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Prince William County Public Schools - School Board Meeting Jan. 21, 2026, Wednesday, January 21, 2026

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Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 56m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx5YDVwNfTQ>
- 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] - Yes, I'm going. Prince William County School Board is meeting now. Pursuant to Board Policy 139, School Board member participation in meetings by electronic communications, School Board member Richard Jesse will participate in this meeting through electronic means. The clerk will so note in the minutes of the meeting. At this time, he is not on.

[00:00:16] When he is on, the clerk will notify us. Before we move on to the approval of the agenda, I need a motion to amend the meeting agenda by moving Thriving Futures Focus to occur prior to our public hearings. - Tonight Lisa Zargarpur will read the motion.

[00:00:32] Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board amend the meeting agenda by moving agenda item 11.01, Thriving Futures Focus to occupy, to, I'm sorry, to occur prior to agenda items 10.01 and 10.02. - All in favor, or do we have a discussion?

[00:00:49] I need a second. - Second, I'll second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? Please vote. All in favor, aye, signify by raising your hand. Any opposed? - Five yes. - Vote is five yes, two not present at vote.

[00:01:05] - Yep. - Williams, Turdenik, and Jesse, three not present at vote. - So which, go ahead, another motion, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board amend the

meeting agenda by adding agenda item 1702, motion pursuant to policy 264 pertaining to school boundaries.

[00:01:25] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? Please vote, all in favor, raise your hand, say yes. - Any opposed, no? - Vote is five yes, three not present at vote. Williams, Tredinik, Jesse, motion passed. - And now what do we do? Motion enter closed session.

[00:01:42] Okay, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as amended. - No. - Wait, what? - Just go to number two. - Oh. - Okay. Okay, do I have a second on the amended agenda?

[00:01:57] - I second. - Ms. Wall seconds. Any discussion? Please vote, all in favor? Aye, hands up in the air. Any opposed? No opposition, motion passes. So it is five yes, three not present at vote. Williams, Tredenik, Jesse. - Motion to enter closed session. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:02:21] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of any public body pursuant to section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia. Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other litigation involving the school division under sections 2.2-3711A, seven and eight of the code of Virginia.

[00:02:49] And three, to consult with division counsel regarding specific legal matters pertaining to the use of school board property in the Brentsville Magisterial District pursuant to sections code two, sections two, pursuant to sections 2.2-3711 of the code of Virginia A, eight and four to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to sections code, sections 2.2-3711A19 of the code of Virginia.

[00:03:23] - Second. - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Okay, please vote, all in favor. Raise your hands, aye. - Voted. - Any opposition, no. - Vote is five yes, three not present at vote. William Stradenek-Jesse, motion passed. - Prince William School Board will now enter closed session and return in open session

[00:03:40] in approximately one hour.

[00:04:44] Good evening, the Prince William County School Board will now return from closed session to open session, excuse me, a motion in order for the closed session certification. Lisa Zargarpur, please. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to section code, section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of January 21st, 2026 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:05:11] Now therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:05:31] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:51] - Vote is six yes, one abstained. Tradenек, one not present at vote. Jesse, motion passed. - Next up, closed session action item. Approval appointments and releases. Motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session.

[00:06:09] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion?

[00:06:32] Please vote. - Vote is six yes, one abstained. Tridentic, one not present at vote. Jesse, motion passed. - Moving on to approval of legal counsel, authorization for legal counsel. Motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board authorize the actions recommended by legal counsel as discussed in closed session.

[00:06:49] - Do we have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:07:12] - Vote is six yes, one abstained. Tridentic, one not present at vote. Motion, Jesse, motion passed. - Great. Next up is the Pledge of Allegiance. We have Ms. Bulas-Arsa, our student rep from C.D. Hilton High School to lead us in the pledge this evening.

[00:07:30] And by the way, the winner of the MLK oratorical competition.

[00:07:55] - Thank you, Ms. Sarsa, and I said that sort of right there at the last minute, but she did win the annual Martin Luther King oratorical competition that's held in Woodbridge every year that many of our students and schools participate in, and hopefully we'll catch a video of that online as it goes viral, and I heard she did a great job.

[00:08:14] So let's congratulate her once again. Very proud to have the winner on our school board. Up next is Thriving Futures Focus. We had voted earlier in the day to move that up ahead of our public hearing because we have students who need to get back home to do their studying.

[00:08:37] So let's start with that. Tonight, Thriving Futures Focus, as you all know, 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 necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:08:53] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor and award at the state or national level. Tonight, the school board is honored to acknowledge student athlete Trent Daniels for winning the Virginia High School Sports League Class 6A Boys Cross Country State Championship and the Hilton High School Esports Team for earning a VHSL State Championship title.

[00:09:20] I invite Ms. Tredenik of the Brentsville District to introduce our champion. - Thank you. This evening, we are proud to recognize Trent Daniels, a senior from Gainesville High School for winning the Boys Cross Country State Championship. In a remarkable finish, Trent surged ahead on the final hill and crossed the finish line with a time of 15:51.64, claiming the Class VI VHSL Championship, his first ever cross country state title after years of dedication and pursuit.

[00:09:50] This is not only his accomplishment. Last April, this is not his only accomplishment. Last April, Trent won the high school boys 3000 meter championship at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia. He then went on to win the 1632 meter titles at the class six state outdoor track and field meet.

[00:10:09] In March, he was the class six indoor state championship champion in both the 1600 and 3200. In 2024, Trent finished as the 2024 class six date boys cross country individual runner up. And as a sophomore, he won the Indoor Class 6 1600 meter and 3200 meter state titles and the 3200 meter state outdoor title.

[00:10:32] Trent has committed to the University of Virginia of Gainesville High School, represented here by Assistant Principal Adam Daniels, who I invite to share a few words about the significant season and to introduce our honorees here tonight.

[00:10:48] One more quick thing. I do believe that Trent has a brother and his brother crossed the finish line close to him. Is that correct? Yeah, his brother was third. - Okay, so that's a big deal too, to keep it with the whole family and mom and dad must be so proud.

[00:11:03] - Yeah, no, and I am dad as well. So I get to serve both roles tonight, so yeah. - Not in the script, excellent, congratulations. - Thank you. So yeah, no, the things that he's accomplished, it's all the dedication that he's done over the last four years while he's been running in high school, we're really proud of him.

[00:11:23] But then also we have Coach Connerly here who has guided him over these last three and a half years. - Yeah, well, congratulations, guys. I don't have much to say, sorry. - All right, well, go ahead. - You wanna say something? - Trent, you wanna say anything? - Yeah, come on up, bud.

[00:11:40] - I just wanna thank everyone who's gotten me here. Coach Lee and my parents were always believing in me. Without them, I couldn't have done it, so, and thank you for having me.

[00:11:57] - Well, so thank you and congratulations, Mr. Daniels and Mr. Daniels, and congratulations, Coach Lee, and to Trent again on this exceptional accomplishment. Is your mom here and anyone else in your family, your brother, please stand. Let's just give them a round of applause as well for supporting this tremendous athlete.

[00:12:19] Okay, wonderful, thank you. Mrs. Zargapur of the Coles District will introduce our next group of honorees. - I'm so excited too, Dr. Lateef. E-sports, short for electronic sports, refers to organized competitive video gaming in which individuals or teams compete in structured tournaments.

[00:12:37] Esports require teamwork, communication, critical and strategic thinking, creativity, sportsmanship, and leadership, and also a good internet connection, I remember that. It also provides a powerful gateway to post-secondary success, with more than 200 colleges and universities offering nearly 15 million in esports scholarships nationwide.

[00:12:58] One such title is in the video game, Super Smash Brothers Ultimate. I believe my students call 'em Smash Bros, right? Smash Bros, which was featured in the recent VHSL Championship competition. Tonight, we congratulate the CD Hilton High School Esports team, Friday Night Lights, for winning the VHSL Super Smash Brothers Ultimate Fall Championship.

[00:13:22] The 64-team tournament featured best of five matchups in each round, and Hilton students dominated the bracket with an impressive 18 to three record on their path to the state title. We are honored to have Hilton High School represented here tonight by Coach Luke Terentian and Sal, Mr. Sal Colangelo, whom I invite to share a few words about this significant season and to introduce our honorees tonight.

[00:13:50] - Hello, Chairman Lateef, school board members, and Dr. McDade, I'm Coach Terentian. I would like to introduce my team members. We have Ismark, our team captain here. We have our MPP for this season, Jason, and we have our team strategist here, Mikkell.

[00:14:08] I've been working with these boys for over four years now and they have grown so much. Like Ismark, he is always a great champion. Jason's been helping me train all the upcoming freshmen and sophomores as well. So I have high hopes for the upcoming years as well.

[00:14:25] Thank you boys for being such a wonderful team this year. You worked so hard, thank you. - Would our students like to say a few words and tell us your full name.

[00:14:44] - Ismark, like my middle name too. How about you? Last name, let's at least go with last. Give me whatever you want, whatever you go by. - It's Mark Espinal. - Excellent. - So I think this has been a big moment for us.

[00:15:00] We've worked hard every day. We've strategized, we've been strategizing a lot. And I think in the grand scheme of things, this is just a stepping stone to something greater. This is just something small that shows that we can achieve something great. And I think it's great to see what my friends can do.

[00:15:18] We were all in this together, and our cooperation is what got us the win, so. - Wonderful, thank you. Anybody else, gentlemen? - They're good, they're good.

[00:15:35] - All right. - And I would like to say that I am grateful to work with my two friends, and I've known them for quite some time now, and I think this shows that not only that teamwork can be completely like revolutionary, and like in terms of like anything, like you need some people in life.

