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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Date Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 2h 30m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCcJXDP87Kk>
- 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.

[00:00:00] - Okay, this time the Prince William County School Board will be called to order. A motion is in order for the approval meeting agenda. Mr. Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - I second. - Ms. Wall.

[00:00:15] Any discussion? Please vote. All in favor, raise your hand, signify aye. Any opposed? No opposition, motion passes unanimously. Wilk absent. Moving on, motion to end a closed session. Mr. Vice Chair Blake.

[00:00:33] I move that pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board, enter closed session for the following reasons. One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to Virginia code 2.2-3711A1.

[00:01:08] 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 and eight.

[00:01:27] And three, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities and 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.

[00:01:53] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Kemen, I second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? All in favor, signal hands up in the air. Any opposition? - Okay, no opposition noted. Motion passes unanimously, Wilk absent. At this time, the Prince William County School Board

[00:02:09] will enter closed session and return in approximately one hour.

[00:03:12] - Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session from closed session. A motion is in order for closed session certification. Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of April 2nd, 2025 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:37] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:04:10] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:34] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action items, the motion's in order for 8.01, Vice Chair Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in the closed session.

[00:04:49] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:12] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, - Motion passed. - Great, next, moving on to Pledge of Allegiance, I'd like to invite our student representative, Alaa Rashid, to lead us in the pledge. Ms. Rashid. - Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:05:42] - Thank you. Moving on to Thriving Futures Focus. Good evening, everyone. Thriving Futures Focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools, fulfilling our vision that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:06:02] We dedicate this time during our meeting to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or an award at the state or national level. We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County Public Schools, and the school board is proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments.

[00:06:20] Tonight, the school board will recognize our state champions in winter athletics, and we will first begin with Mrs. Lisa Zargarpur of the Championship Coles District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Coles District would like to recognize the Osborne Park High School girls basketball team for winning the VHSL Classic State Championship.

[00:06:48] Man, I am so stinking proud of you guys. Ah, congratulations to this outstanding team and head coach, Chrissy Kelly. This marks Coach Kelley's third state title, adding to her previous wins in 2004

and 2006 at Forest Park High School. Sorry, Mr. Wilk. Head coach Chrissy Kelley, would you please introduce your team members and share a few words on their achievements?

[00:07:15] - Boys basketball coach as of yesterday. Congratulations, Coach West. I have junior Jaylen Gorham. I have junior Key Rainey, sophomore of Peyton Walters. What's your name again? Just kidding. This is junior Samia Sneed.

[00:07:32] This is Tariana Hayes Jr., Kai Jones, freshman, one of our lone seniors, Alex Brown, sophomore, Layla Twyman, I have junior, JL West, sophomore, Marlo Hall, I have senior, Taylor Hampton, my assistant coach, Maddie Scarborough, former player of mine at OP.

[00:07:59] We got to a state championship together. We didn't win, but we got there. And then I have Danny Jackson, another one of my former players, who we won a state championship together in 2006. And that was really hard, but I'm glad I got through it. I think it is really, really important to kind of acknowledge what people don't get to see behind the scenes with this group of people and the other ones that were missing.

[00:08:28] The work that they put in, Julia Matthews, Janie Salinas, Tierney Myers, grace justin justin yano that's hard um but really what these young ladies do behind the scenes and and when i say we've been going since march 2nd of last year to get to march 15th this year the work that they put in we went to quantico worked out with marines we worked out with marines at op to really test their mental toughness um they're unwavering in their commitment they don't

[00:09:04] always love me actually I hope they always love me but sometimes they don't like me but I think at the end of the day they know what we accomplished on March 15th is something that they'll remember for the rest of their lives because it was it's not something all high school kids get to do and they bought into something bigger than themselves and I truly believe that they're going to take it on to every aspect of their life from going to college business teaching whatever whatever they end up doing but they're We're a really special group to say the least.

[00:09:36] So thank you for acknowledging this and having us here and celebrating with us and our representation of Prince William County. Thank you. - Coach, I'm gonna go out of order, but I'm the chair, so I can do that.

[00:09:53] Coach, lone senior, that means we'll see you guys back here next year? - We have three seniors. - Three seniors, okay. - We have three seniors, but-- - You have a young team, it looks like. - We do. Yeah, why not?

[00:10:10] Why not run it back, huh? - Very good. - That's the goal, right? So we'll see. - Ms. Agapur, continue. - I do look forward to seeing you all back here next year. And I'm just, I'm gonna take a point of privilege here with Dr. Lateef.

[00:10:29] Coach Kelly, when I watch you with your team over the past several years, you build such great sportsmanship and just a great cohesion between players. and they're very intent when they're practicing in warm-ups and things like that.

[00:10:52] I'm commending you on such a great job of coaching them, and I am looking forward to you guys coming back year over year. - Thank you. - All right, so additionally, we also want to congratulate

Anna Kuntz of Osborne Park High School for becoming state champion in indoor track and field in the pole vault event.

[00:11:18] Our athletes are represented tonight OPHS principal Lisa Marie Kane indoor track coaches Jerry McAvoy and Daniel Kosagoff would either of the coaches care to share a few words I guess that would be me I am Anna's a pole vault coach and have been for her entire time she worked really really hard took a little convincing at you know just before she she jumped at States I had to make a bet with her and you know she was she was a little reluctant to to know that she could win the state championship so i had to put

[00:11:56] a little incentive behind her and i told her that i would dye my hair blue if she took the state title which we did a several weeks ago i've since washed it out and got my hair cut so for a day my hair was blue uh and uh and anna worked very very hard and you know and i think she has a chance to do it again this spring uh and uh you know her her work showed uh she she didn't miss anything until her final height and she wanted it and took it so she did

[00:12:32] a great job coach i think you should just do the blue hair for our sake oh my goodness all right all right um i want to also offer congratulations to alex grocholsky of the charles j colgan senior for being a state champion in swimming the 500 freestyle and the 200 individual medley.

[00:12:58] Unfortunately, Alex is unable to join us this evening, but we have remarkable achievements from our students from Osborne Park and Colgan. Thank you so much for representing the Coles District, your families and your school so well. From the basketball court to the track and swimming lanes, these champions represent the highest level of dedication and talent.

[00:13:15] Congratulations. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Gainesville District would like to recognize several champions from Battlefield High School, represented tonight by proud Principal Dolores Lucas, Assistant Director of Student Activities Doug Burney, and swim coaches Jay Thorpe and Evan Brandt.

[00:13:44] Congratulations to Ava Rice and Brandon Murray for earning state championships in indoor track. Ava earned her state title in the 55 meter hurdles, and Brandon won his state title in the 300 meter dash. - Mr. Doug, Mr. Doug Burney, would you care to share a few words on Ava and Brandon's accomplishments?

[00:14:04] - I'm thrilled to announce that the track coach actually made it from the track meet this evening. So he will share his thoughts. - Wonderful, great. - Hey, how about that? Thank you members of the board. What a great honor to be here today. My name is Van Arnold. This is actually my first year coaching at Battlefield High School.

[00:14:21] And how about it right from the start? Two state champions, yes. You know, it didn't take long. sit here and talk about um you know their accomplishments uh fifth in the nation we're not just talking prince william county and you know the commonwealth of virginia fifth in the nation ava rice finished this year in the 55 meter hurdles 15th in the nation brandon murray in the 300 meter dash 15th in the nation brandon murray in the 4x4 team from battlefield high school university of virginia can't even tell you the combination of football and track and field

[00:14:57] colleges that are trying to recruit this guy right here um and i think those are all great but you know the thing that i probably see in common that people don't talk about enough are the things that take

place off the field and one thing that i see in common when i look at all the athletes here you know whether it's on the court in the pool or on the track is that these people understand one thing very well which is the will to win is not nearly as important as the will to prepare to win the achievements that these two have made for battlefield track and field it's absolutely it's absolutely a product of their lifelong commitment to doing all the little things right on and off

[00:15:34] of the track and i think it's those little things off the track that a lot of athletes don't understand that separate them when we get to the finish line in these meets and why it is that they win so in honoring your achievements on the track i'd also like to give you a big round of applause for the effort and uh this and the types of people you guys are off the track thank you so much well said coach well said um congratulations uh returning to swimming um congratulations to madison richardson amelia edwards maddie mercer and alissa sagal for earning the state championship

[00:16:13] in the 400 freestyle relay i got more about more congratulations to alissa sagal emma young abby hubert and sophie hayden for the state championship in the 200 medley relay and congratulations to emma young for being a state champion in the 50 free which is amazing awesome and a special congratulations to alissa sagal for not only winning the 100 free and 100 backstroke

[00:16:48] but also for breaking the state record in the backstroke so that's awesome jay thorpe are you jay thorpe would you care to share a few words on your team's accomplishments yeah thank you for recognizing all these great individuals tonight we had a great season this year the lady bobcats were undefeated in their dual meet season they won the district title won the regional title and were second at state and they won five of the event of the 12 events at

[00:17:23] state absolutely phenomenal we started off the state meet went in the 200 medley relay that consisted of Alyssa Sagal, Emma Young, Abby Hubert, and Sophie Hayden. So if you guys should show who you are.

[00:17:41] Then our second state champion was Emma Young. Emma won the 50-yard freestyle and continued our streak of winning that event at states for the last five years. Congratulations.

[00:17:59] The next event was the 100-yard freestyle, which was won by Alyssa Sagal. And you can stay out there because she came back two events later and won the 100 backstroke where she set the state record.

[00:18:19] And in the last event of the day, Battlefield won the 400 freestyle relay. That relay consisted of Madison Richardson, Amelia Edwards, Maddie Mercer, and Alyssa Sagal.

[00:18:35] And for the season, the icing on the cake is that all of these young ladies earned All-American honors in swimming. Thank you. - Incredible performances from our Battlefield swimmers and runners.

[00:18:51] Congratulations, everybody. Breaking records and bringing home multiple titles is no small feat, and we're really proud of you. Thank you so much. - Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Ms. Trudenik. - Thank you. From the Brentsville District, I would like to recognize Kayla Smith of the Brentsville District High School for earning a state championship in the 55 meter indoor track event.

[00:19:16] Unfortunately, Kayla could not be here. She was here last year, which makes her a two-peat. I think she might even be a three-peat. And if you ever wanna watch a girl run and have so much fun doing it, I'm telling you, she's it. She's also a phenomenal student and person.

[00:19:32] She's so kind and so caring to her teammates and her brother and her parents are so supportive as well. So I'm sad she can't be here, but I assume it's because she's on the field playing something else or doing something else. Also, congratulations to Evan Sinati and Billy Tyler of Brentsville for earning state championships in wrestling.

[00:19:53] They were also unable to attend, but Evan is another two-peat. He was here last year. Billy has worked his whole life to earn this title, and it's exciting to see these boys get offers for college and really wrestle year-round and put their heart and soul into it.

[00:20:10] They are also phenomenal in the classroom and really, really kind kiddos too. So congrats, boys and Kayla. I'm very happy for you and excited for you. We also have a big congratulations to Henry Burge of Patriot High School for becoming a state champion in the indoor track in the 1,000 meter.

[00:20:29] - Henry is supported. Henry is supported tonight by Director of Student Activities Brad Qualls and Head Coach James DeMarco. Mr. DeMarco, would you like to say a few words? - Yes, please.

[00:20:44] Dr. Lateef and members of the school board, Mr. Qualls and I get to honor Patriots Henry Burge. Henry, this is his fourth time here. He's been here for a team state championship and now his third individual state title. Besides being a very fast runner, he's also in our honor choir at the school, fantastic singer and he's an A plus student he's just such a joy to have on the track as a leader for our team his work ethic you know when you're a superstar athlete you automatically have the eyes and ears of the rest of the team watching everything you do and he's just an absolutely

[00:21:19] fantastic person and leader for our program I'm so excited to see where his journey goes off to I still got a whole outdoor season another year with him so we hope to be back here four or five five more times to see you guys. So Henry Burge, the state meet record holder in the thousand meter run set last year, he repeated this year, but also was all state in the four by eight and also the four by four, helping lead our teams to high performances and has six school records already.

