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

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Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 2h 27m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5V5lfsfI4Hc>
- 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 2026-10-29. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] the Prince William County School Board like to start. We need a approval of the agenda. Motion is ordered, Mr. Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approves a meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second?

[00:00:17] - Mr. Chairman. - Yeah, any discussion? No, Mr. Jessie second. Oh yeah, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:00:39] Very good, Ana. What do you got? - The vote is seven yes. One not present at vote. Williams, motion passed. - Okay, motion to enter closed session.

[00:00:54] Mr. Blake. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Prince William County School Board interclosed session for the following reasons. To discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotions, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public offices, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:28] And two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, procurement and other civil litigation involving the school division under sections 2.2-3711A7 and 8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:51] and three, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and the actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of our such facilities pursuant to section 2.2-3711A19 of Dakota, Virginia.

[00:02:18] - Can I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Second. Please vote.

[00:02:39] - The vote is seven yes, one not present at vote. Motion passed. - Okay, at this time the Prince William County School Board

[00:02:43] will move into closed session and return in about one hour.

[00:03:47] This time the Prince William County School Board is returning from closed session. We have a number of closed session action items to vote on. 801 is the approval, hold on, sorry.

[00:04:04] 701 is the closed session certification. Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of November 5th, 2025, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:26] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting, to which the certification resolution applies, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and/or discussed, considered by the school board.

[00:04:58] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:30] - The vote is eight yes unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action items, a motion in order for the approval of appointments and releases. Mr. Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session.

[00:05:52] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:17] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, next up is the Pledge of Allegiance. We will invite our student representative, Beulah Sarsa, to lead us in the pledge.

[00:06:32] - United States of America. - To be a republic, one nation, under God. Indivisible, with liberty and justice. - Okay, moving on to Thriving Futures Focus for this evening, start with that.

[00:06:52] Thriving Futures Focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members and schools that have earned an honor or an award at the state or national level.

[00:07:13] Tonight, the board would like to acknowledge our nationally recognized director in five schools being honored as the 2025 America's Healthiest Schools. I have the honor this evening of recognizing Dr. Lynn Mara Colon, the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendent's name, Dr. Colon, PWCS's Director of Student Opportunity and Multilingual Services.

[00:07:39] Yeah, let's do a round of applause for that. And the 2025, I think I have some typos in here, 2025-26 National Central Office Administrator of the Year Award. So congratulations.

[00:07:54] ALAS is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating leadership among school and district leaders who serve Latino youth and other historically underserved student populations. Their mission is to provide leadership at the national level that ensures every school in America effectively serves the educational needs of all students with an emphasis on Latino youth by building capacity, promoting best practices and transforming educational institutions.

[00:08:17] the ALAS National Central Office Administrator of the Year Award recognizes a leader at the district level who has had a positive impact on policy, instruction, and student outcomes across multiple schools. Dr. Colon's leadership has been vital in advancing equity and multilingual excellence across PWCS.

[00:08:36] And at this time, I'd like to invite Dr. Colon to share a few words on behalf of her achievement. Dr. Colon. - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the school board, Dr. McDade and my esteemed colleagues. I stand before you tonight, grateful and humbled.

[00:08:52] This recognition touches me deeply as it is not a reflection only of my journey, but the collective spirit that defines our school division. For 18 years, I've had the privilege of coming to a school division where I'm not only fulfilling a profession, but a calling.

[00:09:10] Every leadership move I've made, every initiative that we have championed, and every conversation I've engaged in has been centered around one unwavering belief, that every child is worthy of having a magical experience regardless of the language that they speak or the place that they call home.

[00:09:30] And our strategic plan embodies that core principle that is not only reserved for the few, but for all learners, especially our multilingual learners. Dr. McDade, thank you for your visionary leadership and always recognizing our work.

[00:09:46] From the beginning, you have reminded me that bilingualism is my superpower. To my associate superintendent, Dr. Stephanie Sullivan, gracias mil, she is a champion for our work and makes me better every single day.

[00:10:01] To my remarkable team, and I have some here today, I am endlessly inspired by their dedication, their creativity, and their hard work. And to our students who really drive my why make me better every single day I have immediate family here and I have some that are watching from Puerto Rico and I want to say gracias me because they really are my foundation and my drive so that I can do this work so tonight I am profoundly grateful to carry the banner on behalf of Prince William County around this award I really want to thank you for the opportunity and trusting me to

[00:10:40] to do such vital work. Thank you and have a great evening.

[00:10:56] - Wonderful and congratulations. I'd now like to shift the focus and begin our recognition of five schools being honored as the 2025 America's Healthiest Schools with the Brentsville District. Ms. Erica Trudenik, please introduce our first honorees. - Thank you. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation has named five Prince William County Public Schools as 2025 America's Healthiest Schools.

[00:11:19] This year, 1,120 schools across 34 states and Washington DC were awarded this honor. In Virginia, a total of 11 schools were named America's Healthiest Schools, with five of them being from

Prince William County Schools. This highly regarded annual distinction is awarded to schools for demonstrating exceptional efforts to prioritize the essential health needs of the school community.

[00:11:41] The Brentsville District is proud to recognize three schools. First, I wish to recognize Buckland Mills Elementary School for earning awards in school health services, social, emotional health and learning, staff wellbeing and family and community engagement.

[00:11:59] Buckland Mills is represented by Principal Menaxi Odedra, first grade teacher, Michelle Tierhar. Second, I would like to recognize Piney Branch Elementary School for earning awards in school health services, nutrition and food access, health education, tobacco-free schools, staff wellbeing and family and community engagement.

[00:12:21] Representing Piney Branch tonight is Assistant Principal Monica Sobers and school counselor, Courtney McAfee. Third, I'm proud to recognize Victory Elementary School for earning awards in school health services, local school wellness policy, nutrition and food access, physical education and activity, health education, staff wellbeing, and family and community engagement.

[00:12:47] Tonight, Victory Elementary is holding its annual Handle with Care event, but we are fortunate to have an outstanding representative here, fifth grade teacher, Carol McQuillan. Congratulations to you all and thank you for proudly representing the Brentsville District.

[00:13:13] - Excellent, thank you, Mr. Denik. I now invite Ms. Jen Wall, representative of the Gainesville District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Gainesville District is proud to recognize Unity Braxton Middle School as a 2025 America's Healthiest School Award winner.

[00:13:29] Unity Braxton Middle School has earned an all-star award for excelling in all nine categories. school health services, local school wellness policy, nutrition and food access, physical education and activity, health education, social emotional health and learning, tobacco free schools, staff wellbeing, and family and community engagement.

[00:13:53] Unity Braxton is represented tonight by Principal Aaron Sykes Thurston and Jaina Cobbs, Director of Counseling, along with Counselor Sean Bigler, Mary Beth Stevenson, Emma Doolin, and Pam, sorry, Pam Thomas, congratulations to you all.

[00:14:15] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Vice Chair Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District will present his honorees. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Neabsco District is proud to recognize Minnieville Elementary School as the 2025 America's Healthiest School Award winner.

[00:14:32] Minnieville Elementary School has earned this award for their work in school health services, physical education and activity, social emotional health and learning, and staff wellbeing. Representing Minnieville, we recognize principal, Deborah Ellis, assistant principal, Tyese Singleton, and school counselor, Sarah Basler and Fred Barum.

[00:14:55] Congratulations. Ms. Kim Guyanes, associate superintendent for Western elementary schools, supervises three of these schools. So we asked her to speak on behalf of their recognition tonight. - Good evening. This evening, we come together to celebrate a truly inspiring achievement.

[00:15:15] Thank you to our school board and Dr. McDade for recognizing this milestone. Five of our Prince William County Public Schools have been named America's Healthiest Schools for 2025, a national

honor that recognizes their unwavering commitment to creating safe, supportive, and health-focused learning environments.

[00:15:34] Only 11 schools total in the Commonwealth have earned this award. Congratulations again to Buckland Mills Elementary, Minnieville Elementary School, Piney Branch Elementary School, Victory Elementary School, and Unity Braxton Middle School, which earned the all-star distinction for excellence across all nine wellness categories, a rare and remarkable accomplishment.

[00:16:00] These schools have shown us what it means to care deeply for the whole child. From nutritious meals and daily movement to mental health supports and staff wellness initiatives, they've built cultures where health and learning thrive together. Positive Climate and Culture is commitment to in our 2025 strategic plan.

[00:16:20] These five schools have excelled in demonstrating the belief that every child deserves to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. This award is a reflection of the hard work, creativity, and compassion of our educators, our nurses, counselors, administrators, and support staff.

[00:16:39] To our students and families, thank you for being active partners in this journey. your voices, your choices, your energy, help make these schools vibrant and healthy places to grow. Let this moment inspire all of us across PWCS, because when we prioritize wellness, we're not just improving schools, we're building stronger communities and thriving futures.

[00:17:04] Thank you. - Thank you very much. And at this time, I'd like to ask all those involved in supporting our nationally recognized director and five schools, including family members to stand in recognition of their support.

[00:17:21] if we have any family. Congratulations, and before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I wanna first start with Dr. Colon. I am just so overwhelmingly proud and joyful that your work, Dr. Colon, is being recognized at the national level.

[00:17:45] We already know here in Prince William County the magic that you bring to education every day. And I have to say that you being a former L student yourself, You know personally and firsthand the challenges that some of our students face, and you have been a fierce advocate and champion for all students.

[00:18:06] And I just wanna thank you for your heart for this work. I know how passionate you are about it, and I'm just so happy that you're being recognized at the national level. And you have done a tremendous job here in Prince William County, and we're very fortunate to have you.

[00:18:24] So congratulations, my friend. And then to all of our America... Yeah, let's clap for Dr. Colon again. And to all of our 2025, America's healthiest schools, that sounds like you should be on like one of those TV competitions.

[00:18:43] You all are absolutely, you're absolutely amazing. And you reflect the heart of our mission because our mission is to ensure that we are supporting the whole child. And that is what you're doing each and every day. And you're doing it in a way that shows that you're an exemplar for Prince William County School.

[00:19:01] So I wanna thank you for your leadership and I wanna thank you for the extra mile that you go each and every day to make sure all students are supported and that they're healthy, not just academically, but physically, socially, and emotionally as well. Job well done. We are PWCS proud.

[00:19:17] Congratulations. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation. Thank you.

[00:19:37] - Okay, moving on to the adoption of consent agenda.

[00:23:46] A motion is ordered, Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:24:19] - The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Lateef, motion passed. - Moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions. Approval for this, a motion is in order. Mr. Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approves the adoption of the acknowledgments and the recognitions as recommended.

[00:24:37] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Okay, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:25:03] - The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tradinik, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to citizen's comment time. Those citizens who signed up in advance with a clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:25:22] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room be cleared to restore public order.

[00:25:38] Tonight, we have 10 citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record. Per policy 134, the time allotted for each speaker will be three minutes. I'll announce the first five if they'd like to come up and sit in the chairs in front if they so choose.

[00:25:55] Ronnie Cervone, Roman Cervone, Mallory McKnight, Blake Hera, Monica Guiones. Ronnie Cervone.

[00:26:23] - Thank you for having me in front of you guys tonight. Retired Navy Master Chief here to talk about boys high school volleyball. Boys high school volleyball is the fastest growing sport for boys across the nation according to USA Volleyball. With a 12.5% growth last year, 76% over the past 10 years.

[00:26:42] It is one of the few non-contact team sports that a boy can participate in. My son, Roman, who will speak next, is 15. He's been playing volleyball since he was 11. Right now, the only option is club volleyball. And when he was 11, options were minimal or non-existent.

[00:26:58] Fortunately, he was able to play as the only boy on a U12 girls team to get him loving the sport. Personally, I've been involved with volleyball for years as a parent and a spectator due to my daughter

starting volleyball years before my son, but most recently as an assistant coach at the Battle Volleyball Club for my son.

