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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Date Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 4h 5m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1gUOmDrdM8>
- 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] - Prince William County School Board will now enter open session and I'd like to call the meeting to order. I need an approval for our action item. Mr. Jesse, Vice Chair Jesse, or approval of agenda.

[00:00:17] I'm sorry, 1.02, yeah. - I move that Prince William County School Board. - I move that Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - I'll go to the wall. - I second. - Okay, any discussion?

[00:00:33] All in favor, hands raised in the air, aye. - Any opposed? No opposition? Motion passed. - Vote is five yes, three not present at vote. Blake, Williams, Wilk, motion passed. - Okay, now moving on to the motion to enter closed session, Mr. Jeske. - That pursuer into section 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the code of Virginia, the Prince William County School Board enter closed sessions for the following reasons.

[00:01:02] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, discipline, or resonation of specific public officer, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to a section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:26] Two, to discuss with the division council and staff actual or promotable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other civil litigations involving the school division under

section 2.2.3.3711A7 and 8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:54] And three, to discuss with the Division Council and staff specific legal matters pertaining to the public contract under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia 8 and 4.

[00:02:11] To discuss and receive briefing by staff members related to the security of the school facility, the safety of persons using such facilities, and actions taken to respond to such matters. where a discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security assistance facility pursuant to section 2.2-3711A19 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:02:40] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Okay, please vote all in favor, raise your hands. Significant aye. Any opposed? - Vote is six yes, two not present at vote. Williams, Wilk, motion passed. - At this time the Prince William County School Board now enter closed session and return to open session in approximately one hour.

[00:02:58] Good evening.

[00:04:00] The Prince William County School Board will now return to open session. We have closed session certification. Motion. Vice Chair, Mr. Jesse. Mr. Chair, I move that the pursuant to section 2.2, that is 3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of Prince William County School Board meeting of February 4th, 2026 to be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:28] therefore be resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge one only public business matter lawfully exempted from open meetings requirements were discussed in the closed session meeting to which the certification resolution applies and two only such public business matter as were identified in the motion convening The closed meeting were held heard and discussed or considered by the school board. Do I have a second?

[00:05:02] Mr. Chairman. Ms. Williams. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is 8 yes unanimous motion passed. Next up approval appointments and releases Releases of motions in order. Vice Chair Jesse. I move the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of

[00:05:37] specific employees as presented in closed session. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Williams. Any discussion? Please vote. - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed.

[00:05:59] - Okay, at this time we'll do the Pledge of Allegiance. That'll be led by Karina Grover, our student representative from Colgan High School.

[00:06:24] Thank you, Karina. Up next is Thriving Futures Focus, and tonight, as we do always, it 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.

[00:06:45] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or award at the state or national level. Tonight, the school board is honored to acknowledge the Woodbridge High School Arts. I invite Vice Chairman, Mr. Richard Jesse of the Occoquan District to introduce our honorees.

[00:07:02] Mr. Jesse. - Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lateef. First, I wish to recognize Ms. Taryn Woods, who was honored by the Virginia Musical Educators Association for her contribution to music education.

[00:07:20] Ms. Woods was honored with the 2025 VMEA Outstanding Educator Awards for her leadership and impact on music education as a string teacher at Woodbridge High School.

[00:07:36] Ms. Woods has introduced a comprehensive digital rubric and scoring system for band and orchestra addition, revolutionizing the process by making it faster, more reliable, and providing students with clearer, more consistent feedback. Miss Woods, I would like to invite you to share a few words on your outstanding achievement, but before you do, I also want to say that this is my wife and I, one of the favorite

[00:08:10] people in the world here and she has she is responsible for getting as early as we did locker rooms for all the instruments at Woodbridge High School before and so forth so we this is a favorite person of mine and I had the picture of the 120 people that were on stage that one night plus 20 other

[00:08:37] orchestra people, and I think you have 120 kids enrolled in your program. 150. Okay please. Good evening chair members of the school board and our Prince William County community. I am honored to have received the VMEA outstanding music educator award which encompasses all band choir and orchestra educators across the state. In the spirit of school board appreciation month I'd like to begin by expressing my deepest thanks to this board for your

[00:09:18] unwavering support of the arts here in prince william county i want to give a special thank you to the jessies who always seem to be everywhere at once at our performances cheering on our students and supporting every initiative we take on at woodbridge high school your advocacy has meant so much from attending concerts to championing the renovation of our performing arts space and side note i love my bigger classroom i would also like to express my gratitude to our incredible principal dr heather abney and our administrator for the performing arts miss michelle sullivan who frankly also deserves an award they show every day what it means to believe in the

[00:09:56] transformative power of arts education alongside them i want i want to thank dr anna marie bellino and michelle milgan for their ongoing leadership and tireless commitment to the arts across prince william county we feel their support daily their advocacy ensures that we not only have strong arts programming but that we have the resources funding and visibility necessary to continue growing and innovating in my 17 years at woodbridge proudly a loyal viking i have been incredibly fortunate to work with the best colleagues in the world both current and retired a special shout out to parker

[00:10:31] my theater partner in crime and fellow award recipient recipient our arts program at woodbridge is truly exceptional from dance to band orchestra choir and theater the fact that all three of us standing here tonight have been recognized at the state level as not a coincidence.

[00:10:48] It is a reflection of a powerful truth. We have a strong, vibrant arts community, and that excellence is nurtured by the support and values of Prince William County Schools. And none of it would be possible without the most important people in our building, my students. They inspire me every single day.

[00:11:04] They challenge me to grow, they push for excellence, and they remind me why the arts and orchestra matter. They are the reason we fight for funding, for access, for resources, and for opportunities. Watching them create, collaborate, lead, and express themselves in my orchestra class every day is the greatest joy of my career.

[00:11:23] So tonight, I want to thank you, all of you, for valuing, supporting, and funding the arts. When you invest in the arts, you invest in students' confidence, their resilience, their creativity, and their future. You affirm that voices matter. Thank you for recognizing our work, for championing our programs, and for ensuring that the arts will continue to thrive in Prince William County and at Woodbridge High School.

[00:11:46] Thank you. - I have also had the honor of recognizing Woodbridge High School principal, Dr. Heather Abney and the theater art teacher, Parker Hallman.

[00:12:15] The Virginia Thespian Society has selected Dr. Abney as the principal of the year and Mr. Hallman as the high school teacher of the year. This award is the highest honor for secondary ed schools and celebrates educators who demonstrate outstanding support for the arts and exceptional impact on student development.

[00:12:38] I wish to invite Dr. Abney and Mr. Hallman to share a few words about their significant awards. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, and Dr. McDade. Thank you for recognizing the three of us tonight. This honor means so much to us and to our school community.

[00:12:55] And Dr. Flannard, I wanna recognize and thank you. When we first met, one of the first things you asked me was about our theater program and when our performance was. So I wanna thank you for that. I'd like to acknowledge our students. As educators, we often set out not only to teach, but also to inspire our students.

[00:13:13] Receiving this award prompted me to reflect on this chapter of my career and realize that our theater students, affectionately known as our thespians, are the ones who have inspired me. They have sparked my recent love for theater, especially musical theater.

[00:13:28] In fact, in addition to attending the performances at Woodbridge, my husband and I now make it a commitment to see, or make it a priority to see at least two Broadway shows a year. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Jesse, as Ms. Wood just did, who represents our district and is a proud Woodbridge Viking.

[00:13:47] While he attends many of our school events, he goes above and beyond by requesting our performing arts schedule well in advance. And he makes it a priority to attend our shows. Mr. Jesse, I'm not sure you realize how much your support means to our students, to our staff, and to our families, so thank you.

[00:14:07] I'd also like to recognize Ms. Wood, Mr. Hallman, and all of our teachers in our Fine and Performing Arts Department, led for more than 10 years by Assistant Principal Michelle Sullivan. Together, they share a deep belief in the importance of arts in schools, one that goes far beyond simply giving students a place to express themselves.

[00:14:25] Participation in the arts helps students feel connected to their school community and gives them a true sense of belonging, something that we all know is so important. And finally, as we approach the spring musical season, I wanna encourage everyone attending the school board meeting tonight and everyone watching from home to experience a theater performance at a Prince William County school before the end of the school year.

[00:14:50] And these performances take place at elementary, middle, and high schools. And a special plug for Woodbridge, April 16th is the opening night for Bright Star. So thank you. - Thank you and congrats, oh

yeah, I'm sorry, go for it.

[00:15:09] - Good evening members of the school board, district leadership, colleagues and families. I'm deeply honored and sincerely grateful to be recognized as the high school theater teacher of the year by the Virginia Thespian Festival. This award reflects far more than my work alone.

[00:15:25] It represents a community that believes in its students, creativity and the power of education that reaches beyond the classroom. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our board and division leadership for your continued support of arts education.

[00:15:40] Your commitment makes it possible for programs like mine to exist and grow. I'm especially grateful to Dr. Heather Abney, whose leadership as principal consistently champions student voices, trust in educators, and the belief that the arts belong at the core of a thriving school.

[00:15:57] And to Michelle Sullivan, whose guidance and advocacy the assistant principal overseeing the performing arts has been instrumental in supporting not my program but my colleagues as well. Theater education is about much more than performances.

[00:16:13] It develops confident communicators, problem solvers, collaborators, and empathetic leaders. Students learn resilience when something fails, accountability when others depend on them, and creativity when the solution isn't obvious. These are life skills and workforce skills.

[00:16:30] they help create well-rounded engaged students who succeed far beyond the stage as we look forward i look forward to continuing conversations about policies that shape how the arts function in our schools i believe that success depends on trust theater is collaborative experiential discipline and production quality is deeply connected to students ability to meaningfully engage in the full creative process from the classroom to the stage from the first draft of a design to the final creation of the set from the first rehearsal to the final performance as demonstrated by the faculty at Woodbridge open

[00:17:07] communication and trust between educators and leadership are essential if we want our students work to reflect the high standards that this division values when educators are empowered and supported students rise to the expectations and the quality of their learning and performances reflects that investment, I thank all of you for making that investment.

[00:17:27] Thank you for believing in the arts, in educators, and the potential of our students. I'm proud to serve this community, and I'm excited for what we continue to build.

[00:17:43] - Congratulations to your all. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, I normally don't speak during Boards Matters, but as a Whitbridge alumni and graduate, and someone who spent hours and hours in the theater department and creative writing with Haley back when the dinosaurs roamed, I am sincerely grateful and very pleased and happy to praise you for continuing this tradition.

[00:18:06] Whitbridge has always had a strong theater and arts program. Had my first art show displayed in the high school, downstairs, I'm not sure what they're now. Used to be automotive. So I'm glad to see the tradition continuing. Congratulations.

[00:18:22] - Thank you, Ms. Williams, Mr. Jessie. Thank you and congratulations to these exceptional accomplishments. I'd like to also recognize that Michelle Milligan, coordinator for performing arts K through 12, is also here to support our honorees. I'd like to ask all those involved in supporting our honorees, including family members and staff, to please stand in recognition of your support.

[00:18:44] Let's give them a round of applause for any family who might be here. Before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Starting with Ms. Wood, your innovation and dedication to music education has certainly allowed your students to be able to be seen, to be heard, to be challenged, to grow.

[00:19:10] And from everything I've heard here tonight, you are leaving a lasting impact on Woodbridge High School. Congratulations to you on a job well done. Mr. Hallman, your passion and advocacy for theater brings confidence, voice, and joy to your students.

[00:19:25] You are nurturing their talents and they are growing because of your passion and commitment. Congratulations to you. Dr. Abney, your leadership along with Ms. Sullivan, you all are cultivating the kind of environment that allows for the arts and art education and music education to grow and to thrive.

[00:19:45] And that's critically important because when you have amazing educators like you have, if they don't have the leadership that creates the conditions for them to show up and do their best work, it's hard for them to continue to inspire their children. So I wanna commend both of you for being staunch advocates of the arts in ensuring that Woodbridge continues to inspire students to pursue their passion for arts education.

[00:20:08] Congratulations to each and every one of you. We are PWCS proud. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward with a photo with the school board

[00:20:24] and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:22:58] Okay, thank you at this time. We appreciate the public for allowing us to do that and congratulations again to all our honorees. At this time, we'll move on to the adoption of tonight's consent agenda. That will be 11.01.

[00:23:15] Vice Chair Jesse. - I move that Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chair. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I just want the public to be aware under the adoption and consent agenda item.

[00:23:34] We have two new course offerings that'll be listed for the 2026-2027 school year, and that is AP Business with Personal Finance and AP cybersecurity, thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Any further discussion?

[00:23:50] Please vote.

[00:24:05] - Vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions, 12.01. Vice Chair, Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board to approve the adoption of the acknowledgement and recognition as recommended.

[00:24:20] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:24:38] - Vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tradenек, motion passed. - Citizen comment time. Those citizens who've signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:24:56] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you will be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess.

[00:25:12] I will ask that the room be cleared to restore public order. Tonight, we have 17 citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come into the podium and state your name and address for the record. I will actually call up the first five and they can grab the chairs up front if they want to.

[00:25:28] If they don't want to, that's okay, but this is the order for the first five. Sasal McDaniel, Blake Hera, Brittany Robinson, Eileen Devereaux, Ronald Servone, Cecile McDaniel.

[00:25:54] - Good evening, Dr. McDade, Chairman Lateef, and members of the board. My name is Cecily McDaniel. I'm a PWCS parent and PTCO president at Patti Elementary. And my address is on file with the clerk. This is my fourth time speaking during this process. I'd again like to thank Dr. Cartlidge and the planning team for being responsive throughout and incorporating feedback when possible.

[00:26:14] Mr. Wilk, thank you for continuing to listen to your constituents and bringing forward the school board alternative proposal. directly addresses concerns our Forest Park families raised about the original scenario six. Your advocacy made a real difference, thank you. I support the school board alternative proposal and urge the board to approve it tonight. It maintains walkability for established neighborhoods, preserves parent involvement and investment, and was responsive to the majority of feedback when feasible. It keeps more students at their current schools without cascading shifts from school to school to school. And while Covington Harper and Swans Creek are different from PADI, they're both strong schools that will welcome our families well. I know our Patti Panthers will become

[00:26:53] vital members of their new school communities. This boundary change will fundamentally affect all 12 schools across our region. As we move toward implementation, families across the division will need clear, consistent communication about their new assignments. There are still many who don't know that they're being reassigned. And the success of this entire plan depends on the new school in Potomac Shores opening on schedule in 27-28. I'm committed to working constructively with staff and leadership to support our families through this transition.

[00:27:21] Our students are amazing, our communities are strong, and we'll get through this together. Thank you so much for your service and for listening to families throughout this difficult process. - Blake Herra.

[00:27:51] - Good evening. Board members, Chair, and Dr. Binet. My name is Blake Herra and my address is on file. I come tonight to strongly endorse Scenario 6 for the redistricting in Woodbridge area and Potomac Shores number two elementary schools. I speak as a parent with a child at Covington Harbor and as a citizen who has spent considerable time studying these boundary maps and listening to the neighbors across Prince William County.

[00:28:11] Potomac Shores will gain approximately 600 homes before that school opens, and PWCS needs a systematic redistricting process that prevents overcrowding rather than reacting to it. We must plan now to avoid repeating these capacity challenges. Developing a sustainable solution requires studying policy alternatives and budget trade-offs across comparable districts, and I'm convinced we can do better.

[00:28:33] I have found that path. To address this, I strongly recommend adopting a policy similar to and building upon Fairfax County Public Schools Policy 8130. This policy requires the superintendent to

conduct a comprehensive division-wide boundary review at least every five years. Unlike PDFCS Policy 264, which uses an event-driven model, such as opening a new school, Policy 8130 explicitly incorporates multiple factors, including equitable access to programs and facilities, enrollment balance, proximity, and transportation.

[00:29:03] Regularly boundary reviews would directly support Elevate 2030s, commitments to provide enrollment data needed, and successfully implement the newly proposed programs by 2030. Building on this model, I recommend the board amend policy 264 and direct the superintendent to amend regulation 264-1, mandating a five-year boundary view cycle.

[00:29:23] Under this model, schools operating above a defined capacity threshold would automatically trigger redistricting, with a minimum of six months of planning before public release. This removes discretion, ensures continuity across leadership transition, and it limits the ability to postpone based on changing conditions.

[00:29:40] The board received a \$31.6 million transfer from the county revenue surplus in fiscal year 2024. A comprehensive boundary review typically costs between \$200,000 and \$475,000 in the year it was conducted, approximately 0.2% of PWCS's annual budget when adjusted for inflation.

[00:29:58] If the board implements a regular five-year review cycle beginning between 2028 and 2030, the average annual cost would be approximately \$86,000, less than 25 minutes of our operating expenditure. The challenge is not a lack of funding, but a matter of prioritization.

[00:30:13] Dr. McDade, given your professional relationships with Fairfax County leadership, I urge you to leverage those relationships, study the redistricting cycle, and build upon it so PWCS can take the lead. Thank you for your time. - Thank you, Brittany Robinson.

[00:30:44] - Good evening, my name is Brittany Robinson. My address is on file. This is my daughter Rivka. Rivka is autistic, she is gifted, she is disabled, and she won her due process. A hearing officer ordered Prince William County Public Schools to fund Rivka's placement at Linder Academy, including transportation, because the district denied her a free appropriate public education.

[00:31:10] PWCS lost. There was an order they were required to comply, and they did until they didn't. Without an IEP meeting, without consent, without notice, without a prior written notice, I was notified last week that they have decided to cut off Rivka's transportation mid-year without any cause.

[00:31:31] So tonight, Rivka is standing here in front of you, not as a case file, not as a budget line, but as a child who wants access to school, just like every other child here in Prince William County. Here's the part that should make everyone uncomfortable.

[00:31:47] If I stopped transporting my child to school mid-year without cause, the state would call that educational neglect. But when the district does the same thing, by removing the transportation that makes her education accessible, there are no consequences. I am forced to file state complaints or pursue litigation simply to obtain compliance with the law.

[00:32:08] Transportation is a related service. It is not optional. And mid-year changes without cause are destabilizing for any child. For a disabled child like Rivka, they are discriminatory. Let me be honest about what this is. This is retaliation. It happened after my advocate, Lassiter, won in federal court in November and after I won my own due process case.

[00:32:29] And this sends a message from this board's legal counsel and district leadership. Even when families win, even when there is a legal order, the district may still choose not to comply, forcing families like mine into enforcement and litigation simply to obtain what has already been ordered.

[00:32:46] And it quietly undermines Rivka's access to education. And here's what the autism community understands immediately. Rivka is learning, she is thriving, and that is exactly what makes this so dangerous. Because this was not an accident and it was not a mistake. Rivka's transportation was cut as part of a broader legal strategy being pursued in federal court right now, and the harm falls on my daughter Rivka.

[00:33:09] I will not sit back and take this. I'm going to pursue every legal remedy available to me because my love for my daughter is stronger than any retaliation this board is willing to go along with. So for Rivka's sake, I'm asking the public and this board to help tonight.

[00:33:25] Please email the superintendent and the Virginia Department of Education. Ask why PWCS believes it can unilaterally cut court-ordered transportation for a disabled child. ask when Rivka's transportation will be restored so she can attend school this year. Thank you.

