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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Date Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 28m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Xyl_4jwK9Y
- 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] - Okay, good evening. I would like to call the meeting the Prince William County School Board to order. Approval for the agenda, motions in order, 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? - Yep. - I second. - Any discussion?

[00:00:18] Please vote. All in favor, hands, please raise your hands. Okay, any opposition? None, motion passes unanimously. Moving on to enter closed session, the motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:00:42] 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, one. Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other civil litigation involving the school division under Virginia code section 2.2-3711A, seven and eight.

[00:01:12] Three, to discuss the award of a public contract to employee's exclusive representative, which involves the expenditure of public funds and the terms or scope of such contract where discussion in an

open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A, 29.

[00:01:30] Four, to discuss and consider the disposition of publicly held real property where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body and to receive legal advice regarding the same pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A3 and A8.

[00:01:48] And five, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A19.

[00:02:09] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams, any discussion? Please vote. All in favor, raise your hand or you can vote on here. Yeah, we'll go ahead and follow the screen. We'll just do that. - Anonymous, motion passed.

[00:02:24] - Okay, at this time, the Prince William County School Board will go into closed session

[00:02:27] and return in approximately one hour.

[00:03:28] Okay, the Prince William County School Board will re-enter open session from closed. - A motion is in order, 7.01, closed session certification. Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of January 8th, 2025 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:53] 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 a 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.

[00:04:16] - Do I have a second? - Sure. - Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:41] - Ms. Williams, how do you vote? - Thank you. - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to 8.02, grievance appeal for employee T25001, a motion is in order. Vice Chair Zargarpur. We just did, oh no, oh yeah, appointment of releases, 8.01.

[00:04:59] Okay, so yes, this is 8.01, approval of appointments and releases. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:33] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - 8.02, grievance appeal for employee T25-001. Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board uphold the hearing officer's recommendation of dismissal in employee case number T25-001 and then further that the chairman at large is authorized to provide a written decision to the employee reflecting the school board's decision.

[00:05:54] - Do I have a second? - Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:06:28] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - That concludes our closed session action items. Moving on to the pledge of allegiance, I'd like to invite our student representative Kaylee Tom to lead our pledge. Ms. Tom. - I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, - One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:06:58] - Okay, thank you. Tonight we're tabling our Thriving Futures Focus segment for the next scheduled school board meeting on January 22nd. We will now move on to the organizational meeting. A motion's in order for 11.01 approval of the annual organization meeting agenda. Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the annual organization meeting agenda as recommended.

[00:07:18] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:07:40] - The vote is eight yes. Unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to nomination for vice chair, 11.02, a nominations in order, Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board elect Tracy Blake as vice chair for 2025. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman.

[00:07:56] - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - Oh, I would like to say something. - Yes, yes, please. - I think Mr. Blake will be an excellent vice chair because he goes to everything. He takes all the trainings. He is all in all the time.

[00:08:13] - Mr. Chairman. - Thank you, Ms. Zarkboy. Ms. Williams. - Yes, I'd like to also echo that response. Which Mr. Blake is also someone who has gone to all of the school board trainings, school board education opportunities.

[00:08:29] He has definitely demonstrated that he is more than capable of leading and vice chair, so thank you. - Thank you. I'll just, please vote. While you're voting, I'll just add that I look forward to having Mr. Blake as vice chair and that the Neabsco district is very well served by his representation.

[00:08:49] And it has been a long time since the Neabsco district had a vice chair in school board. - Mr. Jesse, how do you vote?

[00:09:05] Vote as eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to 11:03, motion's in order. Clerk appointment, majority report. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board appoint Laura Mills as clerk of the Prince William County School Board for 2025.

[00:09:21] The salary of the clerk shall be as currently budget, - Budgeted. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chair. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. - Sorry, I am excited to continue to have Ms. Mills serve as our clerk.

[00:09:40] Thank you for doing such a wonderful job, and I know that you will continue to provide us a wonderful service, and as I'd like to say, keep hurting us cats, so thank you. - Thank you. Okay, please vote.

[00:10:06] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - 11.04, Vice Chair's our report. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board appoint Anna Udaetate, thank you, as Deputy Clerk of the Prince William County School Board for 2025.

[00:10:22] The salary of the Deputy Clerk shall be as currently budgeted. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Yep. - Again, I am just excited that Ms. Udute will continue to serve as our Deputy Clerk.

[00:10:38] It is a true joy and pleasure to serve with her. I know she's absent this evening, but I appreciate everything that she's done for us. - Do I have a sec? We did the second, right? Please vote.

[00:11:09] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - 11.05. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board require a corporate surety bond of \$10,000 for the clerk and the deputy clerk to the school board, conditioned upon the faithful performance and discharge of their duties with the premium of such bonds to be paid for by the school board.

[00:11:26] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:11:52] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - 11.06. - I move that the Prince William County School Board establish the location of its regular school board meetings at 14715 Bristow Road, Manassas, Virginia, which are typically held on the first and third Wednesdays of the months January through June and September through December.

[00:12:10] Meeting shall convene at 6:00 p.m. and immediately following the approval of the agenda, the school board will enter closed session until 7:00 p.m., at which time the public meeting will resume. Adjustments to the meeting calendar are made to accommodate scheduled holidays, spring break, and the annual Virginia School Board Association conference as necessary.

[00:12:26] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:12:47] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on 1107. - I move that Dr. Carol Fonard, Deputy Superintendent, be appointed as the designee of the Division Superintendent to attend meetings of the School Board in the absence or inability of the Superintendent to attend through December 31st, 2025.

[00:13:04] - Do I have a second? Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote. - Thank you for your service, Dr. Flanard.

[00:13:31] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - 11:08, and by the way, you know, this is our organizational meeting, so it does get a little bit monotonous here. We are almost done, but this next motion is a long one. Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments for the organizations or committees as follows.

[00:13:52] One, continue membership in the Virginia School Board Association for 2025. Two, elect Lisa Zargarpur to serve as delegate to the Virginia School Board Association Annual Convention in Williamsburg, Virginia in November, 2025. Three, elect Lori Williams to serve as alternate to the Virginia School Boards Association Annual Convention in Williamsburg in Virginia in 2025.

[00:14:11] Four, appoint Lori Williams to serve as representative to the National Alliance of Black School Educators for 2025. Five, to appoint Tracy Blake to serve as alternative, alternate to the National Alliance of Black School Educators for 2025.

[00:14:27] Six, appoint Barbara Lateef and Jennifer Wall to serve as representatives to the Prince William County and Schools Joint Audit Committee for 2025. Seven, appoint Richard Jesse to serve as alternate to the Virginia school, excuse me, the Prince William County and Schools Joint Audit Committee for 2025.

[00:14:46] Eight, appoint Richard Jesse to serve as the representative on the Head Start Policy Council for 2025. Nine, appoint Jennifer Wall and Justin Wilk to serve as representatives on the School Health Advisory Board for 2025, on the Student School Health Advisory Board for 2025.

[00:15:04] 10, appoint Erica Tregenic and Justin Wilk to serve as representatives on the Safe Schools Advisory Council for 2025. 11, appoint Barbara Lateef, Richard Jesse, and Jennifer Wall to serve as representatives to the PWCS Internal Audit Committee for 2025.