[00:27:14] And I have seen the interest and growth firsthand at all levels, including boys at the 12 and 13 U middle school age this past year. The Battle Volleyball Club here in Manassas had over 110 boys try out for spots on five teams this year.

[00:27:32] I also know firsthand that club volleyball can be quite expensive and may detract would-be players from playing, getting needed social and team experience. Fairfax County introduced boys volleyball in the 2024 to 2025 school year, and Loudon just approved it to begin in fall of 2026, two and a half weeks ago, putting us behind our neighbors.

[00:27:54] Boys volleyball in school would open the sport up to boys at all economic levels, providing new collegiate opportunities, in addition to great exercise, camaraderie, and teamwork skills. I know that introducing a boys' sport requires that a girls' sport also be introduced, and I therefore recommend either girls' flag football, which has had a successful inaugural season this year, which also requires that the Virginia High School League support it, and I encourage them to get on board, or a secondary option is girls' wrestling, which has had an increasingly growing interest and is already an approved VHSL sport.

[00:28:28] So let's provide new athletic opportunities to our kids in PWCS. Thank you for your time. - Thank you, Roman Servon.

[00:28:47] My name is Roman Cervone, and my address is on file. I'm 15. I started playing volleyball at 11. I have been playing volleyball for many years. I am a sophomore at Colgan High School, and I've also seen the interest in boys volleyball grown. Many people tried out my club last year, and the competition's hard.

[00:29:06] And people at Colgan and Prince William County especially are getting less opportunities to play volleyball compared to Loudoun and Fairfax, where they are getting more chances to due to having high school volleyball, so they get more touches and more playtime. Volleyball, like in high school, is also easier because all you need is a ball.

[00:29:24] Everything else is applied because of girls' volleyball, so you only need a ball which costs minimal, and the players get to play a lot. I created a petition that got 250 signatures in two weeks to have boys' volleyball be added to Prince William County as a sanctioned sport.

[00:29:44] Another player at my same volleyball club, Ali'i, created one not too long ago as well, and he got 500 signatures. I think that boys volleyball should be added as more people should be able to play this sport that I love.

[00:30:00] - Thank you, Mallory McKnight. - Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the school board and Dr. McDade.

[00:30:16] My name is Mallory McKnight and my address is on file with the clerk. We are excited to be here tonight to recognize our 2025 Red Ribbon Week art contest winners. Each year, Red Ribbon Week provides an opportunity for students to express their creativity while promoting the importance of living a drug-free and healthy lifestyle.

[00:30:34] This year's theme inspires students to share powerful messages of prevention through art, and we were so impressed by their talent and thoughtfulness. It is our honor to recognize the following winners. Leilani Villanueva, first grade student at Lake Ridge Elementary School.

[00:30:49] Yamna Abasi, second grade student at Lake Ridge Elementary School. Mejira Adelarasu, third grade student at Pennington Traditional School. Ella and Marlo Boland, fourth grade students at Gravelly Elementary School. Renata Guevara Rivera, fifth grade student at Pennington Traditional School.

[00:31:09] Nabiha Hashmi, sixth grade student at Woodbridge Middle School. Judith Perez Romero, seventh grade student at Potomac Middle School. And Miana Kennedy, eighth grade student at Potomac Middle School. We would also like to take a moment to thank our generous community partners who donated prizes for this year's contest.

[00:31:28] A special thank you to Paint Your Heart Out, Skate Fun Zone, Nothing Bunk Cakes, Brittany's Restaurant, Urban Air Adventure Park, the International Spa Museum, Team Tactics Escape Room, Wegmans, Chipotle, and Time Mission. Your support made it possible to celebrate and reward our student artists in a meaningful way.

[00:31:47] Thank you for partnering with us to promote prevention and wellness in our schools. Congratulations to all of our winners for your creativity and for helping to spread the message. Thank you to our schools, principals, art teachers, Alphabest, and community partners for supporting prevention and student wellness.

[00:32:03] Thank you. - Blake Harrah.

[00:32:28] - Good evening, board members, chair, and Dr. Medate. My name is Blake Harrah, and my address is on file. I'm here again to speak on behalf of the parents of Covington Arbor Elementary School. In the past eight years, this board has made it clear it prefers to be reactive in most situations, specifically waiting until schools are overcrowded, security concerns present themselves, and families are frustrated before even acting.

[00:32:48] Key planning data has existed since 2013, yet action was either not conducted or delayed. By this school year, sorry, by this school year, the FY22 to 2031 CIP, the school was projected to have an enrollment of 150.3%.

[00:33:03] And recently, FY25 to 2029 CIP, the school was projected to have an enrollment of 197.3% by the opening of the next Potomac Shores Elementary School. Meanwhile, the Potomac Shores still has a county approval of 3,987 homes before the school was even planned, showing the projections were inaccurate from the start.

[00:33:26] Dr. Lateef, at the 2024 meeting, prior to your vote, you stated we have a process which we abide by, which seems to be working, yet Covington-Ocker remains the most overcrowded school in Virginia as documented by this county and Virginia Department of Education. Your process has failed miserably, leading to serious safety concerns and misplaced priorities, including children being left behind by buses and children left outside unattended.

[00:33:49] I wanna thank Mr. Wilk for solving these issues promptly. A clear example of misplaced priorities can be seen in the Fairfax County School Board versus McMahon in her official capacity as US Secretary of Education, sorry, where PWCS officials focus on Title IX interpretation regarding gender identity.

[00:34:11] How can any member of this board who voted in opposition justify agreeing Dr. Lateef's statements when you didn't even take the time to formally discuss the issue? Dr. McDade, as

superintendent, it is your responsibility to proactively address redistricting every year as you oversee all educational and operational planning.

[00:34:29] Yet instead of confronting these escalating capacity and safety issues, you have prioritized boosting graduation statistics for appearance sake, pushing unprepared students through the system by relying on the unethical use of Admentum. Mr. Jesse emphasized this last meeting. The board must act now, beginning with discussion with the superintendent.

[00:34:47] Do not wait until the last possible moment, rush the process and risk making critical mistakes.
- Thank you, Monica Quiones.

[00:35:14] - Good evening, members of the board. My name is Monica Quinonez and my address is on file with the clerk. I stand before you as a black woman, an educator, a widow, and a woman of faith. As a community member and educator, my life's work has been about pouring into others, helping students believe in themselves, their purpose, and the power of doing what's right, even when it's hard.

[00:35:40] Recently, I experienced a situation, myself and several colleagues that left us feeling unsafe, unseen and unsupported in an environment that should represent learning, respect and trust.

[00:35:56] That moment deeply affected not only my sense of safety, but also my faith in the system that is meant to protect both staff and students. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

[00:36:13] When educators are not protected, students are not protected. When teachers must work in fear, the entire learning environment suffers. I come to you not from anger, but from love. Love for truth, love for justice, love for the calling that keeps me showing up even when it hurts.

[00:36:34] Maya Angelou wrote, "I come as one, but I stand as 10,000." Tonight, I speak for every teacher who's been told to stay quiet, for every woman who's been dismissed and for every black educator who's been asked to carry both professionalism and pain in the same heart.

[00:36:54] Peace does not come from pretending everything's fine. And as Malcolm X said, you can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom. Peace comes from the freedom to tell the truth even when it's uncomfortable. And as Romans chapter 8:28 reminds us in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

[00:37:16] Even this moment, I believe, can be used for good, to spark change, to bring awareness, and to ensure that what happened to me does not happen to anyone else. So tonight I rise, not just for myself, but for every educator who deserves to feel safe, for every student who deserves to see their teachers protected, and for every leader who believes that accountability and compassion must work hand in hand.

[00:37:41] Thank you. - The next five are gonna be Keri Pearson, Yubo Zhang, Hina Ansari, Eileen Devereaux, and Carl Gritton. Keri Pearson, Keri Pearson.

[00:38:03] And then, and for the timer, please don't let the timer start until they speak, start speaking. Keri Pearson. - Hi, my name is Keri Pearson, and my address is on file with the clerk. I am coming tonight as a mom, but I am also a school counselor in this district as well.

[00:38:28] and I am coming to talk about Covington Harbor. Our family moved here from overseas in January of 2021, and we were very excited as we were moving to this area.

[00:38:44] We heard lots of things that were good about this county and especially the area that we were moving into as we already had a daughter who had a 504 and a son who had an IEP looking for a school that would support our kids was very important to us.

[00:39:04] And we heard lots of good things about Covington Harbor and we're very excited to move here. And we have definitely found supportive teachers, staff members that listen to us. My daughter is now at Potomac Shores Middle and my son is a fourth grader at Covington Harbor.

[00:39:25] for the most part our experience has been really great I do want to address some pressing concern though is that Covington Harper still does not have a principal and we are one quarter of the way through a school year I know that the school has a lot of students it's the size of some of our middle schools and so that all of you have to be very careful and choosing a leader for this school

[00:39:57] and i thank you that you're not just hiring anybody but with the school being so large and there being so many concerns um i do have a lot of concern about the fact that we do not have a leader at the helm of the school, especially as the two assistant principals are more early in their careers.

[00:40:26] I hope that, well, really we need a stable, permanent principal who can effectively address the challenges, not only I am bringing up, but I know that you have heard from other staff as well. Thank you. - Thank you. Yubo Zhang.

[00:40:55] - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My name is Dr. Ibo-Jama, but I address this on file. Couple of weeks ago, I came to talk about how we might do everything with an equitable mindset. Today, I'm here again with a specific ask for your consideration.

[00:41:11] But first of all, I would like to share my deep appreciation for having a school calendar recognizing various religions and cultural holidays and celebrations. But the question remains as, what else is missing? Who else are not represented?

[00:41:27] Every year around this time, I go to an Asian grocery store. I will get a copy of this kind of calendar at the checkout. What's special about it is under each solar days are the lunar dates. Based on the lunar calendar, the first day of 2026, it's actually landing on February 17th, right after the president day.

[00:41:50] What's interesting is throughout the year, there are also notes about seasonal, 24 seasonal agricultural dates. For example, beginning of spring, which is a reminder of best practice for farming practices.

[00:42:05] And of course, there's a specific food designated to each day of the seasonal division day. Of course, Asian culture is all about food to a certain extent, so is every culture. But my point is that with 12% of Asian families and students in Prince William County, Recognizing Lunar New Year on our school calendar, it's beyond just recognizing a holiday.

[00:42:30] It's recognizing a different way of thinking, a different way of living, a different perspective. Different cultures, when they tackle the same problem, in this case, tracking time with a calendar, there are different solutions.

[00:42:46] There isn't just one right away or one way that is superior than the other. And this close related to my second point that I'm going to make today. There are five million people are adherents to Buddhism, but we don't have a Buddhism holiday recognized on the calendar.

[00:43:05] That's all I have for today, thank you. - Thank you, Hina Ansari. - All right, thank you to the school board for letting me come back.

[00:43:21] I've got excellent attendance. I don't know if you guys give attendance for school board meetings, but I've got perfect attendance right now. Superintendent McDade, I don't think I have any pop culture references for you tonight, but I might if I can get it all together. I don't know, and incidentally, Dr. Lateef, you know, if you've only got 10 people speaking and there's an hour for citizens time, you know, you could divide it up differently.

[00:43:39] I'm sure there are a bunch of math teachers that could help us figure that one out. But anyway, I wanted to talk about the intersectionality of two issues that I've spoken about here at the school board. One is in the beginning of the school year and one is more recent. I'm gonna try to tie them together. So I'd love for you to call me out if you're like, that doesn't make the two and two don't make three on that one and I'll be like, oops.

