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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Date	Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	3h 20m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2C0NpBYCwU
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-31. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

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

[00:00:16] Please vote. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous.

[00:00:41] Motion passed. - Moving on to the motion to enter closed session. The motion 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 the following reasons. 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 2.2-3711A.

[00:01:09] Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff and/or students and other specific legal matters involving the school division that require the provision of legal advice under Virginia code section 2.2-3711a 7 and 8. 3 to discuss the award of a public contract to employees exclusive representative which involves the expenditure of public funds and the terms or scope of such contract where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the

bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711a 29 and 4 to discuss and

[00:01:47] received 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

[00:02:00] 2.2 dash 3711 a 19. do you have a second mr chairman yep second any discussion please vote vote is eight yes unanimous motion passed okay the prince william county school board will now move

[00:02:32] into closed session and return approximately seven o'clock in sweden county school board is now

[00:03:35] Now returning open session from closed session. A motion is in order for 7.01 closed session certification. Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of November 19th, 2024, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:52] 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.

[00:04:13] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:04:36] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving next to action items, 801 approval appointments releases, Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman.

[00:04:52] - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:05:13] vote is eight yes unanimous motion passed okay great next uh we'll do the pledge allegiance um at this time we'll have our student board member al-medina latore lead us in the pledge the flag the united states of america and to the republic for which it stands one nation under god indivisible liberty and justice for all okay thank you uh next we'll move on to thriving futures focus and thriving futures focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished

[00:05:51] in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor award at the state or national level. 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.

[00:06:17] We begin our recognition with Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District, who will introduce our first award winners. Thank you Chairman Lateef. The Virginia Department of Education established the Exemplar School Recognition Program and its Exemplar Performance Awards to recognize schools that exceed board established performance requirements or show continuous improvement on

academic and school quality indicators. For the 2024-25 school year, 92 schools met the criteria for the highest achievement award. To earn this award, the school must be

[00:06:51] accredited and meet state benchmarks in reading, math, and science on the current year pass rate on the state assessment. All student groups within the school must meet state benchmarks in reading and math based on the current year pass rate on the state assessments. There must be no more than five percentage points between two student groups or no more than 10 percentage points amongst three or more student groups finally schools must demonstrate a current year chronic absentee rate of 15 or lower two schools have earned this award with great honor woodbridge district would

[00:07:30] like to recognize featherstone elementary school as one recipient of this prestigious award representing featherstone elementary school we welcome principal christina treadwell miss Ms. Tredwell, would you like to introduce your staff and share a few words about the award?

[00:07:54] - Yes, so I am here with my fabulous fifth grade team. I have Ms. Aisha Burt, Daisy Perez, Kimberly Garlam, and Araceli Arratia.

[00:08:12] So good afternoon, Dr. Lateef, Ms. Williams, distinguished members of the Prince William County School Board, Dr. McDade, Ms. Worley, esteemed colleagues and honored guests. I am deeply honored to stand before you today as we celebrate our school's remarkable achievement in receiving the highest achievement award under the VDOE's exemplar school recognition program.

[00:08:36] This prestigious award is a testament to the unwavering dedication, hard work, and passion of our entire school community. First and foremost, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible staff. Your commitment to excellence and your relentless pursuit of educational innovation have been the driving forces behind our success.

[00:08:56] Each one of you has played a vital role in creating an environment where our students can thrive and reach their fullest potential. To our teachers, thank you for your tireless efforts in the classroom. Your creativity, patience, and dedication in nurturing young minds have made a profound impact on our students' lives.

[00:09:16] You inspire them to dream big and work hard, very hard. and for that we are all immensely grateful. To our support staff, your behind the scenes work ensures that our school runs smoothly every single day. From maintaining our facility to providing essential administrative support, your contributions are invaluable and deeply appreciated.

[00:09:39] I also wanna acknowledge the support of our parents and guardians. Your partnership and trust in our school have been instrumental in our students' success. Together we have created a strong and supportive community that fosters growth and learning.

[00:09:54] And if there are any Featherstone students who ever watched this or who are listening, always remember that we love you and we believe in every single one of you. You can achieve anything that you set your mind to. Thank you.

[00:10:12] - Thank you. - Thank you, Principal Treadwell. And I personally want to congratulate you because my son is now a sixth grader and he is the most prepared sixth grader because of the lady standing behind you along with the rest of the school, because it really is truly a team effort at Featherstone and it is one family and I could not be prouder.

[00:10:31] So thank you so much. - Thank you, Ms. Williams and thank you, Principal Treadwell and congratulations, Featherstone. Mr. Richard Jesse, the Occoquan District will recognize our next recipient. Mr. Jesse.

[00:10:46] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Occoquan District is very proud to recognize Kerrydale Elementary School for their designation for the VDOE Highest Achievement Award. Dr. Lateef, can you introduce those in attendance from Carrie Dale. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse, it'd be my pleasure.

[00:11:02] Principal Elise Zafiro is not with us tonight as she is celebrating her 10-year wedding anniversary. So congratulations to her. Tonight, Carrie Dale is represented by Assistant Principal, Ms. Renee Ricotto. And Ms. Ricotto, would you like to introduce your staff and share a few words on this honor?

[00:11:18] - Yes, thank you so much. So we have Ms. Breckenridge, one of our wonderful second grade teachers, Ms. Jenkins, one of our wonderful first grade teachers, Ms. Jenna Wilson, one of our fourth grade teachers, also wonderful, and Ms. Traxell, of our wonderful fifth grade teachers, as well as some other wonderful staff members that came to support because our Kerrydale community is the best.

[00:11:37] So thank you School Board Chairman Dr. Lateef, Vice Chairwoman Mrs. Zargarpur, School Board members and Dr. McDade for the opportunity to be here this evening on behalf of Kerrydale Elementary School and Ms. Zafiro. We are so honored to be recognized for the VDOE's Highest Achievement Award.

[00:11:55] This award is a testament to the amazing teaching and learning happening in our school every day. Visible Learning Certified School, we have transformed our culture of learning through teacher clarity and collective efficacy that has resulted in consistent high achievement for all of our Kerrydale learners for the past several years. Visible learning means an enhanced role for teachers as they become evaluators of their own teaching. According to John Hattie, the visible learning and teaching occurs when teachers see learning through the eyes of our students and we help them become their own teachers. At Kerrydale, we've shifted the focus from teaching to learning.

[00:12:29] We use evidence based practices to support every student's learning more effectively. Teacher clarity is both a method and a mindset. It's teaching that is intentional and organized through clear learning intentions and success criteria. In all of our classrooms, all of our staff are using those learning intentions and success criteria to effectively teach our Virginia standards of learning.

[00:12:52] The success criteria becomes a guide for our pathway for our students to learn. We also do have that highly effective culture of collaboration that meets the needs of all of our unique student population. And again, teacher clarity is that key factor in the collaborative success and our learning teams.

[00:13:09] We attribute our continued academic success to our visible learning practices, to our committed, talented, and dedicated staff, our brave, reflective, and persistent learners, and our supportive small but mighty Kerrydale family. We appreciate the support of the division in our continued efforts to provide high quality teaching and learning at Kerrydale as a visible learning certified school.

[00:13:31] Thank you. - Thank you and congratulations to the Kerrydale community in the Occoquan District. Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District will recognize our next award recognitions.

[00:13:46] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. For the 24/25 school year, 49 schools statewide are being recognized for the Continuous Improvement Award. To receive this recognition, the school can be accredited or accredited with conditions and must meet at least one of the following criteria.

[00:14:02] An increase in the combined rate for math, reading, and science for each of the past three years with a total increase across the three years of 10 points or more. An increase in the combined rate for two or more student groups in reading and math for each of the past three years with a total increase across the three years of 10 points or more.

[00:14:20] Or an increase in the graduation and completion index for each of the past three years with a total increase across the three years of 4% or more. and the school demonstrates a decrease in the dropout rate for each of the past three years with the total reduction across three years of 15% or more of the first year's dropout rate.

[00:14:41] Wow, that's a lot of options. It is my honor to recognize the first recipient of the Virginia Department of Education Continuous Improvement Award in the category of increase in the graduation and completion index and a decrease in the dropout rate.

[00:14:57] The Potomac District is proud to recognize Potomac Senior High School. Potomac High School is represented tonight by Principal Brandon Bowles. Sir, would you like to say a few words? - Well, thank you, thank you, thank you.

[00:15:13] To our school board, our Potomac District School Board representative, Mr. Wilk, Dr. McDade, our school superintendent, and to our superintendent staff, my name is Brandon Bowles, and I'm joined by our fantastic administrative assistant, Ms. Anne Potomac alum, Ms. Connor Sadler, who did an extensive job of helping us with attendance last year, especially on the coding side of things.

[00:15:35] We are so honored to receive this award on behalf of Potomac Senior High School. I'd be remiss if I didn't shout out our fantastic Potomac High School teachers and staff, their commitment to building relationships, embracing rigor, and celebrating and reflecting on results goes unmatched.

[00:15:54] So shout out to our Potomac staff. Our Potomac parents are continuing to be partners with us and making sure that our students are there at school every day. And lastly, our Potomac students. It's the kid who has to come to school every day. It's the student who has to be engaged and locked in during class time.

[00:16:12] It's the student who has to ultimately perform on SOLs and on those end of course formative and summative assessments like our Cambridge exams. And so shout out to our entire Potomac community. We are honored and humbled to receive this award on behalf of Potomac High School this evening. Thank you.

[00:16:28] - Thank you, Principal Bowles and your staff for all you do. Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. return to the Occoquan District for our next award winner, Mr. Jesse. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Occoquan District is very proud to recognize Woodbridge High School for their continuous improvement award in the category increase in the graduation and completion index and a decrease in the dropout rate.

[00:16:55] Tonight, high school is represented by Principal Heather Abney. And Principal Abney, would you introduce your staff and share a few words on this honor? - Thank you. Dr. Lateef, members of the board, and Dr. McDade.

[00:17:11] Thank you for taking the time to recognize this achievement. At Woodbridge Senior High School, our school theme is building bridges, closing gaps, and leaving legacies. And the increase in our graduation rate, as well as the decrease in our dropout rate, would not have happened without the support of an amazing school community, to include teachers, counselors, librarians, administrators, support staff, families, and of course, 2,829 scholars.

[00:17:43] Joining me tonight is Mrs. Shay Millett, our ESAU department chair, and Mrs. Tamara Dickens, one of our school counselors. They exemplify the work that it takes to know every student by name and by need. And that is what we have found is the key to continuous improvement.

[00:18:02] Finally, I would like to recognize two additional people. One of the unsung heroes, Mrs. Kim McLaren, who serves as a coordinator for continuous improvement with Prince William County Schools. She provides constant support, is readily available for conferencing, and often suggests the need to pivot or make course corrections based on student academic performance.

[00:18:25] And last, but certainly not least, my supervisor, Mr. Hood, who's over there to the side, who has not only challenged me as an instructional leader, but most importantly, has supported me every step of the way. So thank you again for this amazing achievement.

[00:18:47] - Excellent, thank you, Mr. Jessie. Ms. Williams, we're back to you. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. The Woodbridge District is honored to recognize Freedom High School for their continuous improvement award in the category increase in the graduation and completion index and decrease in dropout rate.

[00:19:07] Tonight, Freedom High School is represented by Principal Chevelli Smith and her staff. I see your team behind you. Ms. Smith, would you introduce your staff and share a few words about this honor. - Yes, good evening, Dr. Lateef, our Ms. Williams and Dr. McDade and the school board.

[00:19:25] This award is a reflection of a collective effort and passion of our team, our students, our teachers, our community. We are so excited about this recognition and it motivates us to continue our mission of providing the best possible education and support every student.

[00:19:48] Over the past three years, our school has demonstrated a significant increase in the graduation rate with a total increase of 8%. Additionally, we have seen a consistent decrease in our dropout rates. These accomplishments are not just numbers.

[00:20:05] They represent the lives of our students who are now better prepared for their future. This success would not be possible without the incredible efforts of our dedicated team. and we have some members here today. I would like to take a moment to introduce and thank Ms. Brown, one of our assistant principals who works tirelessly on improving attendance.

[00:20:30] Mr. Eaton, director of counseling, whose guidance and support has been invaluable. Ms. Riley, our graduation coach, who has been instrumental in helping our students stay on track. And Ms. Asconia, one of our parent liaisons who has strengthened the connection of our school and our families.

[00:20:53] Thank you. - Thank you. Thank you all for your commitment to student achievement. And Ms. Smith, I will tell you again, because you are always so humble. Thank you so much for all the work you do. You're breaking records and decreasing the dropout rate for Freedom High School.

[00:21:12] And that 10% increase on SOLs, I believe was the largest by any high school in the county. So when I have my opportunity to give you your props, I am going to do so. And thank you to your team, 'cause you all are amazing. Thank you. - Excellent, and thank you, Ms. Williams, and thank you, Ms. Williams, for those extra words.

[00:21:30] Those are really, really important. Congratulations to our three winners of the Continuous Improvement Award for increase in the graduation and completion index and a decrease in the dropout rate. Additionally, and by the way, I wanna add, these are recognitions from outside entities, so while you hear from us in the school division when we tell you we've improved our graduation rate, everyone else is recognizing it as well, and so I can't thank you all enough.

[00:21:53] You guys have really done the heavy lifting, and we're gonna continue to do it, and we're very excited. Additionally, we have two schools awarded the Virginia Department of Education Continuous Improvement Award for Increase in Achievement in Math and Reading for two or more student groups. From the Coles District, we have Vice Chair, Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, please introduce our first award-winning school.

[00:22:11] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, I'm happy to do so. The Coles District would like to recognize Charles J. Colgan High School for their VDOE Continuous Improvement Award for an increase in achievement in mathematics and reading for two or more student groups. Unfortunately, Dr. Tim Healy could not be here with us tonight, so Colgan is being represented by Assistant Principal Melissa McClellan.

[00:22:33] Ms. McClellan, would you care to introduce your staff and share a few words about this honor? Yes, thank you. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, Ms. Zargarpur, members of the school board, and Dr. McDade. It is a tremendous honor to be here tonight on behalf of Mr. Healy and Colgan High School.

[00:22:50] As Ms. Zargarpur said, Mr. Healy regrets that he's unable to attend. is teaching a college course this evening. Joining me tonight is also Miss Karen Riddle, another assistant principal. She oversees math at Colgan. Mrs. Kristen Schaefer, our English department chair and an English 11 teacher, and Miss Kathleen Lytle, an Algebra 1 teacher.