[00:33:41] - Thank you. Aileen Devereaux. - Greetings, I'm Aileen Devereaux, the Gainesville District. I've been speaking to you for four years this month, advocating for equity and positive climate and culture, and speaking up against racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and such in our schools.

[00:34:08] Yet, I'm here again because our children, particularly black children, have been failed once again. So much so, a middle schooler had to come and defend his God-given rights of physical and psychological safety because some among us are indifferent, insensitive, or inept to take appropriate deciphered actions.

[00:34:30] And my friends, this is insane. So let me help you out. We don't need adults in any capacity that are not for our children. They need to go and you're gonna help me. So as long as it's an issue for people who look like me to feel safe in school, we all have an issue.

[00:34:49] I'm requesting that the school board, along with district leadership, send a letter to the community condemning racist and such rhetoric. And then we're gonna have a link to the non-discrimination policy that is at the bottom of Prince William County main page. You're gonna expand on those resources, particularly the racial discrimination harassment form, the complaint of bullying form, to say something anonymous report form and such.

[00:35:12] We're gonna explain the relationships and responsibilities between the principals, the APs, the counselors, and the dean of students have in this process. We're going to leverage the parent liaison to be tools and resources to parents that's needed. And if they're not trained for this work, then we're going to train them. And they're going to have a link for the contact info for the people in the district level, such as area superintendents and such, so they can be CC and informed.

[00:35:35] And of course, we're going to include the advancement information, so families have an unbiased and reliable resource to validate this process. Further, I believe we should have a family engagement series to explain relevant regulations and the intersection between the student code of behavior, including consequences so we can understand all the resources and tools available and the webinar should be recorded to be available for future reference.

[00:36:00] Finally, each school should send something, maybe with their principal as well, is talking about the standalone or weekly communication. Therefore, their messages are coming from the highest leadership as well as individual schools. I recognize this doesn't stop people from being racist, no.

[00:36:15] However, it empowers those of us who are decent how to fight back. It creates a greater level of transparency and accountability. And for those in the school district that prefer to do nothing or do very little, they'll have a way to have them to answer for failing to do their jobs, the basic jobs of promoting and educating children.

[00:36:36] Lastly, I will highly and strongly encourage Mrs. Jen Wall and Mrs. Erica Trudnick, Since most of this happens, the nonsense occurs in your district. To surprise us, get involved and help lead the way. Thank you. - Ronald Cervone, remind the public we don't have any clapping, cheering or cheering.

[00:37:00] Ronald Cervone next, then the next five will be Colby Pugmire, Scott Pugmire, Yubo Zhang, Raymond Bell and Julian Purvis. Mr. Cervone. - Good evening, my name is Ronnie Cervone.

[00:37:17] My address is on file. Thank you for having me tonight. This is my fourth time I believe speaking. I'm here to advocate tonight for the county to support adding boys volleyball as an official high school sport as part of the upcoming budget for the follow on school year. For those that haven't heard me say this before, boys volleyball is the fastest growing sport for boys across the nation, according to USA Volleyball, with a 12 and a half percent growth in 2025 and 76% over the past 10 years.

[00:37:45] Locally, Fairfax County introduced boys high school volleyball in the fall of 2024. And Loudoun County recently approved it to begin in fall of 2026, putting us behind our Northern Virginia neighbors. Fairfax County is also now looking to add JV teams vice just varsity boys volleyball.

[00:38:05] The next logical progression beyond that would be for the boys middle school volleyball similar to girls. As an assistant coach at the Battle Volleyball Club, I can tell you that the interest in boys volleyball is so large and growing the club had to establish what we were calling the Battle 2 program.

[00:38:22] It's a developmental program both the fall and the spring for boys to learn volleyball from coaches and interact with other players at their level ahead of deciding to take the expensive and time-intensive jump into travel volleyball because there is no school option. I can also tell you that club volleyball can be quite expensive and may to attract would-be players from playing and getting the social and team experience. It is on the order of thousands of dollars per child for club fees in addition to the hotel and other travel costs. If you have more than one child playing it really can be daunting and likely forces many families to decide what they will or will not do if

[00:39:00] their child were to play. Boys volleyball in school would open the sport up to boys at all economic levels and would also provide new collegiate opportunities to the boys of Prince William County Schools. Over ten division one through division three colleges have added or announced the start of men's volleyball since 2023, including the expansion of conferences such as the Old Dominion Athletic Conference after the Virginia High School League approved boys volleyball in 2024. Unfortunately, my son Roman, a student at Colgan, nor any of his teammates can be here tonight to speak on their own behalf. Our team is currently scrimmaging the No Panic Volleyball

[00:39:40] Club down the street ahead of this weekend's tournament in Pittsburgh. But I can say that the two petitions that were started both by my son and another boy from the club have amassed over a thousand signatures and support from members of the community. There are several. The next two,

volleyball coach and player that are here to support as well. So please take the opportunity and think about boys volleyball. Thank you. Thank you. Colby Pugmire. Good evening. I'm Colby

[00:40:17] Pugmire. I'm here to speak about men's high school volleyball. Some reasons I believe we should have men's high school volleyball is it's a great option for a non-contact sport for athletes that aren't the biggest or the strongest, such as sports like football. Some athletes might not be able to contribute to those teams just because of lack of size. And we could use the same gym, same net, same balls, wouldn't have to spend money on stuff like that. I would add another team

[00:40:54] for the school, more school spirit, for the schools to support. Volleyball is one of the fastest growing sports, as Ronnie said. As someone who plays for the Battle Volleyball Club, there has been multiple new kids each year that cannot participate in the club season because of the prizes, and having a high school volleyball team would give them the opportunity to play volleyball.

[00:41:23] Many students who don't currently play a sport at high schools would have an opportunity to participate if there was a men's volleyball team. And as a junior, rising senior, I would love to be able to play high school volleyball for my senior year to end out my high school career.

[00:41:42] And, yeah, thank you. Thank you. Scott Pugmire. Hello, school board. I'm Scott Pugmire. My address is on file. I live in the same place as Colby.

[00:42:02] I did not attend Gainesville High School, but that's where we are. I just want to advocate for boys' volleyball for a number of reasons, but most importantly, I want to advocate about the urgency for men's volleyball. I think in a climate where things seem difficult, issues seem very, very tough, this is an easy win.

[00:42:23] Let me tell you why boys' volleyball. It's tough to watch kids. I'm a coach. I'm a coach of 18-year-old boys, and it's an incredible thing to watch kids overcome. So for these boys that are out there, they do not have the ability to play on their other teams because, as we all know, in Virginia, if you're not specializing at 10 or 11 years old, your chance of playing on a high school sport are basically zero at that point.

[00:42:53] You could go join the football team and not play. You can go through all the practice and you can go through all those expensive uniforms and all those things. But what are the odds that you're going to play? Roughly zero unless you're out in the world playing. but it's an opportunity for for new players that can come on to a sport now why volleyball volleyball is one of the most unique sports you can possibly have because it's what I call a one-touch sport meaning once a player touches the ball one time they cannot touch the ball again until one of their teammates supports them you won't find a more inclusive sport where teammates have to rely on each other you get three touches on the side of the net and you

[00:43:31] can touch it once before somebody else does it's an amazing way for boys to learn how to communicate and get through the stress. And the second most important thing about it is it's the most inclusive sport. And I'll say that when we're talking about easy wins in the current climate where we live, for volleyball up until age 14 and competitive volleyball, it's actually a co-ed sport.

[00:43:54] And so you'll find boys and girls play together on the same nets right up until like puberty starts to separate, you know, the strength. and the boys game gets a little more physical. But what you'll find across competitive 18-year-old volleyball where I play is an incredible array of people in diverse communities.

[00:44:16] LGBT are open and stars. From here in Prince William County, last year we would have had the opportunity to welcome two of our graduates that have started up in a Division I volleyball program from Gainesville High School and Patriot.

[00:44:32] And I know that we have coaches like me that we're are willing to advocate. I've spoken to Principal Beach, who has told me how easy this is at the school level. We've got the equipment. We have all the facilitating things that we need. It's basically uniform, some gym time, and maybe the transportation.

[00:44:50] It is an absolutely easy win for these boys. We should do it for 2026. There's no excuse not to. Thank you, everybody. - Thank you. Yu Bo Zhang.

[00:45:07] - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My name is Yu Bo Zhang. My address is on file. I'm the parent of two students at Battlefield High School. Today, I'm here to speak about a dangerous great lock occurring every morning at the intersection of Route 15 and graduation drive leading into Battlefield High School.

[00:45:26] This is a long time problem, and I appreciate your continued effort in tackling it. Currently, students and residents coming from Dominion Valley are being trapped by the plug in the intersection because the graduation drive backs up the traffic on Route 15.

[00:45:42] Right-turned drivers turn right and sit in the middle of the crossing, blocking our westbound green light. During these dark winter, cold mornings, we're forcing our least experienced drivers, teenagers, to navigate at high speed, blocked intersections where visibility is low and tempers are high.

[00:46:04] I understand this is work in progress, and wondering beyond the temporary band-aid solutions like cameras, police, and fines. Can we address the root costs? What has been the barrier? Budget? The intersection is blocked because the school internal drop-off loop cannot handle the current volume. Numerous attempts have been made to redesign the internal traffic flow, but we are still having this problem. Tonight, my ask of the school board is twofold. First, I ask that board to prioritize the capital improvement funds especially for internal circulation safety

[00:46:41] infrastructure in battlefield we need to widen the entry reservoir on graduation drive to pull those cars off route 15 faster and keep the intersection clear please also explore other options as adding additional parking lot at end of graduation drive right on the school property and compare the cost of different options.

[00:47:03] Second, I asked the board to authorize a continuation of all those band-aid solutions, such as high visibility of police officer during the rush hour, traffic flow direct support, right turn camera, fines, and to manage the graduation drive flow until the internal road improvements are made.

[00:47:22] We shouldn't wait for a tragedy in the dark to fix a no infrastructure failure. Please make student safety a priority in the upcoming budget cycle. This isn't just one neighborhood. This is accident at this crossway will impact every single battlefield student from every zip code.

[00:47:41] So we need to have a unified approach between the school board, the county police department, VDOT to fix this problem. Thank you. - Thank you. Raymond Bell.

[00:47:57] Raymond Bell. Okay, Julian Purvis. Julian Purvis. Yesenia Lassiter. Yesenia Lassiter.

[00:48:18] - After Ms. Lasseter, the next five will be Megan Feeman, Catherine Mulligan, Elizabeth Pacheco, Sam Zaber, and Ronquisha Terrazas. Yesenia Lasseter.

[00:48:34] - I'm just gonna ask for reasonable accommodations due to my documented disability. I'm a little slow tonight. Wade Anderson, I'm sure you have a copy of my disability, so I might need some extra time to get through what I need to get through.

[00:48:57] - Ms. Lasseter, those accommodations to be arranged in advance all right my name is yesenia laister and i'm here tonight not just as a parent but as someone who spent years watching the school system bail my children and many others as well you just heard from rifka's mom i'm here to speak about something much bigger than one case one child or one dispute i'm here to ask this board who is actually running the school system because what i have experienced and what i've seen in recent records is deeply troubling educational decisions are not being driven by educators iep teams or the needs of children

[00:49:34] they are being driven by lawyers and litigation strategy this is dangerous under basic principles of good governance attorneys are supposed to advise this division they are not supposed to decide they are not supposed to control placements they are not supposed to determine what the school system will or will not offer a child and they are certainly not supposed to override professional medical providers and independent experts when those experts identify what a child needs in order to receive FAPE. Yet what I'm seeing again and again is a system where decisions are made

[00:50:08] based on litigation risk instead of answering one simple question: what does this child need to receive FAPE? The current PWCS posture is not what IDEA demands, it's not what ethical governance looks like, and it's not what you were elected or appointed to oversee. When lawyers run special education, children's needs become secondary to risk management, families lose faith because IEP meetings become performances instead of real discussions, and the system becomes more litigious, more defensive, and more dysfunctional, and our taxpayers are paying that cost. This brings me to my

[00:50:44] next question. Are you really confused on the law on Judge Austin's order? Because in my opinion, your claim does not hold up. As recently as November 21st, this division were formally put on notice by vo and i quote federal and state regulations are clear and unambiguous and due process decisions the child shall remain in the current educational placement unless the parents of the child and local education agency agree otherwise and if the decision of a special education hearing officer agrees with this child's parents that a child of placement that a change of placement is appropriate that placement

[00:51:23] "shall be treated as an agreement "between the local educational agency and the parents." So where is the confusion? Your hired outside counsel, Matt Green, also stated in a publicly filed Powhatan County Circuit Court document, and I quote, "In Virginia, a school division cannot implement an IEP "without parental consent," end quote.

[00:51:45] So I'm asking, where is the confusion? If VDOE has told you what the law requires and your own counsel has publicly acknowledged correctly what the law requires. Why are you wasting taxpayer dollars on fixatiously litigating already settled law?

[00:52:02] You're gonna cut me off. - Sorry, I hit the wrong button. What do I do? How do I get that unmuted? Is it working now? Okay.

[00:52:20] Okay. Sorry about that. We will, in advance next time, take up the accommodations. Megan Feeman. - Good evening.

[00:52:36] My name is Megan Feeman. My address is on file. I have been a parent at Patti Elementary School for the past seven years, and I've participated in all of the activities pertaining to the elementary school redistricting process. Thank you to the school board members for the opportunity to speak. Thank you to the redistricting committee for all of your work on this project, and a very special thanks to school board member, Justin Wilk, who tirelessly works for our community, seems to be at more events than humanly possible, and authentically supports his entire constituency.

[00:53:06] Thank you. I would like to bring to your attention some concerns that I have as an active parent during this process. At times, this process felt rushed, lacked meaningful community engagement, and created confusion that undermined transparency and trust. Transparency has been a consistent concern.

[00:53:22] The website was difficult to navigate for many of our families, especially on a mobile device. Data tables on the redistricting website lacked clear sourcing, and without being thoroughly involved, it is unclear who created the scenarios, who was consulted, and how decisions were made. At both town halls, the slide identifying who was part of the committee was passed over quickly, and no introductions were made.

[00:53:42] It was unclear whether the individuals running the town hall were Prince William County school employees or contractors, leaving confusion about accountability. I'm appreciative that at the end of the process, it did seem as though many of the points that were made in the town halls were taken into consideration and met with alternative options.

[00:54:00] However, I did find it concerning that the moderator came across as very dismissive and out of touch. The presence of the moderator, who we later became aware was hired as a third party to conduct the town halls, further impacted the trust of the community. Throughout the sessions, often appear dismissive of participants' concerns, including those of families who require translation services.

[00:54:19] At this time, I do support the passing of the school board alternative proposal. I also urge the board and the redistricting committee to take into account the experience of the many families who are impacted by these big decisions and to work towards a more meaningfully engaging and transparent path to meet the needs of our students, our school communities, and our families.

[00:54:39] Thank you. - Catherine Mulligan. - Good evening, and thank you for giving us space to share our concerns my name is Katherine Mulligan this is my 16th year teaching high school math i co-run the staff voice committee at woodbridge high and i'm also a parent of three pwcs students tonight i'm speaking as a teacher about the transition to quality points back in june the board voted to move to quality points to improve fairness consistency and transparency

[00:55:13] yet the rollout we experienced in january did the exact opposite on january 9th all high school teachers were instructed to change our gradebook settings and turn off rounding. In doing so, already printed first quarter grades were now wrong. We then had to manually correct our first quarter grades. A couple weeks later, we were then informed that each school could independently decide whether to round or not to round second quarter grades. That's a site-based decision and it directly changes students' grades. Having that be a site-based decision is not fair. It is not equitable and it is not transparent. Administrators have been asking for

[00:55:53] clarification since October and did not receive timely answers. This policy change was approved in June. It should have been ready in August. Implementing a new grading system mid-year

violates our syllabus and has caused significant disruption. Now the math. Well the math behind the system is wrong and it has real consequences. Under the old system an 89 and an 86 average to an 87.5 which is a B+. Under quality points, those same scores convert to a 3.4 and a 3.0, averaging to a 3.2,

[00:56:28] which is a B. That student now has lost the B plus they earned. Meanwhile, a student with a 50 and a 60 used to average to a 55, which is an F. Now those scores convert to a 0 and a 1.0, averaging to a 0.5, which is a passing score. We teachers want students to succeed, but not through grade inflation or distortions of performance.

[00:56:53] In fact, a student could earn just a 77% in the first quarter, zeros for the rest of the year, and still receive passing grade. How does this system improve fairness, consistency, and transparency when it lowers grades for some students while inflating them for others?

[00:57:10] How does it prepare students for a thriving future if we are simply passing them through? Please stop using teachers as pawns in policy rollouts that are not ready yet. please stop inflating and deflating student grains. The math is wrong, fix it. Return to percentages, and if you choose to revisit quality points, do so next year, after all questions have been answered and the system is truly ready.

[00:57:33] Or, at minimum, convert only the final year-end percentage to a quality point. Thank you. - Elizabeth Pacheco. - Good evening, members of the school board, Dr. McDade and community members.

[00:57:51] Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Elizabeth Pacheco, and I'm a math teacher at Woodbridge High School, as well as a parent to three fantastic Prince William County Schools students. I'm here to raise a concern about our current grading policy, specifically the practice of calculating quarterly grades using percentages and then converting those grades into quality points for report cards.

[00:58:12] While each system may function on its own, using both together has led to outcomes that are inconsistent, confusing, and inequitable for students. I want to be very clear, the example I'm about to share is not hypothetical. These are real students in my classroom and these are the actual grades that will appear on the report cards that are to be sent home very soon.

[00:58:31] Student A earned a 78% in quarter one and a 78% in quarter two. When averaged, that results in a 78%. When those quarterly grades are converted into quality points then averaged, student A will receive a C plus on their report card.

[00:58:46] Now let's look at student B, who is in the same course with the same teacher. Student B earned an 83% in quarter one and a 73% in quarter two. This also averages to a 78%. Yet because of how quality points are assigned and calculated, student B will receive a B on their report card.

[00:59:06] These two students earned the same exact final percentage. They demonstrated the same level of achievement, and yet they will report it as having different levels of performance. I wanna pause there and ask a simple question. How is that fair? The two students earning the exact same percentage in the same course with the same teacher end up with different final grades.

[00:59:26] For students and families, the system is confusing. For teachers, it undermines the accuracy of the grades we assign. And for colleges, scholarships, and future opportunities, it sends mixed and misleading messages about student performance. Grades should communicate learning clearly and consistently.

[00:59:43] When systems produce student, excuse me, when systems produce different outcomes for identical achievement, they fail in that purpose. I urge the school board to reconsider their policy and find one that ensures equal performance leads to equal outcomes.

[00:59:59] Our students deserve a grading policy that is fair, understandable, and worthy of their hard work. Thank you for your time and commitment to a fair education. - Sam Zaber, Sam Zaber.

[01:00:20] Next up, Ronkisha Terrazas. - Good evening, everyone. I'm good evening board members, Chair Lateef and Dr. McDade.

[01:00:35] Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am Ronkisha Terrazas, my address is on file. I am the parent of a middle school student at Beville Middle School, and I will start with my ask.

