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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Date Wednesday, February 19, 2025
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 3h 12m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp61jw9cX6o>
- 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] Um, the Prince William County School Board meeting is now called to order. Our first action item will be our first motion for approval of the meeting agenda. Mr. Blake. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended.

[00:00:18] Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarpur. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. All in favor? Aye. Hands up. Any opposed? No opposition. Motion passes. Moving on next to motion to enter closed session.

[00:00:34] Motion is in order, Mr. Blake. - 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.

[00:00:50] 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 2.2-3711A1, and two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other civil litigation involving the school division under Virginia code 2.2-3711A7/8,

[00:01:34] And three, to discuss the award of a public contract to employees exclusive representative, which involves the expenditure of public funds and the terms or scope of such contract where this

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

[00:02:04] And four, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3711A19.

[00:02:30] - I have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Okay. Please vote all in favor. Any opposed? No opposition noted. Motion passes unanimously. At this time, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session

[00:02:49] and return in approximately one hour.

[00:03:49] Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session from closed session. Closed session certification action item is on 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 the meeting of February 19th, 2025, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:15] 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 meetings requirements were discussed in closed meetings to which the certification resolution applies, and two, only such business matters as were identified in the motion convening a close meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:04:45] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:07] - Get the votes. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Outstanding closed session action items, approvals and appointments releases. The motion is ordered, Ms. Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in the closed session.

[00:05:25] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed.

[00:05:49] - Okay, next up is our public hearing on the fiscal year 2026 proposed budget. We must do this every year as part of our budget process and this is the night we're gonna do that.

[00:06:04] And so I will read to you that I declare that a public hearing is now open on the subject of the superintendent's fiscal year 2026 proposed budget. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. we ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting.

[00:06:27] If you do not do so, the board will recess and I will ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Any citizens who signed up to speak on this subject may do so when called upon. Tonight, we have six citizens signed up to speak on the budget and when I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:06:47] At this point, they're being, this point we'll start. So I'll just read the first five if you'd like to come up and grab a seat up front. We Jen Donnelly, Sharon McPike, Victoria Stabley, Heather Oberle, Sandra Kern, and then, yeah, and then Gloria Jordan and Naman Raimond.

[00:07:04] First, Jen Donnelly, we need the timers up.

[00:07:23] - Hi. - Okay, great. Thank you. - Good evening, my name is Jen Donnelly. I'm the chapter chair of Moms for Liberty and my address is on file. I stand before you today to advocate for a critical issue, the need for armed security personnel in our elementary schools.

[00:07:41] Our children, especially those in elementary schools, are among the most vulnerable members of our society. They're the least able to defend themselves against an attacker, making it imperative that we take proactive measures to protect them. I want to draw your attention specifically to Covington Harbor, where hundreds of students are walking to and from various trailers that house classrooms due to overcrowding.

[00:08:07] I know that we have roving security guards who make regular stops at all of our elementary schools, but in my opinion, this doesn't go far enough. At a minimum, I urge that you find funds in the budget to ensure these children are safeguarded by SROs at each location.

[00:08:24] I acknowledge that budgets are tight, but our security team has started a path to have the best and most state-of-the-art physical security in the country. I don't want this to change. As you're aware, President Trump signed an executive order regarding the policy restricting biological males' access to girls' restrooms and locker rooms.

[00:08:44] Refusing to follow the order could result in withdrawal of federal funds from our budget. There have been indications from this board that you don't intend to follow the executive order. I recall when our last governor issued a mask mandate, this board had no hesitation in enforcing it.

[00:09:01] You insisted that adherence to state and federal directives was non-negotiable. So I must ask, why are we now selectively choosing which directives to follow? Are you really willing to lose \$48 million of our total budget for next year for not following the executive order?

[00:09:19] What types of cuts to our physical security would have to happen if you choose gender ideology and DEI over physical safety? How can you have a positive climate and culture when you can't keep kids safe? Your primary responsibility is to serve students and families within this community.

[00:09:38] It is essential that you prioritize their concerns over any agenda that overlooks biological realities. I urge you to reconsider your stance, enforce the law, and always put our children's safety and wellbeing first. Thank you.

[00:09:54] - Thank you. Sharon McPike, Sharon McPike. Okay, Victoria Stauble. - Hi, I'm afraid I accidentally signed up for the budget section of the public speaking.

[00:10:14] I meant to sign up for the regular thing. If you want me to come back again for that section, let me know or I can just give a brief summary.

[00:10:31] - All right, this is really the public hearing on the budget. - Okay. - Sorry, if it's budget related, we're happy to listen to it. - Okay. - Okay, thank you. Heather Oberle.

[00:10:46] - Good evening, my name is Heather Oberle and my address is on file. Going based upon the former speaker, I would like to say that Prince William County Public Schools' mission is that we commit to inclusive practices and equity with an expectation of excellence from every student and employee every day.

[00:11:06] How is this happening if Prince William County Schools decides to take away the rights of LGBTQ students and teachers? LGBTQ students are 170% more likely to skip at least one day of school. And yet you have asked us, asked the schools, to come up with ways to help attendance issues.

[00:11:24] Prince William County Schools also talks about core values, equity. We strive to provide equitable opportunities and support for all students. LGBTQ students and staff have higher levels of depression, feeling that they don't belong, and lower self-esteem in schools that have anti-LGBTQ regulations.

[00:11:43] How will the proposed changes support these students? Prince William County Public Schools' inclusivity. We celebrate our diversity as a strength and welcome all students. For LGBTQ students, school is the third most common location for hate crimes in the USA.

[00:12:00] They're twice as likely to be bullied as their straight counterparts. Integrity by Prince William County Public Schools. We trust that we do what is best for students through effective interpersonal relationships, dependability, and doing the right thing in all circumstances, even if no one is watching, and then I'll add, even if the world is watching.

[00:12:23] LGBTQ crimes have increased recently. Between 2015 and 2019, there were 108 reports to the FBI about hate crimes in K through 12. Between 21 and 22, there were 232. These are crimes extreme enough to cause the police to be contacted.

[00:12:41] Over half of LGBT students don't report harassment because they do not believe anything will be done. So think about that. Well-being, we take responsibility for the well-being of students' physical and mental health and take measures to help students, families, and employees feel supported and protected in order to thrive.

[00:13:00] Between 21, 22, 230,000 calls to the Trevor Project hotline. Between 22 and 23, 500,000 calls went to the Rainbow Youth Project. 63% of these calls were because of limited rights at school. One out of three LGBTQ students are bullied. This is two times higher than their straight counterpart. In preparing for tonight, I did research as well as required or asked several librarians at George Mason University to do research. We were not able to find one piece of data to support LGBT students harassing, bullying, or in harming their straight counterpart, their straight student

[00:13:37] counterpart, specifically in bathrooms or locker rooms. Sandra Kern that up here. Give me just a second. Good evening board. My name is Sandra Kern. I'm back.

[00:14:00] I am a former mother of a special ed student here in Prince William County. I want to thank each and every one of you that sits on the board tonight for actually standing up for our children when it's most necessary. And this is most necessary 1.8 million billion dollars yes it was the b there not the m um i'm most concerned about some of the changes here in the budget with regards to the special education um allotment of

[00:14:32] funds one in five children have dyslexia which one of you have one i did my son graduated last year a 2024 graduate with a fifth grade reading level yes a fifth grade reading level hello people let's read this budget let's tighten this budget let's put the money where it needs to go i also noticed in the budget there was a big jump from 2020 to 2025 with the children being

[00:15:06] learning at home my child did it for three years thank you but he still reads on a fifth grade level just a little silence for those parents that don't know what happens in schools we're expected to pick up these little computers or phones and push a button and find out what your budget is not many people can really get a grasp of it as a parent who had a child go through this system

[00:15:38] expecting the world-class education i'm reading it but what's really funnier about it is that my grandson is in the school system too and I'm looking out for his best interest as well. I have been in this county for 50 years. I'm a Prince William County graduate. Maybe I don't sit up here and read off my nice little form of, you know, how I want to speak, but I speak from my heart. When you're making these budgets and when you're looking at who it affects, it's your future too. It's not

[00:16:16] just our children's. So I would hope that maybe you can find a little wiggle room because honestly in that behavioral part I just don't understand it because when a child's needs aren't being met that's when they kind of have a little behavioral issue. Let's focus in, let's hone in, let's see where the real sun is going to shine tomorrow. It's going to be in your choices for our future and our children's future. Thank you again to each and every one of you for tolerating me.

[00:16:46] it's 2026 i'll be back don't worry much love gloria jordan good evening esteemed school board members dr lateev dr mcdade my name is gloria and i live in the coals district having four kids go through prince william county public schools i've stood before you many times over the past decade you've always listened with respect even when we disagreed over the years i've listened to the

[00:17:23] lived experiences of others read scholars and followed data from experts in the field there was It was a time when I believed bathroom access should be based on sex assigned at birth. I actually stood here and said just that. I operated out of fear, not of trans girls, but of cis boys.

[00:17:39] Women don't fear women. They fear men. The real issue is raising boys to respect women. There is zero evidence of trans women harming cis women, yet overwhelming evidence of cis men committing violence against all women. In sports, this is also not an issue.

[00:17:55] the past 10 years only 42 trans athletes competed in virginia just one per quarter nationwide out of nearly 500 000 collegiate athletes fewer than 10 are trans women there's no widespread advantage and there are no and no one transitions to win competitions that idea defies logic if we care about women's sports which i do we should focus on pay participation and resources not fear-based restrictions fear clouded my judgment but when my own child came out as trans i saw the harm and exclusion it caused. Students refusing to eat and drink all day to avoid the anguish of using unsafe

[00:18:30] restrooms. I saw the pain in students eyes when forced into spaces that didn't align with their identity. I learned the data. No increase in harm with inclusion, but undeniable harm in exclusion. LGBTQ+ students suffer from mental anguish and are at three times the risk of suicide, not because of their identity, but because they are judged about their identity. Hundreds of bills have been put out against them they have been dehumanized ostracized and there are threats of physical harm just for existing i can't unsee that pain i was part of that pain i should have led with love and i asked for forgiveness from those harmed due to my fear so now i seek to

[00:19:08] operate in love i will advocate for every student to use restrooms where they feel safe to play on teams that affirm them because dignity isn't negotiable because fairness means inclusion because i was wrong and now i seek to make it right legally title nine the first amendment on free expression and the

14th amendment on equal protection on personhood all protect trans kids and would supersede any executive order the constitution protects trans people i ask that you all please consider the health and well-being of trans kids because they need us now more than ever thank you miss mills the last speaker is that a verified address are we calling that one

[00:19:47] It was not a verified address. - What'd I do Carol on this one? Yeah, okay.

[00:20:15] All right, that will conclude our qualified speakers who have an address in the county and who verified through the system. So that at this point concludes the public hearing on the budget. So there being no other citizens indicating that we speak on this subject, I declare the public hearing closed.

[00:20:31] At this time, the school board will take the Pledge of Allegiance. It'll be led by Kaylee Thom, our senior from Brentsville District High School student representative tonight. - To the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:21:00] - Thank you, Ms. Thom. Let's move on to Thriving Futures Focus. Okay, at this point, this is the point in the evening where we celebrate the outstanding achievements of our students, staff, and schools as they work towards fulfilling our shared vision, ensuring that every student graduates with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future.

[00:21:25] This evening, the school board is honored to acknowledge the winners of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Oratory Competition, Osborne Park High School for receiving the Virginia School Breakfast Award, and Woodbridge High School Boys Cross Country Team. To begin introducing tonight's honorees, I invite Ms. Laurie Williams of the Woodbridge District Representative to begin the recognitions.

[00:21:45] Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. The oratorical legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Is everybody in? Can we wait until they all come in? I'm gonna give it a second and let everyone come on in so they can be present.

[00:22:18] Is that it? Oh, we still got a couple people coming in, okay. Okay, all right, thanks. I think the support's coming in next. Let me start over. The oratorical legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

[00:22:34] resonates through the eloquent voices of young student orators who presented at the 40th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Oratorical Program. This event is sponsored by Prince William County Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.

[00:22:49] And because we have her in the audience tonight, I would like to thank Ms. Lily Jessie, who is a former school board member and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated, who is the reason why we are here tonight because of this program. Thank you, Ms. Jessie. I appreciate you. She's in the front row, thank you.

[00:23:05] The Competition Live invites students in grades six through 12 from Prince William County schools and other area schools to participate. Students write first and then present an oration celebrating the life and accomplishments of Dr. King. This year, the writing competition open to all fourth and fifth grade students was reinstated.

[00:23:25] The Woodbridge district is very proud to share that a student from our district won not only best before judges, but also won best before audience award. We are pleased to welcome Ezayna, did I say that correct?

[00:23:40] Awesome, thank you. Ezayna Tessifei, am I right too? All right, two for two. From Mary G. Porter Traditional School and Assistant Principal Joseph Wood and Michael Fuller, MLK oratorical coach. Please step forward so we can see you.

[00:23:56] Congratulations to, oh, I don't wanna mess it up. Names are important. Ezayna. - Ezayna. - Say it for me. - Ezayna. - Ezayna, thank you. And congratulations, Izana. And thank you, Mr. Wood and Mr. Fuller.

[00:24:21] Izana, do you have some words to share with us this work? I want to thank all the people who helped me get to this point, especially my coach, Mr. Fuller and Mr. Wood.

[00:24:38] They helped me a lot throughout this. And especially the people of the Delta Sigma Theta, they also worked a lot with me. and I wanna just thank everyone who helped me get through this journey. - Thank you.

[00:24:58] - Thank you, Ms. Williams, and congratulations. It's now my pleasure to introduce Ms. Erica Trudenik of the Brentsville District. Ms. Trudenik. - Thank you. The Brentsville District is proud to recognize outstanding students from our schools who excelled in the recent MLK Oratory Competition.

[00:25:15] Representing Gainesville High School is Jordan Nesbitt, who won Best Before the Judges. Also attending from Gainesville is Principal Neil Beach and specialty coordinator, Dr. Robert Scott. Congratulations, Jordan and the Gainesville community.

[00:25:38] Representing Glen Kirk Elementary School is Nick Hill Tampi, yes, who won first place in the writing competition. Nick Hill is joined by Principal Matthew Meyer, fourth grade teacher, Kristiana Moyer, and gifted education teacher, Deanna Card, sorry, Deanne Card.

[00:25:56] Congrats to you all. - Thank you, Ms. Trudena, congratulations. And now on to the Coles Districts. and Coles District. I invite Ms. Lisa Zargar to introduce our award-winning students.

[00:26:13] - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. The Coles District proudly recognizes outstanding student achievements in the MLK Oratory Competition. Representing Bennett Elementary School is Haley Triglia, who won first place in writing competition at the recent MLK Oratory Competition.