[00:23:12] We are incredibly proud to receive the Continuous Improvement Award from the Virginia Department of Education. This recognition is a testament to the hard work and tireless efforts of our teachers who strive to meet the needs of all their students every day i'll give a quick shout out specifically to math and algebra one i can tell you over the last three years they've raised our sol scores for our el students and our students with disabilities in each of those categories by almost 30 percentage points our achievements are a direct result of everyone's dedication

[00:23:47] and commitment to excellence thank you again for recognizing colgan high school tonight go sharks thank you uh and and miss riddle uh is one of the she's the state assistant principal yeah i think it's awesome thank you excellent miss vice chair thank you mr tracy blake of the neabsco district sir thank you dr latif the neabs district would like to recognize the garfield high school for their virginia department of education continuous improvement award for an increase in achievement

[00:24:24] in mathematics and reading for two or more student groups garfield high school is being represented tonight by principal matt matheson mr matheson would you introduce your staff and share a few words with us thank you mr blake good evening dr latif members of the board dr mcdade uh i'm extremely proud to be here as the proud principal of the garfield high school uh and uh with me tonight is

some members of our our leadership team assistant principal maria oshani especially program coordinator ivy coordinator brian bassett and our instructional coach samantha goldneck

[00:25:04] and together along with the members of our administrative team our outstanding staff of you know top-notch teachers teacher assistants counselors and support staff i am just very proud to be up here receiving this recognition it reflects multiple years of hard work putting in place a commitment to high quality tier one instruction for all students and a focus on closing gaps for our gap groups english learners in particular students with disabilities in math

[00:25:38] and reading and in science at garfield we are committed to that all of our students are college career trade ready graduates and it starts with making sure that we have engaging aligned targeted instruction and then supports for students who need it beyond that so like i said very proud that to receive this recognition last year my whole staff worked incredibly hard and we collaborated with lots and lots of support from central office from mr wolf the high school level associates and all the way up to dr mcdade who i know is a huge supporter of garfield high school

[00:26:16] so i just uh again thank you everyone and like i said very proud on behalf of garfield for this recognition thank you thank you mr matson and congratulations to the entire garfield community you know while you all mentioned that you're honored to be here i think the board it goes without saying is honored to have you here and honored to have you work in our system and to do the tremendous work you've all done you've made improvements in the hardest categories the most difficult areas to improve in and and you did this with incredible diligence and hard

[00:26:53] work and we can't thank you enough and we look forward to seeing you continue to succeed at this point i'll turn it over to dr mcdade for her final words thank you so much dr latif i'm always excited to celebrate student achievement and for each of you here you really do reflect our vision for a thriving future for every student in pwcs so congratulations to featherstone and kerrydale on your awards receiving the virginia department of education highest achievement award which just which honors top tier education for for our students and then also congratulations to our

[00:27:31] high schools i know that especially graduation rate is a hard needle to move but you have done such a tremendous job throughout whether it's graduation rates whether it's sol scores closing gaps i'm just continuously inspired by your work and i just want to say thank you for your commitment for your persistence and for your dedication to continuous improvement ensuring that every single student has an opportunity to graduate on time with the knowledge skills and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community the

[00:28:07] work that you're doing every day represents our core business our core business is education and you are doing that with excellence so we are incredibly proud inspired and admire your work and we are so grateful as dr latif said to have each and every one of you working here in prince william county in service to our amazing scholars so congratulations to each of you and thank you a job well done and thank you dr mcdade for reminding us about our core business and and we We do this this evening because we wanna recognize the great work you're all doing

[00:28:46] in the core business of educating our kids. And I can't think of a better night to celebrate than to celebrate the main work we're doing. So I can't thank you enough. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward in a photo with the school board, receive a small token of our appreciation. We'll begin with, I'm gonna let Diana start us off.

[00:29:03] I think we'll start with Featherstone, followed by Kerrydale, Potomac, Woodbridge, Freedom, Colgan, Garfield, if you can remember that, she'll direct. - The same order that we recognize.

[00:29:18] - Okay, all right, thank you all.

[00:39:41] Next up is the adoption of the consent agenda. A motion is in order. Ms. Zargarpur. - All right, so sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Second. - Mr. Chairman.

[00:39:56] - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:40:16] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, next up is citizen comment time. that those citizens who've signed up in advance with a clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:40:34] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask that the room be cleared to return to public order. Tonight, we have eight citizens signed up to speak.

[00:40:49] When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. I'll call up the first five if they'd like to grab a seat up front. If not, that's okay, you'll know the order. Eric Fagerholm, Kristen Stone, Sarah Dane, Kyle Ellingson, and Demetrius Miguel Brown.

[00:41:09] Eric Fagerholm. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Good evening, doctor and members of the board and Dr. McDade and the staff.

[00:41:26] My name is Eric Fagerholm. Address is 4703 Pleasant Hill Place in Montclair. That puts me in the Potomac district and proud to be in that district. And I thank Mr. Wilk for all he's done for our district and the school system at large.

[00:41:41] My request, I can boil down to one sentence. And that is, I'm asking that as we update the strategic plan, that there be a goal to establish a veterinary science CTE, hopefully by calendar year 27.

[00:42:03] Let me back up just a little bit. I think Vision 2025 is an exemplary strategic plan. I was head of strategic planning for the Department of Homeland Security, and I have a bit of a background there. The objectives and goals are clear, and most importantly, there are metrics that people can be held accountable for.

[00:42:21] So congratulations on that. So I'm a member of the county's Animal Advisory Committee. I've been on that for about six years, and I've learned a few things. A couple things, I've learned that there's a shortage vet techs. They are in high demand. I also learned that Fairfax has got a program we do not. There are great opportunities for students that graduate. They'll have a job waiting for them. I've heard some indications that there's some people feel that the new high school has to be built before

[00:42:56] this can proceed. I'm skeptical about that. There's been a very positive development here in the last couple of years 400 yards away from here there is a new animal service center it is a game changer much different than the old shelter we two years ago we had a grand opening that was really for initial

operating capability and now we're reaching full operation capability we are outfitting a state-of-the-market surgical suite and we a really good news is we just hired a veterinarian on the

[00:43:34] first of October. So why am I mentioning that? I think there's a great opportunity for this school system to partner with the county. There's a lot of resources there that could be could be leveraged for both. Some of these, a lot of this equipment is very expensive, x-ray machines, things of that nature. So I would encourage the board and the staff to partner with the county and see how we could we could come up with some value add. That could be internships, that could be a source for clinical practicum. If my goal is, as presented, is a little bit too strong or too hard, I think

[00:44:10] there ought to at least be an objective to get us to some waypoint down the road. I want to thank Dr. Martin and Dr. Lockhart who helped educate me on the process of how you stand up a program like this. But thank you very much and good evening. Thank you. Kristin Stone. My name is Kristin Stone.

[00:44:32] I live at 13730 Abbey Manor Lane in Gainesville. Good evening, Dr. Madej, Dr. Lateef, and the school board members my name i am the parent of two children who are educated in pwcs one of whom has disabilities i'm here on behalf of my children as well as other children of parents with whom i've spoken on this topic to advocate for playground access and why we cannot wait for the updated the update rotation i invite you to perform a mental exercise with me if you would be so kind imagine the first day of school for kindergarteners most are excited and nervous

[00:45:09] for a moment put yourself in their shoes while they learn about their day welcome to kindergarten you all get to go outside every day weather permitting and play on the school's fun playground equipment together however before we go i'm going to draw a handful of your names if you're if i draw your name you will not be able to play on the playground equipment some of you will even have to stay on the sidewalk or blacktop and watch the other kids enjoy the playground equipment for the next six years now school board members please take a moment and imagine how the children left out feel every day during recess this is happening daily to children who are unable to access pwcs

[00:45:45] playground equipment with their same age peers especially to those in wheelchairs imagine their peers learning it is normal to leave out others based on disability furthermore they're typically developing same age peers miss out on enjoying their disabled friends company while playing on the equipment i challenge you to remember these children tonight during the reading of the proposed wording change of the non-discrimination and commitment to equity policy. Most elementary schools in PWCS currently do not provide equitable access and opportunity for all, regardless of disability, on playground equipment during the school activity of recess. Inclusive opportunities

[00:46:21] on playgrounds provide social and communication development, sensory regulation, physical health, and mental well-being for children of all abilities. Please take another moment now and think about the impact inclusiveness has on typically developing children? Will they learn empathy, cooperation, and acceptance as they play with their non-disabled friends during recess? On inclusive playgrounds, I have observed non-disabled children figure out how to communicate, take turns, and meaningfully engage with my son. Additionally, non-disabled peers have benefited from my son's empathy and friendship. I have witnessed children problem solve and help my son almost automatically,

[00:47:00] and in considering all things we want to teach young children isn't helping others as global citizens among the most important lessons. Furthermore, equitable access to elementary school playground equipment should not be a site-based management decision and should not have to wait for

the update rotation. Equitable playground access is every child's right, regardless of disability, and accessibility for all should be a PWCS standard, not a school-by-school decision i leave you with one final thought even though inclusive playgrounds benefit all children to the children left out it is their entire lived experience every child matters thank you thank you

[00:47:37] sarah dane sarah dane kyle ellingson hey good evening kyle ellingson my address and phone number on file but i'm a member of the potomac shores community um good evening to the board and thank you for taking the time to hear from a concerned parent and community member regarding everyone's favorite topic which is the overcrowding at Covington Harper which I will refer to as CHES from here on out. I would like to begin to thank Mr. Wilk for his

[00:48:14] continuing efforts in advocating for the needs of our community. It's much appreciated and hopefully we can get it across the line eventually. My intent here is to convince one of the dissenting members to reintroduce a vote to rezone CHES immediately as it is at 125% capacity which is the largest over capacity in the entire county and we would appreciate a vote to rezone that I'm gonna try to accomplish this by correcting some inaccurate information that was given in the board the board meeting and on 16 October representative Williams stated quote we would like to come up with ideas that

[00:48:50] suit both of our districts without running into each other's districts and she is advocating for her constituents these comments are counter to her her position during the rezoning discussion. She actually represents areas on Gullway and Drive, Broadstone, Shorehaven apartments, and the homes around Takeaway Lane and Sea Skiff Lane.

[00:49:11] Lane, excuse me, those are all CHES communities. So you're actually voting against your constituents in that point. Our communities are very similar. We both have very diverse demographic students there, which is great, it's one of our strengths.

[00:49:29] And that's counter to the comment, My community is much different than yours. And then finally, Ms. Williams claim we don't have room for students at other schools. Swans Creek is at 88% capacity. Mary Williams has 27 vacant spots and River Oaks is about 100% right now as well.

[00:49:47] All these schools have significantly lower enrollments than CHES and can be used to house students. Regardless, the issue is at CHES represented by Mr. Wolk and the bulk of the available space is also within schools that Mr. Wolk presides over, which begs the question, Why would you not listen to his advice on this?

[00:50:03] It affects his schools, it affects my family. I can see I'm running short on time, so I'll try to be more brief, but I'll cut to one. Dr. Lateef stated this board has set a precedent over the years to handle this issue via adding classrooms or schools.

[00:50:19] We haven't done it for trailers. While that may be true, the immediate overcrowding at CHES cannot wait for long-term solutions like new construction. According to policy 264, redistricting, excuse me, rezoning is both legal and appropriate in addressing issues like overcrowding. You just ratified that policy again.

[00:50:35] Everybody in this room said it's a viable solution to change zones for overcrowding. Every single member voted for that. We need to take advantage of that now. We were at a point, we were at a breaking point, and it's only gonna get worse. We're adding 30 units a month, excuse me, 20 units a month.

[00:50:51] Please help us. Thank you. - Demetrius Miguel Brown.

[00:51:16] - Good evening. So it's been four years since I last addressed this board. It was February 19th, 2020. So it needed to say a month after that, world changed so last time i was here let me tell you what hasn't changed first um the reason why i'm here is advocating for my daughter who is autistic has been in the prince wing county school system for since kindergarten so going on six years now thank the lord mom isn't here because she's puerto rican to the core and she doesn't like to talk or be in suits she likes to her

[00:51:52] i don't mind talking advocating you know for my child so let me tell you what has changed though new board mr blake uh you took the place from miss ralston they wanted me to run for that chair but i decided not to because i thought about it i said wait a minute they want me to fight for other kids but i'm not fighting for my own so i backed off dr mcdade i appreciate you you gave me one of the best handshakes ever when i first met you i was skeptical at first but you gave me a really really really gangster handshake so i appreciate that now when you first came in here you said for the first hundred days i'm going to listen and i respected that because listening is the best form of communication so i need you to listen for me we've been fighting this county

[00:52:30] for years my daughter's currently in Saunders to be fair Saunders she loves going to school there's a point in time where she hated going to school and so I appreciate them for at least creating an environment where she actually wants to go and participate now it took until third grade and we and mom and I had to pay $100 for an independent assessment for them to go how long has she been in public school because this isn't good she should be having you know services and we had to fight they try to kick her off right he went to fight to get it you know stay on and you know they've come to and we appreciate that but last thursday we went to

[00:53:05] an iep meeting and they said you need to advocate and i said well what does advocate mean like i know what it means but what does that mean they say you need to argue and and you know for a cause and i said well what am i advocating for well your daughter needs a special education teacher's assistant and i said well duh we've been saying that for years you guys have been giving us push back and telling us that there's hoops and hoopla and politics and red tape so i told the young lady who is the special education person in her school next board meeting i'll be here and i advocate and i'm here i never miss opportunity to look good and talk let me tell you so anyway the point is when i said well how long has this vacancy been there they said two years two years there's kids

[00:53:45] on ieps and special education who have not had help my daughter cannot pay attention not because she doesn't want to because she can't teachers are being taken away from other students to help my child and she's still not getting what she needs and they say advocate for teacher's assistant well why don't you have one a living wage they can work in mcdonald's and make more money so even though i really couldn't care because they have a big teachers union that should be fighting for wages i'm going to advocate that you give them a living wage so my child does not you know go without a teacher's assistant and she can have a better experience in the classroom thank you

[00:54:19] thank you next speakers are megan call cummings derek cummings and elizabeth seipkard megan call cummings i just have a question before i start does my son need to state his address for all to hear i find that okay thank you megan call cummings my address is on file i am a professor and researcher at johns hawkins university i specialize in student voice and equity i'm also a mother of

[00:54:53] six children who have attended or are currently attending pwcs schools you'll hear my son share his experience in just a minute you'll hear him talk about how often he hears the n-word at his middle school you'll hear how he was approached by a kid he didn't know a few weeks ago and asked how much are they selling you for on black friday you'll hear how he doesn't trust some of his teachers to stand up for him i hope you'll listen to him as you do i hope you'll ask yourselves why

[00:55:26] i have to tell my black son to just ignore it or don't get too upset how do you expect him to perform his best academically or maintain his mental health when all he hears are questions about how much he's sold for i know pwcs has policies in place to hold individuals accountable and i'm grateful for those but this is not enough now we know that most often kids who use racial epithets and discriminate discriminatory language don't even really understand the historical

[00:56:01] background of it right nor do they grasp the impact just one word can have on another person let alone an entire school or district to them again most often it's just another way to make themselves feel better, more worthy, or more deserving than someone else. But research shows that this hate speech, which is what it is, can quickly deteriorate into physical violence. This is because the more these things are said, the more victims are cast as less important, less worthy, and in fact less human than they are. I think we can all agree that to have a significant

[00:56:39] percentage of your student population feel scared to enter their school, scared their teacher won't believe them, sure that their teacher thinks they're a bad kid on the second day of school, which is what my son told me, is unconscionable. In conclusion, I want to tell you a story. After the recent school shooting in Georgia a few months ago, my son overheard two kids next to him in science class talking about specific threats made to their school. Now, whether it was false, true, doesn't really matter. He was terrified in that moment when he came home

[00:57:16] and told me what had happened I asked him as any probable parent would did you tell your teacher he said mom she wouldn't have believed me she wouldn't have done anything this is not just about language although that's really enough this has real tangible consequences what if those threats had been real that teacher had shown my son in a matter of weeks that she wouldn't care about the n-word so why would she care about anything else he had to say I know you feel constrained by

[00:57:50] federal and state laws and regulations and rightly so thank you derrick cummings hi my name is derrick cummings i started sixth grade at parkside middle school this year i was the fifth grade student president at bennett elementary and i was elected as house leader this year i have good grades i'm in the world languages program and i play soccer before i went to parkside i was nervous about whether the teachers would be mean or whether i'd be able to keep up with the work within the first

[00:58:28] the first few days, I realized that was not the case. I hear the N-word pretty much every day in every class, in every hallway, before school, after school, in the cafeteria, and in the bus. Within the first two weeks of school, one of my best friends who's black was called the N-word by another kid. This actually happened to him three separate times by three different kids. A few weeks ago, another one of my friends was called the N-word.

