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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Date Wednesday, December 3, 2025
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 3h 15m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-9fMSUcZg>
- 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 2026-10-28. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] A motion is now in order for the approval of meeting agenda. Vice Chair, Tracy Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mrs. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:00:16] All in favor, aye, raise your hands. Any opposed? No opposition, motion passes. - Vote is six yes, motion passes. - Moving on to motion to enter closed session. A motion is in order, Vice Chair, Tracy Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. - I move that pursuant to sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of Dakota, Virginia, the Prince William County School Board interclosed session for the following reasons.

[00:00:42] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotions, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to sections 2.2-3711A1 of Dakota, Virginia, 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 2.2-3711A, 7, and 8 of Dakota,

[00:01:21] Virginia, and three, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and the actions taken to respond to

such matters. We're discussing an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to section 2.2-3711A19 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:46] - Do I have a second? - I second. - Ms. Wall, any discussion? Please vote, all in favor, hands up, aye. - Vote is six yes, one that President Vogt, Williams, motion passed. - Okay, at this time, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session

[00:01:59] and return in approximately one hour.

[00:02:56] - Good evening, it's the Prince William County School Board will now return to open session from closed session. A motion is in order 801, closed session certification. Vice Chair Blake.

[00:03:13] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting on December 3rd, 2025, be certified by adopting the following resolution. Now, therefore, it be resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion

[00:03:51] convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. Any discussion?

[00:04:00] Please vote, give the vote.

[00:04:31] - Ms. Williams, how do you vote? The vote is seven yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Approval for appointments and releases. Up next, 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.

[00:04:50] - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:18] - The vote is seven yes, unanimous, motion passes. - Okay, at this time we will move on to the Pledge of Allegiance. I'd like to invite our student representative, Bula Sarsa from CD Hilton High School to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. - Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic of which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible liberty.

[00:05:47] - Thank you, Ms. Sarsa. At this time, we will start off with Thriving Futures Focus. Thriving Futures Focus is our 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, and habits of mind to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:06:08] 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. Tonight, the board would like to acknowledge Dr. Jennifer Oluni, school psychologist, for earning the distinction from the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists as the Virginia School Psychologist of the Year.

[00:06:33] Dr. Oluni serves students at Tyler Elementary School in the Gainesville District and at Yorkshire Elementary School in the Coles District. So I'm going to ask Ms. Wall and Ms. Zargarpur to share in this recognition, beginning with Ms. Wall of the Gainesville District.

[00:06:48] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The VASP supports school psychologists in promoting and advocating for the educational and mental health development of all Virginia students, schools, families, and communities. This prestigious award celebrates professionals whose work is exemplary and comprehensive in the following areas, data-based decision-making and accountability, consultation and collaboration, development of cognitive and academic skills, development of socialization and life skills, student diversity in development and learning, knowledge of school and system organizations, policy development and climates,

[00:07:27] prevention, crisis intervention and mental health, homeschool and community collaboration. Ms. Zargarpur, can you continue our recognition? - I am happy to, thank you, Ms. Wall. Joining Dr. Oluni this evening in support of this accomplishment includes Supervisor of Eligibility and Child Find, Mrs. Shelley Legall-Brickley, Ricky, and Director of Programs and Development, Dr. Wendy Martin-Johnson.

[00:07:50] At this time, I would like to invite Dr. Oluni to share a few words about her accomplishment. - Thank you. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, Dr. McDade, colleagues, and community members. I'm truly honored to be recognized this evening for my recent selection as School Psychologist of the Year for the State of Virginia.

[00:08:10] And I'm deeply grateful to have been nominated by my administration and colleagues from PWCS, and as well as the faculty and students at George Mason University, where I work as an adjunct instructor. I'm very humbled by their support and their confidence in my work. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Rebecca Zia and Ms. Shelley LaGalbrick for their unwavering support and leadership.

[00:08:32] Their commitment to ensuring that PWCS school psychologists are able to fully utilize the breadth of their training and skills has made a meaningful difference in my work. Many of the professional opportunities and experiences that I contributed to this recognition were possible because of their encouragement and their advocacy.

[00:08:50] I also wanna thank the principals of my current schools, Dr. Lynn Marsilio of Yorkshire Elementary and Mrs. Jennifer Perilla of Tyler Elementary for their recommendations and for consistently viewing me as a valued member of their school communities. their support means more than they will know.

[00:09:07] School psychologists play a unique and vital role in our division. We bridge academic, behavioral, and mental health needs by supporting students through assessment, counseling, and collaboration with families and educators. Much of our work happens behind the scenes, ensuring that students have the supports they need to succeed both in school and in life.

[00:09:27] Continued division level support for psychological service, particularly the commitment to increasing our staffing and providing necessary resources, has allowed many of us to be able to move from behind the scenes roles into delivering direct services to students throughout the division.

[00:09:44] I began my career in Prince William County Schools as a special education teacher. And when I decided to pursue school psychology, I returned here to complete my internship. Years later, I now have the privilege of supervising interns in the same division, many of whom who have chosen to stay and are now part of our team.

[00:10:03] The ability to engage daily with assessment, mental health support and instructional collaboration, combined with the consistent encouragement that our coordinator and supervisor

prioritize for us for personal and professional growth, are the reasons that I continue to contribute to my career here and to continue to encourage others to do the same.

[00:10:26] I would like to thank the school board and the division leadership once again for recognizing school psychologists as vital members of our school communities and for your ongoing efforts to increase staffing so that we maintain our sustainable caseloads. This support allows us to focus more fully on prevention and intervention, ensuring that our students not only learn and truly flourish.

[00:10:47] Thank you again for recognizing me this evening and for your continued commitment to the wellbeing of our students. - Thank you, Dr. Oluni, and congratulations. At this time, I'd like to ask all those involved in supporting our state-recognized school psychologist, including her family members, friends, and folks in our schools to stand in recognition of their support as well.

[00:11:18] - Congratulations, and before taking a few pictures, Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Oluni, congratulations on being named Virginia School Psychologist of the Year. What a prestigious honor. We are just so proud to have you here in Prince William County Schools, and congratulations on the impact that you've made over your 25-year career here in Prince William County.

[00:11:39] And as I always say, in every Thriving Futures Focus, we are PWCS proud. Congratulations. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like to request our honoree we come forward with a photo of the school board

[00:11:52] and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:13:13] Okay, thank you for all that. And now we'll move on to 11.01, adoption of the consent agenda. Vice Chair Blake. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - I have a second.

[00:13:28] - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote. Oh, Ms. Wall has a point. - I just wanted to highlight that we have the 2026 internal audit plan on here, which I wanna thank the members of the audit committee for their commitment and hard work on that committee and also our auditor who is here tonight.

[00:13:47] Thank you very much for all of your hard work and this is a great plan and it sets forth our plan for the coming year and the things that will be happening in that shop. So thank you very much for being here tonight and thank you to the committee members who serve on that committee.

[00:14:02] - On that note, I'll just thank Chair Wall for chairing that committee. It is certainly one of the ones that require some of the most work we do here and I especially appreciate, if you take a look through the audit report, our work on enterprise risk management and the things that we are very concerned about, I think it sets a strong tone and we wanna thank the superintendent for participating and making sure that we're all on the same page with that.

[00:14:27] Please vote.

[00:14:51] - Vote is seven yes, motion passed. - Okay, next up is approval of acknowledgements and recognitions, Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approves the adoption and the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended.

[00:15:06] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:15:34] I didn't get my vote, it didn't pop up. - All right, Dr. Lateef, how do you vote? - Yeah, I vote yes. - Vote a seven yes, motion passed. - Okay, all right, moving on. Up next is citizen comment time.

[00:15:50] Those citizens who've signed up in advance with the 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 PWCS, please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you will be asked to step aside.

[00:16:07] 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 that the room be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have 30 citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:16:25] Per policy 134, the time allotted for each speaker will be two minutes tonight. And as you're getting, the timer's up there to see it and then the mic goes quiet at the two minute mark and it's not because we're trying to be rude to you, but it's just we're trying to be fair to everyone and stop at two minutes, so thank you.

[00:16:45] I will call the first five names and we'll do the subsequent five each time so you kinda know what's coming up and if you wanted to, there's seats up front to sit in. You can come up now and wait for your turn. If not, you can come from your seat. The first five, Timothy Fahey, Paige Bartalot, Jeff Lofgren, Hina Ansari, and Aubrey Verricone.

[00:17:09] Timothy Fahey.

[00:17:32] - Hello, my name is Tim Fahey, and my address is on file with the clerk. Members of the school board, I stand before you as an educator, and also the father of a high, middle, and elementary school student in the district. My position requires me to collaborate with nearly every teacher at my school, giving me a unique front row seat to their daily reality.

[00:17:50] I watch these professionals dedicate early mornings, late evenings and weekends to planning, grading, and building innovative lessons for our students based on an ever-changing curriculum, as well as ever-growing requirements. This time is not optional. It is the unpaid labor that keeps things functioning.

[00:18:08] Your proposal to extend contract hours without compensation or additional leave benefits is therefore not just bad policy, it is an insult. It is a blatant attempt to mandate the free labor we already provide, effectively enacting a pay cut, especially for summer school and ESY teachers paid at their instructional rate.

[00:18:25] You yourselves have shared the best path forward. As board member Dr. Lateef was quoted at Inside NOVA back in May, research always shows the best way to improve student performance is to have a high quality teacher in the room. The best way to have high quality teachers in the room is to pay them well, and that's how you get to recruit and retain them.

[00:18:45] If you add 30 unpaid minutes, you may lose the years of experience and dedication that my own children benefit from, you will continue to accelerate the burnout of the talent you claim you want to retain. Read the room, invest in your teachers. We demand investment, not micromanagement.

[00:19:01] Pay us well, respect our time, and let us manage the work that keeps this district running. Thank you. - As I stated earlier, there's no clapping, cheering, or jeering during citizen common time.

[00:19:17] If that continues, we will clear the room and start over. Paige Bartolo. - Good evening, my name is Paige Bartolo, and my address is on file with the clerk. For 12 years, I have served Prince William County Public Schools and I currently teach gifted education at Potomac View, a school I'm deeply proud to represent tonight.

[00:19:37] I'm speaking tonight on behalf of a marginalized community, a community of families, educators, and neighbors whose voices deserve to be heard. Potomac View is a beautifully diverse small school tucked into the heart of a neighborhood. Many of our families face economic challenges and a significant number speak languages other than English at home.

[00:19:59] We are a community that deserves a voice in the boundary process, not one to be quietly wiped off the map with barely a mention. On November 6th, our staff was told Potomac View will close at the end of the school year. All students will transfer to the new Woodbridge Area School, but staff must apply and interview for new jobs.

[00:20:19] We cannot move collectively with the students. In all the redistricting conversations, the closing of an entire school has barely been acknowledged. For a school like ours, the silence feels dismissive and inequitable.

[00:20:34] The new Woodbridge Area School will consist almost entirely of Potomac View students with three of four boundary scenarios adding only 81 other students. This is not typical redistricting. This is not just shifting boundaries on a map.

[00:20:49] This is closing a school down, severing deep relationships and displacing 89 dedicated staff members. Tonight we are submitting a petition with over 700 signatures representing those who are united in concern and hope. Our petition is simple, designate the Woodbridge Area School and- - Thank you, Ms. Bartolo, thank you.

[00:21:10] - Designate the new Woodbridge Area School as a relocation- - Ms. Bartolo, your time is up. - And transition current staff with students. - Your time is up. - Thank you. - Jeff Lofgren, Jeff Lofgren.

[00:21:32] Hina Ansari. - All right, good evening to the board and Super Nintendo McDade, wonderful to see you again. Before I wanted to go into what I wanted to talk about, I just wanted to commemorate December 1st with Matthew Shepard's, would have been Matthew Shepard's birthday, but he was murdered because he was gay, which was a hate crime, which is one of the reasons that a lot of us come out here to advocate for trans and LGBTQI kids, because we want to make sure that that doesn't happen again.

[00:22:01] And I'm gonna try to pivot from that, and it's gonna be a tough pivot to make, but I'm gonna try. Congratulations, Super Nintendo McDade. I heard your Thriving Futures presentation last meeting was amazing. And you had all kinds of wonderful details and deliverables and executables and community, I think committees of some sort that were involved and all that, which was amazing.

[00:22:19] And I was like, wow, that's so great. the project manager's dream come true and then i hear that the school board says you know what let's add a half hour to the school day but let's not have any input from anybody let's not worry about what we're going to do in that half hour which i'm really curious what it

is that's supposed to be done in that half hour i'm hoping it's a conga line outside of the school because some of the smaller schools they can really make it around the school i think at least once maybe twice but i just don't understand what's going on it's like what are they going to do i mean the teachers i I mean it's almost disgusting that you think the teachers aren't doing enough.

[00:22:50] I don't know which school board member said that. But the teachers, I come in there, I go to school. You guys know I work in the school. I work at our alma mater, Lisa. And it's, you know, the teachers come in early, they stay late, they don't get lunch. I don't get lunch. I mean, as a substitute, I don't, you know, I'm at the whim of the sub coordinator. I'm running out of time. The double secret word for Ms. Abalos' class today is the boo-boo, so use that for your extra credit points, guys, thank you.

[00:23:12] - Aubrey Varricone. In the next five, just so you all know, is Marcia Sowers, Lily Jessie, Dawn Farrell, Gloria Jordan, and Cindy Cruz. Aubrey Veracone. - My name is Aubrey Veracone and my address is on file.

[00:23:30] I'm an educator and I'm so super excited that I'm here the same night as Bula Sarsa, a former student of mine. I'm an educator, a parent, and a member of the PWCS community. It is frustrating that the school board is considering extending teacher hours with no discussion of teachers being paid for this extra time.

[00:23:46] We have a contract for pay based on our current hours. It's great that TAs are getting an increase in their hours so they can get more benefits. They will also be making more money since they are paid hourly. Certified teachers are on a salary, so if you demand more hours of us and pay us the same salary, that is a paid decrease.

[00:24:03] This isn't meant to be rude, but if you don't understand that math, you should not be making decisions for our school system. I'd like to share some evidence tonight about teacher retention as you deliberate whether to increase teacher work hours without increasing pay. Shout out to my high school debate coach, Mitch Gaffer of Huron, South Dakota, who taught me the importance of evidence and using credible sources.

[00:24:26] Quote, "Research shows that employee retention "is important for organizations "because greater retention leads to more continuity "for customers, more efficiency and effectiveness "and greater cost savings, according to CON 2020. "Teacher retention specifically is important "because teacher turnover harms student achievement, "according to Ronfelt Luge Wyckoff 2013, and because turnover can cost districts up to \$20,000 to replace a teacher, according to NSBA 2019, in addition, teacher turnover can disproportionately harm students who need high quality teachers the most, according to Carver, Thomas, and Darlene Hammond 2019, end quote.

[00:25:04] This is from the PWCS website. - Thank you very much. Marcia Sowers, sorry if I got that wrong. - Thank you, I'm Marcia Sowers, my address is on file with the clerk, and I also teach for Prince William County Schools.

[00:25:21] By 2040, the United States will be a majority-minority nation. The diversity and cultural wealth that will shape the future is already sitting in our classrooms today. Students and teachers are living the realities behind the data, yet the district's answer to concerns about literacy and college and career readiness is to demand an additional unpaid half hour from educators who already give countless hours to the system.

[00:25:48] That does not move the needle on student learning. It sends a clear message that the people closest to the students are the least valued. Recently, I taught my students about industrialization and progressivism, about muckrakers, those who exposed injustice and demanded real reform.

[00:26:05] We are living in a similar moment now. The system keeps asking more from teachers while offering little in return, as we are the ones in the building, building those relationships, honoring students' languages and cultures and creating the conditions for authentic learning.

[00:26:22] If anyone is the modern day muckraker, it is us, the educators, raising our voices to say, this is not good enough for our kids. We are not resisting ourselves, we are standing up for our students' rights to fully be resourced, have humanized schools led by skilled, prepared professionals, not just warm bodies in front of a class.

