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

Date	Wednesday, November 6, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	3h 45m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QAJH_4bSs4
- 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] - Okay, I would like to call this meeting the Prince William County School Board to order. A motion is in order for the approval of the meeting agenda. Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:00:19] Are we doing this by hand or what are we doing? Yeah, good.

[00:00:38] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Moving on to enter closed session. Motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:00:53] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A1.

[00:01:08] Two, to review disciplinary matters for a specific student that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the scholastic record for the individual student and to receive legal advice regarding the same as provided by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711a, two and eight. Three, 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 section 2.2-3711a, seven and eight.

[00:01:37] Four, to discuss the award of a public contract to employee's exclusive representative, which involves the expenditure of public funds and the terms or scope of such contract where discussion in an open session to adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A29.

[00:01:57] And five, 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.

[00:02:17] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - I'll second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:02:39] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, with that, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session

[00:02:47] and return in approximately one hour, thank you.

[00:03:31] Prince William County School Board will return to open session from closed session.

[00:03:51] A motion for 8.01 closed session certification is in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of Prince William's County School Board meeting of November 6th, 2024 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:13] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge. One, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies and 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.

[00:04:35] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Williams. - I second. Please vote.

[00:04:59] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to 9.01, approvals of appointments and releases, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman.

[00:05:15] - Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:30] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to 9.02, Parent Appeal of Student Management and Alternative Programs Department recommendation for reassignment, motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that for the reason set forth in the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's letter of September 9, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approved the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's decision to reassign student SR25-032 to the computer-based instruction CBI program via remote access only, based on charges of unlawful acts in the community.

[00:06:04] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams? - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:27] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Thank you. Next, this concludes the closed session action items. Moving on to Pledge of Allegiance, we would like to invite our student representative, Ala Rashid here from Unity Reed High School to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:06:43] - To the flag of the United States of America, to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. - Okay, thank you.

[00:07:01] So at this time, at the beginning of our meetings, we will do our Launching Thriving Futures focus. It's an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:07:20] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members and schools that have earned an honor or an award at the state or national level. We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County Public Schools and the school board is proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments.

[00:07:35] Tonight, the school board will recognize several awards earned throughout our division. These awards honor outstanding efforts to prioritize the school community's achievements and student success. We begin our recognition with Jennifer Wall, the Gainesville District, who will introduce our first award winners.

[00:07:52] Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I would like to congratulate Battlefield High School for winning the Virginia High School League or VHSL National Guard Cup for the 2023-2024 academic year. This is a remarkable achievement.

[00:08:10] The National Guard Cup is a prestigious award given based on a point system that considers performance in state level competitions across 27 sports and 12 academic activities. Battlefield earned a total of 370 points over the fall, winter, and spring seasons.

[00:08:28] This includes 172.5 points in the spring, 85 in the winter and 112.5 in the fall. Battlefield High has demonstrated outstanding performance in both athletic and academic activities.

[00:08:44] Fills me with immense pride to acknowledge that this is the second time in three years that Battlefield High has earned this distinguished honor. Since its inception in 1990, the National Guard Cup has only been awarded to three high schools in Prince William County.

[00:09:01] Battlefield joins the ranks of Brentsville District High School, which won three consecutive titles in Group A from 2001 to 2003, and Woodbridge High School, which claimed the title in 1991 and 1994. Battlefield High School is represented tonight by Principal Dolores Lucas, Assistant Principal Megan Hostetler, Student Activities Leadership Class Teacher Randy Bills, and students Taylor Campbell, McKenna Kelly, Patrick Kelly, Solomon Royals, and Molly Douglas.

[00:09:31] So at this moment, I would like to invite Molly Douglas to share a few words. - Hi, good evening. My name is Molly Douglas and I'm a senior at Battlefield High School. I would like to thank the Virginia High School League and the Virginia National Guard for allowing student athletes to strive for something bigger and more meaningful than just state championships.

[00:09:51] This award represents the dedication that our athletes, coaches and administration have shown in making battlefield athletic programs the best in the state. As a member of both the varsity field

hockey team and a manager for the varsity boys basketball team, I'm honored to receive this recognition on behalf of all student athletes at Battlefield.

[00:10:14] - Thank you, Molly. And once again, congratulations to the students, faculty, and staff of Battlefield High School for this outstanding achievement. We look forward to celebrating many more successes with you in the future. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Up next is Mr. Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District.

[00:10:30] Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Congratulations, Mr. Michael Carter, on being named the Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors Association National Teacher of the Year. We are proud of your commitment to the education of students at Garfield High School.

[00:10:48] The Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors Association or PHCC recognized Garfield's Michael Carter as a 2024 National Plumbing Teacher of the Year. Mr. Carter previously won the 2024 Virginia Plumbing Teacher of the Year.

[00:11:06] Historically, the national award has been given to trade and industry school instructors, but Mr. Carter is the first high school teacher to be awarded Teacher of the Year by PHCC. Mr. Carter traveled to Birmingham, Alabama in October where the award ceremony was held and walked away with the top distinction.

[00:11:29] We are so proud of his achievements and contributions to the excellent education our students receive. Garfield is represented tonight by Mr. Carter, principal Matt Matheson, assistant principal Tiffany Grisham, and administrative coordinator Brian Bassett.

[00:11:47] Additionally, we have Dr. Sarah Martin, the PWC director of career and technical education. I would now like to invite Mr. Michael Carter to say a few words.

[00:12:04] - I'd like to thank everybody for recognizing me on this. Mr. Dade, all CTE, everybody behind me, my family, my students, it's a great honor. Thank y'all.

[00:12:25] - Congratulations to you, Mr. Carter, and the students and the community of Garfield High School. Make me proud. - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Up next is Ms. Erika Trdenik of the Brentsville District. - Thank you. Congratulations to Brentsville District High School and your chapter members on the National Chapter Three Star Award.

[00:12:44] The award is given to chapters that incorporate all 15 FFA quality standards into their program through the events they host, attend, or assist with in the school community and across the country. Chapters must also earn the State Superior Gold Chapter Award to be eligible for a National Chapter Star Award.

[00:13:04] The National Chapter 3 Star Award is one of the top awards for chapters to earn. There are three main divisions of standards, building communities, strengthening agriculture, and growing leaders. Within each of the main divisions, there are five categories, citizenship, healthy lifestyles, career success, scholarship, and agriculture.

[00:13:25] The standards offer the chance for every member to be involved in some way and help prepare them for the future. It also helps guide the chapter in offering things that will benefit the members, school, and community. If that wasn't impressive enough, the Brentsville FFA chapter celebrates its 95th anniversary this year.

[00:13:44] I wish to invite Principal Dr. Kathryn Meintz and agriculture teacher, Ms. Amy Beard, to share a few words on behalf of this accomplishment. - Thank you very much, school board members, for recognizing our chapter tonight, as well as Dr. Meitz, who has been an incredible support system for our organization.

[00:14:10] Dr. Martin, I know she was here a moment ago. She is also a huge supporter of our program. Dr. McDade, thank you as well. Is she coming? There she comes, I see her. And I'd also like to recognize the members who are standing behind me, because without these young folks and their motivation and dedication to the FFA, which is something I'm incredibly passionate about.

[00:14:34] We wouldn't be standing here and we would not have had the opportunity to earn the award that they received in Indianapolis just a few weeks ago. So behind me is Dr. Mainz, and then some of our members, Charlie Outland, who is one of our officers.

[00:14:52] We have Chloe Ray, another officer, Samantha Grimm, Abigail Norris. We have Kaylee Johnson, Hunter Ringer, who is our president, Sean Stewart, and then Asher Johnson.

[00:15:08] We have Rory Orteguera, Allie Yankee, and Ethan Brock, who is one of our officers as well. So these young folks are gonna be leaders in our community and across the nation, and that is all thanks to a wonderful organization, the FFA.

[00:15:26] Thank you very much. - Thank you, and congratulations again for earning this prestigious award. - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Trudenik. On behalf of the Prince William County Public Schools, I'd like to ask Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District to recognize the next honor.

[00:15:47] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, or COG, awarded Prince William County Public Schools the Environmental Literacy Program with the Educational Institution Sector Award. Ooh, that was a lot. As part of the 2024 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards, PWCS was among four local programs awarded, contributing to the COG regional goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting efforts to advance equity in traditionally disadvantaged communities.

[00:16:18] The Prince William County Schools Environmental Literacy Plan published last school year aims to assist teachers across all grade levels with suggested activities that foster cross-curricular connections by utilizing outdoor spaces and school buildings as educational tools.

[00:16:35] The plan also incorporates place-based experiential learning that aligns with state mandated content and standards. PWCS is the largest of only three school divisions in Virginia with an environmental literacy plan. The environmental literacy program supports the goals of the PWCS vision 2025, launching Thriving Futures strategic plan, as well as the Virginia Department of Education's goal for environmental literacy.

[00:17:05] Tonight, the energy and sustainability team represented represented by supervisor miss jessica weimer and her team specialist samantha burdett facilities james higgins and coordinator jennifer rokasky i would like supervisor of energy sustainability miss jessica weimer to speak on behalf of the great accomplishments thank you so much for the introduction mr wilk good evening dr latif members of the school board and dr mcdade on behalf of pwcs's environmental literacy program thank you so much for recognizing our collective

[00:17:41] achievement of being named a 2024 climate and energy leadership awardee by the metropolitan washington council of governments we are sincerely appreciative of them selecting us for this prestigious award we are so proud of our school division's innovative approach to energy and sustainability and the pwcs vision 2025 launching thriving futures strategic plan does include measurable goals for environmental literacy and using the building as a teaching tool the school board's sustainability initiative and our sustainability policy and

[00:18:16] regulation give us direction with these goals and guidance we strive to make our environmental literacy program community connected with an emphasis on student engagement we are so fortunate to be able to collaborate with over 70 so seven zero community partners who help us develop and implement unique opportunities for both students and staff through indoor and outdoor experiential learning our environmental literacy plan includes an alignment guide that identifies content standards and courses that support the development of environmental literacy across all grade levels

[00:18:54] and curriculums our students play a crucial role in all of our efforts they conduct energy audits reduce waste and adopt sustainable behaviors through opportunities like the pwcs ecoquest students can better understand their impact on the environment by using their buildings as teaching tools in closing we'd like to thank a lot of people who helped make earning this award possible for the school division first thank you so much to the school board dr mcdade mr bach for your leadership and your guidance our team would like to give a special shout out to melinda

[00:19:33] landry who is the lead author of the environmental literacy plan as and is an essential part of our team unfortunately melinda could not be here with us this evening but we would like to recognize her outstanding leadership in this area. We'd also like to thank the facilities department, our assistant director, Asam al-Jabr, as well as the departments, the department leaders from the Office of Teaching and Learning, and finally to all principals, staff, students, community members for their dedication to division wide energy and environmental sustainability. By carrying out our collective vision, PWCS students will gain the knowledge and skills they need

[00:20:12] to contribute to a more sustainable future together we are creating a framework for a resilient and environmentally conscious PWCS thank you all so much great work thank you thank you mr. Wilk and thank you and congratulations to all our honorees this evening we're very proud of all you can the parents family members staff colleagues who are here please rise to

[00:20:40] be recognized for your support of these great students and kids thank you very much it can't be done without all of you we know that dr mcdade thank you dr latif um i just want to say how much we're filled with so much intense pride um for all of your hard work your dedication and i wanted to say to each of you first starting with our battlefield bobcats um earning the national guard cup and from what i understand this is the second time in three years is that correct

[00:21:20] so congratulations to you what an outstanding accomplishment we're so proud uh for Garfield High School Mr. Carter there are so many um outstanding educators in the school system and I don't always get to see firsthand their work but um I've been able to visit your class so many times and not just see you in action and the skill that you bring to the classroom but I've also had an opportunity to witness just how much your students are impacted by your work how much they love and just appreciate you so deeply so you know congratulations to you this is so deserving

[00:21:56] beyond just being a wonderful educator you have made a tremendous impact on your students lifelong impact on your students so congratulations to you to our Brentsville high school I think Brentsville's been in the boardroom every month this year so far Brentsville congratulations to to your FFA chapter on earning the National Chapter 3 Star Award.

[00:22:18] What an outstanding accomplishment. Congratulations, but also thank you so much for your hard work and your dedication. And to the school team for supporting the chapter and students being able to pursue their interests at Brentsville. And then for our environmental literacy program being recognized by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, it really just underscores our commitment to sustainability and showcasing innovative and impactful work that's being done across our school division and that you're this team is small but mighty and you're so passionate about the work you two are making an impact in schools across the school division and

[00:22:56] thank you so much for your commitment to our strategic plan and bringing this program and the commitment to sustainability to Prince William County Schools congratulations to each and every one of you you really are a a shining example of the hard work, commitment, and sheer talent that exists in Prince William County.

[00:23:15] And as always, we are PWCS proud. Congratulations. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like the honorees to come forward with a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:23:32] We'll start the photos that first start with our award-winning schools. We'll go with Battlefield first, Brentsville, Garfield, and then the second photo will recruit our energy sustainability team and then Mr. Carter. Okay, let's go ahead and get started.

[00:32:27] - Okay, great, thank you. Next up is the adoption of consent agenda. Ms. Agaraport, motion's in order. - 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.

[00:32:44] - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:33:02] - Vote is eight yes, motion passed. - Okay, moving on next to acknowledgements and recognitions, a motion in order, 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.

[00:33:18] - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:33:41] - Go to seven yes, one abstained. Tridentic, motion passed. - Okay, up next, citizen comment time. Those 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 topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:33:59] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium where 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 meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I will ask the room to be clear to restore public order.

[00:34:14] Tonight, we have three citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. I'll go ahead and call all three up you want to grab seats up front uh and then we'll call it we'll in this order elizabeth

[00:34:28] sype card augustus sype card and hifsa khan good evening thank you um uh we were invited to uh share our opinion on the cell phone policy in the county and um sorry i didn't state for the record that

[00:35:06] i'm in woodbridge virginia um in my opinion uh teachers have become the cell phone police in the the classroom, so a good five to ten minutes at the beginning of class time is not devoted to content. It's more about policing the phone.

[00:35:21] So maybe some incentives to not use a phone, an idea having recess during PE time or during lunch time so that there's more activity and interaction with the students. And to post the queued language transliterator positions for a team of CLTs is easy.

[00:35:44] but to grow a team is necessary now. $30 for the written exam to take and to pass, which I did not do recently. And then there are other steps to take as well. Sign language is taught and then queued speech and queued language should be taught as well to build future CLTs or sign language interpreters.

[00:36:07] You could have a program for students in deaf studies. You could have a program for staff to volunteer to learn the modality quarterly and taught to support growth. One person, it affects him every day, so everybody could have a once in a lifetime opportunity to support him in his daily walk of life.

[00:36:29] Maybe some of the honorees this evening would consider learning the modality to support him in his academic career. And family cannot queue or sign for the child in the classroom. he hasn't had an in-person clt since june 15th of 2022 until today and so that's two plus years that's 875 days and we have 13 1317 so 1307 no three 1317 days until graduation in june of 2028

[00:37:07] and then some say that he's fine but it's his right to hear and not everybody understand that cued speech and cued language conveys the visual modality of spoken traditionally spoken English. So I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you today and thank you all to the veterans

[00:37:33] and thank you for your service. Thank you. Augustus Sypecard. I am Augustus Sypecard

[00:38:34] Woodbridge, Virginia. Telephone use for me. Reason. Challenge with my deaf. One, challenge

[00:39:14] is that you're deaf. Two, live captions from my phone. Three, call, FaceTime. My mom in Emergencies, captions, and my mom can cue to me using Q2P or language.

[00:39:39] Four, text peers or teachers with helping. Five, using a calculator or tools on my phone with a subject.

[00:40:03] Six, common caption apps that can help me. communication apps i mean what happened if there's no electricity or no wi-fi or no batteries or no time to charge devices or when i have to join the zoom on my phone i need a team of clts cute speech

[00:40:40] language transliterators in person not virtual if not please do not take my cell phone thank you Thank you. Next, Hifsa Khan.

[00:41:02] Good evening, all. My name is Hifsa Khan, and I'm here with Saimikwal. My address is on file. I'm in Gainesville, Virginia, and this evening we're here to request that Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha be

added to the school calendar. So the Muslim community celebrates just two holidays per year, and both are called Eid. Eid al-Adha, which we're requesting today is considered the larger of the two EADS, making it an even more significant holiday for our community.

[00:41:37] And I just want to emphasize that this is not a new request. This was included in the original request made back in 2020 when diverse holidays were first being considered. So Simon and I, we were part of the team that had originally proposed diverse holidays.