[00:58:53] We never really heard that word at Bennett, or when we did, the person who said it got in serious trouble and there were conversations and programs to talk about it. Those programs were taken seriously. So to get to Parkside was weird. My mom asked me if I stand up to people when I hear it, but I really don't.

[00:59:10] I don't wanna be targeted because then they'll start saying those things to me or worse. She asked me if I'd tell my teachers and I don't really do that either. I'd maybe tell a couple of my teachers because they like me and trust me and I trust them, but some of them I definitely would not tell.

[00:59:26] I wouldn't tell them because they don't do anything about it when it happens in the classroom, in their classroom all the time. So they would probably just tell me to buy my own business. That's what one of my teachers tells me a lot. I met with my principal about a month ago to talk with her about it.

[00:59:42] I didn't actually want to because people would think I'm a snitch. She asked me who was saying it and which teachers weren't paying attention to it. The thing is, honestly, that's not really gonna do anything to stop it. There are just too many kids saying it and the teachers just get tired of it.

[00:59:58] The teachers might say something one or two times, but then they realize that they don't have any power to do anything, so they just pretend they don't hear it. They just give up. And it's not just the N-word. My mom told you how some random kid came up to me a few weeks ago and asked me how much they were selling me for on Black Friday.

[01:00:17] I couldn't even believe it and didn't understand why someone I didn't even know would just come up to me and say it. I'm here to ask you to please use your power to change this. My mom asks me almost every day if I want to homeschool, but I really do like school. I like being with my friends, and I like my teachers for the most part.

[01:00:35] But it's really hard to stay positive and feel good when I experience racism every day. Thank you. - Thank you. Elizabeth Seipkard.

[01:00:55] - Good evening, all. I am Elizabeth Seipkard. My address is 13304 Baxter Street.

[01:01:16] we witnessed mandated mask wearing and those deaf and challenged and or religious claimed their rights and exemptions from the mandated mask wearing are we repeating history with this

[01:01:41] no cell phone mandate mandate and making this mental health issue more complicated than it is since we are in the business of education have any of the schools in the county hosted workshops

[01:02:13] with technology experts to come in and educate the parents on phone parental controls i learned and it has made a difference i do not permit my teenager to have access to social media during

[01:02:50] class to take care of some issues i have with pwcs there should be another option cell phone use to record voiced instruction and beta live captions under the accessibility settings and the shortage of certified cued language transliterators clt's voice for him when he cannot speak and cued speech from peers this plan would have students volunteering to remove their cell phone and

[01:03:30] of their own accord and rewarded for it it would entail the same concept of the children who volunteer to be crossing guards and wear those neon crawler belts for safety precautions so to have a designated neon color on the cover of the cell phone to show that it is approved for use by students and staff i would go on more but i will record it for you to see later thank you thank you

[01:04:01] that concludes citizen comment time for this evening moving on next to 1301 2025 26 annual school calendar this item's on for action this evening motions in order vice chair of azargarpur mr chairman i move that the prince william county school board approve option a for the 2025 no wait

[01:04:22] what are you doing hold on yeah option b hold on pull it up let's pull it up make sure let's be clear option b on slide seven is that the same option b that's in the documents right option b

[01:04:55] yeah okay so make the motion on that all right so redo um mr chairman i move that the prince william county school board approve option b for the 2025-26 school calendar do i have a second - Mr. Chairman.

[01:05:13] - Ms. Williams. - I'll second. - Any discussion? I think, so I'll start with a discussion. So this option B is the one that begins on a Monday. A and B were the most popular ones when recognized by the counter committee and folks.

[01:05:33] The school board has taken note of the fact that there have been numerous requests for adding the Eid al-Adha holiday, which would be a second Eid, which would be towards May. We are not adding that in tonight's schedule because the holidays that we currently recognize are based on school board Policy that was voted on years ago to add any new holidays to that policy We have to bring that policy back up for an amendment Modification which we will do in the next month at that time once the board if so chooses after hearing public comment over

[01:06:12] the next month or so chooses to change the policy and if they do change the policy they will act accordingly to amend this calendar schedule to add ETH if the board so chooses the board doesn't so choose the calendar will stand as option B I think I explained that correctly the reason the board is looking at option B is it will be starting on a Monday if we do add a holiday then school would just end on that Friday and rather than picking the other options which would be a little bit more disruptive if we were to make the amendments. Do I have any other comments? Did I get it right?

[01:06:49] Ms. Tredenik. I know I discussed this with some of my colleagues, but in looking at the policy for holidays, one of the holidays that is also not recognized in the policy is Easter. And so I asked my colleagues if we could please add that back to the school board policy. And so that's just my ask. And we will be bringing that forward in the month of December and January. I appreciate the input um at this time please vote oh mr wilke sorry it's okay uh not to be loquacious on this um but uh not and not beating not beating a dead horse on this matter um but uh my vote tonight

[01:07:27] will be a protest vote again uh last year i was at my grandma's funeral so i couldn't vote against this calendar that we're currently existing in uh but this year i will vote um as everyone knows The VDOE requires either 180 days or 990 hours for compliance with the state.

[01:07:47] Yes, it is a county regulation that we do 180 days, but does not say any word that we have to do 990 hours. I think teacher exhaustion is palpable. And I think the problem here is we have the ability for an easy win in my eyes.

[01:08:04] I think we could do easily two half days, which if you take those, let's just say those are three hours each or even four hours each that would leave us at 982 or 984 total number of hours. So my vote no is hoping that if enough vote no, it goes back to the drawing board, but I will be voting no today.

[01:08:26] - Ms. Wall. - So my initial reaction to the calendars is that, is to listen to some of the most frequent criticism that I hear and that is that we have too many holidays And the frequent breaks in our routine for kids makes it really hard to get into a rhythm of learning and a habit of getting up and going to school and sustain academic focus.

[01:08:54] And my personal dislike is I especially don't like when the school year extends into the second week of June because I have witnessed that maintaining student focus once you get past Memorial Day is really difficult and it becomes really difficult for teachers as well because a lot of those tests have already been taken, and I know a lot of learning can still happen in many classrooms it does, but I know a lot of learning doesn't happen in many classrooms it doesn't.

[01:09:23] However, I do recognize that in our very pluralistic society, culture, and communities, there are many individuals that really appreciate those additional holidays for their own holidays that they celebrate with their families, and they like not having to be able to miss school in order to celebrate in those holidays.

[01:09:46] So I want to acknowledge the significance of that to families in my district, and I have heard from some of those families. There are a lot of families who are appreciative of those holidays. So yes, there are just things I just don't like about the calendar. I don't like about any of the options.

[01:10:01] So it is very tempting to just say like protest vote on this. However, I do see, I kind of do see the reason why we are where we are. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to be voting for this, although I do want to recognize what Mr. Wilk is saying, and I do believe that it is worth further examination, maybe not on our calendar this year, but to really get to the root of the issue.

[01:10:30] I've also heard the same thing from a lot of elementary school teachers about needing additional time. And I have also heard the same comments as Ms. Wall that we do have a lot of holidays on our calendar, but I do feel that as if we are the 10th most diverse county in the nation, just about everyone has something to celebrate or some way of being honored in our approved holidays.

[01:10:57] I know that it seems like a lot. I think you said 16 holidays. I think that's pretty standard for the average corporate workplace too. It's usually 10 or two, and I have the lowest where I'm at. I think it's like 12 total, but most people have increased. And so I think that this is fair, well, equitable, I guess I should say, not really fair.

[01:11:15] So, and I also like the Monday start date. I think that'll be much easier for staff and students to get acclimated to the school year starting on a Monday as opposed to having that extra break and then starting again. And then for Ms. Trednick, I think Easter is not on here, but spring break is already an approved holiday and it's on the same timeline too.

[01:11:33] So thank you. - Okay, I want to add one more thing, I'm sorry. I misspoke, 990 hours is the minimum. We have way more than that. So my subtraction is actually still more hours to that. I know, but we meet the days and we have way more hours.

[01:11:56] This is my point. Thank you. I'm sorry. I just want to be clear. Our school calendar has spring break on it. It does not have Easter. And if we're amending the policy to include holidays, Easter should also be included on the policy.

[01:12:16] Current policy does not have Easter on it. So I am just asking that we include that if we are motioning to also include Eid. yeah and we'll do that that that discussion we'll we'll go over that in the next month at the discussions on that those um topics when the policy comes back up for the debate um does anybody have any um further questions or concerns on the calendar um good i mean i you know i'll add my sort of two cents in here on the calendar that um and i do appreciate the holidays we are in a diverse community we have a committee that puts together this work they look at this

[01:12:56] each year so i appreciate the work of the calendar committee the staff the parents the volunteers i want everyone to remember that the school board takes very serious the recommendations of the committee they spend a lot of time on this and so we appreciate that time and effort and this calendar comes as a result of the volunteer work that that committee puts in towards this effort As a parent of two recent grads and a current 12th grader and an eighth grader, I know the students especially studying really hard. Some of these calendar days come up at times where they

[01:13:31] get some breaks to do some extra studying. You know, we haven't seen the snow days like we used to, so these are the days that I know the students truly welcome and spend time either celebrating their holiday or getting caught up on some of their work or getting caught up on other things they have to do in their lives so i do appreciate the board's support on this please vote and this

[01:14:00] says option b right the vote is seven yes one no wilk motion passed okay student representative time we have oh we have uh we have uh we have miss latore from cd hilton high school miss latore please so good evening to the board members dr mcdate and everyone who has taken the time to be here today uh for those who don't know my name is and today i'm happy to be here as a student

[01:14:36] representative to the school board i'm grateful for the opportunity to voice the opinions of my fellow students in prince william county i want to begin my remarks by taking the time to thank every retired and active member of the united states armed forces for their service this past november 11th marked an important federal holiday veterans day this day is meant to honor all of those who have served in the u.s military i hope everybody was able to enjoy the festivities that took place moving on students across prince william have recently started their second quarter marking period for underclassmen this means that they are one step closer to having

[01:15:12] completed the first half of the 2024-2025 school year as for seniors this means that we are now getting closer to graduation this is why i believe it is important for me to highlight some of the opportunities that are now available for students last sunday november 17 marked the beginning of the 10th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week. I encourage every student to get in contact with their counselors to become aware of the opportunities that are available to them after high school. Additionally, I want to give a round of applause to all students who applied to college during the Virginia College Application Week and to all the counselors and family members that

[01:15:51] supported them throughout the process. To all of those who have instead decided to pursue a career in the military to start a business to go to trade school or simply to make their own path they know that your efforts are just as important and admirable i would now like to divert everyone's focus to two different by highly important issues bullying and mental health struggles with these challenges in a learning environment can affect students abilities to become engaged and form relationships due to this there are currently many organizations that focus on improving school's

[01:16:26] climates currently my school hilton high school promotes a non-profit organization to write love on her arms this movement aids those struggling with depression addiction and self-injury progress is currently also being made to promote a new initiative known as no place for hate within the school however these are not the only resources students have across pwcs there are many student run clubs that focus on improving mental health. So to every student and parent out there know that support is available and we are working towards improving school climate. Now I will move on to

[01:17:04] give updates about the student voice committees. Recently the student senate made up of representatives from various sbcs was able to meet with the representative from the pwcs food and nutrition department. In the meeting the main topic that was discussed were school launches. The sbcs gather feedback that was then relayed to these representatives. Together, we hope to create school launches that satisfy the needs of students across the county. If you are interested in being part of this process, please remain alert for surveys that request parent and student input.

[01:17:38] On another hand, another topic that I'm aware has been brought up in previous meetings, and will once again be discussed this evening, is the Prince William County cell phone policy. As the policy was debated in the cell phone focus group over the last few months, I have been able to represent the voices of students across the county and today I will continue to do so.

[01:17:59] It is clear that the new guidelines have three main objectives: one, to promote student engagement, two, to encourage social interactions, and three, to create a distraction-free learning environment. However, from the feedback I have gathered, students believe that these goals are already being achieved with the policy that is currently being practiced at the high school level.

[01:18:23] This policy consists of students keeping their phones away during instructional periods, but being able to access them in between classes and during lunches. This provides high school students with clear boundaries, but also the ability to communicate with family members and coordinate after-school events.

[01:18:39] Instead, a belt-to-belt policy would not only demoralize students, but it would also prevent them from fulfilling their extracurricular responsibilities. The expectations of the modern day have shifted so much towards constant interconnectivity that there would be negative side effects to enacting a bell to bell policy.

[01:18:59] In conclusion, high school students believe the new cell phone guidelines should have one more objective in mind: to promote healthy relationships with technology. Another topic I want to go over is school calendars.

[01:19:14] This year, the calendar committee asked us student representatives to give our input the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 calendar drafts. We were able to discuss our perspective with teachers and administrators making adjustments to the draft and voting on the best ones.

[01:19:31] I am glad to have been able to represent the student body and I hope the drafts accommodate the needs of as many students as possible. For future students leaders, I want to encourage you to take into account holidays such as the Lunar New Year when your input is requested if you believe it is necessary to do so. Finally, I want to remind everyone that November is the Native American Heritage Month. It is a time to honor the rich history, culture, and contributions of Native American and Alaska Native peoples, while also acknowledging the challenges that they have faced throughout history. Diversity is a critical aspect of Prince William County, and I want to ensure to give recognition to as many minorities as possible.

[01:20:10] That is the end of my remarks for this evening. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my fellow student representatives board members dr mcdade and everyone listening thank you for having me thank you miss latore appreciate those words next up superintendent's time dr mcdade thank you dr latif we learned last week that the virginia department of education has

nominated belmont elementary for recognition through the national elementary and secondary act distinguished schools program to represent virginia in category two

[01:20:46] closing the achievement gap between student groups and we are so incredibly proud especially coming off of tonight's thriving future with so many schools being recognized at the state level this program officially recognizes qualifying federally funded schools for the outstanding academic achievements of their students school representatives have been invited for recognition at the national conference in texas in february we're proud of the students staff teachers staff at Belmont Elementary community for this honor and we look forward to recognizing them at a future school board meeting. Congratulations to the entire Belmont Elementary School community. Job well done.

[01:21:26] November is National Scholarship Month and college and career counselors are available to assist students with their future planning. All PWCS high schools have a college and career counselor to support students in their post-secondary aspirations. Students are encouraged to set up a meeting with their college and career counselor and visit the pwcs scholarship resources and databases web page for more information speaking of scholarships filling out the free application for federal student aid also referred to as the fafsa form is a critical step toward finding financial support for our students continuing education completing the fafsa is not

[01:22:04] just for financial aid such as the pell grant it is also for work study federal student loans grants programs and even scholarships. So please families, please make sure that you do complete the FAFSA. And as a reminder, PWCS will host a Family Engagement Series webinar Thursday, November 21st. That's this week on the 21st from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. And this session is focused on scholarship and financial aid awareness and will be beneficial for our graduating seniors and their families.

[01:22:38] I also want to acknowledge the 10th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week. For those of you who may not have known, we do have a National Apprenticeship Week, and it is this week from November 17th to November 23rd.

[01:22:54] And I want to just note for everyone that as of October 15th, PWCS currently has 326 business partners in total. And from our business partners, we've had a total of 763 combined apprenticeships and internships that have been awarded to our students over the course of the strategic plan.