[00:21:48] So Henry, congratulations on a fantastic season. - And another congratulations to Trent Daniels and Caroline Tribbett of Gainesville High School for earning state titles in indoor track.

[00:22:06] Trent earned both the 1,600-meter and 3,200-meter state titles, and Caroline earned her state title in the 3,200-meter. I do believe we've seen them here before as well. Our athletes are joined tonight by Assistant Principal Adam Daniels, Assistant Director of Student Activities, Aubrey Quigley, and Coach Connerly.

[00:22:25] Coach Lee, would you care to share a few words? Absolutely. Thank you. It's nice to be back. I'm sure these two are enjoying it as well. It's weird having these two in your program because they are exceedingly normal people around their friends and around their classmates, but they are capable of doing very abnormal things on the track, and it's really fun to get to watch them do that.

[00:22:50] Caroline defending her two-mile indoor state title, Trent defending his mile and two-mile indoor state titles, both of them doing so in meet-record fashion in the two-mile, and Trent running under nine minutes, which is an unbelievable feat for a high school boy, Caroline breaking 1020 for two miles. It was an incredible state meet to watch them run.

[00:23:13] And seeing them repeat and seeing how strong they looked in the indoor meet, I think they're poised to be back here again in outdoor. But more speaking again to the type of people that they are, again,

these are exceedingly normal teenagers. I cannot emphasize that enough. But they are incredible role models within the program, and they have provided an example for their younger teammates to follow, both on the track and in the classroom and as people Trent we fortunately get to keep for another year you know three more seasons with him four more seasons and Caroline will be a big loss as she is off to Penn State next year so again congratulations Caroline congratulations

[00:23:50] Trent the Brentsville Patriot and Gainesville communities should be incredibly proud these individual champions have demonstrated extraordinary discipline focus and resilience in their events not only did you deserve it but you most definitely earned it congratulations thank you mr.

[00:24:16] Congratulations again to all our state champions, but before asking our superintendent to share a few words, I would like the parents and the family members of our students to please stand at this time to be recognized. All parents and family members, we know if it wasn't for your commitment to your children, to our school division and to your communities, we wouldn't have these champions here.

[00:24:50] And for that, we are truly grateful. I now invite superintendent, Dr. Latonya McDade to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. - Well, tonight I'm excited to recognize the extraordinary achievements of our PWCS students. You have each demonstrated excellence in athletics across a variety of disciplines represented here tonight.

[00:25:09] From swimming to track to basketball and wrestling, you each are student athletes who have shown dedication, teamwork, perseverance on your path to becoming state championships winners. Your accomplishments reflect the strong support of coaches, educators, families, and school communities.

[00:25:27] And so I do want to acknowledge all of our educators and school leaders here tonight, as well as our families and parents for your continued support as our students pursue their dreams and aspirations. Congratulations to each and every one of you. Thank you for representing Prince William County schools with distinction and pride.

[00:25:46] We are PWCS proud. Congratulations. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'll invite our honorees to come forward for a group photo. We'll start with the Osborne Park Championship high school girls basketball team,

[00:26:04] and then Diana Gulotta will direct the rest after that.

[00:27:08] - All right, great.

[00:27:09] Everyone, big smiles.

[00:29:00] - Stand on top.

[00:29:01] - Yeah, excuse me.

[00:29:50] - Yeah. - Okay, good, good, good.

[00:32:31] - Okay, thank you everyone. That was excellent, always a pleasure to do that. Moving on from our thriving futures focus, we will move to the business action items tonight. The adoption of the consent agenda is up first. - Vice Chair Blake, please read the motion.

[00:32:48] - 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. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:33:20] - Eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on next to acknowledgements and recognitions, a motion order, Vice Chair Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended. - Do you have a second?

[00:33:37] - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargapur. - He keeps doing that tonight. I just wanna bring to attention so people can prepare appropriately. We have Teacher Appreciation Week in May. It is May 5th through the 9th.

[00:33:53] Get ready for that, please, and thank you. And National Nurse Day, which is May 7th. We know these are hardworking people in our schools and plan now, so you can shower them with the love, which they should be showered with every day. - Thank you, Ms. Zargapur, please vote.

[00:34:27] - Vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tridentic, motion passed. - Next up, citizen comment time. Those citizens who signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:34:46] 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 to each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I will ask the room to be cleared to restore public order.

[00:35:02] Tonight, we have eight citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. I'll call up the first five and there are seats up front for you to sit up here, up front if you choose so, while you're waiting to speak. Sean Daley, Jessica Shar, Brittany Robinson, Francisco Esparza, and Edwin Laririo.

[00:35:26] Sean Daley.

[00:35:46] - Thank you all for having me. - Thank you, I apologize for not making the last meeting. I was in a burn hospital with my hand. You know, we have two very polar opposite professions. Your profession is selfish, it's valuable, and the most important weapon is our mind.

[00:36:05] And when it's engaged, and you are the fire burner for our youth, our children. That is selfless. That is a very admirable profession. And I am proud to be a product of Prince William County Schools.

[00:36:20] SJ High, now you are High. It doesn't matter, it's still the same product. My profession, we all have standards of quality.

[00:36:36] I'm a United States Marine. I hold that title very distinguishedly with the trust of the American people. Retired or not, standards of quality don't change. And the standards of your quality shouldn't change by the person. Shouldn't be discriminated against because I'm a combat vet with PTSD with a service dog.

[00:36:56] Dr. Lateef, you're the chairman of this school board. You are responsible for everything that happens and fails to happen. you've raised \$825,000 in the last year. I've had formal allegations placed since August 14th, 2023.

[00:37:13] That's 547 days, 85 weeks. And I haven't heard one thing. But I understand because I talked to your risk management director after a year and understand the incompetence level now. But I've also had

400 emails to congressmen, ombudsmen, associate professors, or excuse me, associate principals, to my own school board official, Jennifer Wall.

[00:37:41] We're gonna try and remove that wall, because when I ask for missing records for my own son, understand the definition of trauma. These allegations were failure to protect my son twice, inappropriate relationships, and fraud, waste, and abuse.

[00:38:01] I have your employees on my lawn on video. I have this man discriminating me on video. And all I wanna do is be heard. I wanna be heard to somebody who can tell me who's accountable and who's gonna be responsible.

[00:38:20] Because in leadership, you can delegate accountability, but you cannot delegate responsibility. And I am holding you accountable for my son. And for the fact for 547 days, I haven't heard a word. But with the help of my constituents in my community, I am hoping to remove some of you.

[00:38:39] and I am firing the first shot for a revolution of change. I am making all of my videos public and my emails public so the world knows just how distraught. This system is embarrassing. - Thank you, ma'am.

[00:38:55] Moving on, Jessica Scharr.

[00:39:10] - Hey, well, this is gonna be awkward, starting with thanking the school board for upholding the core values of the Prince William County Schools. Equity, inclusivity, innovation, integrity, resiliency, and well-being. I'd like the school board to know that these are the shared values of our community and we are happy that they are in place here in our schools.

[00:39:31] And we are so very lucky here in Prince William County. So thank you. This evening, I come bearing gifts for all of our school board members. I have printed out copies of a report called "The Cost of Conflict." The study was conducted by three universities and set out to answer the question, what is the cost of culture wars in public education?

[00:39:49] The researchers found that between 2023 and 2024, culture wars cost our schools \$3.2 billion. Imagine what public school districts across the country could do with \$3.2 billion. They could hire more counselors and teachers in schools, increase teacher pay, upgrade supplies and technology, provide more nutritious meals.

[00:40:11] This would give kids the opportunity to discover their passions and prepare for the future. Unfortunately, there are those who believe that they stand to gain political advantage by fostering culturally divisive conflict in our schools. America First Legal Foundation is a conservative, non-profit organization aligned with Donald Trump.

[00:40:29] They have filed more than a hundred legal complaints against school divisions and organizations across the country. On February 12th, the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights notified Prince William County Schools that launched an investigation into allegations made by America First Legal. America First has said that allowing schools to use the bathroom and locker rooms based on their gender identity rather than sex violates Title IX and Trump's executive order.

[00:40:52] Again, I am here to remind you that executive orders cannot override existing laws or the U.S. Constitution. 378-5 is supported by Title IX and Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. I've

reached out to the ACLU, as well as a professor of law, who's both kindly given me resources to further explain Title IX protections, and I will email that information to all of you later.

[00:41:15] We have a board member here tonight that has promoted America First Legal on her X account, stating this is a step in the right direction to ensure student safety and keep the focus on academic excellence in our schools. And this troubles me because I would like to keep the money in our schools.

[00:41:33] I will end by asking that all of our board members support spending our tax money on kids, teachers, and schools in Prince William County and not on politically driven divisive culture wars. Thank you very much. - Thank you, Brittany Robinson.

[00:42:01] - Good evening to members of the board. My name is Brittany Robinson and I am the mother of four children, three of whom are autistic. Their names are Ranger, Rivka, and Savannah, and they are all students who reside in Prince William County and attended Prince William County Public Schools.

[00:42:17] I'm here tonight with one message. Awareness without accountability is just performance. What my children have experienced in this district is an awareness, it's harm, it's neglect, it's injustice. Let me begin with Ranger, who just turned 11. He's twice exceptional, brilliant, sensitive, and full of potential, but Prince William County denied him special education for years.

[00:42:40] During that time, he was bullied so severely and internalized that he was a failure, he began having suicidal thoughts. Prince William County Public Schools did nothing, despite his doctor recommendations of homebound. Because he was unsupported, misunderstood, left behind, the suicidal ideation continued.

[00:42:57] Autistic children are up to 28 times more likely to experience suicidal ideation than their neurotypical peers. For twice exceptional kids like Ranger, the risk is even higher. The combination of giftedness and disability is not a protection, it's a risk factor when schools fail to support them.

[00:43:14] When we finally fought for help, the district placed him in a school that uses seclusion and restraint against our objections. You refused to fund the placement where he's now thriving, so we took it to federal court. Rivka is nine. A hearing officer ordered her to be placed at the Linder Academy, a school that understands gifted autistic kids like her.

[00:43:33] You refused. You left a traumatized nine-year-old girl in limbo because preserving your position mattered more than funding her support. Savannah, my youngest, in kindergarten just turned six. She was placed on homebound instruction, but you haven't sent her a teacher.

[00:43:50] She asked when her teacher is coming. I tell her that I am it right now. Her nervous system began to collapse under the weight of school. She started having nightmares. She began wetting herself and she was begging not to go to school. Prince William didn't respond with care. They responded with truancy threats, parental shame, blame, and at our IEP meetings this last month, you brought multiple attorneys to a meeting about a kindergartner.

[00:44:16] What kind of system needs a legal team to deny sports to a six-year-old child? Every dollar spent fighting could have gone towards a solution. Instead, it's going to lawyers, to resistance, to bureaucracy. So tonight, on Autism Awareness Day, I ask you, are you aware that failing to send a teacher is a denial of faith?

[00:44:35] The school refusal is a nervous system and distressed, not a parent problem. That threatening families with truancy is re-traumatizing and wrong. That spending taxpayer dollars to fight families instead of supporting children is a moral failure, because I am.

[00:44:51] I've lived it, my children have lived it. I am their voice, it is your responsibility to provide faith, and I will not stop speaking until this district stops treating autistic children like burdens. - Francisco Esparza.