[00:15:55] It's not always by yourself. Sometimes when you want to achieve things even greater, you need to work with someone. - Coming to the eSports competition, I didn't really think that I'd be able to make it this far, but I was only able to make it this far because both me and my friends were, we worked very hard for this, so.

[00:16:29] - Your full name? - Mikel Faloufebres. - All right, thank you guys. - Well, congratulations. I'd like to thank all those involved also who supported these young men and their family members, coaches, teachers to please stand in recognition so we can recognize you as well.

[00:16:53] This is really great, by the way, very exciting. Before we take a few pictures, Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Starting first with Trent, your state championship really reflects perseverance and determination and focus to finish strong.

[00:17:10] Congratulations to you. - Congratulations to our Hilton Friday Night Lights team. You said it best yourselves, but this is really a demonstration of teamwork, but not only teamwork, strategy and leadership in a new and exciting arena.

[00:17:28] So congratulations to you on your state title as well. And to both of you, we are PWCS proud. - Okay, that's great. At this time, we will now take pictures

[00:17:43] and Ms. Gulotta will let you know the order.

[00:22:20] - Okay, thank you all for letting us do that. It's always exciting to celebrate our students and especially the ones that gotta get back home. We do have a public hearing this evening. So let me, so public hearings are required for us for certain things.

[00:22:37] So I will go ahead and read our, we have two public hearings this evening. So the first public hearing is on the proposed 2030 strategic plan. So I have to read this. I declare that a public hearing is now open on the subject of the proposed 2030 strategic plan.

[00:22:53] Any citizen who has signed up to speak on this subject may do so at this time. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:23:14] And for the proposed plan, we have two speakers this evening. First one will be Carly McDowell. And then after that, Rena Stapp, Carly McDowell.

[00:23:33] - Hello, I'm sorry, this is not the right one I'm supposed to be speaking at. I'm supposed to be speaking of the redistricting of the schools. - Okay, so we'll move her to the redistricting lineup for the next, okay. - Okay. - Oh, she's on both?

[00:23:49] Oh. - Okay, sorry. - Okay, so we'll take you off this. - Thank you. - Great. Rena Stapp, I don't know if I said it right. Rena Stapp, S-T-A-P-P. Okay, so she's not here.

[00:24:04] So there being no other citizens who signed up to speak on the subject. I declare the public meeting hearing of the proposed 2030 strategic plan closed. Next up, public hearing on proposed student housing attendance area recommendations for Woodbridge Area Elementary School and Potomac Shores Number Two Elementary School.

[00:24:24] I declare that a public hearing is now open on the subject of elementary school attendance area modifications that result from the opening of the Woodbridge Area Elementary School that is scheduled to open for the 2026-27 school year and Potomac Shores Number Two Elementary School that is scheduled to open for the 27-28 school year.

[00:24:41] Any citizen who has signed up to speak on this matter may do so at this time. Again, please use proper decorum manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:25:00] So that list, we will start with the first three and I can read their names or first five and you can come up to have a seat and this is the order for the first five. Jennifer Thompson, Shannon Quarles, Patrius Prater, Carly McDowell, Renata Leach, and Ava, well, Ava Santiful is six, and then Vashon Johnson is seven.

[00:25:24] Those are our seven speakers. Jennifer Thompson, please. Okay, Shannon Quarles. - Good evening, members of the school board, Superintendent McDade, and fellow community members.

[00:25:44] I come before you today to speak on behalf of our children and families in the Forest Park communities, which, unbeknownst to most, includes two distinct and separate HOAs, Forest Park 1 and Forest Park 2, both rich in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

[00:26:05] Scenario six, in its current form, proposes to rezone Forest Park families from Patti Elementary to Dumfries Elementary, and I'm gonna tell you why This presents glaring educational

inequalities and does not stand in alignment with the Elevate 2030 strategic plan.

[00:26:24] First and foremost, yes, our communities are within one mile of Dumfries Elementary School, but there are no sidewalks and no crosswalks along the busy Van Buren and Batestown roads. So despite proximity, our children do not have safe access to Dumfries Elementary as walkers.

[00:26:41] And therefore, the division's transportation needs costs will not change in this respect. In addition, many of our children are currently enrolled in before and after school programs that transport to and from academic routines and take them away from programs that they have grown to love. Now let's get to what really matters, which is an opportunity for the children of Forest Park to continue to have access to a high quality education.

[00:27:13] PADI is not just any ordinary school. It is a high performing, top ranked, and fully accredited elementary school, where students across every single demographic, and I mean every single one, consistently achieve above state and division averages in all core academics. Let me break that down for you. What that means is that PADI is a distinguished school with a 90.6 framework score, where students of all backgrounds, including every race, income level, gender, disability status, and including English language learners, consistently surpass standardized pass

[00:27:53] rates by 10 to 25 points above both state and division averages. And federally, PADI has an ESSA school quality rating that ranks all students at or above math and English expectations. The proposed Elevate 2030 strategic plan sets clear goals for Prince William County Public Schools.

[00:28:16] equitable opportunities for all students to achieve at high levels, raising proficiency across reading and mathematics for all student groups, and using data to drive decisions that improve outcomes division-wide.

[00:28:32] Rezoning our beautifully diverse neighborhood from Paddington-Duffries does not support those goals and disproportionately shifts children of color away from a proven and high-performing school. Thank you. - Pedro Prater.

[00:28:55] - Good evening, Dr. Medade, school board members, I'm Pedro Prater. My kids attend Henderson Elementary. - Hold on one sec, can we reset this clock? - I like the four minutes, okay. - Go ahead, sir.

[00:29:10] - My children attend Henderson Elementary and their school board member is Justin Wilk. So thank you so much, Justin, for taking time to talk to me about the redistricting process. Also want to take a second to thank Tracy Blake for actually taking time to write back to me about the concerns that I had. I'm here today because I feel like those concerns, even still I think tweaked back in 2024, that talks about making sure you're expanding the reach of the community and engagement when it comes to parental, I guess parents coming in and talking about the redistricting process.

[00:29:48] And what's interesting about that is you all released four scenarios. The first four scenarios were released and in the fifth and sixth scenarios, my neighborhoods were drawn into it, despite Henderson not being overcrowded. When it was released, it was released on the same day as the last town hall, which excluded my community from having the opportunity to speak.

[00:30:10] What's interesting about what you all are doing with the transportation piece is, and this is Tracy, this came from you. You said that you addressed transportation after this rezoning is adopted, but I

think it was Matt at the last school board meeting who said that it's something that's comprehensive into the entire planning portion.

[00:30:30] You're asking kids to now go out on Cardinal Drive and make a left in order to get the Fitzgerald, cross over a double lane onto basically a highway that is known for a number of deaths and traffic accidents versus considering leaving them at Henderson where the school is not overcrowded and making a right turn now.

[00:30:52] I've asked the question over and over again because based off your own policy, you wanna look at making sure that the schools are at least less than 105%, but no more, or no less than, I guess, 80%. Henderson is at 97% at the time of implementation.

[00:31:07] There's no reason based off of what you guys have identified that Henderson would even be drawn out. Now initially in the first four scenarios that was released, you had PADI Elementary students who were coming into Henderson. So naturally that'll put some people out of Henderson up into Fitzgerald.

[00:31:23] The last scenario, there are no students coming into Henderson Elementary. So that question hasn't been answered for me. I appreciate you all's time. I do again appreciate you all for taking time to respond. Lisa, I know I talked to you. Mr. Jesse, I talked to you as well.

[00:31:38] Dr. Lateef, thank you for taking time to read my emails. That's all I have to say. - Thank you, Carly McDowell.

[00:31:55] - Hello, thank you for hearing me today. Thank you to all the school board members. Thank you, thank you. My name is Carly McDowell. I live in the Cardinal Glen area. My child goes to Henderson and my other child who, both of my boys who I'm getting ready to adopt, will be going to Henderson as well next year.

[00:32:16] I am speaking because one is a safety concern to me as well. When going to Fitzgerald, I live over there by Bushy. when you go to Bushing, you cross over Cardinal. I have seen from the three and a half years I've lived there, I have seen several accidents just crossing there and that's for me personally, it's hard for me just to cross that area as well, just doing a regular work day and during the morning time.

[00:32:37] So I can only imagine school buses and stuff like that happening and going over there. So one, the safety concern for me. Two, the fact that we have not had a chance to really review anything that we were drawn into the scenario at the last town hall meeting is a concern to me and I do believe that the Cardinal Glen area would appreciate being involved.

[00:32:56] And I'm pretty sure the parents, if they knew about this, would want to be involved and have their concerns heard as well. Three, and as it was stated before, Henderson is not at capacity, so I don't think we need to do anything as far as that.

[00:33:12] And personally, for me, my child has a neuro disability. Actually, both of them, they do. And I could probably speak on other parents who have children in our area who has neurodisabilities that it's hard for change for them, especially when it comes to the special education program.

[00:33:29] I bought my house specifically in my area so my child can go to Henderson's special disability program, special education program. And so, you know, things like that can cause behavioral, educational, academic, emotional issues.

[00:33:46] And it's hard to connect, especially with teachers. And I've seen how my child has grown throughout the school year with his school. So I just don't wanna see that happen. And that's all, I yield my time, thank you. - Thank you, Renata Leach.

[00:34:23] - Good evening, my name is Dr. Renata Leach and my address is on file. I'm a parent at Mary Williams Elementary School and I wanna share my concerns about the redistricting process. Throughout this process, there has been a lack of transparency and honesty which has caused chaos and confusion for our families.

[00:34:40] The maps and the plans were difficult to understand, especially in the short turnaround period that we received them. Parents deserve clear information so we can understand the decisions that are being made and how they are gonna impact our children. Research consistently shows that stability during the elementary school years is critical to the child's academic success, emotional well-being and their sense of safety.