[01:23:14] So that exceeds the goal that we set, which was for 500 by 2025. So I'm really appreciative of all of our business and community partners who've helped our students to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. And in honor of National Apprenticeship Week, I just want to publicly thank our community and business partners for supporting our CTE vision and our goals of ensuring that our students can leave Prince William County with a concrete plan in their back pocket for their future.

[01:23:44] While acknowledging family, friends, health, and achievements, it's also important to consider giving during this holiday season. Many local schools have food pantries that provide the community with clothes, food, toys, books, and other essential items. So we want to encourage individuals to contact your local school's parent liaison to learn how you can contribute support resources or even financial donations to such a worthy cause.

[01:24:09] And during this time of gratefulness and Thanksgiving on behalf of Prince William County Schools, I want to just extend to all of our families who recognize Thanksgiving an enjoyable, restful, and happy Thanksgiving holiday next week.

[01:24:25] Thank you. Thank you, Dr. McTee. Real quick question. you did mention the FAFSA. My understanding is the FAFSA did open on the 18th of November. There is a FAFSA PWCS scholarship and financial aid awareness webinar this Thursday, November 21.

[01:24:41] But will that be recorded? I know you said it, but I don't think you gave the date and time. Did you give the date? Oh, you didn't? Oh, all right. Okay, Thursday, is it gonna be recorded? 'Cause it says there's a registration. You have to have a link to receive, to register, but will it be recorded if you miss it?

[01:24:57] Can we find out? - Dr. Atkins, do we record all of the sessions? and then we can just go to the website and find it. Okay, outstanding, thank you, Dr. McTain. Next up is the Virginia School Board Association Academy Award.

[01:25:16] So tomorrow we will be, so anyways, let me start with this. Tonight's meeting is taking place on Tuesday in order for board members to attend the Virginia School Board Association's annual convention, which is beginning tomorrow, and it's for school boards across the Commonwealth to get together, this time each year, before we go to the meeting, the board awards, board members who've taken courses offered by the VSBA to extend their knowledge and stay current with best practices.

[01:25:42] On behalf of the Virginia School Boards Association, I'm pleased to announce the awards earned by four of our board members to the VSBA Academy for their commitment to effective school board governance. The awards of recognition go to Mr. Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District.

[01:25:57] Yes, let's give him a round of applause. The award of honor goes to Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District. - Nice, nice job, Ms. Zargarpur. And then next, the awards of distinction go to Ms. Jennifer Wall of the Gainesville District and Ms. Laurie Williams of the Woodbridge District.

[01:26:15] Congratulations to all. Thank you, strong work. And best wishes as you travel to the conference and bring back some best practices to this board. We appreciate it. What's that?

[01:26:30] Sure, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, I just wanted to say thank you and appreciate Ms. Wall because generally we are in the same sessions together. And Ms. Dagapur is usually also there with us. Welcome to the crowd, Mr. Blake. But I just wanted the public to know that these sessions not only occur at our annual convention with when we have the opportunity to interact with other school board members from across the state, but also throughout the year, they include important things as updates to legal matters, special education, effective budgeting, FOIA, everything really you need to know about being a school board member.

[01:27:06] And I think it's also important for the public to know that we are required to get, I think it's three continuing education credits per year so that we ourselves are also in continuing our education and doing our part as effective leaders. So thank you.

[01:27:24] - Ms. Wall, yeah. - I was gonna add one of my favorite parts about it is meeting school board members from all over the state. And I like to ask them what's going on in their districts. Like what are their top, what's their top success? And like, what's the thing that is the hardest thing they're dealing with, and it's been really enlightening to get a feel for what's going on and some of the things that, you know, what I've come back and pushed for have been because I've talked to other people around the state.

[01:27:51] So I think it helps improve the board and helps improve our ability to govern and work as a governing team to help students. So it's been a good education for me. Thank you.

[01:28:07] Excellent. Okay. Very good. moving on next to the annual report of the ombudsman miss bookstein um this is 1602 please thank you and good evening i'd like to thank chairman latef vice chair zagarpoor school board members dr mcdade and the pwcs community for providing me with the opportunity to serve as your ombuds and to speak on my annual report this report concerns office concerns raised to my office

[01:28:42] for the 2023-2024 school year. Next slide please. Established by the school board in 2019, the office of the ombuds provides parents, students, employees, and members of the school community with a safe place to discuss issues or concerns, explore options to help resolve conflicts, and bring systemic concerns to the attention of PWCS. There are several different types of ombuds practices.

[01:29:18] I am considered an organizational ombuds and I adhere to the standards of practice and code of ethics established by the International Ombuds Association or IOA. The core values shown here were established by the IOA. They include acting with honesty, promoting fairness, remaining non-judgmental, encouraging diversity, communicating accurately, empowering the individual and endeavoring to be a trusted resource. There are four

[01:29:54] fundamental principles of an ombuds office. Confidentiality is a defining characteristic of any ombuds office. The identity of those seeking assistance from the ombuds and all communication with them is kept confidential.

[01:30:10] Impartiality denotes the ombuds is a designated neutral who does not take sides or serve as an advocate for any person or entity. Independence ensures that the ombuds is independent in structure, function, appearance, and decision-making.

[01:30:28] Informality ensures the ombuds does not participate in any formal investigations or play any role in a formal process. As the ombuds, my work has a dual mandate. First, I work with the visitor to address their concerns. I do this by serving as a neutral sounding board and helping them to identify what could be causing the conflict while exploring all options that could be used to address it. Second, I work with the organization to provide feedback

[01:31:01] focusing on improving its overall health. By serving as an early warning system, I can shine a light on areas that may be dark to the organization. In my role, I seek to empower visitors to make their own decisions. As this slide highlights, when I meet with a visitor, there will be the initial conversation. Then I will clarify my role, where I will explain what I can and cannot do. For example, I will advise that I cannot mandate change, maintain records,

[01:31:36] conduct investigations, or serve as notice to PWCS. Then I will work with the visitor to understand their situation, analyze it, explore options available to them, and discuss next steps. Every visitor's situation is unique, and this slide highlights several services an ombuds can provide for example listening and understanding i offer a non-judgmental safe place for visitors to share their issues ensuring they feel heard and understood coaching i empower visitors to address

[01:32:15] their concerns directly by equipping them with the necessary skills and confidence diplomacy i liaise between parties to help clarify concerns and facilitate communication clarifying policies and referrals with my knowledge of pwcs i explain policies or direct visitors to resources that can help them

resolve their issues facilitated conversations when parties are experiencing a conflict i can serve as a facilitator to help the conversation move forward group conflict

[01:32:53] assessments i assess group conflicts to identify underlying themes and provide strategies for better management training i offer training on various conflict management topics to enhance skills across the organization and finally feedback i ensure concerns are voiced and brought to the attention of the appropriate decision makers within pwcs i will now go through the data compiled for those who contacted the office for the 2023-2024 school year the total number of visitors to the

[01:33:28] office was 311 which is a four percent increase from the prior school year i would like to point out that the ioa notes the nature of sole practitioner offices such as this one is not to see everyone but to assist those who do come and to serve as an early warning channel regarding issues that may need further examination of the 311 visitors 60 were employees 36 percent were

[01:34:01] parents guardians and four percent were community members of the 188 employees 91 were in certified positions 72 were in administrative positions and 25 were in classified positions here you will see the visitor contacts for the school year per month for employees the highest months were february and may for parents the highest months were august april and may finally the highest month for community members was February. Overall, the third quarter continues to see the highest rate of

[01:34:40] contact with the office. Breaking down the 188 employees who contacted the office, 62 visitors worked at the central office level, 51 visitors worked at the high school level, 50 visitors worked at the elementary school level, and 25 visitors worked at the middle school level. I would like to note that while employees contacting the office are identified at the level they work, This does not necessarily denote that the concern was raised with that level.

[01:35:14] Breaking down the 123 parents, guardians, and community members who contacted the office, 42 visitors raised concerns with the high school level, 40 visitors raised concerns with the elementary school level, 33 visitors raised concerns with the middle school level, and 8 visitors raised concerns with the central office level or with PWCS policies and regulations.

[01:35:41] there are several ways in which a visitor can contact the office for the school year 42 of the visitors reached out via the ombuds email box 37 of the visitors scheduled an appointment directly through my online booking calendar and 21 contacted the office via phone once a visitor reaches out there are several ways in which i will meet with them for the school year 33 of the visitors chose

[01:36:14] to meet with me in person 28 chose to speak with me via phone 27 chose a virtual platform to meet and finally 12 were addressed through email i would like to highlight that due to the confidential nature of the office when i respond to questions via email my responses are brief as an organizational ombuds i classify the types of concerns raised based upon the ioa's uniform reporting categories

[01:36:48] the nine categories and their subcategories can assist an ombuds in identifying what trends or patterns they see for the school year the highest category identified for all visitors was the evaluative relationships category which refers to questions concerns or issues with the supervisor and employee relationship the next highest category was services administrative issues which refers to questions, concerns, or issues about services provided by the organization.

[01:37:23] The third highest category was organizational, strategic, and mission-related, which refers to questions, concerns, or issues that relate to the whole or part of the organization. I will now identify which

category is of the highest concern for each visitor group I saw, and that group's two top subcategories. The highest category for employee visitors fell within the evaluative relationships category which is considered the supervisor and employee relationship. The most often expressed subcategories were communication which is the quality and or

[01:38:03] quantity of communication and supervisory effectiveness which is the management of department or classroom and or failure to address an issue. The highest category for parent guardian visitors fell within the services administrative issues category which is regarding the services provided by the organization. The most often expressed subcategories were administrative decisions and interpretation application of rules, which denotes decisions made on matters

[01:38:38] and the behavior of the service provider, which is how the individual was dealt with by the school division. Similarly, the highest category for community visitors fell within the services and administrative issues category, which is again regarding the services provided by the organization.

[01:38:58] The most often expressed subcategories were also administrative decisions and interpretation, application of rules, and behavior of the service provider. For the office's continuous improvement, all visitors were sent a post-visit survey.

[01:39:16] This anonymous feedback survey asks five questions: How the visitor first learned about the office. What might have happened if the visitor had not contacted the office. Whether the visitor would refer others to the office.

[01:39:33] the likelihood the visitor would reach out again, and an open-ended question where visitors can provide suggestions for improvement. Overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 85 percent of the respondents stating they would refer others to the office and another 81 percent saying they would use the office again should the need arise.

[01:39:56] Could I go back two slides? Sorry. One more. Thank you. Due to the confidential nature of the office, it can be challenging to recognize an ombuds value it brings to an organization. This chart illustrates potential burdens on the organization if visitors had not reached out to the ombuds office. For instance, resolving conflicts through other channels within PWCS would have diverted

[01:40:35] valuable time from the organization's mission. Additionally, employee well-being might have suffered leading to disengagement. Finally, the risk of costly lawsuits would have increased. The need for effective conflict resolution has never been more critical. Continual investment in the Ombuds Office reaffirms PWCS's commitment to fostering a harmonious and productive environment for all. In addition to assisting visitors, I am proud to highlight several key accomplishments for this year. First, I became a certified organizational ombuds practitioner through the

[01:41:15] IOA, demonstrating my commitment to the profession and adherence to IOA standards of practice and code of ethics. Next, I consistently provided feedback to PWCS leaders and the school board on emerging trends, ensuring they were informed and proactive. To raise awareness of the office, I spoke at two parent engagement sessions and connected with every school's PTO/PTA group.

[01:41:41] I also developed and presented a course titled Rumor Has It at the Annual Classified Employee Conference addressing the impact of workplace gossip and equipping staff with conflict management skills. Finally, I continue to serve as chair for the IOA's K-12 Ombuds Group, which includes over 40

members across the U.S. In this role, I provide leadership, guidance, and support for their programs. I believe these accomplishments highlight my dedication to enhancing the

[01:42:14] ombuds office's impact and supporting the pwcs community i would also like to take the opportunity to highlight a few examples of the feedback that visitors provided the office i value the input of those who have engaged with my office and i strive to create a space that is both responsive and accountable to the community i serve i again want to thank the school board superintendent staff and and PWCS community for the opportunity to serve as your ombuds for any questions or concerns I

[01:42:52] can be reached either by email or phone and I look forward to your continued support and I'm happy to take any questions that you have at this time thank you that was really a great report very informative um are there any questions or comments from board members um Ms. Williams oh sorry oh Mr.

[01:43:11] Wilk oh thank you I just wanted to thank you Ms. Bookstein for being here tonight and giving us this presentation I think it's important I know Ms. Williams and Mr. Trenum were instrumental in this role for our school division and I think it's been overall very helpful for our staff for the community as such and I appreciate the highlights and the work you've done and the breakdown of some of the areas of concern so thank you so much thank you Ms. Williams thank you again I just want to piggyback off of Mr. Wilkes comments and thank you for all of your hard work for continuing the

[01:43:45] growth of the office and getting the word out so that people are able to utilize your services. I visit schools and see the posters up in the main office so I appreciate that. I also wanted to congratulate you on becoming a certified organizational abuds practitioner, excuse me, and for serving as chair. I appreciate your continuous leadership and growth in that area and just overall thank you for the work that you do. Thank you, appreciate it. Ms. Wall.

[01:44:16] Thank you for the presentation and the overview of the last year, the highlights, et cetera. I echo comments, you know, your office is very important. We appreciate what you do. I think this slide, I think you correctly highlighted what might have happened had they not visited the office.

[01:44:34] It was a very informative slide. It gives a sense of the value that you are bringing to the organization, especially the effective conflict resolution. I think everybody could benefit from this kind of training and reminders and things like that.

[01:44:51] So I am really glad that you were able to conduct the rumor has it thing. Hopefully you'll have opportunities in the future to do something like that and maybe the conflict management skills in like some professional development for our staff.

[01:45:08] And I think one of the things that I hear the most is that it was help and it was captured in the slide with the comments, but it's helpful to have somebody just to kind of talk something through with and to better understand the school division and how it works and what options are available to people because sometimes it's complicated to figure out where to take a problem.

[01:45:29] And I think that is kind of one of those undervalued services of an ombuds is helping people understand the giant system we have and how to how to best navigate it. So I wanted to thank you for this report and for the services that you're providing.

[01:45:47] Thank you. - Mr. Jessie. - Yeah, I wanna thank you also for the report and I also wanna encourage our employees to use your services as much as they can. Thank you. - Thank you.

[01:46:03] - Thank you, Ms. Bookstein. We really appreciate it. And the work is outstanding and continue to encourage folks to reach out to your office when they have issues. Thank you so much. - Great, thank you. - I'm gonna do something a little bit out of the ordinary here.

[01:46:22] And I'm gonna own this mistake. I'm gonna ask the board to go back the calendar, I've been made aware of a couple issues from Division Council that I was supposed to bring up and didn't bring up when I talked about what option to go with, and I'm going to ask the Board to reconsider the options, and I'll have Dr. McDade walk us through that.