[00:26:44] Our students deserve better than policies demand more unpaid labor while driving experienced educators away we're here for good trouble necessary trouble and to you i say next lily jesse good evening my name is lily jesse and my address is on file i'm here to talk about teachers and what's happening with this 30 minute

[00:27:22] additional time i i just don't understand it first of all but i must tell you that uh If you believe that all children can learn, you have to believe that all teachers can teach. There's no evidence, meta-analysis that shows that additional time will result in more learning.

[00:27:46] I have been in this business for 40 years. I've worked with probably about 3,000 teachers during that time. I haven't met that teacher who doesn't come to work on time.

[00:28:03] In fact, I had to have, do you have a minute, because teachers were showing up and I had to come to work at 6.30 in the morning. avoid the time I needed to work. I find that teachers will come to work and there are three types of teachers. There are teachers who have who come early and leave early. There are teachers who come late but leave late and there are teachers who come early and remain early. I provide you with a form. Do you see this? Did you get this? Please look at this because you'll find that you are the

[00:28:40] teachers the schools that you're trying to emulate are the worst performing schools in the state of Virginia. Thank you. Thank you Ms. Jessie. Moving on Dawn Dawn Farrell. Hello my name is Dawn Farrell and my address is on file. Hello school board my old friend. I've come to speak with you again. We've known each other for a long long time as student parent and 25 year employee. When we talk about building bridges with the school board we are ensuring every group

[00:29:20] affected by a decision is included. Teachers, parents, students, staff and administrators. A proposal should not move to a motion or a vote until the people that it impacts have the opportunities to understand it, speak to its consequences, and collaborate with the board to consider the full scope of its impact.

[00:29:38] The proposed increase in teacher contractual hours affects the entire district, elementary, middle, and high school. Even what seems like a small change in extra 30 minutes a day or additional contract days has far-reaching consequences. Teachers need to be compensated. Additional contract time is additional contract cost.

[00:29:55] But beyond finances, the proposed impacts teacher schedules, family routines, and as well as family's work, second and third jobs, childcare and elder care arrangements are affected. Because this decision touches every level of our community, every voice must be heard.

[00:30:11] We must recognize the historical context, understand the financial responsibilities, and gather meaningful data before moving forward with responsive, collective decisions. We are all here for the same purpose, to work together in the best interest of the students, employees, and the entire staff.

[00:30:27] I recommend two things, create surveys to collect data, and second, form a representative committee with members from every stakeholder group, grade level, to review the survey results, study the logistics and financial impacts. Thank you. - Thank you, Gloria Jordan.

[00:30:48] - Good evening, school board members and Dr. McDade. My name is Gloria Jordan, my address is on file. I want to begin by saying how proud I am of the progress our division has made through the thriving futures and the Prince William County Strategic Plan. Serving on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Equity was an honor, and it was meaningful to ensure that every part of Vision 2025 was viewed and implemented through a lens of equity.

[00:31:13] I was genuinely moved hearing how many students were able to take the SAT because the division made it free and accessible. Thousands now have a clearer path to scholarships and opportunities that might have been out of reach. This is what it looks like when a school division chooses students first.

[00:31:30] And while Dr. McDade's leadership set the vision, it was our teachers who brought it to life. They stayed late, they worked weekends, they used their own resources and poured themselves into our children day after day. Their dedication is the reason Vision 2025 succeeded.

[00:31:46] To every educator, thank you. This should be a moment of celebration, a moment to uplift the people who delivered historic outcomes, even through a global pandemic. Instead, we are discussing changes that ask teachers to do more for less without including them in decisions that impact their daily lives and their classrooms.

[00:32:05] Adjustments to hours may ultimately be necessary, but making those decisions without consulting educators is unacceptable. We teach our children to communicate, to listen, to speak up. We owe our teachers that same dignity. You can do better, and our teachers deserve better.

[00:32:22] I'm asking that we honor their expertise, celebrate their work, and give them the seat at the table. They've more than earned. - Thank you, Ms. Jordan. Cindy Cruz, and after her, the next five will be Rena Stapp, Emily Cherry, Angie Tretola, Gwen Edwards and Dara Banks.

[00:32:46] Cindy Cruz. Okay, Cindy Cruz, no. Rena Stapp.

[00:33:08] - Thought I had a few minutes to unlock my phone. Hold on a second. - Hi, good evening, my name is Rena Stapp, and my information is on file with the clerk. I'm here tonight as a parent, community member, and an educator, and I have two asks.

[00:33:24] I live in Braemar, as do many of the folks here in Green, and we are imploring the school board, particularly Chairman Lateef, Superintendent McDade, and Representative Trudenik, to use your power and influence to help stop the Dominion Power Line from considering the blue route that goes through our neighborhood, right alongside T. Claywood Elementary, Patriot High School, and cuts through near Cedar Point Elementary, all schools within the Brentsville District.

[00:33:48] We know you don't directly have influence on that, but your voice can be a strong impact on what they will decide is their best route. They have two other routes, one that goes along a train track and then along 28 does not impact schools and neighborhoods nearly as much. Please use your voice to advocate for us because your students are being impacted by this.

[00:34:08] My second ask is on behalf of the teachers and all those dressed in red tonight. It was very cold outside, had to wear my onesie. I previously sent you an email with my concerns, but I'm here to say them again in short version. The time between introducing the changing of workday and tonight is two weeks.

[00:34:24] That is not enough time to get input from any of the educators whose lives you are impacting. Every teacher I've ever known works far beyond their contract hours, grading, preparing lessons, and making school not just educational, but also fun. Many of them work beyond their contract hours, but within the flexibility of their own schedules.

[00:34:41] Mandating that they stay an extra 30 minutes at the work building greatly impacts their quality of life. So please table this until everyone is at the table. - Emily Cherry.

[00:34:58] - Good evening, Dr. Lateef and members of the board. My name is Emily Cherry and I am one of the co-chairs of PWA's Organizing and Membership Ad Hoc Committee. And I'm here to speak on behalf of the teachers who dedicate themselves every day to the students of Prince William County.

[00:35:13] I urge you not to vote tonight to increase the teacher workday from seven to seven and a half hours. Teachers are already working far beyond our contract hours. We grade papers late at night. We lesson plan on the weekends. We respond to family emails outside of the school day.

[00:35:30] Studies show that on average, teachers work 54 hours per week. Many PWCS teachers don't get a lunch break, much less a duty-free uninterrupted 30 minutes. And the division refused to enshrine the right to duty-free lunch in our contract.

[00:35:45] However, through this vote, the school board is sending the message that they do not see that the hours we spend in abundance of our contract hours are enough. That's deeply disheartening. Changing our contract hours may increase our hours in the building, but it will certainly decrease our morale.

[00:36:01] Teachers are professionals who deserve respect and collaboration, not unilateral changes. According to our collective bargaining agreement, PWA and the district have a joint labor management committee that can meet, and this is a quote, in order to discuss any matters of concern to both parties.

[00:36:17] And PWA and the district are able to begin our next round of negotiations in April. I ask you to delay this vote until you've engaged in meaningful dialogue with PWEA. Doing so honors the hard work teachers already give and ensures any changes are made thoughtfully and with the voices of all of us involved.

[00:36:35] - Thank you very much. - Thank you. - Angie Tre-Rotola. - Good evening, Dr. McDade and the board. My name is Angie Tre-Rotola. I am a graduate of Unity Read, a social studies teacher at Osborne Park.

[00:36:51] I'm also the co-chair of PWEA's Organizing and Membership Ad-Hoc Committee. Somehow we've been told that coming to school board meetings and speaking out is being political and that it's unprofessional. Why? They seem to forget we're all fighting for public schools and the only way we're

gonna fight for public schools is we have to take this fight to Richmond, we have to take this fight to DC, we must work together.

[00:37:11] That's where this disconnect begins. No one knows where and how to express the concerns they have with conversations that involve our time, our wages, our work-life balance. I looked at some comments from citizens just in the news because they don't understand what any of us are trying to deal with now in schools.

[00:37:26] We have hit a position in history that rivals the Black Death. There is an economic and educational shift and things are about to change and AI has unleashed a beast we do not know. The true solution to address inequity in our schools isn't to keep everybody an extra 30 minutes because that's a band-aid when our system needs a tourniquet.

[00:37:45] We need to go down to Richmond to demand our electeds to find a way to give free meals to all of our students, demand universal pre-K and change the laws so we aren't beholden to educational monopolies that profit from finding new ways to tie student success and achievement on end of year assessments that penalize our incredibly diverse population.

[00:38:01] COVID was the final stress test on the educational system that for decades was already pushed to the brink. And these public schools are no longer designed to what we need to do. So what we are asking you here tonight is to bring this conversation off the dais and to us at the table so we can work together the new PWA, this organizing membership committee so we can come up with solutions together.

[00:38:24] Thank you. - Gwen Edwards. - Good evening, my name is Gwen Edwards My address is on file and I am speaking on behalf of NEA Vice President, Princess Moss.

[00:38:42] I love visiting my friends at PWA, right here in my home state where I was born, raised, and spent my career as a music teacher. I'm proud of the work my union siblings have done here to give educators a voice. They fought for better wages and working conditions and now have bargained three contracts that are changing the lives of PWCS employees.

[00:39:03] I'm incredibly proud of PWA's renewed spirit of integrity, grit, and commitment to union principal. The school board says they want to change the teacher workday from seven to seven and a half hours without teacher input. Let's make a few things very clear.

[00:39:18] First, good policy is also respectful policy. This proposal devalues the partnership that a collective bargaining agreement is supposed to bring. PWA and PWCS negotiated the 2026-27 wages in good faith, and at no point did PWCS discuss a change to the teacher workday.

[00:39:39] A decision of this magnitude should never be considered without consulting our union leadership and bringing PWA to the table. This proposal devalues the teacher compensation by increasing hours without additional increases in pay.

[00:39:55] Furthermore, increasing the length of the workday will reduce the employee's accrued leave balances from previous years, effectively decreasing the value of the leave they have earned. Given the significant impact of proposed change, the board should pause this discussion until educators can return to the bargaining table.

[00:40:14] - Thank you very much. - Thank you. - Dara Banks, and then the next five will be Michelle Rupert, Lysanne Bodie, Andrew McCarthy, Kim Simons, Angela Stouffer.

[00:40:30] Dara Banks. - Good evening, my name is Dara Banks. I am a Prince William County resident, proud parent of two high school students and a career educator. I've devoted my entire teaching career to Prince William County Schools, being hired in 2000 by former president and board member, Lily Jesse.

[00:40:47] Over the years, I've taught through 9/11, the DC sniper tragedy and the sudden shutdown during COVID. I've just seen this division ebb and flow through many changes and taught under three different superintendents. I've worked when the county gave early release days on Thursdays for staff meetings and professional development to be built in during the school day.

[00:41:06] And I worked through the times when teachers felt that working to the rule was the only way they could be heard. I am not an anomaly. Many of the people seated behind me have similar experiences. We are the experts that should be asked for advice on how this vote will impact the division. I fear that this board is going to repeat the mistakes of the past instead of learning from them.

[00:41:26] This proposed vote without discussion of increased compensation will have consequences and the very heart of our current strategic plan, positive climate and culture and family and community engagement will take hits. In addition, this will affect staff's hourly rates for tutoring and summer school, as well as bank leave and medical insurance in retirement.

[00:41:46] This action will have a long-reaching impact. And why now? Why not when the CBA is up for renegotiation in 27/28? Why are you so compelled to follow the pack of the surrounding counties instead of leading it? Asking teachers to work along without pay sends a message that their voices don't matter.

[00:42:05] If you truly value education, you must value the educators and listen to us because without us there's no future. - Michelle Rupert. - Good evening, my name is Michelle Rupert and my address is on file.

[00:42:22] I'm here tonight to address two issues. First, middle school performing arts teachers are still not fairly compensated. And second, the proposal to extend the contract workday. Middle school performing arts teachers do not receive a stipend, we receive a supplement, which our contract defines as an extracurricular activity.

[00:42:41] Apparently, we can't receive a stipend because nothing is required of us by the VDOE. Yet we were told that participation and assessment is required, and the county itself lists middle school music assessments as required on the division calendar. This seems to be a contradiction.

[00:42:58] If these events are publicly presented as required, and if the VDOE's own standards of learning explicitly reference participation and performances that are part of our curriculum, then aren't they an extension of said curriculum, and therefore stipend worthy.

[00:43:13] And if we're going to compare ourselves to Fairfax County to justify extending our contract day, then let's compare everything. Fairfax County middle school directors earn \$5,275. Prince William pays 2,600. Our high school directors receive 4,500, less than Fairfax County middle school directors.

[00:43:32] We hold the same degrees, attend the same events and often teach more students. Our compensation should at least be equal to theirs. Which brings me to the proposal to add 30 minutes to our contract day with no pay increase. For teachers who already give countless unpaid hours, this is not just disappointing, it's dismissive.

[00:43:48] It tells all teachers that once again, our time and expertise are not valued in Prince William County. Thank you. - Thank you. Lisanne Bodie.

[00:44:04] - Good evening, Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, and members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I come to you as a 10th grade English teacher, a special education teacher, and a case manager, and a parent with children who receive special education, gifted services, and 504 accommodations in elementary, middle, and high school.

[00:44:23] I live the realities of this system every day, professionally and personally. We share the same goal, ensuring every student gets the support they need to succeed, but I urge you to reconsider the proposed solution of adding 30 minutes to every teacher's contract day. Other districts have tried this approach. Dixon, USD, and Illinois added 30 minutes for interventions, and New York City DOE implemented 37.5 minutes for small group instruction.

[00:44:45] Both faced challenges. The extra time often became administrative and not instructional, and did little to reduce workload or improve outcomes. In fact, these changes frequently led to lower morale and to teacher burnout. Instead, let's pursue solutions that work. Audit workloads, eliminate redundant reports and unnecessary meetings, protect planning time, build collaboration into the school day, invest in support staff, reading specialists and interventionists reduce group sizes and improve outcomes.

[00:45:10] This is not just about time, it's about strategic resource allocation and valuing human capital. So I ask you to table this decision until we can all meet at the table to design sustainable solutions that truly support students and retain the excellent educators they deserve. Thank you. - Thank you.

[00:45:26] Andrew McCarthy. - Good evening, school board. Dr. McDade, thank you for having us. Good evening, I'm Andy McCarthy, a teacher and parent in Prince William County, and I'm providing these remarks on behalf of Carol Bauer, fourth grade teacher and president of Virginia Education Association.

[00:45:48] She's here to speak on behalf of educators in the Prince William County community who are deeply concerned about the proposal to extend the teacher workday from seven hours to seven and a half hours. The decision and manner in which you make the decision will impact educators across the state. Let me be clear, this proposal has not been developed with any meaningful collaboration or discussion with the union or with classroom educators.

[00:46:10] Decisions of this magnitude, decisions that directly impact working conditions, work-life balance, and the sustainability of the actual profession should never be made without bringing educators to the table from the very beginning. Our educators deserve transparency, respect, and the opportunity to help shape and change the lives of those who they are teaching.

[00:46:30] Additionally, increasing the workday by 30 minutes is not a minor adjustment, it is additional work. And additional work must be fairly compensated, like every other profession. Asking educators who already put in countless unpaid hours to extend their day without compensation undermines the dignity of their work and sends a wrong message about how we value them and us.

[00:46:54] At a time when our division faces a teacher shortage, heavier workloads and growing student needs, Decisions like this risk accelerating burnout and turnover. We should be strengthening collaboration, improving retention and investing in the educators who make our schools successful. Stronger staff equals stronger schools.

[00:47:12] Thank you. - Thank you. Kim Simons. - Good evening. My name is Kim Simons. My contact information and address are on file with the clerk.

[00:47:28] I live in the Braemar community and like a couple of other folks here, we're here to discuss the power lines. Data centers are the bane of the existence of Prince William County. In this county, we have more data centers currently under operation than there are in the entire country of Malaysia.

[00:47:45] In and more are proposed. Data centers, as everybody knows, are power hogs. They need more energy than we can produce in the state, and in a couple of years, we're going to be facing brownouts. When the power is in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the Shenandoah Valley, the data centers have to put a really long extension cord to bring that power from those substations to where they're located.

