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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 5, 2025

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Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxeNSdmp-z4
- 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 2026-10-30. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] - Prince William County School Board will now call itself to order. We will vote on something here. We're gonna vote on approval agenda. Motion to order, Mr. Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended.

[00:00:21] - Mr. Chairman. - Second. - Yeah, Mr. Williams. - Second. - Ms. Williams seconds. Any discussion? All in favor, raise your hand, say aye. Any opposed, say nay. No opposition, motion passes unanimously. - Next, a motion to enter closed session. Motion is ordered, Ms. Blake.

[00:00:38] - I move that pursuant to Virginia code 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons. One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to Virginia code 2.2-3711A and one.

[00:01:13] Two, to review disciplinary matters for a specific student that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the scholastic record for the individual student and to receive legal advice regarding the same as provided by Virginia code 2.2-3711A, two and eight.

[00:01:34] Three, to discuss with Division Counsel and Staff actual and probable litigation involving staff, students, and the school division, and specific legal matters regarding administrative investigations under

Virginia Code 2.2-3711A, seven and eight.

[00:01:55] And four, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to 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 2.2-3711A19 and five to discuss the award of public contracts to employees' exclusive representatives, which involves the expenditure of public funds and the term or scope of such contract where discussion in open session

[00:02:34] would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to Virginia code 2.2-3711A29. - Second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion?

[00:02:51] Please vote. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, okay, fine. Moving on to, that's it. We'll go to closed session.

[00:03:07] We'll be back here in about an hour.

[00:04:04] Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session from closed session. Closed session certification is in order. Mr. Blake. - 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 on February 5th, 2025 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:33] 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 closed meetings, to which this certification resolution applies, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:05:02] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:05:27] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - I'm moving on to closed session action items, motion in order, Mr. Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve appointments and releases of specific employees that's presented in closed session. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman.

[00:05:42] - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:04] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Thank you, this concludes our closed session action items. Moving on, I pledge allegiance. I'd like to invite our student representative, Alaa Rashid, who's senior attending Unity Reed High School, to lead us in our pledge.

[00:06:21] - United States of America and to the Republic of the nation under God, indivisible justice for all. - Okay, thank you. At this time, we're gonna move on to Thriving Futures Focus, Thriving Futures focus is a time to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our students, staff, and schools as they work toward fulfilling our shared vision, ensuring that every student graduates with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future.

[00:06:53] This evening, the school board is honored to acknowledge two outstanding choral programs for their performance in November at the Virginia Music Educators Association, or VMEA state level

conference. It is important to note that very few musical groups receive an invitation to perform at the VMEA state conference.

[00:07:12] The mission of the VMEA is to enhance quality music education across the Commonwealth by offering leadership, instructional resources, and professional development opportunities for Virginia music educators. To begin introducing tonight's honorees, I begin with Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, representative from the Coles District.

[00:07:31] - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. The Coles District is proud to represent Charles J. Colgan Senior High School for their stellar performance at the VMEA state level conference. Representing Colgan tonight is principal Dr. Tim Healy and choral director Carrie Staley. Ms. Staley, would you please introduce your students and share a few thoughts on this honor?

[00:07:50] And are they gonna sing anything? - Are we gonna sing anything? - I would, point of privilege, I would totally love it if there was a little whoop. - A little whoop, no worries. Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the school board and Dr. McDade.

[00:08:07] Thank you so much for inviting us tonight. It was an honor to represent Prince William County Schools at the state level, performing for an audience of collegiate high school and middle school choir directors and other music directors from across Virginia.

[00:08:24] Behind me are select members of Colgan's Chamber Ensemble, representing all 38 singers who worked hard to prepare a 30 minute fully memorized choral performance with impressive artistry.

[00:08:40] Our theme touched on the power of words, both unique to the choral component of music education and the power they have within our community and everyday lives. We are grateful for the collaboration and community building we had with Marsteller Middle School, which you'll hear from soon, and our neighbors in Loudoun County Rockridge High School, where we performed a VMEA send-off together to build a community within our choral world.

[00:09:08] We also would like to have a great, great amount of thanks to you all for supporting music education within our schools. It's so important to continue that, and thank you for having us here tonight.

[00:09:30] - Thank you, Ms. Staley, and congratulations to the entire Colgan High School Music Department for representing the Coles District with such distinction. - We'll come back and sing for you another time. - Thank you so much. - Thank you, and congratulations, Colgan High School.

[00:09:47] Miss Erica Trudenik from the Brentsville District, please recognize your outstanding program. - Thank you. The Brentsville District proudly recognizes Marsteller Middle School for their outstanding performance at the VMEA State Conference.

[00:10:03] Representing Marsteller Middle School tonight is choral director Philip Kirstead. Mr. Kirstead, would you introduce your students and provide some comments on this recognition? - Thank you, Chairman and School Board and Superintendent McDade.

[00:10:19] And also, Ms. Trudinick failed to mention that her son is in this group that got to perform at VMEA. Performing at the Virginia Music Educators Association State Conference has been on my bucket list since I started teaching.

[00:10:35] In fact, I had applied three times before finally being selected. On the bus after the performance, I told my students that the powers that be were just waiting for the right choir, them. On the

ride home, I gave them a writing assignment just to process everything that happened that day and the associated feelings.

[00:10:53] While many wrote of how great it was to see two months worth of rehearsal come to fruition, the majority of their writing was about how much fun it was doing something they love with their friends, their chorus brothers, as I call them. To quote one of them, "I love this group of people.

[00:11:09] "I've never had a group of students "so committed to each other, "so intent on lifting each other up. "It is this aspect of music education, "the relationships that are inevitably "and irrevocably formed, that is often overlooked among the standard data points.

[00:11:25] I'm grateful to work for a district, a community, a school and a principal who values the work I and these young people do. I don't teach music to kids, I teach kids through music. To quote another one of their writings, who was also quoting one of our songs that we performed that day, I didn't just sing today, I was found.

[00:11:46] Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Kierstad. I will say that although my sweet nugget is not here, Mr. Kirstead doesn't only provide music as he's talking about, he gives them confidence.

[00:12:10] And my baby's actually singing at church on stage tonight and would have never done that if he wasn't in this program. So thank you, Mr. Kirstead for that. And congrats boys. - Thank you and congratulations to Marsteller Middle School for their impressive performance at the VMA conference.

[00:12:32] We have just one more special recognition. I invite Mr. Justin Wilk of the Great Potomac District present our next honoree. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The school board would like to recognize Supervisor of Arts, Dr. Anne-Marie Bellino, for receiving Outstanding Administrator Award from the Virginia Music Educators Association.

[00:12:50] Dr. Bellino is currently Chair of the National Association for Music Education Music Program Leaders Council and Vice President of the Virginia Music Educators Association. Her passion for growing the profession is evident through her work with pre-service arts educators at several institutions in Virginia.

[00:13:09] She has served on the state's Arts Standards Writing Committee and as a grant panelist for several agencies. As a member of the Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education, Dr. Bellino is leading the Commonwealth's effort to bring arts education data to stakeholders through the Arts Education Data Project.

[00:13:28] She is a fierce advocate for arts education and frequently present during sessions and research at state, national, and international conferences. Dr. Bellino, would you share a few words on this remarkable achievement?

[00:13:46] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, Mr. Wilk, members of the board, and Dr. McDade. So first of all, let me just say that it's such an honor to represent Prince William County Public Schools. To receive such a recognition, I think, is indicative of the efforts of not just me, but the team that we have here, the arts team at the KLC.

[00:14:05] Obviously, these exceptional teachers, our students, our school administrators, our central office folks, our school board, of course. And it's very humbling to be recognized by your peers for such a wonderful honor. And so that means a lot to me and to you all for recognizing me this evening.

[00:14:23] May I also just say congratulations to Carrie and Phillip. I mean, their words are remarkable and that's just who they are as humans. What you see in the classroom, what you see here today is absolutely what happens in the classroom. And as somebody who was in the audience, right?

[00:14:40] So you all had this exceptional experience at the conference, and I also received an award at the conference. But as somebody who was in the audience watching our students and then seeing the audience around me as they engaged with the powerful, thoughtful, and fun, right?

[00:14:59] Because that's why we do it, right? It's fun. To watch that in action, it gave me so much pride in what we do here in Prince William County Public Schools. And that's because of our teachers, our students, our administrators, you and our community. I think our community really supports, promotes music and arts education.

[00:15:18] So kudos to all of you. And thank you again for my recognition as well. It means a lot.

[00:15:34] - Congratulations, Dr. Bellino. I would like to recognize all the families here tonight who've supported our amazing students and staff. If the families would please rise in recognition of their great contributions.

[00:15:53] We all know how hard you work and how many places you get these folks to and the success of these students would not be recognized without great parents, families, guardians like we have this evening. So thank you very much.

[00:16:08] We are truly grateful you all picked Prince William County Schools to be educated in and call home. Before we take a group photo, I'd like to invite Dr. Superintendent, Dr. Latonya McDade to share a few words. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One, I just wanna say how incredibly proud I am of you, but more than that, congratulations on your achievement.

[00:16:29] And I want you to know how inspired we are by your artistic talent and creativity, and you continue to make PWCS so proud. To our choir directors, Ms. Staley and Mr. Kirstead, thank you so much for your unwavering commitment and service to Prince William County Schools students.

[00:16:49] The love that you have for your craft and for your students really shines through, not just in your words, but in your action as well in the way that you interact and engage our young people to bring out the best in their creativity. So thank you so much for all of your hard work and commitment.

[00:17:04] And then Dr. Healy, I noticed that Dr. Healy was here, he's trying to hide. You know, I always call out our school leaders because I tell them all the time that, you know, amazing programming only happens when our leaders create the conditions for our educators and our students to thrive, right?

[00:17:23] So continuing to support the programming in your school and making sure that your educators have what they need to be successful with the students is something that is powerful. And so I also want to commend you as well, as well as our Marcella principal.

[00:17:38] I don't think I saw her here tonight, but just wanna say thank you to you for your leadership also. And then Dr. Bellino, thank you so much for the incredible energy and passion that you brought to Prince William County and the love that you have for arts education.

[00:17:54] You know firsthand from being in meetings with me how much I appreciate and love arts education from a personal perspective. And I want everyone in this room to know that in Prince William County Schools, we will continue to invest in arts education because we know that the only way that

students really can succeed is through a well-rounded experience and arts education is a critical component of the experience that we provide to our students.

[00:18:18] So congratulations to each and every one of you. We are PWCS proud.

[00:18:31] - Thank you, Dr. McGaid. I think those words were right on point and we are proud of the arts in our school division. So thank you. At this time, we'd like to invite our honorees to come forward to group photo.

[00:18:41] Diana Gulotta will direct, which groups go first?

[00:24:49] - Come back here. - Come back here. - Right here, right here. You got a good time.

[00:27:46] - Okay, thank you everyone. At this time, we will be moving on to adoption consent agenda. Motions in order, 11.01, Mr. Blake.

[00:28:02] - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? No discussions, please vote.

[00:28:32] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, great, moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions, a motion is in order, Mr. Blake. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgments and recognitions as recommended.

[00:28:48] - You have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Please vote.

[00:29:14] - The vote is seven yes, one abstain, motion passed, or one abstain, Tridentic, motion passed. - Okay, next up is citizen comment time. Citizen comment time period is for regular school board meeting an opportunity for citizens to speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools. Tonight, we do not have any citizens who've completed the signup process, So this time we'll move on to student representative time.

[00:29:35] This evening, our student Ala Rashid, who is a senior attending Unity Reed High School will present comments. Ms. Rashid. - Good evening to the Prince William County School Board community and Dr. McDade. I'm happy to be back on the dais representing my peers again.