[01:46:41] We're going to accomplish the same thing, but we chose the wrong thing, and that's on me. We're going to go to reconsider, so let's go pull up, go back to calendar, and I'm going have a motion to reconsider the calendar. So we'll have one motion to reconsider. We'll vote on that and then we'll have one motion on the new calendar option. And Dr. McDade, if you can explain the options, can we pull up options, the options on the, what I'd like, I'd like IT to pull up for me,

[01:47:16] the calendar presentation, pull up slide seven. Okay. Option A, B, and C. So we voted on B with the intention that we wanted to signal to the public we wanted to start on that Monday, August 18th. And then if we were going to add a day, then add the day. So ending on Friday rather than on Thursday. But Dr. McDade and Division Council made something clear to me over the last few minutes. And so Dr. McDade, can you explain to me where we made our mistake? So because you will be doing an amendment to add Eid, choosing option A, which currently has a student start

[01:47:54] on Tuesday, would allow you to make the amendment for Eid and have the students start on Monday and would avoid extending the school year where students come an extra day in June and teachers have to report an extra day in June. So we save a day actually by doing it that way, whereas we would have lost a day we would have extended the school year if we got one b you would be extending it further in june so students end at thursday they would be ending in friday and then teachers would also have to return that following monday after students are already gone so if you if you

[01:48:29] choose a where it has an option for a tuesday start when you make the amendment to add eid then you can choose to make that monday amend the calendar so that you start on monday and then that would replace the date that you take for Eid, and then you wouldn't have to add the additional day in June. Is that correct, Dr. Sullivan? So you wouldn't have to add an additional student day at the end of June, and teachers wouldn't have to then come and do the additional work day, the Monday after that Friday. So that was my faux pas for pushing that. So I'd ask the board,

[01:49:08] we'll do it by hand if the board would reconsider our vote for the calendar i'd like a motion to ask for reconsideration so i need a second on that motion okay i have a second for mr jesse all in favor by hand to reconsider the calendar motion please raise your hand or yes great okay any opposed nobody opposes okay now um i'm gonna have mrs argerport go back read the motion as it was written originally that i screwed up okay all right mr chairman i move that the prince william William County school would approve option A for the 2025-26 school year.

[01:49:44] - Do I have a second? Mr. Jesse seconds. Any further discussion or questions for Dr. McDade? Okay, please vote. Do you wanna do this by hand? Okay, all in favor, aye, yes, hands up in the air, Mr. Wilk.

[01:50:02] Okay, oh yeah, that's right, he's our protest. Okay, any opposed? Mr. Wilk opposes. So seven in favor of the motion for option A. If we're doing a press release, let's clear that up. So I didn't screw that up. And then- - The vote is seven, yes.

[01:50:17] - Seven, yes. - One, no. - One, no. - One, no. - Right, one option eight. Thank you, thank you. - Motion passed. - I thank you the board for giving my screw up there. And I won't let that happen again. Moving on now, cell phone policy 1603.

[01:50:36] This is a matter for discussion. We have different, I don't know if we have, Do we have one slide that has all the options up there, or we don't have one slide? Do we have? - We have two slides that will show you one option and then two on one slide. - Yeah, okay.

[01:50:52] So since you're up there, Denise, Ms. Huebner, you wanna just tell us very quickly what option one, two, and three are. - Sure, absolutely. You received a lot of information from Ms. Porter-Lucas last week, or last board meeting on what the pilot looked like.

[01:51:08] Policy option one reflects current practices and includes K through eight students with off and away, high school that are off and away during instructional periods. Options two and three are similar with the difference being the start date and basically as off and away, bell to bell.

[01:51:27] I'd be happy to provide any additional details as needed. - Oh, there's been a lot of discussion on the cell phone policy. I'm gonna ask each board member to give us their thoughts. When we come back in December, we will have a motion or a series of motions to vote on on which option to choose.

[01:51:48] But I'd like to hear from each board member on their thoughts about the options they like and their reasons for why. And we'll go do a round robin here. You wanna start, Mr. Wilk? - Yeah, I'll be pretty succinct. I'm in support of option three.

[01:52:04] It follows the compliance from the state and guidance from the state, but it gives us time as a school system to adjust and not abruptly change what we've been doing in the schools, especially as of course, at the high school mid-year. So I'm leaning strongly towards option three to meet the compliance at the state level, but also give us time to fully implement this and prepare for bell to bell at the high school level.

[01:52:29] - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. Ms. Trudenik. - It's no secret I've been extremely passionate about this and I appreciate the student advocacy that I've heard from our student representatives, both of them.

[01:52:47] And, you know, it's no secret that I live with students in my home that are very passionate, extremely passionate about their cell phone use because it is an addiction and it's an unhealthy addiction that occurs amongst our youth that we as parents facilitate by giving them these devices that I call personalized tracking devices as well. So parents understand I do not fault you and giving them to your children, again, like I said, I'm very passionate.

[01:53:17] I am for option number two, which is bell to bell starting January 1, which is what our governor has asked us to do, 1. But more importantly, there is no better time than now or yesterday to implement a policy that helps our children and their mental health.

[01:53:40] Children spend on average an hour of five, I mean, an average of five hours a day on social media. Adolescents who spend more than three hours a day double their issues with mental health. I firmly believe that it's essential for protecting our students' focus, education, and well-being.

[01:54:00] Removing the cell phone distractions completely will have a positive impact on our kids. I've heard a lot of parents, you know, complain about what masks did and say that, you know, we implemented this policy that harmed our children. And I firmly believe that it did harm our children when we put them in masks every day.

[01:54:18] Taking their cell phones away will not harm them. It will only help them. And I've had discussions with these teenagers who say we need to be positive. We need to learn how to use our cell phones in a positive manner. You go to school for seven and a half hours.

[01:54:35] you have the rest of the day to learn that. Your parents can teach you at home how to use your cell phone properly. Yes, we as parents can put safeguards on our phones, but I firmly believe getting them out of their hands in the classrooms also will help teachers by having it not even be an option.

[01:54:53] Like it's no longer being put in a pouch, it's just in your backpack. And for the parents that are worried about an emergency, it's still in their backpack. So if there is, God forbid, an emergency, like they still can get us if they absolutely need to. And I love that we're taking it back to the 90s.

[01:55:09] If we didn't have those cell phones, I just, I'm very excited to see what this can do for our students. And I would beg my colleagues to help me as a parent. I have a junior in high school and implementing this January one would remove his cell phone for half the year.

[01:55:30] And it would help all of the other students as well, give them a whole second, third and fourth quarter of school without the distraction. And so if we're going to vote to put it in place in August, why not January one? Why not now?

[01:55:48] - Thank you, Mr. Denick. Mr. Jesse. - Well, my understanding is option one is from, they can use the cell phone is restricted during the class time, but they can use it in the hall and so forth.

[01:56:10] And I think that's our current policy. I do agree a lot with Ms. Scherndemick or Dent. I try to say it correctly. At any rate, I do agree with her on a lot of this.

[01:56:27] And I do, you know, Dr. McDade gave us the book to read on generation. And he calls for the book, the phones to be put away completely. However, I do believe that at this point in time, we should go with option one.

[01:56:51] That's what the kids are currently used to and our staff are used to. There's no, if that still is a problem, then I think later on we can amend the policy to either option two or three.

[01:57:09] But for right now, I'm supporting option one. - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. Ms. Wall. So I appreciate the many students, parents, and staff who have engaged with me in conversations about cell phone usage in schools.

[01:57:25] Our previous stance of teacher discretion led to a patchwork approach within schools and problematic enforcement challenges from class to class and even school to school. And the result was that too many teachers had to compete for their students' attention for too long.

[01:57:44] And I've heard some really incredible responses from teachers saying they're really happy with the change that we made just by option one, which is the pilot. Students are often, when their phones are in their hands or in their pockets or on their desk or under their book or wherever they are, they're often off task and they're not paying attention.

[01:58:07] And this has been a deep concern of mine for a long time and one I've spoken about from time to time from this dais. I am thrilled to be considering a district-wide comprehensive policy. The need for a strong phone free policy has become increasingly apparent, especially with regard to student academic performance, mental health, which has been a big challenge over the last years, especially since the pandemic, and before that as well, and student behavior. So I do recognize the objections that students and student leaders have shared. They've done a good job of advocating for themselves and

[01:58:44] and their stance, which I appreciate, because I think issues that are complex need to be fully fleshed out. I was going to say on that note, that regardless, while I acknowledge the objections, our primary responsibility is to encourage learning.

[01:59:07] And employers can call the school if they need to get a message to a student. Families that need to coordinate the care of a younger child can call a school and coordinate with a student. think these are actually the rare uses for cell phones in school i believe the main use of cell phones in schools is social media and talking back and forth within chat groups and things like that youtube is also like one of the most used apps if you go look at the data i mean like an astounding number of students admit to being on youtube nearly constantly um i think if students need

[01:59:45] to call home for any reason if they have responsibilities that or in emergencies or they need to get in touch with their families they still can and peers can talk to each other at school or after school if they need to or in between classes and they can save those virtual conversations for another time and another place and as Mr. Dink pointed out students have the rest of the day after 2:10 or whenever your high school ends to show that they can be responsible with their phones and learn to balance the use of phones with other demands on their time because

[02:00:18] our primary goal in school is to learn so i will add that my own experience as a parent of teenagers who are now young adults informs my conviction that this is what we need to do and we need to do it as soon as we can for the kids that we have under our care right now and i am fond of saying to my young adult children what you need is to have more real experiences with real people in the real world and if we make this change that's what our kids will have real experiences with real people in the real world for a number of reasons for academics for mental health

[02:00:56] for behavior this will make a big difference I wish we'd had this policy when my kids were in high school now they're in college I just have so much to say on this I don't know if need to say this all but I will say if you look at the data on cell phone usage in school the impact on kids on their learning their mental health and their behavior the data is compelling device overuse is thwarting students ability to focus and damaging their overall mental health and the research shows that there is a direct connection between distracted minds and declining grades

[02:01:30] between smartphone addiction and poor academic achievement and across the nation I as I was doing some research on this a growing number of school divisions have adopted cell phone free policies policies and nationwide almost 77 percent of schools have banned cell phone use in schools as of 2022. so i don't i couldn't find data for 2024 but that's pretty high and obviously with virginia pursuing a statewide approach and providing that valuable leadership coming from the top of our government here that number is only going to increase and I especially like with every

[02:02:08] classroom holding to the same rules with clear guidelines for penalties for non-compliance which we've been piloting I think our policy will be more enforceable and more efficacious I was surprised

to hear from one of my schools I thought that enforcement would have been a nightmare and one of these schools that had done this on their own initiative two or three years ago and the principal told me no actually it wasn't it i had a lot of buy-in from the students and especially from the parents so that is encouraging to me um we're already halfway there we're mostly

[02:02:43] there i think we're seven three quarters of the way there with our pilot or maybe we're 90 of the way there with our pilot if you count four minutes or five minutes in between class and then like 20 minutes for lunch or however many minutes kids have for lunch we're almost there um i will add that 90% of NEA members support school policies that prohibit cell phones during instructional time and 83%, still very high, support prohibiting cell phone usage during the entire school day.

[02:03:11] So I really think if we were to poll teachers, that teachers are done competing with smartphones for their students' attention. And I heard that from teachers over and over. I'm so happy. I don't have to compete with the cell phones for my students' attention. I have a little bit more stats but i'm going to wrap it up by saying my first preference is option two because i think it is important enough to do this as soon as we can for the kids that we have in our schools right now and my belief that the pilot is almost we're almost there we're almost across the finish line

[02:03:45] and it's gone really well um at all of our schools as far as i can ascertain um i believe that we can do it and i have confidence in our kids and in our parents and our staff and so for those reasons My first preference is option two. Thank you, Ms. Wall, Ms. Williams.

[02:04:03] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we started down this pike, I feel the same as I did then, which is it's never been good to have technology and not teach students how to use it and how to use it appropriately and function in society.

[02:04:22] Cell phones are not new. They definitely are not going away. And we are in the business of education, so I will always stand on that first. having said that policy one is what we currently have it has been the largest and loudest cry from our staff from our students it has created a culture that is working and i think that by disrupting this culture we may be doing ourselves more harm than good because unless you work in a skiff or some kind of secure area where you are not allowed to bring a cell phone in pretty much

[02:04:57] everywhere else in the world you have a cell phone. I do agree that cell phones are a distraction in class and they should not be utilized during class because we apparently do not have the current technological skills to utilize them effectively during school hours for instruction because they are often considered a distraction. What I also heard was that since cell phones are now been put away students are using their school issued devices as distractions so now it's email

[02:05:32] during the day and chitter chatter and going on different sites and things of that nature so i do believe that it is good that we are not having cell phones because they're downsides but i also want to bring that to the attention of our board members and those listening that that has become the new distraction policy one i think is the easiest way to go our students are responsible for many things during the day some students are responsible for their younger siblings

[02:06:06] some students are working some students require them because of their disabilities and i think it's to our disadvantage since we are in the education business to not allow to have students be able to contact their employers to not model good behavior for students with current technology i mean i do

remember if we want to talk about going in the past at one time when calculators came out they were the distraction and oh my god what are we going to do with calculators and how are we going to use calculators and you're never going to use calculators today in your life when you're grown we all carry a calculator so um whatever policy we do pass i hope that our school

[02:06:45] staff is prepared for the lupos that are already in existence that are coming down the pike that i hear all the time i hope that um i just have a hard time with this because the biggest thing with cell phones is social media and anxiety and and the welfare of students and that's not a school issue that's whoever provides you with the cell phone and the access that you have on the phone um so that's a lot where the emotional issues come from and the anxiety my issues with schools and cell phones comes from not appropriate use having them in bathrooms recording fights

[02:07:20] using them to bully we've done plenty of work on anti-bullying but I do not believe that putting a cell phone away all the time is going to be the best met needs I also feel that when we do pass this policy that we provide some education for the guardians of our students on best practices for contacting your student during the day in case of emergency because we're going to have to formulate new ways and new cultures for that it's not something that's commonplace but we still struggle with parents ordering door dash during lunchtime for students so i think that there's

[02:07:54] both pros and cons but i'm going to listen to our student body i'm going to listen to our staff who has to be in the building all day long with our students and i hope parents will or guardians will speak to their students about using technology appropriately and i hope this board follows what we have already decided is current culture so i'm going to go with option one thank you thank you miss williams mr thank you mr chairman um i believe the proposed measures effectively

[02:08:32] address several key issues including consistent enforcement future workload technology integration support for staff and parental concerns these measures foster a positive educational atmosphere and are worth supporting additionally i think it's important to avoid changing policy mid-year stability is crucial for both students and staff and implementing a new policy at this stage could lead to confusion and disrupt the learning environment especially since everyone is

[02:09:04] already accustomed to the current guidelines so and i and um full disclosure i probably the only member up here my my daughter none of my kids have a cell phone so and I'm I've been able to communicate with them effectively but it's she's in ninth grade now so it's possible but at the same time I understand what the students are saying and what the teachers are saying and the staff are saying and I do think it's important to promote a healthy relationship with technology I

[02:09:43] i do think that's one of our our um duties as as as a school district to help kids with that so right now i'm i'm leaning towards uh option three with with a possible option one so i don't but i'm leaning towards option three right now thank you mr blake miss argyport uh thank you dr latif um uh i think miss wall and i started talking about cell phones what at least three years ago when i first came on the board parkside middle school was already doing this

[02:10:19] and you know i was amazed that that the kids complied that it was a thing um was it last year i had benton um started the week before school started i had a couple emails from parents that were who were concerned um those quickly died away and feedback i got from the school from having them put away for the entire time was that kids were socializing better they were there were less i don't say fights but less things going on that were you know the he said she said

[02:10:53] all of that um just a lot of things were just more calm and consistent and i want to i went to a training for for my job yesterday and there was a um a quote that we were going over in one of the trainings it says this is from a u.s surgeon general dr vivek murthy it says quote our epidemic of loneliness and isolation has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health our relationships are a source of healing and well-being hiding in plain sight one that can help us live healthier more fulfilled and more productive lives

[02:11:29] so while i know the problems that giving my teen a cell phone caused for us and our family i wish i could go back in time and never have handed her one um i i do i will i am solidly with a bell-to-bell policy currently i'm sitting here um on on the third option only because uh i know how difficult change can be however if i've got teachers and principals who want to let me know that they can do this i will flip to option two um but that that's where i'm sitting thank you thank you mr agarapur i think i want to remind the public that all options if you take a look

[02:12:08] and again it's publicly noticed that there are disability accommodations for any students with with a 504 or IEP. So the exceptions to the bell to bell will continue for anybody who has a need for disability accommodations and may be granted as part of student health safety and support plan when necessary.