[00:43:57] But we've heard in the last, I wanna say it was the last meeting, but I can't remember. Somebody was talking about how there should be separate bathrooms for the trans students and then for the regular students. And it made me think historically, where have I heard something like that before? And it didn't take me long to figure it out. I'm sure it doesn't take you long to figure it out too, 'cause then you're talking about straights bathrooms and trans bathrooms, I'm assuming.

[00:44:17] And there were, if I'm not mistaken, not even what, 70 years ago, there were whites bathrooms, whites only bathrooms and black only bathrooms. And that's the intersectionality of the two conflicts that we really have together right now. And it's kind of culminating, I think, in the separate but equal ideology that we have from the Supreme Court ruling from, I think it's Plessy versus Ferguson, but I haven't gotten into law school, so I can't confirm or deny if that's the correct case.

[00:44:41] But if I ever get through it, we'll figure it out. But the whole idea of that was you can't have two facilities that are separate that can be equal. And if anybody wants to shout out to read Woodrow Wilson's biography, yeah, it's that almost 100 years ago to this year, he was the president and he was against desegregation.

[00:44:57] And there's a fascinating section in his book where they talk about how these people came to him and they were like, "We should desegregate the lunchroom." And he was like, "Nope, I'm good." So, I mean, it doesn't say exactly that, but you can read it yourself after you get through all 750 pages. But anyway, we've got a group here that's trying to create a club and they're trying to create a club that's already kind of exists.

[00:45:16] We've already got debate clubs. Why do we need another debate club? What's being debated in the TPUSA debate club that is prohibited in the other debate club? And I can think of a couple of ideas, but I don't want to get pelted by tomatoes while I'm here. So anyway, I'll stop there, but I think you guys should update the form that you have.

[00:45:33] I know I'm talking about something completely different 'cause it has the calendar widget on it when you're submitting and some people get confused and don't remember what day the school board meetings are. It should just be a dropdown of what the school board meetings are. But anyway, all right, thank you. - Thank you, Aileen Devereaux.

[00:45:56] - Greetings, I'm Aileen Devereaux, the Gainesville District. Like many of you, I'm deeply concerned about the wellbeing of students. I believe that it's important that we stay true to Prince William County's strategic plan core values of well-being, integrity, and inclusivity in our commitment to a positive climate and culture.

[00:46:12] I'm thankful for the administrators, staff, teachers, and parents who work tirelessly towards making our schools a safe place for all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexuality, immigration, religion, and socioeconomic status, and so on. Our students deserve the right to learn, thrive, and exist in peace, and it's something that we value and we know that we must protect.

[00:46:31] Unfortunately, there are those among us do not truly care about a positive climate and culture. They insist on introducing certain community clubs that undoubtedly will disrupt and I'll say steal the peace that many of you in education have fought to provide and implement at your schools.

[00:46:46] It is that these people are thieves in the night, taking what does not belong to them, our children, our students' sense of safety and wellbeing. So let me tell you a little bit about thieves. We know there are no honor among thieves, so we really can't try to rationalize what do they do what they do.

[00:47:02] but we decent people know it's not right. There are some that say, oh no, I'm not here for that. I'm here for X, Y, Z. Nevermind what you see documented factual information that you may have, you should believe me. No, those type of people, we just call those thieves scammers.

[00:47:17] For teachers, administrators, and staff, do not fall for it. Do not let these people disrupt, corrupt, instill the positives, climbing, and culture at your schools. Do not be scammed, stay firm and say no. In our daily lives, we protect our homes and belonging from what be thieves. We invest in security systems, ring cameras, maybe you have a guard dog.

[00:47:35] And we know that when our homes are disturbed, when someone has taken something from you that you have worked hard for that does not belong to them, it's a very violating experience. And I do not want this for our schools. Therefore, I have a suggestion. In many communities where a threat of disturbance the communities unites and form a neighborhood watch.

[00:47:52] Well, I recommend we do the same thing. It is what it is. We must organize, get out, watch, document what we need these and put them on notice. We see you and we are watching. Now I realize people are still gonna be thieves, but when you have a neighborhood watch and you shine a light on you, unapologetically bright, maybe you'll reconsider.

[00:48:11] So they're still thieves, but maybe they won't steal from your house, your school, your school district, and we could continue protecting the wellbeing of all students. And if you agree, join the neighborhood watch. Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Rowe. Carl Greton.

[00:48:32] - Good evening, I'm Carl Greton, a Prince William County community member. At the last school board meeting, of our citizens was citing a problem with a specific group because that citizen did not agree with the group's stance then they said the group was racist this statement is like calling the naacp racist that's crazy we do have freedom of religion in this county state and country it has been stated that dr mark bray who is known as dr antifa from rutgers university has written a book called antifa the anti-fascist handbook it should be a celebration of valor that this terrorist is is called out.

[00:49:09] The Rutgers University staff then raised money so that Dr. Antifa could leave the country. Antifa is labeled a terrorist organization, not "Turning Point." Saying "Turn a Point" is racist is like saying you were racist or NAACP is racist.

[00:49:26] "Turning Point" performed their due diligence and spoke against terrorism. "Turning Point" clubs should be established as a student-run group in Prince William County schools. Support them by finding a sponsor and event locations. Otherwise, what are you saying?

[00:49:42] Is terrorism okay with you? We know that what is said can far override any actions of the past. By the way, happy Veterans Day and happy Thanksgiving. - All right, that concludes citizen comment time for this evening.

[00:49:58] We're moving on to 1401, I think. Energy management and sustainability update, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to introduce our Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Vernon Bach, and Supervisor of Energy and Sustainability, Ms. Jessica Wymer, who are presenting an update on our sustainability report.

[00:50:19] They present this report annually, and so I wanna welcome them to the podium. - Thank you, Dr. McDade, and good evening, Dr. Lateef and board members. It is truly my pleasure to introduce Jessica Wymer, our Supervisor of Energy Management and Sustainability.

[00:50:36] Our energy management sustainability department sits within our facilities department and it is a small but mighty team. And Jessica is fortunate enough and we're fortunate to have her lead that team. We also have with us Dr. Shawn Spence, who's gonna join Jessica for the presentation.

[00:50:52] And Dr. Spence is the chair of the supervisors, the superintendent's advisory council on sustainability. I'm super proud to be a part of this team work with this team and I think you'll see that this team is small but mighty and we're excited to share with you those updates this evening. So I'm going to ask Jessica Weimer. Jessica please join me at the podium. You need the clicker. We do need the clicker and the presentation.

[00:51:32] Good evening everyone. Good evening. Okay I think we're ready. Okay. Good evening everyone.

[00:52:24] Dr. Lateef who is not sitting here. Members of the school board and Dr. McDade and again thank Thank you to Mr. Bach for the introduction. Again, my name is Jessica Weimer and I am proud to serve as the supervisor of energy and sustainability in the facilities department.

[00:52:43] Before we hear from Dr. Spence, chair of the SACS, I'd like to begin this evening by sharing how our integrated approach to sustainability is shaping school buildings that are high performing and designed to support meaningful learning experiences for all students.

[00:53:03] Our work is grounded in a comprehensive set of policies and regulations. They reflect our commitments to healthy learning environments, reducing emissions, and achieving savings through efficient infrastructure.

[00:53:18] Our program then is framed by three pillars that guide our division-wide efforts. We build efficient infrastructure, we conserve resources, and we reduce waste. These pillars rest on the foundation of education so that our communities, staff and students are empowered to collectively build a more sustainable and future ready PWCS.

[00:53:45] Our program also supports PWCS's vision for thriving futures and demonstrates how our school buildings can contribute to students becoming innovators, collaborators and resilient leaders. Sustainability is embedded in the strategic plan and commitment to for vision 2025.

[00:54:07] Our goals include integrating environmental literacy, using buildings as teaching tools, reducing emissions, and designing and constructing our first net zero energy school, which will be the Occoquan Elementary Replacement.

[00:54:23] We're very excited about that. Now, we've set the stage for our approach and our strategic alignment. Let's take a closer look at how our pillars of sustainability shape real projects and showcase the progress that we've made and the plan for where we are headed.

[00:54:44] Our schools and offices are essential to the learning process, and we want them to perform at their best. So one of the first things that we look at is energy conservation. So we've recently completed a feasibility study for potential electrification of our white fleet vehicles.

[00:55:03] So this is our work fleet. And a recurring strategy for us is to have students and staff be involved in energy conservation through our EcoQuest, and I'll speak more to that in just a moment. Then we look at improvements where we can gain efficiencies in building performance.

[00:55:22] And we use a holistic approach to infrastructure improvements. So for example, this past year, our first geothermal HVAC system was placed in service at Bel Air Elementary School. We also did a small scale retro commissioning project on the automation controls at four schools.

[00:55:41] And we made lighting upgrades, LED lighting upgrades at seven additional schools. So these projects demonstrate how targeted investments in high performance strategies can deliver real results. As I mentioned earlier, education is the foundation of our program.

[00:56:01] Our newly re-imagined EcoQuest, formerly known as the Energy Challenge, is our annual incentive-based initiative. We designed it to better align with the Virginia Naturally Schools program. So this past year, we had 63 of our schools participating in EcoQuest.

[00:56:21] We also hosted, for the very first time, our own PWCS Student Environmental Action Showcase, or SEAS for short. We were proud to feature 94 projects created by 275 student participants in both individual and group categories.

[00:56:42] And we had the support of 38 community partners at the event. The contributions made by our schools, staff, and students do not go unnoticed. The division and individual schools have been recognized this past year at the national, state, and regional levels.

[00:57:05] So first, at the national level, Forest Park High School earned the Green Flag Award from the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools U.S. program. And Forest Park is the first of eco schools in PWCS and the green flag is the highest honor.

[00:57:24] And then Belmont Elementary was recently recognized as a Virginia honoree for Green Ribbon Schools. So while the US Department of Education no longer administers this program, states along with several leading national environmental organizations stepped in to ensure that this year's nominees were celebrated And had the federal program continued, Belmont would have been PWCS's fifth green ribbon school.

[00:57:54] So pictured on this slide are students from Belmont Elementary holding their green ribbon banner. And then at the state level, 30 PWCS schools were honored through the Commonwealth's Department of Wildlife Resources Virginia Naturally program.

[00:58:10] PWCS had more schools recognized than any other school division in Virginia. So for some additional context, the previous year in school year 23, 24, we had 13 Virginia Naturally schools. So this year's total represents a 130% increase in total recognitions from the previous year.

[00:58:30] So we're very excited about that number. And finally, at the regional level, PWCS's Environmental Literacy Plan was honored with a Climate and Energy Leadership Award by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

[00:58:46] So these recognitions reflect the division's commitment to sustainability and to stewardship. And in keeping with the theme of supporting student education through sustainability, we also provided activities for extended learning.

[00:59:02] We distributed new classroom recycle bins division-wide. 12 of our schools participated in our composting initiative. All schools have access to updated energy and utility dashboards so that they can use data from their own buildings to support and supplement their learning.

[00:59:23] And like we've pictured on this slide, several schools are engaging students using outdoor learning spaces. We also hosted an immersive concert-like experience for many of our third grade students. This no cost to schools field trip was held at the Hilton Performing Arts Center.

[00:59:42] There were interactive environmental songs and dances performed by our friends from the EcoHero show. All of these activities reflect cross-functional collaboration between schools, staff, and community partners so that our students can demonstrate environmental literacy through real-world action.

[01:00:05] So now that we have our instructional foundation in place and our building performance efforts already underway, let's take a step back and look at the bigger picture. So now I'm going to walk you through a statistical snapshot of our year by highlighting how our three sustainability pillars are showing up in the data.

[01:00:25] So everything from energy savings to building performance to reductions in waste and emissions. This data dashboard reflects this past school year with the exception of the cumulative data shown in the energy conservation box on the top left and the environmental equivalents on the bottom right.