[01:00:52] Why are we not utilizing virtual remote learning across the county while we have ice/snow conditions on our streets, particularly on our sidewalks? I was surprised to discover this week that we do not have a Prince William Countywide ordinance mandating homeowners to shovel the snow on their sidewalks and in my neighborhood and what I have seen near Beville Middle School there are several sidewalk sections that are covered in hard snow. Over the last two days with

[01:01:28] schools reopened we have witnessed children walking in the streets I'm assuming that's most likely to avoid walking on snowed sidewalks and we've We've seen children struggling, taking risks near school grounds, maneuvering on hard snow.

[01:01:43] I have about three examples, but due to time I won't go into those details. I even had my own child was walking on top of snow on an un-shoveled sidewalk and she slipped. Plus, the traffic over the last two days of people driving their kids to school appears to have doubled this week, taking much longer time for those drop-offs.

[01:02:05] And I assume that this increased traffic is due to parents dropping off their kids instead of having them walk in the conditions on the roads. When we have the capability for virtual learning, why are we taking any safety risks for our kids or causing delays in their education with a week of closures?

[01:02:28] We made it with long-term virtual learning during COVID. So if we could do that during COVID, why can't we do short-term virtual options during snowstorms? I know there are relevant concerns that most children need in-person versus virtual learning, but when it is a weather-related event, virtual learning options would be a short-lived options only.

[01:02:50] Another argument against virtual learning is that some parents and children could have difficulty navigating and accessing computers from their home. however the rules should be for the majority and that we make exceptions for minority situations and i assume i don't know the facts but i would assume that majority of prince william student households have access and ability for computer learning at home either with their own personal computers or with the ipads and laptops that the school assigns to students to be fair the two-hour delay notice that went out this week did state that if you feel conditions are

[01:03:29] not safe, you can keep. Thank you, Mr. Razas. Appreciate it. Thank you. Ken Ansari. All right. Thank you so much for having me again. Super Nintendo McDade. I was actually going to say, I guess this is going to be in conflict of what was just said, but I was really grateful that you shut the school down for just a week and then you had two hour delays because it is really cold at 5:30 and 6 o'clock in the morning

when the kids are going out there, but I guess it's also dangerous. Maybe we should issue ice skates. I'm just kidding. It's

[01:04:06] just a joke. But I wanted to come out here and I told myself at the beginning the school year i was like henna don't forget february's black history month and it's not i'm not going to say i forgot but it just so many things just kept coming up that i kept forgetting so but i saw another parent come in and they brought props so i thought i would bring props but um i'm going to get to that in a second so when i ran for office in 2023 when we all ran for office in 2023 and i know i talk about this too much um i did a monday morning quarterback after i lost i'm i don't know if you do monday morning quarterbacks after you win you can tell me i don't don't know maybe I'll maybe I'll find out one day probably not but anyway so I try to figure out what could I have done differently and besides becoming independently wealthy there aren't a lot of things you can do really to change

[01:04:46] that but one of the things I felt I was really deficient in was knowing about a lot of world events so I started to read a lot and one of the books that I read about racism was called medical apartheid which actually goes hand-in-hand with this going into the black disability politics I'm looking at the TV and this one is a really interesting read and I know that a lot of the stuff we probably don't talk about in schools, and that's why I'm highlighting it.

[01:05:07] The first part of this book talks about slavery and how egregious it was. And I know we have some people that have been proposing for that Turning Point USA Club, and I know I keep beating this drum, but these are the reasons that we need to not even entertain those notions, because books like this will teach you what actually happened in that time period, and none of it was good.

[01:05:24] And it's another one of those books that I've read where I kept reading in the beginning, I thought, oh, it can't be worse, it can't get worse, and it kept getting worse. And this goes all the way into the present day, And my favorite, I don't know if I'd call it my favorite, but my most memorable story from this was there was a low-income housing subdivision that, and I'm paraphrasing 'cause I read this like two years ago, they had some sort of like bug catching implements that were put out in their area, and they thought that it was there to help them, but it wasn't, it was the government testing bugs to see what they could infect people with biomedically, and then they exported that to Vietnam.

[01:05:58] It's fantastic, so I definitely highly recommend that. If there are any kids watching at home, You wanna get some SAT words in? There you go, thank you. - Thank you, and that concludes citizen comment time for this evening, moving on to 14.01, our strategic plan.

[01:06:16] Before we proceed with the vote and the motion on this, I would like to first invite Dr. McDade to say a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I wanna thank our PWCS community for their review and feedback on Elevate 2030 strategic plan.

[01:06:34] Since January, we've received hundreds of comments the plan that we will leverage to support our planning and implementation efforts of the many strategies we have identified over the next four years. Additionally, I would like to thank our school board members for your time and dedication and commitment. You've provided a thoughtful review of Elevate 2030 and your valuable feedback through this process and with our final draft ensures that we are meeting the needs and aspirations of our students, their families, and the PWCS community at large.

[01:07:04] I do want to highlight that given feedback received from school board members, we are updating the plan to include the additional student competition expansion, so that will be added to the final document to include National History Day competition for all high schools and middle schools, academic decathlon debate and speech as well, so that all of our high school students will have access to this level of competition and programming.

[01:07:31] Dr. Lasif, we are available to address any additional questions from the school board prior to the vote on 2030 strategic plan. Also, I wanna state we did receive feedback on things like implementation and execution on the plan, which do not typically show up in the actual document itself but we will be, after the board takes this matter up for vote, we will be providing the board with a comprehensive review of how some of the goals will be monitored and how we'll be using our dashboards and continuous improvement process for that.

[01:08:07] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'll ask Vice Chair Jesse to read the motion and then we'll have a discussion. Mr. Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the Elevate 2030 strategic plan as presented.

[01:08:23] - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - I saw Blake go first, sorry. Mr. Blake seconds the motion. Okay, at this time, we'll have a discussion. Questions, thoughts, concerns?

[01:08:39] So I'll start first. First off, I want to thank you, Dr. McDade. I want to thank the staff. I want to thank the thousands of folks that returned their surveys. I want to thank the staff, the community organizations, elected officials, and all the folks who've weighed in since really November, October, as we started to build this strategic plan out.

[01:08:59] I truly appreciate all of those efforts. Very quickly, Dr. McDade, there's a lot of great things in here, and I'll have a little bit to say on that before I final vote, but a quick question. I just really was fascinated by the return on investment methodology and the work that you're gonna implement to help really oversee what I've been most impressed with over the last five years is that we've had a strong fidelity to spending towards the goals set out in our strategic plan.

[01:09:28] And I believe that has been the key driver for the success of the strategic plan was that fidelity. What I'm really interested in is this new proposal later in the document on this ROI methodology. Can you just speak to that for a couple seconds?

[01:09:44] - Yes, and I'll certainly, I'll have Mr. Youssef, if you want to put a finer point on anything that I have to say here. But essentially, and I think the best way to understand this is, is that every single year of Vision 2025 and moving forward in Elevate 2030, what we've tried to do with continuous improvements is ensure that we're engaging in what we call, from a research side of the start, stop, continue process where we're looking at our strategic investments to determine whether or not we need to continue in those investments or it's time for those to stop to pick up new investments.

[01:10:20] So the goal would be that year over year, new investments can be funded with existing dollars from goals that we've already met or programs that we are discontinuing to fund.

[01:10:35] And Shaquille, if you want to add anything to that. - Just to add, in terms of a methodology, what we're looking at, and this is not just typical ROI we hear in markets, in terms of investments, et cetera. It's also looking at both the qualitative aspects of programs, the cost of it, and coming up with a measure that tells us what success we've had.

[01:11:00] And again, being able to repurpose funds to do stops and new starts. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. I mean, I think, so, you know, when you first came, you started this Start/Stop/Continue program, and really, not just looking at the financial review of a program, but it's actually, did the program do what it said it did?

[01:11:18] And did it do it in a high-quality way? And I think for the first time, the school division five years ago really started looking at everything we were doing. And we looked at it in the mirror, and we looked at it with complete honesty and fidelity, and I truly appreciate it, and I think, you know, when you look at the cost of the last strategic plan and everything we put into it, the return on investment has been very strong.

[01:11:40] I think part of it has to do with that sort of commitment. So I would urge the public to please take a look at this. I think it's a very strong aspect of the strategic plan that provides the public to transparency and the commitment from this board and the community that we will really do our best to oversee all of the improvement projects we're here to do and to make sure we're getting the most out of what we're investing your tax dollars on.

[01:12:06] And I think that's really important, so I appreciate that. Number two, Dr. McDade, I thought that the added section on bullying and bullying prevention and the continued efforts and expanded efforts on that in strategic plan, I think will be welcome to a lot of folks in our community.

[01:12:23] And so I appreciate that, and that was new. And then obviously the commitment to universal pre-K, which is a program that would ensure all four-year-olds across this county, regardless of socioeconomic status, will have access to a pre-K full day program within the next four years.

[01:12:43] We're aiming to roll that out, build that out over four years. And I think that's incredible. And I think that, you know, again, there's a lot in there that provides strong fiscal management, strong oversight, and making sure that we really abide by this, I think will help us get to a really, really accomplish all the goals.

[01:13:05] And these goals I think are very ambitious. And look, if we don't hit some of those goals, that's the way it should be because, you know, if you hit them all, then we set it up too easily. So thank you. Any other comments? I think Ms. Wall, yeah.

[01:13:21] - Yeah, I'll go next. I did a comprehensive read of the strategic plan as Dr. McDade knows and sent a lot of questions in and I appreciate the answers. and the back and forth and the commitment to give us more information about, you know, how we're gonna do this in the future.

[01:13:39] And I recognize that's separate from the goals and the strategic plan, but I just wanted to highlight overall, I think the plan is incredibly ambitious, thoughtful, and well aligned with the division stated priorities and values. And I appreciate the clarity, the background section, each of the four commitments, the tone and structure of the entire document.

[01:14:04] I do think it really does lean into a compelling vision of student learning, particularly through its emphasis on literacy, numeracy, writing instruction, science, acceleration, and all of those elements that are going to really help our students reach and grow and engage.

[01:14:25] And I know that's one of the driving factors Because we want to create a division where engagement is offered to everybody. And I think that it's very ambitious and it's going to do that. But it

doesn't just focus on academics. It also addresses the career and technical education side of it, because we know the job markets are changing and those certifications and those work-based experiences are really important and will give our graduates an edge as they head out into the workforce or they pursue even higher degrees.

[01:14:56] those pathways, those work-based learning opportunities, the STEM and AI related experiences. Those are all really important and very visionary, and I really appreciate that. I wanted to highlight something that people might not know about, but the plan also focuses on educator collaboration and professional learning, mentoring and innovation among our educators, which I think is fabulous.

[01:15:18] And I'm really excited about seeing the goals met that will allow teachers and leaders to to share best practices and earn recognition through micro-credentialing and badging and other things like that. I think that's gonna be excellent for the development of our staff.

[01:15:35] And we'll give people an opportunity to really shine. I do appreciate the emphasis on the community, the community partnerships, the mentors, and other things like that. And I expressed some of my feedback for creating a good way for evaluating the quality of our mentors and making sure that the relationship between students and mentors has safeguards around it as we invite more and more individuals outside of our school community to interact with our students.

[01:16:05] But in conclusion, I think this is a really forward-looking, comprehensive plan grounded in best practices. I'm very excited about it. And this does have the potential to significantly strengthen student outcomes and community trust and educator support.

[01:16:22] So I don't, I've had a lot of questions answered already and I appreciate staff who took all the time to answer my questions. And I feel confident that this plan will move us forward for the next four or five years.

[01:16:39] So I don't have any other questions. - Thank you, thank you, Mr. Wall. And I don't mean to rush anyone. This is the board's most important responsibility outside of picking a superintendent, oversight of the division. Our strategic plan is among the important aspects of the work we were elected to do.

[01:16:58] So please take your time. I'll go to Ms. Williams and then Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's been very hard for me to contain my excitement with the round two of our strategic plan process. For me, it has always, the most exciting part has consistently been the capturing of all voices who show up to participate.

[01:17:22] It has been a process and experience, unlike I think our school division has done prior to your administration, Superintendent McDade, and I am especially grateful for that, living in a district that does not have a unified voice, and to really see and hear the reflections from my constituents in our strategic plan, not only the previous one, but the one that we are currently voting on, makes a difference.

[01:17:51] I feel that as a result of our last strategic plan, because it was implemented and our community believed in it so much, the division from the top down, from our schools and our families from the bottom up, you can tell the difference that it made in our community.

[01:18:08] I mean, we are now the best community moved to for public schools. We have consistently shown our own county government the direction to go into when it comes to environmental concerns and

pretty much anything.

[01:18:24] I spent some of my summer teasing my Bordeaux County Supervisor counterpart about how we employ more of Prince William County residents and also how we are their major competition for summer employment for youth. Growing up in this county, those were not things that I thought would ever occur and especially not at the rate to which they have.

[01:18:45] I am excited about this current plan because I see it as a continuation of the first strategic plan. One of the things I say to my constituents the most is, we are very large, so in writing a large organization like this, it's similar to like, you couldn't pull up the Titanic from one end and think everything's gonna be fine.

[01:19:02] It takes a while, but the proof is right here, right now. And I do think that this current strategic plan is innovative. It is mindful of where we are and where we should be going, the direction that we're going.

[01:19:19] I think it captures as much as we possibly can the rate to which education is moving fast and forward and inclusive of technology. One of my greatest highlights is the use of technology and the accessibility for all of our students.

[01:19:36] I know I'm gonna tease our chairman for a minute who hates our virtual learning from traumatic pandemic times, but I know from my district, the access to technology was a game changer and it leveled what my students were able to do and it showed with their SOL scores.

[01:19:53] The family and teacher education section is so important. So many of our students are responsible for guiding their family members through our division. And having the opportunity for them both to be educated at the same time reduces that burden and brings pride to a family.

[01:20:11] The other thing that I am so excited about is our continuation with robotics. We had our Weber chair earlier talking about arts in theater and music, and how it contributes to a well-rounded student, so does robotics. It provides all of those same things, and one of the things that I've learned as a robotics coach and parent is, often throughout this country, the only students who have access to robotics are elite students, and this will be a game changer for all of our students.

[01:20:40] Robotics provides the skills that we know employers around us are asking for our students to have when they graduate, and it's one of those things that it teaches you how to fail and teaches you how to work as a team, but it also teaches our students to stay current with technology and to be creative.

[01:21:00] The last thing that I wanna highlight, 'cause I could be here all night, I'm very excited. Well, that's two things. One, the profile of a graduate. It started with the last strategic plan, it continues on. I really hope that our families take time to read that, know that it is accessible to them, and utilize that tool that shows up in their parent view or student view to help them navigate our school system.

[01:21:26] And then the last thing, I just want to say a special thank you to Dr. McDade and her team because for years I had asked for students to be recognized as business owners. And it's so important. In today's modern times, I think a lot of us who are adults see Instagram businesses or things advertised and it reminds us of when we had paper routes or we had these outside shoveling snow.

[01:21:47] For many of these students, this is their source of income and it also helps support their families and it is a real business. Providing the framework for our students to be successful in that is

outstanding and it's being taken seriously and it gives our students autonomy while they are in our educational system and it provides a platform for them to come back and be mentors to our current students, which I know is successful.

[01:22:13] I'm a mother of a CTE graduate who is a private chef who was invited back to his high school to talk about his journey. Children do what they see. This strategic plan provides an opportunity for them to see more than what just happens in their household, to experience it, to try it in an equitable fashion.

[01:22:35] And I'm so excited and honored and privileged to be a part of this. And I am very excited to vote yes on this strategic plan. I encourage all of our community, whether you have students in school or not, to read it and know that there is a place for you in our school division, thank you.

[01:22:56] - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good evening everyone. And before I start on my written remarks, I just wanna thank Dr. McDade and her team for this strategic plan. It's a wonderful, ambitious, like everybody's saying, and I think it's gonna be a game changer and that we're gonna lead the way and be an example of a blueprint, to this aid for the rest of the nation.

[01:23:23] But at its core, this plan reflects a simple truth. Prince William County Schools is a system, and systems only work when they are coherent, and we are a business. But our business just happens to be education, and like any strong organization, success depends on alignment between vision, people, resources, and execution.

[01:23:44] Elevate 2030 does not chase the issue of the moment. It builds on a long-term framework that connects early learning, academic rigor, student wellness, workforce readiness, and operational excellence into one coordinated strategy that matters.

[01:24:01] I support this plan because it's evidence-based. The expansion of universal pre-K, for example, is grounded in research, including the 20-year, 20-year longitudinal study that Georgetown University did showing students who attend high-quality pre-K are less likely to fail courses, be chronically absent, more likely to take advanced coursework, more likely to graduate on time, ultimately achieving stronger life outcomes.

[01:24:31] Front-loading opportunity works, and this plan reflects that reality. I support this plan because it understands that students cannot learn if their basic needs are unmet. The inclusion of additional food pantries, school-based health clinics, and wraparound services is not an add-on, it's foundational.

[01:24:49] Strong learning happens in strong environments. I also support this plan because it prepares students for the future with intention. By 2030, every high school offering a pathway in statistics and data analysis is a powerful commitment.

[01:25:07] As someone with a background in research, and yeah, my last statistic course I think I took was like 800 level, maybe, I don't know. But I know that critical data literacy is for college, career in civic life, and this is about equipping students with the tools to think critically and navigate in this complex world.

[01:25:29] This plan emphasizes the plan's emphasis on emerging technology, including AR and VR, AI and advanced STEM opportunities respect responsible innovation, not hype, coupled with designated space that we are gonna put for the robotics site.

[01:25:49] Ms. Williams mentioned earlier, for land, air, and sea robotics competitions, I think that's big, expanded CTE programs, and a strengthened mentor network also. Elevate 2030 connects learning to real

world application.

[01:26:05] I'm also encouraged by the focus on inclusion and belonging. Increased awareness on support for students affected by dyslexia, expanded dual language immersion, and the growing number of students earning the syllabi literacy, which signals academic achievement, cultural competence, and workforce readiness.

[01:26:25] And just as important, Elevate 2030 invests in the people who make schools work. The human capital framework recognizes that recruiting, retaining, and developing talent is essential to student success. Success in planning, knowledge transfer, housing support, and professional growth are not luxuries, they are necessities.

[01:26:46] And finally, I support this plan because it's honest. It acknowledges challenges, like our chair said, Substance abuse use, bullying, and critical transition points for students, especially rising sixth and ninth graders are so important.

[01:27:02] And it commits to prevention, intervention, and engagement rather than avoidance. Elevate 2030 is ambitious, but it is also achievable. It raises expectations while providing the support needed to meet them.

[01:27:18] It gives this division a clear direction and shared responsibility for outcomes. For those reasons, I'm proud to support this plan and we'll be voting yes tonight. Thank you.

[01:27:34] - Next up, Mr. Wilk. - Thank you. I'm gonna, the strategic plan is very robust. So I'm gonna focus on learning and achievement for all, especially 'cause I really appreciated some of those areas.

[01:27:49] And I was wondering at the right opportunity to say this tonight, but with learning and achievement for all, I definitely wanna thank our central office, Dr. McDade, your staff. And I wanna thank all the personnel involved in composing this, drafting this, developing this document.