[02:12:27] So that's really important. That's in all the options. And I really appreciate the staff spending the time taking us through this pilot. I'm not gonna reiterate, I firmly, you know, agree with the statistics that Ms. Wall pointed out, as Tridentic pointed out, the concerns about, you know, cell phone use, it is not a secret that worldwide, not just in the United States, academic performance has started to go down since about 2012, which is when the nexus of sort of social media and cell phones became ubiquitous in the students' pockets.

[02:13:04] And that is really not just a United States problem, it's a worldwide problem. You know, I started this meeting by talking about our core business and our core business is education. I have four children myself, and for me, anything I can do to make sure that the students are highly focused on their academic performance, being more engaged in the classroom, performing better on their exams, learning the material, writing more rather than listening and watching, reading more of our classics, of our books,

[02:13:39] rather than reading what they find online. I think prepares the students better for everything from a better career and making sure that they get into good colleges and making sure that they are engaged with their friends, their colleagues, their communities, their teachers, their parents.

[02:14:01] I know cell phones are bad even for each of us. We are all guilty of spending more time on these and spending enough time even talking to our own kids. And so they have become a crutch And that I, so I am just, you know, I have been saying this from the very beginning.

[02:14:19] I will support a bell-to-bell policy. I will support the bell-to-bell policy that we can get in as soon as possible. So I'll be supporting bell-to-bell, you know, immediately in January, if possible. That will be January, so starting January.

[02:14:38] If that doesn't work, then I'll vote for the bell-to-bell starting in September. But I'm firmly in the camp of bell-to-bell. and I've found that the pilot has been very, very good. The middle school reports have been excellent and nationwide. I think there has almost not been a school that went bell to bell that went back to something different.

[02:14:58] And so the evidence is out there and there's significant amounts of evidence out there. And I appreciate the board members, all the board members' thoughts today. I appreciate the student reps. They have spoken passionately about this over the last few weeks, few months.

[02:15:13] I have students at home who speak passionately to me about this as Ms. Tredenik does, and I have engaged in these conversations. I truly appreciate them. So at this point, the board will bring back options with motions at the next board meeting, and we'll see which option gets the most votes, and we'll get something that this board can all get behind and something that the, and look, and the public still has time to take a look at it and reach out to your board members you have any questions or concerns. Thank you. We're moving on next. Oh yeah, I'm sorry. Oh yeah, Dr. McDade. I just want to ask a point of privilege to be able to just thank Denise and

[02:15:53] Kathy for their work on this and the entire team and all of our school administrators who really worked hard to implement this this year and we have seen success with it and so I do appreciate all of the efforts that have gone into the pilot and the data that we captured from that. So thank you so much for all of your hard work. My apologies for not conveying that as well.

[02:16:13] thank you very much for the work thank you for everyone doing the pilot thank you for all of our teachers all of our administrators trying something different over the last year last two years and thank you to the students and families who have supported the pilot and the work we're doing so we're very grateful okay thank you so much okay sure miss latori yes i also want to thank miss porter lucas for including students in the process of coming up with the policies so thank you so much we appreciate it and again i want to reiterate the student senate and the student board members um all students should know that the student senate the student board members

[02:16:52] have represented your views very well to this board they've made it crystal clear to us where the students in the senate stand so we appreciate that thank you okay without any objection i'm moving on to the next um next item which is where are we at guys 1604 uh so this is a motion that that I've asked the board to add.

[02:17:15] I wanted to add something to the legislative agenda along with some other board members. There's been a lot of discussion. What number is this? 1604? Let me pull it up. All right, got it. Yeah, no, no, I know I gotta pull it up. All right, so I can... Actually, Ms. Zargarpur, you wanna make the motion?

[02:17:32] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I move that the Prince William County School Board amend its 2024-25 legislative agenda to add opposition to skilled gaming in our community. have a second mr shoot miss williams i second i thank you um this basically um there's been a lot of numerous bills in the general assembly that want to add skilled gaming which is video poker games to convenience stores gas stations in your neighborhoods restaurants um i i i you know we we typically as a board don't weigh in on things sort of right outside the school but this does impact students as they attend these stores and it it is concerning um and with the um

[02:18:11] increase of gambling you know even on your cell phones draft kings those kinds of things it becomes harder and harder for students to deal with this and so i think as a general legislative agenda um i i hope the board would consider us adding this to it i know the board of county supervisors will be voting on something similar this evening as well do you have any further discussion miss williams thank you mr chairman while i am 100 against um having legalized skill games and other gambling devices near our schools i have issue with this only because it is not

[02:18:47] really within our wheelhouse and it opens this board up to i think speaking outside of what we do if the board of county supervisors are doing this or if we were to issue a you know a letter and statement saying that we're against it i'm not sure that advocating against it through this route is the most appropriate only because when I got on this board, there was a resolution passed about Medicare, Medicaid, forgive me, because it's been so many years and it was outside of the wheelhouse of the board.

[02:19:21] And we we ended up walking it back. I don't believe that these games should I'm not a gambler. I don't advocate for gambling at all. But again, I do believe that this is outside of the wheelhouse of what we do as a school division. So I have issue with adding it to our legislative agenda is there other school divisions who are doing the same or um i just can we get a little bit more on um yeah no i mean i so so a number of other school divisions are thinking about doing it they're thinking about adding it to their legislative agendas it was something we talked about in

[02:19:58] our meeting with the nine jurisdictions up here and it is something that um i'm going to bring up at the virginia school board association as a delegate to the general assembly to to ask that that the Virginia School Board Association also oppose this. And I appreciate your concerns and comments.

[02:20:15] As you know, in the six, seven years I've been on here, we've kept sort of to the mark of what does impact, but I think this does have a, does stretches to kids and impacts students. And so, you know, we're not changing any policy this board has.

[02:20:32] We're not changing any work this school division will do. This is just something that we would ask our legislative agenda and let the General Assembly know that this is something the board is concerned about. - Thank you, I appreciate that explanation. It makes a little bit more sense. Maybe next year we can add tobacco stores near schools.

[02:20:50] Thank you. - Right, I'm fine with that. Okay, Ms. Wall. - I was just gonna say, I actually do think that this is, while it's not directly in our wheelhouse, it is an important topic for us to weigh in on, and I do believe that the General Assembly would want to hear from school divisions because we are so integrally involved with students and the young people of our county and the practices of the industry are predatory and do not have the best interest of children in mind.

[02:21:21] And our kids would be particularly, we just spent a whole bunch of time talking about distractions. Like this is also a distraction and it can create very addictive destructive habits. So I would think the general assembly would want to hear from school divisions who we know kids and we advocate for kids in so many different respects.

[02:21:41] So I do think it's a very important topic and I would be supportive of it. - Mr. Jesse. - I would not be supporting this. I do believe this is not in our wheelhouse, should not be in our wheelhouse. I agree that it doesn't impact kids, but it's not in our wheelhouse, so I will not be supporting this.

[02:22:05] - Okay, please vote.

[02:22:29] - Are you putting up? Oh yeah, it just showed up. - The vote is six yes, one no. Jesse, one abstain. Williams? Motion passed. Thank you guys. Moving on next to, um, so we have a series of, oh no, 1605. Yep. Motion's order. Mr. Zargarpur. Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to policy 264, section 3A 3.8.3, redistricting projects affecting fewer than 15 current students.

[02:23:06] The Prince William County School Board requests the superintendent to direct staff to begin a school redistricting process for land currently within the school attendance area for the Noakes - Mr. Chairman. - Do you have a second? - Sure, I'm second. - Ms. Williams, any discussion?

[02:23:22] Ms. Trudenik. - I've gotten a lot of emails, a lot of phone calls about this today. I just want to be clear on this. This is something that I asked along with Ms. Zargarpur and Dr. Lateef, we talked about this a little bit just in regards to, there's a lot of development, and I haven't been shy about talking about this, a lot of incoming development to the Brentsville District.

[02:23:48] Right now, currently, we have over 6,000 homes coming through planning in the Brentsville District. Right now, there's two projects that have been approved along the 28 corridor, and there's one more coming up before the Board of County Supervisors for approval.

[02:24:04] These are all currently zoned to the Noakesville School. So a lot of people were very concerned that we're redistricting all of the Noakesville School. We're moving everything around. This is just for these three parcels of land so that when these homes, when and if these homes are built, they do not add to the overcrowding at the Noakesville school.

[02:24:24] So they will go to the closer schools to where these parcels of land are that are under capacity. This is just to help mitigate the current problem right now, right there. So I just wanted to clear that up for anybody that had concerns in regards to that.

[02:24:44] This is just to solve that immediate problem right now to help out with that. I don't believe that this is a good long-term solution that will work for the entire district. I think right now this helps mitigate the projects that could come up over the next two years.

[02:25:04] So that's all that's happening. So I just wanted to calm anybody's fears or worries. The other thing I wanted to say is this has only less than 15 students that this will And my goal would be to grandfather them in as they have in the past.

[02:25:20] I believe it's currently only one student that affects this area that we're talking about, so. - Thank you, Ms. Trinetic, Ms. Williams. - Could we get some information from staff? Because I thought that we had a process for this when a site goes up.

[02:25:37] I thought we'd do this annually or maybe someone could refresh my memory because what am I missing basically? I know that we've passed this new policy, but I'm not sure. is it the timing of when the houses are built that the trigger then comes from staff and i'm also not sure from what it sounds like are these houses currently being built i just don't feel like we have enough information well when these these are proposed developments right now and so typically uh when we are engaged in the processes when those developments are approved and then we

[02:26:13] know the number of houses that are going to be constructed at that time or dwellings that will be constructed and then we look at the schools in the area and then there could be a proposed boundary adjustment to address those issues policy 264 does have that stipulation the new policy adopted in 3a for an administrative adjustment when there's less than 15 students in that development so is so are is this development that we are asking to is this been an approved

[02:26:46] development two two of them have been approved correct correct um and i i am wanting to fix the land because i think that that helped clear it up we originally had put the names of the neighborhood

in um but we removed that two of them have been approved out of the three um does this include the one that has not yet been approved it has but it's it's coming before so so we're so you're asking us to vote on some for two approved and one i'm not asking for you to vote on the neighborhoods nothing to do with the neighborhoods i'm asking you like in the past this has been done

[02:27:25] this was done for avondale before avondale existed i'm asking for the land that these developments will be built on if if they are ever built to just be redistricted to a different school to not overcrowd the nooksville school so whether or not the development is approved it's just that parcel of land if there are homes built on it will go to a different school okay uh and it's just to be clear we're not voting on changing any boundary right now we're asking the superintendent to bring forth the recommendation that if projects are built in that area how does that address the

[02:28:02] overcrowding and these these construction projects currently have no i understand that i guess so my secondary part of that thank you for clearing that up so my secondary part of this is do we not go through this annually um around budget time when we look at we we do and we're engaged in that process right now with enrollment projections and and looking at potential solutions where we do have some uh developments coming online we have some potential for overcrowding so would this overlap that ongoing process are they the same thing yeah in this particular instance uh no because we don't

[02:28:37] have any residential developments coming online in these uh parcels that we're discussing tonight as stated we do have one residence uh that is within one of those parcels so hold on because you just confused me with your statement there. So the parcels on land, are they zoned residential?

[02:28:57] They are. All three of them? Okay. And only two of them have been approved and one of them is active? No, there's been no homes constructed. There was one home that was in the development or in this parcel previously. Okay, sorry for all the confusion in case the public's wondering why I keep asking these questions. It's because we just voted on a policy, so I want to make sure that I understand that. I also know that we are getting close to budget time where we do these things I know that we have done things in the past but I just usually we have a little bit more information presented to us when we make these decisions and so

[02:29:31] that's where the confusion is coming from for me and I have trouble I know that we may have done something like this in the past but this to me sets up a path for this to occur because all of us have development coming through I I can't say specifically if it's going to be for less than 15 students or not.

[02:29:52] I just am not a fan of this because I think it's a one-off and it can cause problems. And we may end up having to change it anyway later on down the road. So I'm not sure of the urgency of why we have to do this now or why we can wait until when we're going through this procedure in, I don't know, 60, 90 days, something like that.

[02:30:13] I also don't like the idea of redistricting for land that's not doing anything. it's not approved, it's not anything. Generally because we only take action when something's been approved, and we know for sure it's coming down the pipeline.

[02:30:31] So I think that's a bad precedent. I do agree with keeping students together. I just feel like there's a better way to accomplish the same goal, and I have no problem supporting the goal if the project is approved, and we know it's going to impact how many students, for sure, with our new student generation rates, because that's also changed recently.

[02:30:52] - To just do it, I'm not really sure the urgency or why we're doing it right now, but just to do it as a one-off, I don't feel like we have enough information or are comfortable to make this decision. So thanks for trying to educate me. - Dr. Lateef. - Ms. Mitradenic.

[02:31:08] - When I first came on this board, we voted for development impact statements. We voted on a development impact statement for Bristol Corner, Bristol Crossing, and Thomas Farm, I believe? - That's correct. - Okay. On our development impact statements, we asked that we recommend that they go to another school based on the overcrowding that currently existed?

[02:31:31] - I think the wording that we put on the development impact statement does give us the option to consider redistricting as part of that process. - Okay. And I think that my goal in this, again, because this is my district and the outcry from the parents at the Noakesville school is so strong.

[02:31:52] As I said, when I first brought this up, when we first talked about this, there is overcrowding and they were very concerned that we were gonna bring more overcrowding at the Noakesville School. It is the number one thing that I hear about from the Noakesville School right now is the crowding.

[02:32:09] And we are bringing 30 classrooms to the Noakesville School to help mitigate that. This is a short-term solution that again has been done in the past. And I don't believe we, This is just asking you to bring something to us to present, correct?

[02:32:27] - That is correct. If the board votes for us to move forward in this direction, then we would bring a plan forward for the board's consideration. - Yes, and again, like she said, like Lori said, they're not built yet, and like I said, I don't think that this is gonna be a solution that we can use across the board.

[02:32:47] I think eventually we're gonna have to move boundary lines and fix things in the same way that Mr. Wilk has talked about with some of his schools. I think it's coming. This is a short-term solution to not uproot everyone in the process.

[02:33:05] - Mr. Jesse. - I think when we're doing something on a basis like this, it's a special basis. You know, if we start just basing on the land, where land is all throughout the county in every district there are, we could do that.

[02:33:30] And I don't think it's wise to do it. I think again, once we know where the homes are actually being built, then we do it. But I do not support doing this preemptive strike to come up with a solution.