[00:29:54] Students had shared their favorite parts of the last semester with me and the majority had said clubs and school spirit. Many felt it had been a great way to get them out of their comfort zone it was a perfect way to create a positive school environment students had also enjoyed hands-on experiences this semester such as outside classroom experiences this is something that many students think should be emphasized in classes such as environmental systems because of the experience associated with it however some students did say that they were unable to attend said activity because of the lack of transportation some schools provide activity buses on days like tuesdays and thursdays allowing for accessibility with their activities however some do not this is something

[00:30:32] students believe is necessary which is why student representative I'm asking for reconsideration on activity buses for all schools because the students in the county deserve the opportunity to stay after when needed this provides students with ease in their school life whether it's staying after for clubs or schoolwork another aspect of transportation is a long wait time some students face in the mornings I do understand that the division is working diligently on the issue as we experience

winter conditions but as we experience winter conditions many students are outside waiting for buses students have that this is a burden for them that it creates their mornings to be hectic because of the cold

[00:31:06] weather. Another point I want to touch on in my remarks is bathroom safety. Some schools have introduced vape detectors that students feel are useful and should be emphasized throughout the county. This is something students feel are needed to combat the issue of drug use so it should have an important emphasize countywide and in the schools that it's president many students do feel that it's doing something. This also ties into bathroom safety and how students believe an emphasis on that should be made because of drug use and other aspects to create an uneasy environment for many students. Restoring bathrooms is another topic some students have felt had been important because of the age of some schools. It does not and should not be a complete remodel but rather updating

[00:31:46] smaller aspects that students feel should are important such as sinks and things like that. Lastly many schools are hosting events for Black History Month with many students to join the videos and posts the division had made. From assemblies to presentations each student involved put so much effort for this event and I hope you all get the chance to participate and or see what takes place throughout the month.

[00:32:08] That will be all for my remarks this evening. Thank you so much. And I hope everyone has an amazing evening. - Thank you, Ms. Rashid. Next up, superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Well, as you can see by the colorful banners and creative artwork displayed throughout the room tonight, this is school board appreciation month.

[00:32:31] So we want to acknowledge our school board members for your commitment and service to PWCS students, families, and community. And on behalf of PWCS, we express our gratitude to all of our board members for your unwavering dedication to fulfilling the vision of Prince William County Schools.

[00:32:48] We salute you. Thank you so much. During National School Counseling Week, I encourage students, families, teachers, and administrators to take the time to acknowledge our counseling teams. They handle the demanding emotional work, required to provide essential care for numerous students.

[00:33:05] Their tireless efforts are pivotal in shaping and supporting an effective learning environment. And so we are incredibly grateful for all of our school counselors and want to show our gratitude during school counselor week. February also marks Black History Month, a significant observance that highlights the resilience, creativity, and transformative contributions of African-Americans, both individually and collectively.

[00:33:31] The narratives, achievements, and contributions of African Americans are integral to the fabric of global history. Please look for features from the school division and our schools throughout the month of February as PWCS acknowledges this annual commemoration of the achievements and heritage of African Americans.

[00:33:50] This evening, I would like to present our FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget. Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair Mr. Blake, Prince William County School Board, staff members, and our community i present to you this evening the superintendent's fy 2026 proposed budget and capital improvement program joining me this evening to present the fiscal year 26 proposed superintendent's budget is chief financial officer mr shakil youssef chief human resources officer

[00:34:22] dr donna eagle and chief operating officer mr vernon bach i want to extend my gratitude to the the school board for your ongoing support collaborative dialogue and feedback in the development of the budget behind the scenes as we over the past few months as we have been developing the budget our school board members have been very given us very a lot of feedback and their voice has been instrumental in ensuring that we are addressing key priorities within the budget there's also an opportunity to make additions during markup where our

[00:35:00] board members give additional feedback after the presentation this evening, and so I do want to extend my gratitude for all of the hard work that you put in in making sure that we have a budget that's not only fiscally responsible, but also one that is responsive to the needs of our school communities. All budget allocations are driven by the priorities set forth in our 2025 launching thriving future strategic plan and support our continued improvement as a school system.

[00:35:29] Before we begin the public presentation, I also want to take the opportunity to share my appreciation for our budget team, who's sitting here with us this evening. They have been working around the clock, literally, planning and executing this year's budget process, which is a monumental task, and this year the budget team revamped the budget process to make it more streamlined, to make sure we're more effective, and this has been one one of the smoothest budget planning processes that I've experienced during my tenure here.

[00:36:00] So I really want to thank our Chief Financial Officer, Shaquille Youssef, our Director of Budget, Joseph Mondoro, our Assistant Director of Budget, Kathleen Addison, and Supervisor of Budget, Natasha Valencia, as well as your entire budget team.

[00:36:16] Thank you so much for all of your hard work to bring our presentation together for this evening. Our collective responsibility in PWCS is to ensure that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:36:37] And it is our vision that drives our comprehensive strategic plan, which is comprised of four key commitments: learning and achievement for all, positive climate and culture, family and community engagement, and organizational coherence. Every strong school system aligns their finances to be driven by their strategic priorities.

[00:36:57] To ensure fiscal responsibility each year, we bring forward investments that are tied to the strategic plan and these four commitments. During the fiscal year 26 budget presentation, we will delve into each of the four commitments and review the proposed investment highlights.

[00:37:14] But before we get to the actual investments, I would like to share a few quick facts about Prince William County Schools demographics. Prince William County Public Schools is the second largest school system in Virginia, and our county is the most diverse in the Commonwealth.

[00:37:31] We're also the 10th most diverse county in the nation. Our student population is represented by 159 countries with over 170 languages spoken. This information is crucial as it shows the significant changes in our student population and needs affecting school funding and resources.

[00:37:49] What you see at the bottom of the screen broken out is specifically that we have a growing number of students who are identified as English learners. Currently, we have 23,660 English learners, which is our fastest growing population. Our students with disabilities have increased to 13,249, and we

have more than 29,000 students who have been identified as economically disadvantaged by federal criteria.

[00:38:16] Given the significant growth in the student populations I've highlighted, the cost per pupil to educate our students with higher needs has also increased. Looking at the regional comparison here, it shows how our demographic information compares to the state and surrounding school divisions.

[00:38:33] Additionally, this chart displays the cost per pupil in each school division. As we compete with our regional peers, their cost per pupil spending outpaces ours by 261 to $350 million. Our current cost per pupil coupled with the growing needs of our student population does impact how we consider resourcing our schools today and in the future to meet the unique needs of every learner as those needs are shifting.

[00:39:02] Before we get into the strategic investments, I would like to invite Mr. Youssef to review the enrollment changes and budget highlights which impacts our investments. Following Mr. Youssef, Dr. Eagle, our Chief Human Resources Officer, will provide updates on fiscal year 26 compensation and health insurance premiums, which we are incredibly proud of.

[00:39:25] and you will see will be the lion's share of the budget presentation this evening Mr Youssef thank you chairman Lateef members of the school board and Dr McDade I would also like to take a moment to thank my budget team with our budget director Joe Mondoro and his team for their hard work and due diligence I would also like to thank Dr McDade for her guidance and support as we navigated through this budget development and members of the cabinet who work very closely in developing our strategic initiatives and a special acknowledgement to our chief human

[00:40:01] resource officer dr donna eagle and a chief operating officer mr verne bach who provided invaluable input for the compensation and cip areas one of the primary drivers for the development of the fy 2026 budget as with other years is our enrollment these enrollment figures are reflective of decreases in birth rates, as well as the ongoing trend of domestic net out migration from Prince William County, as well as relatively lower housing growth rates that contribute

[00:40:41] to the downward trend in enrollment. The chart on the left shows a decline in elementary and high school projections, with a slight increase in the one-year projection for the middle schools. As these smaller cohorts continue to progress through all three levels, I expected to decline our enrollment projections.

[00:41:07] And so for the FY2026 budget, our projected annual enrollment is 89,442 students, a reduction of 2,633 students from the FY2025 projection of 92,105.

[00:41:28] Moving on to enrollment trends, the chart on the left shows our actual enrollment data from September 30th for the years 2018 to 2024, along with projections through the 2029-30 school year.

[00:41:49] Each school division usually provides September 30th data to VDOE, and that is a very important count that we have, so that's why we've used the September 30th for each of these years. As you can see that the projections from 2025 to 2028 show a steep decline in enrollment with a slight increase in 2030.

[00:42:16] Now, on the right side, while the overall enrollment is declining, there are still increases in specific student membership categories, and these require additional funding. The chart on the right

depicts a five-year change in students with special needs, economically disadvantaged students and English learners.

[00:42:40] Students with special needs increased by 11.3%, economically disadvantaged students by close to 15%, and English learners by 23.3%.

[00:42:57] Now let's discuss the overall budget for the Operating and Debt Fund for FY 2026. The proposed total operating budget and debt budget amounts to $1.89 billion, reflecting and an increase of 111.3 million from the approved FY 2025 budget of 1.78 billion.

[00:43:25] The next chart talks about our sources and uses of our funds and where the money comes from, where it goes. And if you look on the left, in terms of our sources of funding, almost 47% of our total funding comes from the county.

[00:43:47] 41% comes from state aid and another 7% from sales tax totaling 48%. So the breakout between county and state is almost the same. 2.7% comes from federal funds.

[00:44:02] And then we round out with use of our beginning balance at 2.3% and other funds at 0.4%. In terms of uses of our fund, the majority of funds is for instruction, 78.5%.

[00:44:21] With remaining funds for central support at 9.3%, facilities management at 5.9%, transportation at 5%, and we do have some reserves in this budget at 1.3%. Mr. Youssef? Yes.

[00:44:36] Quick question. So on this chart where it says federal aid 2.7, that's total, that's all aid, federal, all in. It only makes up 2.7% of the budget? Correct. But in terms of a dollar amount, it totals almost $48 million.

[00:44:53] No, no, I understand that. But like, I think when I started, I mean, a few years ago, we were at like 10 to 15% federal aid. Well, remember in the last few years, we had the ESSA money and the ARPA money come in, so that may have bumped it up. But we can always come back and provide you with what happened in the prior years.

[00:45:09] No, but I mean, but clearly over the last few years, federal aid becomes a much smaller portion of our budget. Yes, sir. So, in terms of our revenue changes, we forecasted increases based on the counties for the county revenue, five-year, most recent five-year forecast.

[00:45:37] Additional details of where the county is progressing towards will come available when the county executive presents their budget, which is on February 18th of this month, and as they progress through their budget approval.

[00:45:55] So $54.8 million is the increase in county revenue, almost 6.1%. State revenue is based on the governor's budget release on December 18th, and as you may be aware that there's a bill both in the House and the Senate and the General Assembly that's making its way through, but for now we are projecting a $46.8 million increase at 5.8%.

[00:46:25] As I said earlier, federal revenue increased by $2.3 million, and mainly due to additional funding in Title I, Title II, and Head Start programs. In terms of other revenue, we have a $1.3 million increase, mainly from rebates from our purchasing card programs and our participation in purchasing consortiums.

[00:46:49] Finally, we are increasing our beginning balance by $6.1 million to provide for certain one-time costs. This chart or schedule shows a comparison of our FY 2025 and FY 2026 budgets.

[00:47:10] Revenues are reported by major line items and the total available funds include the beginning balance which amounts to $1.89 billion. As you can see, the available funds are increasing by $111.3 million.

[00:47:29] Ed service expenditures increased by 6.7 million, 5.8%, and operating fund expenditures increased by 104 million, or 6.2%.

[00:47:44] So of the $111.3 million increase, this is how it has been applied, $83.2 million has been applied towards compensation. As we have experienced, a reduction in enrollment, the effect of the change in enrollment results in a reduction of funding, net reduction of $11.8 million towards our poor people.

[00:48:13] Another $46.7 million is towards strategic investments. And then the $6.8 million are some adjustments that we did to our budget, mainly removing one-time charges, et cetera, from the prior years.

[00:48:31] So I would like to request our Chief Human Resources Officer, Dr. Donna Eagle, to walk us through the compensation changes. - Thank you, Mr. Youssef. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, and Dr. McDade.

[00:48:49] This evening, I'll be providing an overview of our recommended improvements in our compensation and our changes to our benefit premiums. As you're aware, our strategic plan, launching for Thriving Futures, includes regionally competitive pay and benefits as one of our priorities.