[00:26:30] Principal Shelly Polzel and fifth grade teacher, Sandra Mozingo, are here this evening to support Haley. Where are you? Congratulations to the whole Bennett community.

[00:26:47] Representing Osborne Park High School is Principal Lisa Marie Cain. And while Rabab Raza could not be here tonight, we would still like to acknowledge her for winning Best Before Audience at the recent MLK oratory competition. Congratulations Rabab, and thank you, Ms. Cain.

[00:27:05] Where's Ms. Cain? There she is, okay. - Wonderful, thank you, Ms. Arkapur. Here this evening to speak on behalf of the competition as well as our award-winning students is Talia Fletcher-Gay, first vice president of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.

[00:27:26] - Good evening, everyone. Good evening to the members of the board and Dr. McDade and everyone present. My name is Talia Fletcher-Gay and I serve as the first vice president of the Prince William County Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. We were chartered in Prince William County on December 1st, 1984.

[00:27:43] So we are in the midst of celebrating our 40th year, serving the communities of Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park. Our Martin Luther King Jr. program was created by Miss Lily Jessie, as mentioned before, in 1984.

[00:27:59] And she is a former board member and a continued advocate for students in Prince William County. So this is also our 40th year hosting this event and our 35th year of our oratorical competition. On our chapter website, pwcacd.org, there is a wonderful video that depicts the history of our program and highlights many of our past participants and winners, so we invite you to visit our website and watch that video.

[00:28:25] It's full of history and information and a really great watch. Through this program, it has been our pleasure to provide an opportunity for the students of Prince William County to showcase their talents through our youth choir, our essay contest, and the oratorical competition, as well as continue to share and honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

[00:28:47] Through our designated deans each year, our participants write their essays, write their speeches to present. And so we're able to always continuously educate the community on what Dr. King has left behind for us.

[00:29:02] All of our participants have gone on to do great things in their lives and careers. We have seen doctors, public speakers and authors, doctors, lawyers, architects. They run the gamut of what they do now. And that's also noted in our anniversary video. And many of them attribute their experience in the MLK program and the oratorical competition as a key foundation in building their confidence. I personally am always in awe of our student competitors, their inspiring speeches, their command of the stage, the fact that they can write and get up there in front of everyone. It's always amazing to me, and this year's program was no exception, as you can see. On behalf of our chapter president, Felicia Pryor, and our entire

[00:29:42] chapter I would like to thank the board for taking the time to recognize this year's winners they did an awesome job and they deserve all of the recognition we are so proud of them thank you so much for your time tonight and we appreciate you all thinking of us thank you Miss Fletcher Gay and thank you to the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for sponsoring this wonderful community competition and celebration and celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. Miss Argapour, I believe you have additional recognitions from your district please tell

[00:30:17] us more about Osborne Park High School's recent award. I do. Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Virginia Department of Education has recognized Osborne Park High School with the Virginia School Breakfast Award. This award recognizes schools that expand breakfast access, maintain the nutritional integrity of foods offered, and serve more scratch-cooked meals. Osborne Park was one of just three award recipients this year. Our school division is serving more breakfast per day compared to last year with Osborne Park seeing an increase in breakfast participation of about 30 percent. Along with principal Lisa Marie Kane we welcome food director of food and nutrition Andrea Early and Carla Kelly food and nutrition manager.

[00:30:56] At this time I would like to invite the cafeteria manager of Osborne Park Nidia Bruno and her team to be recognized for their efforts in making this achievement possible. Nidia please introduce yourself and this and the your staff. Thank you. My name is Nidia Bruno and I have a few of my staff here.

[00:31:17] I have Delmi Montes, I have my assistant manager Malula, I have Dinga, Kenya, Maureen, Vivian, I have Suri, I have Lorena, and I have Soyla.

[00:31:34] So this is just a few of my staff, the other ones couldn't come, but I'm so happy and thank you for doing this for us. Thank you.

[00:31:50] Mrs. Early, uh, could you please share a few words on this accomplishment? Yes, good evening, Chairman Lateef, school board members, and Dr. McDade. I'm so pleased to be here this evening to share additional information about the important work that Nydia and her team at Osborne Park do each day to ensure that our students are well nourished and ready to learn. As you may be aware, OP was one of the 24 schools added to the community eligibility provision this year. Through CEP, meals are provided to students at no cost. But we know that if you have to wait in a long line,

[00:32:29] even if it's free, you might not access that meal. And so Nydia and her team were really anticipating increases in meal service, especially at breakfast. And so they worked alongside administration and our central office team to be able to open some additional lines to get those students through and to class, and now OP is serving an average of 630 breakfast every morning in that short amount of time, which is pretty incredible. In addition to offering a wide range of fresh and healthy choices every morning, I really want to comment on the incredible kindness that this

[00:33:04] team provides to students every day, and if you stop at OP during meal times, here's what you will see: you'll see students being served smiles and kindness. You're going to witness staff who know the names of an incredible amount of students, and they notice when kids aren't there. They notice when they haven't seen a student in a while, and they ask about that student. Students are really noticed and valued in the OP cafeteria space, and these actions really contribute to that positive climate and culture that we value so much here. So I just wanted to give another thanks and round of applause.

[00:33:38] To Nydia and her team for their work, thank you, thank you. Ms. Jesse is poor, and for the second consecutive year, Woodbridge High School boys cross-country team has etched its name in history, claiming the Class 6 state championship title. Let's give them a round of applause. Yes, sir, this remarkable victory builds upon last year's historic win, the team's first state championship.

[00:34:14] Since 1990, the success of the 2024 season is a testament to the team's unified focus, early morning summer training, shared sense of responsibility, and unyielding patience.

[00:34:30] Their victory is the result of sheer will, trust, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. To recognize our cross-country champions, I invite Mr. Richard Jesse, the Occoquan District, to speak. Mr. Jesse, thank you, Chairman Lateef.

[00:34:45] The Occoquan District is proud to recognize the Woodbridge High School boys cross-country team for an incredible achievement. With the latest championship, Woodbridge has now secured a total of nine boys state cross-country titles, placing them second all time among Virginia public schools.

[00:35:13] At this time, I would like to invite the director of student activity, Kyle Jake, to introduce the coaches and to say a few words about the team's accomplishments. - Good evening, Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, and members of the school board, it is my great honor and privilege to introduce to you our outstanding cross-country team who have achieved an exceptional feat by winning the state championship, not once, but twice.

[00:35:42] Their dedication, perseverance, and teamwork have set a remarkable example for their peers. These athletes have consistently demonstrated an incredible work ethic, balancing their rigorous training schedules with their academic responsibilities. Under the exceptional guidance of Coach McGreal and Coach McCarthy, these students have not only excelled in their sport, but have also grown as individuals learning the values of discipline, resilience, and sportsmanship.

[00:36:06] Please join me in congratulating our two-time state championship cross country team. They are truly a testament to what can be achieved through dedication and hard work. And at this time, our athletes don't know it, but when you win a state championship twice, the rings are a little bit easier to get the second time around.

[00:36:30] So I'm gonna surprise them and introduce each one of them and give them their state championship ring. First, Sharif El-Fadil, Bradley Johnson, Henry McCarthy,

[00:36:56] Cameron McDuffie, Owen Rehnquist, Devin Roberts, and Hayden Goodman, who is not here tonight and is sick with the flu.

[00:37:13] We hope you feel better, Hayden. Thank you so much. - Thank you, Mr. Jack and Mr. Jesse. Congratulations once again to the Woodbridge High School Boys cross country team on this outstanding achievement. I think I said last year, I hope to see you back.

[00:37:31] So I hope next year will be a three-peat. Let's do it, right? Before turning this over to Dr. McDade, I would like to all family members of all our students and staff members who were recognized this evening to please stand so we can applaud you for all the great work you do supporting these wonderful children.

[00:38:00] Before we take a few pictures, I'd like to invite Dr. McDade to share a few words. Doc. - Thank you so much, Dr. Lateef. First, I wanna say to our Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Oratorical winners, I had an opportunity to attend the competition And all of the participants were absolutely amazing and you're the winner, so that makes you phenomenal.

[00:38:24] You were absolutely superb and someone said earlier they were in awe, I too was just in awe of your excellence. Thank you so much for using your voice to uphold the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. For my Osborne Park family, thank you so much for everything that you do for our students, making sure that they receive healthy meals every day so they're prepared to learn.

[00:38:51] We deeply appreciate you. Congratulations on this much earned and deserved award. Woodbridge High School, second time. When I looked at this, I was like, weren't they here last year?

[00:39:07] I know firsthand the amount of stamina, discipline, and sheer grit that it takes to run cross country. And I wanna congratulate each and every one of you for your athletic excellence, as well as your scholarship, because I know that you're both, you're first student athletes, meaning that you value scholarship as well as athleticism.

[00:39:29] So congratulations to each and every one of you on your well-deserved recognition and award. Congratulations to each and every one here. You all make us PWCS proud.

[00:39:47] - Okay, thank you. And at this time, I'd like to invite our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation. We'll begin with a photo with the

MLK oratory winners. The second photo will include the Osborne Park High School staff, and the third will be with

[00:40:02] the Woodbridge High School cross country team.

[00:48:49] Okay, thank you all for that. Now we'll move on to 12.01 adoption of the consent agenda. Vice Chair Blake. - 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. Zargapur.

[00:49:04] - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:49:20] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Moving on to 1301, Acknowledgements and recognitions. A motion is ordered. Mr. Vice Chair Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board acknowledge, approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended.

[00:49:41] - You have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargapur. - I second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you. I just want to remind the public that we do this a month in advance and coming up is next month is for women's month, equity and education month, national athletic training month and Brain Injury Awareness Month for March.

[00:50:01] We've already done the ones for February. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Please vote.

[00:50:21] - Vote as six yes to abstain. Tridentic Wall, motion passed. - Wonderful, thank you. At this point, we have citizen comment time and those citizens who've signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium.

[00:50:36] The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium, or you will be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker, refrain from any clapping, cheering, or jeering to avoid disruptions of the meeting.

[00:50:57] If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight, we have 20 citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. So we'll call the first five. They can grab a seat up front. Mary Ann Jensen, Melissa Jerk, Chris Funderburg, Rebecca Anderson and Caitlin Weston.

[00:51:16] Mary Ann Jensen. - Good evening, members of the board. My name is Mary Ann Jensen. I am reluctantly here tonight, once again, because our esteemed school board has decided to continue its non-step bender of putting politics before education.

[00:51:41] In fact, I'm in possession of a Facebook post citing a school board member's direction to fill this room with supporters to protest against me and other like-minded parents. You all are a shining example of how this board manipulates these meetings to manufacture narratives that your views are mainstream, which of course they are not.

[00:52:01] No one buys your deception anymore, which brings me to why I am here. This board has made it a policy of disregarding the safety of our female students by allowing biological males into girls' restrooms. You have chosen to ignore the common sense executive order issued by President Trump two weeks ago today, which is supported by over 80% of Americans.

[00:52:23] I find this particularly ironic, considering that just a few years ago, when Governor Northam issued his mandate to suffocate children with masks, this board had no issue enforcing it, and even doubled down on what I correctly predicted would be a losing cause, but I digress.

[00:52:41] Whether parents agreed or not, you insisted that following state and federal orders was non-negotiable, yet now you have no issue throwing the law of the land to the wind to suit your political objectives. Your agenda is transparent to parents in this county, and it's reprehensible.

[00:52:56] The rest of America seems to understand the issue here, but since you don't care, even though your funding will be pulled, further sinking Virginia's schools even lower, let me set the record straight for you. Keeping boys out of girls' sports, locker rooms, and private areas is about the safety and dignity of our daughters.

[00:53:14] Girls should not have to feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a space meant for them. It is not bigotry to protect their right to privacy, no matter how much you pretend to hide behind that word. This discriminatory policy you've decided to tie yourself to creates unnecessary risks.

[00:53:31] Girls deserve spaces where they can change and use the restroom without fear of invasion or intimidation. It also opens the door for abuse as bad actors can exploit those policies with no safeguards in place. The NCAA, VHSL, and corporations are aligning with the President's orders and prioritizing fairness and safety in women's sports. If they can face reality, why can't this board? Your job is to provide education, not force an agenda that denies biological reality and dismisses parental concerns. The majority of parents here and across the nation demand you reverse course,

[00:54:06] uphold the law, and put our children first. Thank you. Melissa Yurk. My name is Melissa Yurk. Good evening, and thank you for hearing me tonight. On Monday, February 10th, Governor Youngkin announced Virginia's intent to fully comply with the executive order and keep biological men out of women's sports and locker rooms. This helps keep girls sports and spaces safe and private while promoting equal opportunity on the

[00:54:42] basis of sex rather than gender. The Virginia High School League immediately followed suit the next day. Despite guidance from the governor and VHSL, the Prince William County School Board, you, as elected leaders in our community who oversee the education, well-being, and safety of our children are failing to support the order. You remain silent with your hands-off approach riding the winds of public opinion until you are forced to make a choice. We do not understand how this can possibly be a hard choice to make right now. The choice

[00:55:18] has already been made. What will you do? This is not about alienating students at our schools. Rather, this is about the physical and emotional safety of every public school student in the county. Be the leaders we voted you to be and stop sidestepping your responsibility to declare our county's compliance with Title IX. Your indecisiveness highlights to me, a mom, that you either have higher priorities than our children or maybe you just don't care. As parents, I

[00:55:56] want you to take a stand. School administrators and our children are counting on you to publicly declare our compliance. Stop placating Prince William County parents through avoidance and silence. Do not conflate having a distinctive stance with being anti anything. Do not be the last county in the state to announce compliance. Rather prove your leadership by your adoption

[00:56:28] and enforcement of Title IX. Thank you. Chris Funderburg. Good evening. I know it's rare for you to hear from me or anyone else about the good things that we that have happened here. So I just want to take this moment to thank you for all the important improvements that have been made. What transportation has done over the past year is nothing short of amazing. The cafeteria food has become more diverse and serves our diverse student population better and the enhanced online tools have been great. Unfortunately my primary reason to be here is to

[00:57:04] discuss Trump's EOs regarding Title IX and DEI. I'm sure you're aware of the DOE's investigation of PWCS's Title IX violations. You risk close to \$50 million in funding for what? To allow boys to use the girls' restrooms, locker rooms, and sports?

[00:57:20] Why? Sex-segregated bathrooms do not violate Title IX or cause discrimination based on gender identity. Gender identity should be simply ignored in the case of bathrooms, just like race and nationality. This would not violate the Virginia Human Rights Act either.