[01:00:45] So since 2012, it's been 13 years now that our program has been in existence, we have achieved significant savings in the form of \$82.7 million in avoided energy costs. This is equivalent to powering over 30,000 homes for one year and charging over 18 billion cell phones in that 13 year span.

[01:01:10] And then as we move down the left column, you can see that our energy costs and use per student have decreased. So reductions of 7.6% and 2.6% respectively, as has our overall building energy use, which is down by almost 3%.

[01:01:28] And then moving into the middle column, our emissions have decreased by 2.5%. And then over to the right, our six solar installations produced over 4,000 megawatts of energy. And to put that into

perspective, it's enough energy to fully power about four of our average sized elementary schools for one year.

[01:01:51] And then rounding out the data here for waste reduction and recycling, Our landfill diversion rate was 24.4%, and we composted 124,000 pounds of food waste. And while this data dashboard is compelling, the next few slides I think are even better, and they visualize our efforts in charts and figures.

[01:02:14] So first on this chart, this is another cumulative look from our baseline year, which is 2012, all the way through this past June of 2025. So I will draw your attention to the dip in 2020 and 2021. This of course reflects the COVID years.

[01:02:31] And then we do see a fairly steep incline in cost and use over the next couple of years. But we believe this is mostly due to coming back online and an in-person post COVID. And now things are leveling off. We are trending back downward in energy cost and use.

[01:02:48] So overall, even with the increases in building footprint and student enrollment over the last 13 years our energy use and cost have remained relatively stable and our emissions have significantly reduced. This reflects the impact of our efficiency focused strategies.

[01:03:09] Next, we'd like to showcase some positive outcomes from our first geothermal project, which as I said earlier, was at Belle Air Elementary School. So as of August, 2024, Belle Air's new HVAC system was placed in service and this school is now all electric.

[01:03:27] The data from this past year, we think, speaks for itself. And simply put, it's affirming of the division-wide progress that we're making toward our sustainability goals. So here we show a 70% reduction in electricity use and emissions, and over a 65% reduction in energy costs.

[01:03:49] So our utility bills have significantly dropped at this school. These results validate our investment in high-performance systems. In addition to upgrading mechanical systems, we do have some other project types and associated outcomes that we'd like to share with you.

[01:04:07] So our first project here is smart irrigation. So this type of system works like a thermostat, but for our landscapes. So it waters only when needed using real time data like rainfall and other local climate information.

[01:04:25] So it's saving us water, we're reducing our costs, and we're supporting our overall sustainability goals. So with this emerging technology, we've saved over a half million dollars on our water bills this past year alone.

[01:04:41] And we have this at 60 sites. Then at our six solar locations, we reduced emissions by 911 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. So that's like taking nearly 200 cars off the road for one year.

[01:04:58] Next, we've also done a project here at the Kelly Leadership Center. We completed a mechanical system upgrade and did retro commissioning that led to almost a 47% reduction in energy used in just a few months time. So I'd like to back up for a second and just explain the context of retro commissioning.

[01:05:19] This is like giving our buildings a tune up. So just like your car benefits from going in for its 100,000 mile maintenance to run efficiently, Our mechanical and control systems do benefit from being recalibrated and optimized from time to time.

[01:05:36] So with this type of project, we're not replacing equipment. We are making sure that the equipment that we already have is working as intended and as it was designed. So with these small tweaks, we can save significant energy. We can improve overall comfort in our buildings and we can significantly reduce operational costs.

[01:05:57] Finally, we did another retro commissioning of four schools automation controls and there at those four schools, we have lowered energy costs by 16%. So as you can see, we are finding that retro commissioning is a scalable project, so low hanging fruit and that can help us collectively reduce our energy use, costs and emissions throughout the entire building portfolio.

[01:06:22] So that gives us a clear picture of where we are today. Let's take a look at what's next, how we plan to build on this progress and have greater impact in the division and continue moving sustainability forward. So for this school year, we will continue our LED upgrades.

[01:06:40] We'll do some additional retro commissioning projects. We are gearing up to begin phase two of our solar installations. We are launching an electric vehicle small scale project for our white work fleet vehicles. So not bus fleet, this will be for work fleet.

[01:06:57] We're going to develop an emissions reduction plan, expand waste reduction efforts, and continue to elevate our education and engagement, including hosting our second annual Student Environmental Action Showcase, which will be held at Woodbridge High School on Saturday, April 25th, 2026, so please save the date.

[01:07:20] So all these are future-focused strategies, and they support long-term sustainability division-wide. So now I am nearing my portion of the presentation and I do wanna take a moment to share some appreciation for the many collaborations that contributed to the division's efforts in sustainability this year.

[01:07:42] So first I do want to share a heartfelt thank you to my team who are all here behind me. To my team, the energy and sustainability coordinators and specialists, you all live out our shared purpose every single day and you bring our goals to life in innovative and amazing ways and I am so honored to be in this with you.

[01:08:08] I also wanna recognize my colleagues in the facilities department. So much of this program and our overarching department goals and these incredible energy results are in support of maintenance efficiency. So as we use sustainable design and construction and enhance building performance, we can also streamline our operations.

[01:08:29] So with that, I'd like to recognize our director of facilities, Justin Moss, assistant director, Assam El-Jaber, And of course, Mr. Bach, our Chief Operating Officer. In addition, we could not do what we do without all of our internal and external collaborators.

[01:08:47] So to all of our friends and colleagues in the other departments and schools that we work with almost every day, especially our sustainability liaisons who are our direct connect in the schools, they have helped us move sustainability forward every year.

[01:09:03] And then a very special thank you to Dr. McDade, our superintendent, for your continued leadership and for supporting all of our efforts and for helping us to embed sustainability into the strategic plan. Thank you, Dr. McDade. And finally, to the school board for your ongoing commitment to

sustainability and for helping us get this movement in sustainability started when you all passed the resolution for the sustainability initiative about five years ago, actually, in June of 2020.

[01:09:33] So as you can see, we are all working together and we're aligning our systems with our values, we're not just improving facilities operations, we are unlocking the full potential of our school buildings to support every learner.

[01:09:48] My team believes that every school can be a green school and through our unified efforts, we are making that belief a reality. I've mentioned a few times this evening how important community involvement is in our program and the superintendent's advisory council sustainability continues to offer thoughtful recommendations that help guide our work we have new leadership in the council this year and a group of stakeholders that includes students staff and community members and this council plays a vital role in shaping our path forward at this time I'd like

[01:10:26] to invite our next speaker up to the podium dr. Shawn Spence who is the chair of the SACS dr. Spence represents the Potomac District and brings a unique perspective as an expert in finance and engineering, holding a doctorate in engineering and an MBA in strategy and corporate finance. He is an active adjunct professor of finance at George Mason University, a senior manager specializing in financial advisory services at BDO, and his strategic planning and operational experience were forged over two decades as a major in

[01:11:05] and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and are currently applied through his roles on local economic development and infrastructure boards. Please join me in welcoming the chair of the SACS, Dr. Sean Spence.

[01:11:30] - Good evening, everyone. My name is Dr. Sean Spence. I was appointed by Justin Wilk to this board and my esteemed colleagues saw fit to elect me as a chair, so here I am.

[01:11:48] Before I get started, I only have three slides, so I'll be fairly brief, but I do wanna say that I do believe that this particular body is doing God's work. This is the most important thing, educating our children, and I really appreciate the time and effort and care that this board spends taking care of our children.

[01:12:09] It's very, very, very important, so thank you for that. The other thing I wanna say really quick for the staff of the Energy and Sustainability Department that I'm now gonna have the pleasure of working with. When Jennifer and I were reviewing this over the phone, and I was looking at the slides, and I said to her, I said, did you guys hire McKinsey or BCG or one of these fancy consulting firms to do these slides?

[01:12:33] And she said, no, this is my team that did it. So kudos to the team for these wonderful slides that typically you pay a lot of money for a very, very elite firm to do this for you. So great job. All right, so as I said, I'm an appointed member To this particular body, it's an honor to be here today.

[01:13:07] As you heard about my background, that is in engineering. I also do hold a Master's of Science degree in Energy and Environmental Management with a Hazardous Waste Operator Certificate. My experience is both public and private, both with the Army Corps of Engineers as a reserve army officer, but also with engineering firms like Arcadis, Turner, and Reynolds, and my other appointed positions with the Cherry Hill Development Authority

[01:13:43] and the newly formed Dumfries Economic Development Authority. Prince William County's doing some great work and I'm glad to be a part of it. My focus as chair is ensuring that every recommendation we bring forward is not just environmentally sound, but also physically responsible strategic investment that supports the durability and efficiency of the PWCS asset portfolio.

[01:14:12] I'm pleased to share an overview of the tangible progress that Prince William County Schools has made that reflects our priorities and recommendations. Our primary focus is taking these strategic recommendations and advocating for them to become operational realities that benefit the students, staff, and the entire community.

[01:14:47] The recommendations approved by the superintendent over the last few years represent a significant commitment in both physical and environmental stewardship. These aren't just paper goals, they are active projects creating real change across the division.

[01:15:03] In terms of financial and operational efficiency, we've seen continued investment in modernizing the facilities. These initiatives, such as the retro-commissioning that was mentioned earlier, the LED upgrades.

[01:15:19] These are all tangible examples of this effort. The smart irrigation, from what I understand, has resulted in a cumulative savings of about \$1.2 million, which is very significant. In terms of health and wellness, the water bottle refilling stations promote hydration and reduce plastic waste across the schools.

[01:15:42] And we are going to continue to advise that we bring on additional staffing to continue to help this team with their mission. Prince William County Schools is future proofing its operations by completing the fleet electrification feasibility study positioning Prince William County Schools to be ready for the transportation energy transition.

[01:16:08] The common thread here is impact, ensuring Prince William County Schools infrastructure is efficient, modern, and directly supportive of a healthier learning environment. Looking forward, SACS is focused on deepening our impact by recommending the integration of sustainable principles more broadly into capital projects and the instructional core curriculum.

[01:16:38] Our approved recommendations for the last school year include three key areas that were briefed earlier, high-performance buildings, learning environments, and waste diversion.

[01:16:56] High-performance buildings, We suggest high performance buildings and upgrades and embedded sustainability investments into all capital improvement projects. We want to ensure that every dollar spent contributes to a more resilient and efficient portfolio.

[01:17:12] Prince William County's overall energy costs, as was mentioned, are only up about 7.2%, but over the same period of time, energy costs in Prince William County has gone up nearly 40%.

[01:17:28] So you're definitely experiencing great savings during that time frame. This demonstrates the success of ongoing efficiency investments. In terms of learning environments, there's a couple of studies out there that talk about the impact of learning environments on student success.

[01:17:52] There's one study at the University of Illinois where Professor of Natural Resources, Environmental sciences and psychology, Francis Ku talks about how outdoor learning environments directly impact student test scores, particularly in science.

[01:18:17] They also impact how students interact throughout the day by lowering stress levels and making school more enjoyable for those students. another study by Katherine Jordan that talks about how having if you don't have ability to go outside just having a visual to outside or having a way to put greenery throughout the school you can reduce the stress levels in students and over and over and reduce the overall cognitive cognitive load and increase cognitive

[01:18:56] resilience allowing students to learn deeper and process information at a better rate. So we continue to expand our commitment to student success by supporting the expansion of outdoor learning environments and creation of curriculum lessons that connect sustainability directly to the instructional core.

[01:19:19] This makes learning hands-on and relevant supporting the division's goal to integrate environmental literacy into all schools. The last one is waste diversion. we are endorsing that Prince William County Schools increase its landfill diversion rate by reducing waste, including expanding composting and food share initiatives and promoting the reuse across the division.