[00:49:07] Over the last three budget cycles, we've been able to make significant investments in improving the compensation and our benefits and are pleased that we can continue those investments to ensure regionally competitive pay. As an educational system, we're in the people business and with over 85% of our budget dedicated to personnel, it's imperative that the compensation and benefits stay competitive to retain our outstanding staff in order to recruit talent to the division.

[00:49:38] Furthermore, our continued investments reflect our commitment to recognizing and rewarding the hard work, expertise, and passion that our staff bring to their roles each and every day. By investing in our educators, we are not only honoring their dedication, but also enhancing the overall quality of education and support to our students.

[00:50:02] Together, we're building thriving futures for our students and our community. Before I get started into the numbers, I would like to send out a thank you to Ms. Lisa Fry, our HR Special Projects rock star, and Dr. Bondi Shea Gibson-Learn, our new employee and labor relations supervisor for all their hard work in preparing compensation models in support of the compensation discussions during the collective bargaining process, along with the rest of the bargaining team.

[00:50:34] So our proposal, you know, is across the board. We kind of have the same, we have the same goals and we're in the same situation. It's inclusive of our teachers, our classified staff, and our administrators. What we have found through our salary surveys is that we need to improve our starting wages and our salaries, and we need to hold the line on our mid-scale positions, 'cause as you all know, we've done some work in that area over the last few years, and we need to curtail the top of our scale from getting higher as the tops of our scales are higher than the market.

[00:51:10] As a result, you'll see that our recommendations all involve rebuilt scales with higher percentage increases for staff placed on lower steps of the scales and that we are curtailing the top of our scales by introducing longevity steps.

[00:51:27] First, I'll share our recommendations for our teacher group, which is all grade 12 staff, inclusive of those licensed by both the VDOE, such as our teachers and our counselors and librarians and so forth, and also those holding health licenses, such as our nurses, OTPT, and so forth.

[00:51:45] For our teacher group, the budget includes an overall average salary increase of 6.8%. The actual increases vary from three to 11.5%, depending upon the lane and the step placement of the individual staff member. We increased the entry step for our teachers by over 9% in order to ensure we can compete for talent.

[00:52:07] So the entry pay for teachers will now rise from $57,340 for those with a bachelor's degree to this coming school year, it will be $62,562. That's an increase of over $5,000.

[00:52:22] For teachers with masters, those amounts are $6,000 higher. In addition, our new grade 12 pay scale has been decompressed, meaning that there's now a unique step that corresponds for each year of credited verified teaching experience. Our published scale will have 30 steps, one for each year of credited experience.

[00:52:42] As stated earlier, the percentage increases vary with those at the lower steps and those moving multiple steps as part of the decompression, receiving the higher percentage increases. As you've seen in our salary studies, our compensation for teachers who have achieved the 30-year milestone is above market rates.

[00:53:00] Therefore, as I stated, we've introduced longevity steps for those teachers to ensure that they do receive the minimum 3%, which corresponds to the next step on the current pay scale. Longevity steps will drop from the published pay scale as a salary on the top step for a teacher in their 30th year of teaching meets or exceeds the longevity step.

[00:53:22] Moving on to our classified workforce, comprised of staff in grades one to 11, The budget contains an overall average of 7.4%. Each staff member, except those at the very top, will receive a step movement. And similar to Certified, we've increased the entry step 8.5% to better attract and retain talent.

[00:53:43] Also similar to Certified, we found that the salaries at the top end of the scale are above market and have introduced longevity steps with those scales as well. As a result, the raises will vary from 3 to 11.4%. with those at the top of the scale receiving the lower percentage increases and those placed on lower step numbers receiving the largest percentage increases.

[00:54:06] Finally, our recommendation for the administrative pay scale includes an overall average of 6.8%. Salary studies show the same story as teachers and classified pay scales and that starting salaries need improvement. In addition, over the years, teacher percentage increases have outpaced that of administrators.

[00:54:27] As a result, there's more significant overlap of the teacher scale with the administrative pay scale, making it difficult to equitably place staff moving from teacher to administrative roles. To that end, our recommendation is to increase the entry salaries on all of our administrative scales.

[00:54:45] Also similar to certified and classified, the top of the scale is above market. So our rebuild of this scale includes longevity steps to help curtail the top. Increases will vary with those placed on the lower step numbers, receiving the largest increases.

[00:55:00] Each staff member, except those at the very top, will receive a step movement. We're also pleased to share some other compensation highlights as a result of the collective bargaining process with the Prince William Education Association. As you know, the tentative agreement is for a two year period and focuses on regional competitiveness.

[00:55:19] Overall, combining the certified and classified bargaining units together, the agreement includes average of 7% for this coming fiscal year and 6.4% overall for FY27 and some other highlights we doubled the stipend for IEP case management from a thousand to two thousand dollars for our special educators duly certified teachers who are providing English language case management in addition to serving as a teacher of record for content course will also receive a two thousand dollar stipend annually we added a thousand dollar stipend for elementary strings teachers we increased the

[00:55:57] amount of any supplement which you all know we use for to compensate our staff for clubs and sports any supplement that was below market according to the gallagher supplements study bringing all supplements at least to the midpoint of the market we also increased the number of some of of our supplements to ensure adequate coverage.

[00:56:20] And finally, we increase the night shift differential, doubling it from 2.5 to 5%. In total, including administrators, this package represents an overall average increase of 6.9%.

[00:56:35] This next chart illustrates teacher pay progression from the start of Dr. McDade's tenure with PWCS in FY '22 to our proposed recommendations for FY '26. And this is for teachers in what we call the benchmark years, which are teachers at five, 10, 15, 20 years, and so forth.

[00:56:55] To orient you, the top chart provides salaries for our teachers with bachelor's degrees, and the bottom chart includes salaries for teachers with master's degrees. If you focus on the FY26 column, which is bumped out, you'll start at the top of the chart, the first row, the FY26 shows the recommended salary for a teacher who will have completed five years of teaching as of this June 30th, 2025.

[00:57:25] And that salary will be $69,584. On that same row, you'll see the annual salary history for that staff member. In the first column along the top, you'll see the salary of that staff member was earning in the '21-'22 school year when they had one year of teaching experience, which was $52,292.

[00:57:52] Moving right from that cell, you'll see their salary progress as their years of experience increase. Currently, in this school year, they're earning $65,289, as you'll see in the FY25 column. With the budgeted recommended salary, the difference in total compensation on the four budget years for this particular teacher is $17,292, which is a 33.1% difference between FY22 and FY26.

[00:58:25] As you move down the rows, you'll see the same data for a teacher that will be completing their 10th, 15th, and 20th year of teaching this June. The bottom chart contains the same data for a teacher with a master's degree. As you'll note, teachers completing their 15th year of teaching this June have realized the largest increases on this chart.

[00:58:46] This is a result of the decompression of the pay scale and also the prior year investments that were made to increase pay for our mid-career teachers, which was an area of the scale where we were the

least competitive. Overall, teachers in these benchmark years will realize total increases from 24.4 to 42.1% over these four budget cycles.

[00:59:09] And while cost of living is certainly a factor that has impacted the real value of wages, we have definitely gained ground since FY22 in ensuring regionally competitive pay. That said, we're gonna need to continue to prioritize compensation and closely monitor market competitiveness to ensure we can retain and attract an outstanding workforce.

[00:59:33] Finally, I'll be providing a summary of our healthcare premiums, but before I go too far, I will remind the board that we do offer our staff a very rich healthcare benefit. The benefits team routinely surveys other school divisions in our surveys regarding their benefits.

[00:59:51] And we have found that we are the only school division in the region whose plans do not include deductibles. Over the years, you know, many of our peers have made plan design changes, including addition of deductibles, as a cost control measure and also to bring awareness to covered members of the actual cost of services in the hopes of influencing the healthcare consumer's behavior in choosing care with cost as a consideration.

[01:00:19] Currently, none of our plans contain deductibles, but we continue to consider plan design changes. On this slide, you'll see our history of premiums and increases along with our recommendation for FY26 for our four plan options.

[01:00:34] The first three plans, it's Enhanced, Core, and the HMO plan are self-insured plans, which give us more flexibility in setting premiums. The plan at the bottom, the Kauser plan, is a fully insured HMO plan, and therefore premiums are provided by Kauser.

[01:00:53] The premium paid depends on the plan and the tier, whether or not your employee, employee plus children, employee plus spouse, or employee plus family. Each of the columns indicates the total monthly premium for the respective plan and tier, starting with the '22, '23 school year, so we're looking at the same four budget years in the first column and advancing each year to the final column, which has our recommended premium increases for the 25-26 school year.

[01:01:23] The numbers provided are monthly increases, but in practice, this amount is actually divided in half and deducted evenly from the two paychecks each month. If you orient your eye to the 24-25 column, which is representative of our current employee health insurance premiums, on the top row, you'll see the enhanced plan, our highest level of benefits.

[01:01:44] It's our plan with the highest benefits and the highest premiums. The premium for employee only coverage is $132.42 a month. We're recommending a 5% premium increase. So for this plan and tier, the premium would increase $6.62 from its current amount of $132.42, bringing it to a total of $139.04 a month.

[01:02:10] Annualized, this is an additional $79.44 a year. Next, if you just look at the bottom plan, the Kaiser plan, this is our plan with the lowest premiums and the highest level of healthcare management.

[01:02:26] We're recommending a 5% increase there as well. So for the employee only tier, the premium would increase $1.52 per month. And annualized, this is a total of $18.24 a year. As you'll review the chart, you'll see the recommendations for all plans are for a 5% increase on the premium, not to be confused with a 5% increase based on a staff member's salary.

[01:02:53] The dollar amount increases per month on the plans range from $1.52 a month for the employee-only Kaiser plan to $42.80 a month for the family tier of the enhanced plan, our richest plan.

[01:03:08] Annually, that's a total increase that ranges from $18.24 to $500.60, $513.60. And to offer some perspective, the average teacher raised in the budget is just over $5,700.

[01:03:28] The final slide illustrates the cumulative employee increases for our health insurance plans since the 19-20 school year. For each plan, the cumulative increase is provided by tier level, which are the colored bars, The cumulative dollar amount increases in total since FY22 to FY26 are shown above each bar by month and pay period.

[01:03:50] In addition, the cumulative increase is listed under each plan type. For instance, the enhanced plan premiums have increased by a total of $14.23 per month for the employee only tier since the 19-20 school year.

[01:04:05] And for the family tier, the total increase in premium per month in those six years is $91.95. The Kaiser plan was initially introduced at extremely low rates as they entered the market. Since its introduction, rate increases have exceeded that of other plans, so you will see more significant cumulative percentage increases with this plan, although in terms of the actual dollar amount, it's still the least expensive plan for our staff.

[01:04:34] So what's illustrated shows that we have increased the premiums on our self-insured plans by only 13% in total over the past six years. However, our health insurance costs have increased by more than 13% since 1920.

[01:04:51] To ensure competitive benefits, the division has subsidized the premiums to keep premium increases low. The Kaiser Family Foundation, which is an independent source for health policy research, shows that nationally, the most recent data I could get is for the time period 2019 to 2024, okay?

[01:05:11] Employee premiums during that time period nationally, according to the Kaiser Foundation, increased 23%. During that same five-year time period, at PWCS only increased premiums by 8% as compared to the 23% nationally.

[01:05:30] It will be important for us to monitor our health insurance expenditures moving forward and continue to study the plan design for possible changes that might help curb escalating costs while still ensuring comprehensive benefits that meet the needs of our workforce and also keep us competitive.

[01:05:48] So before turning the presentation over to Dr. McDade, I would like to take a moment and just thank the board for your continued investments in our workforce. I really appreciate the support in prioritizing the areas of most need to ensure regionally competitive pay and benefits.

[01:06:09] - Dr. Eagle, can you provide, the slides don't reflect the stats you just read about how we compare nationally, premium increases. Can you get that information to the board and maybe put a slide together of how we, so the public can see it too.

[01:06:24] You ran through those numbers. Those are really good numbers. I think it's important for everyone to know the kind of work you all have done on our self-insured plan that the division is working on over the years. This has been a great tool and an asset, this work, has been to allow us to provide our employees with really affordable healthcare options.