[02:33:48] - Ms. Wall. - I have a couple of questions. First of all, I think it was in our last meeting, we got a slide that said planning portal. And I've since tried to find that and I can't find it. and when i clicked on it it said access denied but i the reason i was looking for it is i was curious about the numbers that came in on september 30th um and where we are in the capacities of the surrounding schools um nilkesville school included covington harbor i mean because we have hot spots we have we have schools that are very under capacity and we have schools that are over capacity and sometimes they're right next to each other um and i believe what this is trying to do is

[02:34:27] kind of balance that in neighborhoods that have not yet been built yet right correct correct can you tell me the name of the three because i did discover i did get into that um new tracking dashboard um so it's hot is it what are the names no the three the three uh developments that we're referring to um in this uh potential reboundering would be thomas farm bristow corner and bristow crossing okay thomas farm

bristow crossing correct and bristow what thomas farm bristow corner and Bristow Crossing. Okay, so is Thomas Farm the one that wraps around the back of Patriot and?

[02:35:06] Unfortunately, I don't have that information in front of me right now. I have found the portal for that, so I can go figure that out. I apologize, Ms. Wall. Thanks for bringing that to my attention. That's okay. I just had trouble getting into that portal. Okay. But I do like to follow the enrollment numbers of the schools. I like to look at the capacities because this is very strategic and it's it's very much a board function to kind of look at the balance of where our students are where we have under capacity where we have over capacity and i do acknowledge that the new policy that we just voted on is is meant to be more flexible than the process that we used to have

[02:35:43] and so i am interested in seeing like how this works for this particular situation for these particular land bays I guess that haven't yet been built upon. I do think I believe what happens and correct me if I'm wrong is we trigger this the division comes up with a proposal and then we follow the process of letting the community know about it per how many families are currently affected and then so that there is public transparency because right now there isn't any transparency. People are looking at the agenda they have no idea they might think that

[02:36:19] we're doing the entire noakesville school division which is kind of alarming um am i correct yeah just miss wall to add clarity for you know there there is a stipulation in the policy for under 15 students and that does stipulate that will notify uh those affected school the affected schools uh four weeks prior of any potential uh proposal that would impact those schools and and schools would be responsible for notifying those families so there's kind of a four-week notification period so if the board were to provide us that direction as early as tomorrow we'd be working with schools

[02:36:55] to potentially notify them that there could be an impact notify them of some potential plans work with our communications team to assist with the notification of this to the schools and families and then we would be back in front of you with some proposed a proposed plan okay and then do we also know how many potential housing development you know i don't have that number in front of me tonight um it is substantial we we are not prepared tonight to bring data forward so if you if you would like for us to come back or to share with the board

[02:37:31] details and data about this particular district we can do that but you know we just don't have that information readily available yeah i understand this is just to kind of initiate the process correct for developments that don't haven't been built yet and then if the board does give the directive then when we come back we would have all of that information all of the data readily available so that you could make an informed decision okay i have one more question but i don't know if it would be appropriate now i guess the question is are these properties contiguous with other school boundaries or are they islands right we would that would be a part of give us

[02:38:10] time to yes we would bring forward the maps that might be the data and what the plan would be tonight is just about do you want us to go through that process of bringing to you all of that information tonight is not about making a decision about what's going to happen because we haven't put a plan together um if you make give us that directive this evening that's what this discussion is about then we will move forward with bringing you the plan and all of these questions that you have can get answered but for today with what's on the agenda we don't have all of that readily readily available because, again, like what was already mentioned, these aren't existing homes,

[02:38:47] right? So we would have to go and do all of that planning and bring it forward if the board so wishes us to do that. Okay, thank you. That's a good clarification. Mr. Wilk and then Mr. Jess. I just need some clarity on this policy in regards to not, again, if we initiate this, my understanding, unless I have this wrong, is that what comes before us, we have to go with either A or B just like with Covington Harper is that correct okay just just want to clarify that because I you know I know Mr. Jesse supported me but one of the things he said is develop plans that we can look at we're not looking at them you have to you're you're you're asking us to develop

[02:39:26] a plan that you can then take action on correct and we can't say I don't like A or B let's just go back according to the policy correct you I mean you can always say what you don't want to do however the the directive to go down this road is with the intention that you're going to make some form of decision about what comes forward but you always have you reserve the right to if you don't like you can always tell us to go back to the drawing board and you know bring something else okay so we could do that with covington harper okay i was just getting clarity with that um regarding i just want to say um you know um i'm going to defer to my colleague in the brentsville

[02:40:05] district this is her district as she did to me with the potomac district if she believes this is best for her constituents um i really don't believe i have a say in that regard she knows what's best she was elected by those constituents so i will defer to her and i will support her with this proposal mr jesse it seems to me that if we're going to go down this route that i should be asking for a plan for the 14th high school we have property over there that doesn't have homes

[02:40:40] on them but there are being a lot are being built now so and i think there's a more of a need because some of these uh buildings are being built but we're not making plans for the the districting of the 14th high school so i again to me we make an exception for something that doesn't exist and yet i do have something that does exist and there's other properties that could possibly be develop over in the Occoquan district so unless I'm confused I don't know why if this is the

[02:41:19] priority mine wouldn't be Dr. Lateef Mr. Denny so again this is the Brentsville district this is three parcels of land this is two neighborhoods that have been approved they are approved the homes are coming they will be built the students need a place to go it is currently zoned for them them to go to the noakesville school it would put the noakesville school over capacity as it already is even more so you don't have those numbers yet currently right now new bristol village sits on 28.

[02:41:55] it is a budding thomas farm that is coming new bristol village attends t claywood marsteller and brentsville right now currently we would right now thomas farm is slated to go to the Noakesville school in Brentsville, even though it's going to abut and possibly even connect to New Bristow Village.

[02:42:18] That to me does not make sense. So I'm coming to you all and asking you, can you help me make sense of that? Is there a better option? That is part of why I'm doing this because you would have these two neighborhoods abutting. You're sending this neighborhood to a school that's very overcrowded at the Noakesville school instead of sending them alongside of New Bristow Village to T Claywood that is under capacity right now this to me makes sense it's common sense we've done it in the past it is for three neighborhoods it has nothing to do with building a new high school that has nothing to do with what i'm asking right here right now zero to do with building a new high school but i have said

[02:42:57] and i will say it again we will need new schools on the west end of the county in the brentsville district if all of these developments are built two out of the three of these are approved and and are going

to be built. The third one is about to be. So I'm trying to be proactive and asking you for a plan and I don't wanna wait until it's too late.

[02:43:17] I also don't wanna wait till these people buy their homes and think they're going to a school and then we uproot them. Currently, right now, if you were to come back to me with a plan that puts them at a lower capacity school, the only current student we'd be affecting is one, is what I was told, one.

[02:43:35] It's under 15, and that one, I have asked out loud, which I don't know if my ask can be done, it has in the past, again, historically with this board, that one student can be grandfathered into where they go currently so we don't uproot them, if that's a possibility.

[02:43:51] So currently this affects no one right now, but it could have a bad effect if these developments get approved and they are going to the school that they're going to now. That's what I'm trying to prevent. Again, it has nothing to do with a new high school being built.

[02:44:07] These are two completely different options. If another board member wants to bring something before the board, we all have the same ability to do that, which is calling their colleagues, getting two members to agree to put something on the agenda, just like I did. And that's what I'm doing today.

[02:44:22] And it has nothing to do with anyone else's districts or projects. This is very particular to what we're talking about right here. So I'm sorry, I just think it's completely separate and we can't lump those two things down. - So let me just be clear on just where I am on this before we hear from others.

[02:44:42] And I wanna try to wrap this up. So this is basically a request the superintendent take a look at these areas that potentially will get built out. And they're currently gonna be in a very heavily crowded school district as Ms. Trudennek points out.

[02:44:57] Now our current policy that we just voted on last time allows for this kind of look through. Secondly, when we voted on the development impact statements, we made it clear in the impact statements that we would consider when new projects are coming in, when those specific projects came in, we would actually consider what would happen if you rezone those for schools that had less capacity nearby.

[02:45:24] So what we're asking the school division to provide us is documentation on what the capacity situation looks like in those areas. and then that can turn into a possible recommendation. That's all we're asking right now with this vote. And I think it's reasonable.

[02:45:40] It follows the current policies we have voted on. It's good governance. It's also gonna be something that the public can weigh in on. And so that is the reason we're doing this. Now this doesn't impact really, to our knowledge, and we wanna know, if we were to rebound it, does it actually impact anyone that lives there?

[02:46:00] And if it doesn't, and these areas are contiguous with an area that makes sense to put where there's lower capacity, 'cause you're not impacting any real people now. That's a little bit different than what we would do with Covington Harper, where we're gonna move people and actually re-boundary them. And so that is a little bit different.

[02:46:17] But if board members come to the board with a request, get something on the agenda to take a look at, that is exactly how, as Mr. Odenick points out, that's how we do things here. So that's why I'm

asking that the board consider this. This is just for consideration.

[02:46:32] eventually there'll be a full vote on it if there is a recommendation to do so. But this is in line with the good governance that we have sort of abided by when we did the new impact statements, where we said, look, we're gonna take a look at balancing capacity. We have enrollment dropping. We're currently down another 500 students this year.

[02:46:51] And so I have, you know, there are real concerns about this. When the planning commission, the BOCS makes decisions on where to put things, I think it's important that the school division work hard with everyone to make sure that we're doing what we can to say, hey, look, if you're gonna develop, it makes sense to move homes here and there.

[02:47:12] That's why we voted on the new boundary policy. And so it's all part of good governance. And I don't see anything wrong with at least having the superintendent take a look at this work. Thank you. Ms. Williams. - Thank you. When do we do this annually?

[02:47:29] - Say that one more time. - When do we look at student generation numbers, whether that happens annually correct we're doing that right now we're in the process when do we when does that information come to the board we'll be bringing that as part of the cip presentation to the board so we're going through our enrollment projections right now looking at um you know potential impacts on schools which then drives the cip development which includes renovations additions uh new construction okay and so and we do that uh we will be bringing forward our proposal to the board i believe at the work session in january i believe it's january 15th so january

[02:48:02] November now, so I was well within the time. Secondly, this this is something that is specific. I mean, we're asking the division to bring us information and to begin redistricting. It's not like let's just get some information and make a decision. This is a redistricting process. So let's be clear. It's not up for debate as to what the outcome is. It is specific for redistricting.

[02:48:28] We don't have numbers. We don't have all the current information. And even with impact statements, the line that was drawn is that we give our recommendation we don't have anything to do with whether a development is built whether development is approved we don't know when a development is coming online we don't have anything to do with any of those decisions ours is based on numbers and where a student goes to school my only issue with this is it's premature in the sense that we don't even have that information currently because the division is

[02:49:02] actively doing it right now to prevent to present to us that is my objection it's not about what district it's in because guaranteed once we agree if everybody agrees on this then it's going to be rapid fire everyone look at each other's district about a housing project or development that is actively being approved actively approved and if we include something that's not even approved but up for proposal that is opening up a new can of worms because we all also have that in our districts to me the goal would be to gather the information be able to look at it evaluate it and know where

[02:49:41] it is because if we do it in a silo that is why we have the problems we have right now it's because each redistricting or every time we bring a new school online or there's one thing it's in that silo and we don't look at how it affects the surrounding schools and the surrounding district that's the issue coming to harper's is having there's a plan to mitigate that also the reason why we did this is because there was no plan to mitigate overcrowding but we have plans to mitigate places where there's overcrowding so i

mean board members please vote how you want do what you want but again i will say just like i said when we voted on the policy we are right where i said we

[02:50:20] would be in a loophole creating a lot of duplicative work for our already understaffed division you're asking them to give us information that they don't even have prepared yet that they're going to present to us in less than 90 days if you are okay with that that's fine i will gather my three and we can start this process all year long because that's exactly what we're doing this is not an emergency situation we don't even as a board know when that when the houses are being built when they're going to be sold because i could say this about belmont i could say this about the new apartments that are right there on route one that are being built right now that haven't been

[02:50:56] leased so that's why i'm just asking this board to just be careful about when we do make these decisions. I could be wrong but I thought this would be a good part when we changed policy 264 because there are times where a development has already been approved. It's been sitting dormant for years and then all of a sudden they decide to build and that is a one-off and it absolutely makes sense to then think about the school and the overcrowding because we didn't know that they were going to build. We didn't have a clue. It was already approved. Some of these developments have been approved longer than some of us have been in public service. I'll just say

[02:51:32] like that like Belmont is a good example the housing up there has been approved and reapproved and reapproved 20 plus years they haven't built anything yet so if we do this it sets a precedent the next one will be Covington Hartford the next one will be for the 14th high school the next one will be I don't know pick a district that's all I'm saying like this is not a one-off and I understand that it's to protect students but we don't know for sure it's going to be fewer than 15 students and I don't have any problem looking at it I think we should look at it Knoxville is overcrowded there does need to be a solution but we're getting ready to do

[02:52:06] this in 90 days so I don't understand why we want to do it twice and I don't understand the urgency for two parcels of land one that's sort of being developed the other one isn't and the other one we don't even know because the BLCS hasn't made a decision when we do have urgent issues and urgent overcrowding needs that we are going to be talking about 90 days but I am fine being the lone man on my statements just like I was when we changed the policy But we are right here where I said we would be. Thanks. Mr. Jesse, and then I'll have the last word.

[02:52:46] And then we'll vote. I will disagree that this does not impact the 14th high school. It impacts the staff. They will have to do the work. They will have to do the planning. I have asked, and if I need to, I guess I need to learn what to do because I have stated that I would like for the 14th high school boundaries to be considered sooner than later. And I think the parents of that school that is going to be built needs to be done before we do something that.

[02:53:23] Yes, Woodbridge High School is overcrowded. It's probably not as overcrowded as Noseville, but it is overcrowded and has been. We also have Occoquan Elementary School that's being built, and that might have some new boundaries associated with that.

[02:53:43] And then we have the Woodbridge Elementary School, and those are boundaries. The staff have not given us data on that. We have also asked for the, what is it called, program capacity study, and we're still waiting on that.

[02:54:02] And so the staff is busy. So it impacts the staff. It does impact us indirectly, I guess you would say. But again, if we're gonna do this, then I'm gonna ask and try to get, I want our boundaries for the 14 high school fixed or established, thank you.

[02:54:24] - Okay, great. So, you know, again, as I pointed out, this aligns with the work that we're trying to do as a board to deal with capacity. Over the years, we've tried to reduce trailers. We've tried to deal with the overcrowding that existed for a long time.

[02:54:41] I understand there are overcrowding, even in my kids' schools, there's trailers. I recognize that. I think when there's an opportunity to look at something and when we did it in the impact statement, we said we would consider this, then it aligns with what we have in the current policy for triggering something, this all falls in line.

[02:55:01] We're not doing anything that is not kosher or in line with our current policy. And so the recommendation here is that This will help us proactively reduce overcrowding and doesn't affect anybody currently living in those areas.

[02:55:19] And so if that seems to be what we can come up with, I would support the redistricting process over there to do that. And I would do that in any district where we have new construction that doesn't impact current folks and is contiguous if it meets the criteria by which we set our policy, I think that is reasonable.

[02:55:40] And that is a proactive method to doing it. Now, when we're trying to change policy and do reboundering where we're changing and moving current folks at current schools, that's a lot harder to do. And we've had those challenges and those times work best when we're building a new school and we're changing those boundaries.

[02:55:59] And whether we should move those timelines up on reboundering so we give people more of an advanced notice on what neighborhoods are gonna go where, this would align with that similar kind of issue. So, you know, the longer, the sooner you do it, the better, but that's why I'm asking the board to consider this.

[02:56:16] And I do fully support this motion 'cause I think it's the right way to go in being proactive about the work we have to do. So that's my opinion and I recognize and I value Ms. Williams' opinions because she's been on the board a long time and has been dealing with land use issues for a long time.

[02:56:32] And I do recognize that. So at this time, I'd ask the board to please vote.