[00:48:10] T. Clay Wood and Patriot High School are currently facing the threat of a 220 volt high voltage power line running across their land. The State Corporation Commission doesn't have to listen to you. You have no regulatory authority over them, none whatsoever, nor does the Board of County Supervisors.

[00:48:28] But you do have a voice, and your voice is louder than mine. It is louder than the teachers behind you. Your voice represents every member of the faculty, every student, and every staff member in this school division, and you can send a message to the State Corporation Commission and to the power companies and tell them that any time they wanna put in a power line anywhere in this county within 500 feet of a school, it must be buried for the safety, health, and well-being of our students, our faculty, and our staff.

[00:49:02] Thank you, have a nice night. - Angela Stouffer. And after Angela, the next five will be Marty Weaver, Kaitlin Weston, Turner Montgomery, Penny Starrs, and Pierre Dorandes.

[00:49:18] Angela Stover. So I've kind of rewritten this on the fly because I'm really shocked. This room has room for 310 people, and you only have 100 chairs out. The big message to me is that either you're afraid of us, or you don't really wish to allow the citizens of this community to have a voice which that's what I'm assuming so now on to my plan message I teach at Unity Reed I teach child development and I teach I teach teachers I teach young men and women that want to

[00:49:53] be teachers and I got asked about how I feel about this extra time on my day and what as a teacher I thought I might do with this and I was really stumped because Because I had to give a politically correct answer, and I didn't have one.

[00:50:13] So, teachers need to know that they're respected and valued for their professionalism and their knowledge base. We need to be consulted when decisions are made about our future. When you discuss our schedule and the addition of 90 hours to my contract without pay increase related to the time increase, you decrease my hourly rate.

[00:50:33] You decrease my value. Not my value to myself, I know what I'm worth. You don't seem to know what I'm worth. I've been teaching 33 years. I'm worth every penny that I get. I stop problems before they occur because I can see them before they occur.

[00:50:52] Will this decision elevate morale? Ask yourself that. Please table this and talk to the professionals that do the work in the schools. - Thank you. - One minute, 35 seconds. - Marty Weaver.

[00:51:08] - Did they stay on my phone? - Your timer is wrong. - 2:35. - Time off against your own regulations. Okay, I'll run a consecutive timer up here to double check that.

[00:51:31] Marty Weaver up next. - No, no, he stole my time, I want it back. - No, right now we watch the timer. We're gonna go with Marty Weaver next. We've never had an issue before. - You're having an issue

today. - Well, thank you.

[00:51:49] - Marty Weaver, Occoquan. Bless your hearts as reality has escaped your notice. What are you afraid of? I've listened to the October 15th meeting and subsequent ones. What I heard was disappointing. One group was asking for a chance to be heard and shot down, and the others saying it didn't matter to them.

[00:52:07] They only care about what they care about. I heard labeling with no evidence. I heard accusations about who many of us voted for. Well, let me educate some of you. The majority of Americans wanted a change. We did not vote for a bully. We voted for a fighter, for America, for a return to law and order, for actual females, for kids' education, for all of us to be all we can be based on merit, for safety in our homes and on the streets, for legal immigration and secure borders, for accountability, for free speech and religious liberty.

[00:52:40] Why are you afraid of discussion? Is your position so fragile it can't be defended other than to keep proclaiming that we are stronger for diversity? That's supposed to be diversity of thought, regardless of skin shades. And society is not stronger with people here who can't speak or understand the common language of this land.

[00:52:57] English, no assimilation, challenges to critical thinking skills, That is what Charlie Kirk was all about. That is what TPS USA is all about. You label others bully, racist, bigot, fascist, nazis. Why? You can't debate without knowing both sides of an argument.

[00:53:13] You argue based on feelings, not facts. Why do facts scare you? Charlie encouraged people to search for truth and faith in politics. A boy can't become a girl. The majority are being bullied to accept what is not truth.

[00:53:26] We are respectful of feelings.

[00:56:41] - Okay, thank you. And thank you all for pointing this out. this was something we had not noticed and I do apologize. From this point forward, I will time at two minutes and then anybody who wants 30 seconds back from the first 20, we will go back through the list to give 30 seconds back.

[00:56:57] My deepest apologies. I think that's the fairest way moving forward on this and I truly appreciate you guys pointing this out to us. Thank you very much. So we're gonna start now, I'm gonna do the time. I will just give a warning at 15 seconds.

[00:57:14] - So, 'cause we don't have the TV screen that can do it, or I'll have, let me have the clerk. Laura, you're gonna do the time and you'll give a warning at 15 seconds. - Correct, you will see the time displayed on the screen and it'll start at two minutes. - What? - So, BoardDocs has a time function that I can run from the screen.

[00:57:31] - Oh, I see, that one works? - Yes. - Do we need to check that one, do you think? How about somebody out there check that for us? - We'll have both, the clerks will be timekeepers. - In the spirit of making sure we do the right thing, let's make sure we do the right thing. So anyways, I'll double check it as well.

[00:57:46] All right, so at this point, we're gonna go, we'll start with Marty Weaver. We're gonna go, did I just do Marty Weaver? Oh, okay. So Marty Weaver, you get 30 seconds more if you'd like to do that. How about that? Let's go there.

[00:58:03] My apologies. - Okay, so we're starting? - Yes. - Okay, why do facts scare you? Charlie encouraged people to search for truth and faith and politics. Truth has to be spoken. Some things can't be changed. The sun can't become the moon.

[00:58:19] A horse can't become a cow, a boy can't become a girl. The majority are being bullied to accept what is not truth. We are respectful of feelings as much as possible, but we can't deny reality. We can't validate falsehoods. In the end, that isn't kind or loving. And I have not heard anyone say no to some other clubs that we might not agree with.

[00:58:38] - Thank you, Marty. Again, my apologies on that. So we're gonna go with two minutes. Is the time up there now? Is it gonna stay up there? Okay, all right, and I'll double check it too. All right, so up next. So the next, just to sort of get us back on the same page, next file will be Caitlin Weston, Turner Montgomery, Penny Stars, Pierre Durandus, and Yubo Zhang.

[00:58:59] So Caitlin Weston. - Good evening, my name is Katie Weston. My address is on file with the clerk. I greatly appreciate your commitment as PWCS leadership to making every decision with students in mind. While your advocacy for student success is admirable, it is imperative that you recognize that respecting in valuing all stakeholders voice in decision making has a powerful impact on morale and effectiveness.

[00:59:24] PWCS has amazing teachers and as a parent, I truly hope you table the decision about teacher's daily contract time until you have conferred with all stakeholders, especially our teachers. With the salary increase for teachers in PWCS, it is clear that you value your educators.

[00:59:41] To truly support our educators, we must recognize that they are the experts in their daily work and it is unacceptable for contract hours to be determined without their voice. Teachers aren't clocks to be managed. They are professionals who spend their time teaching, planning, grading, collaborating, and supporting students' needs far beyond the bell.

[01:00:01] When decisions about daily contract time are made exclusively by you, our teachers feel slighted and disrespected, leading to burnout and diminished effectiveness. And as a parent, it is incredibly important to me that our teachers are respected and compensated so that they can be the most effective educators for my children.

[01:00:20] If we want fair, sustainable, and effective daily contracts that prioritize student learning, then the people doing the work, the teachers themselves, must be included, consulted, and empowered in every conversation about their daily contract hours. If this decision is really being made with students in mind, we must table it until our teachers are at the table.

[01:00:40] Finally, to our PWCS educators here with us tonight and to those that are here in spirit, we see you. We see the countless hours you dedicate, the resources you spend out of your own pockets, the emotional labor you expend, and the unwavering commitment you have to your student's success.

[01:00:55] Your work is not just a job, it's the foundation of our future. You deserve to be at the table. Thank you for showing up every single day to make a difference. - Thank you. Okay, next up, Turner Montgomery.

[01:01:13] - Good evening, my name is Turner Montgomery. My address is on file. Good evening, I'm here tonight as a parent who cares deeply about the success of our children and the example this district is

setting. I wanna talk about the recent proposal that would increase teachers' contract time without compensation. It is not just unfair, it is unethical.

[01:01:29] We teach our children to value their time, to stand up for fairness and respect the labor of others. We teach them that if they work more, they should be paid more, but this board would demonstrate the opposite. The teacher raise that was previously agreed upon was for the current time commitment, and it was not intended to cover additional hours.

[01:01:45] In not compensating teachers for these hours, the proposal is disrespectful and exploitative, and it's destroying trust. Teachers already arrive early, stay late, grade papers at home, answer emails at night, and spend their own money on classroom supplies. They already give countless unpaid hours because they care about our children.

[01:02:02] Making the extra time an official requirement without pay sends a terrible message. It tells teachers that their time has no value. And for many teachers, the seven-hour contract day is not a luxury. It's how they manage their own childcare pickups, medical appointments, and family responsibilities.

[01:02:18] Extending the workday without pay strips away little flexibility that they have and makes the profession even less sustainable for working families. Increasing workload and extending hours causes higher rates of teacher burnout, which in turn drives higher turnover, instability, and lower quality instruction. More hours do not create better teachers, they create exhausted teachers. Decades of research show that decreasing class size has a far greater impact on student success. Smaller classes mean more individual attention, stronger relationships and students who are seen, heard, and supported.

[01:02:54] If this board really cares, they will understand that is how we raise test scores and close gaps. That is how we launch students into truly thriving futures. I urge this board to pause and reconsider. Model integrity, model fairness. Invest in smaller class sizes. Respect contracts.

[01:03:10] Pay people for the work you ask them to do. Our teachers and our children deserve no less. - Thank you. Penny Starrs. Good evening board and superintendent.

[01:03:26] I'm here tonight as parents. I've had students at Cedar Point Elementary, at Marsteller, and at Patriot School. I'm here to speak against the blue line that Dominion Power is planning to put in. I know a couple of other speakers have already talked about the school board's ability to have a voice in this matter, and I believe that you have more than a voice.

[01:03:49] I believe that you actually have some power. from your own document guidelines for school facilities in 2021, it talks about how school buildings should be constructed, how much size there should be, how many playing fields there should be. On page 16, it says other considerations recommended to evaluate existing schools include number nine, location of schools near electric power transmission lines or other environmental hazards should be avoided.

[01:04:21] Why is this important to us? We know that the lines that Dominion Power is putting in place are 230 volts. A standard voltage is about 35 volts. So 230 volts means that these are high voltage power lines. The World Health Organization has said that this can possibly cause cancer in children.

[01:04:45] Kids that attend our schools, again I'm a school parent, they spend about 12,000, 1,200 hours a year in our schools. If students go to T. Claywood, Patriot, Marsteller, they're gonna be exposed to 15,600 hours of high voltage.

[01:05:03] This has been shown to lead to childhood leukemia. So I think school board, you have a voice. You can definitely oppose this. These aren't gonna be buried underground. These are gonna be triple the size a regular telephone pole about about 135 feet tall.

[01:05:20] And so I really think that you can pull with us and make our children safe. Thank you. - Thank you. Pierre Durandis. - Good evening board. My name is Pierre, address is on file.

[01:05:36] So tonight I'm speaking not just as a parent, but as someone who's witnessed something deeply concerning that should be concerned every family in Prince William. We're the very office that's responsible for educating our students and holding up the procedures openly tells parents that they will not follow federal code and we have crossed the line.

[01:06:01] And this can happen, if this can happen to my family, it's absolutely happening to others. In our experience in the many families, in speaking to other families, I've spoken with procedural safeguards are being delayed, denied, selectively ignored.

[01:06:19] We are not talking about confusion. We're just talking about procedural support just disregarding the law. When you're told that your child cannot get their needs met through special education, and they will not follow the federal IDEA requirements in the Virginia Department, and then the letter tells the school that they do not have to, or they're not gonna tell them to do it, that's unacceptable.

[01:06:51] This should terrify every member of the school board. If the gatekeepers of our children's legal protections aren't following the laws, then who will. So tonight I'm calling for the school board to, and the superintendent to act immediately to see what's going on with the VDOE and to support our children.

[01:07:18] You must hold them accountable. And I'm gonna skip down. And do not let Dominion put the power lines near the schools and vote no to extending teacher's hours. Thank you. - Thank you. Yubo Zhang, and then after her will be Douglas Porterfield, Ms. Feliciano Rivera, Lindsay Childress, and Charlotte Yuhas, Yubo Zhang.

[01:07:44] - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My name is Dr. Yubo Zhang, my address is on file. I'm here asking for the positive vote on changes in teachers' contract hours because we're having serious procedure flaws here. First of all, no clear problem statement before a solution is proposed.

[01:08:03] We still don't know what problem the 30 minutes extension is supposed to solve. Is it instructional need, bus schedule problem, planning time issue? The solution appeared first before a clear explanation of the actual problem. Second, lack of community input, no options presented.

[01:08:20] Before a vote of this scale, the usual steps are a full superintendent report, HR legal analysis, budget impact, work session with multiple options, time for public review, teacher association consultation. None of these have been made publicly available.

[01:08:37] This December 3rd vote, absolutely abnormally early, outside the standard budget cycle, before legal review is typically done, before teacher association typically receive proposal, before committee get to review options.

[01:08:53] When a proposal of this magnitude move forwards without essential data, without full problem definition, Without alternatives, without stakeholder input, a vote becomes meaningless. It is not informed decision-making.

[01:09:08] It treats the public, educators, and even board itself as if details don't matter. This is not how responsible governance works. The quality of our governance matters and the community is watching. If you proceed to vote tonight, it's simply pushing through an outcome without the due diligence that our community expects and deserves.

[01:09:29] We deserve better. the board deserves better. Students and teachers absolutely deserve better. Thank you. - Thank you. Next up, Douglas Porterfield.

[01:09:47] - Hello, I'm Doug Porterfield, 1281 Dardick Court, Bristol, Virginia, Braemar H community, Brinsville District, hello. I'm here today about the power line. I had three kids go through the school system, three all went to Patriot High School, wanted to ask the board to write a letter to Dominion or whoever is the best answer is to be strongly against power lines going through Patriot High School.

[01:10:18] Two primary reasons. First was touched on aesthetic. When the schools were developed, not just Patriot, but all the others, you do all the utilities underground. There's obviously a reason for that. Now we have a group coming in that is suggesting they put up the hard power lines on school property that has no benefit for the school.

[01:10:42] So it's going past that over to areas where they're doing other building. The second one is safety. What you're putting on the school property is a very large structure that's going to be very noticeable to all the students.

[01:10:59] If you think somewhere in there, if someone's not gonna try to climb it, put up signs on it, it's gonna be very dangerous to have that sitting there on school property that they may be reaching out towards. So I'm hoping y'all will write a strong letter for both the safety of the students, as you heard before, and just the design of those schools that y'all have put in place over the past 20 years.

[01:11:24] Thank you. - Beth Zolli Feliciano Rivera. - Good evening, my name is Beth Feliciano. I am a resident of Braemar, and you guys should have my address.

[01:11:44] I'm an electrical engineer, and I'm a mother of three boys, one in kindergarten, third grade, and fifth grade, who attend Tickley Wood Elementary School. We are a zone for Teakley Wood, Mastiller, and Patriot High School, and I am here representing our school community in strong opposition to the Dominion Energy proposed Blue Line Route.

[01:12:02] Dominion is planning a 6.5 mile transmission line extension that has raised major concerns to Prince William County. The Blue Line Route places high voltage infrastructure extremely close to daily walking roads and travel corridors for students from Tickley Wood, Mastiller, and Patriot.

[01:12:23] These areas are not empty or in use. They're active child corridors, sidewalks, trails, and open spaces where students walk, bike, play, and travel every single day. Routing high voltage lines here bring construction zones, heavy equipment, like they mentioned before, and that also means increased traffic, lane closures, and congestion that will also interfere school bus routes, bus stops and morning and afternoon traffic.

[01:12:53] That adds a necessary risk to young children who wait at the neighborhood bus stops and students who walk and bike to school. As I mentioned also before, it is also mentioned that the VDOE clearly states location of schools near electric power transmission lines should be avoided.