[01:06:47] And I think it's a great, and it's instructive on being able to also free up money for us to do the other things we need to do in the core business operations. - Yes, I will. - So that would be great, thank you. Any other questions for Dr. Eagle?

[01:07:04] - We're gonna, we're just, we're gonna. - Okay, yeah, Dr. McDade, go ahead. - Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. So as we continue through the proposed budget, We'll now move into the strategic investments. As you have seen, most of the proposed budget is dedicated to our compensation plan, and there is an additional 46.7 million designated to fund strategic investments that are aligned to our four key commitments.

[01:07:29] Our largest investment is in the area of learning and achievement for all, where we've budgeted 28.9 million in new investments. What you see outlined here tonight represents the highlights of some of the biggest ticket items in the budget for learning and achievement for all. First, we plan to hire 50 additional special education teacher assistants to provide individualized support for students with disabilities.

[01:07:52] Keep in mind that although our student population is projected to decrease overall, our students with special needs continues to grow. As such, we've seen an increase in our level two programming. Over three years, we have added 300 full-time special education teaching assistant positions and 20 English learner teaching assistants.

[01:08:13] This newest investment of 50 additional special education TAs is to address those classrooms which may not have gotten the investment last year as well as new programming based on increased special education programming demands. We aim to improve English learner student teacher ratios to meet state requirements.

[01:08:32] As you'll recall last year, the state did reduce the student teacher ratio for English learners to provide more focused instruction. And so you'll see the breakout here. The previous state requirement was a one to 37 ratio.

[01:08:49] The EL teacher to student ratio per the state's requirements are now for level one students, one to 20, level two students, one to 30, level three students, one to 40, level four, one to 50 and level five, one to 100. Whereas before the ratio was not based on the student's level, but just a general flat one to 37.

[01:09:12] This new state requirement we believe will be extremely beneficial in prioritizing the needs of our students, particularly our level one and level two students. So this investment of 39.3 FTEs allows us to meet the new state minimums and ensure that EL students receive targeted language support, enhancing their academic success and overall confidence.

[01:09:34] We plan to hire 15 additional behavior specialists to support positive student behaviors, intervention strategies, and classroom management. You will recall that we were invested in three graduation coaches post-budget cycle to support schools with the highest dropout rates, particularly dropouts for English learners, and the respective schools did experience marked success.

[01:09:56] And so we are adding an additional five that'll bring our total to eight graduation coaches to provide direct mentorship and guidance to students at risk of not graduating. These professionals will help students stay on track, navigate challenges, and achieve post-secondary success.

[01:10:12] We have also budgeted for five additional school psychologists to expand access to mental health services, helping students navigate emotional and behavioral challenges. Furthermore, we are adding five kindergarten teacher assistants to strengthen foundational learning experiences for our youngest learners, as we made a commitment to ensure that every kindergarten classroom is staffed with a teaching assistant.

[01:10:34] Over three years, we've added 111 full-time kindergarten teaching assistant positions. This ensures early intervention and small group support, setting students up for long-term academic success. Each of these new investments underscores the district's focus on targeted, student-centered investments that enhance learning experiences, improve academic outcomes, and prioritize student well-being.

[01:10:58] Moving on to positive climate and culture. The commitment to fostering a positive climate and culture ranks as the second highest funded priority in our fiscal year 26 budget. We're making an investment to enhance student experience ensuring our students are our schools are places where students feel supported valued and ready to thrive we are adding a dean of students in each of our middle and high schools this is not um an unusual investments as we investment as we do have neighboring school divisions that currently have a dean of students the dean of students is a school-based position

[01:11:34] that will support administration at the local school level in maintaining fidelity and consistency across the school system in the implementation and enforcement of the code of behavior they will also be responsible for investigations and reporting discipline infractions to ensure fairness across all schools last year when Ms. Huebner presented the code of behavior there was lengthy discussion by the school board around PWCS making sure that we are implementing the code of behavior with fidelity as well as ensuring fairness across the board and norming our practices and we've been doing a lot of work around that including audits and

[01:12:10] training and through that we've found areas of improvement that are needed and we believe that this investment will help shore up the practices that are happening across schools because what we're seeing is that administration is stretched thin and there are multiple people handling infractions which is where you get the inconsistency so that's where the addition of this position came from. We're also planning to make additional investments in the PWCS VCU apprentice program, where we are developing future teachers, giving them hands-on experience while addressing the national teaching shortages. Additionally, we are adding three social workers and security

[01:12:49] assistants and investing in training for classified staff and alternative pathways for teacher licensure. As you can see, we are making strategic investments to strengthen student support, expand opportunities, and build a positive climate of culture where every student has the resources they need to be successful moving into family and community engagement we are investing to enhance communication and engagement with our families ensuring they have access to the information and support they need you'll note that that the investment here is much smaller that is because in our strategic plan we have met our goal for family and community engagement we are still making

[01:13:29] investments but we've invested to the tune of 8.3 million over the past three years and you'll see on the screen provided the breakdown of year one two and three this includes our investment in more than 100 full-time parent liaison positions across all schools and a significant investment in our global welcome center renovation as a part of our CIP accomplishing our goal of every school having a parent liaison and creating a warm environment with our global welcome center with additional resources and

support for parents as part of this year's strategic investment pwc is adding a transportation liaison to help families navigate transportation

[01:14:07] concerns provide clear communication and improve coordination between schools and transportation services and then for improved communication we are investing in a website customer service chat bot which many corporations and organizations have that feature so that families do not have to search the web for information but can get quick and ready information through our chat bot to address real-time support when our customers have questions about school services policies or resources we know when families feel connected informed and supported students succeed and these investments make communication easier resolve concerns faster and strengthen trust

[01:14:46] between our schools and our community and finally our fourth commitment is organizational coherence and we are highlighting 8.2 million in new investments. It is important to note that included in organizational coherence are the proposed compensation investments that Dr. Eagle reviewed earlier in tonight's presentation because these adjustments are crucial for attracting and retaining high-quality educators and ensuring the overall effectiveness and efficiency of our school system and if you review our strategic plan in organizational coherence we specifically set a goal and commitment for competitive wages and benefits and so that that commitment that

[01:15:24] we are making on the 83 million dollars in compensation speaks directly to the priority in organizational coherence. The substantive investments that we've made over the last four budget years to increase competitiveness in the job market include but not limited to: we've boosted entry pay by 21.6 percent, we've increased mid-career teacher pay by 40.4 percent, we've adjusted salary scale to match each year of experience, we've equalized step progression giving equitable raises for teachers with one to five years and veterans. We've raised salary cap from 17 to 26 years for the 25-26 school year to attract experienced

[01:16:03] teachers. We've increased summer school pay to staff members hourly rate for our certified staff. We've ensured fully paid paternal leave and provided short-term disability for all benefits eligible staff. And this year we will be working to improve our administrator scale with specific attention to our elementary principals and assistant principals to ensure we remain competitive with this employee group as well. Additionally in organizational coherence we are allocating funding for 20 new school bus attendance so that we can provide an improved experience for students to arrive at school and return home safely each day. We are also investing in five new car and van drivers to help address

[01:16:43] transportation needs, increasing flexibility and reliability for students who require alternative transportation services. And I'm pleased to announce our commitment to the Growing Our Own Educators Pipeline through the establishment of the PWCS Student Teacher Program.

[01:16:59] This initiative will enable us to cultivate and retain future educators by offering on-site training, experience, and coaching. Our goal is to continue attracting and retaining top talent and exemplary leaders, ensuring that our students receive the highest quality education they deserve.

[01:17:17] By focusing on ensuring competitive wages for our valued employees, safe and reliable transportation, strengthening our teacher pipeline, and improving operational efficiency, we are creating a more effective, responsive, and student-centered school system.

[01:17:35] At this time, I would like to invite Mr. Youssef back to the podium to provide a summary of all changes to the SY26 budget. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. The next chart that we look at basically brings together what we've talked about we have given you the changes in the revenues in details and and also the change in compensation debt service one thing I would like to highlight is if you look there's a school repairs and renewals this is basically our cash to capital and just

[01:18:13] yesterday the Board of County Supervisors approved a 32 million dollar TrueUp, which we plan to utilize to our Cash to Capital, and this helps us reduce our bond program and bond sales. Moving on to our Capital Improvement Program, the chart shows a five-year capital improvement program categorized by funding source and the type of improvement.

[01:18:43] This comprehensive plan estimates $1.1 billion approximately, which includes bond funding of 938 million over the next five years 135 million from general fund transfers and 25 million dollars from profits these profits are available to us at the county and there's a lot of flexibility in terms of our use for those profits at this point i would like uh to ask our chief operating officer mr verne bach to talk about the plan in a little bit more detail thank you mr youssef and uh good

[01:19:22] Good evening, Chairman Lateef, board members, and Dr. McDade. First, I'd like to thank our facilities team and our budget team for the very robust collaboration in developing the comprehensive CIP, or Capital Improvement Program, that we proposed to you in the work session back in January.

[01:19:39] I think I'll just add a few comments here. In reference to the slide, just a distinction, I think, between renovation and facilities modifications. Both of those are enhancements and aim to improve our buildings, but modifications typically involve changes to the structure of the building that would accommodate maybe additional programming or adding classrooms to really accommodate increasing enrollment trends.

[01:20:10] A renovation obviously is the modernization of a building and really bringing that building up to speed with local standards to enhance flooring. you know, the structure of the building and HVAC system.

[01:20:25] So I just wanted to point out that slight distinction there. And also, I just wanna make mention too, and I wanna thank the board and the major investment in deferred maintenance. We have had a lot of deferred maintenance over the years in the division, and there's a major investment in the CIP, most notably in HVAC, about $150 million of investment towards deferred maintenance of HVAC.

[01:20:51] And this investment will prioritize the climate and comfort in the building for our students and our staff. And in doing so, we'll also prolong the life expectancy of our equipment. And finally, I'd just like to thank the board for your continued investment in our facilities and providing some of the most state-of-the-art and best school facilities for our students and staff.

[01:21:13] So thank you. - And just to round out the discussion on CIP, When we have increases in CIP, it is to be paid or to be spent over a five-year, sometimes even longer, period.

[01:21:35] So these are multi-year projects, and we do have increased carryovers from year to year. In 2024, we had a $500 million budget. That was an appropriation. Authority to spend, we deferred the 14th high school, and therefore we had a significantly large unencumbered balance.

[01:21:55] as these projects come on board they'll be utilized and and the requirement to to ask for unencumbered balance carryover is is going to be reduced projected debt sales in the next few years bond sales will rise then drop significantly in in fy 2030 as we ramp up again our uh major construction renovation and maintenance and the investments we have in hvac we will need to obviously sell more bonds to pay for this.

[01:22:31] So we anticipate this to be an increase in the next few years before we start reducing our bond sales. Finally, the fiscal year 2026 budget timeline, we're presenting the proposed budget and CIP today.

[01:22:52] There's a public meeting on February 10th. Then on February 18th, the county executive will present the Prince William County Board of prince william county budget to the bocs and then on february 19th we have a public hearing in march we have our march 12th budget work work session and markup march 19 being the date schedule for school board approval of the budget in cip the budget is then presented to the bocs on april 1st

[01:23:28] and we anticipate by April 26, April 22, the BOCS will approve the budget. And again, I would like to thank the school board for all the support in terms of funding, and I will turn over the discussion to Dr. McDade.

[01:23:46] - Thank you, Mr. Youssef. This comprehensive review of the proposed fiscal year 26 budget really underscores our unwavering commitment to investing in the future of our students, staff, and community. By aligning our financial resources with our strategic priorities, we are ensuring that every student thrives in an inclusive, supportive, and academically challenging environment.

[01:24:09] We value the input and collaboration from all stakeholders, specifically our school board members, who have been an integral part of budget development. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and continuous improvement. Together, we will create a thriving future for Prince William County Schools.