[00:15:21] 12, appoint Tracy Blake to serve as alternate to the PWCS Internal Audit Committee for 2025. 13, appoint Jennifer Wall, Laurie Williams, and Lisa Zargarpur to serve on the School Board Disciplinary Committee for 2025. 14, appoint Tracy Blake, Richard Jesse, and Erica Trudenik to serve as the alternates on the School Board Disciplinary Committee for 2025.

[00:15:45] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion?

[00:16:12] Please vote. - Vote is seven yes, one no. Trudenik, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to Adoption and Consent Agenda. - Miss Vice, Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[00:16:27] - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Miss, sorry. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:16:54] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Moving on to acknowledgments, recognition, the motion's order, Mr. Vice Chair Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgement and recognitions as recommended.

[00:17:11] - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams? - I second. - Any discussion, please vote. Oh, Ms. Williams, go ahead. - Thank you. I just, since we're starting the year off fresh in 2025, just a reminder that we approve these a month and ahead.

[00:17:26] So these are celebrated technically in February. 'Cause sometimes we have people ask us why we haven't done anything for the month we're in, but we did that in December. Thank you. - Please vote.

[00:17:54] - Vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tridentic, motion passed. - Those citizens, so next up is citizen comment time. those citizens who've signed up in advance with the 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, citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:18:12] Please use proper decorum 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 in the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have four citizens signed up to speak.

[00:18:28] When I call your name, please come to the podium state your name and address for the record the first four who you can come up and grab a seat up front are Jeremy Webster Madeline Webster Chance Williams and Makia Little Jeremy Webster hello Jeremy Webster Woodbridge Virginia one two seven two eight rolling book Drive Woodbridge Virginia sorry my daughter won't be speaking after me she's got sick today but I'm here to speak to you

[00:19:05] today about the need the need for a robotics building and the impact robotics and the impact of robotics from a parent and a coach's perspective it is truly an honor to stand here and share my thoughts on the profound impact robotics has had on our children or my children on our children not just as a tool of education but as a transformative force shaping their future and why it's important for prince

william county to fund this theme building that will continue to enrich their education as a parent i've had the joy and privilege of watching my child immersed herself in robotics for six years, which has been inspiring.

[00:19:41] I've seen my daughter grapple with complex problems, collaborate with her peers, and achieve breakthroughs she didn't even think were possible. Robotics has taught her perseverance, creativity, and the ability to learn from failures, skills that will extend beyond technology.

[00:19:56] It's not just about building machines, it's about building confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose. However, one of the most significant impacts on her was helping her find her voice. to hesitate to speak up unsure if her ideas would be valued but robotics changed that whether it was brainstorming solution advocating for her ideas advocating for her ideas or presenting to judges she learned that her voice mattered public speaking became a natural part of the experience especially during judging sessions where she had to explain her team's work confidently and concisely over time she stopped fearing the spotlight and started embracing it from a coach's

[00:20:35] perspective, robotics has been, robotics has had the power to ignite curiosity in ways traditional education cannot. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. I've seen students light up when their code works for the first time and when a robot completes a task. They learn from critically, they learn to think critically, to innovate, and to perhaps most importantly to work as a team. These moments remind us that they're not, that we're not just coaching for competitions, we're coaching for life. Despite all of this, one of the most incredible things to see is the friendships made along the way robotics introduces our children to people who share the

[00:21:10] same interests and passions and together they form bonds that go beyond competition they support each other laugh support each other laugh through the stress celebrate every achievement no matter how small and how big these friendships makes their journey thing oh man what makes it even more remarkable is how robotics breakthrough bears it brings them together brings together kids from diverse backgrounds skills levels and creates a space where everyone contributes and learn so So let's continue to support and celebrate this journey by supporting esteem building here in Prince William County because every robot built, every challenge solved and every lesson learned, we're not just preparing our kids for the future, we're preparing them to create it.

[00:21:50] Thank you guys very much. - And Madeline Webster was, she's not coming. Okay, great, thank you. Chance Williams.

[00:22:08] - Hey guys, good evening. Although I see many familiar faces, allow me to introduce myself. I am Chance Williams. I'm a graduate of Prince William County Schools, a former student school board representative, shout out to us, an alumni of Mary Williams' FIRST LEGO Team, an alumni of Potomac Middle School's VEX Robotics Team, an alumni of Forest Park High School's VEX Robotics Team, and an alumni of FRC Team 2068 at Osborne Park High School.

[00:22:35] I'm also a Department of Energy Scholar, a junior in computer science at Alabama A&M, and an older brother to two little sisters still attending Princeton County Schools. Launching Thriving Futures. Though to me, it was just a motto for a little bit, I have truly launched and gone right to Rocket City, Alabama.

[00:22:51] And I owe that to Prince William County Schools and more specifically, the Prince William County Schools Robotics Program. Though I've talked to many of you individually about this, I'm here tonight to speak to all of you about this. Robotics. Pre-COVID, every single school in this county, including independents, participated.

[00:23:11] Currently, the program is at its pre-COVID numbers, even though it never really stopped participating during COVID. It's 39% female, has nine different forms, and even other counties across the state come here to not only learn, but to participate in our events and competitions.

[00:23:28] The robotics program is more than just an extracurricular activity. It provides students with meaningful and hands-on experiences in STEM. It fosters solving skills, innovation, team collaboration, and leadership. An investment in our children's future that no doubt fuels our nation's scientific and technological advancements.

[00:23:48] However, the program is currently operating under numerous constraints, one of which is space, which has limited the number of teams and students that can participate. We are leading the state of Virginia with land, air, and sea robotics programs, which host numerous competitions across the county throughout the entire year.

[00:24:08] For years, these competitions were run by one person, Mrs. Denise Carroll, shout out to her. However, the county did hire an additional staff member, but two people cannot support 10 robotics platforms and thousands of students across elementary, middle, and high school.

[00:24:24] Our robotics program should be preserved and expanded, and a physical and permanent location is necessary to ensure that PWCS can live up to its motto, launching thriving futures. Prince William County must recognize the immense potential of our robotics program and take decisive action.

[00:24:41] We therefore call upon the decision makers in Prince William County, that being you all, to increase support for the robotics program, allow for its expansion, and most importantly, provide a permanent home where students can cultivate their passion for robotics and STEM. Thank you, and I have half of your phone numbers, so expect to hear from me individually.

[00:24:59] Thanks. - Makia Little. - Good evening, I'm Makia Little. My address is on file with the clerk. Good evening, Dr. McDade and board members.

[00:25:16] I would first like to applaud your CIP facility condition assessment and programmatic evaluations program. This proactive forward-leaning assessment is beyond necessary in a diverse county like ours to ensure that schools with the most connected parents don't monopolize all the resources.

[00:25:34] Although I am a mother, excuse me, of three Potomac Senior High School students, I also serve as Vice President of Potomac's PTSO. Therefore, I believe all Potomac High School students are my babies. My son, however, did not start at Potomac.

[00:25:50] As a freshman, he began high school at Colgan, which, as you know, is one of our newer facilities in Prince William County. If you're familiar with the campus, and you are also familiar with the numerous crosswalks that indicate to drivers the importance of pedestrian safety and giving students the right of way to walk about campus.