[00:45:12] - Good evening, everyone. My name is Francisco Esparza. I live in Dale City, in Prince William County, and I am a proud representative of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. I have been a resident for over 20 years, and I attended Prince William County schools, including Hampton Middle School, Babble Middle School, and Garfield Senior High School.

[00:45:33] I also have family that have attended these schools and appreciate the school board making the bold investment you are to expand our schools for future generations while ensuring local workers who have attended and send their children to these schools are not forgotten.

[00:45:51] A project labor agreement is a great way to ensure local apprentices and journeyperson carpenters are building the community they live in, while also ensuring all wages, benefits, and timeline details are agreed to ahead of time.

[00:46:07] Thank you again for putting our students and local workers first. I and my union probably supports this PLA, thank you. Edwin Lorreiro, sorry.

[00:46:22] - Close enough. - Okay, it's Edwin Lorreiro. Oh, sorry. Well, thank you members of the board. I'm here on an issue with a bus stop.

[00:46:39] On February 26th of this year, they stopped dropping off my high school student and told him basically he had to start walking for about a half a mile. On February 27th, my wife wrote an email to the transportation department.

[00:47:00] Later on, I wrote, I actually, sorry, called Mrs. Jennifer Wall's office, and we got a response on March 3rd from Mr. Lyron Woodard on the 4th.

[00:47:17] We set up a meeting. He came out the next day on March 5th. We met with him and a Mr. Robert McCulley, who arrived a little late from the transportation department where we walked to the stop and back.

[00:47:34] Later on, during this time, I've been calling everyone that I could get their numbers. Mr. Danny Yountz, another lady.

[00:47:53] I'll read an email that I sent to them. Mr Woodard, this is dated March 24th. Mr Woodard, I spoke with Tracy Gamble this morning. On Wednesday, March 19th, a car ran over a mailbox on the two curbs between down and downs where my high schooler is supposed to walk in complete darkness.

[00:48:15] I have let people know of the danger of the cars coming down the street at 40 to 50 miles an hour. This is not the first mailbox your neighbor has had to replace because of people running off the road. This route is dangerous during daylight hours, much more when it's dark.

[00:48:32] The drivers can't see the kids and we don't wear fluorescent shirts. The kids actually wear dark hoodies and can't be seen. Earlier that day, I wrote to Mr. Woodard, I've been waiting for the conference

call with you and Ms. Heather Hanschen since the morning of March 17th, but still no call.

[00:48:57] I have forwarded pictures and videos of my children having to walk in complete darkness and still no response from you about this call or any other person in the transportation department. I spoke with Danny Yance. He accidentally picked up my phone call with a blocked number on March 7th.

[00:49:13] When I spoke to him, he told me that they had done a review of the bus stop during the month of July, 2024. When I asked about his assessment on March 4th, he had no idea what I was talking about until I told him that that was in the email where he had stated that he had been there the day before.

[00:49:33] The transportation has pre-made rejection letters set up to turn down parents' requests. - Thank you, Mr. - If I could, just another second. The issue I have is my daughter-- - Mr. Lurer, you can email us and come back.

[00:49:49] - I have, sir, I've emailed all of you, I've emailed everyone and no one seems to care. Well, my daughter doesn't have an arm, and now they're making her walk-- - Thank you. - 300 yards. - Thank you.

[00:50:05] Next three will be Ashley Ellingson, David Dooley, and Rena Stapp. Ashley Ellingson.

[00:50:24] - My name is Ashley Ellingson. My information's on file with the clerk. Good evening, school board members. I'm here to address the overcrowding at Covington Harper Elementary School. The school's enrollment has reached 948 students, surpassing its designed capacity of 796 students, and has necessitated the use of eight modular trailers to accommodate the excess student population.

[00:50:52] Projections indicate that enrollment may surge to 125% to 135% of the school's intended capacity, resulting in the need for approximately 12 to 14 trailers. This is absurd.

[00:51:08] While modular classrooms offer a temporary solution, they introduce significant safety and security challenges. First, there are emergency response challenges like evacuation and shelter in place limitations. Modular units present their own issues for evacuation procedures.

[00:51:26] During severe weather events, these structures may not offer adequate protection, posing risks to students and staff during events such as heavy storms and high winds. It is not possible to timely shelter or evacuate approximately 200 kids in modular units.

[00:51:44] Furthermore, transitioning large amounts of students to modular units increases the time they're exposed to the environmental conditions, such as high heat storms or freezing temps. It is not possible to limit exposure to the elements for 200 kids in modular units.

[00:52:01] Next, there are physical security risks, including surveillance gaps and access control issues. The placement of modular classrooms can create blind spots in existing security camera coverage, increasing vulnerability to unauthorized access.

[00:52:18] Additionally, unlike the main school building, which has multiple secure access points to classrooms, modular units only have one external access point to the students, making it challenging to monitor and restrict access effectively.

[00:52:33] It is not possible to prevent unauthorized individuals from engaging with 200 kids in modular units. Finally, the concern of traffic and transportation safety. The entrance and exit at Covington Harper and its limited parking are already pain points for many parents, staff, and bus drivers.

[00:52:53] An increase in the student body means more car riders, more buses, and more traffic, which will further bottleneck the school entrance as well as River Heritage Boulevard. This may also impede emergency response vehicles from effectively accessing the school and/or residents of the surrounding community in a timely manner.

[00:53:13] The risk to the safety and security of our kids is just one part of the overcrowding problem, but I only have three minutes. I urge the school board to take immediate action by initiating the rezoning of school boundary lines. This approach will effectively redistribute. Thank you.

[00:53:30] - David Dooley. - Good evening.

[00:53:45] My name is David Dooley Jr. and my address is on file. I'm a gay, white, married man to a wonderful, sometimes crazy husband of almost 17 years. I am also a proud father who raised my two kids right here in Prince William County, as well as in North Carolina, Germany, and Arizona.

[00:54:04] Yeah, I'm an RV guy. Both of my children graduated from Hilton High School and have grown into wonderful adults. I am also an uncle, a brother, a veteran, an army sergeant, a friend, a mentor, a human being, and last, but certainly not least, a proud grandfather to an almost three-year-old girl.

[00:54:26] I'm here tonight to ask the Prince William County School Board and the superintendent of schools to continue supporting sexual orientation and gender identity as protected categories both our students and staff why is this important if you're a parent do you remember the first time you laid eyes on your child the feel of holding their head tiny hands cradling them feeling that overwhelming joy what about those of you who are happily married do you remember the mix of fear and joy the first time you stood before others and declared your love the joy of holding your

[00:55:04] partner's hand exchanging rings and sharing a kiss in front of your loved ones how about the first time you finished a book drove a car hung out with friends celebrated a birthday or got a promotion do you remember that joy let me share a story this past weekend equality prince william of which i am the president along with others in our community hosted a transgender day of visibility potluck we couldn't publicize a location due to security concerns fearing hate potential violence

[00:55:40] and disruption from those who would seek to harm people silly simply wanting to celebrate joy like the examples i have shared and yet despite that fear we experienced that joy we had love laughter karaoke games and a feeling of belonging we shared resources told stories and welcomed each other like family the warmth we felt chased away the darkness and it was a beautiful thing unfortunately the current federal administration seems determined to stop people from celebrating

[00:56:15] anything that doesn't meet their approval but what we must remember to forget our history is to repeat it we should celebrate black history women's history the contributions of americ arab and asian americans pacific islanders pride hispanic heritage native american heritage and all the other monthly observances we are stronger when we embrace each other's histories

[00:56:44] and experiences thank you thank you rena stap hi i'm rena stap and my address is on file with the clerk um first off i am wearing blue for autism awareness day the school i work at was doing that to help bring appreciation and awareness to the students that are in the autism room.

[00:57:14] And I have many, I have family members who are, my brother's autistic. I have friends and neighbors who themselves and their children are autistic. And I have worked in the autism and SPED

classrooms. And I see how much time the special education needs for their teaching supplies, for their hands-on capabilities and the different methods they use with these students to learn and thrive.

[00:57:41] And I did look at the budget, and I did see how there was an increase in teachers for the special education department. And I did want to say thank you for that. As someone who was personally impacted by some of these classrooms and events, and just getting another set of hands in a classroom can make a huge difference with some of these kids who just need a little bit more time and care.

[00:58:05] So thank you for that. I did read through the monthly release of all the things going on in the county. I also want to say I appreciate all the inclusive and diverse programs that Prince William County has for the students. I attended the Heritage Night at my student school, and it was great to see the kids that I work with just so excited to share their foods and their history and their background.

[00:58:29] They're coming up to me, and they're like, Mrs. Stapp, come try this. And I was like, oh my gosh, you speak Bulgarian. So we just like made connections and just spoke about different things. And that's one of the things I love about the school system here is just, there are so many opportunities for the kids to express themselves.

[00:58:45] And in reading through what you all have visited this past month, I love the fact that you were all in taking turns and viewing each other's district stuff 'cause the sporting events, the musicals, the robotics competitions are not always just where you are. Woodbridge had the robotics competition and there were musicals all over the place.

[00:59:04] and I appreciate being in a county where the school board is involved and isn't just there in the background. Like, seeing you all at the schools is great and exciting for us and the kids. And in being so involved, my ask is that you reach out to the VHSL to ask that they reverse their ban on trans female athletes and return to the 24-25 bylaws, which does not discriminate against someone by their sexual orientation.

[00:59:32] And I think coming from such a large county in Virginia, especially with all those winning students that you appreciated earlier today, so many made it to states and won, I think it would be a big impact if it came from this county, being that we're just so winning, right?

[00:59:48] PWCS, proud baby. Thank you. - Thank you. That concludes citizen comment time. Up next is student representative time. Joining us tonight is Ala Rashid, our senior from Unity Reed High School. Ms. Rashid, the floor is yours. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[01:00:03] - Good evening to the Prince William County School Board, community, and Dr. McDade. I'm happy to be back in the day as you're presenting my peers again. To start off my remarks, I want to just recap and highlight two workshops the division held that I was able to participate in. Firstly, on March 19th, Risk Management held a workshop working with the Sandy Hook Promise Team for Save Clubs Countywide.

[01:00:23] At this workshop, students were able to collaborate on issues within their respective schools, as well as discuss how important it is to keep our local community safe, whether it is through social awareness in unity or direct safety methods. There were over 18 schools in attendance with each middle and high school county-wide bringing club members.

[01:00:42] A few of schools also had been able to present and share guidance on initiatives their club has taken with an example being my school, Union Reede. At Union Reede, we discussed our volunteer opportunities we have for students within the community and how weekly we go to local elementary schools such as Innovation Elementary School and assist in things spanning from dismissal to Title I events.

[01:01:04] This was shared with other clubs, county-wide, with many stating how useful they saw the initiatives to be. Workshops like this allow students to bring together their accomplishments in promoting safety and unity in a beneficial way for people to collaborate county-wide.

[01:01:19] The other workshop the division held was our third student leadership workshop of the year. This one, however, had been a combination between middle and high school student voice committees to truly embrace working together on a county-wide level. Two board members, Mr. Blake and Mr. Jesse, were also in attendance as well as Dr. McDade.

[01:01:37] We thank you all for your continued support of Student Voice. At the workshop, each Student Voice Committee presented what they had accomplished or an issue they wished to resolve in the future. This was done through round table presentations with each group having six to 10 guests, allowing for students to collaborate with other students and adults to share ideas and receive feedback.

[01:01:57] This opportunity was something each student involved enjoyed with many saying how it was a great way to collaborate on things and see how others are also influenced with the same issues countywide. Ms. Viola and her department work to plan the event and provide the opportunities needed for student leadership to grow. Now, looking into the future of the school year and the upcoming year, some students feel like policies vary widely between schools.