[00:35:02] Frequent changes and uncertainty can negatively affect learning and behaviors. Despite these concerns, I'm in favor for scenario six because it provides the most stability and it keeps our school community together. This is very important during the developmental stage. Our children need consistency and we as parents need transparency and families need to trust in the school system.

[00:35:23] Thank you. - Thank you. Ava Santifull. - Hello, my name is Ava Santifull and my address is on file and I am a fourth grade student at Mary Williams Elementary School.

[00:35:44] I'm here today to say that I support scenario six. I believe scenario six is the best option for our school because it keeps our Panther Pride family together. Being together is very important to our school community.

[00:36:02] At Mary Williams, we are more than just a school. We are a family. We are five dens and each den teaches us something important. Responsibility, integrity, determination, energy, and partnership.

[00:36:17] These values help us grow, learn, and support one another every day. Keeping our school together helps us stay strong, connected, and proud to be Panther Cubs. That is why I believe Scenario Six is the best choice for Mary Williams Elementary School.

[00:36:35] Five dads, one pride. - Okay, thank you. Vishawn Johnson.

[00:36:58] - Hello, my name is Vishawn Johnson, PTO Treasurer, a parent of this wonderful second grader at Mary Williams. I live in Port Potomac and both of my formal addresses, I advocated for Mary Williams staying together by asking the questions where, why, and how.

[00:37:14] In all of the previous scenarios, Mary Williams' population is split in two. It's challenging to comprehend when it is not overpopulated by 94% and disheartening to see that there was no option for us to remain together. It forced us to ask how does this cement the county's commitment to build community, improve transportation, and prioritize proximity.

[00:37:35] This is achieved by answering our questions and hearing us. Scenario six reflects in favor of Mary Williams and Panther Cubs staying together. This decision is critical because, again, in all five scenarios, my Port Potomac community would be moved to Covington-Harper or Potomac Shores, passing three schools.

[00:37:51] We would lose our four-minute proximity to Mary Williams, divide our population in half, drastically affect the socioeconomic diversity, and finally, assigning us back to Potomac Middle School, forcing my daughter to look at Mary Williams every day when there's no natural progression and transition to Potomac Shores, should that be the decision.

[00:38:09] Scenario six will facilitate the principles and honor roll achievements my daughter has reflected this year and previous years. It will give her the opportunity to build new and stronger friendships and high education environment. Thank you for hearing the where, whys, and hows in Scenario six. This process has been sticky, messy, and muddy.

[00:38:25] I stand here again passionately requesting that the board decide in favor of Scenario six. At Mary Williams, we are five dens. partnership, responsibility, integrity, determination, energy that equates to one pride. We at Mary Williams are a diverse and inclusive community and we are better together.

[00:38:47] Thank you. - Thank you. At this time, there being no other citizens who signed up to speak on the subject? Oh, is she still part of your time? - Yeah, she can be. Go ahead, I still got a minute.

[00:39:03] - We're not really supposed to share time. I don't normally lie. they gotta find out on their own. - I submitted for her to come have me. - But that's fine, go ahead. - Is it okay? - Yeah. - Okay, thank you for being gracious. All right, really quickly, sweetie. - Hello, my name is Charlotte. My address is on file.

[00:39:19] I am a second grader at Mary Williams Elementary School. And I love my school because there are so many different events every year. And I don't wanna have to go to a new school for no real reason. I want to, I want to, I don't want to leave my school.

[00:39:38] and go to a new one. I love my, I love learning at my school. I don't wanna leave my teachers or staff at my school. I am for scenario six emojis. Thank you. - Thank you.

[00:39:53] All right, great. There being no other citizens who've signed up to speak on the subject, I declare the public hearing on the proposed student housing attendance area recommendations for Woodbridge area elementary and the Potomac Shores number two elementary school closed. At this time, we're moving on to the adoption of consent agenda.

[00:40:08] I need a motion, Ms. Zargarpur. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:40:24] - This will be a roll call vote. Lateef. - Okay, this is a roll call vote. Mr. Jesse is participating by Zoom, so all votes from this point forward are roll call. - Lateef. - Yes. - Blake, Jesse.

[00:40:41] Mr. Jesse, how do you vote? We'll return to Mr. Jesse. Mr. Dinik, Wall, Wilk, Williams. - Yes. - Zargarpur.

[00:40:57] - Yes. - Mr. Jesse. The vote is seven yes, one not present at vote. Motion passed. - Okay, moving on next to acknowledgements and recognitions, a motion to order, Ms. Zargarpur.

[00:41:13] - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - Lateef. - Yes. - Blake. - Yes.

[00:41:29] - Jesse. Trudinick. Wall. Wilk. Williams. - Yes. - Zargarpur. - Yes. - Jesse.

[00:41:47] - The vote is six yes, one abstained. Trudinic, one not present at vote. Jesse, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to citizen comment time. Those citizens who signed up to speak in advance, where the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on the agenda items or other options, other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:42:07] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess. I will ask that the room be clear to restore public order.

[00:42:22] Tonight we have three citizens signed up to speak. When I call your names, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. The order for these three will be Marylouz Torres, Hina Ansari, Natalie Stoker-Hera. Marylouz Torres.

[00:42:41] - Good evening, my name is Marylouz Torres and my address is on file. I'm here talking on behalf of Potomac View Elementary School. I didn't realize that I had to sign out on the public hearing, so I apologize for that. But last time I was here as well to talk about our request on behalf of a lot of parents.

[00:43:01] I want to clarify, when I take this opportunity to say, this is not an emotional request. This request is for safety. The location of the new school area is located on the Commercial Street, rather than where our kids go right now, which is Pactamac View, is a residential street.

[00:43:19] Transferring all the teachers along with all our kids is, for such a reason, number one, because the teachers know our kids. Number two is because the teachers know the teachers, they know who is around them.

[00:43:35] The area where it's located right now is on the corner of the BC Street, on both walkways. They also have a motel room or motel hotel over there, which is basically dangerous. I mean, there has been a lot of criminal records in the area, which a lot of parents are very concerned.

[00:43:53] What is going to happen if our kids go over there? That fence that is located and how the building is already constructed over there is not safe. Anyone can jump the fence, and who knows what they can do to elementary kids. You're not transferring high schooler kids or neither middle schools.

[00:44:10] You're transferring elementary school kids. Our teachers are able to provide and they can provide ideas of what can be done and do during the first day of school that can make that place safer, that can make that transition for our kids safer.

[00:44:27] Right now, I have a lot of kids, including my son, that is going with a lot of anxiety because he's moving to a new school. And we're talking about a school that has three different buildings level, but Potomac View is only one. so this change it sounds nice because of course you know it's a new building this everything is new but i don't think you guys are taking oh it has been taken in consideration all the um i don't want to say the damages but all the uh stress that is put on our kids and not only our kids but our as parents too because again this is a safety concern our teachers by being transferred and

[00:45:05] being relocated with all our kids you know even if they don't want if there there are some teachers that they wanna be transferred, they can have that options to say like, hey, you know, I wanna be

transferred to different school. But at least they had the option to say like, I don't want these positions versus having multiple teachers trying to apply for the same job.

[00:45:23] And you know, like at first we were told that the reason of this change was because they're trying to save money. But if you wanna hire a new person, you're also gonna spend money in the hiring process versus transferring all the schools over there. Again, this is more a safety concern for our parents and not an emotional concern, thank you.

[00:45:41] - Thank you, Hina Ansari. - All right, good evening, everybody. Thank you so much for having me again. I love the new timer, incidentally. I think I like the colors, whoever picked it out. High marks for you.

[00:45:56] My address is on file, I almost forget to say it. We're gonna have to settle up on how many minutes I have owed to me because I've spoken at like every school board meeting this year, so I'm gonna say 45 minutes. We'll just negotiate down from there for how many you owe me back so that I can make a whole presentation for you. But anyway, I wanted to come here talk about two things I'm gonna try to fit them in. One of them I I don't know I think if anybody wasn't here at the school board meeting last time there was a student that came up here and it was I want to say I'm not sure if alarming is the right word I want to use or not you guys can use your own the source and figure out what word you want to use but he came up here and he said he was getting bullied at school and they were using racist terminology and I want to say that that was one of the reasons why some of us were coming up here and

[00:46:35] advocating against a Turning Point USA Club because that is the exact kind of behavior that's going to be encouraged if we let people speak and use racist terminology and I mean the courage for this kid to come up here and tell a bunch of adults and they were like God how many hundreds of people work in that school and not one of them was able to address his needs so that he felt that he had to come here and appeal to all of you and I don't know what you guys did because I know it's gonna be a privacy issue and you're not gonna tell us but yeah thank you I know but it's like what happened man if I mean if I were on the school board and I know you guys are like Kenna you're like 0 for 4 on

[00:47:07] elections. I know, I know. I'm the Buffalo Bills over here. It's all right. I keep trying. But if I was on the school board and it wasn't even my magisterial district, I would have gotten my butt in that car and I would have driven down there and I would have done my best best Vince Lombardi impression and been like, what the heck is going on here? Because I mean, that's completely unacceptable for a student to be getting all those kinds of names. And I'm going to try to make a really bad segue right now to just stop talking about that for two seconds. And I don't think we've heard anything about what we're going to do with that extra half hour that the teachers are doing. So I'm glad my conga line suggestion hasn't been eliminated just yet because I really think that's a good idea but if we don't even know if the teachers are coming in

[00:47:44] a half hour early they're saying a half hour late and what are they doing and it made me think of something my mom used to tell me when I was a kid she'd be like because I one of the things that I hear everyone saying is the reason we're doing it is because all the other jurisdictions are doing it too so if Fairfax jumps off a bridge should we jump off a bridge too and that's what my mom would say and then she would yell at me so I can have her call any of you and yell at you if you'd like to.