[00:41:53] And at that time, we had gathered support from nearly 800 families that signed a petition and requesting the inclusion of both Eids. So when diverse holidays were approved by the school board back in 2020, it was anticipated that both Muslim holidays would be honored like the two holidays that were approved for the other faith groups at that time.

[00:42:14] However, it was understood that since Muslim holidays follow a lunar calendar and Eid al-Adha was falling during the summer break, that it will be included eventually once it started to fall in the school calendar year. and 2025 being the first year that it will actually occur during the school calendar.

[00:42:32] Therefore, this is like the right time, we felt that to review this request. So we also know that Prince William County Schools, they grant excused absences for religious holidays, but many students are reluctant to take that day off. They worry about falling behind, missing crucial instruction time, and for their ongoing extracurricular activities.

[00:42:54] So as a result, many don't observe Eid when it falls on a school day, which can impact their sense of identity and their self-confidence. Students shouldn't have to choose between school and celebrating a major holiday, and especially with Eid al-Adha falling around SOL season time for next year, for next several years actually, many students will hesitate to take that day off.

[00:43:15] Adding it as a holiday would relieve this pressure and allow students to celebrate freely without compromising on their academic and also their extracurricular responsibilities. Furthermore, Eid al-Adha is a unique holiday that can increase a sense of unity, I feel, across multiple faiths because its roots are based on the story of Prophet Abraham and his family.

[00:43:39] This holiday reflects how, at the core, we have so much more in common than we are different. In a world that often feels divided, celebrating this holiday can remind us of the values we share and celebrate common ground that brings us closer together as a community.

[00:43:56] Lastly, approval of this holiday will send a message of inclusion to young children whose worldviews and identities are just beginning to form. It is more than just a day off. It's a chance for students to feel included, valued and seen by their school leadership.

[00:44:11] We thank you for considering this and your ongoing commitment to diversity and an inclusive environment. - Thank you. - Thank you. - Okay, thank you. That will be the end of citizen comment time for this evening. We're gonna move on to Office of Associate Superintendent, school level information, 1501, PWCS cell phone and personal electronic communication device pilot and future recommendation presentation.

[00:44:37] I will turn this over to Dr. McDade, but before I do so, the staff will be presenting the pilot study, the conclusions from the study and recommendations. At the next school board meeting, board

members will come with recommendations or motions because this will be ultimately a school board decision.

[00:44:58] This will be discussed at the next meeting, and then, is that a first read or are we voting on at that time? Wade, well, would it be a first read? It's a motion then, right? At the next meeting, what are we doing, Wade?

[00:45:15] It'll be a first reading. So we would settle on a motion and then do the first reading and then act on it in the first meeting in December. So it'll be November 19th where we would do a first reading on a motion that the board would sort of come to some level of conclusion on.

[00:45:34] Okay, Dr. McTain. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. So at this time, I would like to invite our Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools, Catherine Porter-Lucas, and Associate Superintendent for Student Services and Post-Secondary Success, Denise Huebner, they'll be presenting tonight. The information that we're sharing is just that, it's information only.

[00:45:53] Prior to, we'll just kind of do a little bit of historical context. the spring of last year before the school year concluded the board had an interest in looking at you know cell phone usage in schools and the impact that it has on the learning environment so this was long before the executive order came out then after the summer the executive order came out we were already in full swing in instituting a pilot for middle school and high school and so we made a commitment to bring back to the board all of the data and and what we learned from that pilot

[00:46:30] as well as share with the public what we learned from that pilot understanding now that the board will be adopting a policy by january 2025 so this information we're sharing is to bring to the board information of what happened with the cell phone usage pilot in our schools so that the board can can make a decision on the policy.

[00:46:52] What you'll get tonight from Ms. Porter-Lucas and Ms. Denise Huebner is a little bit of data. Of course, we only have the first quarter, so we don't have all encompassing data. So we'll share what we have, as well as some survey information, and we do still have some surveys that are out.

[00:47:10] We'll also share what we implemented in schools this year, and then give a side-by-side of what the VDOE guidelines also that came out so you can see what we did in comparison to that, as well as provide the board with a couple of options that could be considered as you determine where you wanna go with policy.

[00:47:33] So that's what we're doing tonight, just to provide as much information as we possibly can in order for the board to make sound decision on policy moving forward. So Ms. Porter-Lucas, we'll start with you. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Good evening, Chairman Lateef, Vice Chair Zargarpur, members of the school board.

[00:47:51] As was shared, this presentation will provide an overview of the PWCS cell phone pilot, an overview of the VDOE guidance, recommendations for the next phase of implementation and policy considerations.

[00:48:06] In the spring of 2024, we as a school division began reviewing research and feedback about our students and the distractions at school due to cell phone usage. This slide highlights two examples of how students are impacted, with 97% of students using phones during school and spending an average of 43

minutes per day primarily on social media, YouTube, and gaming, and more than half of students receiving more than 200 notifications per day, 23% of them occurring during school.

[00:48:40] Therefore, we began exploring a cell phone pilot for the 24-25 school year with the intent to support students in their academic success by removing a major distraction, promoting face-to-face social interactions and connections, increasing student engagement and class participation, and helping students understand appropriate and responsible technology use.

[00:49:07] On this slide, you see the list of our pilot schools. We started with the middle level, since the majority of our middle schools already had an off and away for the day cell phone policy previously, and we added our 13 high schools. The middle level also includes our combination schools, the Knoxville School, Porter Traditional, and Pennington Traditional, so the pilot includes elementary age students as well.

[00:49:35] Our cell phone work group established guidelines that were implemented at the start of this school year. For K-8 students, our guidelines devices were silenced and stored away during the school day. Dual purpose watches are allowed, but wireless features are turned off and on airplane mode.

[00:49:54] Devices are allowed on school buses if they do not distract the driver or compromise safety or violate rules. For our ninth through 12th grade students, devices are silenced and stored away during instructional periods. Dual purpose watches are allowed, but the features must be turned off during instructional time.

[00:50:12] And devices and one earbud are allowed during lunch and hallway passing times. The use is prohibited in locker rooms and restrooms. And the devices are allowed on school buses as long as it does not distract the driver, compromise safety or violate rules. There are exceptions to our guidelines for students and they may be granted as disability accommodations through Section 504 plans or IEPs when necessary and may be granted as part of students' health, safety or support plans when necessary.

[00:50:42] We did provide training and resources to our school leaders and staff and communicated our expectations to students and families through letters, email notifications, FAQs on our website and our school leaders reviewed the guidelines with students as well as with families at back to school nights.

[00:50:58] We spent time sharing with students and families the purpose of the cell phone pilot and the benefits of restricting cell phone usage during school. On this slide, it shows our response matrix. Having the same responses and consequences across all schools has been the key to the success of our pilot.

[00:51:20] So for the first cell phone infraction, you'll see the device is surrendered, The device is returned at the end of the class period, the student signs an acknowledgement form, and it is recorded in the hub, which is our student information system. For the second offense, the device is surrendered, locked in the main office.

[00:51:38] The student can receive the device at the end of the school day, and the staff member reaches out to a parent or guardian, and it is recorded in our student information system, the hub, and then if there's a third offense, the device is surrendered, locked in the main office. This time, the student completes a healthy cell phone use module, and the parent or guardian must retrieve the device from the school.

[00:51:59] It is documented as a referral in our system and the parent or guardian signs an acknowledgement of further consequences form. Based on our feedback, overall family, staff and students feel that the implementation of the new wireless device guidelines is going well and our pilot schools are effectively implementing guidance.

[00:52:23] As Dr. McDade shared, as we made preparation to implement our pilot. On July 9th, Governor Youngkin issued an executive order establishing cell phone free education in public schools. In September, the Virginia Department of Education shared final guidance, and now I'm going to provide an overview of the VDOE guidance starting with key terms.

[00:52:44] So when you look at bell to bell, that's the time from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day to begin instructional time until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day. bell-to-bell includes lunch and time in between class periods. In the VDOE guidance, cell phone-free education is the age-appropriate elimination or restriction of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices in public schools.

[00:53:08] Personal electronic communication device definition is any personal device that connects to a smartphone, internet, cellular Wi-Fi network, or similar devices, including smartwatches, headphones, laptops, and tablets. And stored means devices are not carried on the student's person.

[00:53:23] For example, it's in a backpack, locker, locked pouch, or designated classroom area. According to the VDOE guidance, each public school system must establish clear procedures for offsite events or activities, including all school sponsored events or field trips and transportation.

[00:53:42] During instructional time, students must use school-based communication tools in the office, classroom, or other centralized location to communicate non-emergency needs with parents. Parents should use school-based communication tools and channels to communicate emergencies during instructional time.

[00:53:59] And if a student travels to a different campus during the school day, they must adhere to the building's policy and procedures for cell phones and personal electronic communication devices. According to the VDOE guidance, public schools must consider students with a disability, L students with a documented language barrier, students' IEPs and 504 plans when creating policies regarding cell phone and personal electronic communication device access, usage and storage protocols, and should provide school-based devices for assistive technology where appropriate.

[00:54:35] School divisions must publicly share how school-based personnel are trained to manage crisis and emergency situations, reunification plans and family notification processes during crisis situations. Public schools should notify parents at the start of the school year about any updates to the annual crisis emergency plan, and clearly outline the communications plan for parent notification, should a school-based emergency or crisis occur, including any relevant or timely follow-up information regarding a school-based emergency event.

[00:55:09] The VDOE guidance recommends that school divisions be clear in their emergency communication protocols, whether or not students can access their stored cell phone and/or personal electronic communication device during a school-based emergency, and communicate this policy clearly to parents and students, training and communication plans should be updated.

[00:55:31] Adults in the school should lead by example and have clear boundaries around their own use of cell phones for emergency or crisis communication purposes. And in the event of an emergency, it is important for adults to have access to a cell phone or classroom phone to coordinate crisis notification and emergency safety plans.

[00:55:50] Family-based emergencies should be communicated directly the front office of their child's school and schools should clearly define a family-based emergency and communicate this definition and family-based emergency protocol with parents. VDOE guidance provides specific recommendations for each level so on the left you will find the VDOE guidance for the level and on the right side are the recommendations based on our successful pilot this year. We developed a cell phone focus group consisting of school leaders, staff, high

[00:56:26] school students parents and central office staff we met regularly to discuss the pilot and make recommendations we surveyed students staff and parents in eight of our pilot schools and we reviewed feedback and this is option one based on the feedback so for elementary cell phones or personal electronic devices must be turned off and stored away at all times while in the school building and on school grounds and combination schools such as the Noakesville school Pennington traditional and Porter traditional would follow the elementary guidance for middle school the recommendation is to continue with

[00:57:04] off and away for the day cell phones and personal electronic communication devices including airpods smart watches must be turned off and stored away from the students person including their pocket and cell phones and personal electronic communication device storage begins at the first tardy bell and ends at the dismissal bell. Once the final bell rings for the school day students can access their cell phones and personal electronic communication devices. The recommendation for high school is cell phones and personal electronic communication devices including air pods and smart watches will

[00:57:41] not be utilized during instructional time. Cell phones and personal electronic communication devices must remain turned off and stored away from the student's person including their pocket during instructional time and students will be permitted to utilize cell phones in one earbud during hall exchanges and during their assigned lunch use is prohibited in locker rooms and restrooms again option one is based on feedback from stakeholders including high school principals student representatives and parent feedback option one also accounts for high school students who have outside responsibilities or learning and are learning to be responsible digital citizens

[00:58:17] for option one for all students it's recommended that cell phones and personal electronic communication devices be allowed on school buses as long as it does not distract the driver compromise safety or violate the prohibited content in use for all students for field trips cell phones and personal electronic communication devices must be off and away during instructional field trips unless required by as an instructional tool devices would be allowed on school buses again if they do not distract the driver or compromise safety or violate rules for staff

[00:58:51] expectations all staff communications with students will comply with regulation 503-1 standards of professional conduct for all employees and staff should model the behavior of appropriate cell phone and personal electronic communication device use for recommendations for emergency protocols school-based staff supervising students shall have access to a cell phone if designated by the the division or a classroom phone to coordinate crisis communications and emergency plans should the need

arise students will be instructed not to use personal electronic communication devices during an emergency if a

[00:59:31] personal electronic communication device is needed to contact a parent or guardian as part of a reunification following an emergency staff will provide direction to students when approved to do so school leaders will reiterate that family-based emergencies should be communicated to the front office, and we will clearly define what constitutes family-based emergencies and non-emergency drop-offs and communicate school procedures to all families.

[00:59:57] Division and school leaders will review communication practices and procedures and share protocols for communication with students, staff, and families during emergencies. This will include publicly sharing the training and reunification processes and updates and family notification processes during crisis situations.

[01:00:19] This slide offers the second option for consideration. The difference in this option is a stricter policy at the high school level, which would include often a way for the day that mirrors the middle school expectations. This option is in alignment with the VDOE guidance.

[01:00:36] All of the other recommendations in option two are the same as option one. I would like to point out that if option two is the preferred option by the school board, Our request would be that instead of implementing the new policy January 1st, that the policy go into effect in August at the start of the 25-26 school year.

[01:00:56] The majority of our high school students have successfully adapted to the current cell phone guidelines. By avoiding making a major change mid-year, we would minimize disruptions to the learning environment in January and allow school leaders, staff, students, and families an opportunity to prepare for the adjustment and practices for next school year thank you for this consideration okay um thank you miss evener miss porter lucas for the work done on this we have one additional slide got it actually dr latif i think you covered a lot of this as you can see um tonight is for

[01:01:33] information and consideration as you form your visions and divisions decisions about the policy on november 19th we will bring forward policies for consideration first reading it will allow comment and discussion on December 4th via the decision-making point and then by January 1st we would update our coded behavior we do have the ability to update our coded behavior without bringing that before the board because on page 4 if you're a fan of the print copy it does reference that the online version is the most current and updated version of the coded behavior of course as always our regulations also guide how we conduct business and how we maintain a positive learning environment in schools so those would also be put

[01:02:13] into place and that does conclude the presentation at this time thank you Miss Huebner and Miss Porter Lucas and for the board we presented the two options one based on the pilot just all of the data that we had and what we got from family students and staff and then the second one being based on the video e-guidance where the high school is the difference whichever direction that the board chooses to go with this policy we will be fully prepared to implement it and enact the policy as written.

[01:02:42] - Appreciate Dr. McDade, Ms. Huebner, Ms. Porter Lucas, thank you for this great work on this pilot. We really appreciate it. At this time I'd ask the board members to, if they have questions about the pilot and things that they'd like to clarify, do that. As Dr. McDade pointed out, at this next board meeting,

we can come with option one, we can come with option two, we can come with another option if the board so chooses based on where we seem to come to some agreement on something that will get a majority support.

[01:03:14] So at this time, I'd ask board members if they have questions about the pilot and the program here, and then spend the next couple of weeks after we do this, figuring out what your public, your constituents are concerned about, what they'd like to see in the proposal, and then we will hash out a first reading at the next board meeting.

[01:03:35] Who'd like to go first? questions. Ms. Trudenik. So between option one and option two are either following the governor's order that was put out? That is option two. Option two is fully following his guidelines. That is bell to bell for all levels. Okay. Are we prepared to implement that guideline January 1? Could we do that? We, whatever the board decides, we're going to be prepared to enact the policy. We'll go down

[01:04:13] road mr jesse that's a quick one on the bell to bell uh would the students still have their own cell phones or would they be locked or whatever they'll have them but as miss porter lucas said they they're not to have them on their person so as long as they're um off in a way so they can have it in the backpack but as long as they don't have it on their person and i think to that note for clarification miss porter lucas or dr mcdade uh it's been working at the middle school level bell to bell with the kids carrying it on their port on their in their backpacks or with them is that correct they're not putting them in any stored device or any block or anything correct

[01:04:50] they either have it in their backpack or in their locker and the compliance has been pretty good at the middle school level at the middle school level yes great okay um miss wall can you tell me a little bit more about um what we're seeing at the high school level as far as um where phones are being stored during the day do most kids or is it just across the board some kids have them in backpacks are teachers requiring them to be uh in a device or a location in the classroom and is that What kind of variability are we seeing in our pilot with regard to putting the phone off in a way across our high schools?

[01:05:25] It is across the board. We have some schools where the teachers are asking them to put them in pouches like in the in the classroom and some that where they carried in their backpacks. Is it like 50 50 or do we have a model that seems to be the preferred? Do we know that that might be too specific?