[00:57:35] Sex should be the only discriminating factor and has been for hundreds of years. I'm sure you'll hear several appeals to emotion that might pull at your heartstrings, but these are not valid arguments and should be ignored. While it breaks my heart to hear that many have been fooled by gender ideology, we can't put our daughters at risk.

[00:57:54] For the sake of our daughters, for the sake of my daughters, I implore you to rescind policy 738-5. This will end the Title IX investigation, ensure access to federal funds, and most importantly, protect our daughters. Do this before we have incidents like Loudoun County, which a trans identifying student rapes two girls in two schools in two bathrooms or recently in Alexandria in which a sexual predator disrobed himself in front of little girls in a locker room

[00:58:23] that's all I gotta say thank you very much Rebecca Anderson hi my name is Becca Anderson my pronouns are she her I have two children who attend school in PWCS I have a spouse who teaches here I spent 16 years of my teaching career serving here and my address is on file with the clerk i'm here this

[00:58:57] evening to thank the school board and dr mcdade for your continued support for lgbtqia plus students and staff in prince william county schools thank you in advance for upholding and honoring the pwcs non-discrimination policy dr mcdade i appreciate that you recently reiterated your commitment to the non-discrimination policy in a recent Friday parent email. Thank you in advance to all of you for especially honoring and upholding the promises made in PWCS Regulation 738-5. In preparing my remarks for tonight, I spoke to a few transgender students

[00:59:37] in PWCS and to their parents. The message I received is overwhelmingly clear. The current verbiage is good, but PWCS can still do more. Keep fighting the good fight. One student described a situation where they were taking an SOL test last spring that was being administered by an adult that doesn't typically teach them. Although the student had legally changed their name and all name changes had been communicated and updated in the PWCS systems four years prior, the student's dead name was printed on their test ticket. When the adult was handing out test tickets,

[01:00:14] the dead name was read aloud and the student was outed to all of the students in the room with the executive orders and the vhs1 recommendations i'm worried about trans kids parents are worried about their trans kids historically pwcs has continually taken every opportunity to be a leader in standing

up for what is right no matter how many narrow-minded people show up with hatred in their hearts or how loudly they yell trans girls are girls trans boys

[01:00:50] are boys intersex people do exist non-binary people exist lgbtqia plus people matter and mrs anderson loves you dr mcdade and school board i appreciate all that you are doing keep up the good work. Thank you. Kaitlyn Weston. Good evening Superintendent McNade, Dr. Lateef, and all of the members of the school board. My name is Kaitlyn Weston, an educator, instructional coach, restorative

[01:01:27] practices practitioner, and parent of two children. I am here to thank you from the bottom of my heart for continuing to support and protect all Prince William County students, including our transgender and non-binary youth. Your current policies are what our students need. They prohibit discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on an individual's gender identity. With parent support, allow access to facilities that correspond to a student's gender identity, and allow students to participate in school programs that align with their gender identity. Thank you for continuing to provide an

[01:02:05] inclusive environment that is working for our students and families. As I'm sure you know, there are some really scary statistics about suicide and our lgbtq plus youth the trevor project recently analyzed data from 2018 to 2022 and found that when states enacted anti-trans policies suicide attempts amongst trans and non-binary young people age 13 to 17 increased

[01:02:35] from 7 percent to 72 percent. That number is staggering. This is why protections for gender non-conforming youth are necessary to increasing belonging and lowering the escalating rate of suicide attempts amongst teens. These protections are critical and life-saving. There are a few key protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth which PWCS current policies support that give me peace of mind when thinking about our trans students some of the key protective factors for youth include

[01:03:14] affirming spaces and activities especially at school policies and practices that support transgender and non-binary youth transgender and non-binary youth attempt suicide significantly less when they have access to spaces that affirm their gender identity transgender and non-binary youth who reported having pronouns respected by all or most people in their lives attempted suicide at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected. It is very simple. Continuing

[01:03:50] to support your students in the ways you have been will continue to save lives. Thank you for continuing to do everything in your power to affirm, protect, and respect all of our youth. you are saving lives next five shane thomas sarah maynard rena stapp robin anderson liz

[01:04:18] bohar shane thomas good evening superintendent mcdade dr latif members of the board my name is shane wells not thomas middle name i'm a marine veteran an engineer a jeeper many other things

[01:04:51] but most importantly i'm a father of two amazing young girls in prince william county i'm here because there's a small group of people pressuring this body to remove support and protections in place for the children of our school district specifically targeting the protections for our transgender and gender non-conforming youth i cannot understand why some people feel the need to target one of the smallest demographics in our population but they do so here we are we all know

[01:05:28] the statistics by this point they aren't even really in question when you stop treating our youth with courtesy and decency suicide rates go up and bullying becomes more prevalent when you stop seeing

these children as they are as human beings and start treating them as other or unwelcome that's how they're going to feel and that is going to have a have devastating consequences

[01:06:00] for our community there is absolutely no good reason to remove protections and the protections in place for our transgender and gender non-conforming youth laid out in the current non-discrimination policy.

[01:06:20] The proponents for removal just are attacking children who just want to live their lives. They just want to harm someone who can't fight back. Do not let these people attack our children.

[01:06:36] Our job as parents, educators, school board members, heck, even just decent human beings is to protect our youth and support them as they are, not as someone else thinks they should be.

[01:06:51] This is not the first time the district's non-discrimination policy has come under political fire just two years ago we worked to support our children and ensure that discrimination in politics stayed out of our schools you made the right decision two years ago and i sincerely hope you make the right decision again affirming prince william county support for all its students

[01:07:21] that's it sarah maynard good evening members of the school board thank you so much for taking the time to hear us all this evening i appreciate each and every one of you i know this is a lot to hear but we greatly appreciate the time and the effort that i see in each of your faces as you

[01:07:59] sit here and make eye contact with me i know that's that's a lot from all of us my name is sarah maynard i'm a director of a tiny outdoor preschool called ganteva across the street from hilton high school as an educator i know that children thrive when they feel safe when they feel valued and seen for who they truly are inclusion diversity and equity are not just policies they are the foundation of a strong just and thriving society right now transgender students in our school are facing increasing barriers to safety and belonging researches that all students

[01:08:35] are affirmed in their identity through inclusive policies supportive educators and the simple dignity of being called by their chosen names and pronouns they experience better better mental health stronger academic performance higher rates of graduation in contrast rejection and exclusion increase the risks of anxiety, depression, and suicide in all students. Every child in Prince William County deserves an education free from fear, one where they can learn and grow and reach their full potential. I urge this board to continue to stand on the side of fundamental rights of

[01:09:12] every student, especially our transgender students who need protection and support right now more than ever. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. Rena Stapp. Hello, I'm Rena Stapp and I have children that go to school in prince william county i am an educator in prince william county and i am thankful that you're taking the time to listen to us tonight and to be here and

[01:09:51] i know prince william county just celebrated kindness week and we had so many displays from our counselors and the children and it was just warmed my heart to see how much everyone cared for each other and loved each other and at the school i elementary school i work at no one was being mean because of someone else being different we were all trying to celebrate kindness and inclusion and i also want to say thank you to dr mcdade for the diversity email that came out showing that prince william county does care about everyone everyone here and i want to also applaud

[01:10:30] the school board for not bending to the whims of every executive order that comes out one that says everyone is a woman because of conception there was a lot of weird things that have come out and we don't have to bend to every strange whim of the administration we can do the ones that make sense for our students for our children we are the adults and it is our job to model empathy and kindness for the children in our lives whether they're our own children or the ones in our community or the ones that we teach or the ones that we coach i also coach the robotics club we

[01:11:04] have boys we have girls i don't care what bathroom they use as long as they are happy and safe at school we are here to show them what they should be doing and how they should be treating each other and what we want is for everyone to embrace each other with love to support each other and to be the emotional support and safety for all students and in our school i don't think anybody cares who's with bathroom you use and the people we've heard the statistics they've said it i have them all written down here as well the trans students are the ones being bullied the trans

[01:11:43] students are the ones that are being hurt by others and if you force them into a place where they are not comfortable that bullying and harassment only increases it damages their mental health it increases their suicidal thoughts and as they said only 42 of the 185 000 high school students in the past 10 years in vhs have been trans 42 in 10 years we don't need to be making changes to things for a minute amount of people that are not hurting others they are the ones that are being hurt and being othered and that is not what we are here for in prince william

[01:12:22] county we are here to lead with kindness thank you robin anderson good evening thank you so much for the opportunity to speak tonight my name is reverend ramen anderson and i am a mom of three kids that have not just been educated but also nurtured in our outstanding prince william county public schools my eldest is now in college but my two younger kids are still in high school all three including my daughter have played sports in our schools i happen to also be a

[01:13:00] baptist minister which means that my faith is rooted in following the ways of jesus who welcomed children and gave special care to those who were pushed to the margins or mistreated all too often lgbtq students are being pushed to the margins and mistreated at school the centers for disease control is verified that they're more likely than any other students to be bullied or harassed and students that are bullied and harassed at school are more likely to cut and get these unexcused absences they're more likely to experience depression and succumb to substance abuse

[01:13:35] LGBTQ students who are harassed at school are twice as likely to attempt suicide as students who are not. But you know what reduces an LGBTQ youth's likelihood of attempting suicide? Being part of an affirming community. And too many kids don't get that at home or at their faith community.

[01:13:59] So for a lot of these kids, that life-saving affirming support comes from friends at school, compassionate teachers and caring coaches. It comes from being able to gain confidence playing sports and being able to use the restrooms where they're safe and comfortable.

[01:14:17] You all, this school board, did the right thing when you banned discrimination against our LGBTQ students. And we're currently in this strange situation where those same kids are now being used as pawns to drum up political fervor that is rooted in fear and bigotry as a christian and as a mom i ask you to please stand firm in your decision to protect the kids being pushed to the margins

[01:14:48] and mistreated we want all of our kids to thrive including the queer ones thank you liz bohar good evening dr mcdade and school board members my name is liz bohar and i'm a proud pwcs school counselor and my address is on file with the clerk. I thought a lot about what I would say tonight. I thought about sharing the multitude of reasons why the non-discrimination policy the county currently has in place is what's best for all students and staff. I thought about scare

[01:15:25] tactics and pounding on the podium but I knew none of that would work. I then thought about not attending at all but I knew it was important for students to see that there are adults that not only care for them but are willing to stand up and advocate for them so here i am tonight i'm going to simply request something from each of the school board members i ask that each of you reach out to a teacher or school counselor in your district that works with a trans student that is out and comfortable talking with you i ask that you sit with their families and have them share with you their own fears and feelings i ask that you recognize that these students that you represent

[01:16:03] are human beings with stories listen to them when they tell you that they don't drink anything all day because they're too afraid to use the restroom listen to their families who know what they are up against but ultimately just want what we want for all of our children for them to be happy and accepted and remember that whether or not you agree with them or understand them that deleting a policy that ensures that they are protected will cause them harm it is a policy that ensures they they are equal, that they have rights, and allows them to be who they are and not have to hide their true selves. I would like to end with, it's been a while since I've been at a school board meeting.

[01:16:41] For those of you who have been around long enough, you know that I was lucky enough to welcome a daughter into this world almost four years ago. And now having a parent perspective, I can say that there is not a thing that she could tell me or be that would make me love her any less or fight for her right to exist as she is.

[01:17:01] I implore those of you that are parents on the board to think about these students as if they were your own. I thank each of you for your time. And I hope that you remember that your job as a school board member is to represent all students, not just the ones that you agree with. Thank you.

[01:17:19] The next five, and I'd encourage you to come up front to have a move a little bit more efficiently, but Christopher Saylor, Hina Ansari, Deanna Bair, jessica share and judith cook christopher sailor good evening my name is christopher sailor and my address is on file with the clerk i'm the father of four children three are current students

[01:17:51] of prince william county schools one of which is non-binary my fourth and eldest is a graduate of prince william county schools and is also trans i want to thank the prince william county school board for adopting trans-affirming policies that actively support and protect our children.

[01:18:12] Your dedication to protecting LGBTQIA+ youth and providing them with a safe environment to learn and grow has been instrumental to the health and well-being of both students and staff. I'm here today to ask you to please continue enacting these trans-affirming policies because what is at stake is the very lives of our children and, trigger warning, i will be discussing suicide and assault here because it would be dishonest not to this conversation is difficult but it was sappho who wrote what cannot be said will be wept and i will

[01:18:49] not let silence be my tears fact 82 of trans people have considered suicide and 40 have actually attempted it with suicidality being higher among youth fact trans and non-binary teen suicide attempts increase by as much as 72% after states pass anti-trans laws.

[01:19:15] Trans and non-binary high school students experience a higher prevalence of violence and discrimination and are at an elevated risk of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse when compared to their cisgender peers. 25% of trans students have skipped school because they they have felt unsafe.

[01:19:35] Fact, sexual assault is more prevalent against trans and non-binary youth, and anti-trans policies may be associated with that increased risk. Fact, the feeling of school belonging in students is a statistically significant contributor to their suicidality.

[01:19:53] Fact, when schools implement LGBTQIA+ supporting policies and practices, all students experience better mental health. Those are facts and excerpts from peer-reviewed and published studies, and before this meeting, I emailed them all to each and every board member here so that they can be included in the public record.

[01:20:14] The lives of our trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students and staff will be put at risk if Prince William County Schools decides to revoke its trans-affirming policies. Please keep them. Our children's lives depend on it.

[01:20:31] Thank you. - Hina Ansari. - Shall I wait for the timer? All right, thank you so much to the board and to Super Nintendo McDade.

[01:20:48] Thank you so much for being here. I hope everyone survived the snowstorm that they got in here on. I know it was very harrowing outside. I thought we would have more of the opposition speaking. So I was trying to keep stats of what everyone's concern was regarding this trans student issue. And I didn't find a lot, except I thought there would be more concerns about equity and not as much about safety.