[00:26:09] So one can imagine my shock on my son's first day of school at Potomac when traveling down a dark road. I prepared to turn into the campus only to slam on my brakes to avoid hitting a kid who stepped

confidently off the sidewalk and into the road not marked by any crosswalk toward a strip of gravel on the other side of the street.

[00:26:29] That was 2022. After years of research and with the assistance of Superintendent Dr. McDade and Prince William County Executive Mr. Chris Shorter, we were able to determine who owned the property. So the PTSO established a pedestrian safety committee and with the help of both school and county representatives, we were able to co-create a three phase plan to address our concerns.

[00:26:53] Phase one will be to add crosswalks and a new light head on an existing pole at the marquee entrance to improve visibility and pedestrian safety. Phase two will be to add enhanced lighting to include flashing lights along the entire path leading up to the school.

[00:27:08] And phase three will be to add a sidewalk to ensure our babies don't have to walk in the street to get to the main entrance along Panther Pride Drive. If you receive the images I sent each of you earlier today, you will see that amidst the snow, there is no accessible path for our walkers to access the school.

[00:27:27] As amazing as our facilities team is, they can't clear a sidewalk that doesn't exist. And since the state has yet to clear the sidewalks leading up to the school's property, the only clear path would literally require our students to walk in the street.

[00:27:43] Bill Miller has submitted our phase two and three CIP requests, as CIP requests. So I'm here today seeking your approval and prioritization of this project in your CIP work sessions so that this long overdue project can begin no later than this summer.

[00:28:02] My understanding is that a new sidewalk could cost around a quarter million, but with the budget that we have, we can't not afford to invest in the safety of our babies. Thank you. - Thank you. That concludes citizen comment time for this evening.

[00:28:18] We're gonna move on to the Office of the Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning 1501, the revised 2025 school calendar, Dr. Sullivan, or Dr. McDade, I'm sorry, let me hand it over to Dr. McDade. - Dr. Sullivan.

[00:28:33] - I wasn't sure you wanted to talk. - Thank you, I was gonna say, the ninjas typically sneak out right now, thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Zargarpur, or Blake?

[00:28:56] Members of the board, Dr. McDade, I'd like to present recommendations for possible revision for the 2025-2026 school year. With the approval of the revision to policy 541 pending, an additional holiday Eid al-Adha, and my apologies for any mispronunciation, will impact the school calendar.

[00:29:23] To be aligned with the proposed policy change, the following revisions are recommended for the 2025-2026 school calendar. First, Monday, August 18th, 2025, will change from a teacher workday to the first day of school for students.

[00:29:44] On our current calendar, school would start on August 19th. The recommended revision would have school start on that Monday, August 18th. The teacher workday that was previously on that day would now be an additional flex day for teachers.

[00:30:02] This means that they have more autonomy and how they utilize their planning time to prepare for the school year. With flex days, teachers can utilize that time on non-contracted days, anytime between July 1st and June 30th.

[00:30:18] So at a date more convenient for the teacher, they can work on their pre-planning. May 27th, 2026 will now be a division holiday pending approval of the policy. Here is a visual representation of the recommended revised calendar.

[00:30:38] And I was gonna say, as you can see, but you may not be able to see super clearly, you'll see August 18th switch to the first day of school and May 26th switch to a student holiday. This will come back to the board on January 22nd for a vote.

[00:30:56] That's it. - Thank you, Dr. Solomon. - Thank you. - Any other questions? - I just, and I asked this before, but one of the things that I ask that we add to the calendar too would be the school board meetings that they're listed. When you subscribe to the calendar, current calendar for schools, school board meetings don't show up on your phone.

[00:31:20] And I, so my request would just be that those also get added so parents are aware of when those are, if they choose to attend. Since we have such high attendance, you know, maybe that'll help. - Well, that's a great recommendation. I will certainly collaborate with our communications team on it, thank you.

[00:31:37] - Okay, thank you. Next up is student representative Kaylee Tom from Brentsville District High School. Ms. Tom. - Good evening and happy new year everyone. My name is Kaylee Tom and I am a senior at Brentsville District High School this year, as well as the alternate student representative to the school board.

[00:32:00] As I'm sure you can tell, I am not your regularly scheduled programming. as unfortunately both Ala and Almudena were unable to make it to tonight's meeting. But I am absolutely thrilled to be able to join you all in the dais this incredibly chilly night.

[00:32:17] I hope that everyone had a lovely and unexpectedly extended break and that everyone here was able to get to tonight's meeting safely. I would also like to take a quick moment to shout out the work that is currently being done by the Department of Transportation to get our roads cleared throughout the county, to ensure that students can make it back to the classroom as safely as possible, as well as the tireless work that school custodial staff and the facilities department have engaged in over the past couple of days in order to ensure that all schools are ready for the prompt return of students.

[00:32:51] As we move into the new year and set our sights on the second semester of classroom instruction, I would like to highlight some of the work that has been done by the student senate and individual high school student voice committees in the past few weeks. The Prince William County Student Bill of Rights has been finalized by our County Student Voice Committees and by the Student Senate, and we are absolutely thrilled to be able to present to Dr. McDade all of the hard work that has gone into this document over the past few years by the Student Senate and the Student Voice Committee initiative.

[00:33:24] Additionally, Student Voice Committees are beginning to find their feet on the middle school level, and we are absolutely overjoyed to be able to begin hearing more feedback from our peers at the middle school level. I would also like to shout out the beautiful showcases and performances that happened throughout the county, both before and during winter break, and our student artists, singers, and musicians that all put on stellar performances, from Gainesville High School's Tiny Tot concert to the Potomac and Patriot High School choirs that had the opportunity to perform in this building for staff here.

[00:33:57] And if I may take a quick moment of personal privilege here and say that as a senior in high school, this is an incredibly stressful season. Finishing college and trade school applications or beginning to scout out possible fields of employment are stressful for all of us and I have had the absolute privilege of working with a phenomenal college and career counselor on my journey to that big question mark that is the future and I would just like to say how grateful I am to be part of an educational system that allots these sort of resources to its students because I know that there are just so many of these amazing staff who are in their peak season of demand right now.

[00:34:37] And I would just like to say a resounding thank you to these lovely men and women who are such a vital part of ensuring that we are truly creating thriving futures. Thank you so much for your time. - Thank you, Ms. Tom, pleasure to have you this evening.

[00:34:54] Very good, we'll move on to Dr. LaTonya McDade, superintendent time. - Thank you, Dr. Lacy. Welcome back to a new year. Happy new year to all of our families to our staff certainly we thought we would have been back in school right now but we are not due to inclement weather and I want to echo some of what you already heard and thanking our facilities in our transportation teams for their unwavering commitment to our students and for your hard work and prioritizing both safety and education as we work diligently to try to get

[00:35:30] schools reopen many people are not aware of what goes into trying to navigate inclement weather and getting schools reopened our facilities and transportation teams literally work around the clock oftentimes they're out at 1:00 in the morning 3:00 a.m. because they know how important it is for us to get schools open many of our families depend on us for more than academics and we provide needs to families on a day-to-day that a single school closure is a consequential decision that is made and so we take these decisions very

[00:36:04] seriously and I am so grateful to our facilities and transportation team because they believe in the vision of this organization and they know how important it is to get our students back in school and so they've been working really diligently and around the clock and I want to extend my gratitude to each of you for your dedication to our students and serving our families currently the situation with inclement weather is that although the the weather event in terms of snow is over we have currently about 50 roads a little over 50 roads

[00:36:40] that are not that are impassable to our buses and so our transportation team is concerned about running buses down certain roads and that impacts some hundreds of bus routes today i was able to meet with regional leaders for vdot along with my chief operating officer mr vernon bach and we shared with VDOT specific bus routes that we would like VDOT to pay particular attention to and they have committed to being strong collaborators and working with us and we're hoping to get those routes up and running so that we can get students back in school as soon as possible

[00:37:19] while we prioritize both education and safety. So I want to thank everyone for your patience and understanding both the priority to get students in school, but at the same time ensuring that we do that in a way that it doesn't compromise the safety of our students and our families.