[01:05:42] No, we the high schools decided on their own, you know, what they wanted to do. we can find out how many of them but even some teachers prefer not to have the pouch over the door so you know we didn't want to make it where we wanted the teachers to be able to do something that they can enforce so some schools have the pouches that hang over the door the students put it in the pouch some schools don't and even for the ones that have the pouches not all students may choose to put the phone in in the pouch but that's been working that way so from school to to school it might look different in terms of how you know they're securing the phone but across all schools the objective is for the expectation is for

[01:06:21] all of the phones to be secured can I ask one follow-up on that it's it's related so in the high school level so if kids have the phone like not on their person but in their backpack that seems to be working pretty well as well as the idea of putting it in a pouch over the door or I mean we're not seeing a big difference right just from we have not heard of a difference we've not heard that yet um I've had teachers have me put phones away and like I've had since I have seven in a day I've had both where I put them away with them or I put them in a backpack it's all just the same basically you either give them the

[01:06:58] phone or you just put in your backpack basically thank you thank you miss Russian who's next miss Williams or anybody okay um any more questions you I've been starting for so are we seeing any I'm trying to go back to the slide there was a see that one two three so there was a device surrendered there's a consequence have we had many instances of these consequences being doled out at

[01:07:31] either the middle or the high school level so we have had we've had 218 that's the division at the secondary level across the division yes and so we and we had 23 students um that had more than one um referral for cell phone infraction so that would be like more at the start of it or is it is it an ongoing thing like like when it was first implemented right that's from from the time we started to now oh okay okay that's wow all right

[01:08:05] miss wall um one of the things that i what shared with me with one of the middle schools before the pilot started was that the one of my particular schools saw a reduction in serious Title IX violations and other kinds of behavior so my question is what effects have you seen from the pilot with regard to maybe student discipline student bullying or other kinds of behavior that we're trying to reduce in our classrooms like are we seeing an effect on that kind of on those kinds

[01:08:42] of things in our classrooms we haven't done an audit so we wouldn't be able to tell you and even if we did we wouldn't be able to make a causal relationship between and say unequivocally that because it was because of the cell phone that there was a reduction in title 9 or it's because of the cell phone that there's a reduction in bullying um so we haven't with the short period of time that we've been implementing the pilot we can only give you the actual hard and fast data to say how many infractions there were that were specific cell phone it would be hard for us to make the case that it was the the cell phone was the reason that you know these things um if there

[01:09:21] was a shift that that was the reason but right now we don't have any type of analysis to pull we we haven't pulled all of the infraction data disaggregated that by the different categories and then try to make some causal relationship between a reduction in those infractions and the amount of cell phone infractions that we have so that kind of study we haven't done and we wouldn't have enough data at this juncture that would be something that we would have to do year long um but then even then it would be kind of hard to to prove that one data

[01:09:57] set impacted the other but we but we haven't pulled that's a a great question about um we We are doing discipline audits, so we will be coming to you with some discipline audits, but that'll be more around whether or not the different infractions that we're seeing, the consequences across the board are, you know, comparable.

[01:10:16] That's the kind of data that we've been trying to study now, but not to the level that you're saying as it relates to cell phones specifically. I mean, that makes sense. There are many things that we're doing to try to address student behavior, and it might be difficult to tease out which one is having the greatest effect.

[01:10:31] that might be more of a freakonomics project um but which would be make a great podcast by the way if somebody wants to do that or a research project um but uh i guess i suppose we may have some anecdotal evidence but it would be hard to prove it to prove it um i have heard students say things like i've made more friends this year i know more kids names we're we are enjoying each other's company i'm seeing faces at lunch you know things like this is what i am hearing that's hard to capture as well in the

data but I guess if we're looking for qualitative evidence that this is working capturing some students students comments like that I've heard that from teachers and

[01:11:11] students actually so I don't know if we can capture that or not but I just wanted to put that out there that I am hearing positive things about the pilot. Thank you Ms. Wall. Ms. Trudenik and then Mr. Jessie. It's no secret that I've been a big fan of of the bell to bell take the cell phones away put them in their backpacks um I guess my my question would be have we heard of any instances of them not having the phones being harmful to them in any way shape or form any sort of harm being caused by us doing this pilot or taking away their phones no okay we've not gotten feedback that there is

[01:11:50] harm to students by taking the cell phone in any way the only feedback that we've gotten really has been I do think that across the board most students and again this is just all anecdotal just based on visits to schools talking to students talking to staff overall in the pilot there has been positive feedback where students have said that having the phones off in the classroom has removed a distraction more students than not have felt like not having it in the classroom has been beneficial to them. The only feedback that we got around you

[01:12:27] know not having it at lunch or in passing is students wanting to be able to check in for different responsibilities whether it's that they have a job and they need to check and make sure their schedule hasn't changed they can do that at lunch. If they need to check in with a family member because they have a sibling that they're responsible for they can do that at lunch or they can do that really quickly in the passing period. So those are the kinds of that's the kind of feedback that we got around you know what would be the impact to them of not having it during the lunch period or the passing period I would agree with the sentiment that students are having more conversations even at lunch even

[01:13:03] though they do have the phones at lunch we are seeing more you know student to student engagement in the lunchroom even though they have the option to have their phone at lunch but the students have been really responsible in the pilot and we have gotten really great feedback across the board certainly nothing is perfect but no there's not been any feedback that it will cause harm to them to not have the cell phone thank you the other the other feedback that I got I've also been asking and the teens are very honest about you know what happens and I do think things are different depending on the teacher

[01:13:40] depending on the environment whatever it's which is we can't control that but it's very site-based it's very classroom based it's very you know dependent on the school which I'm I'm noticing that variable in my own children who are still able to text me and you know do things certain times a day depending on you know which which day which period um which I think like I like I feel for the teachers in the sense that they don't have time to police that all day long when they're trying to teach these kids and I think the benefit of that being in the backpack and them saying we never see it again is huge.

[01:14:19] You know, again, like I said, it's no secret that I would love that to go in a backpack and never come out to the end of the day. And the teens that just spoke to me last week, you know, they said, we need to learn how to be responsible with these phones. And I said, and how long are you in school for? And they said, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

[01:14:35] I said, well, you got the rest of your day to be responsible with that cell phone then. And they were like, okay. But, you know, I think there's pros and cons. and I think as a parent I know that it's worked in some ways but they do find ways to get to it and we can't control every kid so but you know I'm I'm going

for that bell to bell so Mr. Jesse and go ahead I just realized when we were talking here and I don't know why I didn't realize it before that the 13 high schools have already been participating in in this program and I'm assuming

[01:15:10] it's a it wasn't a bell-to-bell or did they that differ between the 13 schools so our high schools currently as part of the pilot they are not bell-to-bell students are able to have their phones in the hallway passing times and at lunch but they are off and away during instructional periods so during class periods but none of them were doing the bell-to-bell no sir okay okay to me that's interesting because if if we decide to go with the first plan it's

[01:15:48] not going to be a change to anything because that's what they've been used to but yeah I do think there's some merit if we are going to change since we allow the students to be there for the first half of the year we should wait until next year to implement it and the kids coming in as freshmen they're used to already so uh that's something to think about thank you and thank you mr jesse and that is as we go into the discussion uh in next week's meeting in the next board meeting where we discuss the actual motions and the merits of each motion i'm happy to hear more about that miss williams questions

[01:16:27] um i was just wondering do we are we training staff on how to respond when parents call in because you know you can get varied response responses and then teachers in the classroom so they know when or when not to interrupt because we have so we have phones in the classroom right but do we have any sense of how the division feels what would be an appropriate time to interrupt versus sending a note down to the classroom or getting a student i just want to make sure we're covering it on the school day end because we can tell students keep their cell phones off and that's

[01:17:03] great but we also have parents that still order lunch for students and if there's a change in plans during the day and how you get to those students because i know it's very stressful we spent the past several years of direct contact family members to students but now we're going back sort of to the way that it was and i also wanted to know after this policy goes into effect can we track year over year the disciplinary intentionally uh year over year the disciplinary outcomes from this policy because referrals can lead to suspensions and so forth but obviously we haven't gotten there yet and it's very early so i just want to be mindful of that and then

[01:17:40] that's it thank you you had a couple of things one we absolutely can track and we're already tracking the infractions today so we can definitely it'll be good to study too from when we first started over the years what that looks like in schools the second question I'm gonna have to call on miss portal because I did hear you say in the presentation earlier that we did do training we did provide training we actually provided a toolkit for our school leaders to work with their like front office teams to develop systems for how we are going to handle those you know those phone calls and those messages that come in to our

[01:18:17] middle schools that need to be you know delivered to the student or the student needs to get the information without their phone so we did provide that for for our schools and it's the same from school to school it differs it does differ and so that's part of the the feedback that we have gotten as part of our our survey from our schools just you know how is it working getting feedback from families if they feel like they're not getting the messages we address those with the individual schools okay thank you to Blake thank you for that presentation I have just one question yeah just one question I want to know

[01:18:56] like how much of a disruption would this cause to the school culture into the instruction of the students behavior wise you know instruction just of us going to bell-to-bell we would it be a revolt would

you know like what would happen yeah we so you're meaning if we do it period or at the time are you referring to well we we would we would request the board consider you know if it's bell-to-bell we would request a consideration to be able to start that

[01:19:34] in the fall as as Miss Porter Lucas talked about in terms of just anything you do if it wasn't even cell phone anything that you do where you're shifting the routine or the structure of the day or how administrators and staff have to operate in the middle of the year's heart so that just gives some preparation time it also gives families time too because as I said earlier you know some a lot of what we got from families and from from parents and from students is around you know other responsibilities that students have and needs to contact their students so people do have to kind of plan for those kinds of shifts I can't tell you what would happen you know in terms of what

[01:20:12] that would look like I just know from you know talking with our school leaders and the experience of being a school leader that you know any shift that you make mid years is challenging thank you and miss Williams had one more question Remember my question, how or what is the plan to have students who need to use their phone, instead of 504, their IEP, as they're in the building, right?

[01:20:38] It might be like a one-off or two-off, but how do we, what is the division's plan, right? Because how do you prevent teachers from being like, oh, you have your phone out, you're in trouble, students don't carry their IEPs with them, maybe a small population, but then also like other students who see a student out with a phone, what is the division's thoughts on that?

[01:20:56] Well, the one thing, so teachers know their students that have, you know, a plan. So they have to know because they're responsible for executing what's in the plan. So they would know that.

[01:21:12] As far as other students seeing a phone or, you know, I can't tell you what that looks like. Certainly you always have in any situation where a student's like, well, why do they get to have their phone? So those kinds of things will happen and the school will have to address those on a case-by-case situation.

[01:21:30] Right now, with the pilot, that's not a non-issue because they can have the phones during the cafeteria period and during the passing, so no one's, you know, paying attention to who has it and who doesn't have it. - Mr. Wilk.

[01:21:46] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just some quick feedback questions, I guess, in general. With slide number six, as everyone knows, to my feelings about the code of behavior. I'm just requesting if it could be maybe amended a little bit more to show what actually happens with two referrals, three referrals for the habitual students that commit this.

[01:22:08] 'Cause right now it just says three and I'm assuming four is also a referral and five. So I'm curious how that adds up, compounds the discipline policy on that. So that would be helpful if you could, just a suggestion.

[01:22:24] And the last one, and I apologize. I forgot it was answered. if it was answered already in an email. Are there plans to do any type of formal survey with staff or of the students versus like me put a Google survey out on Facebook or something?

[01:22:40] I would prefer it be more formalized, but I'm just curious to get the student voice, the staff voice. I know you guys keep on saying like, we got some feedback and stuff like that, which I think that's

great and that's very helpful. I'm just curious if, I know you're waiting to answer me. I'll stop, go ahead.

[01:22:56] - No, no, it's fine. - I'm just curious about the plan, if there's gonna be any more feedback coming from the students or teachers. - At this time, we only plan to bring to you the results of the pilot. So the survey that we do have was from some of the schools in the pilot, but certainly if it is the will of the board to do a full-scale survey of all families and students, we're happy to try to make that happen.

[01:23:19] But we do have data, and typically a subset of data is a representative sample. So that's why we went with that. So it's totally up to if the board would like for us to do something more, but we do think that we have a large enough sample to give the sentiment of what has happened with the pilot thus far.

[01:23:40] So we didn't have any plan to do anything further. - Okay, and then also the principal leadership feedback from these buildings as well, right? You guys, okay, for sure. Okay, thank you. - Mr. Jesse. - I just have to do this.

[01:23:55] My buddy back there has his phone with the lights on. It was just very, very distracting. No. - Thank you, thank you, Mr. Jesse. Yeah, another good point. So I think that's it.

[01:24:14] So again, first of all, you know, it's also important to remember that the board has actually been looking at this for quite a while. Some of our middle schools did their first pilot, the middle schools on their own. I think it would have been academic year 23, 24, 22, 23.

[01:24:30] I know Benton is on their either second or third year. And so we have a lot of data, whether it's anecdotal or otherwise. So the school board has been looking at this for quite some time. We've spent a lot of time this past summer as one of our efforts to look at this.

[01:24:45] And so it is something that has been on the mind of the board, which is why the pilots have been done. And we appreciate all the work by all the schools this year all the students participating and we really appreciate it and we will take everyone's thoughts into consideration so over the next two weeks I would recommend that you know citizens students faculty staff please reach out to board members with concerns thoughts about how you'd like to see this go forward and the school board will come forward with some motions to see where we can come to some agreement and collaboration I do have one point of

[01:25:21] clarification if you would I know mr. Wilk gave the recommendation to make some considerations and revising the the discipline structure so we can send bring that forward as well so if that's the wish sure okay so we're gonna bring that forward as well as you best wish to think yeah yeah I mean that's fine whatever works okay I think I think that's good good discussion folks we're to move on next to I think I have on my list am I looking at right student representative time

[01:25:53] or is there something else oh school calendar did I what did I do 1601 let's go school calendar all right thank you Mr. Chairman so we I would like to invite our associate superintendent for teaching and learning Dr. Stephanie Sullivan and she'll be presenting an update on the 25 26 school calendar good evening thank you Dr. Lateef Vice Chair Zargarpur members of the board Dr. McDade

[01:26:28] thank you for your time this evening for us to have the opportunity to review recommendations for the 2025-26 school calendar before i get started there are a couple of key people i'd like to introduce to the board i'd like to first recognize dr jarcellin hart dr hart is a retired level associate who's worked with prince william county school for many years and offered to take on this project for us to have more meaningful engagement with our community. I also like to recognize Dr.

[01:27:02] Tiffany Hardy. Dr. Tiffany Hardy is a director in my office for professional learning but her secret skill is master facilitator and she has exceptional skills at facilitating meetings and converging groups to come up with actionable findings. Without them this work would not have gotten to the point that it has some of the significant process improvements is that through their work and extensive community engagement the committees themselves drafted the options in the past we may have brought recommendations to committee first but because of this team they facilitated those discussions with

[01:27:41] members in the committee committee members were teachers principals students parents. We included the election office, support staff, PWEA representatives and central office staff. They spent a significant amount of hours going through all the details that go into developing a school calendar and for all their time I thank them. So first and foremost our committee must abide by all prevailing guidelines. That includes state statutes, policies and

[01:28:17] recommendations at the local level. So I do want to acknowledge that they did not have the latitude to go outside those confines because of course we have those regulations in place for a reason. I want to highlight a couple of the key factors that they had to consider. First is the Virginia code that established the standard school year and school day. Virginia requires a school year to have either 180 days or 990 instructional hours. Then there's a Virginia code that is very specific about

[01:28:50] Labor Day. It permits a start two weeks prior to Labor Day, but requires a four-day Labor Day weekend, which I know our school community has become quite accustomed to. So when you are starting early, you are required to be off that Friday and that Monday for students and teachers.

[01:29:10] And then the school holidays. The policy that governs school holidays identifies the days that the division is closed for students and staff in recognition of a variety of different holidays. And then finally, the most detailed, of course, is the regulation.

[01:29:29] The regulation in Prince William County Schools has a couple of factors that are worth emphasizing. One, minimum of 180 days of instruction. Two, 195 teacher contract days. want to point out that what that means is there are 15 days where the teachers are contracted beyond student days and those are teacher work days professional development days days that they meet with parents and conferences i'll talk more about those days in a few minutes but in prince william county we allow two of those days to be flexible meaning teachers can account for that

[01:30:08] time throughout the summer in their many preparations that they do to kick off the school year. So the number of days we need for the calendar is actually 193 days, not 195. Our regulation specifically identifies Columbus Day, also known as Indigenous Peoples Day, to be a professional development day that's been in place for a number of years.

[01:30:34] And our regulation requires that we schedule one of those teacher workdays at the end of each quarter. And this is really important. This gives our teachers an opportunity to complete grading, make parent contacts, do additional planning. And in the past, they weren't perfectly lined up.

[01:30:52] This year, they were perfectly lined up to the end of each quarter. And our teachers absolutely recognized and appreciated that day in between each of the quarters. The first quarter work day falls on election day.