[01:19:45] This builds on success from the 24-25 school year where 12 schools sorted organic scraps for compost. These efforts reflect the collaborative and inclusive recommendation process that SACS embodies.

[01:20:04] Finally, our long-term goal, oops, Finally, our long-term goal for 25, 26 school year are centered on further strategic integration, connecting students with nature, including outdoor learning environments, reviewing the reports for the fleet electrification, feasibility study, and EV pilot, and ensuring sustainability is a core factor in future construction and design.

[01:20:35] In closing, SAAC serves a vital bridge between the community, the administration, and the division's operational goals. Ensuring that PWCS continues to have a thriving future that are environmentally and fiscally sound. And I think Jessica's gonna join me up here at this podium for any questions.

[01:20:57] - I wanna thank Ms. Weimer and Dr. Spence. That does conclude our presentation and we're happy to answer any questions that you might have. - Mr. Wilk. - Thank you so much and Dr. Spence, it's an honor having you on the committee and being at the forefront of this.

[01:21:12] I'm not surprised you took the chairmanship of this. So thank you for doing that and for your role in the community and advocacy last year in Potomac shore. So thank you for this and the presentation. I do wanna mention a couple of things that I was thinking, I know a big goal is the outdoor learning activities and stuff like that.

[01:21:30] And I was thinking of, you know, I see an expansion, a lot of our schools with learning gardens and stuff like that and the schools and stuff. And for my job job, I was talking with the director of early childhood education in the state of Wyoming. Yes, long story, but she travels all around the country and I asked her if she, her trends and what she's seeing as like one of the biggest impacts with early childhood education and she sees outdoor learning gardens.

[01:21:57] It's becoming a major thing, promoting sustainability, the environment, all that stuff. So I definitely think we're on the right track with that, especially with some of our earliest learners, ages three to five. The other thing I was thinking of, and I know certain schools have programs like this to make this as a broader opportunity would be our students in special education.

[01:22:19] With them, students transitioning to adulthood, whether it be after graduation or up to age 21, 22, I think there's a great opportunity to have our students with special needs do various components of this, whether it's sorting out things for recycling, different sequencing of activities and such like that.

[01:22:40] I do believe it is a great opportunity, worthwhile for these students to, you know, for future activities and employment to be doing these various roles. So anyways, those are my thoughts, no questions, but thank you for being up here tonight. Thank you to the whole committee. Appreciate it. - Thank you, Mr. Williams.

[01:22:58] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of my favorite presentations of the year. I just wanna thank all of you. Congratulations on being the chair for the committee. Thank you, Mr. Warmeyer and Mr. Bach. I do have a few questions, but I really appreciate the level of detail into the presentation, it's not a topic, I think is the favorite of a lot of people when it comes to sustainability, and it's such a broad topic, so it's really nice to see how it's individually broken down and what that means in our schools, and as someone who's been here for a very long time, I truly appreciate the growth from, I think it was like a contest for turning lights off, and we were paying someone, consultants, and then we took 'em on, and then,

[01:23:35] so it's, I really appreciate the level of care and detail into making this a fully integrated program, not only from our community outward, but within our division and even within the staff. And that brings me to a couple of my questions.

[01:23:51] Justin kind of started it off when he was talking about outdoor learning, I guess, time, 'cause I'm not really sure what that means from your perspective. A lot of our schools, like our high schools, they have outdoor courtyards, but most of our students don't go outside unless they're going out for PE or they're coming and going from the building.

[01:24:10] So what does that look like in terms of sustainability and what does that mean? - Hi, Ms. Williams, thank you so much. So we're very interested in outdoor learning environments. And so at this time, we're just really gathering information.

[01:24:27] We're starting to study what that looks like at all of our schools. There's a lot of things that we don't know yet. So in essence, the first thing that we're doing is just a study because there's varying levels across all of our schools. Some schools have gardens, some schools have, as you said courtyards, some schools have full blown out classrooms.

[01:24:47] I know Freedom is building a classroom right now and several of our schools have that opportunity. So right now we'd like to just investigate what's going on around the division and see what we can do because we're very interested in that and learning more about it and seeing what guidance that we could provide so that other schools could have similar opportunities.

[01:25:07] - Okay, I mean, I think it's a wonderful idea. It wasn't under sustainability, but during the custodians week, I know we have a custodian, Ms. Phillips, at River Oaks, who's been for a very long time teaching some of her students how to grow whatever grows. And I think that little programs and opportunities like that is a great way to kind of, 'cause you know I'm all about integrating as much as we can, and along that lines, we used to do the vegetable towers in our schools, I don't know if any of you were here when we did that, but we still have some schools that have those.

[01:25:37] Is that part of their sustainability program, or do we, I wasn't sure if that was food services, or where that fit or if there was an opportunity because we already have those equipments to kind of

integrate that in yes uh that is food services but we do work very closely with the director andrea and her team okay i wasn't sure because i i see him all the time and then um i promise i'm gonna finish that real quick uh my last last two questions is how much more led replacement do we have to do because i feel like we've been talking about it for years and i know there was a hiccup because of covid and i'm not looking for an exact number but are we quarter we only have like a

[01:26:13] quarter left we're about 60 of the way there and so we we do feel that in the next few years we're going to be able to round that out to 100 i appreciate that because it does make a huge difference in our buildings and the last thing i'll say on this is uh again under the lines of integrations we talk about freedom they have the sins program of sustainability and i see a growing movement within our schools to collaborate whether it's elementary and high school or middle middle and high school and as you're bringing these ideas to us and programs on board, I just think it would be wonderful to see more of that because I know younger students look up to our older students and when it comes to science and anything we want our kids to do,

[01:26:49] having the next age group doing the thing keeps them doing that thing, I'm a science mom. So I'm excited by this, I think it's wonderful and I also like to see different areas like you talk about food services and sustainability or science and art.

[01:27:05] We've had that periodically, a little bit more integration. I think it would be great for all of us. And again, I think you'd appreciate your time and explaining things. I don't know what retrofitting was, so thank you so much. - And if I could add, because it came up twice now, the outdoor learning experiences, I will say and foreshadow a little bit, the team is working on some pretty solid plans and some goals to expand that pretty significantly across the district over the next five years.

[01:27:29] You'll be hearing about that in the future. - Mr. Jesse. - Thank you for your presentation. I think I recall when the program started, and I think Ms. Williams talked about it, we hired a firm to run the program, and that's been a while, and it's impressive to see where you have gone.

[01:27:55] I do recall, I think it was last year, that I had an outdoor experience with one of my elementary schools. There was erosion of the areas, and the team planted different trees around, and the kids came out and they explained the different trees and why they put it there and so forth.

[01:28:17] So that was really impressive to see that. And I think the other thing that's really important is that a lot of adults are not really thinking about recycling, but more we do it at school, the kids will come home and say, "Well, you gotta recycle that."

[01:28:35] And I think that's the thing. Keep up the good work, thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. - Ms. Wall. - Thank you for your presentation. all of you it's always so it's always a nice topic one that we can all get excited about and agree on so I appreciate it presentation was really informative um Miss Williams asked a couple of my questions so I won't ask them about LED upgrades where we were with that and the other the outdoor learning environment question I do think that kids appreciate being outside and I also think they appreciate having greenery in the classroom that's

[01:29:12] something all students can benefit from and so I think you know I support those efforts and I appreciate the thoughtfulness on that and also figuring out what what's the geography on this right now because we do have a lot of different schools different school designs and different activities already occurring at our schools and a community is also interested and it may be a place where community

partners might be willing to help us with like maintaining gardens and or standing up gardens and things like that vegetable flower whatever I did have another comment impressive 82.7 million cost

[01:29:51] avoidance that's a really big number there are a lot of savings that have come through our smart irrigation solar installations and the retro commissioning so I applaud the work on that because if we are spending less on these areas it means we can have put more money into our classrooms and our educational tools and resources for our kids question the geothermal heat pump that was really a really cool thing we did over there at Bel Air do we are we investigating doing that at any other school sites I know it has to do with

[01:30:25] the adequacy of the soil that has to be the right kind of soil that's my first question and we'll go yes absolutely great question so that is one of the things we're studying the feasibility at all possible sites and as you said it's not going to be possible Occoquan will have geothermal and there's a couple of other sites that are in construction that we have either considered geothermal for or will have geothermal so especially new construction it's much easier to do but as you know Bel Air it was a retrofit and it was a fantastic project and and as I said earlier in the presentation the savings are speaking

[01:31:05] for themselves I mean 65% reduction in energy costs is phenomenal real quick just jump in here because that was my question do you have any more that we're gonna retrofit or that are potential means it's just that yeah some of the schools that we're looking at for renovation so those schools that are under major major renovation we are looking at that as well so that's always going to be one of our preferred options just because of the lifecycle costing over you know the 30-year lifespan is just so much better than a made a regular mechanical system where we're having to replace those more often so I

[01:31:41] I don't I'm sorry I don't understand that so are there so you have Bel Air we were we did it successfully you're looking at the other schools that are coming up for renovation to consider doing that but are there good candidate schools that are not coming up for renovation that would benefit from doing the heat pump stuff I think than a large renovation I think when and also when we're investing significantly in HVAC via the capital improvements program so as we're looking at the major mechanicals which are maybe not part of a building renovation and those are just going to be one-off renovations for those mechanical systems yes we are also looking

[01:32:21] at geothermal where possible and feasible because as as we've said before the grounds are not always conducive to that to the wells that that's my understanding is that you have to have a certain kind of soil and depth of soil and yeah i'll use potomac shores area elementary school that's a that's a candidate that really is not suitable for geothermal the size of the site is not conducive it's you you know there are substantial wells that are drilled as part of a geothermal site one project that we are looking at and i think you're aware is the 14th high school with geothermal

[01:32:58] wells at that site in geothermal hvac so i think dr latif to your point yes as we're going through the renovation of buildings, but also addressing our HVAC and mechanicals, those are candidates for geothermal as well.

[01:33:17] And that's always going to be our... I guess the question I had is that, are you saying it doesn't make economic sense to go in and just do a geothermal heat pump renovation on its own, even if the site was good, you want to combine it with when we're doing the normal modeling or what?

[01:33:35] I'm not sure what... Yeah, it's a good question. I don't think we're saying that. I think we're prioritizing those sites because we have work going on at those sites and those make sense to do because it's ongoing work. I think we can certainly expand that out and look at more schools.

[01:33:51] It is a higher upfront cost to perform the geothermal, but the savings in the long-term are beneficial. - So it's a 65% savings at Bel Air. So like I would love to know what the survey is on all 99 other schools left over on where we can find 65% savings.

[01:34:08] - Sure. - Prioritize those as geothermal. - Absolutely. - I don't, but has that been done? - No, it has not. - Okay, what I was asking. - I don't have any further questions, but I just wanted to say thank you for your efforts and thank you to all the volunteers and people who are willing to be on our sustainability council.

[01:34:28] I know that's totally uncompensated time. It's volunteer service and we appreciate your and your colleagues' sacrifice of time and skill to be on the committee, so thank you. - Ms. Williams.

[01:34:43] - Just really quickly, I think maybe for our board's understanding, I know you have the, how you conduct the review process for what needs to be updated when in our buildings, maybe if we could get a little refresher of what that includes and doesn't include. So we have presentations like that, like this, we can kind of categories in our mind to ask 'cause we're not in facilities, so it would be helpful, I think. - Sure.

[01:35:03] - Sorry, thank you. - Great, thank you all very much. Great presentation, always good news. This one's always the good news presentation. Thank you guys very much. Moving on, we have student representative time. We have tonight Bula Sarsa from CD Hilton High School.

[01:35:20] Ms. Sarsa, you may have the floor. - Thank you. Hello and good evening to the Prince William County community, members of the school board and Superintendent McDade. I'd like to begin my remarks this evening by congratulating students on the completion of a successful first quarter. As No School November approaches, let's focus on keeping up the good work and maintaining or even increasing our attendance as the school year progresses.