[01:28:05] I also wanna say learning and achievement for all would not be possible without our school-based administrators, our teachers, our autism aides, our nurses, our classified staff, our custodians. Learning and achievement for all was only able to get started and accomplished this week because of the Herculean efforts of our custodial, our facilities, every one of those people and the amount of hours that they put in, the overtime, the engagement of shoveling those lovely sidewalks that we're talking about that are on our property, those helping build paths for students

[01:28:43] to get to their accessible classrooms, salting anything, the parking lots. They were out here at all hours of the night. I have countless stories in my buildings themselves of people staying out late or people coming in early to better support and get these kids to school.

[01:29:04] Our bus drivers are the ones who are navigating these roads as best as possible with what we have been left with with VDOT. So we're doing the best that we can. And again, this effort that was undertaken by Mr. Bach and his team and everyone else has just been phenomenal.

[01:29:24] So thank you, I was like, when do I say that tonight? I guess it could have been board matters, but why not now? So with learning and achievement for all, what I appreciate most about it is the idea that no student learns the same.

[01:29:40] And although students might have similar strengths, whether it's discovered through Gallup or whatever type of program you wanna find, they're all different. Every student is different. And this

learning and achievement for all pathway plan gives every student whatever opportunity they might desire based off their interests and talents and goals.

[01:30:02] And by expanding these programs that we're doing, not just broadly, but within each of our buildings, I think it does have the opportunity to engage those students and connect them with future careers and pathways and whatever they desire to go off to.

[01:30:19] So that was a big thing that hit me with the overall theme of this category. Some specific areas, of course, strong career and technical education with credentials for work-based learning, expanding programs tied to high demand careers. If you look at the record, I've spent 10 years on this board advocating for the expansion of these programs.

[01:30:43] You know, when I first got on the board, I was really instrumental in helping engage, my goodness, Unity Reed High School with the IBEW for an expansion of the electrical apprenticeship program that started and really expanded back then.

[01:31:01] There's no secret that I definitely have a desire to see a development of a vet tech program because I do believe this is a desired career with plenty of opportunities and a future shortage. So I'd like to see obviously that as part of it as well.

[01:31:17] Arts education as a core component to student success. This is personal to me 'cause my own life, I participated in the arts as a student and I am married to a theater teacher. I love attending our choral concerts, our band, our orchestra performances, theater productions, the art shows, and I love the idea that this plan proposes expanding all of these in each of the buildings, in each of the buildings really kind of formulating and ensuring that every theater department has the resources that they need to be world class.

[01:31:53] So I'm very excited about that and I'm thrilled to see where that is going by 2030 because that is something I've been pushing for. I realize with arts and stuff like that, with the newer buildings, you're never gonna always be able to fully replicate what we're existing with, with renovations, but there is definitely more to be done.

[01:32:11] I could put some personal plugs in for my two buildings, but I'll just leave it broad right now. Early literacy and writing, math for students to start strong, of course, universal pre-K. I believe in the importance of early literacy because I believe writing has the power to open doors for every child.

[01:32:30] It's important to make sure every student can read and write to express themselves, to be fully engaged citizens in our society. And going back to that personal learning pathways and reflecting on different strengths, at the end of the day, if you think about all this, it comes down to equity and providing every student those opportunities that are available throughout the county.

[01:32:53] They shouldn't necessarily have to transport kids to a different building so that they get access to those programs. I love our specialty programs. I obviously believe in continuing them to a capacity, but I believe in many ways it's important to keep your base students within your schools.

[01:33:10] And by offering and ensuring that we have an IT program, not just at Forest Park, but at Potomac, at Freedom, Garfield, go down the list. I think this will be better for the schools in the end, not only just retaining their populations, but providing more opportunities for their student populations instead of having to transfer them and move them to different buildings.

[01:33:32] So, I work closely with the state of Ohio in my job in their education system. It's something that sticks out to me was the analogy from a state leader, the idea that equity is not that every kid gets a pair of shoes, equity is that every kid gets a pair of shoes that fits.

[01:33:53] So, I'll leave it at that, thank you. - Who wants to go next? To my left, not ideologically, positionally. Erica Trenak. - Ha ha ha. - Wow. - So, it appears that all of my colleagues wanted to do their own Elevate 2030 rendition, and I'm just gonna say nobody does it like McDade.

[01:34:17] She did a phenomenal job presenting this, and she really highlighted all of this, And we have heard this 12 and a half times at this point and commented, sent our questions in, also let the public know. But because my colleagues did it, I'll do my own rendition, but it will be much shorter.

[01:34:36] And just highlighting once again, thanks to Dr. McDade, I really think you just did a phenomenal job with this. Presenting to her team, everybody that put in the effort, all of you for still being here as well tonight. We did send in a lot of feedback in our questions.

[01:34:53] I love the CTE program, it's no secret. Dr. McDade and I talk about that probably more than she wants with me on a regular basis for the different ideas and visions and things I see with this program.

[01:35:08] And I also really like the twice exceptional supports that are going in for our kids that are gifted and have a disability. I just think that's so important. And the dual enrollment as well. I just, you know, you and I talk about that as well.

[01:35:24] and the kids and their futures and that being important, especially for kids that hit a certain point and then they don't have any more school to take and they need credits and things and expanding that program. The work-based learning and the SPARC investments, I just think that there's so much goodness in this.

[01:35:43] And if you have a chance to read through it and look at it, I think there's gonna be things that each person finds that they're gonna love in this plan. So thank you again for your hard work and thank you to everybody else that's here, yeah. - Mr. or Mrs. Zargarpur.

[01:35:58] - It is Ms. Zargarpur, yes, thank you. I'm not gonna do my own rendition of this plan. I just wanna say that one of the things that Dr. McDade has always said is we are a school system and we are here for the education of our students.

[01:36:16] Unfortunately, when society fails to provide safety nets in so many ways, schools are forced to take up the slack. And in this plan, she's gone ahead and done it anyway with food pantries in our schools. And that can't happen without community partnerships.

[01:36:32] So I'm grateful for the community that helps this plan come forward. We're gonna have the health clinics that are gonna be so important. I know there's a lot of need out there. So those are like just things that we shouldn't have to consider and we are able to do.

[01:36:50] Obviously the pre-K, the universal pre-K is gonna be very important. The only thing I want to just, everyone else is real excited about AI. I'm probably the only one who pays for my AI because I do dabble with it.

[01:37:05] But I am concerned that we are not going to, we need to make sure that our learning is not outsourced to AI. We need to make sure that it's a tool, not a something, yes, that we don't replace critical thinking skills in our adults and our students.

[01:37:24] know it's fun to make little cartoons of ourselves or be like what if blah blah blah but for real I that is one of my bigger concerns I want to make sure that we use it as a tool we really work on the the ethics behind it we have to also recognize that there are people in our community who are going to be like it wastes energy it wastes water they're concerned about those resources there are people who are concerned about the intellectual property that was stolen to create these learning models so I worry about that because while I do use AI and I can tell you there are great research tools out there they're not cheating

[01:38:02] what they do is they crawl the web they go into your resources and they and they can tell you exactly what articles belong to wherever but and that's great for somebody who can already critically think through them it's just helping me do my work faster but I don't know if our kids are ready for that yet so that's my big worry and I just threw it out there for all of you to fix it so I am excited to vote for this there are so many great things in here and in particular for our teachers we have the micro credentialing we have the pathways that will can provide other opportunities I am a big fan of looking

[01:38:39] at how our teachers who have been around for a little bit can mentor our newer teachers and find ways to use their knowledge and experience to make things better for for everyone so thank you for thinking of absolutely everything I think there might be a kitchen sink in the in the appendix of this project so there's a bunch of them for the pre-k classrooms mr. Jesse yeah I do think we have a great plan I had enough to talk to dr. McDade one of my major concerns with the plan is and I support pre-k I think it's very necessary I'm this

[01:39:15] concern that we have the facilities and to house the students. I don't want our elementary schools in particular to be overcrowded because they don't have enough space because they added the pre-k to it so and Dr. McDade is working on making sure that doesn't happen so I appreciate that. The other thing I would want to see and is beginning to see is the drive towards looking at our SOLs

[01:39:49] and how our schools are doing impacting that and the impact. So this year Dr. McDade did add the advanced placement for the high school students are going to be part of the SOL I mean part of the strategic plan and I appreciate that and I think something like that we need to know and hopefully every year we have have more and more students that advance placement in the SOLs as graduating from the schools, which is a monitor of how well we're doing.

[01:40:25] Thank you, Dr. McVeigh, for everything that you do. I think it's a wonderful plan, and I look forward to seeing other things happen. Thank you. - I want to ask the most important person on this board, and that's Karina Grover, our student, for which this plan is dedicated to improving the lives of.

[01:40:47] Karina, please give us your comments on our strategic plan. - Wow, you're right. I mean, don't let me take your seat, okay? So I just wanna, I'll make this short because we have time, no time.

[01:41:04] I just wanna thank you for coming to our Senate meetings, always. If you don't know what the student Senate is, it's around two people from every high school in the county and with such a diverse county, over 90,000 kids, It's really great that we all come together once a month and meet and talk about issues in PWCS and be graced with the presence of some amazing leaders in our county, like Dr. McDade, who was willing to take the time to talk to us about the 2030 strategic plan and really get our input and our voices.

[01:41:36] And we feel heard, we feel seen, and we thank you. I wanna talk a little bit about the student voice committees you implemented. Without that, I wouldn't have found my passion for advocacy, for uplifting student voices, and now I want to be a child psychiatrist advocating for children in my future.

[01:41:58] So, oh my gosh, I can't cry. But you're really such a role model and the things you do matter, and I'm not the only one who has been influenced by you. So you, your team, thank you so much. Please come to more Senate meetings.

[01:42:14] I can send you the schedule. just you know hit me up and you guys too I haven't seen a lot of you yeah I'm calling you out I'll send you a schedule but I we really do appreciate it and you have impacted the lives of amazing leaders so I also want to talk a little bit about the AI a lot of students have actually you know there's different perspectives different opinions but ultimately people understand you don't have to use AI if you don't want to the a lot of people understand the

[01:42:49] environmental impacts and I am proud to say that at Colgan students are actually advocating about the environmental impacts they're not pressuring anyone making people feel bad they're just letting you know hey this is what happens if you overuse it okay make sure you use it with limitations and I think that's amazing to see there's a balance like there is with everything and I think that's really important to see the students really taking charge and advocating for what they believe in and then the last thing I want to talk about is the food pantries it's eight annually that's

[01:43:24] amazing already our there's one at Hilton and our I'm at Colgan our SCA is doing food drives and we are donating it to other food pantries in the county so this is cross-county collaboration and it's like it hasn't even been voted on yet so I just think it's amazing to see this happening and you know we have such a large county with so many people so many schools so I think this is just another thing that brings the county together and thank you thank you to

[01:44:00] everyone here and I'm excited for what 2030 and the four years have to bring thank you thank you Karina truly appreciate that so so last I'm gonna because I get to be chair and I have the last word a lot of times, and to miss Trudenik's chagrin, I do have a few more words.

[01:44:22] You know, again, I am, this is one of the most important responsibilities the school board has. You know, once we vote on this, this will then kick off the implementation of this work, which is a lot of the work then our, what I call our most uncomfortable superintendent will do.

[01:44:38] She remained uncomfortable over the last four years because she never gets comfortable because there's always work to do. It is an ambitious, the first four-year plan was ambitious. This plan is very ambitious. It's aggressive, it's aspirational.

[01:44:54] It is committed and dedicated to helping each student in our school division realize their full potential. And I think everyone in the school division who works for the division and every student who participates in every family should approach this school division with that same level of ambition, aspiration, and aggressiveness for their children.

[01:45:14] And I think if we do that, this will make this the best school division in America. I think it's already the best school division. It'll continue to strengthen the best school division in all of America. You know, we're gonna build on the strengths of the successes of the academic excellence that we committed the last time around, the increased graduation rate, the increased scholarship dollars, the improvements in career tech ed, and internship programs.

[01:45:39] We must highlight the fact that we are addressing a number of things society continues to fail at. We're gonna do universal pre-K. A lot of politicians lecture us and talk about affordability. This program for every four-year-old in the county will save a family anywhere between eight to \$20,000 depending on how they do their daycare or their childcare or their pre-K.

[01:46:01] This is a real significant savings for families. So if you're thinking about what county to live in in the Commonwealth of Virginia, you ought to think about Prince William County because we will be the only county that does universal pre-K. And if you're thinking about, you know, babies are expensive, this is not a bad time to think about having a baby 'cause if you have a baby now, that baby will have pre-K in 2030, right, Dr. McDane?

[01:46:25] Yes. So we will have that baby in pre-K programs in 2030. You know, the commitment to, you know, continued addressing, you know, a bullying, Preventative strategies for bullying, I think is really critical in this program.

[01:46:42] I want to also address that she has, the division is really looking at drug use, drug abuse. Again, trying to do what we can to address issues. You heard from Karina about food pantries. We didn't even mention today the commitment to trying to build affordable housing units for staff and for our community.

[01:47:03] And I want to thank Mr. Wilk for highlighting the fact that Dr. McDade once put a high quality theater program in every school, also a high quality IT program in every school, that is really important. That's among one of our most popular specialty programs currently in just two schools. That expansion will be, I know, welcomed by many in the community.

[01:47:22] And so I think with this plan, the school division is putting its stake in the ground and challenging everyone in the Commonwealth, everyone in the country that, you know, we are gonna do what we can to really realize the full potential of every student here. And I am very proud to vote for this plan, to support this plan, to fund this plan, and to make sure we see this plan through its full fruition.

[01:47:45] I thank the board for all their hard work, especially Jennifer Wall, who spent five hours with me the other day, going through the plan line by line, comma by comma, and period by period. And I really do appreciate that. So with that, I would ask the board, if there's no other further discussion, to please vote.

[01:48:04] Let's go. Let's make this history today.

[01:48:20] - The vote is eight yes unanimous. Motion passed. - Outstanding. I think that deserves a round of applause. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone. Next up, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Student Housing, Elementary School Attendance Area Recommendations, Woodbridge Area, Potomac Shores Number Two Elementary School, on for action.

[01:48:43] Moving on to 1501, regarding this attendance area, Mr. Justin Wilk has a motion. Mr. Wilk. - Woo-hoo. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the recommended elementary school attendance area adjustments outlined in the Woodbridge area and the Potomac Shores number two school board alternative proposal number one.

[01:49:05] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District. - I second. - She seconds the motion. Do we have a discussion? Mr. Wilk. Sorry, Mr. Jinnick, I won't be super

succinct, but there's a lot to talk about a little bit.

[01:49:25] I kinda wanna formulate and lay out kind of the whole thing and how it impacts the district and the individual schools and where we currently land. First, I wanna address the boundary policy, which I do believe, of course, as everyone knows, it is new.

[01:49:41] This is the first one we have used since it was adopted for this process. I do believe, there were some hiccups, but I do believe in comparison to previous years, it was more productive, involved fewer dramatic shifts, and resulted in a smoother overall timeline.

[01:50:01] In fact, we actually even extended it a little to continue soliciting feedback from our community. I also, like previous speakers, do hope that lessons were learned from the process and will be addressed in future areas to identify shortfalls with the next review.

[01:50:19] A couple that I would like to kind of see in action moving forward. I do wanna emphasize the importance of engaging our diverse communities within their own cultural spaces and meeting people in ways that feel most successful to them. I have a few communities I'm a little worried about.

[01:50:38] I didn't hear a whole lot from. Maybe that's a sign that they're happy, I'll take it. Or maybe we just have to work on engaging communities like that more in the future. But that is something I wanted to flag. I definitely believe we should discontinue releasing new versions of maps on the same day as scheduled town halls.

[01:50:58] It causes major confusion. Some people had not been prepared to go to them. Some people had completely revised speeches and it was just a little bit confusing for people. And I heard that reiterated through a number of correspondence. And I also, I think I've stated this before, before this online polling mechanism.

[01:51:18] I think it needs to be improved. And I think we need to clearly state that this poll is just one of many sources of feedback used in drafting the maps. I don't know if that was clear enough for people, but I was told by a multitude of people that the link was being sent all over, hoping that the majority votes was gonna lead to the choice.

[01:51:39] But hey, little things, not in the scheme of things. But okay, so over the last past six weeks, I do believe in the end, voices were heard. I do wanna be the first to acknowledge that this is not an easy process.

[01:51:54] Change is difficult in many ways. And in the end, there are gonna be people who are not happy with these maps. We, unfortunately, when you open up a new school, you have to fill it. I don't know if it's unfortunate, but you know, the process, unfortunately, you do have to put kids into a new building.

[01:52:15] And through that process, the only way to do that is to navigate students to other buildings in the district to fill that building to some capacity level and then also not leave the other buildings dramatically under capacity.

[01:52:31] So there is no possible way to keep every family within their current and existing school boundaries. While many families contacted me to support the amended map since two weeks ago, that is up for a vote tonight. I do recognize that there are still others that are disappointed and they have every right to be.

[01:52:51] Again, this is a change, whether it's gonna start next year in the Woodbridge area or in 27/28 in the Potomac District. It is again, something that's gonna have to be processed and people are gonna have to be prepared for it.

[01:53:08] Let's start, first community, I wanna begin with Patty. I do wanna recognize the parents who emailed me, spoke before the board continually, participated in the town halls, or reached out to me via Facebook. I did my best to hear every voice during this very challenging situation, in particular with this building.

[01:53:28] As I've stated before, the regulation and its corresponding policies clearly prohibit leaving buildings over capacity when there are opportunities to address overcrowding with the opening of new schools. I understand that there are probably a lot of families that would have said, hey, we're fine.

[01:53:45] Let's keep the trailers in order to keep our community intact. Unfortunately, that is not how the policy and regulation go. And we cannot leave a building at 120 plus capacity when we have opportunities to move students to other locations in a building that would be under capacity.

[01:54:06] Before I created this current proposal with, I guess, amendment, I did look with the division to explore creative solutions in an effort to try to keep and maintain more of the original families at PADI and their boundaries. I did even ask the division to consider relocating the onsite pre-K classrooms into a newly constructed spaces that will open in 27, 28 across the street at Washington Reed.

[01:54:33] As mentioned in previous buildings, This option would literally open 30-ish seats, leaving still over a hundred plus families over capacity with that classroom space. So it was not possible to do that other than chip away and divide literally these communities by like streets and move one and leave the others.

[01:54:55] And I did not want to do that. We eventually reached a point where one community would remain at PADI only if another was moved or vice versa. It is not reasonable in my opinion to move families who live within walking distance of their school while keep others who live more than three miles away.

[01:55:14] I do wanna reiterate that I wish we could keep all families at PADI, but this is not permitted under the division regulation and policies. So even after hearing those concerns from PADI families who would be reassigned, I worked with administration to develop map six, A or whatever we're calling it, the new one up for tonight.

[01:55:36] Parents I spoke with emphasized their desire if they are going to have to move to be at a school comparable to their current one with strong academics and an engaged parent community. This was part of the change where we currently stand with that community that is being moved to another location.

[01:55:56] So that is the PADI area summarized. For the very engaged families in Potomac Shores, the overwhelming message resoundingly has been the desire for the Potomac Shores School to keep their community together.

[01:56:12] Only a small number of residents suggested dividing the neighborhood. My proposal does keep Potomac Shores whole and maintains the alignment with the new Potomac Shores Elementary. However, keeping the entire community together results in capacity level around 90%.