[01:31:08] And that's an interesting call out because some years it's a day or two off, but by doing it on election day, we can make it a teacher work day where teachers can work remotely. This is the second year

that that's happened, which frees up the capacity at the schools to manage the needs they have in having polling sites.

[01:31:30] And also to accommodate voters, we don't do PD at schools. We try to minimize any conflict that might occur with the number of people that participate in elections, and then we try to make each of the quarters match. So ideally, they're each 45 days.

[01:31:47] Sometimes they might be 44 and 46, depending on when some of the holidays fall. And then I want to point out those approved holidays. So we talked about the 180 student days, and we talked about the 13 days for teachers to have work time outside of the student calendar and then we have to consider all of the designated holidays some of those designated holidays are federal holidays some are religious holidays some have days off more than the specific holiday for example christmas eve and christmas day

[01:32:25] typically we will close school for beyond those two days so that families can have more time together and so every one of those days where there's no school extends the amount of time we need for the school calendar and so even though these are a short list when you consider spring break people are accustomed to a full week again we are spreading the amount of time needed to squeeze in the school calendar and so through the committee work and through the review of policies

[01:32:58] and regulations and state guidelines the different groups that we met with identified their priorities and so going through some of those great protocols that i mentioned dr hardy is an expert at these were the priorities of the various groups um two full weeks for winter break that came up because as the board may remember we didn't we didn't always have two weeks for spring break last year the respondents spoke quite clearly that that was a priority and we've continued that feedback onward and we agree it's important for our families who live outside the

[01:33:32] country sometimes our split families that time is very very valuable for our community and we wanted to honor that and you'll see that in all three calendars i'll explain the additional teacher work day in august we'll talk a little bit more about that but you can see what the big ideas were one of the discussion points we'll have tonight is around possibly a Tuesday start instead of a Monday start and some of the pros and cons that come with that and some of the challenges we have

[01:34:06] with students being in school on some of the various days and so this is where the options were identified and they do look similar because we were already identifying and honoring some of priorities set by our community like the full week of spring break like the two weeks of winter break like having the scheduled teacher work days and so i'm going to explain the slight differences in each of them for your awareness and of course any questions that might follow so in each of the

[01:34:42] calendars there are those 13 teacher work days that we spoke of there are four of those that that are identified already for the end of the quarter. There are the five that are traditionally scheduled during pre-service week, meaning the five days before students report.

[01:35:02] That takes us to nine days. Then we have that Christopher Columbus Indigenous Peoples Day off in October for professional development. We also have an additional day in November and in January that is calendared for professional learning as well as parent conferences.

[01:35:23] That leaves one flexible day to manipulate within the calendar. And so in option A, that extra day was put during pre-service week, meaning our teachers would have a sixth day of preparation and that

day would be unencumbered for them, meaning they wouldn't have any scheduled meetings or any requirements on that day.

[01:35:49] So in calendar A, the school year would start for teachers on August 11th, would run five days through that week. And then the following Monday would be a teacher work day with students starting on Tuesday.

[01:36:06] And so that six day kicks off the week where students will begin on a Tuesday. In calendar B, very similar structure, except the six day starts the Friday before. So teachers would report on Friday, August 8th.

[01:36:23] They would have that extra day, of course, during pre-planning with no meetings, which we heard a lot and I imagine you all have heard. And then students would start on that Monday. Those are the biggest differences. In calendar C, pre-service week was left alone, but that extra teacher workday was placed in April.

[01:36:46] And so those are the three main differences between the calendar options. And again, we built in the two weeks of winter break for all of them, the three days of Thanksgiving break for all of them and the spring break, 'cause we heard that over and over again.

[01:37:03] And so we did have an opportunity to survey students, staff and parents and boy, did they respond. Very excited to say we had over 13,000 respondents, which was an increase from 9 000 respondents last year which was an increase from the year before so have a lot of gratitude for our families and our teachers and our staff that took part in the survey because their feedback is critical as you can see our largest response group was parents over 8 000 of them and i know for our audience the screen is hard to see so i'll narrate a little bit

[01:37:42] for our staff members over 4 000 staff members responded to the survey and i was really excited about this student result 1400 may seem small but it is three times as many students that participated last year when you look at how they rank the options they are very very close what you'll see is that both option A and option B were the top choices, with option A overall having slightly more selections,

[01:38:20] but option B having the most number one choices. I do wanna point out that those differences are like a tight election. Okay, I had to play on the day where they were right down to the individual votes.

[01:38:36] The count between option A and B were, as you can see by the numbers, nearly indistinguishable. And option three came in third choice. I wanna give you a little bit more information for your consideration for when you do vote on the calendar.

[01:38:51] Choice B was slightly more favored by parents. Choice A was slightly more favored by teachers. But both A and B, which can contain that sixth workday were the top choices.

[01:39:09] And so themes within the comments, we had about 3,500 comments. And again, I have a lot of gratitude for that. So many of our respondents added a lot of detail to where we could really understand where they were coming from and appreciate the comments that they shared.

[01:39:26] However, I do wanna point out that the differences in comments are pretty extreme. And so first and foremost, very opposing perspectives on too many days off and wanting more days off. And so many of our respondents talked about their understanding that the more holidays we had meant the

longer our calendar ran, while other constituents talked about wanting more days off either for their perspective on balance of time or some holidays that they felt that the district should consider as they move forward in calendar planning.

[01:40:05] Lots of supportive comments and positives about a Tuesday start. Far, many, many people chose to write specifically about that. But there were some very poignant comments about some concerns that some of our constituents had regarding childcare on that Monday.

[01:40:23] And so for some of our families, they saw that could be problematic based on how their childcare operation billed them for a full week. Again, emphasis on a two-week winter break. That persists as a high priority for our community, but very strong opposing perspectives on wanting to start later and potentially go further into June or start the count, get out earlier and start earlier in August.

[01:40:55] Our respondents definitely recognize the challenge of the number of days and recognize that it was difficult to achieve both, but I would say it was an equal split on respondents that wanted an earlier or later start.

[01:41:11] A start closer to Labor Day would run school through the entirety of the month of June, which a lot of people recognize that that was very limiting and some opportunities that were available, particularly to high school students in the month of June.

[01:41:27] Various comments about snow days and how those days are handled. So I just wanna remind everyone, Last year was an excellent example. There were a few days last year where we had snow and we had a snow day and those were handled without adding additional days to the calendar.

[01:41:50] And every year is gonna be different, of course, depending on the degree of weather. And so that worked out great last year. We hope that that model persists, but there are those occasional years with the weather we can't predict. And those are situations we deal with as needed basis.

[01:42:10] And several comments requesting consideration for less than 180 days of school. And so certainly wanted to share those comments with the board. Again, I wanna state that the committee could not vary from the expectations of policy, state guidelines, and of course, our regulation.

[01:42:33] And so as you guys think through that, This will come back to the board at the next board meeting for your vote. Once that's complete, of course, the calendar will be accessible and public on multiple forums on our PWCS website.

[01:42:49] Once approved, of course, whichever one that it selects and we'll make it available for the iCal option that a lot of our families like. So happy to answer any questions. - Ms. Wall.

[01:43:04] - Thank you for presentation, I appreciated it. And I know the public who was, the public who were listening, I'm sure, appreciated it as well. Is it possible, I remember seeing last year the graphic design of the calendar where the days were blacked out or put in colors and boxes.

[01:43:23] Is it possible for us to see that for A, B, and C? Yes, ma'am. They're actually a hot link on the deck. And so I can certainly, let me go back and I will show you. here see where the a b and c are blued out those links will take you to that visual that you're accustomed to and that our families did see when they completed the survey that is great news thank you very much and we made sure that was available on the board agenda

[01:43:57] as well for our families mr dent okay i'm going to ask the spicy question the rhetoric is that we have all these extra days you know like these magic days why don't we use them um can you explain that i can we're chuckling because i often use the word spicy and so that got a chuckle from up here i can um so as a division um prince william county school is a 180 day school system and that choice was made at a point in time of which i cannot identify and so there are options

[01:44:36] to have it based on hours and that would be the bare minimum so if as a division we decided to calculate by hours we would also have to track and make up days and time missed by hours as well and so if you looked at 180 compared to 990 yes there are based on our school time and time in school which is lower than a lot of other divisions we do have days beyond the 990 but they're not actually extra days it just depends on how those are

[01:45:12] calculated by the division choice on the school calendar you're welcome mr. Wilk hi following up on that but there are a lot of extra hours beyond the 990 correct correct mm-hmm yeah they're not equivalent 180 is not equivalent to 990 there are hours beyond that in our calendar.

[01:45:39] - And understood, I know a teacher contract has the exact amount of days in there. My goal, what I would like to see, given the increase and rise of PD, not necessarily just from the division, but from the VLA and all the training that has to come from that, I would love to see maybe some of those days become half days, and so that the second half of the day can be a time where teachers get some PD done, or that can be when the staff meeting is done, just to give some more breathing room to get things completed instead of the additional time that might have to be done on their own at home.

[01:46:11] So I understand where we're at with 180 days. I respect that. That's, you know, seems institutionalized here, right? But my only request, and I don't think it's gonna happen, but in the future would be looking at the ability to embed some more half days into it.

[01:46:29] So that way you still have the contractual days. My understanding from the state is as long as you serve lunch, it does count as a day. And so we could, again, put a couple half days in leading into different periods at the end of quarters, different things like that.

[01:46:45] I know our elementary teachers had a lot of- - They did. - Parent teacher conferences, excuse me, that they had to do back to back to back. And I'm just thinking, again, if we had something more like this, this would give them the opportunity to put some of that time and do that there.

[01:47:01] And even, I know a lot of parents at the secondary level, I remember long ago, there was a day, like when parents met with the high school teachers, it was like a conference day and stuff like that. And I know that was disbanded long ago before this administration, but I think again, more opportunity there to have that parent connection, give the teachers time to again, meet with the parents, have that collaboration, you know, embedded into the school year.

[01:47:25] - Yeah, thank you, Mr. Wilk. I will call out that there were comments to that effect in the survey. So I do wanna honor that feedback and comments. And I know from our facilitators that that did come up in those discussions as well. But again, their scope was limited in current guidelines and that would certainly be a board discussion item.

[01:47:49] Yeah. - Ms. Argo. - I agree with Mr. Wilk about the half days. I got one this year as a teacher and it gave me enough time to collaborate with a colleague over grades. And it was time that we didn't have to search for. it was a it was a beautiful gift it was very relaxing um so i really would encourage the division to

to take a look at that uh for any other reason just getting caught up on those things is just really important and i know i can't just collaborate with my colleagues we all have different things we have to do some of my colleagues have second jobs or they have kids

[01:48:26] that they have to shuttle places so that time in the day really does turn out to be very important And so if there's a way we could work on a half day here or there, just the gift of time is really important. The other thing is we had the person come in and talk about the other Eid.

[01:48:42] I went to look that up just to see. Like this year, it's going to fall. The evening is going to fall on a Friday night. So that's not an issue. But looking at 2026, it's like... Right after Memorial Day. Yeah, yeah. And I'm just like, yeah, Memorial Day is Monday.

[01:49:01] It's Wednesday. So That is a big one. That is a really big one. It is the reason Muslims go on hajj It is it is in the Old Testament. It is the Abrahamic faiths all three of them This is this is one of the stories that you know the sacrifice of his son and And and and all the stuff that entailed. This is a really important one. I would really like to See if we could work that in if you look at the the B calendar And then I don't know if there's a way we can do something slightly different with the work day for teachers, the last day for teachers.

[01:49:38] Why couldn't it be June 12th, but also make the student day June 12th as well, or something. Or make it a half day, and then the teachers get the other half, and they're peace out. I don't know. Yes, thank you, Mrs. Zargarpur. I can appreciate that perspective. We have board policy that does identify the specific holidays, and I know our employee calendars are also tied into that.

[01:50:01] And so we will certainly support the guidance from Dr. McDade and the board, but we have policy that identifies those, so from our capacity. Ms. Williams. Thank you.

[01:50:17] um while i am not 100 opposed to the half days i know that this has been an ongoing conversation and i also am aware the division has updated regulations and guidance for principals and other staff in the buildings and if we're going to actually look at that as a consideration could we also get an update on what has been done to help the teachers have more efficient days and where that is a current major outlier or issue because it wasn't one time like school to school i have no idea now I hear it sporadically but I hear it more in terms of teachers having

[01:50:53] the option or not having an option to use their time for team meetings or building-wide meetings taking away from their own personal planning time and I also know that we have done things as a division to help make the day more efficient like standardized templates and canvas and things of that nature so if it is still an issue with with teachers and staff not having enough planning time i'd really like to look at what are the causes of that right and is it a universal division problem and what the staff has to say or feels about that loss of time like we gave half

[01:51:28] time half a day do they still feel like they have enough instructional hours with all of the new mandates coming down from the state with the science of reading and all the new math i don't want to unnecessarily cause an issue i'm not a teacher so i wouldn't know and i know that there's a difference tremendously from an elementary teachers planning time and day and how they utilize that because they have multiple subjects to plan for versus the secondary so if it is still a major ongoing issue i think it's important that we are more knowledgeable as a board of where the issue is and exactly what it is especially now that we've implemented a lot of these new policies

[01:52:04] and there's new regulations um because it is our job to try to be mindful of that so i don't i don't want to just enter the half day willy-nilly and not really understand the genesis of it other than and teachers need more planning time, 'cause I don't know what that means. And initially, when that was a problem a few years ago, it was time management and principals understanding how the policy worked and then putting it into effect for their building, which I'm sure is not quite the same issue now, but I don't know.

[01:52:30] We also have like 40-some new principals. So I just wanna make sure that we're doing our job to do the best to meet the needs of the teachers. - I can certainly collaborate with my peers that might be more aligned to some of those questions and work with Dr. McDade and Ms. Botella to make sure that the board has the information as requested.

[01:52:52] - Hey folks, thank you. At this point, this is on for information. We'll come back next week and vote on an option and the board can amend the options as necessary based on what their feedback is that they've heard over the next couple of weeks. Thank you very much.

[01:53:08] - Thank you. - Okay. Thank you, thank you, Dr. Sullivan. We will now move on to student representative time. We have Ala Rashid with us who is our Unity Reed High School senior will be our student rep for this evening, Ms. Rashid. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[01:53:24] Good evening to the Prince William County School Board, community, and Dr. McDade. I'm excited to be back up on the dais again, representing my peers. Happy second quarter, after what felt like a long first quarter and very long weekend, students are back with the new quarter. To get started with my remarks, I just wanna highlight some of the things going on with the division and some of the past events going on.

[01:53:45] Student voice committees from all over the county were invited to collaborate at our first leadership workshop of the year. It was a way to embrace the connection between schools and the different issues students feel were important to talk about. We worked on team building activities as well as ones to improve leadership skills.

[01:54:00] The SVC at Woodbridge also gave a presentation on the work they've done last year and some tips for future SVCs. One of the big things they discussed was the campaign they created to combat drug use in school bathrooms, as well as suggestions on how to approach admin assistance with their SVCs.

[01:54:16] Students were also able to speak with Dr. McDade as she discussed the idea of student voice in the Student Bill of Rights, which was a pleasure. This workshop was overall a way for student voice to be furthered, and many students felt that it was beneficial speaking with other schools who would not always get the chance to in most usual instances, with an example being Patriots SVC and Woodbridge's SVC, as they're on two completely different sides of the county.