[00:48:05] But anyway, that's all I have, I think, for now. Oh, and no, I already told you about the 45 minutes that I want, so I'll settle up with you guys in that 45 minutes, all right? Thank you. - Natalie Stoker-

Hara.

[00:48:25] - Good evening, board members, chair, and Dr. Medate. My name is Natalie Stoker-Hara, and my address is on file. I would like to talk about the new school planned for Potomac Shores and the risk of overcrowding that could occur.

[00:48:40] I'm currently in fourth grade. I'm currently a fourth grade student at Covington Harper Elementary, and I have lived in Potomac Shores and attended Covington Harper for four years. And that time, the school has felt very crowded.

[00:48:57] It's often difficult to walk through the hallways during the day. If the wrong map is chosen, it could make overcrowding worse and possibly cause safety concerns. There are already too many students in my classroom it's hard to move around. I hope by speaking to you tonight you'll make sure this doesn't happen at the new Potomac Shores Elementary and that by the time the school opens I'll be in middle school at Potomac Shores Middle and I'm worried the overcrowding could continue if their boundaries aren't planned carefully. I want every student in our school to have enough space to

[00:49:37] to learn comfortably and safely. I've lived here for four years and gotten to know my neighbors and classmates very well. I hope we can stay in the same school together as we grow up and eventually graduate. Lastly, I'd like to ask if Covington Harbor could start a cursive writing program.

[00:49:56] I think it would help us prepare us for the future and teach us how to create signatures we'll use for a long time. Thank you for your time. - Thank you. - Okay, at this time, citizen time is concluded.

[00:50:13] Thank you for all coming and for those who attended our public hearing as well. We'll move on to student representative time. At this time, we have Beulah Sarza of the CD Hilton High School joining us. The floor is yours, my friend. - Thank you. Good evening to members of the Prince William County community, members of the school board, and Superintendent McDade.

[00:50:32] I'm once again honored to highlight student matters with you tonight, and I hope that all of you enjoy the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking all of the parents and students that joined us for tonight's public hearing on the proposed student housing. Your insight and your perspectives are important, and we thank you for sharing them with us tonight.

[00:50:51] Looking ahead to next month, February 2nd, is the scheduled date of our co-pilot AI release, and student voice committees have had the opportunity to try out the Canvas course, tasked with introducing the software to students here in Prince William County. The course includes sections that teach students how to use co-pilot, what safe and ethical usage looks like, and how to avoid bias and plagiarism.

[00:51:13] A very big thank you to Dr. Sullivan and her team for meeting with the Student Senate earlier this month to discuss the new grading policy. Your explanations have proved very helpful as my fellow student representatives and I have received sighs of relief from students countywide. I'd like to end my remarks with a very special shout out.

[00:51:31] Congratulations to Ian Kahn of C.D. Hilton High School for his success in getting the Lunar New Year recognized by the Prince William County community. Your work is commendable, and it is a testament to what students can do when they use their voices. That will be all for us tonight, and thank you, and have a great rest of your evening.

[00:51:47] - Thank you, Ms. Arsa, truly appreciate it. Up next, superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening. We have been quite busy. We presented the strategic plan, Elevate 2030, and we are now preparing our budget for the next school year.

[00:52:04] Last Wednesday, the school board held a live stream work session to review and discuss the capital improvement program or CIP. We shared that PWCS anticipates a notable decline in student enrollment over the next five years, which may delay or change current and future facility plans.

[00:52:24] This means we will continue to refine and update our planning for student success as it relates to our educational facilities. The school board will be considering the information shared during this work session as we move forward in the planning process for the fiscal year 2027 budget.

[00:52:39] And more information on the work session can be found on our website at pwcs.edu. On February 4th, I will present the fiscal year 2027 proposed budget and capital improvement program to the school board. On February 9th, the school board will hold a public meeting on the proposed budget and CIP followed by an official public hearing on February 18th. The school board will hold a work session on the FY 27 budget and CIP on March 11th before a final vote on March 18th. Upon approval the school board will present

[00:53:15] the FY 2027 budget and CIP to the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors on April 7th. I want to thank our entire budget team under the direction of CFO Shaquille Youssef and our facilities and planning teams under the direction of Vern Bach who is our Chief Operating Officer and Mr. Matt Guilfoyle our Chief Information Officer as they have been instrumental in putting together our comprehensive budget and CIP. As we continue to move forward with these important initiatives I want to share a few additional

[00:53:50] updates and reminders for our school community. The first PWCS is excited to host an in-person instructional job fair for teachers, school counselors, and librarians from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. right here at the Kelly Leadership Center on Saturday, January 31st.

[00:54:09] Registration is required, so visit our homepage and apply today if you are interested. As a final reminder to families, the registration deadline for applying to our specialty programs will close February 1st, except for the Center for Fine and Performing Arts, which closed in December.

[00:54:26] 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 want to invite all of our families to attend one of our online sessions, and that information can also be found on our PWCS website.

[00:54:51] In closing, I want to briefly recognize where we are in our academic calendar. We are coming to the end of quarter two, which gives us an important checkpoint to review results and reflect on our students' progress. Now is the time to make strategic adjustments and seek out support for our students.

[00:55:11] That work continues January 23rd during our teacher work day when educators will analyze student learning, review grades, and performance and refine instruction for the second half the school year. Division-wide our educators will be ready to meet families during parent conference day on January 26th and we'll work to strengthen partnerships by sharing progress, celebrating growth, and aligning next steps as we prepare for the second half of the school year. Together we truly can ensure that every student

graduates on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their

[00:55:48] community I want to thank our teachers staff and school leaders for their professionalism our families for your continued partnership and mr. chairman that concludes superintendent time thank you Doug thank you dr. McDade up next is 1701 board discussion of CIP options I think I messed up I don't I didn't include the CIP options in the it's not in the deck the decks not here I need I mean the public needs to see the options it's not included on the it's not Not included in, why isn't it attached?

[00:56:23] - Media will display it on the screen and I will add it to board docs right now. - Yeah, I mean, the public should be able to access it, so I'm sorry about that, I missed that earlier. I should have picked that up. So, okay, so who's, Dr. McDade, who's presenting the options?

[00:56:40] - So they won't necessarily be re-presenting the options, are you all-- - I think we need to quickly run through them, 'cause we wanted to discuss it tonight. Yeah, let's just show us scenario A, B, the highlights of each of them, you can go through, you can cut straight to the side.

[00:56:56] So just for the public to know, last week we had a meeting on the capital improvement plan, that's our normal work session, where we went through a number of scenarios that are gonna be, that impact financially and just generally the school division.

[00:57:14] And it's essentially scenario A and B, two scenarios the board has to make a decision on, one or the other, moving forward with our new capital improvement plan. And so we wanted, we did have it at the work session and that is live streamed and folks can go back and watch the recording, but we wanted to quickly take a review of it tonight so that we had another chance for the public to take a look at scenarios A and B and the board may have some questions and concerns to discuss and then give the public another chance to take a look at scenario A and B.

[00:57:47] We will be voting on scenario A or B at the first meeting in February. This will then help kick off the budget season, but the superintendent and the administration needs direction from the board regarding which way this board would like to go.

[00:58:02] There are large differences between the two scenarios, so I'd ask folks to pay attention. - So just for context, really quickly, since we're not going through everything in totality, so the CIP as presented includes basically, the two scenarios are just to determine whether or not the full CIP will have the addition of the 14th high school and the additional funding for the 14th high school or scenario B, which would not include the funding for the 14th high school.

[00:58:35] So I'm gonna ask that Mr. Bach and Mr. Youssef simply kind of give a summary of what is going to be the difference in the CIP if the board decides to go with either of these two scenarios.

[00:58:50] - Thank you, Dr. McDade, and good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board. I call your attention to slide 34 from our CIP presentation, and I think that does a really nice job of highlighting the two scenarios that we've asked the board to consider. Scenario A, which Dr. McDade mentioned, contains the construction of the 14th high school.

[00:59:10] Scenario B would be if the board decides not to move forward with the construction of the 14th high school, these are additional projects that we could include in the CIP. And then what you see captured is the difference between scenario A and scenario B from a total CIP net cost difference.

[00:59:29] So I'll ask Mr. Youssef if he wants to add additional context. - As you can see, between scenario A and scenario B, eyes are deceiving me right now, but there's approximately a \$256 million difference in terms of the cost in the total CIP, with scenario A being \$256 million more in cost.

[00:59:59] We also talked about the increase in bond sales, which are fairly significant. And if I can just go to that in a minute.

[01:00:18] Oops, did I mess up? Oops, go back. Yeah, can you get us there?

[01:00:34] If we go with scenario A, which is building the 14th high school, We look to sell approximately \$1.1 billion in bond sales. And if you really look at the next three bond sales, that'll account for \$923 million.

[01:00:55] That is unprecedented in terms of the number of bonds we've sold. Just wanted to highlight that piece. - Can you go back a few slides where we talked about enrollment projections?

[01:01:10] Part of the reason scenario A and B are really here for discussion is, One thing we just sort of pointed out and I appreciate is the cost, but more importantly, actually, and more concerning to the board are the enrollment numbers. And if you can just quickly give us a, you know, what does enrollment look like as far as a drop off over the next few years, especially at the high school level?

[01:01:32] - Sure, and Dr. Lateef, I just brought up the slide that we presented in the CIP, which really is just high school. And the top row of that chart there highlighted in green would be what we're seeing as open seats at the secondary level.