[01:35:43] Speaking of attendance, our student senators and student voice committees have shared some of the ways that their schools are rewarding good attendance and explaining its importance to their peers. Woodbridge High School has started utilizing tardy sweeps again, putting up attendance flyers in the hallways with the help of its marketing classes and planning to throw parties for students who miss fewer than three days of school per semester.

[01:36:05] Colgan High School has started a weekly raffle for students with good attendance where winners have the opportunity to win snacks, prizes, and even skip the lunch line. Last month, on October 20th, student voice committees from across the county had the opportunity to connect with one another and build their leadership skills at the first student leadership workshop.

[01:36:24] Students participated in breakout sessions where they looked at data and used it to create a wide range of solutions for a fictional school. The collaboration, communication, and data analysis skills learned in this workshop will transfer to members of our middle and high school student voice committees as they work to make our schools more welcoming and inclusive.

[01:36:42] Additionally, on October 24th, Our student senators had the opportunity to meet with Dr. McDade and her staff as they prepared to write the county's strategic plan for the next five years. Our senators gave their input on a wide range of topics, including family and community engagement, positive climate and culture, and student representation.

[01:37:02] The Student Senate would like to thank Dr. McDade and her staff for seeking our input as they work to create a county that ensures the success of every student. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that the month of November is Scholarship Awareness Month. and seniors, please communicate with your college counselors and check Naviance in order to make sure that you do not miss any opportunities to get part of or even all of your college tuition paid for.

[01:37:27] Once again, it has been an honor to represent the over 90,000 students here in Prince William County as student representative. Have a great rest of your night. - Thank you, Ms. Sarsa. Moving on to superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01:37:42] I would like to begin with some exciting news for our students and families. Prince William County Public Schools has launched a new initiative called FUSE, which stands for Funding for Understanding Science Through Exploration. This program provides financial support for secondary students conducting independent science and engineering research during the 25-26 school year.

[01:38:06] Through this initiative, students can receive up to \$250 per project to help cover materials and equipment costs for participation in local science and engineering fairs. FUSE funds promote academic excellence, amplify student voice and foster future ready STEM learning while removing financial barriers to meaningful research.

[01:38:28] I wanna thank the school board for your continued commitment to innovation and for allocating this funding to empower our young scientists and engineers. Applications are now open with deadlines on November 12th for high school students and December 15th for middle school students.

[01:38:45] Now as we look ahead to further opportunities for our students and families, I'd like to highlight some important updates and reminders for the upcoming month. The specialty programs application is now open. Families should select their preferences as we consider them during placement.

[01:39:02] While a specific program seat cannot be guaranteed, PWCS strives to honor each student's top choices whenever possible. More information is available on our website at www.pwcs.edu. Scroll to the middle of our website and click on the Specialty Program Information button to find the application.

[01:39:23] November is National Family Engagement Month, and I want to thank the PWCS staff at the core of our commitment to family and community engagement. We have a network of programs designed to connect, empower, and support families, which include the Family Community Engagement Series.

[01:39:42] School parent liaisons, family academic and community engagement specialists, or what we call FACES, and the various community hubs, making a difference in our students' and staff's lives. Thank you to everyone who is helping PWCS build a culture where families are not just welcome, but are essential to our vision of launching thriving futures.

[01:40:05] November is also National Scholarship Awareness Month, a perfect time to help students plan the next steps in their journey. Whether our students are preparing for college, career, military, or entrepreneurial pathways, PWCS is committed to helping every graduate find their purpose and thrive.

[01:40:24] Our college and career counselors are available in every high school to assist students with applications, scholarships, and financial aid. Families can visit the PWCS scholarship webpage under departments, student services and post-secondary success, college and career readiness, and financial aid, or just search scholarships to learn more.

[01:40:46] Together, let us continue launching Thriving Futures for every student at Prince William County Public Schools. A positive climate and culture begins with a learning environment that fosters inclusivity, connectedness, and social and emotional wellness for all. From November 3rd to November 11th, we recognize Attendance Officer Appreciation Week.

[01:41:06] Reducing chronic absenteeism by 5% is a key goal in our launching Thriving Futures strategic plan. Students who are in class on time every day will be on time for graduation. Our attendance officers work passionately to engage students and families, ensuring every child feels supported and seen.

[01:41:24] As we enter the winter months, let us all continue to promote student success through healthy habits, consistent attendance, and participation in after-school activities. This week, we also celebrate National School Psychology Week, November 3rd through the 7th.

[01:41:40] Our dedicated school psychologists play a vital role in supporting student well-being. They are trained to listen, help, and heal, and they provide essential services that strengthen our school's mental health supports. Please take a moment this week to thank them for their incredible work.

[01:41:58] In closing, I would like to share that schools will be closed next Tuesday, November 11th, in observance of Veterans Day. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Next up is the annual report from the Ombudsman.

[01:42:16] We, tonight, will welcome Monique Bookstein to the podium to provide the annual report of the ombudsman for the fiscal year 2025. Bookstein, you may begin the presentation. Thank you. - Thank you. Good evening. I would like to thank Chairman Lateef, Vice Chair Blake, school board members, Dr. McDade and the PWCS community for providing me with the continued opportunity to serve as your ombuds and to present on my annual report.

[01:42:43] This report highlights ombuds services, reflects the concerns brought to my office and patterns observed during the 24-25 school year. Let me begin by explaining the role of the Ombuds Office.

[01:43:01] The Office of the Ombuds serves as a resource for the entire school community, providing support navigating PWCS-related concerns, conflicts, and issues. The office exists to ensure when challenges arise, whether they involve communication barriers, procedural questions, or interpersonal conflicts, individuals have a safe, confidential place to turn for support.

[01:43:28] The office helps people understand their options, navigate complex systems, and work toward constructive resolutions. To understand how the office operates, it is important to look at the values that guide the work.

[01:43:46] As an organizational ombuds, I follow the International Ombuds Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. The core values guiding the office are: acting with honesty and integrity, promoting fairness and fair process, remaining nonjudgmental with respect for individual differences, encouraging dignity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, communicating for accurate

understanding through active listening, empowering individuals, self-determination and collaborative problem solving,

[01:44:23] and striving to be an accessible, trusted, and respected informal resource. These values are implemented through four fundamental principles that define the practice. These principles distinguish this office from other resources within PWCS.

[01:44:45] The defining principle of the office is confidentiality. This means identities and communications are protected to the fullest extent possible. Impartiality means I am a designated neutral. I do not advocate for any individual or entity.

[01:45:03] Independence ensures the office is independent in structure, function, appearance, and decision-making. And in informality means I do not conduct investigations or participate in formal processes. Rather, I help visitors consider options and navigate next steps.

[01:45:24] With these principles in mind, here's how I engage when someone reaches out. At the individual level, I will listen, clarify concerns, identify underlying causes, provide information, and explore options.

[01:45:41] At the organizational level, I provide feedback and serve as an early warning system by identifying patterns and systemic issues that may need attention. This dual function allows the office to help individuals while also contributing to continuous organizational improvement.

[01:46:00] Now, let me walk through the experience a visitor can expect when working with the Ombuds. When someone contacts the office, there is a structured yet flexible process. I began with the initial conversation and clear role clarification of what I can and cannot do.

[01:46:20] Together, we establish an understanding of the situation the individual's going through, analyze options, and determine next steps that align with that visitor's goals. Throughout, my aim is to empower the visitor's decision-making while maintaining confidentiality and neutrality.

[01:46:40] Beyond this process, the office does offer a range of services to address conflict. These services include active listening and understanding, coaching, shuttle diplomacy to clarify issues between parties, policy clarification, referrals to appropriate resources, facilitated conversations, group conflict assessments, training and conflict management, and feedback to decision makers.

[01:47:11] Every service is tailored to the unique context and needs of the visitor. With that foundation, I'll now review the activity from the past year. During the '24-'25 school year, the office engaged with 368 visitors, a 15% increase from the prior year.

[01:47:34] Next, I would like to highlight the office's engagement pattern since its inception. Since 2019, visitor engagement has grown by 133%. This level of engagement demonstrates the office's ability to serve as a significant need within PWCS, and that awareness of our services continue to grow.

[01:47:57] Now let's examine who is contacting the office. Of the 368 visitors, 66% were employees, 27% parents/guardians, 5% community members, and 2% students.

[01:48:14] Among the 242 employees, 102 held certified positions, 83 administrative positions, and 57 classified positions. Understanding who utilizes our services helps to ensure we're reaching all entities of our school community and identifies where we may need to increase our outreach efforts.

[01:48:38] Now let's take a closer look at when visitors are reaching out. Employees make up the largest share of contacts. They usually come with workplace concerns, questions about policies, or help with resolving conflicts.

[01:48:53] Most employee contacts are in March and May. Parents' guardians contact the office when support is needed with student-related issues, communication challenges, or navigating school processes. Their busiest months were March and October.

[01:49:12] Community members include prospective families, partners, and others with PWCS-related questions. Their contacts were high in October, November, and March. Finally, students bring concerns about their school experience, peer relationships, and policies.

[01:49:31] contacts peaked in November and April. Overall, the third quarter continues to be the busiest time of the year. Next I will highlight engagement with the office across different school levels. Among the 242 employees who contacted the office, 73 worked at the central office level, 72 at the elementary school level, 52 at the middle school level, and 45 at the high school level. I would like to note that employees work level noted here does not necessarily indicate that

[01:50:06] is where the concern originated. Now let's examine school level patterns for parents and guardians. Of the 101 parent guardians, 35 raised concerns regarding the elementary school level, 32 at the middle school level, 29 at the high school level, and 5 regarding central office or policy matters. Now let's take a brief look at community members. Among 19 community members, 11 raised concerns at the central office or policy level, five related to the elementary school level,

[01:50:43] and three at the high school level. We also heard directly from students. Student contacts were concentrated at the high school level, with six students engaging with the office this year. While the number is modest, student voice remains crucial and we will continue to tailor outreach to ensure awareness of the office. Next let's take a look at how visitors first contacted the office.

[01:51:11] Accessibility is crucial to the office's effectiveness. 20% contacted the office via the Ombuds email inbox, 30% by phone, 41% through our online booking calendar. By offering several ways to connect visitors can choose what works best for them. Equally important is understanding how people learned about the office. This chart illustrates the primary sources of awareness such as as the PWCS website, word-of-mouth, prior experience, school board communications, and

[01:51:51] internal referrals. This information helps to shape our communication and outreach plans, making sure everyone in the school community knows this resource is available to them. Once visitors contact the office, I offer consultation in various ways: 27% of the consultations were in person: 26% virtually, 24% by phone, and 23% by email.

[01:52:22] This flexibility helps to meet individual needs. I would like to note, because the work is confidential, email responses are brief and visitors are encouraged to use other methods for deeper discussions. Now let's turn to the type of concerns the Office heard this year.

[01:52:42] The Office uses the International Ombuds Association's uniform reporting categories to classify and track concerns. The standardized system helps identifying patterns, monitor trends over time, and communicate effectively about systemic issues.

[01:52:58] The overall top reporting category was evaluative relationships, which is primarily involving the supervisor and employee interactions. For the 24-25 school year, I created a new category called educational partners.

[01:53:14] This was created to better capture concerns raised by parents, guardians, community members, and students. This category includes questions, concerns, or issues between educational partners such as teacher-parent, teacher-student, or principal-parent interactions and became the second most reported category for the 24-25 school year.

[01:53:38] The third highest category was services administrative issues, which covers questions and concerns related to services provided by the organization. Now, breaking this down by visitor group reveals further insight, and I'll start with employees.