[02:57:04] - Ms. Williams, what is your vote? - The vote is six yes, one no. Jesse, one abstain, Williams. Motion passed. - Okay, moving on to 1606, compensation and reimbursement for school board members.

[02:57:24] I'm gonna ask the board to consider, I'm gonna actually move to table this motion at this time to bring it back at another meeting in the future. So I'd ask the board to consider tabling this motion in lieu of some more work needs to be done on it, and I'd like to bring it back more ready to go.

[02:57:46] - Yes, do I have a second? - Oh, Ms. Williams seconds. Okay, any discussion? We'll take a hand vote on this, all in favor of tabling this motion. How many do we have? Can someone count?

[02:58:02] And any oppose? Okay, one opposition. For the record, Ms. Trudenik opposes the tabling of that motion. Moving on to-- - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I just want, since we're tabling this, I just want the public to know that our current expense policy still stands then?

[02:58:18] - Yeah, absolutely, a hundred percent. - It was only, we were only modifying. - Modifying, that's correct. And, you know, we'll likely take this up when we do the reorganization of the board, which happens every January. Let's move on next to, okay. So we have a series of policies up for first reading tonight.

[02:58:34] 1607, eight, nine, 10, 11. These are policies for the public to take a look at. These are policies for the board to take a look at. These policies will be voted on at our next meeting. These policies are designed to bring the school division more in line with the US Department of Education's policies and recommendations on issues of non-discrimination, discrimination, codes of behavior, bullying, harassment, and other issues regarding our policies into making sure we align with the federal laws, state laws, and so forth.

[02:59:13] So I'm gonna ask the public to please weigh in on these issues as they see fit. The board will be voting on these moving forward. At this point, we'll move to board matters if there's no objection. I see no objections. We can start with Mr. Blake today.

[02:59:30] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. Tonight, I wanna take a moment to highlight, or I just wanna keep on, just keep talking about Garfield High School tonight. That's what I'm gonna do. So tonight, I wanna take a moment to, yeah, the Garfield High School with a dash.

[02:59:49] Tonight, I wanna take a moment to highlight incredible achievements and opportunities I've recently witnessed at Garfield High School. First, I'd like to celebrate the tremendous success that the football team had this year. Despite facing significant challenges to start the season, key players transferring out, a new head coach, and implementation of a new strength and conditioning program, this team showed resilience and determination, finishing the season with a 7-4 record, but going 5-1 in the Cardinal District. They silenced the doubters and prove that perseverance and hard work lead to success.

[03:00:26] They're a shining example of the strength and spirit of our students and staff. Also during my visit, I was deeply impressed by the Student Activity Leadership Council. Under the leadership of Angel, their president, these students are developing critical skills, those soft skills that will serve them in their future careers, communication, teamwork, time management, problem solving, and adaptability.

[03:00:52] Their work reflects the leadership qualities we strive and cultivate in all of our students. I also had a chance to tour Chef Teresa's Culinary 2 class, where the students were preparing tacos, taco lunch orders for the staff.

[03:01:11] Programs like this not only build technical skills, but also instill professionalism and creativity. equally impressive was the plumbing program where students are mastering real-world skills that lead directly to high-demand career opportunities.

[03:01:29] And like you heard earlier when Mitchell Matheson said that these kids are coming out of school ready. They're career ready, college ready. And these experiences at Garfield High School underscore the dedication and talent within our school. They're a reminder of what we can achieve when we invest in our students' futures, equipping them with skills and confidence to thrive in any path they choose.

[03:01:52] I wanna thank the administration, teachers, and staff, and students for welcoming me at Garfield High School and for their incredible work and their ongoing commitment to excellence. You inspire us all. And I'd like to wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday break.

[03:02:09] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams of the Woodbridge District. - Thank you, Vice Chair. I just want to, again, congratulate these schools my district that were here this evening for freedom for the amazing accomplishments that they have made over the last year and for featherstone for their continuous recognition i am so deeply proud of all of the schools in my district as well as i mean schools division-wide of course i have to brag on mine because it's it's just an honor to be able to represent them

[03:02:44] and all the hard work that they do the uh hours that go unrecognized the the relationships that they take time to build. I am always humbled and impressed by the schools in my division, and I just want to offer them kudos and say because it is the Thanksgiving season that I am thankful to be able to represent them. Because it is the Thanksgiving season, of course I wish that everyone is able to enjoy the holiday break, but I'm also mindful for all of those students and some of our staff who may go home and not have food for Thanksgiving or eat and celebrate in a

[03:03:20] manner to which those of us who are privileged to have full tables to do so i also know that thanksgiving is a time that we gather as families and and due to the rhetoric outside of our schools that it may be a divisive time and i would just encourage everyone to be kind we heard from a student here earlier today during citizen comment time and i bring this up because that was my experience as a student in prince william county schools i did not get selected for gifted it it wasn't even it wasn't even an option there were no minorities in that program when I was in school and for those that I hear often say well we won't let it go

[03:03:58] back to that we can't let it go back to that the only way it doesn't is if you go back and learn your history period the only way it doesn't is if you don't understand your privilege and if you don't have empathy to look through the world through someone else's lens no matter whether you agree with it or not it's still a battling experience and so I would encourage all of us while we have time off and away from academics and away from school, to express your love for someone who is different than you, to learn about someone else's perspective because learning and becoming educated doesn't mean you have to agree, but it does give you the opportunity

[03:04:35] to empathize and see someone else who's not like you as a human being because that's where we all start. And I will tell all of those, I said this during the pandemic, I am someone who comes from a multi-ethnic and racial background.

[03:04:50] happens often is that we become devices by by two sides and those who who come from those backgrounds that are mixed of multiples don't have a place there either so as adults we have students who listen to young people who listen to us let's be mindful of our language as students be mindful of your peers and your neighbors because you don't know if you will depend on them at a time of need just let's all try to be kind and know that difference makes us better and And that disagreeing doesn't mean hatred.

[03:05:22] It's an opportunity to learn. So I hope everyone enjoys their break. Thank you. Ms. Wall of the Gainesville District. Right. Thank you. I wanted to highlight some Veterans Day events that I attended in my district.

[03:05:39] Mountain View, Alvy, and Gravely all held really fun and very meaningful Veterans Day events. And the community members who came in and the kids who were there to see their loved ones, loved ones. The whole feeling of all of these events was just awesome. Tyler also held an event. I was out of town visiting my college kids, but I heard it was also fantastic. We do have a significant military connected

community in the Gainesville district, and I was actually amazed at how many people came out. A very, very large number of veterans attended, so

[03:06:16] that's a very special connection. And I congratulate Alvie on receiving their Purple Star designation this year for the first time let's see I want to congratulate battlefield cheer they made it to states they didn't win states but they did make it there they were the only Prince William County School to make it and they did a great job I want to wish good luck to the football team for their game on Friday night it's going to be a rematch against Patriot and I wish the quarterback a speedy recovery from his serious injury that he sustained a couple weeks ago I want to express some gratitude to some folks first of all miss Huebner and

[03:06:54] Kathy Porter Lucas for the hard work that you, all the work that you provided in leadership for the cell phone policy presentations. I know you've been working on this for a very long time and it is a big policy change. It's huge actually. And so I know it took a lot of work, so I thank you for your efforts.

[03:07:12] And I want to thank parent liaisons. The parent liaisons in my district are amazing. I'm so impressed with all that they do. They go really above and beyond and each one is slightly different in what they do, but But they really are connecting to families and really making a huge difference. So one of the things I'm really proud about with this board is that we funded parent liaisons and expanded that position.

[03:07:35] I want to thank everybody, since it is Thanksgiving, thank everybody for doing your part. It does take everyone's efforts, however small everybody has a part to play. And as in coming across, I came across this Vietnamese proverb, which I want to share, in preparation for tonight's meeting.

[03:07:56] And the quote is, or the proverb is, "When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree." I really love that sentiment. We partake of so much fruit, so many good results, and we should remember the one who planted the tree in the first place for all of us.

[03:08:13] I love seeing the efforts bear fruit in the lives of our students. I love seeing their progress and when the light illuminates in their eyes when they catch and understand a new concept. I thank everybody who works so hard to make those kinds of things happen. And I wish you all a happy Thanksgiving.

[03:08:33] - Mr. Jesse of the Occoquan District. - Again, I would like to thank our schools that did very well and we're honored today. It's a big achievement. I did attend the Jerome contest or tournament over at Altman Park and really, Mr. Blake and I were there together and we had nice conversations with the staff and their needs.

[03:09:02] So that's something very important. This morning, my wife and I went over to Woodbridge High School for the mock interviews and that was good. One of the things that I was impressed with was one young lady actually wants to be a cosmetologist.

[03:09:20] And so of course I asked her, are you using the new facility? And she said yes, and they're very impressed with it. And she said that they love it. And it's really a hands-on real life experience. So that I'm planning to get up at 5:30 in the morning to go down to Williamsburg.

[03:09:42] And so I'm gonna end at this point. Thank you. - Ms. Tredenik. - Thank you. I missed watching the VMEA performance.

[03:09:58] I think we are one of only two middle schools that were invited to this. And I know that Mr. Kierstedt at Marsteller has worked very hard. My little guy is performing in Norfolk on Thursday. And so I

wish Marsteller the best of luck, along with Colgan.

[03:10:16] I believe Colgan is going at the high school level. Football season is still underway, as Ms. walls said and it's going to be a very exciting matchup between patriot and battlefield this friday so go pioneers um and congratulations to all of the schools that made it uh this far in the football season it's awesome work and i'm excited for winter sports i also got to attend for the first time uh the prince william county school's food show at patriot high school and got some yummy yummy food options one of them was a student recipe of butter chicken and they also

[03:10:54] offered bulgogi which i think are very great dishes and great additions with a lot of protein for our kiddos so i can't wait to see if we add those things to the menu i'm very excited and i got to meet a lot of students from all over the county there a beloved teacher from t clay wood has recently been diagnosed with als and he's retired and they did a community party for him engagement kind of thing for him and i just wanted to let mr white family know that we're praying for you thinking about you and if you want more information about how you can rally around them

[03:11:31] it's on my facebook page as well as t claywood's page um there is i'm trying to think there's more thing the cell phone policy we talked about that uh the the veterans day celebrations i went to sorry my notes are scrambled all over my page uh cedar point i have never seen a veterans day celebration like what they did it was extremely emotional extremely just exciting to see how many parents grandparents aunts uncles came as veterans and the coolest thing was getting to hear each kid

[03:12:08] say their veterans name um out loud and it really uh honored the veterans there as well as t claywood we i went to one there um happy thanksgiving to everyone uh remember that there's always something to be grateful for and that gratitude brings joy mr wilk that was beautiful thank you um a couple things uh just a few events i attended i think probably the latest homecoming of the of the entire county forest park had theirs on the 8th they had their first home homecoming

[03:12:43] parade miss patello and i were there we were stars um and uh so we were that that was a great event love seeing it hope they continue the parade then there was the football game where forest park was triumphant so that was great uh mr fagerholm was here i wholeheartedly support the cte program and expansion for the veterinary medical program i think it's a great thing and even if it pains me to say it that it would have to be housed in colgan for the betterment of the students i would be all about it or where independence would be fine too that's good

[03:13:17] i love it i love the idea he's great we did tree planting at 8 a.m on the 13th at patty elementary with mr fagerholm and his wife retired principal of this county there was literary night at covington Harper and then Ashland had bingo night last Friday which I got to be a reader very exciting but it was fun being told I'm going too fast or too slow either or I want to thank Mr. Blake you did a great job articulating position three for the calendar I agree with you and I think that's

[03:13:50] really helpful and I about not the calendar I'm sorry I'm tired about the cell phone policy thank that is helpful and I think that would be great to support number three I want to go back to the 90-day CIP estimates and enrollment and such like that I'm looking forward to that and hopefully as we see with the estimates I've been giving given at Covington Harper I I implore the board to consider adding Covington Harper to the boundaries of the new Woodbridge school I don't

[03:14:25] think it'll happen but i'll put a i'll put a plug out there for it again um and uh yeah i think that's it for now i will say straightening the code of behavior which i wanted to do and put enforce penalties on racial terms and epitaphs like we are heard about earlier i think we would be seeing less of that word if we were suspending an iss or oss in that building um but more to come with that so going with that code of behavior too i also believe that you know for me to support keeping a cell phone at any capacity during midday or in passing time and stuff like that where there is a direct correlation to cell phones and cyber bullying and mental health and stuff like that

[03:15:05] uh would make me a hypocrite so more reasoning why i support at least in august um doing bell to bell at the high school level okay thank you miss auger thank you dr latif i'm got a chance to go to colgan to see hadestown and if you didn't get to see it um i i i wish they'd just bring it it back one more night it was so so good and i loved how all of the leads and yes my niece was one of them but all of the leads had developed their characters just amazingly you could tell

[03:15:41] that they got to develop them themselves they the the ensemble cast was their own character and the the three muses were amazing um did you get to see it dr latif i uh it was oh man he didn't make it I would, his son was there, I saw his son there that night.

[03:15:59] It was so good, so bravo to them. The food show was also amazing. One of my favorites was the meatball, simple meatball, it was delicious. And then there was a strawberry muffin bread that Freedom High School students had made, and it was, it did not taste healthy, and they kept telling me it was, and I loved it.

[03:16:19] It was so good. All right, so bravo. Breakfast burrito, yum, everything, it was so good. Yeah, the student who spoke tonight and what Ms. Williams said is something that we kind of covered in a training that I went to for my job yesterday.

[03:16:37] And I have another quote that they read to us, and I thought this was really interesting. if you think about the idea of inviting people into your space and the idea of hospitality this is an excerpt from a chapter entitled creating space for strangers and reaching out by henry newen from 1975 it says hospitality therefore means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place it's not to bring people over to our

[03:17:14] side but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines it is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment it is not an educated intimidation with good books good stories and good works but the liberation of fearful hearts, so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit.

[03:17:39] It is not a method of making our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening of an opportunity for others to find their way. The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free, free to sing their own songs, speak their own language, dance their own dances free to also leave and follow their own vocations hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life of the host but the gift of a chance for the guests to find their own may every child find their own in the most positive ways in our schools

[03:18:19] happy thanksgiving okay thank you very much um so just to reiterate fafsa opened um it was a problem last year. The government did not have it. You know, it was supposed to be a new system. It wasn't working very well last year. All sorts of problems. They still say they're beta testing it now, which means it could be problematic. So my advice to everyone is to start early. Start working on that now. Make sure you go to the seminar this week. It's again the 21st, which is Thursday, 6.30

[03:18:54] online you can sign up and it will be recorded but very important I would start sooner even if you don't think you can qualify for financial aid many merit-based scholarships from universities do require that you fill out the FAFSA to award the merit-based scholarship so it's really important to have that paperwork done if you're looking to ask for financial aid get loans or even apply for any type of scholarship so it's really important I can't emphasize enough and with all the problems had last year i'm i'm asking everyone to sort of get on it this year it's a lot of work anyways

[03:19:29] just filling out the form so it does take time so starting early is is just better for everyone i continue to you know hope our seniors are doing all their work and getting their stuff and their applications in application deadlines are some are past some are coming up your early deadlines are some of them are done but some are still out there so please get to meet with your counselors and do all the work that you have to do for that and make sure that if you don't want your test scores on your transcript you have to request that and then double check make sure that it was taken off i think that's really important as you look at your transcripts and i think with

[03:20:08] that i'm just going to say happy thanksgiving and i wish you all happy holidays have a great week thank you meeting adjourned



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