[01:02:18] For example, one policy that seems to be very different between schools is flex periods. Some schools do not enforce the no new work policy, leaving some students to not have the opportunity to properly complete their work when in school. On behalf of the students I represent, we'd like to see more consistency in how flex periods are utilized.

[01:02:36] May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. This is something many students believe should be emphasized because of its role in both her academic and personal lives. The importance of discussing mental health, particularly in May, must be highlighted and clearly communicated to students countywide and families.

[01:02:52] The division has already done so through its implementation of Hazel Health, the service that students do enjoy and tend to use. However, providing more in-school opportunities, decreasing stigmas, and being open regarding the idea of mental health is something that would be beneficial for students countywide. That will be all for my remarks this evening.

[01:03:09] Thank you so much, and I hope everyone has an amazing evening. - Thank you, Ms. Rashid. Up next, superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. I want to spend my superintendent's time sharing some information about so many different events that are happening throughout the county as we enter into the month of April.

[01:03:30] I would like to invite our community members to a few upcoming events highlighting the amazing talents of our students and teachers. The PWCS All-County Middle School Arts Festival will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. this Saturday, April 5th, here at the Kelly Leadership Center.

[01:03:48] The All-County High School Arts Festival will be held also from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 26th, also here at the Kelly Leadership Center. Our annual PWCS All-County Arts Festival celebrate our vibrant and creative visual arts programs.

[01:04:07] The festivals highlight the artistic achievements of our exceptional artists with a diverse array of exhibits including paintings, sculptures, digital art, mixed media, and more. Artwork is selected by each individual visual arts teacher through a formal process culminating with a juried process at the arts festival.

[01:04:27] The elementary students shared their work last month and hundreds of visitors were very impressed with the talent and creativity that was on full display throughout our building. As we begin the month of April, I want to take a moment to also recognize a few important observances and reminders happening across our school division.

[01:04:46] First, April is Autism Awareness Month, a time to celebrate neurodiversity and reaffirm our commitment to inclusive practices that support all students in reaching their full potential. Let us continue working together to create learning environments where every child feels seen, supported, and valued.

[01:05:04] April is also the month of the military child. We are proud to serve many military-connected students and families in Prince William County Schools, and we honor their strength, resilience, and sacrifice. We look forward to honoring our military-connected students and families at our April 23rd school board meeting, where we will celebrate all of our purple star schools in PWCS.

[01:05:29] Also coming up this month is National Library Week, April 7th through the 13th. And I wanna encourage our students and families to take some time to visit your local library, whether in your school or in your community. Libraries are not only places for books, but for exploration, imagination, and lifelong learning.

[01:05:50] And as we look ahead, I do wanna remind all families, which I probably don't need to remind you of this, spring break is April 14th through April 18th with a teacher workday on April 21st. I hope that you each will take some time to rest, recharge and spend quality time with your loved ones.

[01:06:08] When we return, we will be entering into testing season. And I know how important it is that we all come back focused and refreshed. Thank you for everything that you all continue to do to support our students and our schools in Prince William County Schools. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report.

[01:06:24] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Next up is the revision of policy 132, regular, special, and closed meetings. We are now, this is Board Matter 1601. I need a motion. Vice Chair Black.

[01:06:41] - I move that the, 1601. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the proposed revisions of dates to policy 132, regular, special, and closed meetings.

[01:06:57] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Okay, at this point we'll have a discussion. there's amendments, we'll accept amendments at this time to vote on them. Ms. Trudenik. Mr. Chairman, I move to amend section XA of the policy to include provisions that first requires board members to reserve their questions to the end of the presentation and second limits board members to

speaking twice on a pending item of business for no more than three minutes each time and third grants the chair discretion to extend the time if warranted.

[01:07:33] - Do you have a second on Mr. Dennyk's motion? - I second. - Mr. Wilkes seconds. Discussion on this motion? Mr. Dennyk. - Mr. Lateef, I have noticed that we as a board don't adhere to the three minutes when it comes to questioning and discussion during timeframes and we do hold the general public to that three minutes.

[01:07:59] I also think that this would help with the fact that we do receive the same presentations are being shown tonight we already receive those in a one hour plus meeting where we are able to ask any questions um we want to ask for as long as we want to ask and staff will sit there with us give up their time their resources they take the time out we can email them with anything out of respect for the staff that are here every night out of respect for the public

[01:08:32] out of respect for each other I think limiting our time to three minutes is not only respectful but needed and I think that it would be great if my colleagues would support that I think there's no reason that we can't get what we need said in six minutes of time after we have that much time thank you any other discussion on this question Ms. Williams is it three three minutes per the way - The way you have it.

[01:09:04] So just for clarification, Mr. Denik, I think you've asked for three minutes per round and it's two rounds for each member. - No more than three minutes each time. And third grants the chair discretion to extend the time if warranted. So if it was-- - Two rounds at two. - Two rounds, but if it was a hot topic, it gives you the discretion as well.

[01:09:23] - Mr. Wilk. - I support this with the condition, of course, that she added that the chair have the discretion to extend the discussion depending on the topic. - Ms. Zargarpur.

[01:09:40] - Yeah, my question is, is it three minutes of us asking and then the answer period can be whatever? - Would you like to clarify, Ms. Trudenik, is the three minutes inclusive of the answer from staff? - I asked them to model it after the Board of County Supervisors and that is included in the timeframe of the question and the answer.

[01:10:03] Again, we do get to ask questions prior, so that's part of why. - Thank you for the clarification. Okay, let's keep it short. in the spirit of this even discussion, Ms. Williams. - Yes, well, I'm aware that the BOCS has five minutes per turn, but I won't be supporting this because this is really the only opportunity the public has to see us be able to ask questions.

[01:10:26] I do believe that the prep that we have ahead of time is for our knowledge and understanding, being that we are the responsible representatives for our community. But one of the things that I will say to this is when I first got on the board, I sometimes would get my first year a little irritated because I was, oh, our board members are up here asking questions for so long and how come they don't know the material?

[01:10:48] And I was reminded by my dad who said, you know, you get up there as a representative and you have access to this information, you have this knowledge base, but the public doesn't. And it's your job to be able to ask questions and have the information disseminated in a way that's digestible to them because this is the only opportunity that you ever have to do this.

[01:11:09] So while you may be a little irritated 'cause you have a sense of knowledge, the purpose of you sitting there is to educate your constituents and to bring up questions. And I'm not gonna support this because A, it's less time than even the Board of County Supervisors has because they have five minutes.

[01:11:26] But B, I would hope that we would, as board members, take that into consideration. And some things do require longer times than others. And we should be able to have the right to express ourselves because outside of this meeting, there really isn't the opportunity to do so.

[01:11:42] So thank you. - Thank you. Anybody else? Ms. Wall. - I feel like the provision to allow the chair to extend time if warranted gives too much power to the chair when each board member has a responsibility, an important responsibility to fully thresh out the issues and express their thoughts and ask questions, which I feel like three minutes just absolutely not adequate enough at times.

[01:12:09] Sometimes it's plenty of time, but at times, sometimes it's not. I remember during COVID, we had long discussions and it was really important that we hear from each member of the board, their thoughts, their concerns. And also when we talked about collective bargaining, that was really important.

[01:12:28] And when we discussed data, student progress reports and data and all of those things, those discussions can be quite long, but frankly, they're really important. The two by two meetings are excellent, but they are not the meeting. People cannot hear, the public can't hear what I ask.

[01:12:46] They can't see if I've done any work on it or prepared for those meetings. But the meeting that happens is the meeting that happens here. This is where the work is done and where I learn what my other colleagues think, not just the person that I'm paired with. So in general, I'm not a fan of limiting the speech of elected representatives.

[01:13:08] And I think if we do have a problem with long-winded members or grandstanding or anything like that. There are internal controls where we can check ourselves and have those conversations and correct our behavior without having to have a hard and fast limit that is subject only to the decision of the chair.

[01:13:26] So I think in the matter of, in the issue of preserving transparency for the public with our deliberations and our questions and our thought processes, that I think it's important that we have not hard and fast rules for our limits on our time.

[01:13:43] - Mr. Jesse. I would say one thing on the way the Board of Supervisors does it and so forth, I do not, if we are going to have a three-minute rule, I think it should be extended if the response from the question is taking up part of the three minutes.

[01:14:07] So that I don't like. The other thing is I think most of you agree I'm probably the least talkative one on the but I feel that it's important to be able to respond and talk even if it's your third time, if necessary, or if you have a disagreement with somebody that stated something that you didn't hear.

[01:14:34] On the two and two, we only hear yourself and the other person, so we don't have how the other people feel about it until we come into this meeting. So I'm not in favor of this, thank you.

[01:14:50] I just wanted to clarify I am not saying that we can't ask questions or that we cannot I don't believe it's my job to educate the public I do think having awareness and transparency is great and I think that that can be done within the six minutes that we have talking about what what we've talked about in

the two by twos again it's a lengthy discussion they give a great presentation again for us so being able to say the highlights of the presentation that are important to

[01:15:26] you or ask a question that you asked in the two by two which I've done for the public so that they can hear the question that I asked in the two by two here as well with an answer and I do understand that my colleagues don't want the three minutes to include the answer portion I don't know how to go about making that not part of it so that's why I went through it this way but I appreciate everybody's dialogue on this and thank you for letting me bring this forward.

[01:15:53] - Mr. Denik, I appreciate the amendment. So my comments on this, I won't be supporting it. And while I appreciate having more power, because you know, that's great as a chairman, I'm always appreciative of more power. What I would say is that for me, I have been very cautious to restrict free speech of certainly of our elected representatives and of our community members on topics.

[01:16:21] and Ms. Wall brought up there, the pandemic discussions went on very long. And if I was, you know, to have that power, I certainly see any chairman, not just me, could abuse that power in a way that he would restrict discussion on topics that were he was against while lifting the restriction on topics that he was for, or she was for either way, as a chair.

[01:16:46] So I feel like this, the discretion that the chair has absolutely prone to abuse and and certainly if you're in the minority I think it could certainly be even more abused against the minority and so I think at this time what I would say is that I appreciate your desire to have efficiency in our meetings I do while I don't like the long meetings as well I think we have a responsibility the public to flesh out in discussions whether inefficient or efficient we are as each of us may or may not be I think

[01:17:22] it's critical that the public get to hear our questions out in the public as transparently as possible and and I continue to resist any restrictions on free speech and so I won't be supporting amendment though well-meaning as it is I'll do Mr. Miss Williams and then do you have anything else well yeah yeah that'll be later that's the second whole different we have to vote on this one Mr. Jesse I think again it's very important that at opportunities when you hear some of the

[01:17:58] other board comments that you have a chance to respond to which is exactly what you just did uh you responded back to the comments from the other board members that you felt different so I think it's important for us to have that ability to do so and not be limited I just a point of clarification I thought if you are directly like if in someone is directing something at you the other person has the right to respond in that with I guess is that part of that dream can I ask for

[01:18:37] a point of clarification um because this has been a problem for me personally up here um when I speak here I believe that we're supposed to address you as the chair or speak to the audience we're not supposed to speak to each other so whether one of my colleagues addresses me directly or not my job is to not turn the microphone on and address them back directly yes I can have free speech and yes I can make a comment but again my comment was under 30 seconds and I did not address this is a discussion that we were having so if I broke Robert's rules and what I just did

[01:19:11] my apologies part of me bringing this forward was also eliminating that nonsense point taken okay at this point um please vote on the amendment so if you're voting yes you're voting to support Mr. Denick's amendment to policy 132.

[01:19:33] If you're voting no, you're opposing it.