[01:21:07] But when I was doing research about this, I thought, what are we talking about here? I was trying to figure out how many students are we really talking about? and i substitute teaching this in the school uh in our princeton county schools and so i interact with a lot of kids and i think i have exactly one kid who's non-binary who i interact with and that's it and that's in one high school so i mean it's not it's not a huge number but i did the math i tried to do the math i'm not gonna let the teachers correct me on this one but there are 335 million americans and 2.3 of them identify as trans that's less than one percent and if you extrapolate that

[01:21:41] down to the Prince William County school system approximately after out of every 100,000 people there are maybe 400 trans people there are about 90,000 students in the Prince William County school system so I'll give you that extra 50 or 20 I don't see I can't do math but so we'll say it's 400 trans students possibly in the Prince William County school system and then you extrapolate that down again I think it's down right is it extrapolate down I don't know the teachers will correct me um to figure out how many of them are athletes because not all students are athletes of course so i went online and i tried to figure out how many of the students are athletes and the

[01:22:18] the number i got was 15.5 million which is not really relevant but what they said was 15.5 million students are high school students and half of them are athletes so i said okay well let's say if half of the student body is athletes and from what i see they are not there are a lot of walking potatoes in the school but you know that's neither here nor there um but uh if half of them are then you're talking about

half of half of half of half of a percent of a percent so you've got less than 200 kids who might be trans who might be athletes and you're talking about what one or two kids per every school and we're going to change the policy for like two kids we accommodate kids

[01:22:56] every day we accommodate kids who can't take tests we accommodate kids there's a kid in the school that i sub at and i hope this isn't a privacy violation who has tourettes he can't be in the classroom when everyone's taking a test they accommodate that too how is that any different than accommodating a trans student who wants to participate in a game it's a game i'll reverse engineer that alan iverson quote it's a game it's a game it's not real life they're not raising lord stanley's cup they're not winning the super bowl they're playing a game who cares let them have fun let them enjoy their youth while they can while they have it before they're old and bitter like

[01:23:27] the rest of us thank you deanna bear sorry unfortunately not um jessica share hi my name is jessica share and actually have an answer it's four i spoke with danica rome our senator and we have 1.2 million kids here in virginia and there's four that are trans athletes um i represent defense

[01:24:04] for democracy and i'm here to bore you with a civics lesson first i want to tell all of you that 735-5 is consistent with both federal and state anti-discrimination laws, so thank you for standing up and maintaining a position in accordance with Title IX in the Equal Protection Law. Trump's administration's recent executive orders are actually in violation of federal protection guarantees and the rights of trans students under Title IX. I would like to remind the board that executive orders cannot override existing federal laws or the U.S. Constitution.

[01:24:38] In fact, the expansion of Title IX protection for trans students started here in Virginia in 2021 with Grimm v. Gloucester. And in that ruling, they found that public schools that deny transgender students the right to access school programs and facilities consistent with the student's gender identity is engaging in discrimination on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

[01:25:04] Okay, so this is widely viewed as good law, a statute and the Prince William County School Board is right to be compelled to follow this binding precedent. That is correct. You are following good law. When school districts decide to adhere to policies or practices that strip trans kids of rights, it is an expensive hill to die on. I would like to say that the Grimm versus Gloucester County School Board, they paid out \$1.3 million to lose.

[01:25:32] The RMAV Blue Springs, the school district paid out \$4.7 million, again, to lose. The ACL versus Central Buck School District, that was \$1.2 million to defend and \$400,000 in settlements. It's a losing game when you're in violation, not just for the trans kids, but for school districts as well.

[01:25:52] You're risking a lot. And I want to tell you that there are multiple lawsuits going on right now against the executive order. so you do risk to lose a lot of money and our schools risk to lose a lot of money so thank you so much for your withholding of 738-5 i would also like to say that if we acquiesce um to those that seek to destroy our protections put in place um there is a small marginalized population with prince william county kids that is like a canary in the coal mine so if we follow this executive order that seeks to destroy Title IX protections and breaks with our nation's

[01:26:31] history of honoring the Constitution's balance of powers, First Amendment folks, we will open our schools up and our kids to a much broader conflict. Right now we will be sending the message that it

will lead to how we talk about history, how we talk about race, and protecting our immigrant students. This is opening up a can of worms. Thank you so much. Judith Cook. Hello I'm Judith Cook. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

[01:27:04] My address is registered with the county. I'm a mom, retired teacher, and former girls track coach. I remember when Title IX first went into effect as a result of the feminist movement. Upon learning about it, my seventh grade sister was inspired to join the newly created girls cross country team with just one other girl with a dream to earn a full scholarship to a top university.

[01:27:29] Mary was a gifted student, but full scholarships mostly awarded to male athletes at the time and our parents could barely afford to pay for any college. Mary ran 10 miles before school each day in addition to the team workout after school. She made all the sacrifices with all the grit, perseverance, and determination that male athletes ran with a goal and other women like her make. Many women athletes and Prince William today are still making those sacrifices. Mary won gold medals and broke records from local to state levels in cross-country and track, eventually becoming nationally

[01:28:05] and internationally recognized and duly earned her four-year scholarship to Georgetown University. Mary was fortunate to not have to fear that a male runner might decide that he is a woman and choose to compete against her, shattering all her dreams and denying her the scholarship as many others have experienced, maybe not here in Prince William County yet.

[01:28:27] This is the fear that high school women athletes live with today. This was not the intent of Title IX. Title IX created opportunities for millions of women. Female high school participation in sports increased 1,057% after Title IX.

[01:28:45] According to National Women's Law Center, competitive athletics promotes greater academic and employment success throughout life, increased personal skills, and a multitude of health benefits for all women in sports.

[01:29:01] Why would anyone want to destroy 52 years of female achievement by allowing men on the women's playing field, a field that still lacks the opportunities of male sports? I hope that Prince William County will stand with President Trump against male students in female sports for their safety, if nothing else.

[01:29:22] Thank you. - Debbie Baxter, Debbie Baxter.

[01:29:38] Didim Ural. Didim. Good evening. Thank you so much for having me tonight and thank you for affording me this opportunity to stand before you and have my voice heard. My husband and I have lived in Prince William County since 2001 and we've got two children attending schools here.

[01:30:04] We've been very fortunate to be assigned to amazing teachers year over year and have been impressed with their capabilities and consider them a vital part of our lives. As the saying goes it takes a village right i say this because i don't want my time here and the words that i'm about to mince to infer that this has anything to do with them this message is for you today the governing body it is wildly known that this topic of discussion tonight title ix and the

[01:30:37] policies which have been born and implemented from it over the past few years have taken a toll on all of us okay teachers parents and more so the children i'm here tonight to ask you the governing

body educators policy makers to get back to basics the basics of academics okay we as responsible and caring parents want our children to learn the things that we send them to school to learn

[01:31:09] science mathematics reading career life skills okay not politically biased social equality ideologies and theories leave that to us to take care of at home you are elected salaried and expected to bribe all of the students equality education here in our county you're paid right to do the job that us parents expect you to deliver for me and many many others this is

[01:31:46] not about anti-lgbtq or anti anything for that matter this is about pro-female and pro-common sense we are not fond of the hyper sensitive social equality policies policies in our school and frankly neither are a growing number of your teachers okay we're all kind of fed up with it we do not want our children to be categorized and divided into social groups and classes we're just a bunch of parents who send our kids to school every day hoping that they get back home safely and that they've learned something which will give them skills they need as adults okay

[01:32:26] what we care about is that our children are safe at school and academically up to speed with the rest of the world i think everybody knows the news about we're at 44th percent that's a shame so that being said let's all work together put all the nonsense aside uh meet in the middle and find a fair and equitable solutions for all of our children they deserve better from us thank you and we deserve better from you and the tax paying money that's being spent on all of this

[01:33:00] mark thank you martha cutzinger okay good evening sorry i had to run in here um there has been reference this evening to a social media post regarding speakers for this meeting it reads as follows quote hey y'all my pwcs school board rep just let me know there are at least three moms for

[01:33:39] liberty members signed up to speak out at this week's school board meeting he there's only three of you he asked me to gather as many people as i could to speak for inclusive policies they will speak against inclusive policies i signed up to speak and i'm reaching out to see if you or anyone you know would be willing to join me if you are a pwc resident please let me know i will be happy to share what i have to say once i write it there is one supportive teacher and my partner signed up as well we are three for three right now and if someone wants to support but doesn't want to speak

[01:34:19] or isn't a resident please come join us at the meeting wear a trans rights shirt bring a sign or just come to be with us unquote the link to the sign up sheet was included in this post so i have questions is it business as usual that a board member shares with a constituent the identities of speakers who are signed up and their speech subject days before the meeting because you know let's face it it's not a secret who speakers are based on group identity especially moms for liberty i'm also wondering which man on this board one two three lobbied

[01:34:58] for speakers against protecting biological girls in their most private spaces and at the same time you have to know you're in actually enabling the denial of true mental health help to the most vulnerable students out there bathrooms pronouns hormones are not the answer um and it's not helping them and oh by the way in reference to all these statistics tonight if you watch the supreme court case on this the aclu attorney admitted before the supreme court that the

[01:35:32] suicide rates claimed are really baseless it actually goes up after transition that was in the court hearing in the supreme court um so i'm wondering which of you is lobbying against 80 of the americans polled who are in favor of the protections that the executive order demands which of you is against 80 of

the american people that put out that request earlier this week because there's a lot of likely democrat voters in that number also um so i request a policy change that

[01:36:06] That the speaker list is shared with no one prior to its closing, or that it's made public once sign-ups occur. Be transparent and forego the charade of manufactured interest in a subject and concocted speaker list.

[01:36:22] Lobby for attendance all you want, but make your speaker's list available to no one or everyone. William Cook.

[01:36:39] Okay, then Victoria Stobly.

[01:36:50] All right. Thank you for letting me speak in my proper place. And I also want to thank you for maintaining the policy that supports trans and non-binary children.

[01:37:10] I figured that at least once tonight, you should hear from an actual transgender person. Such a policy was not a possibility when I was growing up in 1970s West Virginia. And I missed out on years and years of living as the real me.

[01:37:32] was able to transition in the early 1990s so don't believe those who tell you this is a new phenomenon remember students who feel supported and validated are going to be more comfortable studying the basics that people have been talking about and not worrying about being bullied this is a perilous time not just for lgbtq people for example a young trans man was just found tortured

[01:38:07] and killed in new york state but for supportive institutions i fear that no matter what prince william county school system will be investigated sued no matter what happened no matter what policies you have so you might as well be sued for doing the right thing thank you thank you this concludes citizen comment time for this evening we are moving on next to our student representative time. Tonight we have Kaylee Tom. She is joining us from the Brentsville District

[01:38:43] High School. Ms. Tom, the floor is yours. All right. Good evening, everyone. My name is Kaylee Tom. I am a senior at Brentsville District High School and the alternate representative to the PWCS School Board. Unfortunately, Allah and Almudena were unable to attend tonight's meeting, but I assure you that you are in good hands and I am positively thrilled to be able to join you all the dais on this very wintry night. So I want to start by wishing everyone a happy Black History Month this February and taking a moment to recognize the accomplishments and influence

[01:39:21] of the African Americans both in our local communities as well as on a national level who have left lasting legacies. This includes those who have served our country like Admiral Samuel L. Gravely Jr., local educators like Mary G. Porter, and those who have served on this very board like John Harper and Mary F. Williams. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge those who were recognized in our Thriving Futures focus.

[01:39:47] They are doing amazing things all across the county right now and it is truly amazing to get to see people be recognized for their achievements as I sit here. Additionally we are beginning to see the formation of student voice committees on a middle school level this school year which has been so exciting and establishing these committees at a middle school level is incredibly important as it brings new perspectives to the table that many of us in high school may not be able to accurately convey or sympathize with because it's

[01:40:23] been a couple years since we've been there and this can lead to certain issues or viewpoints being completely left out of our thought processes which we don't want to happen so I am thrilled to tell you that just this morning I and many other student senators had the absolute privilege of facilitating a leadership workshop for middle school student voice committees. We got to interact with students and hear their ideas and dreams for their schools, and I think I speak for all of us when I say that we were blown away by their talent and leadership. If any of you are watching, you were truly phenomenal, and it was an

[01:41:00] honor to meet each and every one of you. This seat could be yours one day, and I can't wait to cheer you on turning my focus to high schools we have a lot of exciting things to highlight last week National FBLA week was celebrated and we saw so many exciting activities across our FBLA chapters in at the high school level including chapters at Battlefield High School and Osborne Park High School who visited elementary and middle schools to engage in leadership activities with younger students this week we celebrate National FFA week recognizing the opportunity that the Future Farmers of America gives students

[01:41:38] to broaden their horizons, meeting students from across the country while participating in service and outreach opportunities in their communities and truly making a difference. Additionally I want to give an additional shout out to the cafeteria staff at Osborne Park High School for being one of the three schools in the state to be recognized for their outstanding school breakfast service and they will be further recognized during Virginia School breakfast week in March which is so exciting to turn topics slightly we have had numerous students who have expressed the need to establish specific

[01:42:17] protocols for the new cell phone policy next year this is especially true at the high school level where many students have raised concerns surrounding protocol for outside contact with employers or childcare providers whose message may be time-sensitive or urgent this concern is especially prevalent in larger high schools whose office staff should not be burdened with every call that may need to be made in the absence of student cell phones and we may need to find additional points of contact for such situations in our larger schools and we urge the board to consider this student feedback as they begin to formulate more specific policies and procedures within the larger new policy

[01:42:56] I would also like to take a moment to appreciate the amazing work that our gifted and talented department does at all levels of school here in PWCS as a gifted student myself I've been able to see the work that your department has done firsthand and I'm so grateful for all that the department does to support gifted and talented students throughout the division and I can't wait to listen to your presentation later on thank you all so much for your time thank you - Thank you, Ms. Tom.

[01:43:31] Up next, Dr. McDade, superintendent's time. - Thank you so much, Dr. Lateef. This is the last board meeting for the month of February. And as we close out February, I would be remiss not to honor and celebrate all of the school celebrations for Black History Month.

[01:43:48] Thank you for all the invitations. I'll be closing out the month visiting Freedom High School for their Black History Month celebration. So it's been a great month of celebrating amazing accomplishments of african-american history also february is career and technical education month and so i would like to spend my time talking about all of the things amazing things that we're doing in career and technical education as a viable pathway for our students towards post-secondary success it is a time for us to recognize the invaluable role that cte plays

[01:44:24] in preparing our students for high demand careers throughout the month we celebrate several key programs that foster student leadership skill development and career readiness like skills usa week that was february 2nd to the 8th technology student association week february 3rd to the 7th virginia educators rising week february 3rd to the 7th future business leaders of america week february 9th to the 15th family careers and community leaders of america february 10th to the 14th, and Future Farmers of America Week, February 15th to the 22nd.

[01:44:59] These national celebrations highlight the hands-on learning experiences and industry partnerships that prepare our students for real-world careers. I'm excited to share an innovative partnership between Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow, PWCS Human Resources, and Northern Virginia Community College.

[01:45:15] This initiative creates a seamless pathway for students interested in a teaching career. Students successfully completing the two-year program will earn 14 to 17 of the 20 college credits required for the Teaching Professional Career Studies certificate.

[01:45:31] And upon graduation, PWCS students can enroll at NOVA to complete the remaining three to six credits, making them immediately employable in education-related roles. The CSC serves as the first 20 credits of the 60-credit education AS degree, which students can complete in as little as three additional semesters.

[01:45:53] This program is aligned with Transfer Virginia, allowing students to seamlessly continue their education at a four-year university for full teacher licensure. Additionally, students who complete their associate's degree with a GPA of 2.5 or higher are eligible for the PWCS VCU Richmond Teacher Residency Program, a game changer in teacher preparation.