[01:56:30] Results in a capacity level around 90%. Future residential growth beyond current zoning approvals may eventually lead to overcrowding within several years. Even with this well-known risk, the community has overwhelmingly expressed a clear preference for the continuity of their community being placed in that building.

[01:56:53] I wanna thank the families of Mary Williams who participated early and consistently and whose PTO remain engaged throughout the process. The vast majority of their boundaries remain unchanged. Triangle also retains most of its existing boundaries along with my proposed adjustments with Dumfries, keeping families close to the school that has served generations of students in the historic town of Dumfries.

[01:57:18] These streets lie within the town limits and are now appropriately aligned to the only elementary school within the town again. Henderson maintains the Potomac residence of Cardinal while providing the Neabsco district with a unified elementary school that their school board represented has advocated for.

[01:57:39] My proposal also supports the quieter community of Swans Creek by allowing more of their current students to remain rather than sending additional students farther from home. Overall, in summary, this has been quite the process.

[01:57:55] It over, largely, I don't know if I'm gonna make a percent up, 80%, 80% impacted the Potomac District. This has been a learning experience for me. It was great to work with my two colleagues with other schools impacted Mr. Blake, Ms. Williams.

[01:58:13] Collaboratively, we worked together in that level and things were great. It was easy, it was seamless. No drama within the board on the changes and the recommendations and I appreciate their support for the amendment that I made with the boundaries and proposals.

[01:58:33] My ask tonight would be for the board to vote in favor and adopt the revisions to complete this arduous process. So thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. Ms. Williams.

[01:58:49] - Thank you, Chairman and Justin. I always appreciate your SAT words at the end for throwing them in there. I would agree with Mr. Wilk. This has been the least contentious boundary process.

[01:59:05] I think I have been involved in and the majority of the boundary process did occur in Mr. Wilkes district. From myself, I am excited that I have a boundary for my brand new elementary school. My district has not had one in several several decades, which is an important designation.

[01:59:24] I know that there was a lot of community concern because this boundary proposal does include Potomac View and not being utilized as an elementary school anymore. I know that that's tough for our community and it is a significant change for our community.

[01:59:40] I just want to reiterate again that the Woodbridge Elementary School is a brand new school. It was, the thought process, the development was long before any of the changes that we see now. All teachers will have positions.

[01:59:59] I don't know where, 'cause that's not my job, but I have been assured. I want to make sure that the community is aware of that. The difference is when we open a new school in here in Prince William, the principal of that school has the autonomy to make it their own.

[02:00:14] That is an important factor in this decision in this process and I wanna be sure that the community understands that in operating with equity and fidelity. We want to give everyone the same opportunity. I am excited because I'm sure there will be plenty of staff.

[02:00:31] It will be all of our students who are in elementary. It's an exciting time. I know there also was some community concern about the location of the school. Our school division has worked diligently with the Board of County Supervisors, police and everyone over the past several years to ensure that it is a safe area for our students to go to school.

[02:00:52] Myself as a friend Lynn mother, my student is there. I can assure you I'm there every day just about. I feel like I live there now as a robotics parents. It's an exciting time. This boundary proposal also leaves room for growth for my area, which is a possibility, depending on Belmont Bay or not.

[02:01:11] It's always a back and forth. The last thing I would like to note about this is this is accumulation of several years. It's not just now. If you go back from when we first started talking about building an elementary school, and I wanna also acknowledge our chairman who made it one of his goals to ensure that my district had a new elementary school, and I'm grateful for his collaboration and advocacy.

[02:01:40] What happens a lot is you only see what is occurring today and there's a large backstory. I agree with Mr. Wilk, we do our best to ensure that our schools are not overpopulated. This was a very unique situation in the sense that both of these schools had been in the plans for years.

[02:01:58] We had a population bubble. Now we're looking at a population decrease. I'm just really excited about a new elementary school. I'm sorry, I get stuck on that because it's a huge change for our students. I would like to work with my counterpart, county government to see if there are any options available for safer crosswalks for our families to cross back over on route one, but I am definitely supporting this boundary and a thank you to Mr. Wolk, our chairman, Mr. Blake, and all of the division staff, as well as the community and students who I was able to speak to and voice their opinions.

[02:02:35] I truly value this division's commitment and this board's commitment to capturing as many voices as possible when making decisions like this. Thank you. - Miss, anybody else? Okay, Miss Wall.

[02:02:51] - Thank you. While this is not the area of Prince William County that I'm extremely familiar with, I do know that boundary changes are not easy for families and generally most people want to stay at the school that they're at or that they have planned on going to and so I do recognize that there are going to be families who might not be happy with the changes.

[02:03:19] But I am confident that our schools, all of our schools are great and that they will be welcomed with open arms at their new schools. When we redistricted in preparation for Innovation Elementary School a couple of years ago, we also had a really collaborative process and some of my schools were affected and we had to shift boundaries around to create room for a new school.

[02:03:43] Whenever you open up a new school, you gotta move kids into it. And that shifts, that creates a domino effect around the school and even schools, you know, who are originally not, don't think they're in play, end up being in play.

[02:03:59] But that was also a collaborative process and I've been impressed by this process this time around. As my memory serves, this is the first boundary process since our new policy went into effect, I believe. And so obviously with the new policy, You do an after action, a review, did it work?

[02:04:17] How did it work? What could have been better? What might we need to change? And we can look at that. Let's see, as always, we learn things. And so I do appreciate the increased effort to capture community comments and take those into consideration whenever possible.

[02:04:37] And I did see that in action. And I think families were generally satisfied. And I appreciate my colleagues who know this area very well and are confident that we've come up with a good plan that is workable. And I appreciate their work on this.

[02:04:54] I do know both under and overcrowded schools have their own challenges. There's pressure on the budget, pressure on programs that can be offered, pressure on families. If you have under crowded schools and overcrowded schools have their own challenges with crowded hallways and last chance that a student might get on a robotics team or anything like that.

[02:05:19] So it is important that we do this. It's one of those things you just have to do when the time comes. This process is flexible though. And I do want to thank staff from the team, the planning teams who generated all of these great maps and all of the resources and the schools who communicated about the meetings and everything else and the feedback that people have shared about how maybe communication could have been better or how we can improve outreach to the community so everybody knows, maybe the timing, you know, things like that, these are all really helpful comments that I've been paying attention through the process and I very much appreciate it and I'm thankful

[02:05:57] to my colleagues on the board who spent a lot of time and effort on coming up with a proposal that we think the community can support. - Mr. Jesse. - I'd just like to say that I will support this change here and I understand there are communities that would disagree but I think the majority of the communities want this, and so I support it.

[02:06:27] I am a little concerned about the growth of Potomac Shores, and I used to say that the parents and the realtors and the developers, this was a developer problem, building all the homes faster than we can build a school, and that's the issue that we have to deal with.

[02:06:53] At this point, however, I will say from now on, is on the school board. If they're building faster than they anticipated, it's on us 'cause we moved more kids into the schools, I think, so at any rate, I support Mr. Wilkes and Ms. Williams in supporting this, even if I feel there are some people that want, nobody will ever be happy in a boundary meeting 100 percent there's always somebody that's going

[02:07:28] to be ticked off so i think we did as best we could at this point thank you mr blake thank you mr chairman uh i just want to thank dr mcday and her team again for for the um and dr carlidge and his team for this redistricting process is my first redistricting and i guess it wasn't it wasn't that bad so from the stories that i've heard so thank you for that for the onboarding also again for me this I only had one school affected so again thank

[02:08:04] you mr. Wilkes and miss Williams for helping me you know guide me through this process and again just I want to emphasize you know community cohesion matters for me so I'm very I'm happy with scenario six because it brings a lot of my district back into to the natural borders like you've heard from everybody redistricting is not easy nobody's gonna be everybody's not gonna be happy but we have to do what's best for the for the division not for the

[02:08:40] individual community or individual family or individual so yeah thank you and I will be voting for mr. welcome motion thank you mr. Blake he's my eighth - Eighth year on the board and I don't know,

my seventh or eighth redistricting, they're always difficult and always challenging, but I appreciate the work that Dr. Cartlidge's team has done, Dr. McDade, her team has done, the board, Mr. Wilk, thank you.

[02:09:12] Ms. Williams, thank you for all the work you do. You guys have done a great job. This is the second redistricting I think we've done in your, the last time we did your middle school was a couple of years ago. And this is tough, right? Like folks are not gonna get what they want and some folks will get what they want.

[02:09:30] It's always a challenge. But I do appreciate all the work that everyone's put into this and I will be supporting the motion. So at this time, I'd rise to the board to please vote. Oh, okay, great, me neither. Excellent, thank you, Erica.

[02:09:46] Let's go, vote. Everybody vote, we need to hear from our student next.

[02:10:06] - The vote is eight yes unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, moving on. We have next up student representative time, Karina Grover from the Charles J. Colgan High School. Miss Grover, the floor is yours. - Thank you so much, welcome back from winter break.

[02:10:21] We are second semester in 114 days until my graduation. 114, don't forget that. Now that the first semester is over, students are happy with the new grading system, especially me.

[02:10:42] Most concerns stem from confusion rather than dissatisfaction, as many students and even teachers are still learning how the system works. While Prince William County School has shared information, I encourage the division to partner with student voice committees to develop clear and more accessible communication strategies.

[02:11:00] By working together, we can ensure that information reaches students in ways that help everyone fully understand and benefit from the changes. Next, I would like to highlight the work of Woodbridge High School Student Voice Committee. They organized and led a meeting with Lake Ridge Middle School students, which encouraged open dialogue between middle and high schoolers about academics, activities, and school culture.

[02:11:23] In addition, they use student feedback to advocate for improved seating options during lunchtime. SVC members met with building administration to discuss logistics, including table arrangements and spacing. As a result, tables will be moved inward to create room for additional seating.

[02:11:40] This is a strong example of student voice in action and demonstrates that when students speak up, meaningful change can happen. In mid-February, student representative Beulah Sarza, Senate pro temp, Shivani Davis and your one and only, will be presenting at the CASEL exchange.

[02:11:57] CASEL is an organization dedicated to advancing social and emotional learning in education. We are PWCS proud to share how Prince William County Schools has amplified student voice and to reflect on how social and emotional learning has positively impacted our own experiences.

[02:12:16] We are incredibly excited and honored to represent PWCS on a national stage. Now, I want to take a moment to thank every school counselor for the incredible hard work they put into supporting students every day. A special shout-out goes to my own school counselor, Mr. Chase Beasley.

[02:12:34] Mr. Beasley has played such a valuable role in my life, especially during college season. He takes the role of a counselor and truly makes it his own, going above and beyond to be a mentor, a guide, and, okay, this is gonna boost his ego, but a role model.

[02:12:50] Thank you for everything you do. February is Black History Month. However, I think that black history should be honored year-round. While this month highlights influential figures from the past, it is also about empowering future generations so we can move toward a society where racism is no longer normalized.

[02:13:09] Honoring black history means learning from the past while actively working to create a more just and inclusive future. On that note, I want to share that I am a daughter of immigrants. I strongly believe that schools should be spaces where students feel safe, supported, and focused on learning, not afraid about their family's futures.

[02:13:26] Regardless of background, every student deserves the opportunity to learn without fear. Protecting schools as welcoming spaces is essential to building equity, trust, and opportunity for all PWCS's core values. To end, I want to share a quote from former President Barack Obama.

[02:13:42] For all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter. Students, your voice matters, it has power, and never stop advocating for what you believe in. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Grover.

[02:13:59] Up next, superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Before we move into tonight's fiscal year, 2027 proposed budget and capital improvement program presentation, I'd like to take a moment to recognize several important observances and celebrations taking place this month.

[02:14:17] First, February is the school board appreciation month. As you can see, the boardroom is full of support from so many of our schools and along with them, I want to express my sincere gratitude to each member of this board for your steadfast leadership, your thoughtful governance and your unwavering commitment to the students, staff and families of Prince William County Public Schools.

[02:14:40] The work you do is often complex and always consequential. Our progress as a division is possible because of the direction, support and accountability that you provide. On behalf of the entire organization, thank you so much to each of you for your service. February is also Black History Month.

[02:14:56] This is a time to honor the achievements, contributions, and enduring legacy of African-Americans whose leadership, innovation, and advocacy have shaped our nation and continue to inspire our students. Across our schools, students are engaging in learning that celebrates history, culture, and voices that deserve to be recognized, not just this month, but every day of the year.

[02:15:18] I want to acknowledge this week is National Counseling Week. Our school counselors are champions for student well-being, academic planning, and post-secondary success. They are often the trusted adult a student turns to in moments of uncertainty.

[02:15:33] Their work strengthens not only individual students, but entire school communities. We are deeply grateful for the care, expertise, and compassion that they bring to their roles. Also in recognition of Financial Aid Awareness Month, I encourage families to join us for an upcoming Family Engagement Series webinar, Scholarship Search and Financial Aid Awareness is the title of the webinar and it will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

[02:16:02] on Tuesday, February 10th. Students will learn how to create strong, competitive scholarship applications by exploring different types of scholarships, discovering how to find scholarships using a

variety of search tools, understanding key college application components and learning how to identify and avoid scholarship scams.

[02:16:22] The presenter for this session will be Jason Puryear, the director of the college place. Speaking of finance, tonight we will continue our work to ensure that our strategic priorities are fully supported by thoughtful, responsible investments. And to lead that conversation, I want to introduce our chief financial officer, Mr. Shaquille Youssef, and he will be presenting the superintendent's fiscal year 2027 proposed budget and capital improvement program.

[02:16:49] Mr. Youssef will be joined by Dr. Donna Eagle, our chief human resource officer, as well as myself, and Mr. Vern Bach, our chief operating officer, to present this proposed budget. This presentation will outline how our financial decisions align with our goals for student success, staff support, and the long-term organizational coherence, as well as the recently approved Elevate 2030 strategic plan.

[02:17:16] All right, Mr. Youssef. Okay, me. So we want to start the presentation as we do every presentation that we come before the board with our vision and our commitments.

[02:17:34] Our vision for Prince William County remains the same. 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. It carried us through Vision 2025 and will continue to elevate us to 2030.

[02:17:52] We also have our strategic plan commitment. So as you heard earlier this evening, our strategic plan covers four key commitments and the investments that you'll see tonight are aligned and tethered to those four key commitments, which are learning and achievement for all, that is all about the academic experience, educational experience that students have in their schools, positive climate and culture, spaces where students feel supported, welcome and a sense of belonging, family and community engagement, ensuring that we're serving as trusted partners with our families and community, and organizational coherence, ensuring that we are all working towards the same North Star and goals,

[02:18:30] which is identified in our strategic plan. So I will turn the presentation over now to Mr. Youssef, and he will ground us in just the view of Prince William County as a whole, the demographics and the current enrollment, as well as what our projected enrollment will look like as enrollment definitely drives our fiscal year budget.

[02:18:56] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the school board, and Dr. McDade. I wanted to take a brief moment to extend a special thanks to our budget director and his team who have worked tirelessly in preparing this proposed budget.

[02:19:14] If you don't mind, Mr. Joe Mandoro and your team, just to stand up. Also one would like to, thank you. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. McDade for her leadership and guidance and counsel throughout this process, the executive cabinet for the input with the proposed budget strategic initiatives.

[02:19:35] A special thanks to the Chief Human Resources Officer, Dr. Donna Eagle, the Chief Information Officer, Matt Guilfoyle, and the Chief Operating Officer, Wernbach, and their teams for their crucial input on compensation enrollment and the CIP.

[02:19:53] Prince William remains... - The best high school in America. - The second largest school division in Virginia. Our projected enrollment for the 2026-27 academic year is 88,818 students pre-K through 12th grade.

[02:20:15] The operating budget funds 10,671 school-based full-time positions and 2,198 full-time operational employees. In terms of our student body, we have projected approximately 26,692 English learners, 13,309 special education students and 28,841 economically disadvantaged students.

[02:20:47] And our families within PWCS speak more than 200 home languages, which contribute to a dynamic and inclusive school environment. Looking at our regional comparison, if you look at the chart on the left, we serve a highly diverse student population, reflecting the community with varied backgrounds.

[02:21:13] The student body data includes totals percentages by ethnicity, plus counts of English learners, students with special needs, and those who are economically disadvantaged. On the right side of that chart, we have a per-pupil spending analysis.

[02:21:35] For FY2026, because this is a year behind with Waby, our per-pupil cost grew by \$2,164, about a 12% increase from the previous year.

[02:21:54] But despite this, we continue to lag behind Fairfax County Public Schools and Loudoun County Public Schools in per-pupil spending. To match the per-pupil cost of Fairfax County, an additional increase of \$1,753 per students would be needed, which would equate to \$158 million.

[02:22:16] That would mean that if Fairfax would be static, that's what we would need. but they also increase their budgets each year. And finally, Prince William ranked slightly above Manassas City and Manassas Park in terms of the overall regional comparison.

[02:22:41] Our year over year projected enrollment comparison, overall our enrollment has declined and we are experiencing a downward trend in total students. And primarily, and you've heard this at our CIP presentation, this is due to declining birth rates, ongoing domestic net out migration and slower new housing growth, which are contributing to this lower enrollment.

[02:23:10] We have cohort shifts, which means that our kindergarten classes that are entering are smaller and our high school cohorts that are graduating are higher. So with that, you have more students leaving and less students coming in.

[02:23:26] In terms of our school level projections, we are showing that elementary and middle high schools are declining. We do see a modest increase in middle schools, and that's because of our fourth and fifth grade cohorts progressing through the grades.

[02:23:41] In terms of our budgetary impact, our enrollment is down by 624 students from the FY2026 projection. Again here, the overall enrollment trend shows a decline through 2028 with a slight uptick in 2029.

[02:24:05] However, while the overall enrollment trend is down, specific groups of economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English learners continue to increase. And over a five-year change, economically disadvantaged students have increased by 6.8%, special ed students have increased by 13.9%, and English learners have increased by 24.2%.

[02:24:40] Our overall operating and debt budget for fiscal year 2027 that is being proposed is \$2.1 billion. This is an increase of 183 million from the approved 2026 budget.

[02:24:59] In terms of where the money comes from and where it goes, major source of funding continues to be our county transfer through our revenue sharing agreement. and right now it is 50.1% of

our revenues.

[02:25:17] State aid is at 39% and sales tax is at 6.4, which brings it to 45.4%, and federal funds is at 2.5%. How do we use these funds? The majority of our funds, close to 80%, is directed towards instruction, with central office at 8.2%, facilities at 5.5% and transportation at 5.1%.

[02:25:46] - Mr. Youssef, why do you have sales tax broken out differently? Does that come from the state or does that come from the county? - It does come from the state, but it is a separate line item for the state. So we typically on this chart shows, and this is also how the other jurisdictions show it in terms of our way B comparison.

[02:26:05] But if you add the two together, our total state aid is 45.6. - Okay. changes. The county revenue increased by \$127 million, or 12.8%, and this is mainly due to the growth in our data centers. I do want to note for the board that final figures will be available after the county executive proposes their budget and the BOCS approves the tax rate. So this is

[02:26:39] still something that we are waiting for, final approval from the BOCS. The state revenue is projected to rise by 57 million 6.8% and this is based right now on former Governor Youngkin's December budget the final net numbers expected I expected by mid-march once the General Assembly acts on it federal revenue increased by four and a half percent and this is mainly due to additional money we received in title one funding other revenue this is primarily primarily

[02:27:14] from higher antenna rental fees, our monopolies, went up by \$0.8 million. And we did decrease our beginning balance by \$4 million, and this is attributed to the removal of certain one-time funding opportunities.