[01:01:48] And I think by 20, the end of that slide presentation, we're looking at roughly almost 2,500 vacant seats without the construction of the 14th high school. I'll draw your attention to the bottom of those enrollment projections that would include CIP projects, which is obviously the 14th high school would be included in that.

[01:02:08] We have roughly about 3,500 vacant seats if that high school comes online. And just to kind of reiterate and put that back into perspective, and we shared this during the CIP presentation, that's roughly a high school and a half based on the sizes of our current high school.

[01:02:23] So that's a pretty substantial number of open seats if we construct and follow through on the 14th high school. - So say that again. So if we don't build the high school, what is the number of vacant seats? - We still have, that's what's highlighted in green at the top. And I'm looking at that and it looks like roughly 2,400.

[01:02:42] - Okay, and if we do build the high school, what will the-- - We're looking at 3447, I believe, is what that shows at the bottom. - Right, so the concern, you know, in last week, sort of just generally to summarize the discussion, was that, you know, there will be vacant seats if we don't build the high school.

[01:03:04] And if we build the high school, there'll be even more vacant seats. And the question is, is it responsible to build a high school that we might not need based on our projections. And that has become very concerning the board, especially in light of the costs and the unprecedented borrowing we would do moving forward with bond and construction on the new high school.

[01:03:28] So I appreciate that. Does anyone have any questions or concerns on this? Mr. Wilk. - I was just gonna say, given the numbers and with the enrollment projections, especially looking at potentially

building this new high school, it almost seems the opposite would be true that one would have to close before we built another one, just with the loss of capacity in the student enrollment.

[01:03:50] So to me, it's crazy to think about adding another high school if really the reality is it almost seems like there would be more need for a consolidation. - I think that's a good point.

[01:04:05] And I think in light of not knowing what the fiscal and financial budget numbers coming from the state will be and warnings of the fact that we won't be as funded as well as we have been in the past, or we certainly won't see the increases we've seen at the rates we've seen.

[01:04:21] That is concerning. And you know, so that's a good point, Mr. Wilk. I think Ms. Wall had a question. - Yeah, it's not a question, but I believe I wanted to build on what Mr. Wilk said.

[01:04:36] If we look at the capacity enrollment space, I should say in the 2032 school year, 2047, and then you look at program capacity for most of our high schools, that's about the same amount, Battlefield 2000, Gainesville 2.4,000, Patriot 2.1.

[01:04:54] Some of our schools are a little bit smaller, Hilton for instance, but it does beg the question, is this needed and is this a good use of our taxpayer dollars when we do have other needs and other things that we can do that would enrich our program capacity at our schools, such as the robotic centers that are proposed.

[01:05:12] If we decide to forgo the 14th, we can do other needed things that the community has been asking for for a number of years that would really benefit our students and be able to help us carry out our strategic plan initiatives. So this does give me pause seeing that, you know, we have capacity even without building the school.

[01:05:32] We have excess capacity, quite a bit of excess capacity, in fact, so I do think we need to be really prudent and I appreciate the information that was presented to us and, you know, the enrollment is one thing and then the heavy on take of debt is another because that is a very large sum of borrowing that for borrowing that we would need to do in order to complete a school that we probably don't need.

[01:05:54] It looks like we don't need. So, and that does concern me because the selling of bonds means taking on debt. And generally that's not a good idea if you can avoid it from a fiscal standpoint. It's better if we can manage with what we have.

[01:06:09] So, and anyway, thank you for, I think those are two important pieces that go into making a wise decision for this board. - I saw Ms. Argerpore next and then. - Yeah, Mr. Youssef, when we had our meeting last week, you said something about the bond.

[01:06:27] That amount of money doesn't just affect the schools, it affects the county as well. Could you kind of just give us a synopsis of how you discussed that last week? - Yes, so the county has imposed debt limits or debt ceilings like any government.

[01:06:45] And it is a percentage of the revenue that they test. that couple of tests now we are when we look at it combined we are way under the the ratio of the debt ceiling but once we do these things we are pushing the we are pushing towards the debt ceiling and also included in that debt ceiling is the counties owned at the day issue for their construction so we got to look at it collaboratively and in and so those are things that that will concern

[01:07:20] the county the other piece of it is as we fund our debt service we use the county transfer so as debt service increases over a period of time that's taking money out of the operating operations towards debt service and in one of the charts we had we had over the next five years an increase of approximately 80 million dollars in debt service if we go with scenario a the immediate like for next year you wouldn't see the immediate impact of debt service but as it goes out and you start selling these bonds and you go through a period of time you'll see that increase in debt service

[01:07:59] thank you for explaining that because i think it's um it's one of the things we have to consider and we're just one part of the government and we need to we do need to be working collaboratively thank you mr blake thank you thank you mr bach and mr youssef um i just want to i just want to to say i think our focus should really be on redistricting addressing addressing our transfer patterns and um investing in modernizing our schools rather than spending all this money on

[01:08:34] a school that we really don't need the data shows us we don't need an enrollment trend shows we don't need it so um that's that's where i'm at just for the record miss william thank you mr chairman i guess i'm just kind of bringing it all home with some historical context here um as the one who's been on here the longest dealing with schools and boundaries and all sorts of those nature.

[01:08:57] The reason why we went down this path is because the county was growing exponentially at a rapid pace and we weren't sure we were gonna have seats for students years down the line. Since then, there has been so much change. One of the things that is not talked about the most is when we went on this journey, I would say maybe it was like 2014, 15, Mr. Jessie's not here.

[01:09:21] The idea was to find locations for schools in the future and even if we could not build a school, to bank the land. As Mr. Youssef has been saying, it's all one big pot of money that we, from the county, whether it's them giving us the share, our share out the pot, it's all one big pot.

[01:09:39] So what we do absolutely affects them. We have an outstanding, the county has like an outstanding credit rating right now, the school division as well. We're all mixed together. If the data's trying to showing that we don't need the seats from a parent and someone who is a Woodbridge High School grad and familiar with that area, it's heartbreaking because you wanna see a new school and everyone's talked about it for years.

[01:10:00] But the responsible thing for all of us to do is to be wise with our money and to think about new ways of redistricting, which I've been saying for a few years, no one likes boundaries. It's never going to make anyone happy. However, we've had a significant amount of change here in our county, not only from our new academic pathway, but to what we have available and we can do.

[01:10:20] So I think this is an opportunity to think creatively and to be innovative, which is what we've been doing. But to also give a big nod to not only our own finance staff here, but also the counties for working so collaboratively together. We are very fortunate in our position right now where we are one of the few school divisions that has not gone into the negative or had to give back money to keep on that trend.

[01:10:42] I think the smartest thing to do would be to pay attention to the data and to try some different solutions. So thank you for all of your hard work and for breaking it down for those of us who are not financially astute, and bonds in other areas, thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams.

[01:10:57] Ms. Trudenik. - No secret, Ms. Trudenik has asked about this 14th high school since before we put it in the CIP. I didn't think it was needed or necessary based on the money, and it's now being proven that it's definitely not, and I hope that when we go to take this vote that we make a decision that benefits all the students in the county.

[01:11:19] - Great, and so I'll just wrap up with Mike. I think when I got on the board in 2018, and we were in the middle of sort of selecting a property that would be the new 14th High School. And initially it was down Hoadley in the Prince William Parkway that didn't work out.

[01:11:39] And then we found this piece of land that we negotiated and bought. And that took three or four years to really finalize that sale with the intention that if we were continuing to grow at those projections back then, that we would need that school. Clearly the chart here on the screen shows us that even without that school, as Mr. Wilk points out, we have a lot of vacant seats.

[01:12:01] We have enough vacant seats. We have actually, we'll have as many vacant seats as we have one high school worth of students. And that is concerning. And so while I mentioned that last week's meeting, you know, we may be looking at an unprecedented time in the county where we have always been growing.

[01:12:22] We may actually, and we've plateaued for the last four or five years. We may actually, and we are, looks like we're gonna be going down and we may get to a point where we don't need the schools we have, and we need to repurpose them, redesign them or re-capacitate them as Ms. Wall said, find better uses or for capacity programs, program capacity at the schools.

[01:12:43] And so I have a real concern that based on financial outlook moving forward, based on the fact we don't need the seats, based on the fact that if we did build the school, what hasn't been said tonight is you would cannibalize all the other high schools, especially in the Eastern side of the county.

[01:13:00] And what I mean by cannibalizing, you'll drop their enrollment to a point where may they, you know, all our high schools except for Brentsville are a class six sports. So from a sports standpoint, you know, that's really important for those schools who've historically been at that level, they would change levels and that changes sort of competition levels and that's concerning.

[01:13:19] Also, it allows us, you know, with our schools, the size they are, we do concentrate a lot of great quality programs in each of the high schools that can actually benefit a lot of people and at the same time, responsibly spend our money in a way that benefits more students than less.

[01:13:34] And so I think we ought to, as a board, be extremely careful about how we move forward. I think many decisions boards make on future of schools can be sort of hinged on different moments in time. And I think spending \$360 million on a new high school that is not needed could put this division at a risk in a scenario where we would be looking at having a hard time paying off that debt and operating schools.

[01:14:05] And the one thing that we didn't discuss here in the cost, the only cost that we were shown on the charts and in this presentation is the cost of actually building the school. It doesn't talk about the yearly cost of running a school. That yearly cost of running a school currently is, you know, we would add that to, it's about 25, 30, \$40 million at a high school level.

[01:14:27] and that is another cost on going outside of debt. And if we can save that money by currently housing our students in the current boundaries we have or redistricting in fixed capacity, we have a responsibility to fix the capacity and address our capacity changes, which will be unpopular but necessary.