[01:24:28] Mr. Chairman, this concludes the presentation of the fiscal year 26 superintendent's proposed budget. And we welcome any questions that the school members may have. I have my entire executive cabinet here. So this is the team that works with me to ensure that our budget is meeting the needs of all students.

[01:24:46] And so we're prepared to take on any questions that you might have. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Appreciate all of the time and effort you have all taken, not just tonight, but in our two by twos.

[01:25:02] So we're all laughing up here. I wanna, I'm thinking back to when I first started serving on this board where we were looking at, you know, we were adding more teacher assistants, we were adding more counselors, school counselors and things like that.

[01:25:19] And I know our ratios are better than they have been in the past. I'm looking at, the audience can't see, we have a sheet of other stuff here. And I'm looking on here and it says that we have four added positions for counselors in several high schools where those high schools that there was, those were identified as they needed.

[01:25:40] Okay. So where are we in our ratios? Like at all the levels? - So right now the video we required ratios are one to 325. And so for elementary, we're at one to 325.

[01:25:55] So we're meeting that we're beating the recommendation at the middle school, we're at one to 278. And then for high school, we're at one to 300. Now, all three of those are below the ASCA recommendations, which is one to 250 across all levels, but we are not only in compliance, but actually below the recommended ratio for VDOE.

[01:26:17] - Okay, but the other thing I wanted to just sort of find out, we've got graduation coaches now going into all of our schools, which will hopefully take a little bit of work off of our counselors in high school, I would imagine. - Well, they work collaboratively with the counselors, but with the graduation coaches, there's a heavy focus on dropout prevention.

[01:26:37] So yes, that is a huge support in working with the counselors so that there's targeted support for those students and that no one gets kind of left behind. - Right, and I think that's awesome. I know that the three that we already have made a outstanding effort in moving those graduation rates.

[01:26:56] And then we've also got the Dean of Students and I'm going to presume that will also help support of the counseling as well because you're talking about maybe the well is it what it'll do is right now as i stated earlier you know there's kind of like uh everyone on the admin team is is trying to support um with discipline investigations etc and having the dean certainly will ensure that we protect more time towards the instructional core as well as protecting time for counselors to do counseling work and so that's why that position will be a huge relief to um to school

[01:27:32] teams. Yeah, I like that we've got a couple different ways that we can approach buckets of different kinds of issues so that it doesn't always wind up in the same place. So I will take a look at more. That was just one of the things that kind of floated up because we've talked about reducing the ratios and I know that, you know, we don't have necessarily 900 graduates waiting in line for, you know, it's all of it is a challenge. But I'm hopeful that these things will also help reduce some of the workload and help our students get the best education that they deserve.

[01:28:09] So, thank you. - Who's next? - Erica Trudenik. - The first and last name, got it. I have a couple of questions.

[01:28:28] First of all, I do love that our middle school and high school are receiving Dean of Students to help with the discipline. I appreciate that after some of my commentary last year and I feel like that's so needed and will hopefully help to address some of the differences. I also love that our teachers are being compensated and receiving a much-deserved raise, as well as our classified and admin.

[01:28:51] Can you explain what our behavior specialists do and what department they fall under? - Our behavior specialists are under the Office of Special Education, and I'll have Dr. Ryer come and share a little bit about their roles and responsibilities and how the addition of these 15 behavior specialists will directly support schools.

[01:29:17] - Good evening. So the role of the behavior specialist, Those positions fall under our Department of Tiered Interventions and Supports, and so those staff are deployed out to schools. They currently have a caseload of around seven schools each, and they consult on cases.

[01:29:33] They might work with teachers on strategies to put in place when a student's having behaviors. They oftentimes are very involved and hands-on in leading the behavioral intervention plan process. A lot of those plans, as you know, are developed for students who are students who are served in our programs for students with autism, students with emotional disabilities.

[01:29:53] And so these additional positions will not only lower the caseload for all behavior specialists, but it will allow for more targeted assignment of behavior specialists to schools where we either have a high volume of special education programs, or we have a lot of students who need supports and staff who are just looking for that additional level of expertise.

[01:30:16] - Thank you. And I don't know if this is a question you'll answer or someone else, but as far as our social workers, one of the things that was brought up to my attention and that I looked into a little bit was, will one of the social workers be dedicated to McKinney Vento?

[01:30:34] And can you explain what that is? - So the McKinney Vento program is the program that is supporting our students that may have been identified as homeless. And to answer your question directly, the three social workers that are added are not identified for dedicated solely support to McKinney-Vento.

[01:30:52] We do have social work support, but they don't have a person that is strictly designated for that program. - Thank you. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I wanna thank the superintendent and the budget staff as well as the facility staff for putting together a really good proposed budget.

[01:31:15] I know it takes a lot of time and I can tell from this budget that you have listened to not only what the public has said, but also each of us up here on the board. And I really appreciate that being, having been a board member for a long time, not having to get to work session to add what we want, but having it already in there, because not only do you listen to us when we propose our changes upcoming, but all throughout the year and it's reflected.

[01:31:41] I did want to find out a little bit more about how the Dean of Students fits into the school, 'cause I know it's gonna be a question a lot of the public will ask. Is it like a, maybe you can explain it in a way, is it a principal level position or like a counselor?

[01:31:58] - It is, it's a school-based position. So the position lives at the local school and reports to the principal. - Okay, that's perfect, thank you. 'Cause I wasn't, I was not familiar, so I know if I am curious, I'm sure other people would be curious as well. I appreciate having that position and having discipline be operated with fidelity and the code of behavior, because I know that that's been an ongoing problem, as long as I've been a board member.

[01:32:24] I do want to congratulate our division and Donna Eagle on maintaining our insurance rates so low. I've been working in corporate America for 20 plus years. I have never seen the ability to keep it so low.

[01:32:41] I think that's commendable. I know that's a lot of hard work and meetings and negotiations with our insurance companies. And I think that that is commendable, especially over the period of time. Myself, I've experienced a minimum of a 10 to 12% increase in insurance rates.

[01:32:58] So absolutely phenomenal. Mr. Youssef, I appreciate you explaining the carryover rates. I don't know where'd you go. There you are, I'm short, I can't see above the sign. I know that that's something that has come up not only at the Board of County Supervisor meetings when budgets are discussed, but it's helpful for the public to understand why we have that carryover and why we can't spend it because it's not just funds that we're not using, it is already allotted funds.

[01:33:24] And because the number is so large, it often I think gets confused with why are we just not using that money and it's important to educate our public. If you, the last thing I wanted to know is if you

could speak a little bit about proffers, everybody generally asks this question and what they are because just as a general reminder, I know that the school division is not an entity that asks for proffers, but if you could just explain a little bit, high-level overview about what that is and how it affects our budget or we

[01:33:58] utilize it so as we built our CIP we do know that we have certain profits that were made for schools and there's a lot of flexibility in terms of how these profits can be used you know it's not specific to to district or region within the county and so we felt for the sake of transparency to disclose what is out there and available to us and typically we will make an application to the county and they will look at it and determine and then will provide us those

[01:34:35] funds. Now there have been some legislative changes in proffers so it's become more difficult for counties to ask or require proffers from developers as the law has changed, but we still have available source of revenue that we intend to use.

[01:34:57] Thank you. That's all I have at this time. If I have any more questions, I'll be sure to email. I'll go to Mr. Jesse, then Ms. Paul. I have a question on the federal portion that we're supposed to receive, 2.7 or about 48 million.

[01:35:17] What's the possibility that we don't get that, and what's our plan? - So that's a good question. I cannot speculate on the possibility of what happens with daily changes and with the new administration in place.

[01:35:41] In terms of us, if we do lose that funding, it does affect, in many ways, some of our biggest title grants, like Title VIB, which is our students with special needs, and also Title I, our higher poverty schools, title one schools however with that 48 million it would be it would require us to look for that type of money and some of it may have to go to come from fund balance in the short term but in the long term we'd have to look at talking to our county in the state to see if if there's a total loss of this funding so

[01:36:21] anything right now is very speculative in terms of what's happening but we continue to monitor this I do want to add that just because you know I know that this is a source of concern for our school communities and staff so I do want to add that it was we were publicly notified that that it will not impact schools programming so we don't have a reason to believe that any of our current funding federal funding for you know head start in our title programs are in any kind of jeopardy so I just want to reassure our school communities that

[01:37:00] you know the the recent freeze in federal funding that was announced there was a follow-up that it would not impact our actual school programs so we will be able to continue to execute our programs without any interruption throughout this school year thank you one other question I had is the Dean of Students uh that's for middle and high school uh you know i think we have 13 14 middle schools and 13 high

[01:37:33] schools so my question is the high schools are much bigger so do we need more more than one dean of students in the high school that would be something that we would have to um you know first collect data on to determine if that were the case but right now the data that we're seeing in terms of the number of infractions and the amount of staff that you have at a high school compared to a middle school one would be sufficient for both middle and high. Ms. Wall. Thank you Dr. Lateef um

[01:38:11] on the Dean of Students since we were on that topic um the the stated um purpose was to create fidelity and consistency and enforcement with the code of behavior investigations making sure fair

fairness in that process um are we also hoping that we will see an improvement in student behavior the dean of students as far as like a reduction in infractions is that going to be i can't i can't say that that i can't say that that position is you know designated to reduce um incidents it's more so to ensure that we are appropriately responding to the incidents that are occurring

[01:38:50] in our schools right it's ensuring that we don't have situations where um the same type of infraction with the same code happening in one school gets a different consequence than what happens in another school right so it's it's more around norming practices ensuring accuracy of reporting fidelity in the investigation process because there just needs to be school staff is stretched so thin that there needs to be someone who can be the in-house expert for all things code of behavior as it stands you know it's challenging for our admin teams to you know be able to address core instruction

[01:39:27] do all of the roles and responsibilities there as well as try to investigate and be an expert in the code of behavior and that's why sometimes you see some inconsistencies because you have multiple people that are handling behavior in a school so it's it's the same way you have um you know a director of school counseling that works with the entire counseling suite or a director that's overseeing mathematics to ensure that there's common practices and collaboration the the dean of students can address all things that are related to the code of behavior, but their primary function wouldn't be to, yes, they'll be responding to behaviors,

[01:40:05] but not necessarily the end-all be-all to end or improve student behaviors. That'll be continued work that happens through social work services, counseling services, and other individuals that are trusted adults that are working one-on-one with students, behavioral specialists.

[01:40:24] So we have a multitude of people who are working to improve climate and culture in a school, but we don't have right now, dedicated in our secondary schools, is someone who is clearly the person that is having oversight of all things discipline.

[01:40:41] - Okay, thank you. That's good clarification. I also think that I imagine our principals and our assistant principals will really appreciate this person, allowing the principal to, at least I envision this based on what you said, be more of that instructional leader to focus on what's happening in the classroom and less on What is happening with these you know following up the discipline?

[01:41:04] Process after a behavior has occurred absolutely you think about the size of a middle in high school It's really taxing to have to try to keep up with all the reporting Did the investigation go the way that it was supposed to go and you know following up following up with multiple people?

[01:41:21] um and and the level associates are here and the investments that you see that are going directly into schools um come from the voice of our school leaders our level associates do work with the principals to hear from them you know what do you need to see in this budget and um as they've been working miss porter lucas has been working along with dr atkins um and miss hebner to norm practices across the school system as it relates to the code of behavior and i personally consulted with some of of our leaders, our principals in the system about adding a dean of students.

[01:41:55] And I'll tell you, I didn't find one that said, oh no, I don't need that, you can keep the position, right? They all want to be able to focus on instruction, they wanna move the needle on academic outcomes, but they also need to have help carrying the burden of addressing student behaviors in the school.

[01:42:13] And it is something that needs attention, and we believe that this position will go a long way in providing the necessary attention. - Thank you for that. I believe it'll be exciting to see the results, how that affects how we operate in our schools and hopefully will make a big difference for our students.

[01:42:32] I had a question really quick, the flex funding category, I must have missed it. When it says flex funding on this long big sheet, what does that mean and how is that different from, is it just identifying a particular funding source?