[01:53:56] For employees, the most common category was evaluative relationships. The most frequently noted subcategories were communication, which refers to the quality and quantity of information, and supervisory effectiveness, which includes management of departments or classrooms and addressing issues.

[01:54:16] These themes often relate to role clarity, feedback quality, and timely resolution of concerns. For parents/guardians, the pattern looks different. Their most common category was educational partners, which reflects services provided by the organization.

[01:54:35] The leading subcategories were leadership effectiveness, relating to the management of departments, classrooms or buildings, and addressing issues; and customer service communication, which concerns the quality and quantity of communication.

[01:54:52] Community members showed a similar trend. Their most common category was educational partners. Their leading subcategories were attendance, which includes concerns related to attendance, absences and truancy, and enrollment and residency, which covers issues such as enrollment, transfers and residency requirements.

[01:55:16] Finally, let's look at what our student visitors shared. Student visitors reflected similar themes in the Educational Partners category. Their most frequently noted subcategories were Discipline, which includes considerations such as appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, and options for responding, and Other, which covers issues not addressed in any other subcategory.

[01:55:45] After every consultation, the office seeks feedback from their visitors to assess our effectiveness. Let me share here what we learned. For those who completed our anonymous survey, 83% indicated they would refer others to the office.

[01:56:01] 89% said they would reach out again if needed. The survey also asked how issues might have progressed without Ombuds involvement. Respondents noted potential impacts such as time diverted from PWCS mission, reduced employee well-being, and an increased likelihood of formal grievances or litigation.

[01:56:23] These insights highlight the value of early confidential conflict resolution. I would also like to share a few examples of the feedback we heard directly from our visitors. The perspective shared here by members of the PWCS community again underscored the significance of this work.

[01:56:44] When individuals feel heard, explore new options, and approach challenges constructively, the office fulfills its purpose. Each visitor arrives with a concern, often feeling uncertain, and through the process gain clarity, support, and practical next steps.

[01:57:02] These experiences reflect the real impact behind the numbers I present today. In addition to casework, the office did advance several initiatives this year. First, the office provided ongoing feedback to the school board and PWCS leadership through regular reports and consultation on emerging patterns and concerns.

[01:57:25] Second, the office worked to raise awareness of our services, and I also provided several trainings to staff on effective conflict management practices. Third, I chaired the International Ombuds Association's K through 12 Ombuds Group, bringing best practices from across the country into our work and sharing our expertise with others.

[01:57:47] Finally, I received a certification from Harvard University on addressing implicit bias, which helps strengthen our ability to understand its impact and make informed decisions. As I close, let me offer some reflections and look ahead.

[01:58:04] The presented data shows the value the Ombuds Office brings to PWCS. The concerns I hear reflect real experiences and give insight into what's working well and where improvements are needed. These patterns go beyond these cases.

[01:58:21] They highlight opportunities to strengthen systems. By analyzing this information while keeping it confidential, the office helps leadership make informed decisions. Feedback from visitors confirms that the office is providing a safe confidential and impartial place where people feel heard and supported as I start my fifth school year with PWCS I am looking forward to focusing on the following raising awareness so everyone knows the resource is available to them continuing to provide high quality confidential

[01:58:56] consultations strengthening feedback to leadership and building professional skills through ongoing training thank you for your continued support I look forward to another year of helping people navigate challenges, strengthening organizational culture, and contributing to an environment where everyone can thrive. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

[01:59:20] Ms. Williams. Thank you for coming to present to us. I almost was Gilbert here because we were the two that started to see from the inception of this office to where it has grown now is beyond anything that I could have imagined at the time. I think you're doing a fantastic job with the office and reaching the community.

[01:59:46] It seems like, 'cause we don't go delve into topics, but the way that you broke it down are very similar to a lot of things I think each of us here, topic-wise, so it's nice to see it reflected in the community. Is this the first year, I just don't remember that you've had students come visit?

[02:00:02] - For me, the office as a whole, no. - Okay. - With the prior ombuds, they did, but for me, this is the first year. - Interesting. - I think that's pretty exciting. - It was. without going into too much detail do you feel that for the post exit results or maybe interaction people coming to your office for the ones that maybe say they would handle a different way do you feel that's more of a knowledge of systems issues do you see a lot of that interaction when people come to you with a problem maybe it's not understanding

how the systems around them work more so than the problem itself I would think so too because it's a large organization and I think sometimes it's challenging where to go so I do think that by

[02:00:41] talking to the ombuds office it helps them kind of navigate that in a better way so if that answers that question does I was just wondering something because I imagine you get kind of people just not what sure yeah wait for what and I think that's another great resource that you provide and I'm also excited to see you're continuing education and I think it would be nice maybe with the board could use a refresher on some implicit bias and conflict a lot of the things that your office does it's good for I think everyone in leadership or who has to deal with different members of the community to have those skills so I just appreciate your continuing education and sharing that with us so thank you thank

[02:01:19] you so much mr. wall thank you for your presentation it's always great to meet with you and hear your perspective on what you're hearing and learning and I do acknowledge the need for the office and I appreciate the value that is added that you bring to the organization I thought that it was interesting it's always interesting obviously you would have a lot of employees that would attend or come and seek services but also a fair number of parents and and guardians which you know I appreciate because as a parent sometimes it's very difficult to navigate the system and you don't really know where to go and so I think

[02:01:59] you're you know you really do provide a great listening ear for families to help them understand our very complex school division which we try to make less complex but it is complex and I do want to commend you for offering a multiple ways for visitors to reach out in person over phone or zoom I think that's really great I also wanted to commend you for being willing to provide training at the excellence in education or whatever it was called event because I think that

[02:02:34] proactively if we can help individuals learn to communicate better resolve conflicts better and facilitate dialogue between individuals then we can all have a better experience and we can improve the system or we can improve it for everybody so I think that's also a really valuable service that you provide. The visitor comments were really helpful and I'm sure you get many many more you just kind of highlighted some and I wanted to commend you for seeking the Harvard certification to improve your skills or I'm assuming that's why you did it to increase your awareness and understanding and be able to provide

[02:03:12] great service so I don't have any questions at this time I always read the the reports that come through, but I just wanted to thank you for what you do and for coming in tonight to talk to us and inform the public about your office. - Thank you. - Thank you very much.

[02:03:28] - Thank you, Ms. Bookstein. Truly appreciate all the hard work and your commitment to this work. - Thank you. - Thank you so much. All right. All right, now we're moving up to, okay, great. Moving on to board matters. Last week, we started with Lisa Zargapur.

[02:03:47] This week, we'll start with Mr. Justin Wilk. - Yes, sir, this will be quick. Brevity is great. I just want to thank the community. I always want to thank my constituents who come out and speak before the board.

[02:04:03] I do want to recognize a bunch of events with the Halloween season. It was a lot of Halloween and you know, it was great to still see so many people and community members participating in school

events. I know candy is not cheap, was not cheap, I should say is not, was not is, but still had a lot of people doing the trunks a chunk or treat and stuff like that.

[02:04:26] And making sure kids had a place to go for Halloween and trick or treat. So that was great, I did that. I did that as SpongeBob in Triangle and Mary Williams. So that was a fun night. I went to a fall fest. I went to one Math is Spooky night and then one Monster Mash dance.

[02:04:44] So a lot of Halloween. And then on Halloween, I took the day off of work and visited a bunch of schools. And it was great to see the kids wearing costumes of storybook characters and stuff. So there were creative ways. So be able to let the kids wear costumes in the schools.

[02:05:01] So I went to Independence, the non-traditional school right down the road here. It does serve all board members and their students from all across the county. I encourage any of my colleagues, you have an open invite for me to make a visit over there 'cause your students equally attend that building as much as mine.

[02:05:19] It's a great program, great building. Spent some time with the principal and touring some classrooms. Stopped by Ashland, then went to Potomac Shores Middle, Covington Harper Elementary, and then Potomac Senior High School. So very busy Halloween season. And yeah, I guess that's, I'll yield the remainder of my time.

[02:05:37] Thank you. - Miss Erica Trudenik, Brentsville District. - Thank you very much. I got to attend the academic letter awards ceremony at Brentsville High School. I was very impressed with the kiddos that all have earned an A and a B average throughout their whole high school career were honored, one of which was our student representative, Billy Tyler, so congrats to Billy on that honor, and thank you to Brentsville for inviting me and having me.

[02:06:09] Patriot High School's FCCLA ran a very successful trunk or treat, they had to do it inside, and they pivoted at the last minute, so kudos to all the teachers and staff that made that happen. Congrats to all the seniors that are currently applying to college, some of which have already heard from schools.

[02:06:28] Like our student rep said, it is scholarship season, so please get those, please get those in. Again, here I am again talking about girls flag football. I just wanted to read this little snippet. The National Federation of State High School Associations reports that participation in the 24-25 school year increased by 60% compared to the year before, making it the fastest growing high school sport for girls.

[02:06:53] Nearly 69,000 athletes took the field last year the number of schools offering the sport group by almost 1,000 nationwide I say all that to say congratulations to all of the teams that made it to the districts this week I guess would be what we would call it the first round of the playoffs was tonight and it just so happened that three out of the four of the schools in the Brentsville district made it with a bye into the playoffs and And the championship game and tournament is played this Saturday at Brentsville District High School.

[02:07:32] So if you'd like to come out and see these girls in action and what they've accomplished this year, that's a great time to come and join us. And I really hope to continue to have conversations and advocate for this to become a sport, as well as talking with the parent and the son that came today about men's volleyball.

[02:07:53] So I'd love to keep those conversations going. And I would like to say a very happy Veterans Day to all those who serve and put their lives on the line and sacrifice for us so that we can live in freedom. A special thank you to my favorite veteran, my husband.

[02:08:11] Thank you. Mr. Jesse, Occoquan District. As a veteran, I also like to wish the best for the veterans. And for most of the services, including the Marine Corps, this is 250 years of celebration.

[02:08:31] As far as the school activities and so forth, I've still been missing in action, if you would say that. And I hope to start getting back to attending a lot of different events and looking forward to it. I missed this year's parade for Woodbridge Homecoming.

[02:08:49] First time in 12 years I haven't participated in a parade. And of course, Woodbridge High School football team has done very well this year. So I'd like to get back to doing some of these things and we'll hopefully soon. Thank you. Ms. Wall, Jennifer Wall, Gainesville District.

[02:09:08] Greetings, everyone. Great to be with you. Last meeting, I was half of the time here over Zoom. I was babysitting my sisters for children ages 7 through 15 as mom for two weeks while she and her husband served a medical mission in Accra, Ghana.

[02:09:26] And they were able to help a lot of people with tremendous needs, and I was happy to be a part of making that happen. I want to congratulate everyone on making it through quarter one. Yay! I heard that Touch Base at Battlefield was awesome. They had a really high attendance, which was fabulous. I want to say good luck to the Battlefield Bobcat cheer team this weekend as they compete in the state championships. Go Bobcats!

[02:09:48] Congratulations to all the student-athletes who were named to the all-cedar-run district volleyball team. There were a number of students from the Gainesville district there and other districts as well. Best of luck to, as I mentioned it, the flag football players going on tonight and then those who advance to semifinals and finals will play on Saturday.

[02:10:06] Very exciting, hoping to catch a little bit of that. And the Volleyball Class 6 Region B quarterfinals are tonight. That's Battlefield at Colonial Forge and Gainesville at Colgan. And finals are going to be next Wednesday. Since we last met, I've attended a number of events. I'm going to cover a couple of highlights.

[02:10:22] October 24th, I went to Reagan's Fall Festival, and it was a crazy wild weather day, and they were a little short on staff, so I pitched in and stuffed a ton of hot dogs and hamburgers. It was a lot of fun. And Alvy's PTO put on an amazing trunk-or-treat, as they always do, and it was really fun to be there and be a part of that.