[00:37:36] I also want to encourage all families to work with us to voice your concerns to HOAs and different, helping individuals to clear snow that are on private property for students to be able to walk, because that's not something that the school system has control over.

[00:37:53] Certainly we'll work with VDOT on primary and secondary roads, but we also do need everyone to work with us to make sure that neighborhoods are cleared for walkers to be able to get to bus stops. We're also exploring the opportunity to plan for emergency snow routes, so you'll hear more about that in the coming days because that's something that we may need to enact depending on what the future holds for future inclement weather events.

[00:38:23] I also would like to congratulate our new school board vice chair, Mr. Tracy Blake, on your appointment. I look forward to working collaboratively with you, along with our chairman, Dr. Babar Lateef, and our entire school board. And as we gather for our first meeting of the new year, I want to express my gratitude to our school board members, our staff, our families, and our community for your unwavering dedication and the essential role that you each play in shaping the future of our schools and our school division.

[00:38:54] To start the new year is always filled with reflection and anticipation. It is a time to acknowledge our progress, celebrate our leaders, and set the course for what lies ahead. PWCS continues to thrive in no small part because of our principals.

[00:39:10] From January 12th to January 18th, we celebrate Virginia School Principals Appreciation Week. When we recognize Virginia School Principals Appreciation Week each January, we recognize the remarkable leaders who drive the success of our schools each and every day.

[00:39:27] Our principals embody strength, resilience, and vision that transform our school communities. They set standards of excellence, foster relationships that empower student and staff achievement, and lead with core values and commitments to launch thriving futures.

[00:39:44] So to our principals, I want to personally thank you for your leadership and for the countless hours that you dedicate to ensuring our schools are not only places of learning, but environments of growth, safety, and belonging. In addition to honoring our leaders, January is also a month for budget planning for the next year.

[00:40:04] And we have spent the past several months reviewing priorities and analyzing funding estimates. Throughout the next several weeks, the school board will be engaged in many meetings with a goal of delivering an approved 2025-26 budget to the Board of County Supervisors in late March, early April.

[00:40:22] One important component of the budget planning process includes the Capital Improvement Program, or CIP. As you may know, the CIP is a management tool for planning the capital improvement projects needed to house students adequately. Annual review of the CIP enables the division to address changing enrollment patterns and utilize facilities in ways consistent with sound educational practices.

[00:40:46] The CIP provides a 10-year blueprint for new construction, renovations, and specific projects in response to our student body. The CIP meeting is scheduled for the evening of January 15th, and I want to encourage you to visit our website at pwcs.edu for more details about this meeting and to review the remaining meeting dates and times for the 2025-26 budget.

[00:41:12] Our budget planning process is reflective of the vision, mission, values, and commitments in our strategic plan. And we've stayed committed to that strategic plan throughout the course of the four year plan. This year also marks the culmination of the PWCS Vision 2025 Launching Thriving Future Strategic Plan.

[00:41:29] And I'm proud of the strides that we've already made toward meeting our goals in our plan. But just as learning never stops for our students and ourselves, growth never stops for us as an organization. In the coming months, we will be working toward preparing a new five year strategic plan, one that will carry us forward beyond 2025.

[00:41:51] This is not just an administrative task, as you'll see in the work that went into the 2025 launching Thriving Futures vision. That was the culmination of feedback and input from thousands of stakeholders within this organization. It is an important opportunity for us to dream boldly and to chart a future where every student graduates on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:42:18] Our new strategic plan will reflect the voices of our community, educators, families, students, and community partners. Together, encouraged by the growth measured in our strategic plan 2025, we will set new ambitious goals and build on the foundation that we've already laid in our current strategic plan, ensuring that our visions align with the evolving needs of our students and the broader school communities.

[00:42:44] Together, let us step forward with optimism and resolve toward building a future defined not by the challenges that we face, but by the resilience, innovation, and collective effort that overcome them. Thank you for your dedication, and I look forward to a productive year of impact and student achievement in 2025.

[00:43:01] Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Moving on next to our committee updates, we have four committee updates from Ms. Wall, Mr. Blake, Ms. Agarapur, we, four, three. We have, we'll begin with Ms. Wall, provide an update on the joint audit committee.

[00:43:17] Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Joint Audit Committee met on December 10th at the Board of County Supervisors McCourt Building at one county complex at 10 o'clock in the morning.

[00:43:32] And we heard a presentation by Cherry Beckert on the fiscal year 2024 annual external audit results. There were no deficiencies identified in internal controls on the school side. There was one on the county end and that was being addressed. It had something to do with prepaid taxes, a balance sheet adjustment, something above my pay grade.

[00:43:51] and the county was responsive and was on it. This was a really good audit. The auditor said that we're in great shape. Our audit met their high standards. We had a high quality of financial documents submitted. They noted no fraud, illegal acts, or violations of laws or regulations.

[00:44:08] Our team was commended on how we take feedback seriously, that the county and schools were cooperative and easy to work with, and the overall consensus we're doing a great job. I hope that was a good summary of what we talked about. Of note, there will be some upcoming financial audit and reporting changes for this coming year.

[00:44:25] And this may have a quite significant impact on the county and schools financial reporting. And the auditors indicated a willingness to discuss with management the potential impacts on the county and schools financial statements and how the auditors may be able to assist us in our implementation efforts.

[00:44:44] So that's just something to be aware of. Other than that, I think it was a good meeting. It was fairly quick and there wasn't a lot of discussion. It was just kind of an overview presentation. - Mr. Blake, you wanna give us your update?

[00:45:00] - Yeah, it was a quick meeting. We, they went over the education updates, the nutrition updates, as well as we had, they served fewer meals obviously in November because it's no school in November.

[00:45:20] So we served fewer meals to the preschool kids. And that was basically it for this last meeting. There wasn't a lot.

[00:45:35] - Ms. Zargapur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I went to the JET meeting, which is the joint environmental task force between Prince William County government and Prince William County schools. I did arrive a little bit late, so I was basically getting there as they were starting to discuss new business.