[01:13:14] This is wrong and I know that, and I'm here tonight, that I wanna be clear that you as our board have the power and responsibility to push back against any infrastructure plan that places high-voltage transmission lines near our schools, our bus routes, and our student travel zones.

[01:13:32] Please hear our voices and do something about it. - Thank you. Lindsey Childress. - Good evening, members of the board. Thank you for allowing me to express my thoughts with you this evening.

[01:13:50] I am a mother of two young children at T. Clay Wood, and I am also an AP Spanish teacher at Patriot High School. I'm here tonight in stark opposition of the Dominion Virginia Energy proposed blue line, power lines as many before me have previously stated.

[01:14:06] I moved to Bristol 15 years ago to find my forever home. I never thought my home would be jeopardized or threatened by such an eyesore and a health hazard to my children and my family in which I have zero vested interest to fund power to data centers.

[01:14:23] You may think that I have a vested interest in this because it increased my salary, but that's not the case. My quality of life and the quality of life of my community is at stake. I implore you to please consider the responsibility that you have to write a letter to the Dominion Virginia Energy Power Company.

[01:14:43] I enjoy the tranquility of nature taking walks after work. I enjoy the trails and the serenity that walking brings me as someone who carries many stresses throughout the day as a mother and a teacher. Not to mention that my property value will be significantly lower and negatively impacted if the blue line comes to pass.

[01:15:04] These power lines are slated to be constructed practically in the backyards of Patriot High School, T. Clay Wood, and will interrupt many, many walkways where children bike and walk to school, including the pathway of both of my daughters. The blue line compromises this path and it compromises the safety of our students.

[01:15:24] How can a company supersede the guidelines of the Virginia Department of Education? As someone with a PE certification in addition to Spanish, what will happen to the PE teachers when there's a construction site in the backyard of Tee Clay and Patriot High School?

[01:15:39] As an alumni of Virginia Tech, I knew people who were shot in the shooting. If there was a shooting outside, would happen to our children thank you charlotte uhas hello my name is charlotte uhas and my address is on file i would tell you that multiple studies have shown that students perform better in school when they are less stressed and can relax at home but that would be doing exactly what i am asking you not to seeing us as just statistics just numbers but all these numbers

[01:16:16] are real people if you extend the school day we will only get more stressed we have responsibilities activities jobs and sports it will end up having the opposite effect that you hope it will Teachers can come up here and speak their peace, but us? Technically we can. I mean, I am here in front of you today.

[01:16:34] But between balancing work, school, and finding time to just be a kid, we are incredibly busy. You know another thing teachers can do more easily than us? Leave the school if they do not agree with the policies. We are most of the county's population.

[01:16:49] Most of the people who will be affected if this is passed. And yet, we have the least representation of actual students. Children who are currently in the school and learning in it. who input what they believe and come up to this podium and speak for us and as much as we all appreciate it not only adults who are speaking for us i am not an accurate representation of all of my school students much less all of the counties if almost all of us are against the lengthening of the school day and believe it would be detrimental to our mental health that would not be something to be taken lightly i am begging you to at least postpone the vote until you take a survey about what we think about the school day getting longer

[01:17:29] "because I guarantee that what you will find "is that the majority will be against it. "Just because we are young "doesn't mean that we are irrelevant. "We deserve the ability to speak our opinion "on things that will affect us." Thank you for your time.

[01:17:46] - Okay, so we're gonna go back through the first 20. I will call them up five in order and just watch the timer on the screen. We won't give any verbal warning. I'll just mute the mic at 30 seconds. Timothy Fahey, Paige Bartolo, Jeff Lofgren, he wasn't here.

[01:18:03] Hinnan Sari, Aubrey Veracone, and Marsha Sowers. Timothy Fahey. - All right, I'll be really quick.

[01:18:19] I'll just say, if we're not paying attention to the timer, we should spend more time looking this over and being more careful, just like we should've been more careful about the timer. Thank you. - Paige Bartolo.

[01:18:34] - As I was saying regarding Potomac View, this is not typical redistricting. This is not just shifting boundaries on a map. This is closing a school down, severing deep relationships, and displacing 89 dedicated staff members.

[01:18:49] Tonight we are submitting a petition with over 700 signatures, representing those who are united in concern and hope. Our petition is simple, designate the new Woodbridge Area School as a relocation of Potomac View and transition the current staff with students.

[01:19:06] Please honor our petition by keeping the community together. - Thank you. - Thank you. - Hannah Ansari. - Can you guys hear me okay? 'Cause I've noticed a lot of people aren't standing close enough to the microphone and I'm like, "I can't hear you," and I'm looking, I'm squinting at the subtitles, and I'm like, "What?"

[01:19:28] Oh, now I can see myself talking. I just wanted to say, I do agree with the free speech that, I don't know what that person's name was, I call it Grandma Maga, but I know, I know it's so bad. But I don't think that we should put a club in that intimidates other students.

[01:19:44] All right, I've already run out of time, look at that. - Aubrey Viracon. - So I had gotten to my speech where I did a big quote, and I just wanted to let you know that that information is on the PWCS SharePoint site under talent retention and engagement.

[01:20:01] The school division knows that encouraging work-life balance, valuing employee input, and having employees who are happy with their working hours is key to teacher retention. The board needs to listen to their own experts and vote to keep teacher contract hours the same. Show us that retaining our skills and expertise is more important than just writing on the webpage.

[01:20:22] - Marcia Sowers. - Marcia Sowers, okay. Lily Jessie? Okay, Dawn Farrell? Oh, I'm sorry, Miss Jessie.

[01:20:37] Yeah, yeah, yeah, Miss Jessie, sorry. - Well, I guess I get to close. Keep your word.

[01:20:55] You don't change things in the middle and not involve teachers in that process. You have to keep your word. And I wanna read off that, I thought you were doing this to improve instruction. The research does not support that.

[01:21:10] John Hattie's research does not support this. I'm not gonna name the school systems, but there are two schools that have eight-hour days, 200 days a year. Their scores at SOLs are 55. - Thank you, Ms. Jessie.

[01:21:25] - Thank you. Dawn Farrell.

[01:21:44] - I've come here to talk to you again, again. I recommend two steps. First, create surveys to collect data for teachers, family, students, and staff to understand how the proposed changes would affect them. Second, form a representative committee with members from every stakeholder group and grade level to review the survey results, study the logistical and financial impacts, and bring informed recommendations to the board.

[01:22:00] because teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. These steps will ensure transparency, collaboration, and responsible decisions for the entire district. This is why I'm asking the board to pause. No motions, no votes until a full inclusive process takes place, thank you. Natalie and Shannon. - Gloria Jordan, yeah, am I right?

[01:22:19] Gloria is next, Gloria Jordan. And then after Gloria, just so everyone remembers, Cindy Cruz, Rena Stapp, Emily Cherry, and Angie Charitola. - Okay, I'll be quick. - I'm just gonna say, please table this conversation until all the teachers are actually at the table.

[01:22:40] And then in terms of the power lines, that is really dangerous. That poses risk for brain development, for their ability to sleep and for safety. Please, please, please do all you can to move that to a safer location.

[01:22:55] Thank you. - Cindy Cruz, Rena Stapp. - All right, teachers work hard and are paid for the hours they work. If you extend the hours with no discussion pay your increase. You are doubly impacting teachers who are also parents.

[01:23:15] They would have to pay for longer hours for before and after care if they have children to go to different schools from where they teach. After school activities would be impacted because they would have later start times or before school activities like tutoring and clubs would also have different times because teachers work contract would start before the school day starts.

[01:23:30] Let's not be like all the other counties in Virginia. Prince William County can stand out by showing how much we value our teachers. They are the ones who make the revision plan as awesome as it was. So table this until everyone's at the table. Emily Cherry. Our teachers are the backbone of our school district. We're exhausted but we show up every day for our students. Please show us that our dedication matters by pausing this vote and committing to partnership and dialogue. We want to keep great teachers in Prince William County but you must

[01:24:05] meet us at the table not dictate to us from the dais. Thank you. Angie Tray-Ritola. Tray-Ritola. Time is money so I'll be fast since we're making comparisons into other counties. I'm an FCPS parent and attended their first school board meeting in August, I'm asking if the board consider these initiatives, putting school board meetings on YouTube the same night, FBI wrap back checks for all employees because FCPS is the first to do this in Virginia, RFID cards for students when they get on the bus, so transportation runs smoother.

[01:24:34] Teachers will have Raptor badges, so when there's a crisis, they can push a button for a response, including emergencies with things like overdoses. Under FCPS, the CBA, the tier two ERFC pension benefit remains intact. They provide a guaranteed double pension for VRS members for an additional 3% of their annual salary. This would mean for a-- you. Gwen Edwards. Gwen Edwards. Okay. Dara Banks. Dara Banks. Okay. Got it. Got it. Michelle

[01:25:09] Rupert. Lisanne Bodie. Ms. Bodie. Andrew McCarthy. Andrew McCarthy. Thank you for the extra time or the time we got back. In this giant building that's all about leadership, there's one of the

[01:25:44] most important things in leadership is trust. And we're just asking you to trust us that we do our job and we do it every day I mean we bring people in here with photo ops all the time because we do our job if you don't trust us and give us the half hour but we're not going to do as good of a job thank you Kim Simons and then after after that's okay take your time and after Kim will be Angela Stouffer hi

[01:26:23] um three points that I haven't heard anybody else make when you're going to compare districts like Fairfax to Prince William County you might want to consider planning periods my understanding is that our teachers have very little planning time and other districts have significantly more time number two if you're going to increase my work hours by seven percent you better increase my pay by seven percent above and beyond a step or a cola and number three it looks like the snow miser is going to be out on

[01:26:51] friday so i hope you're ready and then uh angela stouffer a book to read you it's called because i had a teacher so you can remember what teachers do and why we need to be respected because I had a teacher who loved to learn I love to learn because I have a teacher that believed in me and wanted me to succeed I discovered that I can do much more than I ever thought I could I realized it's okay when some things are harder than others because my teacher allowed me to observe her own

[01:27:31] learning process I found that thank you very much Ms. Stouffer all right that That concludes citizen comment time. Again, apologies for that. We will make sure that timer is fixed for the next meeting.

[01:27:47] Moving on to the Office of Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Annual School Calendar. Dr. McDade. - Mr. Chairman, we presented the school calendar and so we do not have any additional information to share but are prepared to answer any questions that the board might have.

[01:28:11] - Okay, so we're up for a vote on this. Moving on to 1401 school calendar. We need a motion to end discussion. Mr. Vice-Chair. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve option A for the 2026-27 annual school calendar.

[01:28:32] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? - Okay. Ms. Wall? No, okay. Yeah, we're discussing option A or any other option you may not like or like.

[01:28:50] Ms. Zargarpur. - Dr. Sullivan, you and I had discussed separately the issue that I wanted to see maybe a half day here and there, why is it we can't do that?

[01:29:11] It was a question, I just, I don't remember what. - No, that's okay, Mrs. Zargarpur. For the recommendation of the calendar, we're not navigating, we're selecting days, essentially. So I would have to defer that to an alternate process for consideration.

[01:29:26] - Is that possible? Still, like we approve whatever calendar and you all could still perhaps consider ways to help with teacher workload vis-a-vis. - So the calendar committee only brings together-- - Dates.

[01:29:45] - Just the calendar dates, the holidays, that's it. That's the only thing the calendar committee actually handles. - Okay. - So actual student school day, teacher work day, that's all a function of the board.

[01:30:03] - Okay, wait, so I would like to see half days for teacher work days on the calendar. - And I feel like no one ever asked me to come to a meeting about that. - But that's, so I don't, that's not what the calendar, yeah, so, right.

[01:30:24] - Okay, so how do I get that on the calendar? - Who else, who else? - Oh yeah, Lisa's just thinking. All right, well, for the future then board, because apparently the boat has sailed, I would like to add teacher half days to help alleviate workload, because we know that that's significant.

[01:30:52] We will consider that for next year, God willing. Do I have, I want friends on that one. - Yes. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. - Yeah, thank you, sorry, Ms. Zargarpur, a process I wasn't privy to. - My apologies to staff, I misunderstood a little bit of that process, but I will, I got that for next year, so.

[01:31:20] Thank you, Dr. Paul. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Vice Chair Blake. This is actually a good example of what occurs very frequently. As Superintendent McDade said, and please correct me if I'm wrong, the calendar committee is composed of teachers, members of the community, so well-rounded group of stakeholders, correct?

[01:31:43] And they only address the actual days on the calendar. The issue with that is there also is, the public has option to also weigh in for suggesting half days as well as staff at any point in time.

[01:32:00] One of the things that I think is a missed opportunity is A, right now we're going to take the vote. So there are many things that we could do. If we postpone a vote now, then it further delays other processes. Knowing what was brought up this evening, I would also ask those of you in the audience who are cheering to share your voice before we get here next year.

[01:32:27] That is, I'm just going to continue to finish my statement. It is not sharing your voice just from the boardroom. This board does also read emails. There is the division staff. There's multiple ways to share your voice.

[01:32:44] And the reason why I say that is because it's not exclusive to just teachers, it's everyone. That is why the calendar committee is made up of multiple people. What I'm hearing is the understanding of what they do and why the expectations aren't being met.

[01:32:59] That is a separate conversation that does need to be had. But I'm going to say, just as my board member Lisa said to the board, could she find support? It also would be something that the board would appreciate to hear from other sources.

[01:33:17] The excitement that is felt in the room, you don't have to do that through calendar committee. You don't have to do that through PWA. Those are options, but you always have an option to reach out to us directly. There's always a period of time in between an idea being introduced and an idea being voted on.

[01:33:34] And I'm gonna say, as I've said the entire time I was a board member, it matters. It absolutely matters because that is our job. We don't always make a decision that everybody likes, but that's how we get up here. So I hope that, when do we introduce, November?

[01:33:51] When does the calendar committee start? Right, I know, I'm just wondering, when did they first initially meet? Is it like October, November? September, summer is when it starts? Okay, I just wanna make sure that this information is out there because this is part of the disconnect that we have sometimes with our community and who does what and when.

[01:34:11] I wanna make sure that if there is an issue, 'cause I hear that there is, that I provide you the information needed to know when you can start sending that information independently as well to provide you another option. Ms. Sullivan, can you tell us when the calendar committee starts? - The calendar committee begins in the summer and in fact last, for this calendar began even earlier.

[01:34:30] We convened several stakeholder meetings, put forth recommendations, share those recommendations at the cabinet level, bring those recommendations to the board. - And how do stakeholders, if they're interested, let the division know that they would like to participate?

[01:34:47] - Well, we take the survey very seriously as well. So we do, we've got 12,000 surveys. - But on the committee? - On the committee, we do have teacher representatives. We did, when this calendar was drafted, have a PWEA rep as well, along with a few other stakeholders, and then did various groups and open sessions for people to provide feedback.

[01:35:11] - Okay, I just wanna make sure that while we have people present that we reiterate that because we may talk about this as a board, September, may not come up for discussion in this vein until we're actually voting. If you're a member of the public, that can be very frustrating. So while we have this moment, I just wanted to try to lay out the timeline for those in their presence.

[01:35:30] So I appreciate that, Ms. Sullivan, thank you. Thank you, that's all I have to say. I somewhat disagree with Ms. Williams. The committee, the procedures, what they do is identify a day.

[01:35:51] They are, if we want them to do something besides tell what you do in that day, then we need to change the policies and procedures. That's not their job to tell us what we do in that day. So, yes, if we want, and I agree, if we want a half day, that's something that we need to talk about, but the committee, that's not their mission, that's not their procedure.

[01:36:20] Thank you. - Mr. Wilk. - Thank you. Point on that, I think, yeah, to your point, Mr. Jesse, there is some confusion because two years ago, I joined the Zoom calendar meeting and listened, and when people brought up the days, to half days, scaling back days, it was immediately shut down, killed every time.