[01:54:39] And it overall furthered the idea of SVCs for new and upcoming members. Now, moving towards school climate and safety, I know that last meeting or presentation done by the security team regarding security and the measures put in place and what was done and after showing it to my school's sbc and kind of speaking with student senate about it many agree with what was said more specifically with how evolved machines are at football games because they haven't been a problem at all students just go right through and it's been simple and easy and also on the note of safe clubs which are which stands

for student against violence everywhere and many schools which are very beneficial to the student body in terms of safety

[01:55:17] in culture save clubs benefit the student body with students at garfield highlighting student voice as they created a mural that discusses resources with students could reach out and speak up for themselves when needed with it being um with one of the things being the see something say something which was also talked about in school today as an example and another thing is the volunteer work this club does to improve community culture with unity read my school our safe club having student volunteers students volunteer these past few weeks at innovation and St. Clair Dementory Schools title one trunk retreat events with our lovely board member Miss Wall making an appearance from the Gainesville district which was very nice to see at St. Clair's

[01:55:55] and it was a way for students to positively influence the idea of safety onto the younger generation. Safe clubs are something that a lot of students feel benefit their school culture and climate and these are in overall lawsuits do you think they're important with many schools having them and after reaching out to students and only a few high schools don't really have a full of working one and now to kind of steer toward the end of my remarks I just want to touch up on the presentations done today as well upcoming things within the county with the first one being the cell phone policy which is something that a lot of students have been have input on and the plans proposed by Miss Porter Lucas were something that Almudena and I the other student representative had

[01:56:34] direct input on as members of us of the stakeholder group that she was talking about which was composed of students admin teachers and parents and we continuously reached out with the Student Senate and peers to share a range of opinions when reporting to these meetings as we felt that they were we wanted to be able to provide student input and a general consensus that was made between the different groups of students that we reached out to from the Student Senate and SVC's was that what in what is now in place as as many people have said it is working and is gearing towards the shift that the county wants and that a bell-to-bell policy is unnecessary and is almost unnecessary for the high school level and

[01:57:13] would almost be more restrictive and hindering and this is because many students have seen the policy to be effective in terms of productivity and in-person communication for what is in place now one senator that i spoke to said that even though adjustments had to be made at the beginning of the school year they were able to push through and see an increase in productivity with it now being something that they've gotten used to and kind of adjusted to and that school environment is something that they think benefits from this policy because it creates a balance for students who have outside responsibilities and that allowing cell phone use during lunch passing periods gives students a chance to balance these responsibilities both in and out of school

[01:57:50] and manage proper use of cell phones. A beltable policy though, in many eyes, is seen as restrictive because it creates a divide in many students' lives with students having outside responsibilities and this policy would require them to kind of adjust and uproot them in a very big way, as they not all, is that, sorry, as not every boss is gonna be open and waiting, open to waiting until 2:10 every day to find out if you're open to work a shift that starts at 3 o'clock.

[01:58:20] It just causes difficulties in student lives, with another thing to note is that for the presentation, it said personal laptops as well, which is another thing that a lot of students disagree with and they feel

that they should be able to have their personal laptops in school. And that was just something I saw in the presentation, so I had to talk about that.

[01:58:36] but it also does the opposite of what is needed 'cause a lot of students are already seeing the productivity with the current policy and feel that this is just gonna cause a bigger shift towards disagreements between students and teachers and things like that. And then to add to some of the questions from earlier from the board and just some comments from the presentation, in my school and in other schools when I've spoken to student senate, the pouches and backpacks, it kind of varies between teachers.

[01:59:01] Some teachers like prefer to use the pouch or I've seen one of my teachers have a lockbox, basically, and they put their phones, and then they lock it, and then the class students get it, or if they have to leave early, they can just unlock and grab it, but she's watching it, so it's right there, and it just kind of varies between classes and teachers, because an example is my math class only has 11 kids, so she doesn't take our phones away because there's only 11 kids, but for her regular geometry class, she takes them and puts them in the pouches.

[01:59:29] It just depends. It's just teachers' preference and the trust they have. their students because I've had her for example for the past three years and then in class discussions I've seen when after speaking to the students are more engaged with my school being an example of after speaking to our SVC my school requires every single person to take an IB English class either junior and senior year so whether it's standard level or higher level which is the more advanced one they're required to have these discussions per IB and per the curriculum so these discussions a lot of students I think that are more open and more participative and then to add on to parents calling into the office my

[02:00:07] I've seen and I've spoken to other students how sometimes the office is busy and phone calls aren't really sent through sometimes and with my personal experience with my mom sometimes she won't even get to pick up it's like the fifth call so I think it just depends school to school and having the bell to bell policy where students can't just contact during lunch if they need something and having all these parents contact the office is just going to add more to the issue of having parents call the office, because sometimes they just won't answer.

[02:00:34] I've had to personally, and my friends and my peers have had to personally go down to the office and ask them to answer the phone call that's being called right in front of them. And then another thing is that of many SVCs have also led surveys, which I know you guys said, they are informal though, not very formal, in between their SVCs and between their schools.

[02:00:53] And this is the information I'm getting, and I'm just kind of reading from the surveys and the summaries that the senators give me and stuff. And an example would be Colgan had a survey with their SVC as well as Patriot and Unity. And then to add on to this usage of cell phones in schools, QR codes are kind of used around schools frequently with the see something, say something, having at least four QR codes in my school and many in others.

[02:01:18] So students are using these QR codes to access something that's being encouraged to protect student culture. So limiting use of cell phones throughout the day, whether it's lunch or passing period, kind of just shies away from the benefit of having all these QR codes around the school, as well as last with two weeks ago being Virginia College Application Week, that's another way, that's another use of QR codes, 'cause we were able to directly meet with our college admissions counselor.

[02:01:46] Furthermore, the proposed PANs of option one today is something that aligns with student feedback I've seen and provided to you all, and many students do think that the recommendations from the county are better than the VDOE guidelines of a bell to bell policy at the high school level. The calendar was also discussed earlier today and I was able to be a part of the committee that discussed it alongside the other representatives, Almodena and Kaylee.

[02:02:07] And we were able to work with our other stakeholders on creating three drafts to each provide input from all groups. After reaching out with students and looking at the presentation today and committee meetings, many think that either A or B are good options for next year. And the data from the survey shows that. It was very informative to be a part of the committee and students are glad that their concerns are met with a two week winter break.

[02:02:27] One week's winter break and certain days off being a component of each track. But I said earlier with the city's comments and per the board, the addition of Eid would be beneficial for the large number of Muslim students present in the county, including myself. It would provide us the chance to celebrate the extra time with family as it is a major holiday to us and many students do not wish to miss key instructional time during the testing period of the school year.

[02:02:50] And personally, I'm just gonna be honest, many students would just miss school in a sense if they really, really had to to visit family. And that's pretty much it on that part. It's just a very big part and very big holiday. And lastly, to conclude my remarks, I want to just focus on upcoming things within the county with both international education and inclusive school weeks coming up, both highlight inclusion and equality in schools and allow students to be open in more ways.

[02:03:15] And also Veterans Day is on one day, so I wish all of our veterans a very happy day and thank you for your service. and that is all for my remarks today. Thank you so much for having me. - Thank you, Ms. Rashid. Superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[02:03:31] Providing a positive climate of culture is about providing a learning environment which fosters inclusivity, connectedness, and encourages social and emotional wellness for all. And our school psychologists play an important role in supporting a positive learning environment. From November 4th through 8th, we are celebrating the work of our attendance officer Appreciation Week.

[02:03:51] In our launching Thriving Future strategic plan, we have a commitment to reduce chronic absenteeism by 5%. Students who are in class and on time every day will be on time for graduation. And so we know that attendance matters. Our attendance officers work passionately to ensure students are showing up to school and they need our help to show students we care about their wellness.

[02:04:13] As we move into the winter months, let us collectively support student success through prioritizing students' time in class, healthy habits and engagement in after school activities. From November 11th through 15th, we're celebrating the work of our school psychologists through School Psychology Awareness Week.

[02:04:29] Our dedicated school psychologists are trained to listen, help and heal and are available for your support and the support of others. We want to provide our students with every opportunity to pursue multiple pathways in securing their future. These pathways may be the military, career, academic or entrepreneurial, but we want to help all of our students take the first steps after graduation.

[02:04:53] And November is National Scholarship Month. And our college and career counselors are prepared and eager to meet with your students to plan the launch of their thriving future. All PWCS high schools have a college and career counselor to support students in their post-secondary aspirations.

[02:05:10] And so we encourage you to have your senior or junior to set up a meeting with their college and career counselor and visit our PWCS scholarship webpage for more information. If you go to our website to departments and select student services and post-secondary success and choose college and career readiness on the left navigation you'll see the link to scholarships. If you have any questions please do reach out to your students college and career readiness counselor and in concluding the superintendent's time we do have a presentation this evening and so at this time I would like to bring forward again Dr. Stephanie Sullivan our associate superintendent for teaching and

[02:05:50] learning and Dr. Sullivan will be presenting an update on the independent audit of our English Learner program that was conducted by in partnership with West Ed. Thank you Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Zargarpur, members of the board, Dr. McDade, thank you for this time to address one of our most critical groups of students and our efforts to improve outcomes for them in our school system at the last board meeting you saw the update on data regarding all of our student groups and we all shared our concern

[02:06:25] and focus for improving outcomes for our students and we are very fortunate to have spent all of last year partnered with west ed to give us those external eyes on the strategies in our schools and places for improvement what i will say is i i wouldn't even use the word audit because it really was a partnership west ed our our consultants came in worked with our teachers worked with our principals met with our parents met with our students shadowed students in their

[02:07:01] school day on top of an exhaustive review of data by having the opportunity to work alongside them all last year we were able to begin initiating process improvements along the way and so today it is my pleasure to introduce leslie hamburger and dr martha palacios who are going to share with you their work throughout the school year to identify areas for us to continue improvements and then after their presentation i will share some of the ways we've already begun the important work to improve opportunities for our students i believe at this time i'm turning it over to leslie

[02:07:50] good evening mr chairman dr like the members of the board and dr mcdade thank you so much for the opportunity to address the board about our study of english learner programs conducted in partnership with the division staff over the school year the 23 and 24 school year my colleague martha and i are going to basically do sort of a three part presentation we will describe a little about the context and the current knowledge about the education of english learners and multilingual

[02:08:29] learners we will discuss sort of key findings from the study we conducted in partnership and collaboration and then we will talk about recommendations for improvements to go forward the so just a little introduction so uh i am leslie hamburger vice president for k-12 systems at west ed and west ed is a national non-profit that is focused on conducting research development

[02:09:04] and practice to improve education for all learners we currently hold the national research and development center for the improving the education of secondary english learners and we carry out a pretty robust body of work in which we conduct research, we do evaluation, we provide technical assistance and professional learning to state agencies and local education agencies to support them in improving educational programs for English learners and multilingual

[02:09:41] learners the el review of your programs was a collaborative effort and in context conjection with division staff we designed areas for review we agreed on processes we agreed on processes for inquiry we agreed on the questions that we wanted to address so on the screen are some of of the focus areas for review that we collaboratively decided on but I want to highlight that even though we're looking at all of these questions we really were

[02:10:19] centering the work around the opportunities to learn that offered in classrooms to students and I'll build more on why that that was so important we wanted to make sure that in the design of the program we were centering the district needs, that we were centering the experiences of the stakeholders in the process, and that we were really trying to enact the process that was a process of capacity building, so that everybody from the division that

[02:10:56] participated in the process really developed greater understanding and and capacity to design and enact and implement equality programs for English learners. So the research questions addressed in the review are six, and they are up on the screen.

[02:11:18] We will talk about some of those in more detail in the later part of the presentation. But I want to go forward and highlight how critical a quality education for all learners is in this moment.

[02:11:38] It's of great importance for our community and our country as the nature of learning, the nature of work, and the nature of societal institutions is evolving very rapidly, preparing Learners to thrive in this ever-changing landscape is really an imperative.

[02:12:02] Developing all students' abilities to engage in deeper learning, to engage in problem-solving, to be critical thinkers and able to communicate productively, successfully, so that they can succeed in life is really of utmost importance.

[02:12:21] So the collaborative review is centered on instruction. A quality education for English learners is a coherent system among which many pieces coalesce to ensure that students have quality opportunities to learn and opportunities to succeed.

[02:12:45] So we were focusing very centrally on the classroom experience, because the primary factor for the success of English learners is the nature of the learning experiences that students engage in in every classroom every day.

[02:13:06] In order for students to realize their full potential, they need to really experience robust learning opportunities K-12 throughout every day in every classroom.

[02:13:21] In different phases of the project, we spent time looking at different parts of the system, but always through the lens of how did those parts of the system impact student learning opportunities in the classroom.

[02:13:38] So that was sort of the central component of the project. So really, students and multilingual learners, English learners, are no different than any other students. Students learn because they're offered relevant, enticing, powerful, well-supported learning opportunities.

[02:13:59] And they need to have opportunities that provide intellectual push as well as high levels of support. And so through the project, we built a collective understanding of what comprises quality learning for language minority students.

[02:14:20] And I want to highlight a couple of key points about quality education for English learners, because they inform the design of the project. And it's the first idea I want to highlight is the idea that students develop conceptual understandings, the disciplinary practices, and the language to engage in learning together in tandem.

[02:14:49] Those things don't happen in isolation. You don't learn language separate than what you learn content in math or in science or something else. The second point I want to highlight is that language develops in use as students grapple with important ideas, as they interact with their peers, as they argue and construct thoughts and ideas and present evidence for those ideas.

[02:15:22] That's how learning happens. And that's how language learning happens. And so these features of quality learning opportunities are reflected and those are realized instruction that represents these three principles that we use as the links the lens for data collection and analysis in this review so we look we focus very carefully in ensuring that students had learning opportunities that were

[02:15:59] characterized by academic rigor which is defined as students engaging in in activities that are deep, that are generative, that require higher order thinking, that require students to engage with grade level appropriate content, that students are engaged in quality interactions with peers and their teachers, in which they talk about ideas in ways that are sustained, that are reciprocal, that are building knowledge,

[02:16:33] that there is a significant focus on language during classrooms so that students have opportunities to practice the use of the of the of the of English that students have opportunities to develop understanding of how language works so these principles were at the center of our observations and review and data collection and analysis the the project took over uh the last

[02:17:08] year the 23-24 school year and it had three phases and what we were trying to do in the three phases were these three points we were trying to develop an understanding among the division staff at what constitutes quality learning opportunities for an english learner what does it require what does it look like? What does it sound like? And then we engaged in a collaborative process of data collection and analysis and make sure to include sort of stakeholders at the center

[02:17:44] of that process. The review was a pretty robust and extensive review in some of the things that we did to better understand the current status of educational opportunities and outcomes for English learners in the division was that we collected extant we collected and analyzed extant data on demographics on student outcomes and students opportunities to learn we conducted

[02:18:16] classroom observations in conjunction with division staff at a sampling of schools and And we also conducted additional observations just by the WestEd research team to enhance the number of observations we had so that we at the end of the review visited 10 schools.

[02:18:41] We engaged in division staff, engaged with us in the process of shadowing a variety of students who are English learners from sort of different language levels and experiences in grade bands. We surveyed teachers and school leaders and we conducted focus groups and with parents and students. So my colleague Dr. Palacios is gonna guide us through a review of key findings in some recommendations that

[02:19:16] emanated from those findings good evening it's a privilege to present our findings and recommendations to you and i thank you for the invitation um in october of whoops i went backwards

there we go in october of 2023 a team of west ed facilitators visited prince william county schools to conduct observations in 10 schools these 10 schools represent the full gamut of experiences english

[02:19:56] learners receive in Prince William County. In all, we conducted 89 15-minute classroom observations across all grade levels and subject areas. During the observations, WestEd staff looked for instances of quality instruction for English learners that Leslie mentioned a few minutes ago: academic rigor, quality interactions, and a meaningful language focus.

[02:20:20] We found that students in elementary classrooms were much more engaged in academically rigorous instruction than students in secondary grades. The same is true for quality interactions. We saw much more quality talk happening in the elementary classrooms than in middle and high school. This slide shows the differences across all three grade spans, elementary, middle, and high, in terms of percentages of classrooms in which the three indicators of quality instruction were noted. This first set of bars on the left shows the percent of classrooms

[02:20:56] in which we saw evidence of academic rigor noted in light blue, quality interactions noted in goldenrod, and a meaningful language focus noted in navy blue, and that is for elementary classrooms. The second set of bars represents the percentages of each indicator of quality instruction in middle school, and the last set of bars represents the same, but for high school.

[02:21:21] What we found is that academic rigor was apparent in 56% of elementary classrooms, 31% of high school classrooms, and 11% of middle school classrooms. So as you can see, academic rigor was appreciably higher in elementary grades than in secondary grades.

[02:21:39] Similarly, our observations revealed that students in the elementary grades had more opportunities to engage in quality interactions than students in the secondary grades. The interactions were apparent in 44% of elementary classrooms, 28% of high school classrooms, and 11% of middle school classrooms.

[02:22:00] A meaningful language focus was similarly present in 53% of elementary classrooms, 33% of middle school classrooms, and 42% of high school classrooms. Now that elementary classrooms exhibit a higher percentage of all three quality indicators is not surprising.

[02:22:19] No matter where we go in the United States, this tends to be the case. What is surprising is the dramatic drop in quality indicators at the middle school level. Across the country, the lowest percentages of quality indicators are usually found in high school as opposed to middle school.

[02:22:35] In any case, academic rigor and quality interactions could stand to improve greatly in the secondary grades. Now, these data might cause you to ask the following question: What is it about the elementary grades that contributes to stronger seemingly stronger instruction one hypothesis could be that elementary teachers are better prepared or better trained to teach lessons that are high in academic rigor and involve quality interactions but data we collected through other means do not support this we found for example that although a high percentage of teachers have had professional

[02:23:12] development in the use of instructional methods for teaching english learners the quality of the professional development teachers receive is often inconsistent this graph shows the proportion of teachers in the district that report having received professional development that explicitly addresses the teaching of english learners within prince william county schools over 80 percent of respondents reported

having received some professional learning related to english learners that's extraordinary however when When drilling deeper, we found that many of the professional development experiences teachers

[02:23:51] have received lack certain characteristics of high-quality professional development. Research tells us, for example, that effective professional development is content focused, meaning that it's focused on the actual subject areas that the teachers teach.