[00:45:55] There was a discussion about the county government and school division collaboration on stormwater management and flood mitigation. There was some discussion also the inflation reduction act tax credits and because we've done a lot of work in the in our schools there was some discussion from Jessica Wymer about how we're going to be looking at those tax but those potential tax credits and savings that the the schools could get back there was also some discussion about how this is relatively new for a lot of municipalities in that there

[00:46:32] needs to be some discussion across governments to talk about best strategies and how to use these credits and and things like that there was a little bit of discussion about energy efficiency and conservation block grants I'm just looking down our list climate mitigation and resilience goals between the school division and the county one of the things there was a short discussion about that I I threw in my ten cents my ten cents two cents whatever inflation um the the county bus system public transportation they were talking about potential routes and things and i made the recommendation that maybe they should talk to the school since

[00:47:11] we do have quite an extensive bus system um and that maybe there were some things that we could learn from each other so um and that was it great and we'll go back to miss wall for an update on the governor's school joint board chair wall thank you um for governor's school we were given an update on the first months of school basically the first semester and the students are doing well of course it's a challenge for some of course they're taking college level classes but the

[00:47:45] kids are on track we took a look at the budget proposal for fiscal year 2026 the budget is looking good the biggest impact will be cost of living increases and we're waiting to see what that will be we discussed recruiting efforts for the coming year promotion of the school the opportunities that it prevents or presents the school had a parent information session parent student information session it was standing room only so that was very good they also the governor's school at innovation park took the kids over to innovation elementary school and they hosted an event called innovation squared and this was a huge success the kids were able to

[00:48:23] interact and teach the elementary school students and try to ignite interest in stem and the kids said that this was really rewarding and the younger kids of course loved it they loved it when the high school kids come to visit and there was some good press for governor school NBC News did a feature and PWCS communications did a story and there was some positive buzz on Facebook alumni day was on 12:20

I heard it was awesome I there were over 50 students who were slated to come back and speak to the students and they students the current students get an opportunity to speak with the alumni and and hear their

[00:49:01] perspective having been a few years away from governor school I heard it was fantastic a couple of calendar highlights that might be of interest to the board we have two more meetings this year February 20th and April 10th there will be a research symposium on May 2nd and this will be at the GMU SciTech Freedom Center and I've heard this is awesome I've heard Miss Williams talk about it and so this is just something you know we should all if we can try to go to it we should apparently it's amazing so I'm really looking forward to

[00:49:31] May 5th there will be the mechanical engineering department will host its first event at their new life science and engineering building and this will be a capstone day for the department of mechanical engineering and this is the first time this will be held on the SciTech campus of George Mason also a very cool event would be neat for some of our students to be able to attend this and graduation it seems crazy to think that in January we're talking about graduation but that will be held on May 17th at 10 a.m. and this rotation is our turn so that graduation event will be held at Colgan high

[00:50:06] school again May 17th and that's going to be here before we know it and that's that's all for the governor's school innovation park thank you miss wall appreciate that okay that concludes the committee updates we're going to move on to board matters we have 1901 and 1905 these are policy revisions council has been looking at these they're on for first reading mr. Anderson if you want to give us a quick review and then the board will take a look at this from the next couple of weeks and take feedback from the public mr. Anderson

[00:50:40] thank you mr. chairman this is a set of policies in the section of the policy manual that belongs to the board it's sort of the foundational series of policies the first policy that we're what we're suggesting should be added is a fairly common one for school boards to have for some reason our policy manual does not have that essentially it's just a foundational policy saying from where the board gets its authority and then we're recommending the deletion and revision of several policies that are duplicative of other policies that

[00:51:14] exist elsewhere in the manual including in the instruction series and so these are really just a cleanup effort that the board directed for that the series of policies that it owns any questions happy to answer that or if you have any suggestions or changes before we take it up at the next meeting for action so please communicate with council regarding these policies and if the public has any concerns please email them to the clerk or to the board members thank you mr. and i'd like to head um hand it over to dr mcdade for our next two agenda items dr mcdade i believe that is mr bach will be coming

[00:51:53] forward to address policy 1906. thank you dr mcdade and good evening board members uh first policy we we have in front of you tonight for first reading is policy 401.01, which is safety and security, general goals and security of our building and grounds.

[00:52:13] There's some additional, well, this is within our five-year revision window. Policy 102 does dictate that we need to review and update our policies every five years. So this is the fifth year of this policy. And so it firmly does establish language in it that the superintendent is responsible for ensuring that PWCS and all of our public safety officers, including fire and police, have clear guidance on the roles

and responsibilities of public safety officers assigned to schools in interaction with school staff and students.

[00:52:45] So that's the first rating of that policy tonight, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have. - Okay, thank you. Moving on to policy 892, Dr. McDade, for the same one. - Yep, I can take it away. That's policy 892.

[00:53:01] It is telecommunication facilities on school property. It's a first reading. Again, this is a five-year review and an update. It modernizes our language away from telecommunications, which is old language, to new language of wireless structures and facilities.

[00:53:20] And it removes some redundant language that's in the policy and places it in the regulation. So it's really an update. So happy to answer any questions you might have. - Thank you, Mr. Bach. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. - Thank you. - Moving on to 1908, we're bringing back an agenda item was tabled at our november 19th school board meeting and i'd like to hand that back over to legal counsel wade thank you mr chairman this is a policy again that's owned by the board it's policy 115 it governs the reimbursement of school board members for various things as provided by the code

[00:53:54] of virginia the change here would align the policy to the same reimbursement procedures that govern all school employees the previous policy or the current policy I guess is a little more restrictive in the sense that it prohibits school board members from being reimbursed for travel within their district that is not something that would occur with employees who are performing their functions along with their job you'll note that I did I do recommend and this is a change from the

[00:54:30] previous one that at the bottom that the school board be shown as the as responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy not the chief financial officer because this is a board policy not an administration's policy thank you mr anderson motions in order mr blake mr well we'll get to do the motion first yeah i can do it oh you're fine miss williams yeah i moved that the prince william county school board approved the proposed revisions to policy 115 one yeah 115 compensation and reimbursement of school board members.

[00:55:03] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Blake, Mr. Blake seconds. Okay, any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I just appreciate all of the hard work on this policy to get the language correct. I also think it's important to know that this as a-- - Mr. Anderson.

[00:55:22] - Mr. Anderson, thank you. I was gonna say Wade, but that's not appropriate. As Mr. Anderson stated, because I've heard from a lot of our employees, specifically teachers, that they feel that they are not eligible for reimbursement when they travel, which we know is incorrect. And so I just want to make sure that that is reiterated.

[00:55:40] Of course, there's parameters around that, just the same applies for school board members. I also think it's important to note for the public that we just don't submit a report and it goes to finance and they're just like, oh, cut a check. We still have to adhere to the same rules and regulations to ensure that it is properly vetted before the expense is paid out to us.

[00:56:00] I know 'cause I submit expense reports my other life and it can get kicked back if you don't do it right because they are audited and it's still money and we have to be sure that we're in compliance. That was the other misunderstanding that I had heard from the public. So again, I just want to reiterate, I

appreciate everyone's combined effort and hard work and I think this is a great opportunity to again inform our public.

[00:56:24] - Ms. Trudanik. - Wade, can you explain, I guess I have a few questions. The first one would be, can you explain how this works because I believe that we do not, this does not include if I leave from my home and come here to a school board meeting that is not covered under this policy.

[00:56:45] Can you explain that a little more? - Correct, just as all employees are not eligible for reimbursement for mileage when they leave their home to come to work, whatever that work location may be, that's not a reimbursable event for an employee.