[01:36:47] And so if that is not the right venue, then we have to guide people to the right area and venue. And Dr. Sullivan, I think I asked you a few meetings ago about the verbatims or the submissions, and you did say, correct me if I'm wrong, there were a number of submissions talking about half days and other in that realm, correct?

[01:37:07] I'm not putting words in your mouth, right? - No, you're not putting words in. It definitely comes up each year in some of the comments. I do wanna clarify, the calendar committee has not been given the authority to shorten a student day. And so that's why there is perhaps some confusion because they're outlining against current regulations and policies.

[01:37:31] So in working with a committee, we can certainly share like we did last week at the presentation that those comments and suggestions are made, but not empowered to shorten the amount of instructional time a student receives.

[01:37:48] - Thank you, appreciate that. I'll be voting no again, again. Largely because of the shortened days, I think everyone knows the VDOE requires 180 days or 990 hours.

[01:38:04] I understand it's a regulation that we have 180 days and I respect that, but I think we have 1,100 hours baked into our annual calendar and given the inclement weather changes and not in my opinion, needing 15, I think it's on average 15 and a half snow days.

[01:38:25] I would like to see a discussion about the early dismissals having in quarterly to give teachers opportunities to work on grades, maybe have parent meetings, conferences, et cetera. So I will be voting no on the calendar.

[01:38:44] Ms. Wall, and then we'll vote. - I wanted to thank the calendar committee. I don't know if anybody is here who worked on that committee, but there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to put together proposals for the board to consider. And there were four good options that were considered.

[01:39:02] And I also appreciate the, how many did you say? 12,000, no 12,000, sorry, individuals, teachers, staff, parents, even students who weighed in with their voices, and while the four options aren't too different, option A was the most chosen of the four, and I can respect that voice.

[01:39:28] And I do want to say one thing. There are a lot of policies, regulations, and Virginia code that put parameters on the calendar, and fitting in professional development days, work days, conference days, flex days, prep days, holidays, for a diverse population where we have lots of different holidays, it does make for a very long calendar year, perhaps different from when some of us were children.

[01:39:53] And I know that is a point of disagreement in the community, in the communities at large, because some individuals would prefer a more condensed calendar, others would like us to start earlier, end earlier, and others are fine with a very stretched out calendar.

[01:40:10] Like we have, one thing I have heard teachers others say is sometimes with a lot of days in the middle of the week like a Tuesday or a random Thursday it's a little difficult for children especially young children to get in a routine and stay in a routine and I understand that and can appreciate that I just want to you know for the record acknowledge that that that's a that is a challenge of our current calendar makeup but each of these four options didn't necessarily address that concern that is out there in the public but these these calendars do give us you know a reasonable parameter for the situation that we find ourselves in and option a was the one

[01:40:48] that most people had the most majority support I guess it was a plurality of support so I just wanted to put that also in the record for this and I will be supporting that thank you miss wall I'll also

support option a I'm always consistent on I love the two-week Christmas break that's typically among the most popular and that's why usually most folks pick that option.

[01:41:12] So please vote.

[01:41:33] - The vote is five yes, two no. Wilk, Zargarpur, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to, we are up to student representative time. We have Ms. Bula-Sarsa from CD Hilton High School.

[01:41:48] 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 am grateful for the opportunity to highlight student matters with you tonight. I would like to open my remarks by asking our school board members a question about teacher contract hours.

[01:42:06] Many students are aware that the new contract hours may be approved tonight and would appreciate a further explanation of how after school activities, like clubs and sports, would function under the new contract hours. Specifically, they would like to know if they would have to leave school and come back or if they would be allowed to stay in a common area, like a cafeteria, while they wait for their teacher sponsors.

[01:42:25] Most importantly, students ask not to be left in the dark and state that they require a clear explanation of the rules next year, whatever they may be. Moving on, the Student Senate is gearing up for its first middle school leadership workshop. It is for the central middle schools in our county, and it will be held at Unity Braxton Middle School this Thursday, December 4th, and our student senators have lots of fun and interesting breakout sessions planned for our attendees.

[01:42:48] They look forward to facilitating workshops and encouraging future leaders here in Prince William County. There will be another leadership workshop for our Eastern Middle Schools on December 16th, and one for Western Middle Schools on January 13th. Besides the engaging student leadership workshops that the Student Senate has planned for the rest of the year, our students are taking advantage of the opportunity to build their leadership skills in their student voice committees.

[01:43:14] Students at Hilton and Colgan High Schools report building and supporting small groups of students focused on certain issues like attendance and beautification within their student voice committees. These committees within a committee seem to be working and have given our students the opportunity to pay close attention to problems that they may have a lot of experience with or are particularly passionate about.

[01:43:36] Finally, just to clarify for any students who may have heard otherwise, the student school day is not changing at all. Tonight's vote is on extending the teacher work day, not school start and end times. That brings a close to my remarks, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of your evening.

[01:43:58] - Thank you, Bill. Now we are now moving on to superintendent's time. Dr. McDade, you had the floor. - Thank you so much. I want to share a little bit of information about the announcement that we made earlier this month related to PWCS being selected as one of only a dozen divisions nationwide to join OpenAI's first national K-12 cohort, giving our educators free access to ChatGPT for teachers through June, 2027.

[01:44:26] When our educators use ChatGPT for teachers, their data will stay private. Anything that is typed into ChatGPT stays within the PWCS secure workspace. It will not be used to improve AI models and

the system meets FERPA requirements to protect student and staff information.

[01:44:45] Our teachers will be able to set preferences like grade level, curriculum and format so responses fit their classrooms. PWCS educators will also have access to ready to use lesson ideas, workflows and prompts from their peers nationwide.

[01:45:01] This partnership directly advances our proposed Elevate 2030 strategic plan by equipping teachers with tools that personalize learning, strengthen collaboration, and create future ready classrooms. As we continue this work, we remain focused on ensuring every student benefits from high quality, safe and secure learning environments that prepare them for the future.

[01:45:20] And as we are looking ahead, we're also getting ready for the public hearing and presentation of the Elevate 2030 strategic plan at the school board meeting in January. This next strategic plan reflects the voices of our community and charts a bold direction for the coming four years.

[01:45:38] Families and staff can expect clear goals, stronger alignment across schools, and a renewed focus on personalized learning, global competency, and student well-being. Elevate 2030 is our shared roadmap to ensuring every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[01:45:59] As we close out the calendar year, I want to highlight several important opportunities for our families, students, and staff across PWCS. In PWCS, we are committed to ensuring every family can access important school information in their language that is representative of their home language.

[01:46:18] On December 4th, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., we invite all families to an engagement series session focused on how to receive PWCS updates and communications in their preferred language. This is part of a broader effort to strengthen two-way communication and ensure all families feel informed and included.

[01:46:37] More information is available on our PWCS website. I also want to invite prospective educators to our instructional job fair on December 6th from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We are looking for outstanding educators to serve our diverse and dynamic community, and this fair is a fantastic opportunity for future teachers and school-based staff to learn about open positions in PWCS.

[01:47:02] While college football bowl season is here, I invite families of student athletes to participate in an NCAA eligibility information session on December 9th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

[01:47:18] Understanding college athletic requirements early is essential and this session will help families prepare for their next steps. Finally, on December 16th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., families can learn about the PWCS gifted identification and services process.

[01:47:35] This session will provide clarity on how gifted services work and how we support students with advanced learning needs in the school division. As a reminder for families, the registration deadline for applying to our 37 specialty programs will close February 1st, except the Center for Fine and Performing Arts, which closes December 14th.

[01:47:56] Our specialty programs offered in elementary, middle, and high school focus on career exploration, subject area concentration, and college and university preparation. Information and application assistance sessions are being held through February 1st, and I invite you to attend one of our online sessions found on our PWCS website.

[01:48:17] While acknowledging family, friends, health, and achievements, it is important to also consider giving during the holiday season. Many local schools have food pantries that provide the community with clothes, food, toys, books, and other essential items.

[01:48:32] Please contact your local school's parent liaison to learn how you can contribute support, resources, or financial donations. Consider giving as we all have received. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Next up is committee updates.

[01:48:48] We actually don't have a committee update. That's on as a mistake for tonight. Moving on to 18.01, teacher contract day. We have a motion on the floor. Mr. Vice Chair Blake. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[01:49:03] I move that the Prince William County School Board direct the superintendent to amend section 3.C of Regulation 561-2 to ensure the classroom teaching, assignment, planning periods, and lunch periods of all teachers shall not exceed seven and one half continuous hours beginning with the 2026-27 school year.

[01:49:26] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, I think it's-- - Yeah, we'll go around once. - Yeah, okay, I'm not supporting this. I understand that there are some operational reasons for extending the teacher workday, but I am not supporting it at this time.

[01:49:44] I think the board does have authority to make certain kinds of decisions. I would like to have a little more thought, clarity about teacher workload, because I think we're coming into some interesting times, The VDOE keeps putting more requirements on our teachers, which puts more requirements on the districts to do things.

[01:50:16] And it's just a constant ask of more and more and more. We've had this for five years now, and it's been nothing but constant change. So I am not supporting this right now. And I just wish I could have done some more for you guys.

[01:50:38] - Ms. Williams? - Or who wants to go next? - Who wants to go next? - All right, well, this might be a minute. The first thing that I wanna say on this topic is, I want to take a minute to acknowledge the emotional aspect of this.

[01:51:02] Because I think when it, I don't think, I know I'm not a teacher. What I understand and what I have heard consistently is feedback that comes from an emotional standpoint of teachers not feeling valued.

[01:51:20] This is where I'm starting because this is not, let me say, let me rephrase this. This decision is not an emotional one for the members who are seated up here, seated up here. But that shouldn't mean that you feel disregarded for how you are feeling and the impact that this has had on your life.

[01:51:39] That's valid. The way that you feel is valid. I don't know any other way to phrase it because it's real. It does not change the business side of education.

[01:51:58] They don't reconcile. It's not fair for any parties involved. What I have heard consistently since the November meeting is different perspectives from each level of the academic community, whether you're in elementary school, a middle school, or a high school teacher.

[01:52:18] I have heard different perspectives from the community, at large, parents. Everyone has a different feel on this. What is not being acknowledged, to my knowledge, is the response that we've gotten

is, is that we don't care about teachers.

[01:52:36] This board cares about teachers. This board, hold on, because this is important. This is a professional discussion. And if you want people to hear you, you have to allow them to speak.

[01:52:52] And that is what's going on right now. And it's important. And I want to make sure that not only the words that I say and my fellow board members are heard, but the words that you took time to express to me as a representative are restated to you so that you know that you were heard.

[01:53:11] There are some teachers who only work the seven hour day. I am not aware that that is most of the teachers in this division. I am aware that when teachers hear this extension to their contract day, that they perceive that this is a punitive measure, that nobody sees the amount of hours that are put in, that we don't value you as professionals, and that this is one more thing that this board is telling you to do.

[01:53:41] That's what I'm hearing. You are right in what you are feeling, and your interpretation of the situation. Can you not hear me, I'm sorry, someone's looking. Okay, thank you, 'cause I can't, my ears, I appreciate that. So what I want to say is, I just wanna take a moment to acknowledge that, because it's a very real thing.

[01:54:00] It's a very real thing. However, what I want to be perfectly clear and understood is this board has not been the responsible party for adding all the additional add-ons. We have sat right along with you, having to deal with and fight for you in other circumstances.

[01:54:21] The issue is a lack of understanding of how all of these systems work and operate together. Because as teachers, you're asking to be treated as professionals. Your job and your day-to-day existence is not in a corporate office. It doesn't function that way.

[01:54:37] So when you hear corporate business, like seven point of hours on a contract day, that's what that discussion is, it doesn't align with your lived experience. That makes sense to me. You feel that my understanding is, or what I'm hearing is it minimizes to you how we perceive you.

[01:54:55] And I just wanna be perfectly clear in stating, I can't speak for the board, but I have spoken with my board members. I have spoken with other professionals in the Kelly Building. That sentiment has not ever been issued by this administration, and it has not been interpreted correctly when speaking from a corporate perspective from board members here.

[01:55:17] I understand why you're upset. What I want to reiterate is how this process works, because that is where the disconnect is. A few years ago, the teachers, the school board, the unions, all parties involved, decided on collective bargaining.

[01:55:36] Collective bargaining, when we made that agreement, the board and the union, it was decided at that time that contract hours were not part of the agreement. This was a mutual decision. This was a mutual decision.

[01:55:54] Let me explain something to you, let me explain. Because this is very important. This is extremely important. And as someone who sat on this board for 12 years, and as someone who's never liked that teachers work and they aren't compensated for their pay, and as someone who understands how public education, we don't generate revenue.

[01:56:14] The hours that you work as teachers are not recorded time. That's not something that we did, that's not something that you did. It doesn't change the fact that it's unjust, but it also does not get us, it

doesn't give us a bargaining position to get money from the people who give us money in the general assembly.

[01:56:34] This morning we had a legislative breakfast with members of the General Assembly, our county board, and this board. We had a delegate elect tell us how proud we should be because of the results that this county produces on a seven hour work day.

[01:56:52] Let me explain to you why I was angry. Let me explain, because this is a part you're not hearing. - I'll clear the room. - This is the part you're not hearing. I don't want you to clear the room only because this needs to be said, and you need to hear it. - It's not a two way street, Ms. Williams. - The point is, as much as you don't wanna hear it, If we aren't able to record on paper and catalog the time that you invest, we can't tell the people who give us money, we need more money.

[01:57:17] Because the thing that they're gonna say is, look at how good you do with what you got now. That's not fair to you. It's not fair to us who are trying to provide the best that we can because we know that public education is not fully funded. The disconnect comes in because never before have you had compensation and work hours operate in two separate systems.

[01:57:39] We have to open collective bargaining to negotiate salary. That's completely separate than your contract work hours. This was what your union representative agreed to. When discussions with us, when it comes to salary, it must now, as long as collective bargaining is in place, be done through that process with your comments going to your union representative.

[01:58:07] Period. That's how it works. That was agreed upon. I still don't, not a fan. in the sense that I don't like the way the state did it. But I have to operate just as well as all the rest of my board members, as well as all the rest of our employees within the system that we have.

[01:58:23] It's not 100% fair, and it's not 100% just. Having said that, let me back you up to how we got here. Because I was here when that vote came out in 2016. It's probably the only thing Mr. Wilk and I have continuously disagreed on for the entire length of our service.

[01:58:40] Because I felt you got cheated when you got seven hours. Because you don't work seven hours. very few people only work seven hours. I understand that when I say I want to give you credit for your 0.5, you still feel like it's an unfunded mandate. It's not an unfunded mandate. The reason why it's not is because right now teachers are our only set of employees who work a seven-hour day that includes a paid lunch. Let me explain, because this is where a disconnect comes in. It is not

[01:59:16] your lived day. The reason why I'm taking time to say this is because it matters. It's not pretty, it's ugly. The contract is as written, says you work a seven-hour day and you get paid for it.