[02:24:07] This makes good sense. Good professional development should emphasize the academic practices, genres, and discourse patterns that are particular to each subject area and yet we found that roughly 75% of teachers who responded to our survey said that the professional development they received was somewhat or not at all focused on the content areas that they teach in keeping with the requirements of the DOJ settlement agreement the divisions professional development plan clearly outlines the amount of English learner related PD that is required of all educators in

[02:24:45] Prince William County as a result teachers have an extensive menu of professional development courses that they can select from in fulfilling their requirements many of these offerings are delivered online through canvas we found however that teachers clearly prefer in-person PD over PD delivered through an online platform and in our own work as providers of professional development we too have found that in-person professional development is more effective. Seven Steps is a professional development program that is

[02:25:19] highly favored by many staff here in Prince William County and it's also been consistently and well implemented throughout the division. Yet many report that it promotes the use of isolated teaching strategies as opposed to a holistic content-centered pedagogical approach to teaching English learners. I also want to mention that one of the things that we learned is that collaborative learning teams or CLTs are required mechanisms for collaboration among teachers in a school so this is a good thing but these two are implemented unevenly some schools require that CLTs convene regularly and follow a

[02:25:59] prescribed format for the meetings even taking detailed notes and sharing them with others but other schools do not a third key finding that we will share with you tonight again the full report discusses other findings in detail is is about school administrators calls for more centralized guidance and support from the division in regards to English learners.

[02:26:30] One of the themes we saw in both surveys and interviews with school leaders is that the resources and opportunities available to English learners are uneven across schools. For example, an examination of the budget guide for Prince William County revealed that schools receive an annual allocation of $3,015 per English learner if the English learner is at levels one through five as determined by the access, that's the state English language proficiency assessment.

[02:27:03] This, however, results in inequity among the resources that English learners receive. A school with 400 English learners, for example, receives $1,206,000 for English learner-related services, whereas a school with just 50 English learners receives just $150,000.

[02:27:25] And so there is a need to adopt coherent EL related policies, practices and supports that can be equitably implemented across all schools that serve English learners. And what I'd like to spend the next few minutes doing is talking about how this can be done.

[02:27:42] Something we learned in our data collection activities throughout the division is that there is not a consistent observation or classroom walkthrough tool that is used to give feedback to teachers the

instruction they provide to English learners where it does exist it varies by school developing an observation or classroom walkthrough tool that aligns with a district-wide ambitious vision for what quality instruction for English learners looks like is one way to ensure that no matter where an English learner is enrolled whether the school has a high enrollment of English learners or a low enrollment of English learners the expectations and quality of instruction are the

[02:28:20] same here's another way support can be improved at the time that we conducted our review one year ago Prince William County Schools employed six English learner specialists to support every school in the district by providing professional development and coaching to schools that requested it or that were most in need the second column of this chart lists the number of schools that each English learner specialist was responsible for supporting each of the three elementary English learner specialists was responsible for covering

[02:28:55] at least 21 schools imagine supporting teachers at 21 schools the situation was not any better at the secondary level considering that middle schools and high schools tend to be larger two English learner specialists were assigned to support teachers with their English learner related needs at no fewer than 15 schools each and finally one English learner specialist was assigned to support dual language and English learner intervention at six schools including virtual and alternative schools now we're happy to hear that since our final report was delivered to Prince William County in June of this year additional

[02:29:34] EL specialists have been hired we applaud the district for making this decision and hope that in in time more support is made available another way in which support to schools can be improved is by increasing the number of English learner-endorsed teachers who were employed in the district.

[02:29:53] At the time of our EL review last year, the district employed 7,412 teachers. Of these teachers, only 11 percent were English learner-endorsed, meaning that they had received an add-on to their credential that allows them to teach English learners in addition to whatever grade level or content area they are authorized to teach.

[02:30:15] In effect, these are teachers who are highly qualified to teach English learners. Now let's compare this to the percentage of English learners in the division. 22% of all students last school year were English learners. In our estimation, the percent of English learner certified teachers should match the percent of English learners in the district.

[02:30:37] We recognize how hard this is. Hiring teachers is difficult no matter where you go these days. And we understand that there simply aren't enough English learner endorsed teachers out there to draw from. However, one thing the division might consider is providing incentives for teachers that you currently have to pursue this add-on certification.

[02:31:02] One way to do this could be by partnering with nearby institutions of higher education to provide courses locally to teachers who are interested in better serving or better becoming Yale endorsed rather.

[02:31:18] so that you're not too discouraged by the findings I've just shared with you I do want to share some bright spots that we found in the analysis of data from various sources because what good is a report if you don't find good things to celebrate and we found good things to celebrate here it is clear to us given our review of documents our interviews with educators at every level of the system teachers school leaders and central office administrators that Prince William County policies clearly communicate that

improving outcomes for English learners is a priority throughout the division it's laid out quite clearly in your strategic plan the fact that you hired us to conduct a

[02:31:58] collaborative review of your English learner programs and services is another indication you are clearly on the right track secondly we heard from diverse English learners throughout Prince William County that they enjoy coming to school and experience a deep sense of belonging in their school communities this is invaluable you have created a culture that makes the vast majority of English learners want to come to school and that is commendable and this next point was picked up across a variety of data sources the parent liaisons employed by the division play a critical role in fostering positive connections

[02:32:35] between students families and schools this is an important piece of the puzzle and we encourage you to continue investing in this important cadre of individuals there are obvious implications related to much of the data I've shared with you and much of the data that's in the report but in other respects implications may be less obvious so over the next few slides I will present a few of our recommendations recommendation one design and implement instruction that is aligned to a clear coherent vision of

[02:33:12] quality teaching for English learners some strategies for doing this are establishing an ambitious vision for what quality instruction looks like for all English learners, for all English learners in rigorous high-quality instruction that's specially designed with their needs in mind, and standardizing observation and classroom walk-through tools to align to this ambitious vision. Recommendation number two: make strategic investments in professional learning that align to the division's ambitious vision for English

[02:33:46] learners. This entails building the capacity of all educators through in-person professional development in the subjects that they teach. This can also be accomplished by providing job-embedded coaching as a follow-up to professional learning so that teachers' growth is supported as they attempt to apply what they learn during PD. This third strategy is not related to a finding that I've highlighted in this presentation, but it is rooted in what we've included in our written report and that involves building the capacity of ELD teachers English language development teachers to promote students oral language and

[02:34:23] discourse in content based curricula recommendation 3 restructure resources to equitably serve English learners throughout the entire division some strategies to do this include providing additional support and resources to schools with small populations of English learners increasing the number of English learner specialists to support teachers in implementing quality instruction and finally hiring or growing your own EL endorsed teacher workforce in closing I'd like to end with a quote

[02:35:01] from one of the foremost education leaders of our time I'll give you just a moment to reflect on it we chose this quote because we think it says it all you can redo all the curriculum management structures and compliance systems in the world but unless you pay attention to helping teachers learn how to teach kids well it often doesn't amount to a lot we encourage you to keep the

[02:35:38] sentiment at the center of your decision making and with that i'll turn it back to dr sullivan we're excited to hear about the good work that that she's doing in improving instruction for english learners and so as i mentioned before we had an opportunity to work with them all last year so we have already accelerated responsiveness to the recommendations that we found and so although there is much work to do i think you will be very pleased with the progress that we have made so far

[02:36:15] to improve these very specific recommendations i do want to recognize dr lynn mara colone she is the director for student opportunity multilingual services she could not be here tonight but she is central to the work in the division and improving outcomes for our students so i did want to recognize her work in this area and so as they mentioned they they recommended three key buckets of strategies and so i want to address all of those with what we've done in progress and what

[02:36:48] work still has to be done so in terms of developing a clear and coherent vision of quality teaching for English learners. A very formal process we will be embarking upon this school year to work with multiple stakeholders to identify exactly what that vision is, but significant work has already been done in curriculum to support those instructional lessons. Prior to this year we did not have formal curriculum guidance support plans aligned to instruction for our English language

[02:37:23] development classes and we launched that across the entire division this year we have worked with all of our school leaders and our ELD teachers to make sure they understand how to utilize those units that are built on high expectations for students quality interactions and of course the academic rigor that they spoke of so that is new this year and something that has launched well certainly some growing pains when you have new expectations but we're really proud of that work we also enhanced every single one of our

[02:38:02] curriculum plans for every subject area math English science social studies any grade level with alignment to the English lack English acquisition standards and so now when a teacher is a math teacher and they are pulling up their curriculum guide. They are seeing explicit alignment to the WIDA standards that are about English language acquisition. So the teacher has embedded strategies and approaches to maximize that content area time in addition to that ELD time. One of the things they mentioned was a

[02:38:39] research-based observation tool. We launched that this year as well. Worked with some additional partners to identify ELA walkthrough tools that were consistent with the expectations that we would like to see in our ELD classrooms as well. We have launched training and readiness across the division, have already conducted a significant amount of walkthroughs, and our principals are accustomed to that. So we are, as a division, utilizing the same tool to give consistent feedback to our teachers because when different sectors of the organization are giving different feedback

[02:39:18] that creates some of the incoherence that was witnessed. The other thing that we've aligned in a formal manner is co-teaching. Co-teaching still needs a little bit more work but what we found is that we were not maximizing the benefits of two professionals in the classroom. In a co-teaching model you might have a history classroom with a history certified teacher and then an esol certified teacher in the classroom there is a lot of power to that model but it also requires a lot of support and so we realize that we need to put structures in place and teach teachers more

[02:39:57] explicitly about how to utilize both professionals in the classroom to maximize opportunities for learners. Our middle schools and our high schools particularly employ co-teachers and so we want to provide some more support there. We think about our strategic investments professional learning.

[02:40:17] One of the things that I want to mention is the emphasis on those collaborative learning teams. We additionally launched a division-wide framework for collaborative learning teams. So our presenters mentioned that it was a bit incoherent depending on the school, depending on the team we certainly agreed with that our principals agreed with that our teachers agreed with that so we've had a tremendous

response from the school community about our new framework for high quality collaborative learning teams we are continuing with our current

[02:40:53] professional learning platforms and supported additional learning for language acquisition however we do still need to grow in the area of subject area specific our content leads in math english science societies and other content have been working very closely with the members of our l team to add more specific strategies about english language learners in regular content area teaching to take a look at restructuring of resources i want to recognize our finance

[02:41:30] departments. We've been doing a lot of parallel work in equitable resources and how to provide appropriate resources for our L instruction in particular. So I've worked very closely with them and our consultants on finance. A couple of things that I do want to highlight, and this is where we've made some significant changes. One of the findings of the audit was about some of the imbalance potentially with smaller populations or populations that grew after September 30th and this has been a pain point for our principals I imagine

[02:42:06] long before they mentioned it to me with our L population the calendars of school divisions throughout the world are not always aligned to ours our funding has traditionally stopped at September 30th so when students enrolled after that our our schools did not receive additional allocations so one of the things we built this year were 20 reserve units beginning with 20 knowing that that may need to increase and those reserve units are being placed after the september 30th and held for those big waves of enrollment and so that

[02:42:44] schools could have ongoing allocations as their populations change and this is a very novel approach and we're really excited to launch that this year the other thing our guests mentioned that we we had six specialists added so you saw that our elementary specialists were working with over 20 schools we now have three additional elementary specialists two additional middle school specialists and an additional high school specialist essentially double the number of staff

[02:43:20] going into schools doing that teacher level work alongside our teachers and that's really our specialty our specialist expectations to be in the schools working alongside teachers who really want to do great work in this space but just need some help that also was new this year one of the other things we added was l teacher leads we allocated 15 positions and those teacher leads are for schools with significant percentages of L students all of the teachers in their allocation are teaching students which means nobody is

[02:43:58] available to help coordinate services work closely with families on plans for English language acquisition do professional development with teachers co-teach with teachers learning if necessary and so those are being allocated actually in the very near future because the 9:30 numbers just came in and so we will be allocating those and then the other area that we decided to put some additional resources that may not be dependent on what we know is not a never-ending supply of

[02:44:31] teachers with l certification based on how well our parent liaisons work we are adding l teaching assistance and this is a new position for our division because we recognize that it doesn't always have to be a certified teacher to advance outcomes for children and that we can add positions that's not pulling from a limited pool in the state of virginia these teaching assistants are going to be vital for the diverse languages in our classroom our eld teachers often have 25 30

[02:45:05] 35 students in a classroom of varying languages and keep in mind those eld classrooms are primarily level one or maybe level two students who don't have English mastered and so by providing an assistant in an alternate language we can provide up more support for those students and so all of those are new this year and part of the first steps in us addressing some of the needs for our students our presenters mentioned our funding formula that is based on one number for regardless of

[02:45:45] the student need in working with our finance team we have modified that as well so our funding ratios have changed based on student level so level one students schools will be moved towards a funding formula of for example 1 to 20 our level 4 students will be funded differently and so that way we're actually providing resources based on the needs of the students some of our schools have a huge number of level ones others have a huge number of level threes and we want to make sure we honor those differences and then finally we

[02:46:24] also wanted to highlight the importance of that home family school connection regardless of our student population from our gifted students L students all the different student groups family engagement is a high priority and so we are continuing to work with ways to engage our diverse stakeholders and not have language be a barrier to their involvement in school we are beginning a parent Academy at our global welcome center to teach our families from other countries how to be engaged in our school system you know we have an an excellent and robust translations and interpretations department.

[02:47:04] We have increased our partnerships with local agencies to help us do this work and continuing to strengthen our communications with our family engagement series. And so by working all of these angles, we have begun the important work of improving outcomes for our students.

[02:47:24] This will be a never ending quest because we want to stay on top of best practices and research and opportunities for students to learn. But based on the feedback of our partners, we had a roadmap. And so as somebody who came in new to the division last year, having that partnership was invaluable to expedite understanding the needs of our community.

[02:47:47] So I wanna thank our partners, thank the board, and happy to answer any questions. - Dr. McDade, Dr. Solomon, thank you. This is, and to our guests from West Ed, We really appreciate the time, the effort you've put into this work. You know, before we even start implementing this work, we did just by, you know, using our bootstraps, made the significant improvement in graduation rate for English learners over the last year.

[02:48:17] - Huge. - But we have to sustain that. You know, it could be a one-time jump from just recovery from the pandemic. It could be a fluke. I don't think it is, but this is the long-term work that we actually need to be doing, should have been doing a long time ago.

[02:48:32] I think it's another data point in the story about us moving from more building managers to instructional leaders, and I think this work is critical, and I really appreciate it. There's a lot in here, and I hope the public takes some time to take a look at this.

[02:48:49] We are taking this work seriously, and I think it'll have enormous payoff. What was the percentage of English learners in the school division? - 25%, yeah, so, and that's all languages.

[02:49:04] It's not just one, I mean, we're talking like, you know, Dari, Pashto, Spanish, you know what I mean? - Yep. - Whatever, and so we have a significant number of students who are immigrated here to our

country and who this becomes critical work to, so I really appreciate the time and effort into this, Dr. McDade and Dr. Solomon.

[02:49:26] - Thank you, sir. - Does the board have any questions, concerns? Dr, or Ms. Zargarpur? Oh, Dr. Zargapur, one day? Inshallah. Yeah, one day. So I actually just was curious about how this work and this study is aligning with the VLA.

[02:49:46] When I was talking with one of my, yeah, there you go, I was talking with one of my schools and they were, it's one of my smaller schools that has a high population of multilingual learners and there were like 125 kids who are going to be on a learning, you know, on a reading plan. And how does this align and work with the VLA?

[02:50:08] Thank you, exceptionally well. Our team, our leaders, Dr. Colon, and several members of our team have been working at the state level as experts in the impact of VLA and L instruction. And so those teams have been working together in the development of it.

[02:50:27] So our students are receiving those exact strategies and supports for those strategies through their ELD. So previously we did not have explicit alignment with the curriculum for English language development with English language arts, they are now aligned.

[02:50:43] And they are aligned to support each other for students. And so it is literally one project, one expectation with plenty of resources for both. We added additional resources to our intervention tools for English language acquisition.

[02:51:01] I think I mentioned at the last board meeting is now available to every single student in Prince William County who needs those resources or is previously individually school dependent. So the strategies are aligned, the research is aligned, and I really think this coherent approach based on the science of reading, we are gonna see significant gains.

[02:51:22] - Thank you. Another, I think I just forgot what I was gonna ask. Let's see, we had the alignment. I forgot, I will have to revisit that later. - Thank you.