[01:46:15] Through this program, students receive a full salary and benefits, plus a bachelor's degree at no cost. This is a major step in strengthening our teacher pipeline and ensuring we continue to grow our future educators. I also wish to share some notable milestones our CTE department has delivered in the past few months.

[01:46:36] On November 19th, 2024, we hosted our first PWCS Sports Medicine Symposium, a collaborative effort between CTE and student athletics and activities. Nearly 200 students from our three sports medicine programs attended.

[01:46:53] Sessions were led by athletic trainers from local colleges and universities, the Washington Commanders, and the Prince William County Fire Department. This event provided an incredible hands-on learning opportunity for our students pursuing careers in sports medicine and athletic training.

[01:47:09] Mr. Mike Carter is our plumbing teacher at Garfield High School. He was honored as the State and National Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors Teacher of the Year, making history as the first secondary teacher ever to receive this prestigious award in its 100-year history.

[01:47:28] We are proud to have received an Advancing Computer Science Education Grant totaling \$75,000 dollars to support several important initiatives, summer discovery camps, teacher training in Code High School, IT summer internships, Mason Gaming and Technology Academy classes for middle school students. These programs provide students with cutting-edge opportunities in computer science, technology, and innovation. Last, but certainly not least, our schools continue to shine on a national stage. Each year Virginia selects only five CTE students to move forward as

[01:48:05] U.S. Presidential Scholar candidates. One of those students is from Prince William County Public Schools. Congratulations to Ezekiel Miller from Hilton High School. These initiatives and achievements exemplify how our career and technical education programs are paving the way for our students to thrive in their future career, and there is no question that all PWCS students are multi-talented. By offering hands-on learning experiences, industry-recognized certifications, and unparalleled

[01:48:42] opportunities, we are preparing our students for jobs and for lifelong success and achievement. We are incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication our students and teachers demonstrate every day, and their accomplishments are a testament to the bright future of Prince William County public schools. We're so excited to have this diverse offering of educational programming for the most diverse county in in Virginia. I invite Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Stephanie Sullivan to present on

[01:49:13] gifted programs. Good evening Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Blake, members of the board, and Dr. McDade. Thank you for the opportunity to provide updates on key initiatives for gifted education and student talent development. We thank you for your continued support for the specialized programs essential for the

[01:49:51] growth of our students. Presenting tonight is program supervisor Brenda Bailey. She has been an educator in Prince William County Schools for over 30 years. Throughout her career she has served as a sixth grade teacher, a K-8 a gifted resource teacher, gifted specialist, and gifted administrative coordinator.

[01:50:13] But even more exciting is Ms. Bailey is a proud graduate of Prince William County Schools. She attended Muromsko Hills Elementary School, Rippon Middle School, and Woodbridge Senior High School. She holds a BA in elementary education, a master's degree in educational leadership with additional doctoral level coursework in gifted education.

[01:50:35] Ms. Bailey has presented at the local, state, and national levels on best practices in gifted education. She is an officer in the Northern Virginia Council for Gifted and Talented Education, and a member of the Virginia Consortium of Gifted Education Administrators, and the National Association of Gifted Children.

[01:50:56] We are so fortunate to have her leading this critical work in Prince William County. Turning it over now to Ms. Bailey. - Thank you. - Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the board and Dr. McDade.

[01:51:14] It's my pleasure to share updates about the Gifted Education and Talent Development Program with you tonight. We have many successes to be proud of, as well as opportunities to grow and improve as a program. I'd like to begin with an overview of the state regulations and guiding documents that inform our work.

[01:51:31] The regulations governing educational services for gifted students provide the framework for school divisions in Virginia to develop a comprehensive five-year local plan to meet the needs of gifted learners. The PWCS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted 2022-27 addresses six program goals established in the regulations: identification, delivery of services, curriculum and instruction, professional development, equitable representation of students, and parent and community involvement.

[01:52:02] My presentation tonight is divided into sections based on these program goals. The PWCS 2025 strategic plan commitments are aligned with the goals and objectives of the local plan. Finally, each year,

the Gifted Education Advisory Committee reviews the local plan and its implementation.

[01:52:21] They report their findings and recommendations to the superintendent and to the school board. Some of the data I will share tonight was included in your last report. Identification and equitable representation of students are two separate goals in the local plan, but they go hand in hand, so I will address them together.

[01:52:41] To understand the gifted identification process, it's important to know how the state of Virginia and PWCS define gifted students. I would like to draw your attention to two parts of the definition in bold. Gifted students are students in kindergarten through 12th grade who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment.

[01:53:09] Last year, we added talent development to our program name, gifted education, and talent development. To emphasize that we not only identify and serve students in the gifted program who are achieving at high levels, but we also seek to nurture and develop potential and emergent talent.

[01:53:28] This slide shows a snapshot of gifted program enrollment. At the start of the school year, 15,158 students were identified for and receiving gifted services, roughly 17% of the student population in PWCS.

[01:53:43] As we continue to improve and refine our identification practices, our program only grows. Over the last five years, we've increased the overall number of participating students by 14%. Next, you'll see the different identification or strength areas.

[01:53:59] In PWCS, we identify in general intellectual aptitude and in specific academic areas. We also identify for visual and performing arts. Our early talent development program recognizes our youngest learners in grades kindergarten through two who show the potential for gifted identification by third grade.

[01:54:17] 24.1% of identified gifted learners are economically disadvantaged, 11.6% are English learners, and 3.6% of our students are twice exceptional, meaning they are identified as needing both gifted and special education services.

[01:54:34] Finally, the race/ethnicity profile is shown on the pie chart. 22% of identified students are Hispanic, 16% are black, 15% are Asian, 8% are two or more races, 39% are white, and less than 1% are American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander.

[01:54:54] For context, the race/ethnicity profile of our overall school division is on the right. In the 2025 strategic plan, we were charged with increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in gifted education by 10%.

[01:55:11] Due to improvements in our identification process, we've met and surpassed that goal. Dr. McDade shared this slide with you at her October State of Schools address. We're extremely proud of this data because it reflects the hard work of our 127 elementary, middle, and high school gifted resource teacher who lead identification efforts in their schools.

[01:55:35] While we celebrate the progress we've made to grow the program, we know that there's more work to be done. Equity is a core value in PWCS, and we strive to provide equitable opportunities and support for all students.

[01:55:51] Equitable representation is a goal established by the state of Virginia, as well as our National Organization for Gifted Children, NAGC. Equitable representation is when the demographic composition of this gifted program reflects the demographic composition of the overall student population.

Underrepresentation of diverse student populations in gifted programs and in advanced classes has been an ongoing concern at the local, state, and national levels. In PWCS, removing barriers to identification and access for underrepresented student groups is a strategic priority. We've implemented

[01:56:27] many research-based strategies to improve identification practices for all student groups the following five slides illustrate progress we've made over the last five years in this series of graphs the orange line represents the percentage of students in the gifted program from a specific group the blue line represents the percentage of that group in the overall student population we'll begin by looking at black students in the gifted program in 2019 to 2020 there was a 6.1 percentage point gap between black students in the gifted program and black students

[01:57:02] in the division. As you can see, after five years, we've narrowed the gap to 2.8 percentage points. Next, let's look at Hispanic students. While division enrollment of Hispanic students continues to increase, so does enrollment of Hispanic students in the gifted program. In five years, we've reduced the gap from 16 percentage points to 14.8 percentage points. Students with disabilities is an opportunity for growth even though we've increased the percentage of students with disabilities in the gifted program every year division enrollment has increased at a faster

[01:57:39] rate in 2019 to 2020 the gap between the two groups was 9.5 percentage points and it's currently 10.1 percentage points we're very excited about our work with english learners for the first three years in this graph the data indicates little to no progress in closing the gap in fact you can see losing ground. But during the 2022 to 23 school year we turned a corner. New screening tools were introduced including a language growth percentile that was developed in collaboration with Dr. Paul Parker in the research assessment and data services department. This new measure captures rapid

[01:58:17] acquisition of language widely considered to be a sign of giftedness and brings more Ls into our gifted screening pool. Based on growth during the last two years we've narrowed the gap from 18.1 percentage points to 17.5 percentage points and we continue to move in the right direction finally let's look at economically disadvantaged data over the last five years we've narrowed the gap from 23.3 percentage points to 18.5 percentage points our progress is a result of purposeful action and continuous improvement

[01:58:53] let's look at the research-based strategies that have been put in place to improve gifted identification practices for all student groups in pwcs in the fy23 budget you invested in a gifted resource teacher at every school, which has had a huge impact on our ability to identify and serve gifted learners division-wide. We use the Nagliari Nonverbal Ability Test in grades 2, 6, and 9, and the Cognitive Abilities Test in grade 3 to screen students for the gifted program.

[01:59:23] Research strongly supports implementing universal screening for all students, rather than relying only on referrals, to help identify gifted students who might otherwise be overlooked. In addition to universal testing, we have ongoing identification at all grade levels and welcome referrals from parents, professionals, and students at any time during the school year. The gifted identification process is multi-criteria and the school level identification placement committee considers data and input from many different sources when making decisions.

[01:59:55] In addition to aptitude and achievement test data, we collect work samples and input from classroom teachers, parents, and the students themselves. ESOL and special education professionals are included in the decision-making for students who receive those services.

[02:00:11] As mentioned on slide five, we now identify students in general intellectual aptitude, which captures strengths across many disciplines, as well as general strengths, not tied to a specific academic area. We partner with parent liaisons, translation and interpretation services to remove language barriers for our families.

[02:00:30] I'll speak more about community outreach, professional development and enrichment lessons in the coming slides. The next program goal is delivery of services. Virginia regulations require continuous and sequential gifted service options in grades K through 12.

[02:00:49] Options must include time for identified students to work with age level peers, work with intellectual peers, academic peers, work independently, and foster intellectual and academic growth. In PWCS, gifted services are delivered through a pullout resource model.

[02:01:06] At the elementary level, students work with a gifted resource teacher on a weekly basis. The amount of time increases by grade level 25 minutes per week in kindergarten to a full academic day in grades four through five we know that gifted learners are gifted every day not just the day they receive services and for that reason gifted teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that instruction is differentiated in the first photo at the top of the slide you'll see two fourth graders at Loch Lomond elementary school they created a prototype for a chicken habitat then used computer programming and making make-a-kits to add interactive components to the model. At the middle school level, sixth and seventh

[02:01:46] grade services are offered through the arts rotation as a scheduled class. Eighth grade services are offered through a scheduled class or in a pull-out model. In addition, extended classes and accelerated pathways provide gifted students with advanced content in language arts and math.

[02:02:02] In the second photo, you see eighth graders at Potomac Shores Middle School working collaboratively on an end-of-year project. High school gifted services are delivered through a seminar program. Socratic seminars, facilitated by the gifted resource teacher, prepare students for seminar-style classes in college.

[02:02:20] In this small group setting, students make cross-curricular connections, discuss abstract ideas, and learn to express and support their viewpoints. Their social-emotional needs are addressed in this non-graded environment. Gifted teachers connect students with resources and enrichment opportunities, such as mentorships, camps, and summer residential governor schools.

[02:02:42] They can also assist with college planning, recommendation writing, and goal setting. The final photo on this slide shows ninth graders at Woodbridge Senior High School on their freshman field trip last year. They worked in small groups in the Curious Lab, an interactive and experimental learning space at the Natural History Museum in D.C.

[02:03:01] We continue to make changes and enhancements to our service model at the middle and high school level so that our program is accessible and meaningful to more gifted learners. as i mentioned earlier every pwcs school now has at least one full-time gifted resource teacher on staff those teachers not only serve identified gifted learners but they have an impact on the entire school the best way to explain

that impact is to show you some examples starting at the top left at haymarket elementary the gifted resource teacher miss laurie phillips collaborates with

[02:03:37] fourth and fifth grade math teachers to implement building thinking classroom strategies building Thinking Classroom strategies are research-based practices designed to foster deep mathematical thinking and student engagement through collaborative problem-solving and active learning. At all elementary schools, gifted teachers go into every kindergarten through third-grade classroom to lead enrichment lessons. These lessons nurture critical and creative thinking for all students. The next picture shows kindergarten students at Montclair Elementary School thinking like engineers as they design egg houses. At Sudley Elementary School, the gifted teacher partnered with a PE teacher to design and build a miniature golf course that all students

[02:04:16] enjoyed during their PE class. For the last two years, Ms. Kelly Riley and her fourth and fifth grade students at Swan's Creek Elementary School have put on an SOL carnival for all third, fourth, and fifth graders at the school. Students designed, built, and manned the carnival games to help students prepare for their SOLs in a fun way. The evening has been a huge hit every year. Finally, at Dale City Elementary, Ms. Bridget Pine is not only the gifted teacher there, but she's also the faces representative family academic and community engagement specialist miss pine coordinates saturday field trips for dale city families to take advantage of the many enriching

[02:04:54] opportunities in our area and the last photo on the slide shows a recent group photo at the national zoo i'll end this section with one more example the gifted teacher at belmont elementary school kathy lamont brought a story walk to the school dr lamont leads language arts enrichment lessons outside she develops lessons plans and shares writing ideas with classroom teachers based on the books in the story walk this amazing project which benefits the entire school community at Belmont was featured in a PWS news

[02:05:26] story that we'll watch now please play the video welcome to our story walk we are reading the book called I wonder by Carrie Ann Holt think about this one do my toys miss me when I'm gone what do you guys think that we applied for a grant from Dominion Energy and they generously donated \$5,000 towards our grant. We also were able to get books through another grant through the Wisner Foundation and they sent us about \$500 which we then used for books that

[02:06:02] will pretty much supply our story walk for the next year. We have 18 stations and they just walk together and they can either take turns reading the stories or or the teacher can do a guide along they enjoy nature at the same time as learning and encouraging reading and writing it can be incorporated in different academic aspects you guys are going to be able to pick one of those and you will be writing a letter if you were writing about this sandwich do sandwiches get mad when you bite them i like reading because

[02:06:38] it helps you learn the importance of reading for us and why we decided to do the story walk is because reading is fundamental to all of the stuff that we teach our kids throughout the year so if they can learn how to read and enjoy what they're doing they're going to be able to pick up on a lot of the stuff that we try to teach them during the school year i wonder why i wonder so much because you are wonderful let's look at curriculum and instruction next virginia regulations

[02:07:14] outline outline the type of learning experiences that gifted students need advanced content and and pacing of instruction, original research or production, problem finding and solving, higher level

thinking that leads to generation of products, and focus on issues, themes, and ideas within and across areas of study.