[01:59:33] That is a different reality than what you choose to do in your day or was told to do in the day. Those are two separate things and they are both true. The reason why this is important is, at least for someone like me, I would like to get you paid more money. I also feel it is my responsibility, because it hasn't been done through your previous union leader, to make sure you understand this process. And I'm going to say it, and I don't, this is, this is a fact, because if it was done, you would not be here saying you're not getting paid. You would not be here saying you don't understand the difference. That's not fair to you. The board's responsibility is

[02:00:10] governance. Our decision is the time. How the time is used is an operational decision. No matter the outcome of this vote this evening no let me phrase that if the board decides to vote and add a 0.5 hour day this conversation is not over the the way that the 0.5 hour day is implemented becomes operational at no point in time has anyone said to any teacher your input is not valued the reason

[02:00:42] why it feels that way is because it's all one-off conversations there is no there is no method there's no organized system for teachers to come and have a conversation with us as a board outside of collective bargaining period you can reread the agreement because it's there this is why it seems that there's another layer and barrier between the board and employees because there is

[02:01:16] because of collective bargaining but that was what okay hold on i don't i i understand the chairman is asking to clear the room and i understand that people are upset at me but it's my job because it's an elected official's job to help you understand what you're not seeing and it's okay if you don't but I don't want to ever hear anybody said that you weren't informed because there's a lot of misinformation right now floating in and out in the spirit and it's important to me. The whole point of everyone being here and the protest is so that you're heard. I

[02:01:52] took time and went out to speak to the union leaders. I have taken time to go outside. I didn't know that it was starting at six but the people were there. I spoke to. I've spent the past month because this was introduced last month speaking one-on-one the problem is that doesn't help you as a group feel that you have been heard but it doesn't mean that you aren't and I want to make sure that you understand that there this is an issue that will continue to be raised until there is a way that meets both sides when talking about things that aren't included in CBA because that's

[02:02:30] what this is when it comes to your paid time there was a presentation done at the last meeting in November. And from what I can see and what I understand, it still caused problems because the idea that this board would spend the past three, four years doing everything on our auspices to ensure that we provide equitable pay to the best of our ability and then turn around and decide to take it away from one group doesn't make sense. And it's not something that I believe in or I'm

[02:03:03] going to sit up here and agree with. The seven hour work day is paid in full seven hours. All other employees have unpaid lunch when you move should this board vote for a 7.5 hour work day from my lens because i'm i can't speak from anybody else's i'm now able to give you credit for time that you're in a building that matters to people who don't see your daily activity who do give us money who don't understand what you do when you move to a 7.5 hour work day

[02:03:37] the idea is the idea is to make it equitable for all of our staff which is one of our core tenants because what we've done is level the pay scale now the up the hours have to be adjusted and and that falls in alignment with all of the other groups our tas all of the other individuals who will be working a 7.5 hour day minus teachers the disconnect comes in is the fact that you hear 7.5 hours and believe that we don't think you work longer that's not true that's not true nobody

[02:04:15] thinks that nobody thinks that teachers are not professionals nobody thinks that teachers are not capable of doing their job at least i i'm not aware of value that you're demanding requires money that we don't have we don't and and and our goal is to get it for you but there will always be a difference because teachers exist in a public business which is education but your day-to-day

[02:04:52] experience is not one like anybody else in a public business this requires deeper level of conversation but this is not the end of this issue as many people think it is and that's important the vote goes on the time the operation how it works is completely different and i'm going to keep saying it because it makes a difference it does it should because you're the employees so it does make a difference when you talk about schedules or you're talking about the movement of a day the thing that i keep hearing repeatedly is people are already in the

[02:05:26] building what i hear from the teachers is my principal will you're going to make that has not been decided and does making a 0.5 change tonight still won't make those decisions the opportunities you are asking for to be heard about how the 0.5 is implemented that opportunity has not passed and i want to be very clear about that and i also want to be very clear about the fact that that is important. That's fine. I don't feel disrespected because your feelings are important but feelings and operations are two different things. I

[02:06:04] know everyone's getting irritated. Okay you know here's the problem if I stop talking then everybody else can say we didn't we didn't do our job to inform them how the systems work because no ever at point in time has there been an hour extension to a contract day that's not simultaneous with pay. The problem is we can't do that we cannot do it because they are two separate issues and I want to be very clear about that voting no and I want to be very clear about the reason why the yes is if we vote no and

[02:06:40] you don't get 0.5 added the ramifications are bigger than what you feel in your day what I would like to see happen moving forward is for us to build a community response so that the people who continue to pile on things on your day that this division is a funnel through can hear your voice. Because it is not us who made all the curriculum changes. It is not us who did all of the additional workload to your day. Many of those things come from the state. And this is the first time in 12 years, as a board member, I know that I've had parents come and actually speak to your

[02:07:19] defense's teachers. So I'm hoping, at the very least, that you feel heard, that you will take this opportunity to work collaboratively at all levels because it takes more than just the board going to lobby on your behalf. It takes all of us as a community because in one month, this 0.5 conversation is going to be folded in still with the rest of the budgets and everything else that we have going on. So giving credit for time already there is how I'm looking at it. You don't have to

[02:07:56] agree, but it is the tool that I'll be using to try to continue to justify the amount of work that you put in as professionals to continue to try to lobby for better things for the people who who do fund us and i hope that you will consider to join that team and not make an enemy out of the board because very soon we all have to be relying on each other and we have to understand the systems that we operate in in order to make a change and if you just want to exist in those systems

[02:08:29] and be and complain and not work for change this won't benefit anyone and it when it will no because if everyone has a right to talk so do i because it's important to me because what's going on right now is what our kids will see okay i just want to make sure that everyone is aware because we do we do spend time we do spend time making sure that everyone's opinions and voices are heard and i'm going to say the same thing that i said this morning at the legislative breakfast this school board this county has worked wonders collaboratively with our administration and we have set up systems

[02:09:07] and worked with our employees this is an opportunity to continue down that path to continue to work to clear up the things that need to be cleared up to continue to provide equity and to continue to

work collaboratively if this shuts down discussions then we have wasted our time with all the progress and the innovation that we have done to this point and that's a shame because right now we are where everybody looks and we should be taking this opportunity to be proud and learn to add systems to to fix the issues to fix the issues that this situation has brought up

[02:09:47] and i hope that we will take the opportunity as adults and critical thinkers to do so and understand how this works that's all because you know this is the this is the problem if if if someone is talking and they aren't heard we can't work together and it doesn't matter if they're in the audience or up here on the dais everybody has a right to be heard for their opinions and it And it doesn't have to be agreed upon.

[02:10:13] But I can't sit here on the dais and continue to listen to people come to us and complain about things that aren't true because that's a waste of time. - So to those who listen, I hope that you heard and to those who don't, I hope that you will take time and take a breath with the emotions and then go back and look at the facts.

[02:10:36] It's not a pretty conversation and it's not gonna be easy, but we are all connected and what we do for one affects the other and that is the point. - Ms. Wall. Ms. Wall.

[02:11:08] - All right, bear with me. I have a lot of thoughts that I wish to share. I think I will start out with saying teachers do so much. Teachers are loved. Teachers make a difference. Teachers are trusted.

[02:11:24] Teachers deserve our respect. They work with our children every day. I'm thankful for the teachers in my children's lives who have helped them, seen things I didn't see, helped them develop talents I didn't know how to develop, and guided me as a parent as we work together to develop amazing, amazing young adults who are thriving today.

[02:11:46] I know teaching is a hard job. You put up with a lot and I'm telling you now, I appreciate everything that you do. I appreciate all of the teachers in my own children's lives, the teachers who have taught me and interacted with me.

[02:12:06] Never for a second let anybody tell you that you're not valued and that you don't matter. I want to also relate some important facts since the issue today is not how we feel about teachers, which I did take the opportunity to do that.

[02:12:24] But the issue today is a very real operational decision. And there are facts involved, so I'm gonna try to bring it into that realm, understanding that's maybe not where we all are. But I do wish to start out with this.

[02:12:39] Alexandria, Fauquier, Manassas City, and Manassas Park have eight-hour workdays. Everyone else is-- - I'll clear the room. So I expect no more response from the audience.

[02:12:56] The board will do its diligence in our discussion and then take our vote. - Everyone else is a 7.5 except for Prince William County, which is the only division out of 19 in region four, which is our region, with a 7.0 hour workday.

[02:13:17] The only other division out of 131 divisions is in Commonwealth of Virginia, which I believe there are 132, so don't know what happened in one of them, is Williamsburg James City County with a seven point hour workday also.

[02:13:34] In region four, where we sit, 84% of school divisions have a 7.5 hour workday. Of those 19, 13 have longer workdays than us. They also are valued educators. What we are considering is not unreasonable, nor is it disrespectful to the profession of education.

[02:13:54] I've heard from many teachers on this issue. Please know I have heard from you. I have read your emails. I've tried to reply. I'm overwhelmed. So if I did not reply, I am sorry, it is impossible for one person to handle the input.

[02:14:11] I have also tried to seek input from other constituencies as well, because it's not just teachers that are affected by this decision. This includes students, parents, administrators at the school level, administrators at the central level, and community members.

[02:14:30] These individuals' voices have not been amplified. They have hardly been tapped. I have nonetheless tried to seek input and I've carefully considered all of the input that I have received. I've deliberated it, weighted over pros and cons, and I am aware that in my inbox and tonight, I am only hearing one point of view.

[02:14:54] The task before us is to balance a variety of needs, student needs, staff responsibilities, and key operational considerations. Above all, I, and I know my fellow board members have done this, have always tried to look through tough, look to solve tough decisions from multiple viewpoints, and consider what is best for the entire division.

[02:15:21] To do this, I keep in mind the overarching principle of what is best for students, because at the end of the day, that's why we're all here. That's the thing we have in common, even though our interests may be diverse, and they may at times be opposed.

[02:15:36] No doubt, this is a complex issue, and passions are running high. I see and hear the teacher point of view about workload, micromanagement, professional development, burdens and so forth, those issues are important.

[02:15:52] I appreciate hearing from you. In my mind, they are separate issues that can be addressed and should be addressed through appropriate procedural and other communication channels that do exist. If we need additional communication channels, we can look for that.

[02:16:10] I hear the teacher point of view that a 7.0 workday is highly valued. I do point out that while it is valued, it is unique, and perhaps a relic of another time, past time, and certainly it does have its attractiveness.

[02:16:27] While our contract hours are seven, I also acknowledge that many teachers work far and above that, often 45 to 50 hours a week, according to ChatGPT, the nice service that we have now, which I'm using, have been using, that's pretty standard for the industry.

[02:16:44] I expect that's true here. And as the consummate professional educators, you are, you know that this is true and so do we. Teachers in our county, by and large, work as many hours as those in other counties. Teachers have shared that the seven hours doesn't even begin to account for all the extra hours they put in as professional hours, where contract hours simply do not reflect this.

[02:17:08] I have heard concerns about how leave is accrued under a 7.5 day, as well as concerns about a raise in pay to offset the additional contract time. There are ways to offset the impact of a 7.5 day. One is by keeping leave accrual and deductions at 7.0 per day with no impact to the teacher hourly rate calculation.

[02:17:27] I know that this issue is being examined. The desire to offset a 30 minute increase with an increase in teacher pay will be addressed during the upcoming budget process with budget salary increases.

[02:17:44] If funds exist, teachers can expect an increase in pay above that of keeping track with inflation. And we have already, we already know approximately what that will be. And we know that the following year, we will see another significant jump in pay. So probably number one concern, we're just giving us more work without additional pay.

[02:18:03] If you look at fiscal year 2026, which we just did last year, there was a 6.8% overall average increase. The range was 3.0 to 11.5% increase. That was last year. Back-to-back average pay raise of 7% this year and a proposed 6.4% next year.

[02:18:24] That would be the following fiscal year. I do wish to go back and show that there has been a significant increase also to entry steps, a decompression of the salary scale, and we have rebuilt the scale, and many, I would say everybody has benefited from this.

[02:18:42] In fiscal year 2022, we had a 5% salary increase. In 2023, we had a 7% salary increase. That was a 7% increase on the already 5% increase. This is compounding. 2024, we had a 5% increase. 2025, we had a range of 5.2 to 6.1% increase.

[02:19:00] 2026, a 6.8 to 7.4 average increase. Folks, nobody's getting these kinds of raises anywhere else, as far as I know. This is really an important point. Going to the merits, a 7.5 hour day will help us meet our goals of organizational coherence.

[02:19:18] It will improve operational efficiency, will impact instructional quality, will provide greater student support, improved safety and supervision when children are in the buildings, will help us reach our strategic goals, will align teacher and teacher assistant work days and schedules, would offer a few minutes more each day for collaborative planning or parent outreach and create a higher adult to student ratio in the building. For elementary teachers, it may offer time for dedicated planning, which in elementary school, we have heard for many years is a problem.

[02:19:50] The details are yet to be worked out, but there is going to be flexibility and there will be continued discussion. I urge the division to consider that flexibility with scheduling to allow for the kind of flexibility that teachers are telling me they appreciate, where if they need to come in early and leave at the end of the day a little early, if they need to come in late and stay late or however it is, I'm sure that this flexibility that we are known for will continue depending on the needs of the educators and the needs of the school working as a team.

[02:20:23] I also urge the division to engage teachers who have voiced concerns about feeling micromanaged and disrespected. If this is a lingering or prevalent sentiment, I urge us to establish communication processes, whether that's through collective bargaining, which everybody wanted or some other means to gain valuable insight into how teachers are feeling, and listening to their concerns about new curriculum that's come down from the state or other state initiatives or state laws or any other things that might be worth addressing, which I'm sure they are.

[02:20:58] I just have a couple more comments and I'll wrap up. Some have suggested that we should delay this discussion and engage in a back and forth and a committee and study it, which is a good way to drag things out and make everybody really, I mean, it may work, but it could also just drag things out.

[02:21:16] Going over the facts as presented by the division last month, and in weighing the issues for both and against, I see, from where I sit, I feel the issues are clear. Supporting data is clear, and the need, from an organizational standpoint, and from the lens of what will help us help kids is clear.

[02:21:31] And so I feel that delaying this is not prudent, and an up or down decision is merited. And to conclude, in deliberating this issue, I've tried to be thorough and examine the issue from many angles, from the point of view, as I said before, of students, of parents, from school division leadership, from school-based administrators, from political operatives, from employed people in the community, from the taxpayers who pay your salary, educators, certified staff, and classified staff, and our teaching assistants.

[02:22:03] All of those constituencies have a point of view, and their needs, while not expressed directly, are important to consider as well, and I have sought to do that to the best of my ability. Thank you. - Mr. Jesse. - Well, after attending school board meetings for about 12 years now, It's good to see a crowd again.

[02:22:29] Most of the time these meetings are very boring. And I like to have the attendance and see what we have. I want a couple things before I get into my little speech.

[02:22:47] Number one, Chair, I hope that you don't clear the room. I will ask the people out there if you want to make noise and stuff and leave so everybody else can stay.

[02:23:04] It'll take 15 minutes to clear the room, it'll take another 15 minutes to get you back in. And I'd like to go home sometime this evening. The other thing is that I think I'm the only board member here that has no intention of running again.

[02:23:22] So when I make a decision, there's no pressure on me. I wanna do what I believe is best for the kids and best for you. So that's what I'm doing today. I have gone back and forth whether I wanna support this or I don't wanna support that.

[02:23:42] And so I have listened. I have not read 60, 70 emails. There's no way, I've read probably about 20, but I just don't have the time and the day to do everything and read emails.

[02:23:59] But I have listened and I have some opinion that I will share with you at this point. - I believe there is a significant financial potential damage if we do this to you as teachers.

[02:24:15] And most of you have pointed that out. You have pointed out the salary will decrease for benefits and so forth, and that's important. And that's something that we should be considered.

[02:24:30] I'm also glad to hear that that will be considered in the future. However, I can understand if you are in doubt of that because the way we did this today. Yes, the board, and I want to sort of my understanding, Dr. McDade and her staff does not decide to do this.

[02:24:58] The board asked for this to be done. So your complaint is with the board if that's the only complaint. It's not with Dr. McDade. she did not ask for this to be done, and I don't think it was even on her radar.

[02:25:13] So we, if you're mad, we are the one that you should be mad at at this point. However, I do agree that in all that we do, we always talk about the stakeholders and getting together with the stakeholders.

[02:25:34] You are the stakeholders, and we did not get together with you. - Stop clapping, please. Don't make noise. Wave your hand, thank you.

[02:25:50] You deserve to have your voices heard. And we should be able to figure out a way to do that and get this done, but you have not been heard. Some of these things that are being brought up obviously have been discussed, but they haven't been discussed with you.

[02:26:10] If we have had a group meeting, like we do for boundaries, like we do for other things with you, then you could have said, this is what we need to do if we're gonna do this. When we do it in this manner, and I'll say to the Republicans on the board and the Democrats on the board who's supporting this, this is why we need unions.

[02:26:39] Because when teachers and when we do things like this and make a decision and don't involve the people that are impacting, they feel left out, they feel ticked off, and so forth, and that's where unions come in.

[02:26:55] Before we had unions, I would say, for the most part, we really didn't need unions, because we did things for you. But this is an example of something that we did that we shouldn't have done the way we did it.