[01:42:48] - So typically as we add programs, - Flex funding is basically logistics. It's your materials, supplies, that's what it is. And it depends on what program and where we're adding it. So if we add a position, there's an amount of flex funding that the person will need office equipment, supplies, et cetera.

[01:43:09] - Thank you. On the topic of compensation, I very much appreciate the efforts of staff to work on this problem because I know it has been an ongoing problem in Prince William County. And I know a lot of careful thought went into it.

[01:43:24] understand that these large salary increases are historic and it's been over the last like four or five years and the numbers you know the date the percentages and the numbers are pretty impressive I just want to caution that it's probably not sustainable into the future to continue to see these very large increases year upon year upon year I mean maybe it is but it just seems like this is a good time to right-size while we do have these funds and then moving forward will probably need to get to a place where we just have like regular you know predictable increases that's right so i mean the goal we were we were lagging in the market and so

[01:44:03] the goal was um what that we identified in this strategic plan is uh while we while we can you know to get us to the place where we are competing with our peers or surpassing them in some respects and then just like we expect that in the out years the funding will not be coming in um you know as significant as it has in the past for us it won't be for our neighbors either so you know once we kind of get on level ground we'll probably be pacing at the same rate and and that will be able to stay in line in competition so although

[01:44:38] we don't expect that and mr. Youssef reminds us of this every day he can that we won't necessarily have the same kind of increases in investments that we've had in the past years we'll be able to at least remain competitive because we were expecting that our neighboring districts will experience the same kind of decreases that we will in terms of the funding source okay that's that's kind of what I'm expecting to you but I do appreciate the surge the salary surge on the topic of deductibles I do think that I've never had an insurance plan that had no deductible and I personally think it's awesome having a couple of

[01:45:17] family members with chronic illnesses where you have to go to the doctor it's not like you just choose to go to the doctor to investigate something so in those cases it's been very helpful to have that saved thousands of dollars just by being able to take advantage of the health insurance benefits without having to meet a five thousand dollar or six thousand dollar deductible but you know for what it's worth that's my input I really think it's amazing it really is amazing but I do understand you know the rationale for why nobody else is doing it and just to just I think I think it is important to call this out and I know

[01:45:52] that this is something that dr. Eagle continues to remind us of like we just discussed that you know we've made these increases to compensation because we have been able to and at some point you

know we will have to slow this down to be fiscally responsible the same thing holds true for our insurance right so we've enjoyed you know lower increased percentages we've enjoyed not having a deductible but it is going to catch up to us and so there will be a time where we will no longer be able to maintain you know these are low these low rates

[01:46:30] and increases and so which is why it's such a good thing that over the years we've been able to do this so that if we do have to make any changes they shouldn't have to be so significant to be absorbed by the employee that's true I appreciate that it's always good to have the fiscal word am I looking for the fiscal a fiscal eye on what we're doing you know being conservative with the taxpayer money knowing that it those are hard weren't hard-earned dollars and we need to prioritize them and I look forward I'm gonna just wrap up my comments by saying I look forward to hopefully seeing these investments flow

[01:47:10] into higher student achievement higher abilities you know higher passing rates graduation rates kids who can read at you know appropriate levels all of those things because at the end of the day the budget should support the academic progress of our students and I've seen good things in past years as we've pushed forward towards our goals and at the end of the day that's what the purpose of the budget is is to see that progress in reflected in how our students are doing and in launching their thriving futures.

[01:47:44] So thank you, thank you everybody. - Mr. Wilk. - Okay, quick with brevity to truncate the length of this meeting here. I think I appreciate Dr. Eagle explaining to me some of the misconception about how the increase in health costs are offsetting the raises, which we're talking totally different numbers there.

[01:48:10] So I appreciate that as those percentages don't have the same weight with one another. The dean of students, it's been echoed up here a number of times, I think it's a great move. You know, I do believe it's the importance of consistency in the implementation. Sure, I'd like, you know, punishments to be stricter, but I think heading in the right direction of making sure it is consistent across the board and that, you know, one building isn't doing one thing for a level blank infraction versus this other building.

[01:48:37] And let alone, like you said, with the almost just the sheer amount of work that our administrators have to do in the building, it is possible that APs could have different, you know, this decisions on the discipline that they administer.

[01:48:54] So thank you for that. I think that's very important. And then the other thing I just wanted to, I don't need the numbers on the spot, but you know, Lisa and I both being, well, Lisa's still a teacher and a former teacher years ago, thinking of my student teaching experience.

[01:49:10] You know, I think it's really important and critical to have that pipeline of teachers. I think that's one of the major benefits of having a student teacher program and try to amplify what we have as a future workforce. I would just be curious to see each year how many and what levels they're at and kind of see what trends we have with that too, if it kind of replicates what we're seeing on the job market as well with teaching jobs.

[01:49:35] But that's all I have to say. - We can even provide that data at markup 'cause that's something that we do track. - Okay, thank you. - Mr. Blake. - I just want to thank you guys for presenting this budget and taking the time and listening to the community, the administration and the board.

[01:49:59] And I too am excited about these dean and students. I think that's gonna do good things and free up space for our administrators to handle our core business, which is education. So I just wanted to thank you, that's it.

[01:50:20] - Great, Mr. Blake, some questions, not just a couple more, maybe some comments. On enrollment, if we go back to the beginning, Mr. Youssef, Dr. McDade, whoever would like to answer that.

[01:50:38] I mean, as I look at what concerns me, and while we're talking about federal dollars and all that stuff, I think it's also important, I'm glad you reminded the public that many of the federal dollars, so I guess this question first, Many of the federal dollars that we receive is by statute law.

[01:50:58] Even if you close the Department of Education, we still have to get that money whether it's delivered by Department of Agriculture or Labor, correct? I think that is correct. I'm not a legal expert, but these are titles under the Education Act, the Federal Education Act, that we are entitled to these monies.

[01:51:19] How it manifests itself is a different matter, but we are still entitled for these federal programs. - So is that correct, Mr. Anderson? If they shut down the Department of Education, these dollars have been dedicated to schools by prior law or current law or law that's unrelated to whether a DOE exists or not, is that correct?

[01:51:43] - I don't know the answer to that. - Okay, yeah, okay. - I liked his research before I give an answer. - Okay, fair enough, fair enough, okay. On enrollment, so I believe as I look at the budget overall and I think it's important for the community and as Dr. McDade has pointed out, Dr. McDade, you can answer this.

[01:52:02] To me, the biggest risk posed to this division moving forward in the next five to 10 years is this risk of enrollment drop, is that correct? And so, you know, while this is a great budget and I've been chair almost, I don't know where I'm going in my eighth year, we've overseen a lot of great budgets and the division has grown and able to catch up in many areas.

[01:52:29] But as Ms. Wall points out, you know, dollars coming in are going to be less and then enrollment will impact the dollars we receive is that correct yes so in terms of our state aid it is based on our average daily membership count but there's also the local composite index which is going to be resetting in the next biennium so those could all have an impact on the the state funds and then in terms of how we apply those funds but in terms of revenue coming in the average daily membership is one of

[01:53:06] the current basis for the state to fund us and you know unless they come up with a new funding formula there's been talk at the video about that that that does impact revenues from the state and and the the the duck so so just looking at your chart, we could be down 4,000 more students, four to 5,000 more over the next four or five years.

[01:53:37] I mean, that's the size of a couple schools. - Correct. - Yeah. And so I think it's important for the public to be aware that we are facing some significant challenges if these projections pan out. And I think that's really important.

[01:53:52] And so as we look at how we spend our money, I appreciate the eye on these major risks that the division face. I'm grateful for the Audit Committee, Jen Wall's eye on audit risk and some of the risks that we face otherwise, I think that's important.

[01:54:11] And so that it's, and I'm glad you guys have looked at that and focused on that in the budget. Regarding the English learner additional positions, are we adding them, Dr. McDade? I mean, we're adding them 'cause we need them, but are we adding them solely because the state's requiring us to hit those ratios or were we planning on doing that anyways?

[01:54:32] I think it's a mix of that. I mean, we need the money, so we couldn't plan to do it without it, and so the state providing the money allowed us-- - They are providing the money. - You let Dr. Sullivan do it, she would reduce it even lower. - Yeah, fair enough, yeah. - She definitely was leaping with joy when the state came through with the reduction, but specifically, we were only able to do it because the state provided those funds, and if they didn't, we would not have been able to reduce the ratio the way that we would have liked to.

[01:55:06] - Okay, so fantastic. So anyways, that's great. And do we expect moving forward, they'll provide increases to that? Or is this a one-time baseline adjustment and any new ELs will have to be on us or will the state, did they put anything in there about increasing it each year over year?

[01:55:23] - So as earlier on, it depends on, so it is part of the state budget now in commitment unless they curtail that. and they had given us a two-year period to catch up, so we expect continued funding. But again, everything flows in, as you look at the state calc sheets they provide, the average daily membership does affect what we get.

[01:55:51] - So for those positions, is it the average daily membership of English learning students? 'Cause you know, as you point out in our slides, that's one of our fastest growing populations. - It's based on the ratio that Dr. McDade described by levels. - Okay, I see.

[01:56:07] - And then we have to be able to show the state that we are complying with it. - But I think what Dr. Lateef, which I think this is important to call out that I think you're noting here is, even though our average daily is going down in terms of enrollment, our membership, our average daily membership is going down, the number of English learner students is going up, right?

[01:56:34] Both things can be true. - Yes. - And so, when you see that we're adding 39 positions or we're adding 50 TAs, although we're projected to lose students, that loss of students does not equate to a decrease in English learner students.

[01:56:49] We're seeing the opposite effect that the students that are coming in are more and more being identified as either English learners, students with special needs or economically disadvantaged, which is why we extrapolated those three subgroups and showed that in the presentation because it is a direct alignment to the investments that we're making, right?

[01:57:09] So you can have a school system that is losing enrollment year over year, yet the needs of the population that is being served is increasing and then the investments have to match that need. So I think that's important because sometimes the public may see that, or you're projecting a decrease of 2,600 students, yet you're adding 39 positions.

[01:57:31] Well, those 39 positions are specifically to support English learner students, and we're seeing a continued growth year over year in the students that are identified as English learners. - And I don't know if we do this, maybe I should know this, but when we say our projections are going down, do we have a subset of projections?

[01:57:49] Do we, of what's gonna happen with the English learner population, what's gonna happen with the students with disabilities? Do we say currently we have this many numbers, but over the next three years, those are actually gonna go up or, I mean, the percentage goes up obviously, right? So we know the percentage goes up, but do we project the actual number?

[01:58:08] Do we know that? - No, that's not something that you can project. You can't project who's going to qualify for special education services, right? That's a year by year, need by need basis. So we never know from year to year what that number of students with special needs is going to be.

[01:58:24] You can't, there's no way for you to predict that. Same thing holds true for our English learners. As you have students that are enrolling in the system, you never know. We can predict what our enrollment is going to be. - Percentage may look like. - What our projected enrollment is gonna be, but we can't tell you what the subgroup percentage is going to be.

[01:58:45] - Is there any science around that? Or is there any thought to doing that? Because that also poses a big risk, you know, for us in the face of decreasing enrollment, the cost of the students that we are getting is going up. - The cost to educate the current population we have is going up, even though the enrollment is decreasing, but there is absolutely no way to project the percentage of students that will be requiring special education services or requiring English language services until the students are enrolled and we identify that that is there.

[01:59:23] - Okay. - This just a quick question. I don't need the answer tonight. What is our, just to remind me in the public, what our current counseling ratios are at each grade level at the sort of elementary, middle and high, what the ideal counseling ratio is.

[01:59:40] And I know we added a few counselors here in the budget, maybe not enough to move the needle on that ratio, but I'd love to know what would it cost the division to get us to the 250 to one at the high school level, which was where I remember from last year, the only place we were lagging.

[01:59:59] In the elementary and middle, we hit the ratios probably. - So Ms. Zargarpur did ask this question and I shared where we are today with our ratios. The VDOE required ratio is one to 325 across the board, all levels. PWCS is meeting that ratio at elementary school at one to 325.