[02:27:37] When we look at 26 versus 27, I have talked a little bit about the revenue summary and the details about county and state. we have a \$2.1 billion that is available, an increase of \$183 million, or 9.4. Expenditure changes in debt service, we increased debt service by \$6.6 million, and operating fund

[02:28:07] expenditures by \$176 million, or 9.7%. That, in a nutshell, is the highlights of our 2027 and proposed budget, there will be more details coming towards the end. At this time, I would like Dr. Donna Eagle to talk about compensation and health insurance premiums.

[02:28:44] - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, and Dr. McDade. This evening, I'll be providing an overview of the recommended improvements in our compensation and changes to our benefit premiums. As you're aware, regionally competitive pay and benefits is one of our priorities.

[02:29:01] Over the past four budget cycles, we've been able to make significant investments in improving our compensation and are pleased that we can continue those investments to ensure we offer regionally competitive pay. As an educational system, we're in the people business and with over 85% of our budget dedicated to personnel, it's imperative that our comp and benefits stay competitive to retain our outstanding staff and in order to recruit talented division.

[02:29:30] Furthermore, our continued investments reflect our commitment in recognizing and rewarding the hard work of our staff and their expertise and passion that they bring to their roles every day. By investing in our educators, we're not only honoring their dedication, but also enhancing the overall quality of education and support for our students.

[02:29:51] Together, we are building thriving futures for our students and our community. This slide illustrates the proposed budget pay scale initiatives. First, I'll share our recommendation for our teacher certified group, which includes all grade 12 staff.

[02:30:08] Those licensed by both the VDOE, such as our teachers, counselors, librarians, psychologists, et cetera, and also our staff holding health licenses, such as our nurses, OT, and PT. For our certified group, the budget includes an overall average salary increase of 6.5%, with everyone except those at the very top moving up a step.

[02:30:30] The recommendation also includes an overall scale enhancement. If you'll recall last year, we decompressed our teacher pay scale with 30 distinct steps for each year verified experience and introduced longevity steps for staff with greater than 30 years experience as our pay at the top of the scale exceeded the market.

[02:30:51] The actual increases will vary from three to 7.1% depending upon the lane and step placement of the individual staff member. In general, teachers with bachelor's degrees will receive 6.1% increases, and those with master's degrees will receive a bit more, up to 7.1% due to the \$1,000 increase in the master stipend.

[02:31:14] It'll be moving from \$6,000 to \$7,000 for the FY27 school year. Increases for staff in the longevity steps are generally 3%, more for those with master's degrees due to the stipend increase. All staff will receive a raise with the exception of those at the very top of the scale.

[02:31:34] As a reminder, longevity steps will drop from the pay scale as the salary for a teacher in their 30th year of teaching meets or exceeds the longevity step. The FY27 scale has one less longevity step than FY26.

[02:31:53] Moving on to our classified workforce, comprised of staff and pay grades one to 11, The budget contains an overall average of 6.2%. Each staff member, except those at the very top, will receive a step movement. In addition, the scale has been adjusted.

[02:32:10] We also introduced longevity steps with these scales last year, as the top of the scale was well above market. All classified staff, except those in the longevity steps, will receive a 6.2% increase. Increases for staff in the longevity steps are 3%, with the exception of those at the very top of the scale.

[02:32:31] Finally, our recommendation for the administrative pay scale includes an overall average of 5.24%. Each staff member except those at the top will receive a step movement. We also introduced longevity steps with these scales last year at the top of the scale was well above market.

[02:32:48] All administrative staff except those in longevity steps will receive 6% and increases for staff in the longevity steps are 3% except those at the top. Other compensation highlights, we would like to share our, as you all know, we are in year two of our collective bargaining agreement, which we've really focused on regional competitiveness of our pay.

[02:33:12] The collective bargaining agreement actually called for a 6.4% increase for our certified staff and for our classified staff by 6.2%. In actuality, our certified staff increase exceeds the CBA because it's an average of 6.5%, which is attributed to an increase in the number of teachers with advanced degrees hired this school year.

[02:33:35] Other wage and salary improvements include the \$1,000 increase to the master stipend for certified staff, an additional 7.69% increase in salaries over and above the 6.2% increase in wages for our teaching assistants as their workday has been lengthened by 30 minutes to 7.5 hours.

[02:33:58] a \$2,000 stipend for our facility staff with a journeyman license, a \$3,000 stipend for facility staff with a master's license, reclassification of our assistant principals to move them up one grade, and a 3.25% increase to all extracurricular supplements.

[02:34:18] In total, including our administrators, the overall average increase in value of this package is 6.27%. This slide should look familiar to you. It illustrates the teacher pay progression from FY '22 to FY '27 for what we refer to as the benchmark years, five, 10, 15, 20, et cetera.

[02:34:43] At the top of the chart are salaries for teachers with bachelor's degrees, and at the bottom of the chart are salaries for teachers with master's degrees. In the first column, you'll see the years of experience and the associated salary that was paid to that teacher in FY22, and in the next column, you'll see the years of experience that same teacher will have effective at the end of this school year, and then the salary that they will advance to in FY27.

[02:35:13] In the boxed area, you'll see the increase in the base salary over the five years they've been working for us, and the percentage increase in that five-year period. As you see, the increases over five years range from 30.6% to a high of 51.2%.

[02:35:32] So just to run through that chart quickly, at the very top line, the teacher that was brand new to the division back in FY '22 was making 51,000, I believe it says a little small for me, \$491. And that same teacher today is making 72, or will be making \$72,286.

[02:35:54] So that's an increase of nearly \$21,000, which represents over a 40% increase. So it is a significant increase, and I'm not trying to discount the cost of living, it's certainly a factor that has impacted the real value of wages, but there's no doubt that we've gained tremendous ground in ensuring regionally competitive pay.

[02:36:17] That said, you know, it's one of those things that we definitely always have to continue to prioritize and closely market to, or closely watch the market to ensure that we remain competitive. So next I'm gonna talk a little bit about our health insurance.

[02:36:34] I'm gonna give you a summary of our health insurance premiums. And before I go too far, I do wanna remind you that we do offer our staff very rich healthcare benefits. We're the only division in the region whose plans do not include deductibles. I'll also mention that the division has been subsidizing the plan over the past few years.

[02:36:54] These subsidies are in addition to our increased employer share. By subsidizing the plan, employee premium increases were limited. This year, however, the renewal on our Anthem plans, which is our three self-insured plans illustrated on this chart, called for a 29% increase.

[02:37:12] However, rather than increase premiums to that extent, we're proposing a 15% increase and plan to recommend plan design changes in the following year, so in FY28, that will help curtail escalating costs.

[02:37:27] So on this slide, you're gonna see our bi-monthly premium recommendations for FY27 for each of our four plans by the tier level. And the tiers are employee only, employee children, employee spouse,

employee family.

[02:37:43] The boxed area is the amount per pay the premium will increase over what staff are currently paying. The range is from a low of \$2.39 per pay period for the Kaiser employee-only tier to a high of \$67.42 per pay period for the Anthem Enhanced Family Plan.

[02:38:11] Annually, that's a total increase from, for the Kaiser plan, \$57.36, are for the Anthem Family Plan, \$1,618.08. To offer some perspective, the average teacher raised in the budget is over \$6,000.

[02:38:32] Next, we have our bi-monthly premium recommendation for FY27 for our dental plans. We have two plans, two dental plans with four tiers of coverage. The boxed area, again, is the amount per pay. The premium will increase over what staff are currently paying.

[02:38:49] The range is from a low of five cents per pay period for the standard dental employee only tier to a high of \$1.77 per pay period for the Anthem Enhanced Family Plan.

[02:39:04] As you all know, a 15% increase in health insurance doesn't equate to a 15% increase in a staff member's salary. This chart shows the percentage of a staff member's salary that is used for health insurance premiums.

[02:39:22] And we pulled two years, FY23 and FY27. So four years apart. There are only two of our health plans on this slide, the Kaiser plan, which is our least expensive plan for our staff in terms of premiums, and the Anthem Enhanced plan, which is the most expensive plan.

[02:39:44] As you'll see on the slide, the average certified staff member's salary in FY '23 was \$76,251. In FY '27, we're projecting that the average staff, average, excuse me, certified staff member's salary will be \$95,637.

[02:40:05] That's an increase over those four years of \$19,386. The increase in premium for the family plan, not the employee, but the family plan over that four-year period is on the far right side of the slide.

[02:40:23] It was \$1,746 for the Kaiser plan family and \$2,723 for the enhanced family plan. In looking above the line in the middle of the slide, on the bottom two rows, you will see the percentage of average salary allocated to health insurance premiums in FY23.

[02:40:45] Kaiser only, 0.5% of salary went to pay the premium. Anthem employee only, 2% of salary went to pay the annual premium. If you follow those two rows to the right, you'll see the percentage of the average salary for the family plan, which is 8.1% in FY23 for Kaiser, and 12.7% for Anthem.

[02:41:09] Next, if you orient your eye to the bottom two rows on the slide, you will see the percentage average salary allocated to health insurance premiums in FY27. The COSER employee only is 0.5% of salary would go for the annual premium, and the Anthem employee only is 2%. Those are the same percentages of salary as in FY23. If you follow those rows to the right, you will see the percentage of the average salary for our family plan premiums, 8.3% for COSER and 13% for Anthem, a slight

[02:41:48] increase in the percentage of salary allocated to health insurance premium over the four-year period. Finally, I'd like to share with you some national data and this slide actually compares our premiums over the past five years to what's going on nationally and this data was pulled from the COSER Family Foundation which is a nonpartisan organization that focuses on health policy research polling and analysis. The blue bars, the Navy bars, are the national data and the gold bars are PWCS. As you can see in this five-year

[02:42:27] period, which is the most recent period that I'm able to get data for, premiums have increased by 24% nationally compared to PWCS premium increases by 13% in in that same period it will be important for us to work with our consultant in the development of a plan of plan design changes that will help curb escalating cost while still ensuring comprehensive benefits that meet the needs of our workforce and are also competitive before turning the presentation back over to mr yusuf i'd like to take a moment and just thank the board for your continued and investments in our workforce.

[02:43:06] I appreciate the support in prioritizing the areas of most need to ensure our staff is well compensated and has excellent benefits. - Dr. Eagle, I don't know if you have an answer to this question, but I think it's important. On this slide 23 on health insurance premium increases, in every other industry, in every other field, certainly in my practice where I am a physician and I pay for the healthcare premiums of my employees, we have dramatically increased our share.

[02:43:36] I mean it is, you know, it is skyrocketed and at UVA where I served on the Board of Visitors, the employee share has dramatically increased in that 24, 25, 30% range. You know, I think this is one of the most remarkable achievements of the HR department over my eight years serving and you know, you provided some nice data for five years but even if you go back another four years, has been our, yeah, and has been our ability to keep our healthcare costs down for our employees.

[02:44:14] I mean, we had three years where I think we froze any changes in premiums. - Yeah, prior to those. - Yeah, prior to those three years, prior to those five years. But this is really, I mean, remarkable, and a lot of credit should be given to your team. This is among the most challenging things to deal with, And you know, to be fair, we do this with the county.

[02:44:36] The county does their own for their employees and we do our own subsidies, which I think are maybe a little bit higher. I'm not sure exactly what they do over there, but the self-insured plan and you folks negotiating with these providers has really done a remarkable job.

[02:44:52] So I do appreciate this. This is really better than the national average, better than all other industries, better than all other folks in other fields. We are providing incredible savings to our employees. Thank you.

[02:45:15] - All right, thank you so much, Dr. Eagle. We will now move on to the four key commitments and I'll be sharing just the highlights from each of the four key commitments. Certainly the full budget book and line item budget is available online.

[02:45:32] The presentation tonight really highlights in each of the four key commitments, some of the bigger ticket items that show up both in the strategic plan and in the budget aligned to each of the core areas. So I'll start with overall the strategic investments equals \$60.8 million across all four.

[02:45:53] You'll note that the highest investments which are in learning and achievement for all is most appropriate because of course that is where all things education lie and our core business is education. And then you'll see positive climate and culture and family community engagement and organizational coherence.

[02:46:13] You'll see the dollar amounts that are assigned to each of those. So right now, I'll start with learning and achievement for all, which is our most critical commitment and really represents our promise to provide academic excellence for all students. The first investment that you see to the tune of about \$2.9 million is the addition of special education TAs.

[02:46:35] With this addition, all special education specialized programs K through 12 will be staffed with two teaching assistants. This really is the final phase of the superintendent's addition of teaching assistants and prioritization of special education programs over the past five years.

[02:46:50] So in Vision 2025, we made a commitment that by the conclusion of Vision 2025, we would ensure that we staff additional special education TAs for our programming. And so we're keeping that commitment.

[02:47:05] So this is just a continuation of that to close out what was already envisioned 2025. So you'll see that staffing each program with two TAs not only offers increased support to our students with the greatest needs, but also enables continued progress with our goal of inclusion and educating students in general education settings to the greatest extent possible.

[02:47:26] The next line item that you see is our non-traditional education support to the tune of \$866,000. And this investment supports improvements to our current computer-based instruction, also known as CBI programming, as well as school-based programming.

[02:47:42] We are doing a lot to reimagine CBI and interventions at the local school through what we have identified as rapid intervention programs, which includes school-based intervention programs to address tier two and tier three academic, behavioral, and wellness needs of students through a centrally staffed and monitored program.

[02:48:02] So our students who are assigned to CBI now have more of a hybrid option where they can have some learning in person as well as online with wraparound supports and services available but we're also using these dollars to support school-based interventions for those students who may not be assigned to CBI but need tier two and tier three academic behavioral and wellness support the program has rolling admissions is directly tied to the needs identified through these student support teams and it is designed specifically to support improved outcomes for those students who may be at risk of dropout or have discipline discrepancies.

[02:48:42] The other line item that you see here, CTE dual enrollment. This is an expansion of dual enrollment, but the FTE that is a part of this \$657,448 is for our Grow Your Own CTE program.

[02:48:58] So that's kind of like Teachers for Tomorrow. So all of our high schools in Vision 2025, we set out to have every high school have this program available. And now we've met that goal. All high schools have that, and we are expanding it. And so that's where those dollars will be going. School psychologists, the addition of school psychologists will continue to expand the scope of services provided to our students, aligned to a comprehensive school psychology program.

[02:49:24] Everyone's favorite, universal pre-K, is an investment totaling nearly \$24 million, which is being allocated to launch the universal pre-K program. This funding is designated to provide the necessary resources and support to ensure the successful initiation of the program.

[02:49:42] A portion of this investment may be directed toward potential improvements to facilities. Several of you mentioned that earlier in terms of the concerns about facilities. These enhancements are intended to help standardize the learning environments required for the universal pre-K program, ensuring consistency and quality across all participating locations.

[02:50:03] School instructional support, this is also university instructors. So additional funding is being requested in this budget to support a service agreement between PWCS and university instructors. Under this agreement, university instructors will provide qualified special education instructors to address existing vacancies and ensure compliance with Virginia Department of Education Standards.

[02:50:29] We certainly still have teacher shortages most critically in special education and this is an opportunity for us to source top talent. These instructors will plan and deliver specialized instruction aligned with the general education curriculum and individualized education program goals.

[02:50:46] The partnership will strengthen the division's capacity to address critical special education teacher shortages, expand the talent pipeline and support students in achieving their IEP objectives. Summer school support, you'll see here for nearly \$4 million.

[02:51:03] We, you haven't seen this in the budget prior because in prior years the cost has been offset by ESSER funds and then following that we received all in tutoring funds with the launch of the literacy plan. Those funds have now been exhausted and we're no longer receiving them and so this 3.9 million investment allows us to maintain our level of programming.

[02:51:27] So we're now absorbing it in the operational budget because it is no longer grant funded. School-based funding supplement for adequacy. I'm going to bypass this because Mr. Youssef will cover this information more in depth when he talks about the school funding redesign model very shortly.

[02:51:48] Augmented reality and virtual reality, this \$2 million investment is phase one towards the strategy in Elevate 2030. We identified in our strategic plan that we would ensure that students across all schools have access to AR and VR technology for personalized learning.

[02:52:05] And so this \$2 million investment is year one to start a phase process towards all schools having access. You'll also see that in Elevate 2030, we identified early literacy and numeracy as a strategic priority. And you see a \$1.4 million investment that supports our commitment within Elevate 2030 for early literacy and numeracy.

[02:52:26] Just Write Readers provide customized take-home book sets for our young readers who may be struggling with developing foundational skills or our English learner students who are strengthening their reading skills in English. In 25-26, over 6,000 students will receive multiple book packs throughout the year.

[02:52:45] So this \$1.4 million investment continues the program next year as the state literacy grant expires. In the area of CTE, also a big favorite for everyone, we have adopted core curriculum across the last two years.

[02:53:04] We've had curriculum adoptions in both math and in literacy, and now it is time for us to address CTE because some of our CTE content areas do not have high-quality instructional materials. So this \$750,000 will go a long way in getting these curricular materials up to par for our CTE educators.

[02:53:21] Before I close out Learning and Achievement for All, I'm going to turn the presentation over to Mr. Shaquille Youssef, and he's going to share information on the funding redesign model that is going into effect this year. In Vision 2025, we set a goal to look at our funding model and redesign for greater equity and adequacy.

[02:53:42] We had a two-year-long budget task force with many recommendations that came from that. We worked with a partner, ERS, and so we've made some significant design changes to our funding model.

[02:53:59] And so Mr. Youssef will talk a little bit about that and how that ties into adequacy, where you see the supplement for adequacy. Thank you, Dr. McDade. So one of the things we heard loud and clear from our school administrators was that when we have a funding model, we need clarity and a well-set, defined, set of defined funding guardrails.

[02:54:23] So tell us where we have flexibility and tell us where we don't have flexibility. So overall, we came up with a funding structure that looked at two funding streams, what we call core funding, which is basically our baseline resources every day a school requires.

[02:54:44] So a school does require a principal, for example. And so we converted that a lot into what we called designated FTEs versus per-pupil allocations. Then we looked at another category called needs-based funding, where adjustments can be made by the principal or the school administrator based on programs and where enrollment is.

[02:55:12] So those were the two major funding streams. Now, we did some technical updates in terms of how we changed our rounding rules. So for example, for our classroom teachers in our elementary schools, we rounded to a full FTE, and for middle schools and high schools, it was rounded to a .2 FTE, and there were other rounding decisions we made based on other school staff staffing from anywhere between 0.2 or 0.5.

[02:55:50] That in itself gave more positions to the schools. We also added support. We increased our support for economically disadvantaged students. And more importantly, we've centralized our IT, athletic equipment, and textbooks without taking away the per-pupil allocation from schools.

[02:56:12] So this is our initial step into making sure that there are certain things that the school should not worry about student devices, staff devices, that will be handled centrally. When we looked at the funding model and we applied it to our FY26 budget, we said let's take this funding model and apply it.

[02:56:35] What would have happened, obviously we didn't change the numbers, but what would have happened would be that we would have added an additional \$9 million in increased school funding, money going to schools with this new funding model.