[02:07:36] Our program focuses on the development of advanced skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and conceptual thinking using curriculum designed specifically for gifted learners. One of our overarching goals is to grow independent thinkers and learners, informed and supportive collaborators, and exceptional leaders.

[02:07:57] With that in mind, let's take a look at a few more gifted learners in action. For 4th and 5th grade gifted students at Occoquan Elementary School, a unit about space was brought to life at the Udvar-Hazy Center. At Gainesville Middle School, gifted learners presented innovative solutions to problems as a part of their think tank unit.

[02:08:15] And at Battlefield High School, gifted learners explored solar energy as an introduction to their sustainability seminar. The second overarching goal of gifted education is to prepare students for advanced coursework, dual enrollment classes, post-secondary education, and future careers.

[02:08:35] This graph illustrates some of the annual data we collect to measure progress. In '22, '23 to '24, 84% of identified gifted students graduated with an advanced or IB diploma. 82% of identified gifted students earned a qualifying score on an AP test.

[02:08:54] At Unity, Reed, and Garfield, 78% of identified gifted students in the IB program scored a qualifying score of four or above on the IB exam. At Brentsville and Potomac High School, 72% of identified gifted students in the Cambridge program scored a qualifying score of E or above on an ACE exam.

[02:09:13] Now let's look at professional development. Virginia regulations mandate that gifted learners are taught by professional instructional personnel trained to work with gifted students. In PWCS, gifted resource teachers earned the Virginia add-on endorsement to their certification within three years of their date of hire.

[02:09:35] Core content teachers complete an 18 hour gifted accreditation requirement. They receive instruction and gifted competencies established by the state, including characteristics and needs of gifted learners, differentiation strategies, and identifying gifted students from underserved populations.

[02:09:52] To make learning meaningful, accessible, and convenient for classroom teachers, we offer professional development in a variety of formats. The last program goal established in our local plan is family and community involvement.

[02:10:08] There are many opportunities for families to learn more about the Gifted Education Program in PWCS. We have a Gifted Education Advisory Committee composed of parents appointed by the school board, community members, teachers, gifted staff members, and administrators. The group meets seven times per year to review the local plan and determine the extent to which it was implemented.

[02:10:29] And all meetings are open to the public. We participate in many division-wide outreach events, such as Title I Family Camps and the Family Engagement Series, to empower our parents with information gifted services and how to navigate the identification process we host information sessions family nights and multi-school game nights in recent weeks hundreds of families attended multi-school events at swan's

creek elementary sudley elementary and jenkins elementary communications actually just released a video that i saw playing this evening before the school

[02:11:03] war meeting started we have a robust site for parents on pwcs.edu that includes information about enrichment camps and programs books games websites resources webinars and helpful hints for the identification process gifted resource teachers have communication plans in place to ensure consistency of communication across the division i would like to close with an invitation to all of you on saturday may 3rd we're hosting our third annual parent advocacy event here at the kelly leadership center this yearly event connects parents with resources and information about

[02:11:42] parenting gifted children this year our event will feature two speakers emily kircher morris is a licensed professional counselor and author who specializes in neurodivergence in addition to her clinical work miss kircher morris is the host of the popular neurodiversity podcast where she explores a wide range of topics relating to neurodivergence often interviewing leading experts educators and individuals with lived experience our second speaker dr herman diaz is a professor and teacher of gifted learners in milwaukee public schools his research focuses on gifted education especially on the underrepresentation of latino students in

[02:12:19] gifted programs twice exceptional learners and gifted services in diverse student populations dr diaz will be presenting his session in both english and in spanish many more details will be shared this spring that concludes my presentation thank you for the opportunity to share the work of gifted education and talent development have any questions on the board um miss williams thank you um let me first thank your thank all of you in gifted education you work with it hands-on

[02:12:57] every day i appreciate the presentation tonight um for those who don't know as a former prince william county schools graduate i was not afforded the opportunity to even test into gifted and then became a parent of a lovely and amazing gifted student who was so gifted that i became on a first name regular basis with our at the time gifted coordinator which is how i ended up serving on the gifted advisory committee. I am extremely proud of the work that we have done to from where my knowledge base started to where we are

[02:13:33] now with our gifted programming and our gifted students. I know it's been years of retraining teachers, defining or expanding the definition of what a gifted student looks like, educating our community on what a gifted student looks like. I can remember the stereotypical gifted profile of a student was one who was a straight-A student and rigorous in their note-keeping and time-keeping and never missed an assignment, only to learn myself from attending one of these seminars. That is quite the opposite of the typical profile of a gifted student.

[02:14:09] I am curious to know as we talk about our Hispanic community and our students with disabilities right because these are the two populations that tend to be growing and we've narrowed the gap but it still has a ways to go could you speak to a little bit about what are some specifics that we are utilizing to capture more of those groups division-wide? So we're working really

[02:14:45] closely with both the Special Education Department and our colleagues in the English Learner program. We are bringing in speakers, as I mentioned, Dr. Diaz, reaching out to the Hispanic Latino community, making sure they're aware of our program and how to access services for their children. A lot of the work we do is in changing perceptions of giftedness in our teachers so we do a lot of professional development and book studies and oftentimes it's really just about how gifted characteristics

[02:15:21] manifest themselves differently in culturally and linguistically diverse populations with students with disabilities it's about changing mindsets with our teaching staff and making sure parents are aware of what the look-fors are at home so we're constantly doing professional development bringing in speakers we have always sped and colleagues from esol at the table when decisions are being made about gifted identification so they can be advocates and sort of the experts in the room about characteristics and things to look for so we try to have a team approach

[02:16:00] and a strength-based approach especially with special ed because special education students oftentimes we're very concerned with their deficiencies what isn't working what weaknesses they have but we look at special education through a strength-based lens and we're always trying to pick out what strengths and aptitudes are coming out in the classroom that we can recognize and nurture thank you i appreciate that i'm wondering if there's opportunity i'm always trying to be proactive and I know that we message our school families and communities a lot and one of the things that I'm hearing back from a lot of our especially my

[02:16:39] community right our parents who are new to this country or English is not their first language or they're new to this public school system here they often feel very overwhelmed by the amount of communication that we have and it's hard sort of for them to absorb everything that comes through I mean naturally you see what's going on in the news today it's every day it's a new thing most people are like overwhelmed and tuned out is there opportunity when the beginning of the school year starts and parents are either registering their students and filling out papers or back to school nights or things

[02:17:12] where we capture the widest audience of our school community to maybe bring this up in a digestible way I've been to the parent when a parent title one camp love it there's sessions on it I know that we do it throughout the year but is there an opportunity to maybe sort of give us a simplified intro because what i've noticed is they also don't feel a lot of these families that these programs are for them because of a lack of understanding that it doesn't matter if your english is your first language or you just got here there are lots of things that are applicable to you how are we

[02:17:51] or have we given thought to how to sort of bridge that gap yeah so one of the great gifts that we have now in our program is a teacher at every school and that has been a game changer for us so we have a full-time five days a week gifted professional who can make those connections with the community and with new families families as they enter the school we have a much tighter relationship now between the gifted teacher and the school staff and with the school community because they are present and there so we are making a lot of efforts to reach out through school status through different parent information sessions that we have at the school

[02:18:30] but also division-wide so there's always more work to be done so i appreciate that you brought that up but just know that we have that in the forefront of our mind and a lot of the work we're doing is to reach out to those families thank you i'm going to wrap up with go ahead i'm sorry yeah i just wanted to add that one of the things that we just briefly mentioned is with the capacity of of those teachers now, they're actually pushing into general education classrooms where all students are getting exposed and access to.

[02:18:58] I had an opportunity to attend a training this summer with Ms. Bailey and general education teachers getting information on how to make those early identifications in our non-traditionally identified students.

[02:19:13] And we also know that the classroom teacher is the most trusted person for parents And so we really think it's important to continue to focus on the classroom teacher, the school staff, and having those communications and outreach.

[02:19:29] Data has been real strong on parents trusting the people closest to the work. And so we're just gonna continue to try to advocate in that space as well. - Thank you, I appreciate that. I'm gonna, two more things and then I'll be done 'cause everybody else wants to comment.

[02:19:45] One, is it possible to provide, and I don't know if we do 'cause I haven't been there lately, what gifted education is at the global welcome center when students come in so that parents are getting an early start on understanding what that education is and how it may or may not apply to them um and to yeah that's a yes okay awesome uh and awesome the other thing is utilizing parent liaisons i saw that they were involved and so are they also educated to deal because they're another trusted person in the building besides a teacher and sometimes even more trusted yes thank you for bringing that up we have trained our parent liaisons for the past

[02:20:24] two years i've done a training with them about the gifted program what it is how to access it i've walked them through the identification process and given them a document with some commonly asked questions and talking points for families so yes the parent liaisons have all been trained in our work thank you and then the last thing i'm always harping on is high school students right having been a parent of a high school gifted educated um gifted student um are we doing any modifications to the pull out program because i know that causes a lot of strife for some of our gifted students right they don't feel that it's a worthwhile or value in the way that we educate

[02:21:02] them and then also there are some classes that can sit that are considered gifted right but that's not always the same sentiment that our students feel so i'm wondering how are we expanding those opportunities um for our gifted students at the high school level to make it a more meaningful experience for all of our gifted students and not just some that like the current programming yes so last year the gifted advisory committee conducted a year-long study we had a subcommittee focused on high school services looking at what's working what's not working and have a what having

[02:21:34] a wider range of services so we are i'm in the process now of improving and adding additional options the pullout model does work for some students we're also looking at more pushing in to the classrooms so the gifted teacher would go into the academic course and conduct a seminar as a part of that day's learning in the class so we're looking at a lot of different um you know options and ways to make sure that all of our high school learners have something that is a good fit for them so it's ongoing work but it is something that we are actively engaged in thank you and i'm

[02:22:10] sure we'll get updated as a board i just want to take time to thank you again for all of your work it is a heavy lift um in educating our school community what a gifted student is how we can best educate them and the the work that has been put in definitely shows so i just want to appreciate you for everything thank you thank you miss uh wall and then miss verdini uh thank you for the presentation it was great to hear um some of the things that are happening in gifted and especially on the identification process.

[02:22:43] I have three questions, but my first comment is I'm glad to hear that the full time gifted resource teacher in every school is making a difference because that's something I specifically advocated for as one of the first things when I was on the board.

[02:22:59] So I'm glad to hear. I know having that extra staff member in the building dedicated to gifted makes a big difference. So I'm glad to hear that. That was my suspicion all along. so but my first question is has to do with identification and I think for the benefit of the community I sometimes get asked this question if you know we lowering the threshold for our acceptance into the gifted program based on whatever data we're using or are we just doing a better job of identifying students who are demonstrating a high level of accomplishment or potential so if you wanted to just kind of address that because that is sometimes a community concern when you see oh look how many students we're finding we're

[02:23:38] growing our program yes so that is a misperception thank you for bringing that up i would say that the improvements and enhancements that we've made to our identification practices have only made identification better for all students it's helped us to more accurately identify strengths and aptitudes in all student populations that's good to hear and i know um for my for my kids in particular when you're moving into a gifted program they were all identified which i wasn't surprised that and they benefited a lot. My second question has to do with funding. Is it still the case that

[02:24:15] the number of gifted students in a school, higher a number of gifted students in a school, higher number of funding, does money still follow the student? Or are, because I've heard some things and I don't know if, I actually don't know the answer to this, if we are giving kind of a lump sum of money to schools and so if you have a lot of kids and not as much money, right, because proportionality is going to be different. Or because I remember that it was you get a certain number of money per student in the school and then there was a multiplier for every student that was a gifted identified student or like a sped identified student you know student with disabilities english language learner can you speak to if that's the same or have we changed

[02:24:52] it in recent years yes we've changed it at the elementary level so now every elementary school has a fixed position so that every school can have their own gifted teacher and then there's There's a funding calculation to determine if that elementary school has a large enough gifted population to warrant additional staffing.

[02:25:13] So currently we have six elementary schools that actually have one and a half gifted resource teachers and the rest all have one full teacher. And then at the middle and high school level, that has not changed. That's still funded on a per pupil allocation based on the enrollment of identified gifted learners on September 30.

[02:25:32] Okay. So the enrollment of September 30th. if you if you do find additional children through the year then you have to wait until the next budget cycle to fund the additional children that were identified okay all right um and then my third question is can you speak to how kind of not on the identification end but on the evaluation of our program and how we evaluate the effectiveness of our gifted program i know we had like the the a AP the IB scores etc but I know there's got to be more metrics than that yes there are many

[02:26:08] more metrics than that and the gifted education advisory committee gathers all of the data both quantitative and qualitative data as you remember they go out into schools they do observations they do interviews um so they hear from administrators and gifted teachers and the students themselves they also hear from our student panel every year we have a high school senior who's participated in in the gifted program one from every high school they come and speak to our advisory committee which is also open to the public and share their experiences so we have that qualitative piece but

[02:26:41] then we also gather all kinds of data related to achievement test scores we look at identification referral rates and all kinds of data that's compiled annually into the report that you receive every October. So that's really the mission of the advisory committee. They are charged by the state to ensure that the local plan is being adhered to each year and to collect all of the data on the effectiveness of the program and report it out. And then do we, and thank you for that, do we follow up with our students once they leave Prince William County? Do we,

[02:27:18] and I don't know if we do this, I know we are trying to follow up with our graduates and see kind of where they went and how they did do you know if we are tracking our gifted specifically gifted students to see like how they do or where they go or we have to graduate yeah we can through our national clearinghouse data gifted is a category where we can look at their enrollment and persistence in college for six years following graduation but the same as we would track other students gifted is an indicator where we can differentiate by so to some degree yes in terms

[02:27:51] of individual student follow-up no so broadly yes probably no just looking at ways to you know continually evaluate like how how was our end product like did students gain something from the education that they received and where did they go with it and i do want to add through the cip process the division-wide focus on comprehensive improvement ms bailey also tracks and works closely with our content area to track gifted student success as past advanced in math and

[02:28:26] ela and so she's continuing to look at it in individual level sol level and in all those indicators on our continuous improvement planning cycle okay great i'm assuming that also includes like the num squat and the psat the sat i'm sure it does correct okay great we actually use psat as a data source that we collect at the high school level to build screening pools you know for gift identification does really well on the psat and maybe we haven't identified them as exactly gifted

[02:28:58] then we can pull them in and get them involved okay thank you very much miss trudenic thank you so much i'm so glad i finally got a turn um i wanted to ask i know miss wall asked about per people funding is there an extra stipend that the gifted departments get or the gifted classrooms get so at the elementary level they get a stipend for instructional resources is that based on how many children are in the room or it's they have across the county it's the same in every

[02:29:36] elementary school for resources and then centrally we purchase quite a bit of curriculum and resources for all of the schools as well do all of our gifted programs across the county have the same amount of children in them no every school is different okay so that could possibly be something that we look into um giving a higher stipend where there's more kids like we're talking about per pupil funding giving more money where there's more kids in a gifted program possibly okay absolutely and then something else that we spoke about in our two by two was the middle school and high

[02:30:08] school decline in gifted um personally i i know i know that um with my own kiddos uh we talked about the mitigation that's gone in place in the last three years in order to help with that and make it a little bit more appealing so our kids are not missing the same uh activity each day such as pe in order to be a part of the gifted program can you talk about that a little bit yes so similar to the high school subcommittee we are always looking at how we provide services and try to have options for students so that it meets their needs and fits within their schedule and is

[02:30:47] meaningful and relevant to them so we are constantly reviewing and revising and looking at our delivery of services model. At the middle school level, we spoke earlier about the model changing to a

scheduled class in their arts rotation so they're not missing any academic time to come to gifted services, and that's been successful.