[00:57:02] However, we have lots of employees who leave home, report to their first duty station and then during the day may go to two or three other duty stations that travel in between during the workday is of course reimbursable mileage and so the same would apply to the school board your essential let's call it your commute your commute from your home to your first duty station would not be a reimbursable event however if you were to let's as the code of Virginia requires school board members to visit their schools if you were to set up an appointment to visit schools two or three times in a day to visit two or three separate schools once their first sort of commute to the

[00:57:42] first school was over the travel in between the school let's say school one school two and school three would be a reimbursable event just as it is with other employees so long as you were on school board business of course my next question would be how many other policies do we align with Prince William County School employees on that is a difficult one to answer because obviously when I get into this debate all the time my position is that you are not employees you do get a you do get a you do get paid but that is not the sole

[00:58:21] determination of whether you are an employee you're an official a school official and so obviously there are lots of policies that wouldn't apply to you because you're not actually in the course of work you know you wouldn't be issued a letter of reprimand by example because you're the school board so that's an example but there are lots of policies that don't apply I couldn't give you a number and then one more question I have children in the school system if I'm at attending an event that they are participating in and I am also

[00:58:57] a school board member would you say that that could qualify for reimbursement if I'm going to that event if I was going from that event to another event would be the question the policy as revised says that it's mileage that is reimbursed incurred while performing school board business it's up to the school board member to determine whether or not that meets that criteria if you are going to see your child in a play it would be my position and I'm usually hesitant to give legal advice in public but in this case I think I can safely say if the purpose of your trip is to see your child perform that is not

[00:59:37] school board business it's a personal trip if you are however going as part of your school board duties to tour a school and visit with your school as you are required to do under the code and then later on there is a an event or maybe you go to another school for a personal event there are circumstances the facts would determine that but it's up to board members to understand and submit for what is a what is official school board business and of course the legal counsel's office is always available to provide advice to board members if there's some question about that

[01:00:11] and last question would be these reimbursements when and if submitted are available to the public if they ask uh they are public records under the uh virginia freedom of information act correct thank you wade mr jesse yeah i i think some of the issues is most people don't realize it but we We don't have an office.

[01:00:41] Our home is our office. So it's not like we come here to work, which is what we're saying we're doing. But this is not where we are most of the time. If I have to have a meeting, I usually come here for the meeting and so forth.

[01:00:59] So again, our home is our office. We don't have that. So what we're doing is, again, consistent with what the employees. The other thing I want to point out to my other board members, you have an option whether if you feel that you don't want the reimbursement or you shouldn't have the reimbursement, you have the right not to file a claim, and so that's your option.

[01:01:28] But I don't think you should say that none of us have the option if we want to do that. Thank you. Okay. Please vote. I'm sorry. Oh, yeah, Mr. Wilk. - No, I'm just explaining my vote.

[01:01:45] So a couple for consistent purposes in the past, I voted for a similar proposed policy change. I'll remain consistent on that. I've also notably voted against previously proposed board pay raises. I did talk to one of the sponsors of this and said to what Mr. Jesse's point was a second ago, in the spirit of transparency, if I vote for this and then tell the community I'm not going to use it, the only way for them to really follow up with me is to do a FOIA, take the process and get a FOIA.

[01:02:19] I proposed that a link would be accessible on the board page that would be updated monthly where the constituents could see such a thing in the language. That's not in the language, and therefore I will remain voting against this.

[01:02:35] Ms. Wall. - I feel like our unique position as elected officials and not employees makes this policy change uncomfortable for me. I drive around a lot, I visit my schools all the time.

[01:02:54] That would be a very open-ended, costly thing for taxpayers if I submitted everything that I did, which I consider to be part of the elected position, but it's not that I am being mandated to do that, it's those things that I'm choosing to do because I want to do the job well.

[01:03:14] And everybody has their own way of looking at it and how they interpret this job because it is very open-ended. How we serve is very self-determined by each one of us. I do feel like the change makes it too broad. I prefer the former policy. I don't like the option of saying, well, if you wanna know what a board member's doing, you have to FOIA them, 'cause heavens, we get so many FOIAs already.

[01:03:37] I just don't think that's a very great option. So under all of the circumstances, considering the fact that I do believe we are a unique, not non-employee of the school division, and as servants of the taxpayers, I feel this is too broad of a change and I'm not gonna be in support of it.

[01:03:58] - Okay, thank you. At this time, I'll just let everyone know I'm supporting this motion. I've been consistent about making sure that I, we tried to do everything in consistent with the policies of the entire broad school division. So please vote.

[01:04:36] - The vote is four yes, three no. Tredenik, Wahl, Wilk, one abstain, Zargarpur. Motion passed. - Moving on to board matters at this time. Last time we started with Mr. Wilk, Today we'll start with Ms. Williams, go this way and then do Mr. Blake and then Ms. Williams.

[01:04:53] - Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome back to the school year, now 2025, although we haven't been in school yet, but I know it's coming. I would just, this is my favorite time of year as we enter budget season. I will do my annual plea for the public to not only be present here at school board meetings, but also at the Board of County Supervisor meetings and at the state, the General Assembly is getting ready to convene.

[01:05:22] I say consistently throughout the year that many of the things that our public finds the most problematic come from the state. So their bills are public information, just as all of the things that we do as public information.

[01:05:37] It is posted for the upcoming bills that have been filed and the bills that will be filed, they will also be posted. I would highly encourage our public to reach out to their state representative if there is something particularly burning on their heart. I know from speaking with lots of our teachers, it is always training and unfunded mandates.

[01:05:56] So please join me when I go lobby to our state officials to ask them to not give us any additional unfunded mandates or any training that is not intentional for our school division staff. I would like to encourage all of us to work together, collaboratively for the betterment of our students, staff, and community.

[01:06:18] In addition to that, I just wanna give a big shout out to Vern Black and all of the facilities team. I know that they do a tremendous amount of work and there's more coming. Hopefully the snow will wait until after Friday, school dismissal, but I know it's a heavy lift.

[01:06:34] I appreciate all of the community members that come out and volunteer their time as well. Dr. McDade made an excellent point. Often when we have snowstorms, We get a lot of communications from the public asking us to plow things that are shovel things that are not under our authority to do so.

[01:06:50] So please help us help you get our students back in school and shovel near those bus stops and sidewalks if you haven't already as greatly appreciated. Next up for me is the annual January. It is specialty program season. There are plenty of informational nights program, specialty programs start elementary all the way through high school.

[01:07:10] There's a plethora of opportunities for our students to participate in. If you're unfamiliar or unaware, everything is posted online. Please look out for the specialty program nights. They will be coming up soon. And along with specialty programs, dual enrollment. And those who are getting readjusted and acclimated to come back to school, the last day of the second marking period is also this month.

[01:07:32] So please, students, you know, if you make sure all of your homework is done, you're communicating with your teachers, take a deep breath. if you're a senior on the 17th. And the last thing I will end with is, I am so grateful for the work that our student board representatives have done throughout the years.

[01:07:51] I have never been prouder of an accomplishment that I've had my hands in than to provide students with voice. And congratulations on passing your first Bill of Rights. - Mr. Blake, who is it?

[01:08:06] It's me, oh, juggling all the things. I'll go 'cause I'll be really short tonight. Happy New Year, welcome. Well, we're not actually back, which brings me to a source of frustration. You know, on Monday

morning, I woke up, looked outside, saw several inches of snow and knew that I needed to clear my driveway, at least a first pass.