[01:14:50] Fairfax County has decided to redistrict their entire school division. They've done high schools and they're doing elementary schools and they're going through that whole process now. You just saw a presentation on, well, actually we have it coming, the presentation on our elementary schools on the east redistricting and the concerns folks have about that, but we will have much larger concerns when we move towards redistricting high schools, which is something that is definitely needed based on the capacity issues we're facing at our high schools.

[01:15:19] And so I wanted to make sure the public had a chance to look at this presentation. Please take a look at it. It has been on the web for a number, since last week, at least. I want you to take a look at it now. If you have any concerns about this presentation, the board will come back and will hold a vote.

[01:15:38] What's the date on that February meeting? - February 4th. - February 4th, we will hold a vote on scenario A or B. A is the one to keep the high school and B is the one to remove the high school, correct? - That's correct. - Okay. So I expect the public who has concerns about this, please reach out to your school board members, reach out to me, reach out to the superintendent.

[01:15:58] Please send your questions, concerns, emails, call, whatever you do to communicate. We wanna hear from you on this matter because this board will make a decision and it will be a final decision at that next meeting. And with that, we'll move on next. Thank you.

[01:16:14] Thank you, gentlemen. We'll move on to 1702, which is a motion pursuant to the 264 pertaining school boundaries. So I think, hold on, let me see. I don't, did you give me another sheet on this? No, okay, so again, we don't have, no, I know, so I just, for my sake, you know, on 1702, I think we should have had the same slide deck or the information about the boundaries and all the options that should be in here so that if people come to look at board docs,

[01:16:51] they can see that we have, they can quickly find the boundaries. Yeah, and they can find it elsewhere on the website, but I think since this is up for a discussion, That should be back on there, huh? Okay, yeah.

[01:17:07] So I guess to some context here, we will be voting on at the next board meeting. So we had a public hearing tonight on the boundaries for Woodbridge Area Elementary School and Potomac Shores number two. Those boundary options are listed in our last board meetings and it'll be put up here as well.

[01:17:29] But it was those options scenarios one through six are listed, the maps, everything is available on the website. I want folks to take a look at it. A number of board members have been working very diligently with the community, with the public, based on what they've heard, talking to the superintendent.

[01:17:48] I understand Mr. Wilk has a motion pursuant to the policy regarding our boundaries that he'd like to make some changes and I'll have him read his motion so that the next time we appear, and when we vote on a final motion, there'll be another option or an amended option.

[01:18:05] So Mr. Wilk, you have a motion? - Mr. Chairman, can I just add, just since you went through the history, just as a reminder that our team, we are recommending option six to the board. - Okay. - For

consideration. - Right, right, right. So option six is the one that's being recommended to the board and we'll put that up here shortly.

[01:18:24] And so option six is the recommendation and I know Mr. Wilk, Ms. Williams, the board members have been working diligently over there to sort out any concerns folks may have and we can never satisfy everyone, but we certainly are working to do the best we can. Mr. Wilk.

[01:18:41] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you mentioned, we've had a number of events, town halls, focus groups, emails, listening sessions. The administration has received a plethora of different types of communications leading to the current proposal of six.

[01:19:02] As I've said before, I'm keeping my hand still, Erica says I flail it around a lot. As I've said before, clearly the impacted board member, at least the one impacted the most is the Potomac District. We have a number of elementary schools that are pulled into this.

[01:19:19] I do want to thank Mr. Blake and Ms. Williams, who also have schools involved in this. They represent their constituents, but I appreciated getting insight from them on this given that this would impact Potomac residents for this proposed change.

[01:19:39] So being a keen observer and listening and seeing the recommendations and the changes that have happened with map six, also taking feedback tonight, I think part of this recommendation will meet the spirit of something that was some things that were said tonight.

[01:19:56] You know, I do have, you know, a number of thoughts about things as it pertains to the boundaries, but I'm gonna focus, and I'll say more about that in two weeks, but I'm gonna focus more on my recommendation tonight, and we'll go from there. So as I mentioned, I do support, out of all the options currently, scenario six, I think it's the best one out of the ones developed.

[01:20:18] However, I do believe after following policy regulation 264-1 and staying back, letting the process unfold, taking the feedback, having the administration make the adjustments and their recommendation, I do have some slight minor modifications of the scenario that I think it will definitely impact and affect my communities.

[01:20:45] Specifically, I would like the students in the Graham Park corridor to remain at their current school, Dumfries Elementary. I would also like to see the students then from Forest Park be assigned the Covington Harper Elementary School.

[01:21:00] I believe these changes will maintain attendance area contiguity to the greatest extent possible while balancing capacity utilization across the schools impacted, which are some of the criteria set forth by the board policy and regulations. I will note on policy regulation 264-1, we cannot leave a school overcrowded.

[01:21:23] There are two schools currently overcrowded right now, Covington Harper and Patti Elementary. There's no way to leave them at where they're currently at without making some impacts and changes to that. That is how that has to happen. It would violate the regulation 264-1.

[01:21:40] I've already talked to the superintendent and her team. I know Patty has some two pre-K classes housed in it. If it could move across the street when the new facility opens. But again, we're talking 20, 30 kids at most. We're not talking a couple hundred.

[01:21:56] We're trying to do what we can there, but we have to open capacity. So with that being said, that is my recommendation where we currently stand right now. It is my understanding that since all the students impacted have previously either been included in the superintendent's recommendation in six or in an early alternative proposal, and therefore this would not be a significant modification under the policy.

[01:22:24] So again, this is my recommendation to the boundary planning committee, slight modifications to the current proposal.

[01:22:41] - So you're not allowed to discuss after this? - Yeah, yeah, thank you. I move that the Prince William County School Board requests the superintendent to develop an alternative school redistricting proposal consistent with my request. - Do I have a second, Ms. Williams?

[01:22:58] - I second. - Ms. Williams seconds, discussion. Anybody else have anything to add to this? Ms. Wall. - So for, this is a different part of the county than where I am, the opposite side. So if I could have the proposed changes be drawn up in a map and then have that circulated among the board so I can get an idea of what little changes you to the boundary process, having been a part of this as a parent and as a boundary committee member a couple of times back,

[01:23:37] back in the day in the West, when we were doing this kind of thing and it would be helpful. And if we can accommodate little changes that don't have an overall big impact, if we can keep kids in schools that they are currently in as much as possible that I'm not opposed to that, but I do want to have a better idea of what we're talking about for six, if this becomes scenario seven or this becomes scenario six A or whatever we're calling it.

[01:23:58] So thank you very much. - Ms. Wall, I do just wanna clarify that under the policy, we've got this new policy that they followed this year and where the superintendent makes a recommendation, which she's done, and then it's turned over to the board to then come back under the policy and ask that she make any changes.

[01:24:15] And so when her team does that, they bring it back to to the board for consideration so just so everybody understands how that process works so it's so it remains a scenario six with yes and then by the next meeting there will be a scenario 6a that has that's kind of where we are right so 6 and 6a would be available so what i'm asking is going to happen anyway so yeah i think mr jesse has a word but just so the sooner we can get that map up and the modification so the public has a chance to take a look at it the sooner we and your folks can get that up.

[01:24:48] - We'll be prepared to have those maps turned around fairly quickly. - So they'll be up posted before a meeting? - Yes, absolutely. - Okay, yeah, that'd be great. Okay, Mr. Jesse, I think, wants to say something. Mr. Jesse. - Yeah, I just got back and I just have a question for-- - You have to unmute, sir.

[01:25:05] - I thought I did. Am I still unmuted? - Yeah, now you're unmuted, sir, go. - Okay, I just got back. I just had a question for Justin and I wasn't here for most of this. - In your new proposal, the people who are concerned about making left turns and so forth, are they impacted or not with this?

[01:25:29] - Sir, I'm representing the Potomac District constituents that would fall under a different magisterial district with that recommendation. So this is pertaining to Potomac District, the Dumfries Corridor.

[01:25:44] - Okay. - Okay. - Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. All right, so great. Thank you, Mr. Wilkes. So we need to vote on Mr. Wilkes. Did we vote on it yet? We did not. Okay, so let's vote on Mr. Wilkes' request to the superintendent to make modifications to scenario six.

[01:26:05] - Lateef. - Yes. - Blake. Jesse. - Abstain. - Trudinic. Wall. - Yes. - Wilk.

[01:26:21] Williams. - Yes. - Zargarpur. - Yes. - The vote is seven yes, one abstain. Jesse, motion passed. - Okay, thank you. And now on to board matters. Okay, so we changed the order a little bit. We're gonna start with Mr. Blake this week.

[01:26:37] Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. Since our last meeting, I've had the opportunity to be out in the community in a few meaningful ways. And I just wanna tell you about those. So I'll start, I did attend the All-County High School Band Performance that was hosted at D. Garfield High School, where we listened to both the select band and the honors band.

[01:27:02] The level of musicianship and discipline and collaboration on display was outstanding. Events like this remind us of the talent across Prince William County Schools and the importance of continued investments in the arts.

[01:27:17] I also wanna highlight one of the performances by the Honor Band, which included a rendition of Our New Day Begun. That piece was written in honor of the nine lives lost in the 2015 Charleston AME church shooting, a tragedy that still resonates today.

[01:27:39] And its message of remembrance and rising hope was profound to hear performed in our countywide concert. I also attended the Virginia Alliance of Black School Educators Conference in Norfolk this weekend where educators, board members, and leaders from across the Commonwealth came together to focus on equity, leadership and student opportunity.

[01:28:04] Those conversations reinforced for me that many of our challenges we're navigating locally, growth, capacity, staffing, fiscal responsibility are all being faced across the Commonwealth. And I also wanna acknowledge our own Dr. Hart, who is a retired associate superintendent here, who presented at the conference and her message on leadership and hope.