[02:51:41] - Mr. Jesse. - This is a very impressive program, and so my questions, no criticism, I just wanna know some understanding, and you addressed it a few minutes ago, and Dr. Lateef just mentioned it.

[02:52:01] If you have a classroom of 15 people, 15 students, the probability that there is at least three to four different languages being spoken. So I'm trying to figure out how you deal with that. - And we are fortunate.

[02:52:18] We have a fleet of skilled teachers who understand how to utilize some strategies. Seven steps are some of the strategies you've heard about. It is a model based on using support mechanisms to help students understand concepts.

[02:52:34] For example, you might be doing a science experiment. You might also add the directions with pictures and visuals, and other ways for students to access the content, but it is challenging. I don't want to minimize the difficulty of it for our teachers, but teachers in Prince William County embrace the diversity in the community, and like she mentioned, huge percentages of participation in professional development.

[02:53:00] And so we continue to embed those strategies in their curriculum plans to make one less decision point for the teacher as they're grappling with time constraints, but it is difficult. Children at a

younger age acquire language extremely quickly, but we also have seen remarkable rates of English language acquisition in our older students that often make us adults here wonder how they're learning a second language so quickly.

[02:53:29] They, students persevere, the teachers persevere, and through the hard work of really good curriculum, They're making gains. I think I do wanna call out that at the State of Schools Address, one of the most impressive data points was our increase in access scores, which is our metric to measure language acquisition.

[02:53:52] We had huge gains for all learners from the year before. - Another question is, you mentioned grade level teaching. Again, in a classroom of 15 people, teaching science but the grade levels for can be different within those 15 so how do you deal with that yeah we know from an abundance of research that when students have access even students who are significantly behind are being taught with grade level appropriate resources that they actually increase higher grade

[02:54:29] level content is even more beneficial to students that are behind than those that aren't and it seems a little counterintuitive sometimes but it is a the well-researched platform of knowing that if you stick to those high expectations and you teach strategies for students to acquire it, they will.

[02:54:48] You do have to scaffold, though. So think about that high building. You get there through scaffold, so they may have more instructional moments along the way to get there. A lot of their intervention time is spent on building the knowledge structures, the schema, if you will, for students to access the higher.

[02:55:08] So we now know if we are pairing what's happening in intervention with what's happening in CORE, we can use that intervention time to increase student access in CORE. It is a mindset shift that is known to have significant benefits.

[02:55:24] - Okay, and my last question, on one of the earlier slides, the third column was language focus. I'm not sure what that means. - Yeah, and my guests are certainly welcome join in as well um the importance of speaking and vocabulary cannot be understated and it's certainly something aligned with the english language arts standard i'm going to turn it over to miss hamburger who might want to add additional comments so i mentioned when i spoke that language

[02:55:58] is learned in use so in classrooms where students who are multilingual learners english learners can thrive in where we can accelerate their learning they need to have a strong focus on language so opportunities to practice using the language in the discipline abundantly the research shows that in particularly in secondary schools english learners spend less than two percent of

[02:56:30] of their time talking in English about content, and that's not adequate at all for their development. So a language focus is about creating opportunities for abundant language practice, is about focusing on how the English language works, how do you use language in science or in social studies to construct arguments, because it's different from subject area to subject area.

[02:56:59] So having a language focus is really explicitly teaching how the language works, how do you use it, and practicing abundantly. Thank you. Ms. Wall.

[02:57:15] All right, thank you. This is really great to get an update on. This was one of the concerns I had identified in past years as being one of my highest concerns is how we're teaching English to our students

that we need help.

[02:57:33] So this is really—I found this really informative, and I appreciate all the work that was put into it. I had just a couple of questions. I'm still a little unclear about the professional development piece because I saw on slide 14 a reference to the seven steps, which I'm not an English language educator, so I forgive me.

[02:57:54] But I also saw on slide 28 a reference to seven steps. so our what what are our plans for professional development specifically and how does it differ from what we were what we used to do because that slide where they you know it's looked like 90% of our employees were like yep we got professional development but it wasn't very effective and then it seemed like seven steps was listed as kind of like what we're going to be doing going forward if you can fill in the gaps for me to help me understand like what the change is because we can hire lots more people which it looks like that's a big part of our plan but if we i want to know

[02:58:33] like how what is the effort to like get our folks really like really proficient like beyond proficient with the actual teaching part yeah and so that they have professional development that they find really useful and then they can turn around and implement it absolutely in prince william county schools it is essential that each of our teachers have a high level of proficiency in teaching language acquisition and for it to really be the model district that i know that we can be it has to happen with that expertise in every classroom and so our prioritization up to this

[02:59:08] point has been a general level of understanding for all of our teachers um seven steps is one of the models we've used and it is really about some of the things mr jesse mentioned about helping students access content outside of their language comfort and some really specific strategies and our teachers have repeatedly mentioned how much they enjoy it gets a lot of positivity because it's concrete strategies however it isn't the entire answer it is the first sort of covering of a foundation of common language and understanding about how to help students acquire language

[02:59:48] our next step i agree with our consultants are how can we do that at a more deep level with our content professional learning and within the constraints of the time and the day and so what more can we do with job embedded professional learning and so our student learning team and l team are working really closely together to provide more unified so when i'm learning about math I'm also learning about how to help students acquire language in that space but it is definitely the challenge that we face

[03:00:25] because our goal is to have an entire fleet of teachers who are experts in this work and so we will continue a variety of approaches to make that happen but it is not something we have a checkbox completed next to but we have taught strategies at scale the strategic plan did specifically call for teachers being trained in seven steps as a strategy several of our schools have done a second level of it which gets to even deeper levels of engagement for teachers

[03:01:00] but to really be the model that I know we can be your math your English your science your social studies teachers all have to understand the concepts of teaching their content area in a language rich environment and so even if they're not the expert in in acquisition they are experts in using language more meaningfully we ideally want students to have opportunities to read write and speak in every class every day those strategies will build the capacity of our students when they are doing more engagement in classes every day our

[03:01:37] new walkthrough tools, more specifically designed to track what the students are doing. So we're moving away from micro-analysis of teacher actions to really looking at what students are doing in class every day, how many times they have those meaningful engagements.

[03:01:57] So it's an ongoing project for sure, but we have to get to scale. The other initiative that I haven't spoken to that our guest mentioned was a need for more content teachers to have EL endorsement.

[03:02:13] Been working with our partners in HR for the last couple of months to incentivize exactly as they said, so the board will be seeing more on that, because more content area teachers that receive that endorsement not only have the skills, they can provide services for students within their classroom so they're in a more English language rich environment and not in a separate class environment so that is one of our strategic initiatives for next year that I imagine the board will see thank you I had

[03:02:48] another question if it's alright the schools with the smaller populations of English language learners I saw how our strategy is adaptive to when we get an influx of a lot of students like where you have a small number of students but then you go to a larger number of students but what about the schools where they just kind of have a smaller number of students but they don't really have a lot of resources yeah i should have mentioned those reserves are for both scenarios so they're for a scenario when we evaluate their staffing

[03:03:25] against their small number and doesn't get them the support they need by grade levels so sometimes even if they mathematically let's say earn one they might need to because that is a disparate amount of students that need services and so those are for that scenario as well and the work that mr yusuf is doing on equitable funding with our consultants there we are looking exactly at those small school scenarios where the resources you know you can't fraction out the resources necessarily and you sometimes have to make those whole which is why

[03:04:04] you see those increased costs in smaller schools right you know like a 0.4 exactly exactly how do you have a 0.4 you can't and so yeah um so those so that's kind of when we say to be flexible for that right when we say 20 they're not necessarily 20 separate i could be taking a 0.4 0.6 um to help marry those units okay thank you that's a good clarification and if i may ask one additional question um thank you uh the can we will we be getting an update on this at the end of the year

[03:04:38] because i would love to follow this um follow this up and see how we're doing with the changes that we make well we will certainly support um whatever the board would like what we wouldn't be doing um at the end of the year what what we would do is give you an update on how we're doing with um the strategies that we're implementing right so it wouldn't be another comparison of like all the data and the research that was captured in the audit um and then looking at that again right doing all of that legwork but what it would be is based on for example the walkthrough tool

[03:05:17] how many visits there have been what what data did we collect in terms of what instruction looks like from that um which we already have uh a lot of that a lot of that data is already being captured in continuous improvement the team has been bringing forth that data we had our beginning of the year session so then at the middle of the year we'll be able to see what the classrooms look like from using that walkthrough tool and then again at the end of the year so we can give those types of results as an update on how the work is progressing from where we are today so what it looks like at the end of the year so we certainly can we can provide that we can do

[03:05:53] a board memo update to just detailing everything and giving you all of that data not necessary not necessarily the type of presentation that you got tonight yeah yeah i agree um but right but a kind of an update on like this is what we're seeing and this is the effect that we're finding or this is how our kids are doing and this is how our teachers are doing yep because it is really important and i really feel with the number of english language learners that we have in our our division and diverse language learners from all over the world that this is a really important part of what we need to be doing to help every kid

[03:06:29] succeed absolutely and the data trends aren't slowing down so we are seeing increasing trends and we are tracking both the qualitative data and the quantitative data so looking at student of course student outcomes but I've been also looking at the work from the professional development the work from observing the classroom instruction.

[03:06:50] So we're tracking that throughout the year. - Thank you, thank you very much. - Okay, thank you, Dr. McDade. Thank you, Dr. Solomon, I appreciate it.

[03:07:05] Moving on to committee updates. We're gonna go to 2001. This is a committee I serve on. It's a group of the nine chairs and vice chairs of the nine large, well, nine school divisions in Northern Virginia, Fairfax, Loudoun, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William, Monassette City, Monassette Park, Falls Church City, and Fairfax City.

[03:07:30] We've been meeting over the last few months. We typically meet on cross-jurisdictional issues, issues that impact all of us. We've been working on this effort over the last few weeks, last few months, really, on concerns about the new implementation of the accreditation program that the Virginia Department of Education is asking school divisions to implement.

[03:07:52] The school divisions, we've brought numerous concerns up and had discussions with our administration regarding this. The Virginia Association of School Board Associations and the Superintendent Associations have made their voices clear to the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education regarding concerns about the speed at which this is being implemented, the concern of the algorithms being used to assess our schools.

[03:08:20] And then once a school is deemed needs supports, there's a lack of detail on what that will mean if we're gonna get funded for the concerns.

[03:08:37] And so the group has decided, and this is a group that we meet out of George Mason University's Regional Elected Leaders Initiative, decided to put together a joint statement asking for concessions from the Virginia Department of Education regarding its implementation and more specifics on how the funding, if any funding will come, will look like.

[03:09:01] And so I'm gonna ask the board to authorize me as chair to sign this position's paper that we're working on now regarding this. Many of the other school boards have already included this work in their legislative agenda.

[03:09:17] We had not, I'm bringing this to the board to ask for authorization to sign the letter. If you wanna read the action, Ms. Zargarpur, for a motion. - All right, I move that the Prince William County school board authorized the board chair to sign a joint position statement from the members of the regional school boards nor the Virginia public school leaders network to the Virginia Department of Education and the state superintendent requesting a delay of at least one year of the Commonwealth

[03:09:49] school performance and supports framework. Senior and board docs on recommended action. Oh on the statement you mean? The statement no it's it's not it's not we're you're giving me permission to go ahead and sign the statement that will be drafted once finalized. So before we do that we're asking each of the respective boards to go and discuss that with the board.

[03:10:24] All right. Mr. Jesse. Are you saying that the board will draft it and not you personally but the other board? Yeah everyone will sign it as all the chairs from all the different jurisdictions. My guess is that I would probably accept it but I feel a little uncomfortable signing something that I haven't even seen I will I'll send it to you all before I sign it but to move forward with it to offer just to make it move a little quicker because it's

[03:10:59] coming up to joints legislative agenda time anyways so I thought we'd put it on but I'm happy to share it with you all as it gets put together you have miss wall which jurisdictions did you say Fairfax Loudon Prince William Alexandria Arlington Monastas City Monastas Park Falls Church in Fairfax City Fairfax

[03:11:32] City's kind of Fairfax. They come on their own. They have a separate board. Fairfax City. Yeah, so this is one. Oh, I see. We'll go back to that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I didn't know if there was one on there. Okay. For committee updates? Oh, okay. I'm sorry. I skipped that.

[03:11:56] We'll go back to that after I do this. You're not upset. All right. Okay. Any, do you have a second? All right. I will second the motion. I second the motion. Okay. You got a second?

[03:12:10] Okay. Please vote. The vote is six yes, two no. Tredinic Wall. Motion passed. Thank you guys we'll go back to committee updates 10:01 I'm sorry about missing out so we'll go first to safe schools advisory committee miss wall sorry about that

[03:12:48] okay so I'm gonna give an update about safe schools advisory council the council met on October 7th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. and because the purpose of the SSAC is to support student staff and school safety through discussions on policy questions and collaboration with stakeholders and it's also a purpose to strengthen relationships between PWCS government agencies and the community and safety matters, we took a field trip to the Security Operations Center as counsel and for the purpose of the

[03:13:26] counsel to see and experience the great work that is happening over at the Security Operations Center. And sometimes seeing something is a thousand times more powerful than reading about it or having somebody tell you about it, and this was true for the council to see the SOC and to see how it's laid out, where it is, and what they do, and how important that work is.

[03:13:52] And we also learned that the SOC is funded through, I think, 6 p.m., right, but a lot of work that is done in the security sphere is done after 6 p.m. and before 6 a.m. I don't know what your start time is over there, but that was also something really important for the council to learn about and consider as perhaps a future item that we could consider funding which would be an extension of the SOC with people manning the SOC because I think there is probably a justifiable need based on the number of incidents that have

[03:14:29] to be tracked through the evening hours into the night. So at a future meeting the council will be selecting new leaders for vacancies in the cabinet positions in the council, such as vice president, secretary, I think that's right. Yeah, and so that's something we'll be doing at our next meeting, which will be held on Monday, November 18th.

[03:14:51] So if any public is interested, listening out there in Cyberland, if you're interested in coming to SOC, we meet on November 18th, and that's all. - Thank you, thank you, Ms. Wall. Next up, Head Start Policy Council, Tracy Blake.

[03:15:10] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I'm just pleased to report that we held our first meeting with our new policy council, preschool policy council, this past October 17th. And during the meeting, we voted in the new officers and I'm pleased that the president and vice president both held out in the Neopsco District, coming from Dale City Elementary and Miniville.

[03:15:33] So we had good representation. We also conducted training for the new council members And we reviewed budget reports and the program reports which are essential for our ongoing efforts to enhance services.

[03:15:51] The purpose of this policy council is to serve as a crucial role in guiding and overseeing the Head Start in the Virginia Preschool Initiative Programs. Some key purposes of the council are parent involvement, program oversight, and community engagement and advocacy.

[03:16:09] I wanna thank all the individuals who are serving on the Preschool Policy Council for their time and effort to support the work of the school division. Some key stats I just wanted to highlight where currently we serve 81 students with IEPs, reinforcing our commitment to inclusivity at PWCS and we truly believe in not leaving anyone behind.

[03:16:35] And also in September, we serve just under 42,000 preschool meals, highlighting our dedication to serving our students' nutritional needs. And as of October 1st, there were just under 1,500 students in the pre-K program.

[03:16:54] So, looking ahead, our next preschool policy council meeting is scheduled for November 21st at 1:00 p.m. And I'd just like to thank you for your support and as we continue to enhance early childhood education in our community, thanks.

[03:17:13] - Thank you, Member Blake, that was fantastic. We really appreciate the update. We haven't had one of those updates in quite a while. So thank you for helping us get caught up on where we are on that. Next up, Joint Environmental Task Force, Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur. - So I went to the meeting on October 17th and it was like coming to one of our meetings because our own Jessica Weimer was doing the same report that she did for us a couple weeks prior to that meeting.

[03:17:41] What I did learn is that the efforts that we are making Prince William County Public Schools um are really they're they're monumental in our local government we are a we have more buildings than the county government and so the savings and the efforts that we're making are really going to make a difference for our taxpayers and I also had an opportunity to listen to some discussion between the county government and uh the schools to talk about initiatives where uh the county government's looking at uh different kinds of equipment that

[03:18:16] are maybe battery operated rather than gas powered um there were discussions about what would make the most sense in terms of the lifetime of a of a mower or something or a leaf blower and whether the battery option is a better you know expenditure um will it do the same work that kind of thing it was a it was a really neat conversation to hear both sides going back and forth i also learned a little bit about nutrient credits which was exciting I did not know that if we make a turf field rather than a grass

field like an art yeah that means we have to pay more in nutrient credit so that was very informative for myself but

[03:18:54] I really enjoyed hearing our our school report again a little it was a little more succinct but just to recognize that the work that we're doing here is the the school division is making a difference for the entire county.