[02:00:18] We're below that at one to 278. so we're faring better in middle school than the required VDOE ratio. And then at high school, we're at 1:300. And according to ASCA, it's a 1:250, as you stated. We have not calculated what it would cost for us financially to get to the 1:250, so that's something that we could bring back the cost to you at markup.

[02:00:43] But I will caution, though, to make that kind of sizable investment in a single year, I would anticipate that we would be sitting with vacancies for quite some time because it would be very, very challenging to fill those vacancies.

[02:01:00] And so we can fund the FTE, but then to have a school sit with a vacancy for the full school year, that's funding that could have been going to something else. So, I mean, just putting that out there as a point of consideration, but we definitely at markup can bring to you the full cost of what it would be to fund at a one to two 50 ratio across the board.

[02:01:23] - I mean, I don't know if it's as simple as one counselor per high school, that might seem easy to fill, but if it's, I don't know if it's two, three, four, five, I don't know the answer. - It would be more than that. And we, and I don't want to, you know, throw any numbers out because we haven't done it. So we'll do our due diligence to determine the number of counselors that would be needed as well as what the financial costs would be.

[02:01:43] And then also keep it in, just keep it in mind for the full board that we are in a shortage right now and counselors is a critical shortage. So it would be incredibly challenging for us to fill a significant number of positions, even if we had the dollars to be able to fund it.

[02:01:59] - Fair enough, fair enough. Okay, great. I look forward to seeing those numbers. I really like those numbers. I mean, I think we're hitting the numbers already at the elementary and middle level. I mean, our targets- - If you're looking for us to meet the American School Counseling Association recommendation of one to 250, no, we are not hitting- is that only for high school or they say that's for elementary?

[02:02:19] - That's across the board, that's across the board. The closest that we're coming is at middle school, which is at one to 278. - 278, okay. - But high school is one to 300 in elementary right now and PWCS is one to 325, all three of which are below the BDOE recommendations, but do not hit the ASCA recommendation.

[02:02:36] - Okay, great, thank you. Dean of students, everyone's comment on that. I think it's great. I think Dr. McDade, as you've always done with all of the work we do, I would love to see some metrics around how we determine whether those positions become effective.

[02:02:52] So is it the kinds of things that it frees up more time for our APs to go and do more evaluating teacher performance, you know, working with teachers, instructional, you know, working on that sort of instructional leadership kind of stuff, is it that we're, you know, I don't know what are the kinds of metrics we would say these positions are, how do we monitor the success of that work?

[02:03:18] you know, there'll be a subjective aspect to it, but are there objective metrics? You don't have to answer that now, but those are the kinds of things. As we roll out new programs, I always appreciate that. - Absolutely, and we are actually prepared though for that because that's the work that I mentioned earlier that Ms. Porter-Lucas and Dr. Atkins and Ms. Hebner are already doing.

[02:03:36] They're already doing the audits. They're capturing data in terms of consistency of implementation. And so we will be able to compare where we are. we have now baseline data for the first time. And so we'll be able to compare that to where we are after a year of having the dean of students on staff, even down to Dr. Atkins' office monitoring reporting and the quality of the reporting that's coming through.

[02:04:04] We'll be able to have both qualitative and quantitative data as a baseline this year that we can then compare year over year to see if the dean of student position is making an impact in the areas of improvement that the team has identified. - Outstanding, that's great.

[02:04:21] I think this is my really second to last question. Mr. Youssef, you had mentioned, and I think I missed it when you got this slide, you talked about cash to capital, 30 million. Did I miss something? What was that? - So yesterday at the Board of Supervisors meeting, there was a resolution.

[02:04:43] Once our audits are completed, the BOCS looks at their revenue, actual revenue, and they do an exercise called true-up, which is what the true-up of the revenue is. And we got $32 million or $31 million rounded up in terms of extra cash.

[02:05:00] And because this is— That's for this fiscal year? It's based on— The true-up on this fiscal year, right? No, it's on FY24. Fiscal year 24 just— Right now? No, we're in fiscal year 25. Oh, I see. Oh, yeah, yeah.

Okay, so it's what they owe us from.

[02:05:16] Right, and so typically with those things, because there's a non-recurring nature to that, we apply it to one-time projects, and with the increases we have in our CIP, we have allocated it in our budget for the general fund transfer to CIP construction.

[02:05:37] To current construction? Yes. Okay, all right, fine. So I guess then the question I had is, the projected increase that the county share of our revenue will be this year remains the same.

[02:05:55] There hasn't been a change to that. So what do we expect from the county? Oh, yeah, go ahead. So in terms of the fiscal year '25, the year is not complete, the collections are not complete, and so we will not know that possibly until next fiscal year sometime once the audit is over.

[02:06:13] And, you know, based on conversations with county staff, they feel that this is something that is going to decrease time over time as the county tightens up its projections. So that remains to be seen what we get for FY25.

[02:06:31] So, Mr. Yusuf, on the county budget, forecasted increase real estate personal property tax you have here on slide 14, increase of $54.8 million, so 6.1% increase. Is that a firm number? that is based on the five-year plan which we go by every budget we proposed is based on that because we don't have the advertised rates for this this particular year and uh as i mentioned earlier on when the county's uh executive proposes we'll get some indication of where they're going

[02:07:06] and it all depends on what they do in terms of tax rates and uh and if they do if they lower the tax rates and you know so two factors there there's the growth in your values and your tax rates and if they lower the tax rate but of their five year projections that we looked at this was the more conservative projection so it's unlikely to be lower than this but it could be higher it is unlikely to be lower than this but I would caveat that if the board decides the Board of County Supervisors decides to cut the tax rate it could have an impact okay - All right, that's all I have.

[02:07:45] And you know, just kudos on the premiums. I would remind the public that Dr. Eagle, maybe you can remind me. We had three or four years in a row where we didn't increase the premium at all. Is that correct? Okay, so on top of the fact that we, and I feel like just either last year or two years ago was the first year we had increased the premium after quite a while.

[02:08:05] - Yeah. - You wanna tell that to the microphone? - What? - No, but she didn't say, well, yeah. But how many years, though, we didn't do the premium? Do you remember that? - Well, my history began with PWCS in 2018, and so we did not increase premiums in the '18-'19 school year, the '19-'20 school year, and the '20-'21 school year.

[02:08:30] Now, it could have been prior to that as well, but I don't have the lived experience to comment on that without doing some research. - So it's at least four years where we didn't increase the premium. - At least three years that I'm aware of, but it could have been more. - Okay, all right, very good.

[02:08:46] All right, well, I appreciate that. That's very good, and then without the, no change in the deduct, or no deductible is outstanding. Okay, now I'll go to Mr. Jessie. - We had this discussion about the funding for the special eds or classes.

[02:09:06] One thing that we're not talking about is the impact on facilities. These smaller classrooms are gonna impact our facilities and schools that are currently crowded. So that's an issue that we have to deal

with I think.

[02:09:22] - Okay, any further questions? - Great, thank you Dr. McDade. Is that wrap up your superintendent's time? - Yes, that concludes the superintendent's time for this evening. - Okay, outstanding. 1601 Revision Policy 333, Public-Private Grants.

[02:09:39] First reading, Mr. Youssef, Dr. McDade. - Mr. Youssef's gonna provide a brief overview of the revisions to the grants policy.

[02:09:56] - So just to give a background, we did a comprehensive review of our grants management process and we looked at our policy and regulations, we've streamlined the regulations, we've developed a grants handbook and come up with detailed procedural changes.

[02:10:15] So as far as the policy 33-1 goes, we've removed the reference to, there was a position that was responsible for the entire grants management process and we've consolidated that function under the budget department.

[02:10:31] So as grants get developed, the Budget Department will review those applications and coordinate with the different program officers. Budget is very essential with grants because it is a great source of revenue, but it could require matches and local matches that could increase our costs without us knowing.

[02:10:50] So that is something that we wanted to bring into the Budget Department, and that's reflected in the policy. And then the other one is a change in the title of the Associate Superintendent for Financial and support services to the chief financial officer. - Questions, if you have any questions, please get them to Mr. Youssef over this week or two or Dr. McDade and we'll be up for final vote in the next board meeting.

[02:11:14] 1602, redistricting proposal for new residential development. Mr. Blake, I'm gonna read the motion. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the proposed redistricting for new residential developments, Bristol Corner, Bristol Crossing, and Thomas Farm at Bristol Station.

[02:11:40] - I have a second. - Second. Seconds any discussion mr. Denny I just like to thank you guys for working on this I really appreciate it and I think the Brentsville district residents have appreciated it and I do I do want to clear up one one point of of issue that they brought up I know I talked about it last time but I was just gonna say it one more time that it does not affect any current students at the Noakesville school that was a piece of misinformation that was going around it It does affect that one student, but we've talked about grandfathering him in so, or him or her in.

[02:12:16] So thank you so much for all your hard work on this and thank you to my colleagues for working together on this as well. - Please vote.

[02:12:48] - The vote is seven yes, one no. Williams, motion passed. - Moving on to 1603 policy revisions. We now have several revisions to policies for the first reading tonight and they are available to read in their entirety on the board docs under agenda items 16.03 to 16.06.

[02:13:05] If the board has any questions regarding the revisions and deletions. Division counsel Wade Anderson is available to answer them now and over the next couple of weeks, as you all know, this is the first reading. So I would, as you've all had for the last week or so, to take a look at it, but certainly take the next week or two to take a look at it and certainly get your questions.

[02:13:23] And if anyone has any questions on 1603 to six, please share them now. Ms. Tridentick. - Wade, can you just clarify for me what this entails? We're not getting rid of any of these things. not abolishing them can you just explain that a little bit sure mr denick as you know as the board is aware division council's office in conjunction with the clerk's office has been working to sort of review as we're supposed to do every five years and clean up and make some changes where needed

[02:13:58] to the zero series and the 100 series that belong to the board as part of that effort these policies are up for review one of the things that we're doing now is for some reason there were regulations attached to some of these policies it's not clear why but because the board typically does not adopt regulations that's for the superintendent to do and since this is the board series we're converting everything to policies so before there's any fake news out there that we're getting rid of the pledge of allegiance or we're getting rid of a moment of silence that's that's not true we're simply taking

[02:14:33] what's in the regulation making sure it's all in the policy so that's certainly the case for those i do need to point out something that my astute and unofficial editor and proofreader ms wall caught on with respect to the revisions to policy 102 and so in that case down in 102 where we missed one piece where it says that the superintendent is responsible for reviewing and and um enforcing that policy that of course should be the board it's the board's policy and so we'll make that

[02:15:10] change between now and the next meeting when it's up for action and we'll redline that to be available for the board but that that's the only minor change that we just we missed that that it should be the board um so thank you ms wall great um yeah it's like having chat gpt right next to me uh we're moving on to board matters last week we started Mr. Wook this week we'll start with Ms. Zargarpur thank you Dr. Lateef last weekend I went to see the

[02:15:42] district band concert and it was really really it was fantastic and while I was sitting there was remembering when I was a kid in this school to school division I started that in middle school I auditioned for all county and district band and things like that and when high school got to do all state and all kinds of other things and I was remembering how you know we would go we would sit with people we didn't know read the music put on a concert literally 12 hours later and kids continue this tradition I think they get to practice the music a

[02:16:21] little bit more than we did but it was still thrilling to sit there but one thing that's definitely changed since I was a kid because I remember being involved in a national symphony program where I got to talk to professional musicians and a lot of people told me at the time you know there's not a lot of women in professional music and they kind of cautioned the girls to not go into the schools of music and want to be performers that temper our expectations but what what I was thinking about was at this at this event there was a female conductor and there were pieces written by female composers which is something I

[02:16:58] would not have seen as much of when I was a student so I just was reflecting at that change and thinking wow we have just so much so many more things that our kids can look forward to doing I'm going to keep it short because we're all tired and there's some icy weather coming in so I will yield the rest of my time Miss William thank you mr. chairman February is one of my favorite months it is black history month so I would like to say that black history is American history and I appreciate going all to all the celebrations in my house it is a