[02:56:53] Thank you, Dr. McDade. - All right. - Okay, can I have a quick question on that, Dr. McCade? So, you know, just, you know, if some schools have certain programs, other schools don't have certain programs, sort of, for example, like if you had speech and debate, the stipend for the coach for speech and debate is available to all high schools, correct?

[02:57:18] - Correct. - That's not something that, so if that high school doesn't have a speech and debate coach, that stipend is that money sitting in the high school's budget or it was sitting at central office and just doesn't get sent over because they don't have a speech and debate team?

[02:57:33] - So it depends, actually. And what happens is we look at speciality programs at the school and allocate based on what they have. So in essence, if they don't have a speech and debate program, they don't get that allocation for that.

[02:57:53] - From the central office? - From the central office. And so part of this is also we are looking and studying our speciality programs and we hope to have a better sense of where our specialty programs

will land and ensure that there's more opportunities available for all schools.

[02:58:14] - So there's a little difference there, Doc, on one specialty programs, one's extracurricular sort of stuff, but if that school had a teacher that they were gonna pay, they would get the stipend automatically, right? So there's no school can say to me, Dr. Lateef, we don't have the money to have a speech and debate coach, right?

[02:58:36] - Correct. - Right, everyone's shaking their head. Okay, all right, that's great, thank you. Ms. Williams. - So, I'm assuming then, piggybacking off Chairman Lateef's question, that that is so that the funding remains equitable, because prior to, they would just get funds if you didn't have a speech and debate team, then the school could then move those funds anywhere.

[02:59:03] - So there is flexibility at the school level. - Okay. - So if they had put forward a program for debate. - But it's no longer automatic as it, I think my understanding of the way the funds were allocated in prior years.

[02:59:19] - So we've kind of divided it between two, our core funding and our needs-based funding. So this would fall under the needs-based funding and they have flexibility. So the, did I answer your question?

[02:59:34] - I think so. - Okay. - If not, I'll follow up with you. The only other one that I had was the adjustments for the increase in low economic support, but. - Okay. - I think it's basically, I wanna make sure I'm hearing you, is if you have funding for debate, you gotta use that for debate, you can't decide I'm not gonna do debate, I'm gonna give it to something else.

[02:59:56] No, right. - Fair enough. - So it's based on what the school, what the needs of the school are. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Ms. Wallace. - Because we were talking about a redesign our funding model I just want to make sure I'm understanding this it was always said well previously the money would follow the student so you count how many students you had and then if you had special needs or economically disadvantaged you got a multiplier right like a certain dollar money would follow a student you got extra money for different categories of students so what we're doing here now is we're saying the money follows the employee the money

[03:00:31] follows the full-time employee no it still follows the student what what we've done is we've come up with a core funding model in terms of FTEs that is still based on certain things that is given in terms of baseline and if you look at the second which is needs based funding that is more adjustments based on programs and enrollment but we do take into account what the size of the school is in terms of that funding because you know depending on the number of students, it'll generate X number of teachers, et cetera.

[03:01:10] Except we're doing a more of a FTE model, which is a full-time. So it's not necessarily the money following the staff, it's money that is based on where we have guardrails, and this is your baseline, and this is what is your core, versus where we have the flexibility at the school.

[03:01:31] So it's a hybrid. - Okay, it's a hybrid. Okay, so we're saying every school needs this much to fund its core functions. Every school should be able to do all of these things. - Yes. - And then based on if you have an IT program or you have mechanics or you have culinary arts, whatever it is, you look at what the school's needs are based on their special circumstances.

[03:01:55] - Correct. - For that use-based part, okay. - Yeah, correct. - Okay, thank you. - And it gives greater guarantees. So having the core funding, schools can plan better 'cause it's certain guarantees that I know these positions will be in my budget. - Mr. Jessie.

[03:02:12] - Did I hear you correctly? Did you say the needs funding, I guess, is for athletic equipment and uniforms are handled by Central? - We will, we'll talk a little bit about that coming up, but no, so schools will have their budget based on needs, but then there are certain things centrally, which I'll share in a minute, that we will fund for every school, like which is coming up in Positive Climate and Culture, conditioning of equipment, so we'll handle that centrally.

[03:02:46] It won't come out of the school's budget, we'll pay for it. But they'll still have their dollars to be able to meet their specific programmatic functions. - Thank you, thank you, Mr. Youssef. Thank you, Dr. McDade.

[03:03:02] - Okay, moving to positive climate and culture. So we take a look at some of the items in positive climate and culture that have the highest dollar values, which is what we're sharing here. Again, in each of the core commitments, This is not the exhaustive line-by-line budget, but those initiatives that are tethered to the strategic plan that have the highest cost value.

[03:03:25] So our new principal residency is one of our biggest investments in positive climate and culture, and we are supporting, within the strategic plan here, nearly \$1 million investment in year one in our principal residency. In the first year, we will have three elementary school residents, one middle school resident, and one high school resident.

[03:03:45] The other line item that you see here environmental sustainability program support for \$333,000 for environmental sustainability program supports that the superintendent's Advisory Council on sustainability some of which were recommended by that group that came before the board earlier this year and so a few things that are included in the three hundred and thirty three thousand are a sustainability manager funding for a contract to support hazardous waste as well as fifty thousand dollars in in training the next line item is our international faculty increase so we are proposing an approximate 1 million dollar investment for international

[03:04:24] faculty this is for our participate teachers program teachers come from all over the world and we've leveraged this program to increase diversity representing the 159 countries of origin of our students we've done really well in increasing our diversity and in that and so we'll continue to invest in our international faculty as it does represent the diversity of our school communities athletic equipment reconditioning this is what i spoke to just a few minutes ago so this next line item is athletic equipment there are state and federal requirements to

[03:04:58] recondition athletic equipment and so we've taken that on centrally as opposed to every school having to um you know set aside dollars in their budget we provide that funding for every school and annually our high schools currently spend on average \$11,848 to recondition equipment for their sports program this request will address some of the disparity in the quality of athletic programs for all PWCS students so where some schools might not have the dollars for the conditioning and others do we want to make sure that across the board they're all getting the same support and

[03:05:34] so also unlike high school's income for middle school athletics is nearly non-existent and and the principal has to fund the program's cost. Many of our middle schools cannot absorb these costs, so

centrally financing the cost of reconditioning equipment will support our middle schools with meeting athletic equipment reconditioning as well.

[03:05:54] Middle school athletic training. This is \$207,000 for middle school athletic training to come closer to the kind of athletic training support that we have in our high schools. And this supports a contractual agreement with George Mason University.

[03:06:12] In collaboration with George Mason University, PWCS provides certified athletic trainers for our middle school students. Due to the collaboration, PWCS middle school students can access athletic trainers who are licensed healthcare professionals to assess and treat athletic injuries.

[03:06:29] So that's what that cost is going to. The \$175,000 in the mental health initiative investment is a phase one of Elevate 2030, and all that we would like to do to support the mental health of our staff here in PWCS.

[03:06:45] Just like we have telehealth for students, we want to be able to connect staff members to support on-demand mental health supports. So we will have a contact at every school who will be trained by 2030. And this initial investment will support the training of staff as well as the identification of on-demand mental health support for staff.

[03:07:06] The next line item in Positive Climate and Culture, or the final one is ninth grade success support. So \$164,000 will go to support student transitions. We have a partnership with the Center for High School Success.

[03:07:22] This will help our high schools focus on ninth grade success, making sure that when students transition from middle school to high school in ninth grade, they are successful. Ninth grade really is and continues to be the gateway to drop out when students are not on track through their ninth grade year.

[03:07:38] there's a higher probability that they will not graduate with their cohort. And there's three key areas that this partnership with the Center for High School Success will support and it's grades, attendance, and behavior, 'cause those are the three areas that research has showed has to be a focus for ninth grade transition in order for students to experience success.

[03:07:58] It also will allow us to support with scheduling and intervention support. Currently, we have three schools piloting this programmatic structure and they're doing extremely well with their ninth grade cohort, Osborne Park, Woodbridge High School, and Unity Reed. And we will be onboarding four additional high schools next year.

[03:08:16] And this is a \$164,000 investment to support that onboarding and expansion effort. And that concludes Positive Climate and Culture. Moving into family and community engagement, we really just have three big ticket items in family and community engagement.

[03:08:33] The first one being the mobile health clinic. So we have in Elevate 2030, We have three site-based clinics identified to be operational by 2030. And to support this deep need in the interim, we're purchasing a mobile health van that would be staffed by our health provider partner.

[03:08:53] The van will go a long way with supporting families' immunizations, dental and vision screening services, especially at the beginning of the school year when students get excluded from school because of not meeting health requirements. Often we struggle to get social services and resources for families, so this investment will greatly support getting these resources to families that need it the most.

[03:09:14] We will purchase the mobile health clinic, however, it's fully staffed and operated by our health providers. Likewise, with the three site-based clinics, we've made a commitment to have three by 2030. The first one is already allocated funding for Garfield High School, and it's included in the CIP for \$2.5 million to support the renovation of the actual physical space for the health clinic on site.

[03:09:43] And the site again will be fully staffed and operational by our health partner, Sentara. So the year over year cost for this really is not incurred by the district because it is completely outsourced. We're just providing the actual site in the community and it'll be within our actual school building.

[03:10:01] Workforce readiness initiative for 500,000, which is a startup investment for the Workforce Readiness Initiative. This is where parents and students can pick up a CTE pathway or trade and learn side by side towards getting a certification or credential in a particular field.

[03:10:18] We will launch a Workforce Readiness Initiative that establishes three distinct CTE programs for students and families to learn together. And we will develop this Workforce Readiness Initiative in collaboration with at least five local business partners and the investments that you see here is for year one.

[03:10:36] And then finally, enhanced onboarding for new families. We've made a commitment to enhance our onboarding efforts for families who are newly arriving to the school system, whether they are new to the country or military connected families. And so phase one of this initiative, we are earmarking \$500,000.

[03:10:54] And then you see at the bottom of the screen, in the capital plan, the 2.5 million for Garfield High School's health clinic. And that concludes family and community engagement. Now moving into the final strategic commitment with organizational coherence, we'll start with improving our support for our ROP program.

[03:11:17] Temporary employees and retirees play a crucial role in maintaining organizational continuity by filling staffing gaps and supporting ongoing operations. And their experience and flexibility allow departments to respond to changing workload demands without compromising service quality.

[03:11:33] And so by consolidating administrative processes, this program ensures more efficient utilization of temporary and retired staff, enhancing our responsiveness and resource allocation across the organization for our ROPERS. The job architecture, this is phase one of our job architecture strategy and looking at jobs across Prince William County.

[03:11:55] This investment for the first year of \$324,000 includes a supervisor to support the program. At its core, the job architecture is a structured framework that defines and organizes roles within our organization.

[03:12:10] It outlines job titles, responsibilities, required skills, and levels of accountability. And by developing a comprehensive job architecture for PWCS, we'll have a framework that ensures consistency in how roles are evaluated, compensated, promotes transparency, and supports equitable progression within our organization so that we can retain top talent.

[03:12:32] and we will have a consultant that will be coming in to look at the entire system and helping to develop the job architecture. Because not only do we wanna source talent in PWCS, we wanna keep talent,

and so that way we have to have a continuum for people to continue to grow in the organization and be promoted.

[03:12:51] ERP, this is Enterprise Resource Planning, and essentially this is a big part of organizational coherence, and this is phase one, readiness. will be launching the ERP to modernize technology and upgrade the older legacy systems that we have in our operational offices, particularly in human resources, finance, and facilities.

[03:13:15] And so this is a 500,000 investment in year one. And the only other thing in organizational coherence I do wanna call out, which is a part of our capital plan budget, our technology improvement fund. So in Elevate 2030, you see AI and digital literacy and data dashboards embedded throughout.

[03:13:37] And so we wanted to be clear about what the investment is in that. It does show up in our technology improvement fund to the tune of \$3.4 million. And to address some of the things that Ms. Zargarpur talked about, questions about not only the cost of AI integration throughout the plan, but also the digital dashboards and other technology and how we're thoughtfully using that, we wanted to just be earmarked this and show the investment, but Prince William County Schools is using AI enabled dashboards thoughtfully to turn data into timely insight for educators and operational leaders while keeping cost controlled and ensuring student privacy is protected.

[03:14:17] So we're building on existing systems and carefully selecting tools. We're helping teachers and leaders spot needs earlier, personalized support and spend more time focused students rather than manual spreadsheets and things like that a lot of what the data and the AI analytics can do takes a lot of the guesswork out in the manual labor out when it comes to data so this work is not about technology for its own sake but about using better information to advance equity strengthen instruction and improve outcomes for every student and operationally division-wide and that

[03:14:52] concludes organizational coherence and so we'll round out the presentation of of the budget with a summary of changes, and Mr. Youssef will go through the summary of changes at this time. - So I have explained the changes in the count, the revenues from county, state, and federal.

[03:15:14] Wanted to focus a little bit more on the expenditures here in terms of the 183 million. 6.6 million is going to its debt service. Approximately 51.7 million is applied to its compensation. Now, that is a net number, and it is the net impact of salary, our health benefit increase, but offset, this year we've had a one-time reduction in VRS rates, contribution rates, and also slippage, which is what we call our lapse.

[03:15:48] So that number is a net of all of those. So there are increases and decreases to that, or savings that we've realized from VRS. Our IT fund shows an increase of 47 million.

[03:16:04] Our strategic investments total \$60.8 million. CIP increases by \$37 million. The impact of students and schools, and that is basically the number that we apply in terms of the change in enrollment, and it's a net number.

[03:16:25] And baseline changes are basically one-time items that we no longer have to fund, so we remove that from our budget. I do want to take a minute to talk about the informational technology fund. The Information Technology Fund is being established to consolidate and centralize all PWCS IT costs across schools and departments.

[03:16:50] Into an internal service fund, this approach will enhance efficiency of resource management and allocation. All major software purchases, technology refreshes for staff and students are now managed centrally. Importantly, these changes have no impact on school-based funding.

[03:17:07] So previously they would get a per pupil allocation for IT equipment. We haven't taken that away. We are just funding it centrally. So in effect, we are increasing that school's allocation by that amount. The overall strategy focuses on digital equity, data transformation, and AI implementation.

[03:17:27] - Mr. Youssef, real quick on that. So when you're centralizing it, if a school says, I want a whiteboard in a room, I need to do it. Do they have to call you and go through some bureaucratic sort of scenario to get it? Or I mean, because before they could just buy it, right? So there are standards, and certain things like student devices and staff devices are now being controlled by IT standards.

[03:17:52] Similarly when you buy software, that flexibility is needed because of the risk associated with getting devices and also getting software that may not be safe. So we now have a control board.

[03:18:10] So yes, now we have not talked about the whiteboards, et cetera, this focuses, and this is a big ticket item, this focuses on student devices and on staff devices.

[03:18:27] - I just think we have to be careful to make sure we're not sort of creating impediments for progress by creating unnecessary bureaucracy. - We're not creating, okay, we'll take that. - Right, right. - Okay. And so this will give us some economies of scale and maximize our return on investment.

[03:18:51] In terms of budget by funds, we have our operating fund, which is almost at \$2 billion, is our biggest fund. It's our general fund. But we also have other key funds. We have our construction fund, food and nutrition fund, health benefit fund, and technology fund.

[03:19:09] These funds also support specific needs and priorities of the school division. and our total all fund budget being proposed is \$2.9 billion. I will ask Mr. Wernbach to talk about our next item, which is our CIP scenarios and then we'll close it out.

[03:19:30] Maybe you can address the heat as well. - We have, we've turned it up a few degrees there, Dr. Lateef, so good evening members of the board, Chairman Lateef and Dr. McDade. My slides here are really just a review, a few slides to review and hit some highlights from our capital improvement plan and from the work session.

[03:19:50] What you see before you on this slide is really what we discussed in the CIP work session around scenario A and scenario B. So just to recap, scenario E, A, A, scenario A, sorry, is really with the 14th high school remaining in the CIP and continuing to move forward with the construction of the 14th high school.

[03:20:11] And you can see there in scenario A that there's a CIP amount of about 120, little over 128 million. If the board gives us direction to proceed with scenario B, that would be the discontinuation of the 14th high school.

[03:20:27] And you can see there, that would free up about \$191 million in scenario B. I think a couple important things to note though, if we did discontinue the 14th high school, we would lose the planned robotics center in that construction project.

[03:20:43] but we do add two robotic centers under Scenario B at Garfield High School and Unity Reed High School. And those projects would be not only designed to be utilized at those schools, but also to be

utilized from other schools within the district and be designed as such.

[03:21:00] You can see some other additional projects that we pick up in there. Some around sustainability, including additional LED lighting upgrades and some building automation systems, which have a huge impact on energy management and sustainability.

[03:21:15] And then on the far right, you can see the difference there, just highlighting the difference between scenario A versus scenario B. And the total CIP net cost difference between the two would be a little over \$256 million. Next slide, please.

[03:21:31] Here are a few highlights of note, I think notable highlights from the CIP work session. You can see here Marsteller Elementary School. I just wanna say, and it's important to note, that any renovations that we engage in moving forward will be considering geothermal as an option.

[03:21:52] We are engaging in a renovation at Marsteller. It is, and it's site-specific. That is, that site will accommodate geothermal, so we've added \$22 million into the CIP to accommodate that. Also, I think a notable addition in this year's CIP hampton middle school just to remind the board we did engage in a contract with rmm architectural services to complete facilities condition assessments of all of our sites and that includes an objective comprehensive review of a lot of the mechanical structural security systems

[03:22:28] in the building and it rates the building and so hampton middle school had one of our highest fcas and that's not a good thing if it's a high fca then that's a building that's in poorer condition so we've addressed all of the top schools and previous cips and this was a school that was top on the list so that's at an 85 million dollar price tag and i won't read through all of these i think some notables as well within some of the renovations and facilities modifications are really focused on energy management and sustainability and really just

[03:23:04] recouping some of the cost to some of those major projects. You can see there and thank you Elisa for moving forward that's in the maintenance a lot of the energy management sustainability really picking up six additional photos voltaic arrays or solar arrays. The retro commissioning of the building is like you know that that tune up for your HVAC system and make sure they're functioning as designed and you can see picking up some additional LED upgrades at 22 schools which will round us out and complete all of our LED upgrades across the district also important to note before I move on to the next slide

[03:23:43] you can see in here the outdoor learning environments and that was Dr. McDade mentioned that in the strategic plan and that's going to be a huge focus of ours moving forward and you can see this CIP includes 28 schools for outdoor classrooms and that's all I had thank you so looking at the funding over the next five years for scenario A and scenario B scenario A estimates a total of CIP of 1.3 billion over the next five years almost 1.1 billion will be

[03:24:19] financed through debt issuance and the other 200 million will come from operating cash scenario beat our total CIP is 1.08 billion and we would fund 800 million in new debt and 263 million from operating cash. Overall, scenario B proposes a CIP that is 256 million lower than scenario A. Our projected debt sales, under scenario A,

[03:24:52] it's 1.1 billion. And just to emphasize, under scenario A, we will be issuing almost, over the next three years, almost a billion dollars. It's 924 million, plus you have almost 800 900 million outstanding debt and so our debt limits will be increased and we have to be very cognizant of where the county is with their debt issuances and their debt limits conversely

[03:25:26] scenario b will actually bring debt sales down by 54 million dollars finally we talk about our calendar we are presenting you the proposed budget on february 7th on february 9th we have a public meeting on the budget and cip february 17th is when the county executive presents uh the budget for prince william county to the bocsc february 18th is our public hearing march 11th is when we

[03:26:03] have our work session and markup followed by march 18th where the school board would approve or adopt the budget in CIP. On April 7, the school board chairman presents the budget at the BOCS, and on the 21st, the BOCS adopts or approves and appropriates the budget. In between that time, the BOCS will advertise the tax rate and will have a better idea of what the final revenue will be.