[02:31:06] In eighth grade, scheduling is a little more complicated, so we do have a hybrid. Some schools are doing a pull-out model. Others are doing a scheduled class depending on the other courses that the student is taking. just so you know we're constantly you know examining what we're doing surveying kids surveying parents we gather data to try to make a program that works for everybody so it's an ongoing ongoing process yeah and i would add for high school one of the oddest things has had a big impact on enrollment is they changed the name of the courses because what we found is the

[02:31:45] students weren't necessarily valuing how it reflected on their transcript and so that was feedback they got through the committee and that change has had a pretty big impact i heard at the senior seminar last year several students called that out that they felt now that it was represented as a gifted services program on their transcript they felt more positive about participating in it oh yes that's right and we also changed the criteria for sequential electives which is a graduation requirement that the gifted classes in high school now fulfill that requirement

[02:32:23] so those are some new changes in the past couple years based on the feedback that we've gotten from students and parents that are making a difference awesome and i know you mentioned our high school seniors um we talked a little bit about the other services that our gifted teachers help with during class for our seniors can you touch on that a little bit yeah sure i talked about that on slide 17. so the gifted teachers do provide a valuable service they help students learn about opportunities they can connect them with camps and mentorships and summer residential

[02:33:00] governor school they do a lot of recommendation writing because they really get to know the students well many of the gifted teachers work with those students for four years so they can help them with goal setting and college planning and advising so they really do provide a really valuable service to not only high school seniors but high school students from 9th through 12th grade thank you both lisa zagapoor thank you for your presentation many of the questions i had have already been asked and answered but it did occur to me when you're talking about the the kids in

[02:33:39] high school um maybe even middle school um i know my children who were involved in the gifted program weren't um necessarily motivated to take them and i know you just talked a little bit about high school i remember one of the one of a counselor somebody telling me well they can just take ap and i i really want people to understand gifted is not an overachiever it's not necessarily that kid and it's not necessarily um you know someone who is always scoring high on tests i had one of those

[02:34:17] two she got perfect scores on her sols she's not in college yet she's still working and she's been graduated two years now so um there's different things that happen with gifted kids and i i'm curious to know if you see one falling off what do you do is it does it happen as much now or That is another role of the high school gifted resource teacher now that we have the early warning system.

[02:34:46] They are aware of students who are struggling or maybe who aren't on track to graduate or to graduate with an advanced diploma. So that's a role that they can play in that advising. We do know that AP, IB, Cambridge courses, those satisfy a need for advanced content.

[02:35:03] But gifted learners also have other needs. addition to advanced content they have social emotional needs you know intellectual needs there are other factors that the gifted program can nurture

and develop beyond just that college readiness academically yeah thank you for that um so i i teach in fairfax county and i'm in a school that is a level four advanced academics program in my school when you hit third grade you are immersed in complete gifted programs with peers in your class now in my school once my kids hit

[02:35:42] fourth fifth and sixth grade i see them mixed up for my content but it is definitely interesting when you talk about differentiation when i see those mixed classes the differentiation range in a in a class of only gifted kids is this wide and when i hit the other ones it's it's much bigger can you speak a little bit to how you're supporting the classroom teachers in reaching those differentiation possibilities with the range they have in their classrooms yes so the gifted resource teachers and again having one in every building makes all the difference but they have

[02:36:16] built into their calendar bridge weeks that's what we call them and that's an opportunity for them to work directly with classroom teachers on differentiation strategies and techniques they can model lessons they can co-teach they can assist in the classroom we also have a differentiated services plan so every fall the gifted teacher works with the grade level teams to talk about throughout the year what opportunities are there for differentiation extension opportunities to give choice to gifted learners and we also have our students cluster grouped so part of the services in the classroom are differentiated classroom services we ask

[02:36:56] principals when they're making classroom placement decisions every spring to group students together so a classroom teacher isn't just differentiating for one gifted learner he or she has a you know a solid group that they can work with and differentiate in an extent so we really support the work through our gifted teachers we also write enrichment and extension opportunities that we share with the content areas so they're embedded into the unit planners particularly in math we have math extensions for every unit in grades three through five we're working on bringing it down

[02:37:34] into second so a classroom teacher always can see what are some options and opportunities not just for gifted learners but for any student in a particular unit of study any student who demonstrates the need for something more and beyond you know the grade level standard if they need to be pushed and stretched further there are options that are embedded in the unit planner thank you for saying that i i think there's um probably parents out there with kids who are like yeah but my kid really likes math but they're yeah thank you so much i appreciate everything you guys have

[02:38:08] been doing um that's it thank you miss wall i had one uh additional follow-up from the discussion about um gifted classes in the high school level um are the gifted courses and and forgive me i you said you changed the name so that kids like them better or anyway yeah what did you change them to and then are they are they rated as a 5.0 class they're not a weighted course but they do qualify for the sequential elective requirement we used to call them if you were called gems which was a bit misleading and caused some confusion not only internally but on transcripts

[02:38:46] as students were applying for college and that type of thing so um gem stood for gifted education multidisciplinary seminar. So it made complete sense to us, but it didn't make sense necessarily to the general public or to college recruiters. So what we've changed the name to is gifted education seminars. And we have two classes. We have power in progress and we have a philosophy class. And so those two electives together satisfy the sequential elective requirement.

[02:39:15] Okay, good. And then is AP research and AP seminar, are they still kind of considered gifted yeah those are 5.0 classes yes and we encourage our students to enroll in those classes they do satisfy a lot of the work they do in this classes is very similar to the seminar program that we offer and it does give them the option of having the weighted course so do we if it's not a 5.0 is it a 4.5 or is it just a 4. it's a 4.0 currently i'm going to weigh in on that one um i I wanna know, you don't have to answer tonight, why it is not a 5.0 and what Fairfax and Loudoun do

[02:39:52] for their equivalent courses. Ms. Wall and I worked about, let's call it five years ago to, there were about 30 courses in the school division that were not weighted that Fairfax and Loudoun had weighted. It puts us at a significant disadvantage.

[02:40:07] It may challenge enrollment, especially of the top students who, you know, when you take a 4.0 class and get an A, your GPA goes down, right? when you're compared to everyone is running a 4.5 and six. So you can't afford to take a 4.0 class.

[02:40:22] I mean, that's the strategy of most students at high school that if I take a 4.0, get the A, my GPA goes down. - Yeah, I appreciate that request and we're happy to follow up on it. We are simultaneously conducting a code review division-wide this year.

[02:40:41] So we are looking at every coding and every weighting as part of an audit this year, we can add that layer of interest to the discussion as well and compare the weighting between the divisions. - Great, thank you. - Mr. Jessie and then Ms. William.

[02:40:59] - I just wanna say thank you for everything that you're doing and also thank you for making sure that people understand that this is not a, we do this and some people are gonna go down. This is across the board all and it's an important program. I have a daughter who was either A or F student all the time 'cause if she didn't like the teachers and she didn't care and whatever the grade was, but then she got enrolled in IB program at Garfield and it's changed her life.

[02:41:35] She loved the competition. She loved to be with it. And when she went down to UVA, not UVA, but the other college, she didn't get in the honor roll, right, 'cause she wasn't invited, but she said, "Don't worry about it, I'll get in," and she did, and she did well.

[02:41:59] The competition in the schools and the rigor in the school is important 'cause kids love that, even though they don't wanna admit it, but thank you for what you do. - I'll do Ms. Williams and Mr. Wilkins. - Thank you, I just want, I wanna start with clarification.

[02:42:16] wall asked a question about tracking your students and could you just if i understood what you're saying you're trying to you're able to track the students through their post-secondary educate college is that what you're saying yes yes ma'am okay so i would caution because being a gifted my mother myself my student didn't really go to college went to culinary school we have students in alternative programs and there's a lot of gifted students that don't go to college at all and then also to the point of what what has been brought up it's the meat and potatoes of the class

[02:42:53] you know we we are all looking for different things um chairman latif talks about the waiting and miss wall and that's very relevant too but it's the material in the class um you know the experience that my son had we waited all the way until his senior year to get into a seminar class that nearly identically modeled his world history class and still not provided opportunity for voice now that was in 2019 so we've I know we've come a long way I just use that as an example because that's often the thing

that turns the gifted kids off they have to wait so long to be able to get in a class to use their voice because a lot of those classes are discussion based as well as

[02:43:32] the academic side writing and things like that and so I would just encourage that we have those opportunities throughout the student's academic career and not only have them but make them meaningful um i i was joking because a few of us laughed when we're talking mr jesse said about a or f students i was a student um because i fit that profile i almost dropped out of high school because i didn't have the opportunity to express my intellect in a meaningful way and was often penalized for it right because a lot of that that small that category of gifted students that are

[02:44:08] are the ones rebel rousers like myself why do i learn who is this guy named columbus in my history book when we don't know really know what he looks like kind of a student right so i want to make sure that we're also capturing those students and providing opportunity for them before they get to senior year in high school um so i just wanted to make mention of that thank you thank you mr wilk well i figured i might as well jump in and happy i asked my questions ahead of time because we'd be here until midnight tonight um i do want to thank you uh both for what you do and for the engagement and the expansion of the gifted programs i've seen it firsthand as personal as a parent i've

[02:44:44] seen it at all my schools as i go in and you guys know i'm there a lot i've gone to variations of gifted nights and the unique themes that they do at the schools so essentially thank you for being here tonight and answering my questions earlier and the presentation was very insightful thank you mr blake yeah i just wanted to say thank you as well thanks for all the hard work you're doing i I just saw you, Ms. Bailey, last week at Jenkins.

[02:45:13] So you guys are really doing good work and I just wanna thank you for the intentionality of trying to, the progress towards the equal represent, the equal, the equitable representation of the underserved communities. I really appreciate it. Thank you, keep up the good work.

[02:45:29] - Thank you. - Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Bailey, Dr. Sullivan, appreciate it. Thank you very much. Excellent presentation. Okay, that leads us into board matters. Last week, we started with Ms. Zargarpur. week we'll start. Mr. Wilk. Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just to reiterate since this was a hot topic tonight my position has not changed in two years. I believe in following the federal court ruling which was established by Grimm with the fourth circuit and until somehow a court rules that the executive order usurps a federal ruling or if the supreme court decides to take it up again that's what I'll abide by when it comes to that. I will also maintain and continue despite ideology

[02:46:09] following I believe we're going to do it stay in compliance with the VSHL and offer our students again the opportunity to compete in regionals and states which they otherwise would lose the opportunity to be exposed to the recruiters at college levels and earn millions of dollars of scholarships so those are my two positions on that I do want to thank some people for coming tonight Jen Donnelly thank you for bringing up and being an advocate for Covington Harper I know know we sit on the safe schools together and that was something that we brought up I think I have two other board members who are going to support me putting Covington Harper up on the agenda for

[02:46:44] information I want to thank Ms. Kern I think she's gone but she's a regular or she was used to be but she is a great advocate her daughter's now an advocate for the grandson she mentioned Lily Jessie's gone but of course your wife thank her so much for the work she does with the speech oratorical contest. Recognizing the cross-country team, the coach, Andy McCarthy, is a Potomac resident. Him and his wife

are both teachers, so I want to thank him, and congratulations. That's quite an accomplishment. Ms. Weston, thank you for coming out tonight and being a part of this.

[02:47:21] Highlighting a couple events that I did go to, I do, you know, we have some great programs in this county. Ones as partners, not necessarily always run through our school. Future Kings is one of those programs that I was able to go and see their STEM carnival. I told my wife I was there and I needed to be there to support it but I ended up playing Mario Kart for an hour so it was a great opportunity to engage. Potomac, Garfield of course they did, they always do, in basketball, the boys basketball team. It is a tough thing to say that last night my two schools are the best two schools

[02:48:00] in the cardinal district for men's basketball and one of them won and so last night forest park congratulations on being the cardinal district champions both potomac and forest park will go on the regionals this week and continue competing so congratulations and the girls potomac team won districts in the cardinal for the girls sports lastly i know patty had a great glow night which which was an embedded form of their STEM with a nice theme that they had.

[02:48:32] Let's see, there was an awesome Valentine's Day dance put on by the PTO and Mary Williams Elementary School. They're killing it over there, the PTO. It's always great to see the engagement and the parents and what they're doing at these schools for their students.

[02:48:48] So again, thank you for everyone coming out tonight. I'm done. - Ms. Trudene. - I'm gonna take some notes from Mr. Funderburg start out with some positives. Congrats to Patriot boys, Brentsville girls, and Gainesville girls. I didn't catch Gainesville girls this week but I did last week. I'm very very excited to watch you guys keep going. The level of play on that basketball court is something to see so if you have not gotten out to see one of those games I suggest that you do. The Brentsville girls especially are quite an inspiration with their attitudes on and off the court and they

[02:49:25] are stellar in the classroom as well um I'd like to congratulate again the Brentsville FFA for receiving the National Chapter 3 Star Award which is one of the organization's most prestigious honors the FFA was recently honored by the House of Delegates so thank you Delegate Lovejoy for bringing them to the floor and recognizing our amazing amazing students and their teacher Mrs. Beard I know she just won some awards as well so I just think that program is just doing amazing things um and now on to the meat and potatoes as the other board members like to say we heard a lot from our constituents today the boardroom has not been

[02:50:04] this full in a while so i'd like to talk a little bit about some of the executive orders that have come out regarding k-12 education there are some things in life that should be common sense things that shouldn't require debate one of those is biological males do not belong in bathrooms or on the sports field with biological girls. That's not fairness. That's not equality.