[02:17:37] daily activity well it's really a yearly activity because you don't even get to ask for time on my on your phone unless you give me a fact but I think it is one of the things that one day I would like to see incorporated into our regular curriculum in our everyday life I think that is a an achievable goal and I hope that we meet it one day and that in other news student profiles have been released I think I mentioned this at the last meeting but they the announcement went out after our last meeting so if you have a student I think it's 6 through 12 please go into your parent view app would be listed under the document

[02:18:14] section and you can see a profile of where your student is currently and how they can be on track to graduate on time and have a thriving future I would like to dedicate the rest of my time for a moment of silence freedom high school lost a very special person Mr Vern Lee he was a basketball coach but we all know I don't do anything really with sports except try to learn and fail miserably but I knew him he really was I think inside of Nova said it best the heartbeat of the school but he was so much more it's he was that person that you saw when you walked in the building that just smiled and it seemed to light

[02:18:54] up the entire building you always felt loved in his presence that he just sort of radiated it and I was at the home of some former freedom students last year who had graduated several years ago and it was just rooms of full of tears he will be dearly missed by everyone at freedom but not only freedom so many other events that he attended and to have a person who is primarily in athletics and school security but absolutely affected every asset of that building and every member of our community I would just like to dedicate

[02:19:26] the rest of the time for a moment of silence for him thank you all my deepest

[02:20:25] condolences to his family thank you miss Williams miss wall thank you dr. Lateef first thank you to all of the schools for your support and for your posters and artwork it really spices up the boardroom and they're so thought that the messages are so thoughtful and colorful and fun so thank you I just quickly some events all county high school orchestra all county middle school orchestra and all district band were some of the events i went to this last two week time period all the performances were so well done and the special guest conductors had very nice things to say

[02:21:03] about our students so good job everybody and especially music educators for preparing your students so well that hilton performing arts venue was particularly special and the middle school students were just on their very best behavior and they were absolutely awesome.

[02:21:20] Last evening, I spent some time at Mullen, sorry, Unity Braxton for Mullen, Sudley, and Innovation had a pyramid concert. It's fun to see the little kids starting out and then to hear the all-county students who are just so good. I attended a spelling bee. I went to a military pathways event for students at Battlefield and they had representatives from all of the members, There's all of the armed forces, all the branches of the armed forces.

[02:21:45] They did a Q&A with the kids and gave them time to talk with them. It's a really great event. And we had a STEM night at LV with high school groups. A lot of battlefield clubs came out, community partners, parents, and they even had a mobile planetarium. It was very awesome. Had a good time at VSBA, got to attend several committee meetings, and met some parents who are advocating for improved laws for managing type 1 diabetes in school.

[02:22:09] So great job, parent advocates. A couple of thoughts. This is definitely a politically charged environment right now, and things are changing rapidly almost day-to-day. My position has not changed on the model policies, the 2023 model policies in particular.

[02:22:27] I urge the board at that time to adopt them, and I continue to advocate my support of those model policies because it restores parental rights and decision-making about their children while at school, while also protecting the safety and dignity of all students. And I want to say that in light of the recent executive orders issued by the executive branch of the federal government, I look forward to seeing a comprehensive review of our policies and procedures to ensure that they are legally compliant.

[02:22:55] I think that's very important. I have a couple of other thoughts. I'm interested in how things are going with our cell phone pilot. I know we talked about it a lot a couple months ago. I'm knowing a little bit more about what we are planning to communicate to students and parents before they go away for the summer break so that they're fully ready to embrace the cell phone plan in the fall so I'm kind of I would like to know an update on that I'm extremely interested in what we can do to improve medical school science I've already expressed some interest in that for our planning for the strategic plan going forward I am continuing to monitor the enrollment numbers of schools in my district I'm very closely watching two of

[02:23:32] my schools that have roll low enrollment numbers and as always it's a privilege to represent the Gainesville District and I hope everybody has a great evening. Thank you. Mr. Jesse. Yeah I'm just going to hit a couple things quickly here. I attended the Omega Talent Show. That's the show that they hold every year. It was at Freedom High School this year. I also went to the Potomac Lake Ridge basketball game and or Woodbridge basketball game

[02:24:09] I'm sorry, and Potomac won both the boys' and the girls' game, so that was a little disappointing, but I was hoping to see Mr. Wilkes there to egg me on. But the other thing, I went to the Student Voice Center grand opening at Woodbridge High School.

[02:24:32] This is a new project that was started by the students themselves, and they now have a center where kids can come in if they have situations and talk to them on different occasions, so it was really something to see that they are doing that.

[02:24:52] And the last thing I went to is the robotic event at, I think it was Lake Ridge Middle, and all I can say is Lake Ridge Middle is doing wonders for both the drone and the robotics competition.

[02:25:09] So the game is on with them and they're doing wonderful with that. So I just wish everybody a safe trip home and looking forward to continue to be of service. Thank you.

[02:25:25] - Ms. Trudanik. - Thank you. I ran for this office on the promise to keep our kids safe and stand up for common sense practices within our school. This includes keeping boys out of girls sports locker rooms. I was happy to see the executive order signed by President Trump today. I was also excited to see some of our Prince William County schoolgirls standing by his side in the White House and making their voices heard. I've been assured that the school system is working to review all the changes being made including the ones today to ensure that our policies remain legally compliant. I will work tirelessly to address any issues

[02:26:04] identified within our schools. I also want to say thank you to all of our schools for their posters that they work so hard on decorating the boardroom. I love seeing the drawings, especially innovation

schools. I think it's such a cool one. It's around the corner over here, but I think they should really consider using that in their yearbook because it was awesome work by all the students. One of my favorite things I did this weekend was bring my husband and my youngest son to go to Unity Reed High School to visit the Unity Reed Lions drill meat team and to see them perform um sorry not perform compete um i was so impressed with

[02:26:41] these kids getting to see uh pho and balen again pho and balen um they are such amazing leaders on that team uh getting to see their excitement their joy uh the way these kids cheer each other on um congrats to both of them and romeo for ranking in the top three in the competition I've been making my rounds to each of my schools this month.

[02:27:04] One thing I wanted to say is I'm extremely thankful to my principals, vice principals, and front office for being part of the glue that makes each one of our schools run. They work very hard. I'm looking forward to continuing to visit schools, and especially going back to Tee Clay Wood to be a part of Leadership Day, which I don't know what that's about yet.

[02:27:22] But I'm excited to see those quality leaders and learners achieving excellence. I also enjoyed this week being a part of my first Safe Schools advisory meeting. I'm thankful to all of you that work around the clock to ensure our kids' physical safety.

[02:27:38] So that's all I have. Mr. Wilk. Thank you, Mr. Jenick. Just real quick, a couple events that I've attended. I do love the unified sports program in Prince William County and the expansion of what we're doing, what our teachers are doing, excuse me, and the students who partake in that.

[02:28:01] It's amazing. the inclusion is amazing and watching these kids engage with one another and so i was at woodbridge senior high school mr jesse i was there and watching these kids play this past saturday it was great a phenomenal event and my two schools were there both forest park and potomac high school we're representing the potomac district made us very proud a couple other basketball has been like what i've been doing a lot of potomac and forest park played the best two teams in the cardinal division again um and uh potomac won uh this uh bout as well montclair had a bingo night

[02:28:38] that i made it to and henderson had a book fair i do want to just on a more somber note just mention and say my prayers are with uh on the 30th of january there was the worst air disaster in or in the United States since 2001, where 64 people on an American Airlines regional jet from Kansas collided with three people on a helicopter, resulting in everyone perishing.

[02:29:08] So I just wanted to, given that there were a number of Northern Virginia residents, especially from Loudoun and Fairfax County, my prayers are with them, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention that. Thank you. - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[02:29:23] Since our last meeting, I've had the privilege of visiting several schools, Fitzgerald, Penn, Beville, Hampton, D. Garfield, and King Elementary. Every visit reinforced what I already knew, that our schools embrace every student and believe in their ability to succeed.

[02:29:45] I also had the pleasure of visiting King Elementary and attending their MLK assembly. And I just wanna give a special thank you to Mrs. Poe and Mrs. Jenny for keeping Dr. King's spirit alive in the school that bears his name.

[02:30:01] It was a powerful reminder of why we must continue fighting for access, opportunity, and excellence for every child. Then I also attended the VSBA Capital Conference with Ms. Agapur, Ms. Wall, and our communications team.

[02:30:22] And we met with our legislatures to advocate for some key priorities, not just for Prince William County, but for the entire Commonwealth. Making sure our schools have the resources they need to serve students is a top priority for us.

[02:30:38] And at Enterprise last week, I attended the Title I Literacy is Sweet Family Night, where families came together for evening their face painting, poetry, slime making, and journaling, all centered around literacy.

[02:30:56] Seeing that, seeing that level of family engagement was inspiring, inspiring. It's a reminder that education is a partnership between schools and the community. And speaking of community, I wanna take a moment to thank our churches, businesses, and organizations that continually support our families and students.

[02:31:17] We can't do this alone, and your partnership makes a real difference. And so, a couple more things. Last night, I also attended a string pyramid concert, but it was for Minneville, Neabsco, Dell City, and Bel Air at Hampton Elementary, and it was a great night of music.

[02:31:38] It really is, they sounded good too. I don't remember it sounding like that when Bel Air was playing strings, but they did a real good job last night. And finally, I would want to congratulate the Garfield High School boys basketball team on their senior night victory over Freedom last night.

[02:31:57] It was a great win for the Red Wolves. And I'll close with this. In times of division, our strength comes from unity. Our community thrives when we listen, uplift, and work together, not as impotents, but as neighbors committed to a better future for our children.

[02:32:21] As always, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and witness firsthand the incredible things happening in our community. Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Blake. - Thank you board, thank you Dr. McDade. This is always a big night.

[02:32:37] I think that it's said that one's budget is a reflection of their values. I'm very, very proud of this budget. I think the proposed budget from the superintendent does reflect the values of the school board, the superintendent's office, our teachers, our staff, and certainly the work I believe I've been able to do on this board for the last seven years.

[02:33:04] The largest portion of the increase in this budget goes to compensation, typically as always, but it is a strong compensation package that really helps us reward our teachers, helps us recruit and retain our teachers, and really will make Prince William County schools maybe the first choice where school teachers come to work.

[02:33:29] We are achieving a first year salary that is extremely competitive with our neighbors for the first time ever. And this puts us really in the realm of recruiting some of the top talent coming out of our universities and folks who might be wanting to move to the area and teach in our division.

[02:33:45] And I really believe, you know, I mean, it is true, research shows it out, the biggest driver of student performance is the quality of the teacher in the room. If you take a look at this budget, this budget

is committed to things that will help improve our teaching and learning, the teacher in the room, accountability.

[02:34:04] It adds positions to free up the folks in the building from having to do things that don't impact student learning to now being able to move into positions to help our teachers, help our students do the work that we ask them to do every day.

[02:34:22] I'm very proud of this budget. I think if you were to take a look at this budget and say, you know, what is the strength of this budget? This is a exclamation mark on the top of Dr. McDade's first four years of her commitment to really catching up on the salary, but on the, you know, my seventh year of one of the largest budgets in the Commonwealth and certainly one of the largest in the nation for a school, we have given a record number of raises to teachers since 2018, I believe the largest set of raises of any school division in the same period, same time, anywhere in the nation.

[02:34:58] And again, that's a reflection of the values that I believe I bring to this board and this board has really committed to doing for its community. And I think that if more than anything else is a credible driver to the student performance we have.

[02:35:17] You know, I've always talked about increasing counselors. We've been able to do that every year, you know, on and off for the last six, seven years, dramatically improving our ratios. I will continue to sort of push for that. I think that's really critical. And everyone knows that's very close to my heart as well.

[02:35:35] I wanna reiterate to the public that Prince William County remains one of the most welcoming open school divisions in the nation, a place where we will welcome you, keep you safe, protect you and make sure that you get the best out of the time you spend with us for your own progress and for you to launch your own thriving future.

[02:35:58] Thank you very much and this board meeting is adjourned.