[02:27:12] The major reason that I will not support this today is this. That reason is this. We have, I think it's six hours and 40 minutes for the school days for the kids, and we have seven hours for the teachers.

[02:27:33] When we say, and when the members of the school board and the administration say that that's gonna improve, half and a half hour is gonna improve academic performance, I don't believe it.

[02:27:49] The reason I don't believe it is simple. If you don't improve, increase the school day for the kids, you're not dealing with academic issues. You're dealing with administration. You were not hired to be bus monitors and so forth.

[02:28:09] You were hired to learn, teach kids to learn. This, the other thing is, if you have 20 or 30 kids or teachers, they're not gonna be used for those 15 minutes at the end and 15 minutes.

[02:28:27] You don't need 30 teachers doing that, Jen. What are you gonna be doing? I don't see any academic thing. If you are allowed then to do planning and so forth, at some point the teachers who are out there doing the monitoring are gonna say, why are they allowed to do the planning and I out here doing the monitoring?

[02:28:51] It doesn't make sense to me. I think this is something that we should have and I would like to make a motion that we table this for another decision time. I'd like to know if there's a second.

[02:29:08] - Do I have a second for Mr. Jessie's motion to table? - I'll second. - Okay, hold on.

[02:29:23] So all in favor, so we'll just take the vote to table this motion. So we're just, it's just a table. So if you wanna push it off, then you vote yes, if, yeah.

[02:29:38] - Before we, since the motion has been moved and seconded, I want clarification on how long you would like to table it and the purpose of the tabling. because there is no current mechanism to do what you are described. It needs to be developed.

[02:29:54] And this is not whether it's important or not because it is, right? But when, to when? - Okay. - Because that could take a long time. - Mr. Jessie, do you have a date or a motion to tell?

[02:30:10] - December, I'd like to put this off until April. - Okay, Mr. Jessie makes a motion to do it till April. Ms. Zargarpur, you still continue your second? You seconded Ms. Zargarpur? - Yes. take the vote on

this.

[02:30:27] So because we don't have it loaded in the agenda, I'll take a hand vote. Okay, so if you're voting yes, you're voting to table. If you're voting no, you're voting not to table and you're gonna have the vote tonight. Is it on the screen?

[02:31:00] What is that? All right, I'm gonna do a hand vote. So all in favor of tabling it and moving it till April, vote, put your hands up. That's a yes. So I have three yeses. How many in favor of not tabling it? How many do I got?

[02:31:16] Four, so motion dies. Mr. Wilk. I, given all that said, it is an emotional topic as you presented and said, and I am going to stick mostly to my speech and stay on track and then I will add some commentary a little bit afterwards of things that I've been thinking, adding to this emotional experience and what others might be thinking.

[02:31:52] So first I do urge careful reconsideration of the proposal to extend the teacher contract day from seven to seven and a half hours. My position is not rooted in opposition to progress, but in prior data, history, and the vital need to preserve the trust we have diligently built with our educators.

[02:32:12] Before I delve briefly into prior findings, I want to address the question that is likely on everyone's mind, including my own still. Why are we the board revisiting this issue now? What is the impetus for changing the contract day at this specific moment?

[02:32:28] Honestly, I do not have an answer and I have not been able to answer that question when people have asked me that question. To propose this change without providing clear justification or new research demonstrating why the outcome would be different, this time requires great scrutiny and sagacious planning.

[02:32:45] Regardless of the pressures that brought this proposal forward, our duty remains to assess its impact on our students, our budget, and our most valuable asset, our teachers. We need to acknowledge the history of this exact issue. Almost a decade ago, I sat here and led the charge to overturn a similar extension.

[02:33:05] I remain the only board member who voted in the affirmative in this pivotal moment. The board's decision on May 18th, 2016 to change the contract from seven and a half back to seven hours passed in a 5-3 vote.

[02:33:21] I would be remiss if I didn't thank my colleague, Lily Jessie out there. I had to refresh her memory after watching it that although this was my baby, She was the pivotal swing boat that made it not 4-4, but 5-3. And I'll always thank you for that. I joked with her the other day.

[02:33:37] I said, I don't think we were really liking each other back then, but she did me a solid, so appreciate you. That vote was a major victory for teachers grounded on clear evidence and restoration of trust. We must remember that the original discussion occurred five months before the 2016 vote, which also included a survey issued to over 3000 teachers to gauge their feedback.

[02:34:03] That process, while imperfect, was vastly superior to the original 2012 vote that added 30 minutes at the last minute before the budget was passed. The data from the 2016 survey showed a palpable concern from the staff.

[02:34:20] Only 9% of teachers at that time saw adding 30 minutes as a positive. The qualitative comments revealed feelings, "retaliation," punitive, a loss of autonomy, words like a slap in the face i reiterate exactly what i said for 10 years ago i wish it was four years ago 10 years ago there is a fundamental difference between a teacher choosing to stay to work late or come early versus the board dictating how long they must remain in the

[02:34:56] building when you tell them you must do this number of hours it sends an ominous message This proposal is a matter of telling them they must work, not letting them make the choices of individual autonomy. The single most significant cost of this proposal is the impact I believe it will have on our workforce.

[02:35:17] The risk of eroding work-life balance is a serious concern, making it harder for teachers to remain in the profession or in this county. Teachers will always go above and beyond their students. I did for six years. I know Ms. Zagapur still does it today.

[02:35:34] as a teacher, but mandating longer in building hours risks undermining the trust that is shared by our teachers and staff. Such a change could lead to burnout and attrition, ultimately harming the very students we aim to serve.

[02:35:52] I believe this detrimental move does not hold true to the trust we share with staff. While we may feel hopeful about our recruitment efforts, the reality is that extending the contract day risk undoing some of the progress we have made in attracting that talent.

[02:36:09] The question of compensation is wholly germane to the maintaining of trust. If the goal is to elucidate the value we place in our staff, we must align our actions with our words. Additional hours would strain morale and diminish the positive school environment.

[02:36:25] We have worked so hard to build. Extending hours without increasing pay reduces the hourly rate. undermining recent gains and risking the retention of high quality teachers. This change represents uncompensated work.

[02:36:40] An extra 30 minutes daily is an extra 2.5 hours each week, adding up to 97.5 hours per year that teachers will not be getting paid for, in my opinion. Instead of reverting to an approach that was contentious almost 10 years ago, I asked my colleagues. Why does PWCS not want to be strategic and offer a shorter contract day? In the midst of the teacher shortage, having a shorter contract day will be seen as a competitive advantage for educators looking to join and improve our overall retention rates. We can gain experienced

[02:37:17] educators because they will see our contract pay in time and could choose us over other divisions. they can do the math and see that they would be getting quote more bang for their buck end quote here empowerment by preserving a reasonable work schedule is foundational for building strong student relationships with their teachers as i said this is an emotional topic what happened in 2012 i was a teacher i saw this occur i worked in a building where this where the school board

[02:37:55] chairman's son at the time was literally taking note to his dad on every teacher who was working to the rule i remember this time and it impacted me and it propelled me to run sure on emotion at first but to run for the board in 2015 and beat someone no one thought could be defeated this is a passionate topic of mine and yes it is emotional and it is something i feel strongly about as i

[02:38:27] feel strongly about it 10 years ago so in closing i respectfully urge my colleagues to vote no on this result proposal and preserve the flexibility that has made prince william county a desirable and supportive place for educators thank you for your time mr blake thank you mr chairman before i speak to the decision in front of us i want to begin with something that sits at the core of every decision i make up here respect our teachers carry an enormous load emotionally intellectually and

[02:39:04] and physically. They show up for our students with hard skill and a level of commitment most people never see. I hear the frustration. I hear the exhaustion. I hear the need to be seen and understood, and that deeply matters to me. I read all your emails. You know that. But respect also means being honest about what it takes to run strong schools, especially in Title I communities like mine, where time, alignment, and consistency are not only luxuries, they're lifelines. And right now our system is out of alignment. A seven-hour teacher workday, really six

[02:39:44] and a half hours once you subtract lunch, hasn't matched the realities of modern teaching in a long time. Every other full-time employee group in this division works longer days and has unpaid lunches, but our classroom teachers are the only group with a paid lunch and the only group whose leave is based on a full contract day, not a work day.

[02:40:10] And beginning in 2026-27 school year, our teaching assistants too will be moving to a 7.5 work day as well. We can't keep operating the system where almost every staff group is aligned except the people who are most central to instruction.

[02:40:29] That doesn't support kids, it doesn't support teachers. When I'm in schools, I see teachers carrying, I see what teachers are carrying, but I also see where the gaps show up. And I talked to principals. Principals across all levels were clear.

[02:40:46] Elementary schools need more protected planning time, more coherent collaboration. Middle schools need better coverage, more support around transitions so instructional time stops bleeding away. High schools need stronger CLTs and more capacity for real parent engagement.

[02:41:05] All of that takes time, real time built into the system, not squeezed out of already overstretched adults. Right now, we're asking educators to hold up the structure through sheer effort and heart.

[02:41:21] That's not sustainable. Strong systems are built on alignment, not heroics. And I want to acknowledge the reactions I've heard. 30 minutes feels like we're losing flexibility. This feels like another demand.

[02:41:39] This won't fix workload. Those feelings are real, and honestly, they also tell us The current structure is already stretched to the breaking point. That's the whole point. We need a system that supports teachers instead of depending on them to patch holes with their personal time.

[02:41:58] We keep hearing two competing, I keep hearing, all of us keep hearing two competing claims as well. This extra time adds stress, but 30 minutes in a day isn't enough to make a difference in student outcomes. Both can't be true. Time matters.

[02:42:14] If time matters for adults, time matters for students. And the truth is, right now, limited teacher availability before and after school is creating real inequities in my district, in her district, in your district.

[02:42:33] Schools with extra resources can pay for tutoring and support. Others can't. Extending the workday gives students consistent access, no matter where they live. This is also about safety and student well-being, arrival, dismissal, emotional regulation, restorative circles.

[02:42:51] Those are all crucial moments that shape the entire school day. We need more adults available during transitions, not fewer, more stability, not less. This is also not about making teachers do more without valuing them. Over the last several years, this division has invested heavily in both pay and overall compensation packages.

[02:43:12] Teachers are receiving raises again next year of over 6.6%. I think it's 6.4% raise again next year. Over, over this strategic plan, educators have seen roughly 25% minimum in cumulative pay increases and many receiving up to 42% pay increases. That's real. That's tangible. That's commitment. And it happened during the same strategic plan that now calls for the alignment, aligning the workday to the needs of the students.

[02:43:46] But compensation is more than just salaries, more than just salary. It's stability and support around the salary that makes careers, that makes a career sustainable. And classroom teachers benefit from one of the strongest packages in the region.

[02:44:05] Six weeks of fully paid paternity leave, or I mean parental leave, which is, people don't even talk about that, parental leave. So six weeks, the mom, if you both work in the school system, six weeks, the mother gets off, six weeks, the father gets off.

[02:44:23] You get 12 weeks off fully paid. Ten days, ten, six days, five personal days, advancing a full year to start the year. Comprehensive medical, dental, vision, and prescription with no in-network deductibles.

[02:44:41] Short-term disability that covers up to 125 workdays per incident. Unlimited child school event leave. Unlimited leave for VEA, PWA involvement. The VRS retirement, we pay into the retirement system 14% of the tuition reimbursement and credential support.

[02:45:09] Those are just some of the benefits. These benefits are necessities. They represent a real investment in educator well-being, family stability, and long-term security. They reflect our values and our beliefs that teaching is a profession worth supporting at every angle.

[02:45:27] And I want to be honest, the time we're talking about today isn't about increasing the workload. The expectations of the job remain the same. This is about aligning the system so teachers can do the work already being asked to do within the structure, not outside of it.

[02:45:43] Not in parking lots at 5.30 p.m., not at the kitchen tables late at night. This is also not unprecedented or catastrophic. When the workday increased from 7 hours to 7.5 hours in 2012, 2013, and later decreased again, retention rates remained stable.

[02:46:04] The length of the workday simply did not drive major retention changes. I know some have asked, why isn't this a bargaining topic like you heard before? The reason is straightforward.

[02:46:20] Under the current bargaining agreement agreed upon by both parties, scheduling is a management right. That was framed again and agreed by both parties. Exercising that responsibility is not anti-bargaining.

[02:46:35] It's honoring the structure that exists. I do not make this decision lightly. I'm a parent first. My kids are in these schools. I live with the impact of our decisions around my dinner table. I know teachers

shape lives. And because I know that I believe they deserve a structure that actually supports them with clearer alignment, safer transitions, better planning conditions, stronger collaboration, and more meaningful time with families, this change isn't perfect.

[02:47:06] No schedule is, but it is necessary. And if we're serious about raising student outcomes across the division, especially in schools where the needs are the highest, We cannot keep saying we want better results while clinging to structures that don't allow adults to do the work required to get those results.

[02:47:26] If we want more consistency, more intervention, more collaboration, more connection, then time must reflect that reality. I respect our teachers deeply, and because I respect them, I won't pretend the current structure is working equally well for every school or every student.

[02:47:43] I won't ignore a misalignment because it feels comfortable, and I won't let fear, the fear of pushback, outweigh the needs of the students who depend on us the most. So, yes, I will be supporting this change, not because it's easy, not because it's popular, but because our students deserve a system grounded in truth, and our teachers deserve a structure that backs them up, not just through praise, but through time, alignment, and honesty.

[02:48:13] And before I end this, I've heard burnout get mentioned. But when I'm in the schools or I'm at these events, I see the same teachers, the same teachers doing the same work all the time.

[02:48:29] Those are the teachers that are going to get burnt out. Those are the ones that are going to get burnt out. Thank you. Okay, thank you for this. I'll wrap up here. And, you know, my remarks continue to sort of change.

[02:48:46] as the last couple of weeks have gone by, I appreciate the board's commitment to studying this topic. I appreciate all the input and all the emails, and I've read all of them from all the teachers. I haven't responded to all of them, similar to sort of the pandemic where they were just coming in and it was impossible to respond to all of them, but I read all of them.

[02:49:09] And I know all the concerns and the issues teachers have brought up about moving on this issue. I voted on eight budgets. I have served almost eight years on this board. I'll vote on a ninth budget coming up. For context sake, in 2016, as Mr. Wilk pointed out, when they decided to go from seven and a half to seven, one of the arguments was that they had frozen steps and hadn't given steps and colas in numerous years.

[02:49:37] And this was one way to sort of address benefits for the teachers by lowering that work day. And they made it clear, going back in that meeting, that they thought that when we got to a point where we were competitive salary-wise with our regional partners, that we would go back to seven and a half.

[02:49:58] And that was something that was discussed at that time. And so that's just, going back to the context of why we went from seven and a half to seven, which truly is an anomaly. There's only two districts in the state that do that.

[02:50:16] and most districts are at seven and a half and some are even at eight with longer contract days, as we discussed in the last board meeting. And so in all of those budgets that I've had the opportunity to vote on it, you know, it was interesting when I took over, it wasn't like the economy magically changed.

[02:50:37] I firmly believe that I brought to this board a strong commitment when I ran that I would not entertain a budget on my desk without a step in a COLA as the first priority of the school division. That was

the instruction I gave Dr. Walts on the day that I took over, that there will not be a budget that sees the light of day without a step in a COLA.

[02:51:00] And that means if we have to cut dollars from construction or projects that we need to do because we need to catch up with teacher pay and benefits, that that's what I would do, and that's what I did. Every single budget since that time has had at least a minimum step in a COLA plus, And it's really been plus.

[02:51:21] The only time we voted on a step in a colo in the pandemic year, but we had to cut back the colo, we did a bonus, but every budget since, and every budget under Dr. McDade has had far more than a step in a colo. And so what we looked at was how can we catch up?

[02:51:41] And I know many of you say, well, we shouldn't do what other districts are doing. Well, the number one concern when I came in was, we're not getting paid as much as everyone else around us, and we are losing teachers and we were bleeding them. we were truly bleeding them. We had a recruitment and retention problem. Even when the seven and a half went to seven, it wasn't as if it dramatically improved our recruitment and retention.