[01:19:49] - Vote is two yes, six no, motion failed. - Moving on, any other amendments to policy 132? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, I just wanted to offer a friendly amendment. - Make the motion, yeah. - Yes, I just wanted to offer a friendly amendment to the current motion.

[01:20:05] Under board matters, excuse me, under board time, just to extend the board time from three minutes to four minutes. Obviously we do not have to use the time if necessary, but that's what I'd like to do. So the motion off is to extend board members time from three minutes to four minutes.

[01:20:23] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Blake seconds, as well as Mr. Jesse. They tied on the second. Any discussion on this? - Mr. Wilk. - Aye, this one was what I kind of foresaw as a great way of making sure time was allocated to the board member.

[01:20:46] So if we would have, you know, adopted that amendment that Ms. Tregenick made, I will still support this 'cause I was under the, you know, I was hoping this one would pass, but I still believe that extending the board matters from three to four would be appropriate.

[01:21:02] I thought at one point it was five and that was going to be, I'm happy that we kind of worked from five to four. So I will support this Ms. Williams. - Any other, Ms. Tregenick.

[01:21:18] - Can I just, can I just get clarification because I think I was a little confused. Are we just amending this to add one more minute is all we're doing, same motion, amending for one more minute. - This is, what the amendment is, what's the section on this, Wade?

[01:21:37] - This is section 13 of policy 132. - Did you write it up? - No. - Okay. - What's the section? - Section 13 of policy 132. - Okay, the motion is to change the time allotted for each board member's board time from three minutes to four minutes.

[01:21:55] - Okay. - So this is different than the motion that I made. - Correctly different. - Yeah, it's different. - Yeah. - Yeah, it's a totally different motion. - This is for board matters at the end of the meeting. - At the end of the meeting. So we're adding an extra minute to the time where we already have three minutes at the end. - That is correct. That is a clarification, yes ma'am. - And can I also get clarification?

[01:22:11] There's eight board members? - Yes ma'am. - And so if we add an extra minute of time each. - That's eight minutes. - That's an extra eight minutes that we're gonna go on and on. Okay. And we don't have enough time in the middle of the meeting to already get our point across if it's unlimited, because my motion failed, our time is unlimited in the middle of the meeting, and now we're proposing to add an extra minute for us to hear ourselves speak at the end of the meeting.

[01:22:36] I just wanted to clarify that. - Correct, your clarification is correct. Ms. Williamson. - Thank you, just to give a little background, several years ago when I started, there was unlimited board matters time. It was then restricted to five minutes and then we brought it down to three.

[01:22:51] I'm asking for the extension of an additional minute because it is the only time we are allowed to speak on any topic that we would like to speak on. During a meeting, we are restricted to conversations on the topic at hand, whatever the agenda item is.

[01:23:07] As it is now, most of us attend a great deal of amount of events, whether it is a sporting event or a musical event or whatever have you. If you were to go through that list, several of us sometimes never even get to any other important matters that we would like to announce to our constituents because we are doing our events.

[01:23:26] That is the only time, as a board member, we have unrestricted messaging in our official capacity. So, thank you. - Yep, please vote. Please vote.

[01:23:58] - The vote is seven yes, one no. Chedenek, motion passed. - Okay, now we'll move to the full vote of the policy 132 with the new amendments. Does anyone have any discussion on the rest of the policy that wasn't answered in the last couple weeks on these discussions?

[01:24:13] Okay, please vote.

[01:24:39] seven yes, one no, Tridentic, motion passed. - Next on the agenda, we have three policy revisions up for first reading. 1602, revision of policy 133, school board hearing procedure, first reading. 1603, revision policy 138, minutes and records of school board meetings.

[01:24:56] First reading is 1604, revision policy 180, office of ombudsman, first reading. Council, Mr. Anderson, do you have any comments on this? This is on for first reading. - Yes, Mr. Chairman, very quickly, I'll point out that as to policy 133, the change here, the substance of change is to add a provision in accordance with video regulations that provides that in a dismissal hearing, the employer shall bear his or own expenses and the board is responsible for the expenses of the division superintendent.

[01:25:27] and this is also part of the five-year review, and the board's ongoing efforts to update and conform its 100 series policies to legal changes. In section policy 138, the next topic is simply to make sure that our policy is in compliance with Virginia code changes with respect to electronic attendance at meetings.

[01:25:54] And then policy 180, the substantive change there is to allow the chair with the consent of the vice chair to designate another board member to meet regularly with the ombudsman or the ombuds, sorry, as reflected in current practice. And so our current policy limits that supervision.

[01:26:14] As you know, the ombuds is one of the four direct employees by the board. and so part of the supervisory duties would be to allow the chair with the vice chair's consent to designate another board member to meet with the ombuds.

[01:26:33] Again, these are just on for action tonight. - Thank you. If you have any questions, concerns, please-- - I'm sorry, for information. - If you have any questions or concerns, please contact division counsel or the superintendent. Well, actually just division counsel or the clerk, and then we'll bring this back up for vote at the next meeting.

[01:26:50] Next up, 1605 pilot project labor agreement resolution. 1605, motion is in order. Vice Chair, Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve a resolution directing the superintendent to implement a pilot project labor agreement requirement for any public works contract awarded for construction of the 14th High School.

[01:27:16] - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? We'll start with Ms. Zargarpur and then we'll go to Ms. Williams. So I'm looking in this resolution, it does say that we, the school board, are authorizing the superintendent to develop the procurement regulations, contract bid specifications, or other bid documents.

[01:27:40] I just, it lists things inside this for the, if the public is interested. I trust your judgment, is it, yeah? Yeah, it's, I'm just saying, in here it says, now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County

School Board, as authorized, it says directs the superintendent of schools to develop procurement regulations.

[01:28:03] So it's not the board, it's the division, correct? - But I would like for Wade to be really clear about that because I would, as a superintendent, would not be the person-- - It would be division. - No, so we need to have Wade.

[01:28:19] Could you please bring some clarity to that?

[01:28:40] - Is the question, Ms. Zargapur, that whether the board is directing this? - It says in the thing, it says, hereby directs the superintendent of schools to develop procurement regulations. Who's developing it is all I'm asking. - Oh, sorry, it would be the superintendent. - So, okay, I just wanna be clear.

[01:28:56] We're saying the regulations for procurement is PWCS, but I want the board to be clear, based on what I heard Ms. Zargapur say, this is not, unlike the CBA, this is not the superintendent negotiating an agreement.

[01:29:12] So I wanna be clear that the board understands that that is not the role of the superintendent in the project labor agreement. - Correct, go ahead, wait. So the direction here would be for the superintendent to adapt regulations on a pilot basis for the construction of the one high school that would allow for project labor agreements because there are multiple ways in which those could be done.

[01:29:37] That would be up to the discretion of the superintendent how that is implemented. - Right. - Thank you. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, part of my concern was that how it's written in the resolution 'cause resolutions and motions, words matter.

[01:29:54] Is there an option to have it read the superintendent's schools or her designated staff? Because the superintendent is not in our procurement department. And I think it's very important that the correct people be involved in this. And I don't want the wording of the resolution to tie our hands, 'cause that does make a difference.

[01:30:13] - So this is, we've left this very open-ended in the fact that the superintendent can determine how we're gonna move forward with the project labor agreement. And in the regulation, she can outline exactly what the process would be. Is that correct, Mr. Anderson? That's correct. So she would authorize whoever in the regulations?

[01:30:32] Correct. It's not that the superintendent herself has to personally make a regulation. Right, but that's how the resolution reads. And so that's why I'm concerned, because, you know, I'm a stickler about words. And I think it is important that we have that in there.

[01:30:48] I'll be honest, Ms. Williams, that's not how we read it. Yeah, I don't read it that way. That was not the intent. But is it possible? I mean, would it be possible to have a friendly change to that just to-- - If there's a motion to do so, then the board would need to adopt that motion.

[01:31:04] - Okay, well, I would like to make a friendly motion to change the language in that, to have it read the superintendent of schools or her designated, or whom she designates. - Or her designees? - Or her designees, yes. - Okay. - Does anyone have any objection to the typo on that?

[01:31:22] - Yeah. - Can I, is there, can we remove her name and do something else? Is that possible? I just feel like we're still tying her hands a bit. Like we're still making it have to be her decision when this is not something she brought forth.

[01:31:39] - Well, regulations are the purview of the superintendent. - Yes. - So policies are the board's policies and the regulations are the superintendent's regulations implementing those policies. - That's right. I mean, the board is directing the superintendent to create regulations to move forward with the project labor agreements.

[01:31:55] And I'll just point out, Mr. Chairman, that it could be that there are multiple regulations that this would be impacted depending on how it's implemented. And those fall under the purview of perhaps anybody from the COO to the CFO because they could be budgetary, they could be financial, they could be operational.

[01:32:15] Can I ask one more question? Yeah. If we go through with this, does that mean we have to build the 14th high school? Does this lock us into making it that it is so? no nothing in this motion uh affects in any way other than directing that the procurement process used for the 14th high school uh should there be one uh that it include a pilot project on project labor agreements okay thank you miss wall i'm going to the question at hand which

[01:32:53] is the language in here my understanding is we have other language that it's it's implied that when the board is directing the superintendent of schools to do something that it wouldn't necessarily be her it would be under her direction staff under her direction i mean i don't know if we necessarily need to amend it because i think it's implied that it would be anybody under the superintendent but just it's neither here nor there i think it could be fine how it's written but if we wanted to add the language it wouldn't hurt i believe the motion's still out there on whether or not on amending the language to the superintendent of schools and her designees

[01:33:28] anyone have an objection to changing that in the in the language no if you vote it's unanimous then Does anyone object to changing the language to the way Mr. Anderson read it? Oh, I understand that.

[01:33:44] You can vote on that at the end. - So point of order, we're just considering the amendment at this point? - Right, at this point we're considering the amendment on the wording. - Can we vote on the, I would suggest voting on the amendment with the new language. - Please vote on the amendment that submits it to the designee.

[01:34:00] All right, we got a second for Mr. Yep, please vote. - This is on the amendment. - On the amendment.

[01:34:16] - Yes. - Vote a seven yes, one no, Trudinic. Motion passed. - Okay, discussion on the full motion. Any further discussion on the motion? Ms. Williams.

[01:34:33] - Thank you. I appreciate the fact that this is a pilot so that we have the opportunity to sort of parse this through because it would be a first for many of us. My only concern is typically with PLAs, there becomes an issue with having small local contractors being able to bid and participate in an agreement like this as well as retaining autonomy for ourself as a division.

[01:35:02] I feel confident that there's alternate methods to get this done so that we can retain our autonomy. But my concern is how do we ensure in this that our smaller local contractors are not excluded from bidding?

[01:35:22] And that is my main concern. So I'm wondering if in executing this, There could be maybe a letter from a general contractor, we could ask, you know, I don't know the ins and outs to say yes, we can

or can't. But I just wanna make sure that in doing this, that we're not excluding any small companies that are local and that they're able to also participate.

[01:35:42] Do we have any knowledge or understanding on that? - Mr. Jesse. - My understanding is that it does not restrict who can bid on the contract. It just restrict that whoever does bid has to follow the rules that are laid out.

[01:36:03] - Yeah, that is correct. Ms. Wall. - I have some comments, but first I have a question. Are project labor agreements something we already do in Virginia? Or is this one of those recent laws that was passed and now we have the ability to do it?