[01:28:30] and her message was on leadership and hope, and in our current climate of our nation, our nation is navigating, that message felt especially timely. Hope is not passive, it's something leaders have a responsibility to carry and model, and that really resonated with me.

[01:28:50] And finally, I wanna recognize our own Beulah Sarsa, right here that you heard earlier, our super representative on the board for winning the MLK oratory contest. She won the oratory and she won the written.

[01:29:05] Was it written? Didn't you get two? She got a lot of checks that day though. She won a lot. She did a very good job and she represented herself, Hilton and the board with poise, conviction and clarity.

[01:29:21] It was a powerful reminder of why students' voices matter and why we do this work. And then I also want to talk about a few things that some families brought up tonight and that have been on the mind of the community.

[01:29:38] And I wanna acknowledge upfront that these are not easy conversations around redistricting and the discussion around this 14th high school, but redistricting is disruptive and facility decisions carry real emotional weight.

[01:29:57] I personally attended both town halls, listened carefully to the families, and I've read the emails, the letters, and the comments that continue to come in. At the same time, my responsibility as a board member is to make decisions grounded in data, policy, and long-term sustainability, not just what feels the easiest at the moment.

[01:30:22] On redistricting, we are guided by policy 264 and the obligation to look at system-wide balance, not individual schools in isolation. For me, community cohesion matters. Neyapco residents should attend Neyapco schools whenever possible because strong neighborhood schools strengthen engagement, stability, and student outcomes.

[01:30:47] Redistricting is not a failure of planning. It's a necessary tool of responsible planning as new schools come online. Enrollment data, declining birth rates, long-range projections, and the escalating cost of construction, especially on a site that is expensive and challenging to prepare.

[01:31:14] I do not believe moving forward at this time is physically responsible or aligned with our actual capacity needs. Even with new housing developments, data shows growing surplus seats division-wide, that matters.

[01:31:31] That doesn't mean ignore overcrowding. It means we address it through a multi-pronged approach, redistricting, better alignment of transfer and specialty programs, and targeting investments in schools. We already have that data tells us we will no longer need long-term.

[01:31:56] I know responsible people can disagree on these issues. I respect that, but I will continue to lead with clarity, honesty, and a focus on what best serves our students, not just today, but 10, 20 years from now. Thank you.

[01:32:11] - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Ms. Williams. - Thank you. Now is the time of year where we discuss with our students, career and academic planning, what you plan on taking next year for your courses, and if you're thinking about graduating, I highly encourage both parents, guardians, and students alike to remember you have your profile of a student that is in your parent view and student view accounts.

[01:32:41] Please look at those. It'll give you the high school catalogs, middle schools, all the specialty programs, and there's a tool there to help you plan your future. Parent teacher conferences are coming up. Please touch base. This is the time of year where everyone starts to get worried about testing and SOLs and we're running out of time.

[01:33:01] You are not running out of time. Please utilize the tools that we have provided for you and talk to your counselor or trusted adult in school for resources, other resources if you need. The other thing I'd like to remind our school community is that we still are in wintertime and we have students that are lacking resources.

[01:33:19] So if you have clothes to donate or if you have additional foods or supplies, please reach out to your middle school, your principal of your school, sorry, middle school on the brain, having a medical school student, because oftentimes families can come directly to the school to get those resources instead of going to food banks or outside areas.

[01:33:36] They are much more comfortable there. I'm gonna try to keep it short. And I also would like to say congratulations to our new governor. It is a historic moment in time for women, for government, for politics, doesn't matter what side of the aisle you're on, if you're on an aisle or not, it's still super cool.

[01:33:53] I'm a nerd, so I appreciated being able to watch, 'cause it's always cold on Inauguration Day in Virginia, our new governor come in. It's something that is definitely worth a conversation. It's a historic moment in time, and I'm excited to see what her administration will do, which leads me to the next segue, and that is that if the weather does not prevent us, we will be, some of the board will be going to the Virginia School Board Association Capital Conference.

[01:34:18] That's the time of year where we go and learn all about our upcoming government, who is newly seated. We talk about legislation and laws. We also go and lobby. It's an important event of the year. So please, if you have things for us to take down with us to Richmond, please do so.

[01:34:33] And I'm gonna finish that by saying, happy Founders Day to a few of the divine nine, which I'll speak to more next month, but to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, which was founded on the 15th, Kappa Alpha Psi on the fifth, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority on the 13th, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, frat brothers on the 9th and my own dear sorors the zeta 5 beta sorority incorporated which was found on January 16th these are a few members of the divine nine who contribute significantly to our students in our schools or academic progress or like me I'm a parent so I just wanted to give

[01:35:06] a shout out as I do every January thank you thank you miss miss wall thank you I appreciate the citizens who came tonight and commented who have participated in the process in person over email and in conversations thank you for being engaged and thank you for sharing your viewpoints I appreciate it a lot I want to thank the division leadership team and staff for an excellent presentation at our work session last week on the capital improvement program and I was especially struck by the information about forecasted population change and its impact on enrollment including the

[01:35:41] impact on our fiscal actions with bond sales and so forth and the implications of revised cost estimates for the proposed 14th high school and the presentation was informative, organized, provocative, clear about the decisions that this board will need to make and I will have more comments on that topic at a later time. I want to highlight the Ronald Reagan middle school spelling bee that happened last week on the 13th. I was invited to be a judge along with Mrs. Porter Lucas and Mr. Grazick, our middle school leaders and wow those fourth grade those Reagan middle schoolers put forth a great group of

[01:36:17] spellers and it takes so much courage and dedication and hours preparation. I want to congratulate Cia Sampath for being the winner of Reagan's spelling bee. She was amazing. Congratulations to all of the students who participated in all-county band on January 10th. I love music education. It's vital critical part of a well-rounded education and for some children is the reason why they come to school each day. So thank you for continuing to prioritize music education I also wanted to note and express appreciation for the sighting

[01:36:55] of a food pantry in the Gainesville district at Reagan middle this is the only pantry in that kind of region of the division or of our county and the Haymarket Gainesville area and while this general area is generally more affluent than and you might think that there wouldn't need it to be what pantry there are still families in need and they can often go unseen and without easy access to resources because of where they are so I do think the division for considering my suggestion that we add one at Reagan I do appreciate that and I know the families do as well tonight at night at battlefield there's a rising

[01:37:32] ninth grade parent information night happening as we speak unfortunately I won't be able to attend it because I'm here but I and I do not yet have a transmogrifier as Calvin and Hobbes had so I'm only here and not there also but I But I mentioned this as an opportunity to highlight our school

counselors and thank them for their work of shepherding students through the difficult process of class selection, career exploration, college preparation, and basically identifying who they're going to be as they grow up.

[01:38:06] I really do appreciate it. Thank you for all you do. Lastly, some thoughts on hope. As a new board member five years ago, facing the enigma that was COVID, I made a reference to hope in one of my speeches and I was roundly excoriated by some for the audacity. I have been reflecting on January 2021 now five years on from that calamity that afflicted us all and exacted a substantial emotional toll for so many. Hope springs eternal as Alexander Pope wrote in his poem essay

[01:38:38] on man in 1732 or as Emily Dickinson wrote in 1861 near the start of the Civil war quote hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all hard times come and go thankfully we're not doing Covid right now but hope is the thing with feathers hope springs eternal and my hope as we work to finalize the new strategic plan is that our new path forward for the division will spark in our students the desire to grab a hold of hope and opportunity and engage with their

[01:39:16] learning as never before and so i leave you with lots of hope for the new year and with that good night um mr jesse we can go to you next i've been in the house went in the hospital yesterday when people say how are you doing i i sometimes say i'm 97 of the time i'm fine this is a three percent that uh it causes some problem uh i'm working it out i most of it i think is is serious

[01:39:54] but not it can be flexible so that's why i'm here tonight and have an mri so i missed part of part of the meeting uh the other thing i'd like to say is that uh you know i understand mr blake's uh concern about having schools in the district but i live on ommissal road and my kids even though i'm the board member my wife has what was also they went to garfield not woodbridge uh and last

[01:40:28] redistricting carrydale i think which is one of the former schools from most uh neapsco moved over to uh the occoquan district so the district lines are political and not necessarily bound and really care less about the boundaries of the schools in some aspects uh i also like to say that uh i'm concerned and again i i don't know uh everybody that spoke tonight but i am concerned

[01:41:03] about the areas where you have to make a left turn i have two friends uh best friends actually who live on 234 uh when i come down from their home to get on 234 uh i stopped trying to cross over the two lanes and then make a left turn because I just couldn't get enough things, so I actually go down to another street and then even that is dangerous to cross over and I can't see buses having situations, so that's what I'm concerned about and that's the reason why I'm

[01:41:39] staying. I don't know all the facts that went on tonight. The last thing I would like to say is that my wife uh announced on monday that after uh 30 some years of this program in 17 years where she was the head of the program for mlk this was her last meeting and her family had asked that she retired and we asked a couple years before now but this is a great program and uh congratulations

[01:42:18] to our board member who won she was dynamic and great and so forth i don't know if we had a picture i asked to have put up if it we do but these are the woodbridge high school people that participated and i don't know if uh mr rubin uh can't think of his last name now right now but i I think he's the coach and he works at Woodbridge High School.

[01:42:48] So it's a great program. I think we had last year, there wasn't a lot of people there. This year, there was an overflow and some people, including one of the little girls that was supposed to carry the medals down, could not get in and was not able to participate.

[01:43:06] So I thought it was a great program and look forward to seeing you guys and hope to get back, get my health, my wife's health back together and be more active. Thank you very much.

[01:43:22] - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. Ms. Zargapur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. We've been getting a few questions here and there about AI use in schools, and I don't know what it's going to look like for our students.