[01:08:30] I spent two and a half hours and it was great. You know, got it cleared off and turned around and looked and it was snowing again. On my street at the same time, there was unfortunately an emergency. And so a plow did go down my street that my house is on because they were with the fire department.

[01:08:52] And they wanted to make sure that the fire truck could get in and out. And because they did that, when the plows eventually came down and when my husband came out and did the second round of shoveling, it was much easier. And parts of my road in front of my house are clear and my driveway is fine.

[01:09:10] And I say that because I know this snow is more than we've had in years, but I think we were caught a little off guard. And by we, I mean VDOT. So, yeah, I'm blaming them. You know, I love snow days just as much as any other teacher.

[01:09:29] And I'm using that time to actually get some work done on some projects that I have. But I do miss my students. So regarding snow, let's make sure we're good neighbors to make sure that we get our sidewalks cleared. I know that sometimes we have neighbors who can't take care of these things and this is a time where we should come together and make sure we're helping each other to unburden from all of this snow. That being said, enjoy hopefully maybe our last day of snow days tomorrow and maybe another good one before spring comes in. If I could put in an order it would just be spring the next

[01:10:06] day and we move on I love snow days and there's other things to do as I we pass the torch to mr. Blake for being vice chair this was a rough year for me my I personally was trying to finish my coursework for a doctoral program I was trying to get through my comprehensive exam my father was sick and he ended up passing away my second grandson was born it was just a lot going on and I felt like this was I know some of you're gonna look at me weirdly but this was a this was my grounding space this was work that I could count on doing people

[01:10:45] I could trust and work with and I knew we would have a direction and get things done so thank you for all of your hard work board and staff for all the things that we've been doing to help make sure that our students have a thriving future thank you and happy new year miss Jen wall I I want to begin by saying just personally I've seen I've my several my children have participated in robotics one of my children COVID kind of got in the way of robotics being awesome for her but for my son it was a transformative experience and he has

[01:11:24] taken that and propelled that into college doing great amazing work wants to continue in the field of robotics and computer science and it's just been awesome it's the when I asked him what did you get out of PWCS education that's what he says it's robotics because it introduced him to the world that he wants to be in after he graduates or now that he's graduated so with that caveat I wanted to begin by saying that I hope everyone had a great Christmas Hanukkah Kwanzaa holiday family time whatever you were doing for the last two and a half weeks I hope it was awesome and welcome to the new year the new year always

[01:11:59] holds promise of a new start and I love I love January I love New Year's and as As we step into 2025, here are some of my wishes for the new year. I wish to see students grow in their mastery of content. But not only that, I wish to see students excited to come to school to learn every single day.

[01:12:17] I wish to see improved focus and attention while in class and less distraction by cell phones and social media. I wish to see a thirst for teachers intent on growing and improving their skills every day. I wish to see those reading and math scores go up as evidence of high quality teaching and learning happening in our buildings and as evidence of the investment that we have been making in our schools and in our salaries.

[01:12:42] I wish to see a renewed commitment to science fairs and speech and debate programs. I wish to see an improved approach to grading and assessment that rewards hard work, encourages mastery and reinforces positive work ethic and respect for due dates. I wish to see modernization in the way that type 1 diabetes is managed at schools and other through chronic and relentless diseases.

[01:13:04] I wish to see continued modernization of our practice facilities and infrastructure, including a turf practice field at Battlefield. I wish to see a culture shift where children and schools are prioritized in our communities, in our attitudes toward learning the importance of school. I wish to see a culture shift in our recognition that we take every opportunity to show up and deliver for kids.

[01:13:25] And I would like to see a renewed commitment to perseverance and refusal to succumb to life's obstacles. which there are many and I have no doubt that 2025 will continue to be challenging as many of the past years have been. In the words of Invictus by William Ernest Henley, "It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul." This is true for us individually and collectively and together we have the privilege of shaping a bright future for the next generation. So thank you to all who are here for kids your partnership trust and dedication to excellence and education

[01:14:05] inspires me and let's make the best of 2025. thank you miss wall mr jesse i want to wish everyone a great and let's have a great 2025. i hope you had a great holiday uh so i can go home tonight and not get beaten up i want to make sure you are aware that this year the prince william county delta Sigma Theta sorority is hosting the 35th oratorical contest. These are students from middle schools

[01:14:43] and high schools here in the county that come and speak before audience. The audience has sometimes been up to almost 3,000 people. This year, unlike the other years, it is not going to be on Dr. King's holiday Monday is going to be on Saturday the 18th at Mount Zion Baptist Church down in Dumfries so I would encourage you to come it's a great event there will be generally three speakers from middle school and three speakers from the high school and they will be speaking in front of the audience and

[01:15:21] there will be awards for that it's a great event the second thing I just want talk about a little bit about the school i want to thank dr mcdade and uh fern and his staff for all the work they do keep in mind folks we have almost 100 schools and when i read over the the little blurb that you sent out to your staff i noticed that the custodians are responsible for the sidewalk and so forth but the facility people are responsible for the the parking lots that's

[01:15:54] 100 parking lots folks they don't get done every day i mean in one day that's a lot and keep that in mind the other thing to keep in mind is this many of the places where the kids are being picked up by buses are full of snow my piles of snow so it's not only there might not be a sidewalk for them to be on because there is a bunch of snow there when i was turning off of minneville road onto uh whatever road 234 here i was confused because the snow was packed up so far that the

[01:16:31] normal place i turn i couldn't turn so we got to keep that in mind safety is important for our kids the other thing when it's 30 degrees is the last thing i want to say before my time run out is i want to thank the folks for coming here to speak on the robotics this is an important subject i'd I'd like to get with Vern and Dr. McDade and talk.

[01:16:55] I have some ideas of what we can do with some facilities that might be available here in the near future. But robotics is a wave of the future and it's something that we need very much.

[01:17:10] Thank you very much. - Ms. Erica Trudenik. - Thank you. Chance, you did a great job speaking. You were fabulous. And it seems like robotics has taken you so far.

[01:17:26] So congrats on that. And I did meet your teacher a long time ago doing, what is innovation, that camp that we did forever ago that my kids loved where we had to find garbage for them to reinvent, it was just great.

[01:17:46] So you've just done amazing work with kiddos and he probably started in one of those camps too 'cause my kiddos are that big now that started in your camp. So thank you for all your hard work that you've done to advance that program And congrats to all the kids that have participated in that program.

[01:18:05] Kaylee, wow, girl, you crushed it. It's no secret I'm a Brentsville Tiger fan, so great job. You were incredibly well-spoken. And thanking all of the people that you thanked, including your college and career coach.

[01:18:22] Shout out to our college and career coach at Brentsville High School. Fabulous. I believe we have two of them, but I think I've only experienced one there, or we only have one. Okay, I'm like, but she's wonderful. I know these snow days are a big deal and a lot of kids are having fun.

[01:18:42] I will say as a mom whose kids don't all go out anymore and I don't have to get them dressed and spend 45 minutes sweating for them to spend 12 minutes outside. I understand some of our young moms are probably like, this is exhausting, but one day you're gonna miss it 'cause you're gonna look around and they're not out there playing anymore and it'll break your heart.