[02:50:30] We cannot let distractions take our focus away from what truly matters. Educating our kids, ensuring their safety, and preparing them for success. Our schools should not be testing grounds for social experiments. They should be institutions of learning where students gain the knowledge and skills they need to thrive. Parents deserve to know that their children are protected girls deserve to know that their spaces and sports remain fair and safe and every student deserves an education system that prioritizes academics not political agendas it's

[02:51:07] time to stand up for truth it's time to stand up for fairness and most of all it's time to stand up for our kids let's get back to the basics keeping our school safe strong and focused on education we should continue to align with the vhsl and follow our president's executive order i also think we need to make sure that the rules that we adhere to when it comes to speakers in this boardroom are consistent and clear thank you mr jesse i hopefully you're putting up a chart

[02:51:44] that i wanted to have put up thank you uh the mlk competition started 40 years ago in the oratorical 35 years ago my wife had that there is a wonderful 18 minute video that i would like for you to look at and uh the qr code there you take a picture of it and go there and see the 18 it tells you about the program but more importantly it shows you the impact of the doctors and the uh people

[02:52:22] who became they were going to probably be successful anyhow but this added to their success so i would encourage you to look at that and take a picture of it if you will uh to my colleague to my left here you know there's a difference between having different opinions and the truth the truth is what you believe the truth to be and i'll tell you right now you know just because you believe it doesn't mean that it's wrong or it's right so you know let's let's get this uh straight

[02:52:54] Also, you know, to me, we have to do what is right for the majority of the people. And so that's all I'm going to say on that. I have been out of the pocket for a while.

[02:53:11] The last board meeting I missed, and I just want to tell you a couple things quickly on that. Three times, two times on the 4th of February, and one time right before the board meeting on the 5th, everything in my head just went black.

[02:53:29] for maybe one or two seconds. I spent two and a half days in the hospital that week trying to figure out was it my heart, with the rapid heart rate, or was it my brain and so forth. At the end, nobody knew, and it hasn't occurred.

[02:53:46] I did go to see an eye doctor, and he said it's a common thing, make sure that we don't have a plaque in your eye and so forth, but I'm also sending a urologist. I have not had a cold or something like that probably in 10 years until about two weeks ago.

[02:54:05] Then I had an incident with my sinuses. Every 10 minutes, 15 minutes, my nose would be running. I have to blow my nose and stuff for about a week. So that's why I have not been to a lot of events. I had to cancel and so forth.

[02:54:22] So I hope to get back on track and so forth. And I don't want to bore you with my problems, but I'm well, I think, but we'll see. Thank you. - Ms. Wall.

[02:54:37] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I want to start out by saying thank you to our board clerk, Laura Mills, and our deputy clerk, Anna Udate, who is not here, and Liliana Bick, because she had a baby recently, and Liliana Bickham and Daniel Brown, executive administrative assistants.

[02:54:54] This is board clerk appreciation week, and I appreciate your hard work, commitment, and overall support, And I know we really could not do any of this without you. So thank you. And we have gifts in the boardroom for you and your colleagues that I think you might only be the only one here.

[02:55:12] So you'll have to get them to them. But anyway, thank you so very much. I also want to congratulate the Battlefield High School Girls Swim and Dive Team on their VHSL Region 6B championship. And I believe the Colgan boys were the winners on the boys' side.

[02:55:28] Since we last met, I've attended a number of events. the District 9 High School Honors Choir at Gainesville, the Erg Sprints Rowing Competition hosted by Battlefield, the Mock Trial Competition, in which eight of our high schools participated, and that was a really fun event to see, brought back some high school memories of my own.

[02:55:48] So great job to everybody who participated in that. And then this morning I met with the Bull Run Republican, Bull Run Middle School Student Advisory Council students from sixth and seventh grades, and they asked me some really great questions about the school board, and sometime later, I'll tell you what they asked me.

[02:56:04] It's hilarious, actually. And they were so much fun. And tomorrow, I'm gonna meet with the eighth graders. They were asking me all kinds of questions about the board. And I wanted to say, tonight, we heard from citizens with lots of concerns about our stance on Title IX, and we heard policy 738-5.

[02:56:22] Actually, I think it's a regulation. So there's just a lot of information out there, and some of it is just half-accurate and partially accurate. There's a lot of data and stats, but I do want to say my biggest concern as far as 738-5 regulation is that parents are not required to be informed or notified of their students who are experiencing gender distress.

[02:56:46] I don't even know if that's the politically correct way to say that, but with their names, pronouns, accommodations, and I believe that is wrong. There is a good reason for keeping parents informed and in the loop, and keeping secrets from parents is just never a good idea.

[02:57:02] Children who are struggling with their gender deserve our compassion and attention and our help, but policies that cut parents out of the discussion are not pro-child. They deny children the support they need from those who know them and love them best.

[02:57:17] I know it is also settled law that is explicitly not sex discrimination to sex-segregate spaces, such as bathrooms and other locations like that. And to require parent notification and consent about their children's non-conformity is not also discrimination.

[02:57:36] I think it's important for us to remember these things. I'm gonna end, I'm gonna send by, I'm gonna end by saying good night. Thank you. - Ms. William. - Thank you, Chairman. I came prepared tonight with a wonderful speech that I had pre-written about diversity, equity, and inclusion, because I don't wanna say DEI, because we need to name it every single time so people understand what it is.

[02:58:05] But I changed my mind based upon the climate here tonight and what I do wanna start with before I get into that and before I forget is I just want to thank again our school board clerks, because as I always say, you keep us on task and on time and on topic.

[02:58:27] And it's always, as I say, herding cats. I wanna thank the student representative for giving voice once again to our middle school students because every voice matters. And I also want to celebrate, 'cause this is the last meeting for Black History Month.

[02:58:43] One of the things that I was gonna talk about is our living black history, such as our first black superintendent, who is also a woman, myself who sits here, Tracy Blake, who sits here, Mr. Jesse, because every African American in existence today is living black history, and that is accurate.

[02:59:02] I would like to include Ms. Trednick, but as you're serving on the Racial and Social Justice Commission, my understanding she does not define herself that way and we should respect how everyone

defines themselves and if that's incorrect please let me know um because i i would love to i would love to change it i'm sorry i was honoring and being respectful to my understanding of what i've been told and heard so having said that what i will say is as someone who grew up as an other because that was on every government forum watching my mother try to enroll me in prince william county

[02:59:39] schools because at that time the only option was to check black or white um i refuse to ever be a part of an othering someone else i will always stand for my rights i will always stand for the most marginalized group and excuse me i'm sorry did you did you want to correct me was i - I would happily correct you, Ms. Williams.

[03:00:06] - Was I wrong? - I do believe that if we want to talk about people's race and backgrounds, we should actually do it accurately, Ms. Williams. - That's why I offered the question. - I do believe if we took a blood test today, honey, I am more African-American than you are.

[03:00:23] - That wasn't up for debate. - And that's a problem. - But that's okay. - Board members are both out of order. I'm gonna cut your time. - Yeah, you can talk out of order, but I'm not gonna sit here and take it. - I'm not gonna sit here and take it. - It's fine, you take it somewhere else. - That's okay, great. - I mean, I was just being honest. - Ms. Zawner forced that. - So what I will say, because I'm going to take my time and I'm happy to be out of order, is that fear, when you let it rule you, it's for lack of education and understanding.

[03:00:47] We're in education. When you talk about safety, it is our job to provide a safe learning environment for all. Education is, public education is for all. Just as we start our meeting with the pledge and it ends with liberty and justice for all, we better mean it when we say for all.

[03:01:11] And that doesn't mean that we aren't allowed to have differing opinions, that we aren't allowed to express those and they shouldn't be respected, because they absolutely should. But what it does mean is that we provide a safe environment for all. Policy 738, as well as the regulations, are for everyone on both sides of that equation.

[03:01:32] If you are a trans student and you don't want to utilize those spaces, you don't have to. If you are not a trans student and you don't want to use those spaces, you don't have to. Because in this division, we believe in inclusivity. And I, as long as I'm on this board, I'm always going to stand for it.

[03:01:48] I have taken violence for it. And as the only one who has been invited into trans spaces to take the time to listen and hear their stories, I will continue to fight for that. And I will do my best to respect all. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[03:02:04] - Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you. So I have a couple of notes, so I don't forget some things. Thank you to the clerks for keeping track of us.

[03:02:19] I appreciate it for everything that you do. Track, you know, chasing us down to make sure we answer your things. I got you, and the newsletter's coming. So sorry. I'm wearing an Osborne Park metal jacket shirt because they've finally, finally bestowed one to me.

[03:02:38] I love the metal jackets. They are an example of what is great about our kids in this county. It is a group of students who will go out of their way to make sure that they are inviting anyone that they can who is interested in robotics to come and join them.

[03:02:56] They offer trainings for, not trainings, events for elementary kids, middle school kids. They are always building things together and in being really inclusive of everyone. They are only limited by the fact that they can't have hundreds of kids because of volunteers and things like that, but they do a lot of things together.

[03:03:21] They have learned how to do advocacy from Senator Danica Roam. When they wanted to make sure that the Virginia legislature could provide a little bit of funding for robotics to other schools in the state, they went to Richmond and advocated. And Senator Roam was really great about explaining how to do that.

[03:03:40] They have taken that skill, and they were advocating this year for other things that had nothing to do with robotics. So it's turned them into great civic citizens. They also, a while ago, pitched to VHSL, since we've been talking about them tonight.

[03:03:57] They don't just do sports. They also do robotics. They do debate. They do academic, forgot what it was called, but it's an academic competition. and so they wanted to make sure that robotics was included. What was it called?

[03:04:12] Scholastic Poll, thank you, thank you. And they host so many events to make sure that people are learning more about robotics. Some of the girls in the group have made sure that they ask younger girls to come and learn about robotics because we know that women have not been represented in STEM for very long.

[03:04:35] And so they've created this thing called this is a girl thing. And they've just done a wonderful job. So I appreciate the shirt. And I will, it's one of my favorite things now.

[03:04:50] I also got to go to the mock trial event. And Dr. McDade, if you've not seen these kids, they prepare for months to do this thing. They all do the same trial. They prepare to defend all the different parts. And it was amazing. And everyone should go see it next year.

[03:05:06] Thank you. - Blake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. Thank you all for staying to the end. And, you know, it's been a busy couple of weeks across Prince William County Schools.

[03:05:23] And I just want to take a moment to highlight some of the incredible things happening in our schools. And I just to kick things off, I attended our Hampton Bevel girls basketball game where both teams showed a lot of skill, determination and great sportsmanship.

[03:05:40] After that, I had a chance to attend the Garfield Pepper Alley. It was crazy level of energy there. And my favorite part was the air mattress races. So there was, I don't know if you've ever seen it before, but trust me, it's really, it's fun. So it's as fun as it sounds.

[03:05:57] And then I also got to attend a model judicial program, mock trial competition at the Prince County Courthouse and with Ms. Wall and Ms. Zagapur and Ms. Tredenik was there too, I believe.

[03:06:15] And watching our students step into the roles of attorneys, witnesses, and juries, it was just incredible. And the case, so I'll just fill in, it was a murder case and they were, it was domestic violence and a woman killed her husband in the bed and uh our student rep got got the yeah she got the woman off not guilty and then there were there were there were first degree

[03:06:48] murder second degree murder manslaughter every charge imp like there was tough prosecution tough defense it was it was it was really great and i just want to thank like the prince willton

county courts and the judges that came there and also the program so this is a really good program i didn't know we had law clubs i wish i would have been in a law club so it was really great and um i've also just did a number of school visits i've been in neapsco dale city and enterprise and uh you know it's always great to connect with the students the staff hear their perspectives

[03:07:27] and see firsthand the great work that's happening in our classrooms uh and then like i said earlier another standout event was the John Jenkins Elementary they had the multi-school gift at night and for the Dell City corridor so it was all Dell City schools and it was just it was really inspiring to see so many families and all the educators come out in the evening and spend their time after they've been at work all day and still out there supporting and challenging our learners our early learners so thank you for that and then on the athletic side I'd like to congratulate

[03:08:01] garfield high school last night on a big win against woodbridge in their district so they'll be moving on the regionals to play colonial forge friday and stafford so i'll be wishing them the best luck and before i wrap up uh also be on the lookout i just filmed my board brief yesterday so be on the lookout for that and as we navigate these challenges and the opportunities ahead i'll leave you with this the only way forward is together thank you thank you mr blake um

[03:08:39] well you ended with a quote i'll start with one there are not more than five musical notes yet the combinations of these five get rise give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard there are not more than five primary colors yet in combination they produce more hues than you can ever be seen there are not more than five cardinal tastes yet combinations of them yield more flavors that can ever be tasted sun tzu art of war 2500 years ago good evening everyone um i've been elected to this board three times and i'm honored to serve here um and i ran for this office on focusing on student

[03:09:15] success safety and security space infrastructure and salaries and i never had to say it because everyone who voted for me knew it and understood it and re-elected me two times but it's student success for all safety and security for all space and infrastructure for all and salaries for all and this works and that's why i'm i'm grateful for the public here in prince william who re-elected me twice on the work that i've done because we have succeeded in each of these metrics across the board in all demographic groups i am particularly proud of the superintendent we hired on this board four years ago and we chose at a time that was maybe the most polarized

[03:09:55] time in american education that was during a pandemic and um so let me tell you a little bit about her because i think it's important she's a child of immigrants from belize she is african american she grew up on the south side of chicago she went to a high school magnet school she paid her way through college masters and a doctorate degree she was a teacher a principal and a chief academic officer for one of the largest divisions school divisions in america and i tell you this story not because you know she was the first african-american hired in a large school district

[03:10:32] in this area and the night we hired her i never really made a big deal about that i hired her we hired her because she has multiple perspectives and viewpoints based on the experience and lived experience that i just described this school division benefits from that this board benefits from that this community benefits from that it is those multiple perspectives and her openness into listening to folks on all sides of every issue there's not just one or two or three sides there's many more sides on a lot of issues and she showed that to us with her planning of the strategic plan she showed that to us when she did the re-entry plan when we came in from the pandemic

[03:11:09] she showed that to us each year as she is now coming to complete her fourth year i'm very proud of the fact that we have a superintendent who weighs multiple perspectives takes into consideration multiple viewpoints and i believe it makes our school division much stronger as sun tzu said 2500 years ago you know you might only have five colors but there's so many hues that come of that and it is the same here in prince william county the 10th most diverse district in the nation i would say you know if you ignore the outbursts from this evening that

[03:11:42] this board itself has multiple perspectives i'm proud to work with these members most of the time and I am really thrilled to have their perspectives and I really do try to hear each of them regardless of whether I agree with them or not and at the height of the most challenging times that I've served now seven years across three presidential administrations two governor administrations and some of the most challenging times in American education history so I believe the school division is very strong I believe our school division is one of the best in the nation I believe we comply with the law

[03:12:21] and I believe we will continue to do the good work that the people elected me to do and the good work that this community expects from our school division. With that, I wish you all a great night. Thank you.



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