[02:52:01] What has improved our recruitment and retention is that since 2017, teachers are making 60% more money in real dollars in this county than they were then, and 40% since Dr. McDade took over.

[02:52:16] And those are real numbers, those are real dollars. And I made that the highest priority 'cause as our first speaker pointed out this evening, I did say those words. The strongest way to improve student performance is by putting a high quality teacher in the room.

[02:52:33] And the best way to put a high quality teacher in the room is to pay them what they deserve. Pay them everything that we can. Everything we can find in the budget we can. And we did that. And I will say it's catching up to us. I don't know how much longer we can continue these raises 'cause we have outpaced our regional partners.

[02:52:52] We have now the highest paid first year teachers in the entire Commonwealth and nearly in the nation. We have our veteran teachers are among the highest paid certainly in the region and I think in the state and our mid range teachers are almost at parity with the quote richer districts of Arlington, Loudon and Fairfax.

[02:53:09] And that's important because I do believe if you pay your teachers more, you can improve rear recruitment and retention. And we have, we've done just that. Our recruitment and retention is better than the state average and I think is better the national average and that has been dramatically improved our surveys validated from forbes you know of outside saying that we're a top district to work for we continue to be in one of the top four districts to work for in the commonwealth based on outside research and so those are those are that is what i sort of brought to this board is a strong commitment it wasn't like the money

[02:53:48] didn't exist before it was there they just chose not to do it they chose not to make that the highest priority and so it has been different and we have caught up I do believe this is an anomaly I have always had an issue with this I do believe as mr. Blake points out there are numerous advantages to seven and a half hours there are more time at for for students arriving students leaving, more time for possible tutoring,

[02:54:20] more time for, we have, and there'll be more time for planning at the, certainly at the elementary level. And for those reasons, I think it is very important.

[02:54:37] Now we have raises coming up in the next two years of the collective bargaining agreement. We have, you know, as pointed out by numerous members that this is not one of the bargaining parameters that the school board and the PWA came to an agreement on, we did not agree that this would be part of bargaining and, or rather we agreed that it would not be part of bargaining.

[02:55:00] And at that time we moved forward with a bargain. And so, you know, I've heard a lot about the word respect and I think, you know, I've, you know, many of you in the room were here during the pandemic and weren't happy with my decision making during the pandemic.

[02:55:16] and many, many folks in the community were happy and we're not happy. And on par, you're gonna judge me as an elected official on what I've done to help improve the school division and my commitment to students. And you might like eight or nine of the things I've done and hate three or four of the things I've done.

[02:55:36] And I hope in the end that I have more of those things that you liked and I think more of those things that I think I have pushed forward have done things to improve student performance. And we've seen that with our strategic plan and the success that's come from that and i firmly believe as i started this job that it does come from the teachers i do recognize the going up on the half hour without sort of an adjusted pay as a concern i absolutely understand that i do have also made eight years of raises without increased responsibilities that would be outside of the normal increased responsibility that came in the

[02:56:14] prior eight years when they weren't getting raises meaning teachers are always expected to do more more professional development, learn more curriculum, do more things, those things, they're all part of the job and every one of you who signed up knew that those things were part of the job and teachers do that and that's why we say it's a noble profession.

[02:56:30] Nobody I ever went to college with went into teaching for the money and none of my friends who do it do it because it particularly pays well. It is a noble profession and so I appreciate that and so when respect, if one were to say, Well, you show us respect by salary, no division has given higher raises than Prince William County in the Commonwealth or in the nation in the same eight year period.

[02:56:56] No division has done that. No division has improved and worked hard on benefits as we have. And so we've done those things over eight years without a whole lot of new demands. And so I do believe that while I recognize the criticism on this, I think I am justified in my push to move this 'cause I do believe This is good for students.

[02:57:18] I think it's good for families. And I do think that when we sit down at the collective bargaining table the next time around, this will certainly be a point of discussion and contention. And that's certainly why we bargain and why if we say, well, Dr. Lateef, respect is by how much you pay us.

[02:57:36] Well, we've done more than other districts. Respect is by how much you give us in benefits. We've done more than other districts. We've invited collective bargaining, which is something that not all districts do in Virginia. we were among the first to do that. And we were the first to come to a collective bargaining agreement. And so for those reasons, I am, I believe I've worked really hard for the teachers in Prince William.

[02:57:59] And I think the evidence is there with our recruitment and retention and with our performance. And I do recognize that I will disappoint many of you with my vote this evening. I know I'll disappoint many teachers in the division for this, but I also know that I frankly have done that in the past with other votes, but I also know that teachers have been happy with what we've done on salaries.

[02:58:22] And it's been something that hasn't been seen in other districts. And so with that, I will be supporting the motion to go to seven and a half. So at this point, I'll ask the board to vote. No, I mean, yeah, sure, just one minute.

[02:58:40] - I would just like, as the board makes this vote, if we could advocate to the administration to have further dialogue on how the 30 minutes, if passed will appear because that's the missing part of the conversation. There was a miscommunication between myself and the division because I'd asked for sample schedules, but I didn't make it clear that I wanted them to be presented.

[02:59:00] So that is my fault because I did speak to some of my constituents and make the claim that that would be, there would be a visual. And so I wanna make sure that that is corrected for the record because that was my issue with the miscommunication. And again, I just wanna make sure that there is time after the vote for that conversation to be held on the operational end, that is what I'm advocating for.

[02:59:20] - Yeah, I think Mr. Blake, read the motion one more time so everyone remembers what it is. - I move that the Prince William County School Board direct the superintendent to amend section three C of regulation 561-2 to ensure the classroom teaching assignment planning period and lunch period of teachers shall not exceed seven and one half continuous hours beginning with the 2026-27 school year.

[02:59:51] - Yeah, so just, I had you read that because I wanted to make sure it was clarified that there is some, you know, the superintendent has been directed to do this, you know, based on her operational management. And so that, I just wanna be clear on that, Lori. I also wanted to clear up, I know we had the students speak this evening.

[03:00:06] I may have misheard her, but it sounded like she thought the school day was being lengthened. The school day is not being lengthened for students. the school day hours will remain as is. Correct, Dr. McDade? We're not changing the school day times. So I want all students to know that.

[03:00:22] And I think that was known because otherwise, I think if we were really extending the school day, we would have a lot more students here. But that's just, I wanna be clear on that. This is not extending the school day for students. That will remain the same. So at this time, I'll ask the board to take your vote.

[03:00:37] Please put that up on the screen as motion read by Mr. Blake.

[03:00:54] - The vote is four yes, three no. Jesse, Wilk, Zargarpur, motion passed. - Okay, at this time, move on to board matters. I think last time we started with Lisa Zargarpur, so we'll start with Mr. Wilk.

[03:01:13] - Yes, sir, the only thing I wanna say is a previous colleague of mine had a very impassioned speech. Actually, in my opinion, I think it was the best speech I think he's ever delivered. But if there's concern, no, no, yours was actually, I thought yours was very nice too.

[03:01:29] If there's concern about equity in Potomac, I look forward to a second and then maybe a third from the Woodbridge rep on fixing the most glaring disparity of equity in Potomac, which is Dumfries Elementary School. So we can put that on the CIP and ensure those kids are having access to everything all the other kids are having.

[03:01:48] We can abruptly close Potomac View under the auspices that it's a very old building, but my building, which is extremely old, is perfectly fine. So I look forward to adding that on the CIP with your guys' support. Thank you.

[03:02:05] Mr. Jesse. Again, I'd like to thank all the people that came out tonight to express your concerns and it's very much appreciated. Again, I have hoped to start getting out to more and more activities.

[03:02:23] And I'm happy to see my wife here tonight. This is the first time she's been in a long time. My guess is she's outside in the hall talking to a bunch of people at this point. But, you know, this is an important meeting.

[03:02:40] It didn't go the way that I would like it to go, but that's the way things happen. The key thing is for you all to vote. If you're not voting, please start voting. It matters who you elect. Thank you.

[03:03:03] - Jen, sorry, Ms. Wall. - No worries. Given the meeting we've had, I'm gonna be briefer than normal. I want to report on a couple of things that I've been doing since we met last. One of the things that I was able to do was go to the Virginia School Board Association annual convention in Williamsburg.

[03:03:24] Always a wonderful opportunity to network with other school divisions and their school board representatives and occasionally their superintendents and ask them how things are going and what are their biggest concerns. This is one of my favorite things to do is just say how are things in whatever county they're in and what is your biggest concern?

[03:03:45] What is the biggest thing you're dealing with? And tell me something really great about your division. It's always really fun, and I learn a lot. And everybody I talked to was pretty shocked about our 7.0 work day. I wanted to highlight some of the activities I've been to.

[03:04:01] I went to a turkey trot at Tyler Elementary. It was awesome, so fun. The kids, it was a beautiful day. Sunny, the kids were running around and having a ball. Pace West held, what a gem Pace West is. They held a harvest feast for their students, elementary, middle, and high school.

[03:04:19] And this was like a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with all the sides and the turkey and everything, the decorations, handmade painting. It was just beautiful and really nice. And I know staff went above and beyond for it and they were thrilled to do it.

[03:04:36] And the kids were really appreciative and they invited their families to come too. So if this was the Thanksgiving feast for our family, then it was a worthy feast, and it was really great. So I commend Pace West for their amazing dedication.

[03:04:53] Mountain View also had an elementary school turkey trot, and this was with staff with costumes, and the kids ran around. It was a reward for, I can't remember, I think it was for a readathon or something like that.

[03:05:10] And the kids, again, loved the opportunity to get outside and run around, and I think staff appreciated it too 'cause it was a beautiful day. We had a joint legislative breakfast this morning where we met with leaders across our division, Board of County Supervisors, Delegates, Senators, and talked about our priorities as a school division because there are many laws that go into place that do affect us and so we have priorities and it's good for us to be able to advocate to them and share what we need with our elected officials.

[03:05:41] And so if individuals have desire to reach out to their senators or their House of Delegate members, you can find the legislative priorities on our website and you can advocate and help us advocate.

[03:05:57] I hope everybody had a wonderful Thanksgiving. It's one of my favorite holidays. There's so many things that I'm grateful for. As I said before, I'm thankful for the wonderful educators in my life who have guided and helped me along my path and thankful for the spirit of collaboration that we have on this board.

[03:06:16] I want to leave you with a thought. This is John F. Kennedy on courageous judgment. He taught that a healthy democracy relies on citizens choosing leaders who will use their own best judgment, even when that judgment is unpopular.

[03:06:31] And in that spirit, you could say, could apply his quote, which is this, those who elected us did so not only for ability to listen, but for our willingness to exercise conscientious judgment, even when it leads us down an unpopular path.

[03:06:49] I wish to close with that thought tonight. And I appreciate my fellow board members for their dedication and willingness to look into these difficult issues and tackle them head on. And with that, good night.

[03:07:05] - Thank you, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Vice Chair Blake. I also hope everyone had an enjoyable Thanksgiving break and will enjoy the upcoming holiday. It will continue to be my position to advocate that our community has the opportunity to create space and understanding to learn and fully recognize the different systems that our public education has to operate in and how that affects everyone and everything else.

[03:07:42] It's our job as leaders to do so and to do so accurately. Tonight I struggled with a lot of performative speeches and misinformation being tossed around. And I will continue to say that does no one any service.

[03:08:00] I hope that at some point before I leave this dais that we will all be able to at least talk about the same issue with the same set of understanding and defined terms because that's not going on now. And it's heartbreaking.

[03:08:19] It is the responsibility of all of us to build coalition and community, and to do so respectfully and with a sense of shared understanding. And as every year that I've sat on this board, I have continued to advocate at all levels that we join forces to correct an incorrect system because it matters.

[03:08:38] And I will again say that I've not sat in public office and ever experienced a time where more people with different lenses are tuned in and listening. And it will only be to our advantage to continue to build a shared language and understanding and work collaboratively to change the system that doesn't benefit most of the people in it.

[03:09:01] And that's the work that needs to be done. And we're not all gonna agree how it gets done, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't entertain difficult conversations. And in addition to that, it is the responsibility of every leader to make these explanations clear.

[03:09:18] That's not being done all the time, and it's not being done consistently. It's also the responsibility of the individual to go back and check what your leaders are saying for accuracy, that'll help

all of us. I hope that as we move into the new year, that we can work for a sense of understanding that schools operate on a day-to-day basis.

[03:09:39] Teachers don't experience the business side of it. Us business people need to do a better job of changing the language so that it's understood by the people that it affects. And I'll continue to sit in a seat and listen to everyone who shares a comment and try to regurgitate that and try to have people understood that they're heard.

[03:09:58] And in addition to that, I would like to advocate that there is some sort of mechanism built because what exists now is not for the purpose of this discussion, which was missed, or the discussion on the 0.5. It doesn't mean it can't change.

[03:10:13] Nothing is forever. That's why we have votes. What I would like to say is that there's always time in between a vote is made, and there is a distinct difference between a governance decision and an operational decision.

[03:10:30] And I hope that one day, you know, we can have conversations about that for deeper understanding so that we can work more collaboratively. In the meantime, I hope everyone enjoys their break. And for those who have questions, go back and watch the November meeting presentation because the answers that you're searching for were presented and I don't think everyone had the opportunity to view that.

[03:10:53] Thank you. - Mrs. Agrapoor. - Thank you. I am looking forward to the many concerts there are in December. So tomorrow night I should be at Hilton And I know Colgan has a bunch of concerts.

[03:11:09] My niece is in chorus there, so I will definitely be going to her concert. And I know when we get back from the break, we are looking forward to, Ms. Wall and I tend to go to a lot of stuff together. So we've got some district events coming up. So I'm very excited about seeing those things.

[03:11:27] Just hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and hang in there for the next couple of weeks until we get to our break. Have a great evening. - Hey, I'm up. - Well, I hope everyone had a chance to rest and reset over this Thanksgiving break.

[03:11:45] Over the past couple of weeks, I've been moving around our community quite a bit. I want to lift up some moments that really showed who we are as a division. Again, I was able to attend a turkey trot at Neabsco Elementary.

[03:12:00] And this, I think, is a really innovative and simple idea that works 'cause attendance usually dips right before a holiday. But Neabsco flipped the script. A lot of families came out. Kids were excited, a lot of energy. And I think that's exactly what was needed before the break, heading into that break.

[03:12:17] And then I, too, also went down to Williamsburg to the BSBA annual conference and got to network with a lot of different school board members from different districts. We also won the – we received a Platinum Design Award in the exhibition of a school architect for Innovation Elementary School.

[03:12:43] So that was a big deal. And the Gainesville choir was also there. And they performed and did a great job representing Prince William County. So it's always good to get noticed at the state level. Back home, I stopped by at Minnieville Elementary. I got to see their drama club perform the toy store.

[03:13:03] And I'm just saying the pride on those kids, they said it all. They actually had some cameo appearances by Miss Ellis and Miss Singleton in the plate. So it was it was very good. And yesterday I was I got to go to Penn Elementary for their career day.

[03:13:22] I met some truly impressive presenters, everyone from local professionals to professional musicians, even the dean of admissions from George Mason University was there at the elementary school. So it was really good. Kids got to talk to him and and, you know, spark the interest in school and post post secondary education early.

[03:13:45] so it was it was very good to see how they were and then also I went to I wrapped up my evening at Garfield of course you know I gotta go by there at least once a week it'll go where I went to watch the varsity basketball the boys play and they took down Mountain Dew so it was a great game great sportsmanship so congratulations to the team and the coaches and at the I just want to leave you with this at the end of the day this comes down to doing what's right for the people

[03:14:19] we serve. Leadership isn't proven in the easy calls. It's proven when you choose the hard path because it's the right one for the people you serve. That's the standard I'm holding myself to and it's the standard our students and teachers deserve and I just wanted to leave you with that and as always thank you to our educators, staff, family, and students for creating all these moments and they will keep me focused and grounded in the work.

[03:14:47] Have a great day or a night, thank you. - All right folks, we are at the end of our last meeting for this calendar year and it's been a great year and we look forward to next year. At this point I wish everyone a happy holidays early and see you in January.



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