[01:19:00] So enjoy those moments. enjoy your snow days, please stay safe. I do think we made the right call because we do have a lot of teenage drivers and there's a lot of ice still and things that need to be cleared, but fingers crossed that VDOT, HOAs, neighbors can get it done so our kids can go back to school on Friday.

[01:19:21] I will say, I have to mention I am sad that we are not implementing that cell phone policy when these kids go back starting in January. I have gotten a lot of talk in the streets from you kiddos excited that we didn't implement it in January and I'm disappointed we had the cure to something and we're waiting to give it to them until the fall.

[01:19:41] Shame on us, but oh well. Enjoy your Thursday snow day and that's all.

[01:19:57] - Sure, go. Mr. Jesse, I'll vouch for you in case someone hurts you tonight, you'll be good. Congratulations, first Mr. Blake on your selection as the vice chair. We look forward, I look forward to working with you.

[01:20:12] Ms. Zargarpur, thank you for your service and thank you for opening up about that. I know it's a personal thing, so thank you. Reiterate again what Ms. Williams, Ms. Zargarpur and maybe others have said about the sidewalks. The sidewalks are not the responsibility of the school system.

[01:20:28] We have a lot to deal with and we encourage our community, our HOAs, which a lot of people spend a lot of money on to help us and ensure that all the sidewalks leading up to the bus stops are taken care of. Wanna thank Ms. Little for coming in and speaking today.

[01:20:46] Her advocacy, I'm happy it was brought back up because in the past under a previous administration, when we looked into it, we were told that that land leading up to Potomac was actually not the property of Prince William County Schools. So had she and her team not brought that up with this administration and we looked into it and found out actually it is on our property, maybe it would not have happened.

[01:21:08] So I wanna thank her for that advocacy. And I wanna thank our team for jumping in and with alacrity for taking phase one. I know she mentioned about the CIP, I will push and emphasize the importance of including that in our CIP, at least for phases two, maybe three, put them together and get it done with.

[01:21:28] That would be great. Also just plug it in there for the budget. I'd love to see some seed funding for a expansion of CTE in the veterinary science program. So a lot of couple of things, but I do wanna emphasize some events. I do wanna thank all the holiday events, the Christmas events that I attended before our break from strings concerts at Patty and strings concerts at Triangle to orchestra concerts at the high school at Potomac, choral concerts at Forest Park.

[01:21:57] I think my favorite thing out of all that was the day before school got out. I did get to visit five different schools back to back to back to back. I always liked those, you know, spending about an hour in each building, it gives me a little bit of a preview of what's going on.

[01:22:13] I know it's not a perfect situation, but I do like being present and making sure that teachers know that I'm going into their buildings and that I definitely wanna see the day-to-day activities and what is going on in the classroom. I thought a lot of great things that were happening there, a lot of fun actually at Potomac Shores and different things, but particularly, I think it was a great, the PE teacher at Ashland, I guess it's been something of tradition with previous ones, but they had the whole gym lined up with string lights as like bowling lanes.

[01:22:42] And so it was really cool. You felt like you were actually doing global in the gym. And I thought that was really fun and interactive for the kids to do. So that was unique and that was definitely different. And Patty has her tradition. They do the 12 days of Christmas, a sing along right before the start of break. So a lot of fun traditions I got to be a part of.

[01:22:59] So thank you for letting me have this time. - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good evening everyone and happy new year. i trust that each of you have enjoyed a restful rejuvenating and extended winter break filled with cherished moments alongside your loved ones as we gather once more to embark on the journey of a new year i just want to extend the heartfelt wishes for the year of abundance and growth collaboration and success for all and in the spirit of reflection and renewal i'd like to pause and honor the memory

[01:23:35] of President Jimmy Carter, who passed away on December 29th, 2024, at the age of 100. President Carter's unwavering dedication to education led to the establishment of the U.S. Department of Education in 1979, a testament to his belief that education is the cornerstone to a thriving democracy.

[01:23:59] His visionary leadership unified federal education programs addressing systemic inequalities, ensuring equal access to quality education for all students. This legacy resonates deeply within our own community as we continue to prioritize learning and achievement for all, positive climate and culture, family and community engagement, and organizational coherence, principles that echo President Carter's foundational ideas.

[01:24:29] And as your representative for the Neapsoar District, I am steadfast in my commitment to advancing these priorities, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive in a supportive and equitable educational environment.

[01:24:45] Let us draw inspiration from President Carter's enduring legacy, working together, families, educators, staff, and community members, to build upon the foundations laid before us, striving for excellence and equity in all our endeavors.

[01:25:02] Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our students to our community, to all the staff, families, and students. Here's to a year of continued progress and shared achievements. Thank you and good night.

[01:25:19] - Thank you, Vice Chair Blake. Well, first off, I wanna thank Ms. Zargarpur for this year of her being the vice chair. I've enjoyed working with you. The board has benefited by having you as our vice chair. I think the school division has benefited and certainly the Coles District has benefited.

[01:25:35] So thank you very much. I wanna congratulate Mr. Tracy Blake. It has been a long time since Neabsco District has held this position, and we are very excited and look forward to working with you as you continue to represent Neabsco with such due diligence. I truly appreciate it. Regarding the school closures, I think, you know, I mean, I think snow days are great.

[01:25:57] They're fun. It's wonderful. But, you know, day one was understandable. Day two of missing was reasonable. Day three was, you know, barely acceptable. I think tomorrow being off and VDOT not having the roads cleaned is unacceptable.

[01:26:15] And I really, you know, I take a lot of phone calls and a lot of incoming shots from elected officials from around the region on what the schools are doing right or what we're doing wrong, or, you know, mostly what they think we're doing maybe wrong. And I take it and that's fine.

[01:26:32] And I will call back and ask for money and support. And I do that, but I rarely ever call and complain about something, but, you know, if the priority of VDOT is not to get our schools open, I don't know what else I can say. I mean, casinos are open, the bars are open, and I don't know why we don't have our schools open.

[01:26:52] And I think if we have to sit here and talk about this for Friday, I think, you know, the elected officials need to reflect and demand accountability for the Virginia Department of Transportation on why we can't, after a snow event on Monday, can't get this stuff cleaned up and get our schools open.

[01:27:12] I think it really is unacceptable. Moving on, thank you, Mr. Blake, for your words on President Carter. Tomorrow is, I think, been dedicated as a federal holiday to honor President Carter.

[01:27:27] President Carter was my father's favorite president, a man whom I also tremendously respect for his commitment to peace in the world, peace in the Middle East, his work as a humanitarian, his work on educating students and making sure that we had a strong education system in the United States.

[01:27:50] I think of him fondly and I think he was a wonderful human being and I will miss him and I think the country, you know, he may have been one of the most consequential figures of the last century, certainly. To our seniors and I think Kaylee, Ms. Kaylee Tom, very nicely expressed the stress, the concern of being a senior.

[01:28:13] My daughter is a senior. This is a very tough time for seniors. It's a tough time for parents of seniors. You know, if you haven't started filling out your FAFSA form, please do. Those need to start getting in and support your children as they apply to college and support them as they deal with the stress of applying, the stress of hearing from them, the stress from hearing back, the stress of not hearing from them.

[01:28:37] It is a tough time and I wish all of our seniors the best, keep up the great work, and I look forward to this new year. Thank you very much, and at this time, the meeting is adjourned.



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