[03:19:10] - Thank you, Ms. Sargapour. We will move on next to 2002. First reading, revision of policy 115 on compensation reimbursement of school board members. This is on for first reading. What I would ask if everyone take a look at the documents.

[03:19:30] We have two weeks to look at it, seek guidance, seek feedback, and then we'll come back and vote on these issues. Does anyone have any questions? have a question or a comment though yeah comment all right we we have received a couple um communications from concerned citizens about this and i do want to just point out in the code of virginia this is an allowable expense under 22.1-32 it says salary of members it is the second thing down it says any school board may pay each of its members mileage for the use of a private vehicle in attending meetings of the school board and in conducting other official business of the

[03:20:08] school board its members may be reimbursed for private transportation at a rate not to exceed that which is authorized for persons traveling on state business in accordance with uh 2.2-2825 whatever rate is paid however shall be the same rate for school board members and employees of the board um just because the questions come up um i am the kind of person who never remembers to file these things anyway so I won't be doing it myself but it is allowable under the under the code of Virginia so I just want people to know that when

[03:20:43] they write to us this is where it can come from Mr. Jesse yeah as one of the members who recommended this you're absolutely correct the other thing I want people to understand is that unlike the Board of Supervisors unlike most We don't have an office. My office is my home. So if I'm going anywhere for school business, I go there.

[03:21:17] I work for several different companies for many years. You are generally reimbursed when you're using your vehicles. When I call for a tech staff from here to come out to my home to work, to fix something, generally they drive a county car to the home most of the people sitting in this room have a vehicle that they use that's provided by the school system and they do their business so when

[03:21:54] someone said you're you know you are not entitled because you should be doing your job I would say to disagree with that. The other point I'd like to make is that for board members who feel that you shouldn't have this, as Ms. Zagafor said, don't file a claim, but don't deny the other people for a claim just because of it or give it to charity or something.

[03:22:23] Thank you. - I'll go to Ms. Trinetic and then Ms. - In looking at this, when it came before me, I looked back, a very similar resolution was brought forth with many members of this previous board voted down twice um extremely similar resolution um so i guess my curiosity would be why now in comparison to then um the existing policy covers official business in a more direct way i struggle

[03:22:59] with this i don't get reimbursed to drive to my workplace every day we all signed up for this job we get paid for this job already we get paid to come here that's part of our of what our pay goes towards is

to be here um i also struggle with the new policy opening it up to be abused in a way um you know what i am a school board member i think i'm the only one that has a 3a school

[03:23:32] our sporting events can be up to an hour and a half away at times um are we are we like insinuating that we want to be reimbursed every time we go visit a school what if at the same time you're picking up your child does it count then there's all these ifs ands or buts and i guess i if we're getting paid to do what we're doing right now i'm confused as to why we need extra pay on top of that um for reimbursement and i i don't think it's a wise use of taxpayers dollars

[03:24:06] um and that's just my opinion miss way thank you mr chairman um let me give you a little historical background this has been something that's been available to board members since before I was on the board as far as mileage and reimbursement it's not new the what is new is refining the scope of official business and to and from board meetings when I first got on the board this policy was in existence it was changed not sure why other than we only had one board member at the time who was

[03:24:40] continuously re asking for reimbursement which is legal and under the law it's in the state code also we follow the same mileage reimbursement I believe is the federal government I think that's the same can someone I see some nods over there and for finance and you have to justify your expense which means you have to do from point A to point B and the mileage is calculated in a specific manner official business um i don't think has really changed the definition uh it school board

[03:25:16] members as mr jesse was saying don't have office don't have staff don't have company cars and don't receive the same amount of stipends that or pay that other elected officials receive and in addition to that this is available to federal government employees other public entity employees it's not just school board members that are receiving reimbursement for expenses for mileage i understand that the terms are different depending on what type of job you have or conditions but i think that this is a good idea in the sense that it is allowable under law and it is optional so

[03:25:53] if you do not choose to be reimbursed for mileage or expenses you don't have to this is just there for school board members who may need that when i got on the board reimbursing for mileage was something important but often i miss the deadline because i was not used to the deadlines here for the school division but as someone who was one of the lower income earners it helped me do my job as a school board member because at that time the stipend was even less than it is now we haven't gotten on much more but i believe this is one of the things that allows um elected officials to

[03:26:29] this board who may be not in the same economic bracket as others to more proficiently do their job since we all have to utilize our own personal cars and home supplies and things like that so i don't see any reason why um we should not pass this but again i just want to make sure the public knows that this is optional and not new thank you miss walt so i know this is on for information so not on for action tonight right it's gone from information but as i read the um the edits or

[03:27:08] the proposed edits it looks like in the past mileage was allowed to be reimbursed when the travel was outside a member's district um like at local state and national programs but that this amendment is making it more broad to include any meetings of the school board and conducting any other official business am i correct miss wall the limitations before in the current policy are uh that it knowledge is not reimbursed in for in district travel for each

[03:27:47] member and to and from the school board meeting is not is not reimbursable so that's the limitation currently in the policy okay so this is kind of eliminating that it means travel within the district of members district is now acceptable and to and from school board meetings that's what change we're talking about okay any other questions yeah i'd like to just make two other comment first of all you said when you go leave your home to your office you don't get paid and that's correct but our office is my home so when I leave

[03:28:26] there to go somewhere else you know that's a difference the other thing is yes we are getting paid less than $30,000 a year so I don't think that's a huge salary that we're getting paid so that's just a point of contention thank you wade can you clarify one more thing for me in in district travel or to an event that's school board business or school board it's always subject to the

[03:29:04] travel being for official school board business so in your example earlier picking up your child would not be obviously but if going to a sporting event if you're going to a personal reason or if you I think that would come down to whether or not it's an official you're making an official trip if you're using your VHSL pass to get into that, would that count as? I may have to defer to our, it's the same, the applicability would be the same for as it is for our employees. So I'd probably have to defer to finances for some of these questions, but can we just, I don't need an answer tonight.

[03:29:40] Can I just get an answer to that? Sure. Okay. So if you have more questions, concerns, fire them off to division counsel, staff, or each other. We'll be back here for the vote on this matter in two weeks moving on to policy 170 this is um we're making revisions to the standing committees advisory boards task force and councils uh the actions of the prince william county school board approved the proposed revisions in policy 170 standing committees advisory boards task force

[03:30:15] and content and councils so again this um has been posted for the last few days take a look at it uh we will um it's actually on it's on for action tonight oh yeah we already did it and i want to oh yeah so let me have a motion first sorry we made some changes so i just wanted to cover the changes cover the changes sure so at the last meeting we had the first reading uh for information and the red line for that uh showing the differences between the first version and our current policy is in board docs the second red line you'll see it just shows the changes that

[03:30:55] we made based on some feedback generally ms wall called this actually so she's always my good editor and reader of policies and what i want to clarify just what the the changes are between the first reading and tonight one we made clear that the term lengths for school board appointees are for one year and clarifying that the board removes representatives not a board member obviously the board appoints the appointees the board is the only entity that can remove the appointees also it clarifies that appointees are not limited to a maximum number of terms that was not it was sort of implied but we made it explicit and finally the more important one is

[03:31:35] that as ms wall had pointed out we went back and looked at all of our current advisory committee appointees and they have terms that run longer than a year and so there's language at the bottom you'll see we added that says for any currently appointed members to the board's advisory committees i think there are nine they will be essentially grandfathered in in terms of the one-year term limit won't apply until their next term is up and then once their term concludes they'll be subject to a one year that is renewable so that was the major change just making sure that we didn't cut

[03:32:13] short people who had already been told they're going to be serving for two years and then just as a reminder the overall changes were to bring uniformity to the bylaws and ensure legal compliance with all the board's advisory committees thank you Mr. Anderson can have a motion Ms. Zargarpur Mr. Chairman I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the proposed revisions to policy 170 standing committees advisory boards task forces and councils as attached in the meeting agenda I have a second Mr. Chair Mr. Blake Mr. Blake seconds motion any discussion further

[03:32:48] discussion exciting discussion questions oh Ms. Wall I appreciate the amendment changes to clarify that for appointees and i think appointees may not know that that this will benefit them but i think they'll appreciate the benefit of having the their length of terms clarified by the policy i think it strengthens the policy and i think it's a well-needed policy the the amendments that are put forward so we always appreciate all of our folks who serve without any compensation on our on our councils so um thank you for the um taking a look at this and making those changes

[03:33:26] - Thank you, Ms. Wall, strong work, very nice. Any further discussion? Please vote, and I echo Ms. Wall's comments about the volunteering nature of the work that folks we appoint do.

[03:33:50] We truly appreciate it. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Outstanding, moving on. 92474, what am I? 924, what is this, a first reading?

[03:34:06] Is it info? All right, revision 924, public solicitations In the school and annual employee charitable campaign, first reading, okay, it's there for the first reading. Folks, take a look at it.

[03:34:23] Oh, okay, great, Dr. Atkins, please speak to it. - And this is really brief. The implementation and monitoring of the policy is moving from the chief information office over to the chief equity officer in alignment with the organizational structure.

[03:34:43] So that is the only major update to the policy. - Does anyone have any questions for Ms. Dr. Atkins? Anybody have any questions for Dr. Atkins? Dr. McDade? Oh, Ms. Wall, yes.

[03:34:58] - Can you, oh no, no. Everybody's like, no, don't ask any questions. - I'm yes. - Okay, so you said it's changed. We just changed which office is overseeing this. - I'm sorry, say that one more. - Just changed which office will be overseeing.

[03:35:14] - The chief equity office. And did you say why? I'm sorry, it's getting late. - No, that's fine. So the Department of Community Outreach, Business Partnerships and Philanthropy is now under the Chief Equity Office. And so the work is governed by that department.

[03:35:32] - So we moved Spark from, Spark was with the Chief Information Officer, which it made more sense for it to move to the Chief Equity Office because the office that Charmel oversees actually also houses family and community engagement, the parent liaisons, and so it's all about community partnerships, business partnerships, and family and communities with her office.

[03:36:00] So it just made more logical sense for it to go there. So that was the shift. - Okay, so it's really towards our goal of organizational coherence? - Yes. - Okay, perfect, thanks. That's helpful, I appreciate it. - Okay, thank you Dr. Atkins.

[03:36:17] We're at Board of Matters. Who wants to go first today? Oh, Mr. Wilk. - It's late, I yield my time. - Ms. Trudenik. - Yeah, that is.

[03:36:36] No, you gotta go here, go, go, go. It's all you, all you Trudenik. - Happy Veterans Day, I'm excited about that. And thanks to the Girl Scout troop that invited me. You were wonderful. Your costumes were great. I love talking about citizenship with you hearing about all your goals and dreams go do big things congrats to the brunsville tigers cheer who won regionals gainesville high school who won regionals cross country for both and to the two athletes trent and caroline who won individual titles congrats to the patriot high school girls

[03:37:10] volleyball for being cedar run district champs um fcc la what a great event at patriot um the The trunk or treat was awesome. Thank you so much for that. And the all county chorus at Forest Park was amazing.

[03:37:27] I'm a little biased. Great job, Miles. And again, happy Veterans Day to my favorite veteran. - Mr. Jesse. - I have to admit that, you know, with Justin Wilkes not saying anything, it throws me off because I just made some stuff up to make sure I spoke today.

[03:37:47] So I'm gonna continue. Springfield Elementary had an issue with the soil on this hill down to their playground just being eroded and stuff and every year they had to fix it.

[03:38:06] So they worked with the facility people and they installed 72 trees that will now help keep the erosion from happening and so forth. So that was a really, and they went out there and they brought the classes out.

[03:38:24] and they told them and taught them what they were doing. So I thought that was really very impressive. I also went to the Echo Hero Show, and that was really fantastic. The interaction between the, I mean, it was at the Hilton Performing Arts Place.

[03:38:45] It was packed. My only concern was that up in the fourth tier balcony were the kids, and I kept saying they're jumping around. I hope they don't fall off. But the program was so just, you know, they got the kids moving, they got the kids thinking, and it was just a wonderful show up there.

[03:39:07] And I participated for my 12th year now in the Woodbridge High School Homecoming Parade. 11 years with my wife and one year with me. So that was always an honor and it's a privilege to do that and hand out candy and so forth.

[03:39:26] So that's it, thank you. Ms. Wall. - Okay, all right. So as tempting as it is to say I have nothing to say, that would just not be honest. 'Cause I always have something to say, so I'll try to be quick. Happy Veterans Day.

[03:39:42] I'm looking forward to a couple of awesome veterans events. I think three in my district, one tomorrow, one Friday, and one on Monday, or not Monday, Tuesday. I wanted to highlight Battlefield Cheer, all the cheer teams in Prince William County who competed at districts and then regionals.

[03:39:57] Battlefield came in second, well, one of two, the other was a non-PWCS team, so I'm very excited that Battlefield earned a spot at State. So that's November 9th, so go Bobcats, and thank you for representing Prince William County Schools.

[03:40:13] I wanted to highlight an event at LV. They had a Red Ribbon Week, and they really went beyond, beyond, beyond, and they had the DEA, the FBI, and the Border Patrol who flew a helicopter in to their field, and then they let all their kids go out and explore all the different stations.

[03:40:30] And they had one of the drug dogs who was the highlight of the show for all the kids. But it was a really great event, very hands-on, and it was a nice collaborative thing between, the parent liaison organized it, so the work our parent liaisons do is amazing.

[03:40:46] I wanted to highlight, the last thing I wanted to highlight is I went to the town of Haymarket's youth in government program, and there were a bunch of middle schoolers who were serving as town council, and they were discussing how they were going to use funds, proper funds, approximately $1.2 million to benefit Prince William County Schools.

[03:41:08] And these kids were awesome. They had so many great ideas, and they were really deliberating extensively on and taking seriously the task before them. And it was really a delight to see them. They asked me, they questioned me for like 45 minutes on all kinds of stuff.

[03:41:26] And it was a little bit of a hot seat, but at the same time, they really were thoughtful and they really care about their education and it was fun to hear their ideas. And so I don't know if they'll make a formal presentation or not, but congratulations to all those kids who experienced that, who spent that time to have that real hands-on learning experience because it is hard to sit in a seat like this and have to make decisions about where you're gonna spend money and where you're not gonna spend money and what are your priorities.

[03:41:55] And that's exactly the lesson that they learned that day. So I wanted to highlight that. And other than that, happy Veterans Day and everybody have a great evening and hope everybody gets a lot of sleep. - Ms. William. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just say the next school board meeting is on the 19th, which is a Tuesday, not a Wednesday due to VSBA.

[03:42:13] And I'm gonna yield the rest of my time. - Mr. Blake. - I yield my time. - Ms. Zargar. - I'm not gonna take anyone's extra time.

[03:42:31] I just wanna remind, just want to bring attention to in our adoption and acknowledgement of our recognitions one of the one of the groups of people we are recognizing this month is the education and support professionals these are people who are paraprofessionals who provide essential support to our teachers in our classroom and to our students all the way from preschool through 12th grade so i want to make sure that we give our thanks to them and i yield the rest of my time all right um thank you very much everyone um wow that was fast even think about what i was doing chit chatting over here

[03:43:09] um listen this was a terrific meeting tonight um we we the work done for the special the english learner stuff is really critical to the um success of this division it is um you know and i learned this the other day we have um over over 3 000 students born in el salvador in the school division and right around 3 000 students born in afghanistan um that are currently in our division who immigrated this country. So that's 6,000, that's about six, seven, almost seven and a half percent of the entire school division actually born in another country from just those two countries. So I'm excited by the work presented this evening, the work Dr. McDade is doing. It is very important.

[03:43:49] It's critical to the success of this division, and I fully support it and ask the board to continue to provide Dr. McDade and the division all the supports required to make this program a success. We had an election last night, American democracy is one of the great institutions in the world and it continues to be a great institution and it is our responsibility as the public to move forward with the decision of the public and to do what we can, each of us in our own space,

[03:44:24] in our own place, to make our country a better place. And I'm looking forward to moving forward on the work we have to do here in this county, in this school division, and the work that I can make a meaningful impact.

[03:44:39] And so I'm excited by that. And so with that, I want to wish everyone a happy Veterans Day. I have two great honors in my career, and that's one, serving as a physician and getting to take care of veterans. Over the years, I've worked at the Veteran Affairs Hospital, and then in my office, I take care of many veterans and operate on many of them.

[03:44:58] And it's a true honor that they put their eyes in my hands, And then my second great honor is serving here on this board for the students of this community. And so I wanna thank our public for allowing me both those opportunities. Have a good evening everyone and meeting adjourned.