[01:36:22] And if it is something that has been allowed for a while, how common is it in Virginia and have we ever done it? - I can answer the question as to the law changed several years ago allowing project labor agreements by public bodies including school boards that was in 2021 i believe and as to how common i'm not sure i can answer that i do i'm aware that fairfax perhaps the county did one it was not a school facility but there was so i think it's fair to

[01:36:55] say they're not common but again and it's also new so so do we know it sounds like we don't know if any school divisions have actually done this um my understanding is no school division in the state has done it yet mr wilk oh yeah yeah no go miss no no no miss wall okay mr wilk okay enough uh so i'm not gonna hold i timed this for three minutes but now that that's done uh it's time to

[01:37:33] pontificate a little bit uh for those who don't know um like dr latif i'm from the midwest i grew up in the blue collar state of michigan uh there is no secret about my love and affinity excuse me allergy season my love and affinity for the working class and our laborers my dad was a uaw member for 39 years at ford motor company both my grandfathers were uaw members at ford motor company and growing up in a state like michigan you have the experience where it wouldn't

[01:38:06] be uncommon for my friends and i to have almost games in a sense in the 80s and 90s about representing where your father worked whether it was ford gm or chrysler um that was the big three that was the buy american slogan i remember my dad's next door neighbor our neighbor came over and asked my dad if it was okay if he was going to buy a toyota that that was not uncommon in these blue-collar states. I'm not going to go on about what has happened since then but I'm highlighting my labor blood. When I was 16 I joined the food

[01:38:43] carriers associate the food carrier workers as a grocer. I have been a part of a union ever since and so for me I look at tonight as simply fighting for our working class and our communities in Prince William County. That's to me what I see this. This is the real difference, making sure that we are implementing a PLA for our 14th high school, because what we are doing is ensuring good jobs, fair wages, and real opportunities for our local workers. Our families, I think we've talked about this with the economy, are struggling

[01:39:22] to get ahead. We heard about this over and over again, about there's families, husband, wives, what have you, who can't afford their first homes anymore. They can't. And we heard all during the election like, oh my God, get my son out of my basement. He can't afford a house. And somehow that was just going to miraculously change, you know, based off of the outcome of the election.

[01:39:44] Well, nothing's going to change unless we actually implement policies that help our workforce in our community. You know, we have people traveling and spending hours commuting to the District of

Columbia or Maryland just to make ends meet. What do we do for like a person who's on a non-union job who's fighting for the wages she's owed? But we can help these people because by guaranteeing this PLAs ensure workers receive fair wages, benefits, and protections they deserve. They promote local training, keyword local, so parents in our community, people we see at the grocery

[01:40:23] store at the soccer fields on the weekend which is why my allergies are bad they can work close to home putting food on the table and still making it home for their kids events like soccer or even dinner these agreements create real apprenticeship opportunities giving our students a direct path to high paying careers without college debt we talk over and over again i know we're releasing a new strategic plan sooner it's in development we have highlighted our desire to expand career

[01:40:55] tech pathways this aligns with that and let's talk about something even more urgent with this let's talk about health care no parent should have to choose between paying rent and affording medication for their sick child a pla ensures that workers have health care so no family faces that impossible decision plas are also mean safer work sites no workers should have to fear that they won't come home because safety shortcuts were taken to cut cost these agreements create can

[01:41:31] create better conditions proper training and a key word again the workforce that would know their rights that would have a livable wage that would have their health care we are attracting all these students that we're putting out through our career pathway programs whether it be the electrical program the fire program um the plumbing program the carpentry program we're putting these kids in the market right now and now we're saying to them hey we want to hire you or we want to make sure

[01:42:04] that the people building our next high school or maybe even further down the road with our pre-k expansion program or other schools that we're building you know we are investing in our people it's about keeping jobs local giving families a fair shot and making sure our tax dollars support our community that's how i view this this is fighting for the working class this is where i think things were missed this last election cycle we need to be there for the workers for the people

[01:42:37] who are struggling every day because the wages aren't keeping up with inflation because they cannot afford a home they're still losing all their money dumping money into an apartment rent so i urge my colleagues to please support this resolution thank you um let me give others a chance you spoke already uh anyone else down there who hasn't spoken mr denik um so i'm a i'm a big fan of blue collar workers if i could think of the country song i would sing it right

[01:43:12] now but that would be a little much it might go in over the three minute time limit so i am going back to god's country yes um i do i you know i do appreciate mr wilk and his passion um i i do want to be clear that my vote does not dictate that i do not care for blue collar workers um yeah i could go into more detail on that but i won't um i i also think that career technical education does not have to equal a union i think we we have plenty of of kiddos that come out of our school system that

[01:43:46] go and work for small businesses and things that are not involved in a union i did because i needed to know for myself i did just use the google and ask what percentage of blue collar workers are part of a union in 2024 11.1 percent of all wage and salary workers in the united states were union members 11.1% so I just wanted to say that. Ms. Williams. Thank you Mr. Chairman. So I'm going to support this because I believe in trying something new. I am doing so cautiously because it's always

[01:44:23] a gamble when you're the first out the gate. I will say that when it comes to having a livable wage that's what we did with the prevailing wage so that I understand that that can be included in a PLA I do want to be cautious and kind of reframe a little bit of what my fellow board member was saying because we are not a tax generating or a revenue generating entity so the PLA has to assure that we work within the confines of the amount of money that is already allotted for this project and I would like for the board to also have updates on this because it's a learning

[01:45:03] experience not only for us as a board but for the community at large my understanding is that or the main reason why I'm supporting this is because it gives an opportunity as my fellow board member said for our students who are coming out of the trades which number one fan of consistently the opportunity to work locally and I will say again my concern too is ensuring that the RFP or the PLA however it's designed because we this is a learning experience for us all allows for you know our local companies who are smaller to be able to

[01:45:42] participate and I would like updates on anything that concerns staffing because our current society now we've had construction projects in the past that almost were over went over time and we're not able to be completed because there was not enough people to complete the job so I just would like some assurances as we go down this process which I think is a worthwhile one for us to do to keep us informed because again this is a learning experience and I want to make sure that if this is truly for our apprentices truly for our students truly for our union labor our union laborers that everything is done for

[01:46:18] that benefit and that if there are things that we need to modify next time or whatever the case may be that we are also educated on this process because it is important we do need to support our trades we do need to support the people who are building and and providing these environments and upkeeping these environments for ourselves and for our students and we do have a commitment for all of the apprentices and internships that we support here in the county our commitment to those students and our commitment to the workforce and as I see it I think this this could be a win-win for all of us but it is also an educational opportunity and I would like for us to to really be informed as this

[01:46:57] process goes along and i would also like some assurances or some reassurances if it comes to the point that we have to cancel or something is does occur with the 14th high school that that is also built in as well so thank you mr jargopar okay um i'm assuming i'm the only union member of anything on this board i'm actually in two unions um and uh because my unions are in education I'm kind of bound by slightly different rules, but I decided to use the Google, as my colleague

[01:47:35] said, and I was looking up some information about project labor agreements. So I'm assuming that the potential for a strike could happen. You can include in a PLA clauses which ensure that their project is continuous so that there are no costly delays.

[01:47:53] It will kind of keep things standardized so that there's uniformity and efficiency across all the contractors who are working on the project and it can facilitate coordination between those different trades it gives you a highly skilled not just skilled workforce but a highly skilled workforce which I am concerned about because I do want to make sure that any of our buildings whether they are brand new or they are renovations are done really well and the craftsmanship the the accuracy and all of the you know electrical and everything because we

[01:48:29] know what happens when something isn't done right it has to be redone which is going to cost us time and money again they can obviously we've talked about this support apprentice programs we have

recent graduates who can benefit from this they also can establish safety standards and training requirements to make sure that our people are protected so I will be supporting this I just want to make sure that this Union girl yeah yeah yeah you got something I want to

[01:48:58] hear it mr okay mr mr jesse sometimes makes us wonder if we should have voted the other way uh but listen folks yeah and besides all the side talking going on listen with this agreement we

[01:49:33] talked about only 30 or whatever it was our union members everyone benefits just like in this system here you do not have to be a member of the union in prince william county to receive the benefits that the union provided and that's the same thing here everyone benefits when there's a separate wage people can't be paid under the table less amount and so forth so that's a very good benefit

[01:50:07] everyone is protected so you know uh we can say and and and our political people say they support the you know they support blue collars but action speak talks cheap thank you mr wilk that was excellent thank you sir um my only thing was i just wanted to clarify so we did i did look both Fairfax, Loudoun, and Alexandria all have PLAs, but they are not, they're not the schools.

[01:50:45] We would be historically the first school, I believe in Prince, in the Commonwealth of Virginia. So just wanted to point that out. I think this is a great opportunity. And I forgot Ms. Zargarpur, I was actually the vice president of the Prince William Federation of Teachers, so.

[01:51:03] - Ms. Wall. - Well, I don't really want to throw too much water on this fire, but... First of all, I don't like that no school division has done this. I'm not thrilled to be first, especially based on the cautionary tale that is collected bargaining and how stellarly, not stellarly, that has gone.

[01:51:26] I do understand the sentiment about our graduates going into the trades and wanting to help them out, but we are a school division. We don't have taxing power. We can't raise revenue. We have a fixed pot of money, and if we spend money on labor costs, That means less money to put into the classrooms, which I do not like because our first priority, our only priority, is to educate kids.

[01:51:53] And while I appreciate the job, the goal of looking after labor, that isn't our priority. It just isn't. It is to educate kids. That's what our constitutional powers tell us to do, and that's what our priorities should be. What if costs run over?

[01:52:10] How does that affect things? what is that what will what is going to happen with that and is this going to put a lot of work on our staff I have no doubt because we have to craft a whole bunch of regulations we have to come up with new contract language we have to do all of that that's gonna be a lot of work and time is money and when time is spent on these kinds of things it's not being spent on the things that are our first priority which are the children and their education so again as a public school division our priority is to ensure that every dollar spent on school construction and renovation which is what we're talking about and I think we know that we need to do that is used efficiently to create safe high quality

[01:52:50] learning environments for our students however my concern is the implementation of a pilot project labor agreement would increase costs it would limit competition and exclude qualified local businesses to the detriment of our schools and our taxpayers again going back to my comment we have a fixed sum of money we do not generate revenue and that's why I know school divisions have done this. Whereas a local government like Fairfax government, Arlington, they can do it if they want.

[01:53:19] PLAs impose union labor requirements that prevent many highly skilled non-union contractors of which apparently there are a majority, especially small and minority and local owned businesses. They have trouble bidding on school construction projects because their margins are smaller. So when you reduce competition, you drive up costs. And when costs for construction go up, that means fewer resources are available for classrooms, teachers, and student programs.

[01:53:51] In my research, studies show that PLA projects cost 12 to 20% more than comparable open bid projects, placing an unnecessary financial burden on the school division and taxpayers. That's a large amount of money if we're talking about a \$200 million school or \$160. I don't know how it is much it is now. I think when Colgan was built, it was like \$100 million, and it might be \$200 million now. That's a lot of money, 12 to 20 percent. I'd rather spend that money directly on our students in our classrooms and our teachers. I think the kids would probably feel that way too. Additionally PLAs create workforce inefficiencies by forcing non-union contractors to hire unfamiliar union

[01:54:29] labor instead of using their existing well-trained teams. This disrupts project timelines, increases compliance burdens, and delays much-needed school improvements. Moreover PLAs may require non-union workers to pay union dues or or contribute to union benefits that they will never receive, an unfair practice that discourages participation from a broad and diverse workforce.

[01:54:53] Public school construction should be based on merit, cost effectiveness, again, it's taxpayer dollars here, and it's a limited pot of money, and inclusivity, not restrictive labor agreements that favor special interests. This is government favoritism towards unions rather than a free market approach to contracting, which I am in favor of.

[01:55:14] Our school division should remain committed to open competitive bidding that maximizes taxpayer investment and ensures the best possible learning environments for our students. So for these reasons, while I recognize the strengths of the argument on the other side, I strongly oppose the adoption of the pilot project labor agreement.