[02:10:42] And I jumped over to Gravelly and went to their Halloween bingo, where the directors of the bingo were six, seven, and I learned all about this from my nieces. I'm really clued in on this now. Anyway, it was really funny to, it was a great, it was a great event and everybody was dressed up. Parents, teachers, kids, it was amazing.

[02:10:59] October 27th, Girls Track for Middle School Regionals was hosted by Ronald Reagan at Battlefield. And I wanna say thank you to the Battlefield track folks for helping make that event amazing. And my daughter ran track for Bull Run and Battlefield, so it brought back a lot of memories and really fun times.

[02:11:16] Ronald Reagan, congratulations on making it as region champs. And there were some great performances and personal bests from a lot of students from a lot of schools. I love our student athletes. I also wanted to say I went to Pace West, their fall festival, which was, this is a long standing tradition.

[02:11:32] And one of the things I love about this is the staff go all out for it. And there's a key dedicated group of community members who every year come and support that and open their trunks and give candy out to the kids. And it's just, that school is just a gem. And everyone from the principal, the principal McDonald all the way through, every single person is really dedicated.

[02:11:52] And it's just cool to witness that. I'm looking forward to a number of things. I'm gonna skip that since I'm out of time, but I look forward to reviewing data from across the school division on how this first quarter went and celebrating all of your hard work. And I'm gonna leave you tonight with this thought.

[02:12:09] Oh, I wanna say I also support boys volleyball. I think this is a great idea and we should do it. There's a high community interest and I've heard from people too. So my final quote is grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina.

[02:12:25] GRIT is sticking with your future day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. GRIT is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint. That's from Angela Duckworth. May we all persevere in our personal marathons and in our collective marathons.

[02:12:42] And with that, good night. - Ms. Laurie Williams, Woodbridge District. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. Try to keep it short tonight. Many of us, and throughout the meeting, we've talked about specialty programs being open. I would just advise our families and our students to go check out the student vision profile.

[02:13:00] A lot of the information you need to be able to make an informed decision about specialty programs that we have around the county are located on that document. Also, most of our students have met with their counselors or are in the process. So it's a good time to do a check-in if you haven't to see if they're still wanting to do what they want to do.

[02:13:17] I still have a budding geologist, I'm thankful. But the other one, we had a couple career changes between so it's never never hurts to check in um as we uh enter gratitude season here um i've heard my other board members talk about all the wonderful events i this is the time of year where i usually remind people that like my district some of our halloween activities were canceled because people aren't coming because of the current state of community affairs so they they don't want to come out of their house to trick or treat this is the first year my son i think got more trick or candy from going to his grandmother's house and having a pre-made packet than actually having houses

[02:13:55] available in our neighborhood or surrounding neighborhood force for kids to trick-or-treat because families are nervous about the current conditions and also for food insecurity and affordability so as we are those of us who are privileged to out and enjoy these events might be time or i would suggest to try to do some new things and pivot maybe drop some candy or things thoughtful things off to your school because usually our staff know who those families are and I'm sure they would appreciate a little extra bonus this time of year and also some of our families aren't going to pantries and things like that as they would normally because of the current

[02:14:31] climate so if you're someone who does donate food or is working with the community just be mindful it might to reach out other ways that we don't normally so that we can reach those families because it things are a little bit different and I think it's a good idea also want to give a shout out I think the chow wagon is also helping set up some food pantries in our schools because it's not just a holiday season that are some of our families don't have food and I think it's always that this is a good time of year to be mindful of that in addition to that I just want to take note from yesterday was the election day it was historic just election day two female

[02:15:09] candidates one prevailed I can't wait till we can see that in our history books it was a momentous for our state and just I love history I'm a nerd so I think I spent all day volunteering and encouraging my child my youngest child to also participate that is using our voice and getting out and meeting other people in our community for us it was fun I always like to meet a lot of new people so I would encourage if you want to grow civic minded young adults to go out and be civic minded as well, there's opportunities for every to participate in all different kinds of ways.

[02:15:48] And the last thing I will say is I did mention it during our ombudsman presentation, but it has been a while since this board had a retreat and I think it's always a good idea to have a refresher. I think the last time we even talked about implicit bias training was a few years ago during a joint board meeting.

[02:16:03] So I hope that we will have the opportunity to do that and have a good night. - Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, Coles District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Good evening, everyone. I wanted to just remind people, we have many federal workers and people who are federal worker adjacent in maybe some of the other fields in our community who may not have received a paycheck.

[02:16:31] And as a reminder, you can contact the school about free and reduced lunch. No one's gonna broadcast your name or anything, but I know it's a difficult time for a lot of people, especially coming into holidays And even if this is something that's stressing your family, but you're not totally down and out, a stressor is a stressor.

[02:16:55] So reach out to our schools for any information that might help support you during this time. Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned the election. I'm very hopeful that the people who will be in Richmond will take very seriously how important our public schools are.

[02:17:14] And it's an opportunity with things in Washington being a little up in the air with rumors of getting rid of the Department of Education. I'm encouraging our leaders who are going to Richmond to take a look at all the things that we're held accountable to by the federal government and ensure that we are still making sure that our students with special needs have their support, that we are fully funding our schools.

[02:17:48] We've never fully funded, but it's an opportunity and I'm very optimistic for it. And I'd also like them to take a look at policies. I know we've lived in a testing culture since forever and I would really love it if we could take the testing culture and instead of looking at it as a way to measure our schools and districts to actually do something for our kids.

[02:18:11] If you find, and I know our Virginia Literacy Act doing some of that but our SOLs don't and I feel like we can do better so for the people who love or used to having testing I would love for people to stop and consider that educators use formative assessments to see what their kids know what gaps there are and make adjustments but we don't we're not as able to do that with these final things in the

springtime just before summer so So I'm looking forward to that opportunity of re-envisioning what we can do in public education.

[02:18:48] And a lot of times when people talk about funding, I'm talking about funding human capital, the people who are in our buildings, the people who are with our children. That's what I'm talking about. We're not throwing dollars, we're throwing dollars to get human capital to help educate our kids.

[02:19:07] I wish you all a great week. Thank you for everything. Have a good night. Blake, Neabsco District. - Thank you, good evening. Over the past few weeks, I've had a chance to be out in our communities and schools quite a bit. Honestly, that's the best part of this work.

[02:19:24] So I was able to stop at several trunk-and-treats as well across the Neabsco District, notably at Neabsco Elementary and Minnieville Elementary and the joy and creativity and sense of community at those events were everything. You could just feel how much our families and staff poured into making our schools feel like home.

[02:19:46] Lots of candy, lots of costumes, lots of joy. And then I also joined students for the Storybook Character Day at Fitzgerald in Mendelville Elementary. And, yes, I showed up as Scooby-Doo, and the kids absolutely loved it.

[02:20:04] I had a big Scooby-Doo mascot head, and they were, you know, going crazy. Scooby-Doo, Scooby-Doo. But there's always something about seeing the kids' faces just light up and then when they see you. So that was a good thing. And, you know, this job is about connection.

[02:20:20] And that was something that we did there. And so I also had a chance to attend a robotics competition at Forest Park, the Bruins and the Den competition. That was impressive. And, I mean, we had schools. They had people from McLean and from Ashburn.

[02:20:39] They had teams from all over there. so not just Prince William County Schools. So that was, our students are doing phenomenal things in STEM, collaborating, problem solving, and competing with confidence. It's a great sign of where our division is headed with innovation.

[02:20:55] And speaking about innovation, I got to visit the Think About Labs, Makerspace STEM Lab at Neabsco Elementary. And I would like to just thank Dr. McDade and her team because that is a true investment in our kids' future.

[02:21:12] When I was there, I even ran into Ashland Elementary, and they actually were supposed to be going to Cedar Point, but because now we have this lab here, they were like, "Can we come here?" And, you know, so it was great to see that happen, and it was an awesome lab.

[02:21:30] It was amazing to see how this space continued to inspire creativity and hands-on learning. So, again, I thank you for bringing that to the Neapco District specifically. And one of the most meaningful moments for me, though, serving lunch at Minnieville Elementary this last week, and it was popcorn chicken. And let me tell you, that line moves fast, and our food service staff does it with so much efficiency and heart.

[02:21:58] I walked away with a new level of appreciation for the work that they do every single day to keep our kids nourished and ready to learn. I was supposed to be there for four hours, and I only lasted two hours. It was tough. It was a tough gig. And then just yesterday, I had the honor speaking at our classified staff professional development conference. They had a powerful keynote speaker. They had

Period 8. I saw them again. I saw them before at Mr. Wilkes Breast Cancer Awareness. They're a great little group there from Benton Middle School. And then it was

[02:22:34] a lot of energy in that room. And we got to remember these people are the people who keep our schools running, our bus drivers, our custodians, our food service workers, our front office staff. They don't often get the spotlight but they are the backbone of this division and I want them to know that their work matters deeper. And then with that I can say at the end of this we can't lead with firm resentment. We have to lead by example, by showing up, by focusing on what truly matters and that's what I'll continue to do. And then I also want to take a moment to

[02:23:11] congratulate the governor-elect Abigail Spanberg on her victory last night. Her message is one that i take to heart stay focused on connection and clarity over correction or blame and may i believe you with this may we always be challenged and never defeated live life don't exist and if you believe in a better story for prince william county then the time to act is now it's always now it's every day stay engaged stay involved keep building

[02:23:47] that story together thank you and have a good night um wonderful we finished the first quarter Last week, we had touch base on Monday for those parents and families that didn't get an opportunity to go to touch base. You can still connect with your teachers, your counselors, and at all grade levels, reach out to them, go meet with them, set up times to meet with them.

[02:24:10] It's really so critical. The more engaged you are with your kids learning, the more they're gonna learn. And so we wanna do everything we can to encourage you to reach out. Congratulations to all our students who completed the first quarter. Whatever you feel like you were short of in the first quarter, let's work on improving in the second quarter.

[02:24:29] Congratulations to all our teams who are gonna be making playoffs, who are already in playoffs, our district champions and all the different fall sports. There's too many to say, too many great teams to mention, but we have, I think our final set of home football games, final set of regular season football games this Friday night, and then playoffs will begin in the next week.

[02:24:50] And as you heard from Mr. Denik on the girls flag football championship games this weekend. You know, I just wanna bring up test scores. We, you know, we focused on, and during the pandemic, the universities have all sort of, many of them went test optional on SAT and ACT.

[02:25:09] And during the pandemic, they did that. And coming out of the pandemic, many of the universities went back to requiring them. And this year, or in upcoming next year, we're looking at most of the universities in the nation going back to requiring them, especially your flagship institutions across each state and so to the students, we had PSAT day last week, we have Khan Academy.

[02:25:36] Khan Academy, I've had three kids go through the system, have used Khan Academy, they have benefited from it. Khan Academy is a free resource that all of our students have access to, all of our families have access to. Please, please, please take advantage of it.

[02:25:51] My current child in the school divisions in ninth grade, He's using it for chemistry and he's using it for SAT prep and he's in ninth grade and he used it for PSAT prep as well. It is very good and it will help you all perform better in whatever subjects, especially in the math and sciences that Khan Academy offers.

[02:26:12] And I really encourage you all to take advantage of it. If the schools aren't pushing this, please I'd ask you to push this. I'd ask the school teachers and counselors and each of the divisions to push it. I'd ask, you know, we have resources for our AP students.

[02:26:28] I'd encourage all of our AP teachers open up their resources for our students so that they can benefit. Giving students more access to tutoring and information will help them. It cannot hurt them. And I think I would encourage all of you to do it.

[02:26:45] It will help improve their scores. It'll improve their opportunities and improve their chances to get into the colleges of their dreams. And so with that, I wish you all the best and have a great weekend. Happy Veterans Day.



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