[01:43:42] I would love if we could have a presentation about that, about how it can impact our students, how our students will use it. Personally, I don't think our elementary kids need to be using it, or much. I would also like to ensure that there's critical thinking going on before they access AI.

[01:44:03] And to that end, we actually have Copilot on our computer here, and I did ask, you know, what to look for for our students. And aside from streamlining teacher administrative work, which I have used in my job, It talks about supporting personalized learning, increasing access and inclusion, building up AI literacy and responsible use skills.

[01:44:30] And with that, I would like to see what our division is creating for that and how we're preparing our staff. I think our staff needs to know how to teach it, know how to make sure that our students are critically thinking before we turn our kids loose on it, or turn it loose on our kids, whichever way.

[01:44:51] That so that that is a concern of mine as we move forward because this is newer a lot of people like to talk about well our kids will get behind but I I would like to make sure our kids aren't behind in critical thinking and being kind and knowing how to do basic research skills and how to represent themselves into that I will segue into the beautiful JFK JFK I can't talk tonight I know the Martin Luther King oratorical thing we went to on Monday, the kids were amazing, all of them.

[01:45:27] And one of the things that is really fun for us as board members, those of us who've gone to several of them, is to see kids who are in middle school now getting into the high school competitions as well. Beulah, your speech was amazing. It was inspiring. She was magnificent.

[01:45:42] If you can get a recording of it, you've got to see it. I loved the poise you had. You commanded the room. and your words were so meaningful. You wove meaning from the beginning through the middle to the end, and I felt like there was a call to action there.

[01:45:58] There was a little self-reflection you were asking us to do. It was beautiful. You definitely deserved that win, so beautiful job. For everybody else, we're getting to the end of the second semester. We're midway through the school year. We do need to be checking on our grades, where we're at, so I'm hoping everybody is keeping up with that.

[01:46:18] And Dr. McDade, I'm so sorry, but I do hope we get a snow day out of next week. So have a good night, everyone. - Ms. Erica Trudenik. - I am team snow day two with Ms. Zargapur.

[01:46:35] I do love that the kids get so excited about that, but it looks like it's gonna come on the weekend and they'll have it all cleaned up before we can make it back. It is the end of the quarter. Good luck to the teachers.

[01:46:50] And I hope that there's a lot for you to do your teacher work days and closing out and thank you for all the hard work and time that you put into our students and you know the many students that run in in the last week with their last-minute requests and you know just found assignments that they just figured out about so thank you for your patience in that the the winter season of sports is still going on congratulations to all the athletes that are doing excellent while being students at the same time and gearing up and so many of the kids are committing to schools as seniors

[01:47:29] and it's such a cool thing to watch as they've spent their careers in in high school doing these things so to touch on the AI with Ms. Zargarpur it's interesting because I've done a lot of research on this and looked at it and there's so much out there that you know she talked about being left behind a little bit you know in the workplace especially as these kids get older there are going to be people that are proficient in AI and if you are not you're going to take a little bit longer to do certain things you're gonna the tools that are there that you can use for your benefit I hope our kids do use those but I do understand as a mom not wanting them to go there first and wanting them

[01:48:09] to be critical thinkers as well but I do think that our schools and our teachers have set them up to do that in a really strong way there's a base there that they have and I think that that base will continue because teachers truly thrive off of wanting to make these kids leaders and learners on their own outside of technology too so I think that I think that Prince William County Schools is gonna do phenomenal with both so yeah that's all I have Justin thank you Erica thanks um thank you yes you did a great job at the Martin

[01:48:48] Luther King speech competition, it was great being there. Reiterate what everyone else said, that was phenomenal. Mr. Jesse, it was great seeing Miss Jesse. I know the competition has been sacrosanct to her since she started it back in the early 80s.

[01:49:04] You know, major applause for her and the work she did. It was great to see her recognized at the event. Always a great event, just wanted to recognize that. Normally I yield my time, but I will mention it, I'm scrolling on my social media feed to see what I did.

[01:49:20] It is really cool. I will say I'm sure a lot of people saw this story about Steve Hardiman and his son, Seth, of Triangle Elementary, the school resource, school security guard, excuse me. He and his son appeared on the wall and walked away with \$1.6 million.

[01:49:39] It was great to be at a showing party that they had in the community for Triangle Elementary. So that was a phenomenal event. He's a great guy, he still plans on working in the school still and continuing and dedicating his life to his students. His son still subs at the school, which is phenomenal as well to see them there at the event.

[01:49:59] Let's see, bingo, that was lovely. There was a great career day at the Potomac Shores Middle School. It's become an annual event. I was able to stop by and spend a morning with them and meet some of the various careers.

[01:50:18] I like how they kind of, it was interwoven with the high school specialty programs, so not only could the kids learn about future careers, but they could learn about things like the cosmetology program at Woodbridge High School, or some of the other programs like at OP, Freedom, et cetera, so they were there to speak to the kids as well.

[01:50:35] I thought that was a really creative way of talking about careers and also promoting our specialty programs. And then lastly, I do get invited from here in there from time and time again, I guess we'll say, to speak with the Cub Scouts or the Girl Scouts.

[01:50:52] So I had a chance to speak to Cub Scout PAC 35 at Ashland last week. I love these events 'cause I get to teach like fourth and fifth graders about government and kind of makes me miss the classroom. But it's great, you know, to see pure learning and them actually really being engaged, talking about something can be as boring as the three branches of government, but having those conversations with them and teaching them the importance of separation of powers and checks and balances and all those good things.

[01:51:29] So I do have a couple more booked with some other Cub Scouts. So if there's a girl or a Cub Scout group that needs to meet that requirement for speaking to an elected official, please let me know. I'm always down to do that. But anyways, I'll yield whatever remainder of the time.

[01:51:47] - So does that mean I get five minutes? Well, who'd he yield it to then? Okay, there you go, no. Okay, I think I'm wrapping up. Congratulations, Biela Sarsa, again, wonderful. The story's written up in the Inside NOVA, so take a look there, and hopefully that video will get up and out shortly.

[01:52:07] So very excited and very proud to have you on our board and represent yourself, your school, and the students so well, so thank you. Moving on to, I think Mrs. Zargarpur brings up a great point on artificial intelligence. I think, unfortunately, the genie is out of the bottle.

[01:52:24] It is very difficult to put back in the bottle. I think, I don't know if today is a harder time to parent than it was 50 years ago for my parents or 40 years ago, but the challenges for parents in keeping their kids focused off these devices or scheduled on the devices get them back into reading books properly and writing cursive and those things are really challenges that I think are important. And there's a lot of research to indicate that just reading off a book, writing with your own hands, help hardwire information into your brain a little

[01:53:01] bit better than just trying to look at it or type it. But without a doubt, AI is here. It's here to stay. The genie's out of the bottle, cannot be put back in. I think the discussion is no longer, Is it about humans versus AI?

[01:53:18] I think it's truly about AI-enhanced humans versus humans who choose not to learn to use it as a proper tool ethically and appropriately. And I think AI-enhanced humans, humans who take this tool like we did with calculators or with the abacus or with the computer, can improve in productivity.

[01:53:38] But it is a lot of work to figure out how to navigate getting us to the ethical and proper use of AI. And I think that is one of the challenges the superintendent has stated as one of her goals in the strategic plan and it's one of the national goals that all educators face as we look to, and it's not just educators in K through 12, it's pre-K educators and it's college.

[01:54:03] This is a huge concern at the university level. And how do we do this? It's a huge concern in the workplace. And so I think it's important to prepare our students for the future and how to handle this and how to, you know, be ready for the, I mean, like I said before, I think it's never been more true now that we're preparing them for jobs we don't know will exist.

[01:54:25] I mean, whether they're gonna be a prompt engineer or whether they're gonna be developing the next round of algorithms that these systems will use, you know, math becomes critically even more

important in everything we do. And so making sure our students have a solid math education and be able to be critical thinkers are all part of our strategic plan, have been for the last four years.

[01:54:48] I believe we have made significant progress and improved all of our schools over the last four years under Dr. McDade's leadership. I think next week, or it might be this week is the four year anniversary of when we interviewed Dr. McDade, I believe. Is that right? - Yeah.

[01:55:05] - It is, it is. And it was a snowstorm too. I think we were snowed in and we interviewed her. So, you know, at that interview, and I've told this story a number of times, you know, I asked the superintendent, I asked Dr. McDade at the time during the interview, and it wasn't even Dr. McDade, 'cause she was finishing her doctorate degree and got it right around the time we announced her selection.

[01:55:27] But I said to her, I said, you know, what are the things that you think you could, you know, what are some things you've learned about our school division? And she looked at our school system and she had a binder and she had, you know, flipped through profiles of some of our high schools and said, look here doc, you have some low hanging fruit, things we can fix right away.

[01:55:46] And she did, she came in, fixed a lot of those things, put us on track to have significant improvements, record graduation rates, record scholarship dollars won, record pay for teachers. It doesn't get easier, in the next four years, the goals are gonna be more ambitious, harder to achieve, and even more important.

[01:56:05] And so I really encourage, 'cause I want the public to buy into our strategic plan, learn about it, study it, give us feedback. We're gonna vote on this plan at the next board meeting. This is the most important document, the most important thing this board did four years ago, or actually three years ago, whenever we approved the plan, the last plan.

[01:56:26] This will be the most important thing this board does and the legacy this board will leave will be in this document. And if we follow this document all the way through, like we did the first time around, we will achieve those goals and those ambitions. And that is something this board, this community and everyone in this community can own together.

[01:56:44] So with that, I hope you all take a look at it. If there is a snow day, great. If not, we ride at dawn on Tuesday.



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