[01:55:31] And I would urge this board to consider fairness, fiscal responsibility, and the long-term interests of our schools and community with our primary purpose in mind, which is to educate students. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. So I'm gonna have the last word, I think, here.

[01:55:47] Ms. Williams. - Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I could hear the disappointment in your voice, but I'm gonna keep it short. I just want the public to be aware that when we do construction projects, there's been a lot of mention about safety requirements and fair pay. I don't want the public to think that we don't adhere to stringent safety requirements.

[01:56:02] There are some by law, OSHA. They're very important, so it wouldn't be something specific to a PLA that we just invented, because that's not true. I also want to remind the public that we do have prevailing wage and we do pay. You know, there are things set in stone, so that's not specific to just a PLA.

[01:56:18] These would be enhanced benefits that are included into the PLA, not that they don't exist at all. 'Cause I don't want anybody out there to think that we don't do any of those things. And I just, for the last reminders, I would just like the board to be updated on this because it is a new process and I think it's very important that we work collaboratively with everyone involved.

[01:56:36] Thank you. - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Williams. - I just have one more question, sorry. - Ms. Trudenik. - I don't know if this is something Wade can answer or not. - If this were to go in, does this

eliminate us being able to use the local companies? That's what I'm understanding.

[01:56:52] - No, it does not, but I can't answer a lot of the details in that because a lot of the details are gonna be determined by the superintendent's regulations. - Okay, can I also ask, will this come at a cost to the division? An extra cost, staffing? - I'm not able to answer that.

[01:57:08] - Not able to answer that. - But I'll take a few extra attorneys if you'd like to. - Okay, thank you. Any more questions? Okay, so I think I might be able to answer some of those questions for you. So first of all, I appreciate Mr. Jesse's comments on the fact that good labor practices not only benefit unions, but they benefit everyone.

[01:57:28] Our teachers are a great example. It's a minority who are actually members in the PWEA, yet the 61% increase that I've overseen in their salary since 2017 or '18 has directly benefited every single member of the teaching faculty, the staff and the administration in the school division.

[01:57:48] The holidays that the school division voted on for Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Eid, and Diwali benefit all students and families. And just like Labor Day, which we all sort of forget, is a day to recognize the hard work of Americans and the work that we do.

[01:58:07] America, still to this day, is the engine that runs the planet. We have the most work days, the least vacation days. We continue to churn out high productivity and work worldwide where we don't have great healthcare for everyone.

[01:58:25] We don't have great vacation times for everyone. We don't have childcare for everyone, where many of the industrial countries have solved these issues and have strong social safety nets. A project labor agreement here will offer a number of things.

[01:58:43] And I think we should be clear on what these are. It's a pre-hire agreement negotiated before work begins on a project that sets the stage for how we're gonna move forward with the project. You can have incentives built into these agreements to include women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, local businesses.

[01:59:01] We currently have no safety valve or a regulation that ensures local businesses in the county get current bids on current contracts. So I've been on this board seven years. I think it's about 10 schools we've constructed. there is no current to my knowledge policy that guarantees local businesses have the option in a project labor agreement we can include incentives to hire local businesses to include apprenticeships to include internships to include opportunities for local people in our communities to get to work

[01:59:36] here who get to then enjoy the facilities so that is something that everyone is is it a form of of collective bargaining sure it is a form of collective bargaining and it's on top of the fact that we already have prevailing wage prevailing wage which this board voted to approve a couple years ago already sets the stage for making sure the workers on the projects that are contracted out by the the school division are getting prevailing wage there will be no further cost increases in a PLA over in the fact that we've already done the project labor agreement frankly the greatest cost threat and uncertainty to this this school division that everyone should be aware of, which we talked about last night in the budget presentation,

[02:00:16] the board of County supervisors is a fact that tariffs are gonna drive up construction costs, costs of steel, costs of supplies, cost of things that are gonna do just like they did in the pandemic. And if

you remember, we had estimates for the new high school being around \$360 million during the pandemic.

[02:00:33] Those have come down dramatically since pandemic inflation on construction costs and supply chain issues have been resolved since. But those may go back up due to the tariffs imposed by the current federal government. Yes, they will involve unions, but many of the workers on these projects may not be union workers.

[02:00:53] But just like our teachers who are not members of the PWA benefit from an increased salary, so will any worker on these projects. And so it benefits all workers. It ensures stability and efficiency. One of the things that I asked when I got on the board first is they wanted to spend in a new school an extra \$5 million on the roof.

[02:01:13] And I said, why are we doing that? They said, Dr. Lateef, that's gonna ensure the roof lasts 40 years rather than 20 years. We'll save money on having to not replace it in 20 years. That same philosophy, we then approved our energy and sustainability initiative with the idea to go to solar, that that initial investment on solar will pay off because we will then have savings 10, 15 years out.

[02:01:35] In the same way, there are many studies, white papers that show projects built with PLAs have better work, better results, better skilled labor, finer crafting, longer term, less maintenance issues in the long run.

[02:01:56] And so I firmly believe this is consistent with the work that I've done on this board, is that if I invest in early, which sometimes might be a little higher, we get a longer term return on investment. and I believe firmly that a project labor agreement does that.

[02:02:11] It also has built-in dispute resolutions, on-time and budget project completions are typically higher in PLAs. It guarantees a skilled workforce, reduced labor disputes, improved worker safety, and it has community benefits as I've discussed already. And inclusion and diversity, frankly, you can include women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and there's opportunities for training advancement.

[02:02:36] So for all of these things, I believe a project labor agreement is consistent with our strategic plan on positive culture and climate, on family community engagement. I believe strongly that our modeling of good labor practices as a school division and as a steward of taxpayer dollars, having to be a good steward is a good model for our schools, our students, and our community.

[02:03:07] And I think it is a responsible way to ensure that we do the best we can for the division. And so that is why I'm supporting the resolution and ask the superintendent to develop project labor agreements on the new high school. And with that, I will ask the board to please vote.

[02:03:42] - Vote is six yes, two no, Trudinik, fall. Motion passed. - Motion passes. Moving on to, what are we at? Board matters. We're starting with Ms. Zargarpur today. - Still only three minutes, yes.

[02:03:59] - Good evening, Prince William County. I would like to remind us- - I'm sorry, it's four minutes on the timer. - I'm not gonna use all four. You're welcome, Mr. Jenick. All right, the month of the military child is at hand.

[02:04:15] I'm wearing purple this evening and you may or may not see the same purple in two weeks. Who knows? If you need some ideas in your community on how to celebrate, you can choose a day to wear purple and have a purple up day. You can feature your military connectedness on your school's website.

[02:04:34] You can do community events. You can have your kids make cards and pictures for the military families. You can recognize military families at some kind of school event.

[02:04:49] I know my school is a purple star school. We have done all kinds of things where we've had like coffee for the military families. kids have been able to participate in different activities so those are some things that our schools can do I am looking forward to seeing some musicals as we get into the springtime and been to a couple of the international nights and those were a lot of fun I also know that we're coming down into this fourth quarter so everybody it's gonna both feel like it's flying and dragging I'm

[02:05:25] sure to some so let's make sure that we're we're attending our our classes with a mindset of success we're getting ready for whatever your sols or whatever tests you have if you are looking at graduation this year I hope you have gotten your plans lined up for the after you graduate whether you start in the summer or the fall and I'm hoping that we will all get to the end of the school year and take that little bit of our spring break to refresh before we push to the final point there. So I am going to just end right now and and yield my

[02:06:02] time to whoever else would like it. Thank you Miss Zagrapoor. Miss Williams. Thank you very much. I am not gonna take my whole four minutes either. I just don't have a lot to say this evening. I again would like to piggyback off of what board members Zagrapoor said. It is that time of year. We just finished the grading period so it's SOL time review get ready for the end of the year your AP test all of those good things and look forward to spring break I just want to make a special mention to the virtual programs that we do offer there are some really good ones coming up there's an instructional job fair Virginia

[02:06:40] Cooperative Extension information but more importantly there's one for parents of teens there's understanding your teen which is a parent guide family engagement series and I just want to make a special designation at the moment last meeting I ran out of time so I just want to acknowledge the passing as school remember Blake did by share Blake for dr. Howard Golson as a member of the divine nine he was also a member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity he had a special designation in our county as he was the first black individual to be promoted to

[02:07:19] administrative position in the county after integration and received an award from the NAACP for that often we forget the people who have made the moments for us today possible so I wanted to give special recognition to him as I neglected to do so in the last meeting and then I will end with a point of privilege and saying congratulations to my youngest who is now a member of the track team that is a phenomenal achievement in my household because I am about as non-athletic as they can get so I look forward to seeing him throw the shot put on the field and learning how to buy track shoes so I hope everyone has

[02:07:56] a good evening and we'll see you here again in two weeks. Ms. Wong. Okay so I'm gonna give one small rebuttal considering with my extra minute considering the importance of competition to keep costs down it's it's already the case that we pay more for labor as was pointed out with the prevailing wage provision which I also opposed in which we passed and which is also led to escalating costs in our school division for construction and labor costs but it's also important also as pointed out it is there is an

[02:08:34] uncertain market in construction materials and so it's even more important to keep our costs down I can't I can't understand why we think this is a good idea so I know it passed but I'm not happy about it obviously I think it's It's a political giveaway to unions rather than a fair way to manage public projects.

[02:08:52] So keeping in mind our highest priority, which is not managing labor markets, but educating kids, I just wanted to say that. I'm going to move on to the activity I want to highlight this evening is Prince William Manassas Regional Science and Engineering Fair that took place on Saturday the 22nd here at the KLC.

[02:09:12] I attended this event. I was so very proud of each and every participant. projects were amazing, so advanced, so interesting. I'm really just so proud of all of our students. It takes a lot of work to come up with a topic, organize your project, gather all the materials, run your experiments, and then review what you've learned and compile results, and then present and defend your science research to judges in a competitive field. So science fair represents so many different important facets of learning and life. So I'm very proud of all our schools that sponsored science fairs at the school level and encouraged that and who encouraged their students to participate.

[02:09:48] And I'm very proud of all of our winners. Well done. As you head into the next level of state competition or even international competition, I wish you all the best and I'm sure we will be hearing great things in the future. Shifting gears, I appreciate hearing from community members on matters that are of greatest importance to them, such as quality instruction, transportation, safe and welcoming schools, course programming and services, or how to crack down on vaping in school bathrooms.

[02:10:16] And yes, I am hearing that this is still happening and we need to get a handle on it for the sake of our kids and their health. Thank you to members of my community who have spoken to me specifically about their concerns with the CASET program at Battlefield. This program is a PWCS highlight and I encourage the division to do all we can to support this program so that students for years to come can take advantage of the wonderful opportunities that my own children and those children who are in college and in the workforce now, we're able to take advantage of.

[02:10:46] When all is said and done, what I've learned is that families care most about a few things, having excellent teachers, having safe welcoming environments for school and wanting their children to have as many opportunities to develop their unique talents and interests. I wanna speak to the class of 2025.

[02:11:02] You are so very close. We have fewer than 10 weeks to go. I remember when I was a senior, my friends and I used to joke, life is hard and then you die. And rather than this sardonic motto, I recommend King Lear's Attitude to Challenges, where he says in act three, scene four, "Pour on, I will endure."

[02:11:21] I take it to mean hard work, get those assignments in, be prepared for your exams and quizzes, retake if necessary, and to the seniors, keep pursuing your grad goals and your scholarship opportunities. A few words of advice to all, be patient in your challenges and endure them well. Remain steadfast in your focus, in the pursuit of your goals, and you will find an inner confidence that comes through having gone through hard times, having done hard work and having gained the reward.

[02:11:48] So I look forward to seeing you across the graduation stage at the culmination of everything we do, of every dollar we appropriate, of every meeting we have. With that being said, to all, good night. - Mr. Jess.

[02:12:03] - Thank you, Mr. Chair. On Thursday, March 26th, my wife and I went over to Friedman High School to thank the band director at Friedman High School. and hopefully you will see a picture here in a few minutes.

[02:12:20] Mr. Thorogood and his drum major team participated in the opening medal ceremonies for the fourth anniversary of the MLK celebration and the 35th Youth Oratorical Context celebration sponsored by the Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

[02:12:40] Mr. Thorogood and his team made it possible for the traditional medal ceremony to return and it was given by Mrs. Jessie, a former board member, one of the cups of gratitude that she's famous for.

[02:12:57] She was also the founder for this. So the picture right here is the picture of the three little girls who brought the medals in as a ceremony, and then you have the picture of the bottom right of the German major from Friedman High School, And the other young gentleman was Mrs. Bonarese's grandson, who she started the program.

[02:13:27] And then this is a picture of myself and my wife. So that's a good thing. Go ahead and get back to the timer here so I don't run over, please. One of the citizens sent a note in to us and asked about the issue, Are we really concerned about all the graffiti and all the inappropriate things are being painted and put on our walls and stuff?

[02:13:56] And I'm sure, yes we are. But perhaps we need to talk a little bit more about that in public that, what's the consequences of doing that? You know, how many kids have gotten in trouble and stuff.

[02:14:13] It is a serious thing when we start damaging school buildings and doing something and so i i do agree that perhaps we should give more public attention to what we're doing to prevent that uh you know this the time is a uh issue but i would sort of like to know uh how many people are watching online because they're surely are not here okay so we spend you know four minutes per person talking and we

[02:14:52] really don't know how many people we're talking to so you know it's important that we do go out and we we are seen and so forth but I don't know if all this time that we spent is being watched by anybody and I sort of like to know how many people now my wife and i were very surprised at how many people do watch this thing and so you know it's sort of like you used to go to church all the time now you stay home and watch church

[02:15:28] on tv uh so maybe that's the case but uh so at any rate thank you uh doc by the way dr howard Golsan was a good friend of our family and we will miss him and the best to his family.

[02:15:47] Thank you. Mr. Denik. So talking about schools, I just want to say congrats on a third quarter, a strong third quarter to everybody that finished. You've got one more quarter in that rolling grade book to make it happen.

[02:16:06] I always love to hear from the kids on how they make it work and make it happen as they go into this SAT time and testing time I love to hear from them about you know the challenges and then their wins so please feel free to share those with me switching gears because I feel like we've gotten a little bit off topic sometimes a little bit political and campaigning and I do believe I was advised to not do that so I've been choosing not to do that but tonight I'm going to take a few minutes three minutes and 15 seconds to be exact to

[02:16:43] talk a little bit about how ridiculous I think the fear mongering speculation and scare tactics that continue to be used and how I have not gone through one school board meeting in this room or any other room on a commission without someone using some sort of tactics to talk about the current administration and what's occurring and it's exhausting and I'm hopeful that maybe after six months will

stop i'm not sure i don't i don't recall the other side doing this this much i don't recall all of this um what's the word they use pontification uh grandstanding uh again fear

[02:17:21] tactics fear mongering speculation um tonight was especially political from um some of my colleagues uh going for this union uh pla is that what it was called a pla um it's interesting that this got brought into this arena because again i also echo miss wall's sentiment it it does not belong here this is not what we're here for um it was completely out of place and clearly um was a political strategy to earn more donations get elected um congratulations i hope it works um

[02:17:58] i just feel like this is not the place for campaign speeches this is not the place to grandstand this is not the place to earn more donations this is not what we're here for um and i i also would like to be a steward of taxpayer dollars and again of people's time so um i would hope that we can get back to that after this and then there's not going to be any more of that going on so and i really hope we can let it go eventually mr wilk moving from a little bit from

[02:18:33] that. I do want to recognize that this is, I know it was said earlier, Autism Awareness Month. I actually believe today is International Autism Day, Awareness Day, which is why I'm wearing blue, and I always say like the Regis Philbin monochromatic who wants to be a millionaire look.

[02:18:56] I do want to talk a little bit more about that, not the clothing style, about autism. And, you know, from a personal standpoint, you know, I do, I think I've said it over again, I am a special needs parent. I have a son who's 12 on the autism spectrum.

[02:19:16] I believe Ms. Williams has had godchildren on many of them. And so she understands and can be empathetic with this. And, you know, I'm very thankful today because my job job also gave us a day off for this.

[02:19:31] I decided to visit six schools with a keen focus on visiting for sure the special needs classrooms for today and for this week and you know and I when I do visit schools I typically do go into more of the self-contained autism rooms and I'm very grateful starting from a high school this morning to seeing a little bit more about our presentation last week about you know preparing our students after they graduate from high school or phase out after 22 21 22 the job opportunities

[02:20:07] and the career opportunities for our students with disabilities i think we're doing we're expanding our role as we saw last week with all of our partnerships all of our programs and so starting off the morning at forest park was great and then i went to the other end of the spectrum i went to the next school was washington reed our pre-k program so you see it from uh start to finish uh and you know and god love our pre-k teachers i god love our special needs teachers but all of our teachers but i go into these pre-k rooms and i'm just like i i don't know it's amazing what

[02:20:46] they do uh i love the inclusionary practices of you know students that are delayed abilities and speech and what have you and they're in there with their peers who are on track to go to kindergarten and seeing them interact with one another and building that empathy from day one and that inclusion that our students are together it's a part of life we're seeing a rise in autism one in 36 children in the u.s are now i believe that's the last stat i didn't go to google but are diagnosed with autism boys like my son are four times more likely to be diagnosed with it

[02:21:25] and again I know I'm going on kind of some tangents but I just because this month is so important to so many families and so important for all of our schools and our teachers I do truly want to

thank our special education teachers very difficult jobs I mean today I know one's had to to clean up some accidents that were occurring.

[02:21:50] I know that often there's students, you know, I mean, they're kids, they're throwing toys, they're doing, it's crazy sometimes, right? And, you know, having to change diapers, things like that. And it's not the most glorious role, but they do it. They have a passion for it.

[02:22:06] And I'm very thankful for all the work that they do for our special education programs, our educators. And so thank you very much as we celebrate. Bless you. As we celebrate autism awareness, I just, again, want to thank all of our teachers and also thank all the families who work in collaboration with us, with children with special needs.

[02:22:29] So thank you. - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since our last meeting, I've just had the opportunity to engage with students, educators, and families at a variety of events across the county.

[02:22:47] It's always inspiring to see the passion and dedication that makes Prince William County Schools such a strong and vibrant community. And I was able to visit Neabsco Elementary where I joined students and families at their book fair, cardboard challenge, and cosmic flight.

[02:23:04] It was a fantastic combination of literacy, creativity, and science that brought learning to life. And then I went over to King Elementary and visited their content carnival that they had that showcased an engaging way to reinforce classroom learning while keeping students and families actively involved.

[02:23:26] Then I went to the 2025 Prince William Manassas Regional Science and Engineering Fair for my first time. And the level of innovation and problem solving on display was nothing short of impressive and amazing.

[02:23:47] Like I said, there was the one group of students that found biomarkers for esophageal cancer. Am I saying that right? And once they get those validated, they'll be able to actually test for that to be able to find out if you have the markers for that cancer, but that was great.

[02:24:11] Those kids were very awesome. And then I was at Fitzgerald Elementary for their family enrichment day. It was a wonderful morning of connection, creativity, community. The families had a chance to participate in hands-on workshops, explore growing minds, and there was a special presentation from the Beam Steppers.

[02:24:35] So if you've ever seen the Beam Steppers, they are very good. And then I went to Minnieville Elementary where they had Angela Dominguez, who is a celebrated illustrator, that came through and shared her creative journey with the students.

[02:24:52] It was a very good experience for these students. These kinds of experiences are powerful and sparking imagination and encouraging young minds to explore their artistic potential. And then like our student, our rep said, I was able to go to the student leadership workshop.

[02:25:13] Again, it was amazing seeing these super high functioning kids walking around and just the ideas that they had and the Bill of Rights that they came up with. It's just amazing, like these type of opportunities I wish I had when I was a kid, and they have 'em, and it was, again, just a great opportunity to hear directly from the students about their concerns, aspirations, and encourage my fellow board members to attend next year if they can, 'cause it was really a great opportunity.

[02:25:49] And then I also attended juvenile detention graduation, which was a powerful reminder of the resilience and second chances. Seeing this student reach this milestone, despite the obstacles that they faced, was a testament to the impact of education and the support system in place to help him succeed.

[02:26:10] And then finally, last night, I got to go to the Board of County Supervisors meeting with our school board chair and our chief education officer and her executive staff and present our fiscal year 2026 budget.

[02:26:27] They did a great job and thank you guys for that. And then I'll just leave you with this, with this little quote right here. Education is the most powerful weapon in which you can use to change the world.

[02:26:44] And that's from Nelson Mandela. And maybe that's why education is under attack right now. - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Okay, Ms. Wall used sardonic. I'll use prognosticate tonight.

[02:27:02] And for each time that I have on this board voted for, whether it's the energy and sustainability initiative back in 2017 or whether it was the prevailing wages or whether it was the effort to implement a collective bargaining agreement just about a year and a half ago.

[02:27:24] And by the way, the raises that we did do were long before collective bargaining. they are here as well and included in the collective bargaining agreement now that we've done that the pro pro pro pro prognosticators prognosticators would have said the dr. Latif is going to run the school division bankrupt and broke and what we've seen rather since I've taken the board has been a division that has improved across all demographic groups on SOL scores a division that that has increased teacher salaries so that we've become one of the most, we've gone to being very strong

[02:28:04] in recruitment and retention, better than the state average on retaining our teachers. School division that was ranked, I think by Forbes magazine back in 2020 with the best school division to work for in the state. And I did similar work at the University of Virginia where we, in the health system, we were the number one health system to work for in the state as well in 2022.

[02:28:24] I believe very strongly in taking care of our folks, the people that work here. We are the largest employer in the county, one of the largest employers in the state. And I think how we treat our folks directly impacts how our students are taught by the folks that work here.

[02:28:40] And that has been my philosophy and guiding principles since I've taken over the school board and become chair. And I'll continue to do that where I see fit the appropriate use of that kind of effort I'll continue to do. So as Ms. Wall says, life is hard then you die was what she said when they were 18.

[02:29:01] I would say it doesn't have to be that way. We can have good labor days and strong efforts to take care of our employees. So life doesn't have to be hard and die. Life can be hard, you can enjoy it and then you die. Pour on, I will endure.

[02:29:17] We can endure as long as we take care of the folks here as well. And I always appreciate my colleagues' animated responses and well thought out arguments. And I truly do appreciate my colleague Jen Wall.

[02:29:37] Moving on, as she pointed out, it was a great weekend at this regional science fair. Folks, we are putting together, it was a record science fair with a record number of entrants, with a record number of schools participating. This weekend we saw schools and high schools participate who had not participated at least ever, or at least in the last 10 years, last decade.

[02:30:00] And they did, and they competed. And when you compete, what happens? You win. And we had a lot of winners winning, and congratulations to Unity Reed High School, which had a grand prize winner that qualified for the International Science and Engineering Fair, which is truly exciting.

[02:30:16] So we are thrilled with that work. I firmly will continue the effort to, you know, whether it's on the science fair, whether it's in the swimming pools or on our tracks and on our courts, as you saw tonight, we will continue to push our students hard, ask a lot of them, commit to making sure we do our part so they see success and can launch a thriving future for themselves and their families.

[02:30:42] With that being said, this meeting is adjourned. Have a great night, everyone.



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