[03:26:42] And I would like to turn over the presentation to Dr. McDade for any closing remarks. - Thank you, Mr. Yousef. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the budget presentation. - Thank you.

[03:26:57] Anybody have any questions, concerns? I know you're all seeing this now, and certainly we have, as you see the timeline, a lot of time to sort of get through the budget. You'll get the presentation of the full budget whenever we get it.

[03:27:13] And then everyone, I want you to please work with the superintendent or staff on any questions, concerns you might have on that. Does anybody have any questions right now or ready to move on? Any comments, concerns? Okay, all right, let's move on. Thank you, Dr. McDade.

[03:27:29] Does that conclude the superintendent's time? All right, I think next up is a revision of policy 275, wellness, first reading. Dr. McDade, do you wanna give us an example? What are we doing here with this one? - We, this is the policy 275 wellness.

[03:27:49] Mr. Bach is here to provide a brief overview of the proposed revisions for the policy. - Thank you.

[03:28:11] - Thank you, Dr. McDade, and this is a proposed revision to policy 275, and it's really modernizing and clarifying the division's wellness framework by aligning language with current Virginia code, as well as federal requirements with some updates around terminology and strengthening some clarity around the governance and accountability.

[03:28:31] It also really defines the role of the School Health Advisory Board, and it updates some statutory references related to federal child nutrition laws and smart snack standards. - Okay, great. Everyone take a look at it, and if they have any questions or concerns, please refer them to Mr. Bach, and we'll come back and vote on this at the next meeting.

[03:28:51] - Thank you. Next up, first reading for revision of Policy 382, Employee Reimbursement. Dr. McDade? - This one is Mr. Youssef, and he's also available to provide a brief overview of the proposed revisions for Policy 382.

[03:29:10] - Policy 382, Employee Reimbursement, has been updated. We've re-titled it to Travel and Expense Reimbursement, and we've changed the policy administrative title from the Assistant Superintendent Finance Risk Management to chief financial officer to reflect the current organizational leadership.

[03:29:30] In addition, the staff have revised the travel regulation to align more with GSA per diem rates, ensure consistency and compliance with federal standards. And we've also added a procedures manual that will talk about all the different nuances of travel and employee reimbursement.

[03:29:53] - Thank you, Mr. Youssef. Anybody have any questions? Okay, provide any questions, concerns you might have to him and then we'll come back and vote on this in two weeks. Up next, 18.03, a motion is ordered, Mr. Blake. - Mr. Chairman, thank you.

[03:30:09] I move that the Prince William County School Board direct the superintendent staff to pursue scenario B of the capital improvement program. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Okay, this is a discussion for everyone who's been monitoring what the school board's been doing over the last few months and what we just heard in the budget.

[03:30:33] we are looking to make a decision on whether to move forward with the construction of the new high school or not. Scenario A was a scenario that includes budget in the capital improvement plan to fund the building of a new high school.

[03:30:50] Scenario B, am I right? Scenario B, it's not two, right? Scenario B is the one to not move forward with the new high school to cancel the construction of that new high school and to move forward with a budget that does not include the building of that high school.

[03:31:08] And so what is now on the floor is a motion by Mr. Blake and Ms. Williams to move forward with scenario B and that is to not build the high school and move forward with a capital improvement plan that outlines other spending that does not include the new construction of the high school.

[03:31:28] The floor is open for discussion on this and then we will take a vote on that. Miss Williams. Oh, Mr. Jessie, Miss Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For me, this is a very challenging decision, having been the board member who's been searching for land and construction sites for, it seems like 10 years now, but the decision is easy in the sense that there's so much more that we can do for our students in our community, especially with the current projected population decline

[03:32:06] by supporting scenario B as opposed to scenario A. I recognize that my community, the Occoquan community, probably even Neabsco to a degree, had been expecting this, some constituents for years.

[03:32:21] And I hope that we, as a board and the division of information presented, will help you understand the decision for supporting not having a 14th high school at this time. In the beginning, it just, the population was, I guess at that time scheduled to increase exponentially when we started this journey and now we are at the opposite end of the spectrum.

[03:32:45] So I appreciate all the work and effort by everyone involved 'cause it has been years in getting to this point. Thank you. - Mr. Jesse. - I expect I'm the only one that's gonna vote no on this resolution.

[03:33:04] I'm sorry. I expect I'm only gonna be the only one that votes no on this. But, you know, we started this process five, six years ago and we were hoping to have a school to mainly help relieve the pressure off of Woodbridge High School, which is one of the, has the largest student body, probably second largest student body right now.

[03:33:30] And I understand that the projections there, most of our citizens are asking will we keep building houses and stuff around where this facility is gonna be built and you know that's understandable do I fully expect that this is gonna play out the way that we're projection projecting I'm not sure it will I'm not sure when we looked at the utilization

[03:34:06] of the school I know we went to the new model of the school program capacity I have not full faith in that project I want to look at how we do that because from what I hear from parents and teachers Woodbridge High School is still very overcrowded and it's not going to get you move to 300 people out of there it's going to just go back down to where it should have been before the other

[03:34:40] thing is I I have to give compliment to the staff you did the excellent job and in explaining to the other community why we should not do this. You got probiotic centers and two new locations.

[03:35:01] So why would they vote for us not to do that? You know, and I, you did a wonderful job and I understand why you did it. I just, I don't like it. And that's all I got to say. Thank you.

[03:35:17] - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I just, I'm gonna read what I had. You know, the data before it shows that the enrollment across Prince William County schools is declining. The projections show a decrease in nearly 3,000 students over the next five years with continued declines across elementary, middle, and high school levels.

[03:35:38] Notably, this is the first time in more than 15 years that our first grade cohort has dropped below 6,000 students. This is a critical signal about the future of our systems. These trends are being driven by both out-migration and declining birth rates, factors that materially change over long-term planning assumptions.

[03:36:00] Even with capacity projects already underway, we're facing increasing underutilized space across the division, not shortages. With that context, moving forward with the 14th High School, at an estimated total cost of exceeding \$350 million is not justified.

[03:36:20] In fact, the projections show that if the school were built, we would still have thousands of vacant seats division-wide within just a few years of opening. That is not responsible planning. It is also important to note that the proposed site presents a grade drop of nearly 100 feet across the property and a significant complexity and cost to the site plan that goes beyond the base construction estimates.

[03:36:46] Scenario B allows us to step back from a necessary new construction, avoid taking on excessive long term debt and instead focus our resources on what our students and schools actually need right now. Maintaining and modernizing, yeah modernizing existing buildings, addressing safety and infrastructure issues, investing in sustainability and energy efficiency and making smarter use of the facilities we already have.

[03:37:18] We also have to be clear eyed about the debt we issue and how we pay it back over time. Long-term debt decisions must align with long-term enrollment realities, not past growth patterns. This is not about doing less. It's about doing what is fiscally responsible, data-driven, and aligned with current realities.

[03:37:38] Scenario B preserves flexibility, protects taxpayers, and ensures we are prioritizing student impact over assumptions about future growth that the data simply does not support today. Redistricting must be a part of this conversation as well.

[03:37:54] Strategic redistricting can address many of the capacity, utilization, and equity challenges we are facing across the county without adding unnecessary new facilities. We also have to consider the full cost of operating the high school, not just the construction costs, but the ongoing staffing, utilities, transportation, and maintenance expenses year after year.

[03:38:18] For those reasons, Scenario B is the right path, and I will be voting to support it. thank you mr. Blake miss wall thank you mr. chairman I agree with mr. Blake his comments are really similar to mine it's the Chinese philosopher founder of the Taoism religion who said if you do not change direction you may end up where you are heading and I think this is such a moment where we are being asked to

[03:38:54] consider a moment a moment a change of direction and I have thought about this a lot. I've tried to be thoughtful not least because I know how much the community has looked forward to a new school for a long time and I know how that feels and I know how it feels to have to see a change and not necessarily embrace it but to know that it needs to happen. I do appreciate staff for taking a hard look at the data about enrollment and debt service and inviting

[03:39:30] the board to engage in a courageous conversation the reality is as I see it that facts on the ground have changed over the last decade or so as mr. Blake said and I might quote a few of the same things if we build this school with the data that we know that we have now we could have as many as nearly 2,500 vacant seats at the high school level in 2032 and with the addition of the new school the school system projected that there would be as many as 3,500 I'm

[03:40:05] rounding up 3,500 vacant seats at the high school level in 2032 33 school year that's only three years after this new school would have been built that's nearly enough for one and a half high schools above what we would need based on the students that we have and the enrollment projections continue to decline into the foreseeable future obviously we don't know what's going to happen in the future 10-15 years ago we thought we needed a new high school 20 years ago 15-20 years ago in the west we were exploding with students and building school year after year now those schools are becoming more and more

[03:40:42] empty so you do the best you can at the time that you have to make the decision and you do the best you can to foresee that the data points that are relevant add add to the enrollment realities at the high school level the high costs of this school coming in at 350 million dollars proceeding with building the school is simply untenable it's indefensible I cannot in good conscience sustain such a course of action we would be roundly criticized for irresponsibly spending taxpayer dollars and taking on unnecessary debt and we

[03:41:20] would deserve that criticism if we did that so as such scenario B allows us to apply funds elsewhere to meet division needs all of those items listed under Scenario B are things that will benefit our students across the division and our needs that we have identified.

[03:41:40] And it would allow us to do a number of things with the money. And it would allow us to avoid astronomical and unprecedented amounts of debt and the associated debt burden for years to come. So I think the decision is really clear that Scenario B is the best option.

[03:42:01] - Okay, anybody else? Then I'll wrap up. So I'll be supporting this motion. while I wanted to build that high school and thought it was a great idea a few years ago, and the facts are the facts.

[03:42:16] We are in a free fall right now in student population. We peaked at about 91,000 two years ago, two, three years ago, and we're down to like 88.5 or something, as you heard earlier. We've actually lost students already. So while we believe there's construction and we see anecdotal evidence of such, It hasn't shown us a larger student population.

[03:42:42] If anything, we continue to drop and it really is a free fall. And the enrollments are dropping across the county in a variety of areas. There's a couple of districts where they're staying steady or growing, but the rest of the county is dropping. And that will require, as I pointed out in the last few meetings, redistricting, certainly at the high school level.

[03:43:03] I do not believe building this high school would be the right thing to do. It would cannibalize current enrollments at current high schools in the area. And that would reduce, you know, competitiveness of those high schools in a number of areas and arenas.

[03:43:19] I think the cost of this high school has expanded beyond what we initially planned for, for a variety of reasons. And we would be taking on, as Ms. Wall and Mr. Blake said, unprecedented debt for the county.

[03:43:35] and I think in the long run jeopardized the AAA bond rating of the county. I think it makes sense to not build this now, save this money, reutilize dollars for other high priority needs and move forward on that.

[03:43:53] There is no sign five years out that we will be gaining any population. I hope that's wrong, maybe we'll get there. I mean, people will say, hey, we have universal pre-K, Let's move to Prince William County. Their schools are doing incredible things.

[03:44:09] We wanna move into this county. That's the work we're doing. But as of now, the facts are showing that we are dropping and it really is a free fall. And I say this personally, not as a representative of this board or of the superintendent's office, but my concerns are when you drop in this population, you are looking possibly at closing schools and reducing staffing.

[03:44:34] And reducing staffing means, you know, letting go of folks, 'cause if we don't have the students to teach, we're not gonna need the folks that we have to teach them. And so I am highly concerned about that. I think our commitment to pre-K will sort of help stabilize some of that staffing concerns.

[03:44:53] But I do think in the long run, this is one of the headwinds that I believe that I have a hard time sleeping with every night. And that is, you know, as the largest employer in the county, we have a responsibility and I wanna make sure that we do the best we can for our employees.

[03:45:08] And I think we have to do the right and responsible things. And so I will be supporting scenario B and this motion. Reluctantly, I wish we could be going forward building the school, everyone's seen the pictures and everyone's seen the project. It's a fabulous project, but at this time, it doesn't make the right sense for this division.

[03:45:29] So thank you very much for everyone working on this, and for the communities who are hoping to have it, I, you know, I'm committed to making sure that we, you know, redistrict and do the things we need to do to sort of rebalance our schools. And if there's overcrowding in places, you know, we're gonna have to do it, but it'll come with some hard, hard choices that will, again, redistricting is never the fun thing to do, but that is a necessary thing we're gonna have to do.

[03:45:54] So with that, I'll ask the board to please vote on the motion. The motion again, to remind everyone, 'cause we've been talking a lot is scenario B. This is to support scenario B, which would be canceling the construction of the 14th high school. So a yes vote is for scenario B to not build the high school.

[03:46:13] Please put the vote up on the screen and we will go ahead and vote.

[03:46:29] It did, you didn't, did you put the vote up? It didn't come through. Only him. No, I'd really like to record this one.

[03:46:44] There's, it's not working.

[03:46:59] All right, to take a roll call. Only Mr. Jesse sing it. - None of us are seeing it. - Okay, Lateef. - I vote yes on this motion. - Blake.

[03:47:14] - Yes. - Jesse. - No. - Tredinic. - Yes. - Wall. - Yes. - Wilk. - Yes. - Williams. Zargarpur.

[03:47:30] - Yes. - The vote is seven yes, one no, Jesse, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to board matters. Last time we started with Blake, tonight Wilk. - As the great Marshall Mathers, AKA Eminem said in his famous song, "Lose Yourself."

[03:47:47] The clock's run out, time's up over, blah, I yield my time. - Ms. Trudenik. - I think we were inspired by Jen Wall and her quotes, so I think we're all going to come with some next week.

[03:48:05] So, I do wanna say it's happy National Girls and Women's Sports Day. One of our graduates sent me that today and asked me to mention it, so I figured I would. Shout out to my son's college and career coach and counselors who have dealt with him for a very long time 'cause he is very persistent and goes about things himself.

[03:48:28] And I'm glad to hear from Karina that we only have 114 more days. So thank you to his counselors who only have 114 more days to deal with him. It was a great public comment time this evening on everything from boys volleyball to other things. I'm extremely passionate about helping those young men try to make that sport happen.

[03:48:46] I think their points were great. I've talked to a few of them and I intend to go and watch a practice since they play out of state a lot. I'd also like to address some of the things said about getting back to school this week. It was a tough decision Dr. McDade had to make with so many factors involved.

[03:49:03] I truly appreciate her team, along with our custodians, bus drivers, teachers, and staff. I strongly believe that our students benefit most when they are in school. Education provides stability, opportunity, meals, support services, and connection, especially for our most vulnerable students.

[03:49:20] While winter weather presents real challenges, we also know that waiting until every sidewalk is completely clear is not realistic in our region. At some point, we do have to begin transitioning back to normal routines with safety, communication, and shared responsibility guiding us.

[03:49:36] Each family ultimately knows their child's circumstances best and parents should always make the decision they feel is safest. At the same time, I believe it's important that we continue encouraging resilience, responsibility and perseverance in our young people. Learning to navigate challenges together as families and as a community is part of preparing them for adulthood.

[03:49:56] I'm grateful to Dr. McDade for her leadership for prioritizing student safety, ensuring meals were available to families during this closure. I also firmly believe that online learning did not work and our kids suffered because of it, so I don't want to try that again.

[03:50:11] I've heard many teachers regarding grades and I want you to know I hear you. The points you've raised have also been brought up by my own children, and I will keep asking questions and

continuing those conversations with Dr. McDade and staff. I want to acknowledge some comments made tonight and directed towards me.

[03:50:30] I've strongly advocated for clearer, stricter guidelines alongside my colleague, Justin Wilk, especially when it comes to racial slurs and discrimination. Some of this is addressed in the Code of Behavior. I do not condone any acts of discrimination, and we have policies in place to address such incidents.

[03:50:50] And I expect those to be fully enforced across all of our schools. I followed up with division leadership on the most recent incident to ensure that not only Gainesville Middle School, but all Brentsville district schools are safe and welcoming places for all students.

[03:51:07] I voted against the code of behavior because I believe there needed to be firmer and more consistent consequences for certain behaviors. And I have said from this seat that racial slurs and in particular, the N-word, are never okay to say. Finally, on a lighter note, I really enjoyed meeting with principals, discussing the budget, and if any constituents or non-constituents wanna discuss anything in the budget or have any concerns that they wanna bring to my attention, please feel free.

[03:51:34] I've also thoroughly enjoyed watching basketball and seeing many of our athletes commit to further their athletic and academic careers, and I am praying for 70-degree weather here soon and for our school board meetings to never take this long again.

[03:51:53] - All right, Ms. Zargarpur. - I yield my time. - Ms. Wall. - Okay. So I want to start out with saying we have survived the snow Crete storm of 2026.

[03:52:14] Well done everybody. I want to thank everybody who worked really hard, especially Mr. Bach and his department, for getting everybody out there to get schools ready for kids to come back. and I know the community is coming around. Parents in my district are thrilled that schools are open.

[03:52:30] I've heard from them, they've told me this, and the majority are okay with returning to a regular schedule without the delays. And I'm on the record for not being in favor of virtual days. I still have a lot of trauma from COVID, me personally.

[03:52:45] I wanna speak about boys volleyball. I am all in favor of it. I think it's a great idea. I viewed a video submission from a Ronald Reagan middle schooler who advocated for boys volleyball to be in our schools and he made great points and we heard the people who came in tonight and spoke about it.

[03:53:06] I think it is a great idea, I'm all in favor, please let me know what we can do to proceed to get that in place for the 2026-2027 school year. Regarding the rights of every student to feel safe in school, to be free of bullying, racism, harassment, vile language, I fully support the rights of students.

[03:53:30] Our code of behavior is strong. We need strong, consistent enforcement of the code of behavior. And I applaud the division for the efforts that are being made whenever we need to address particular problems at particular schools and what we are doing across the division as well to help students understand and be responsible for their actions and their words.

[03:53:56] And so I do want to say, like, every student does have a right to feel safe in school, and that includes the way that they are treated by their peers. And we as adults need to do a lot around this, and we are doing a lot, and I appreciate the efforts. I want to say good luck to the four students from Prince William County Schools who are going to be competing in the Olympics and the Paralympics.

[03:54:18] They are graduates of our program. Three are graduates, and one attended elementary school here in Prince William County, so good luck to them. And I wanted to also say there was a remark about Battlefield's traffic situation.

[03:54:34] And this is an issue I've worked very hard on over many years, as Mr. Buck knows, we've had many conversations. We've seen a lot of improvements. We've done a lot what we can do. We've done what we can do within our power. And we've advocated for improvement on the roads through VDOT and other solutions.

[03:54:54] If there are other solutions out there that we can do, I'm open to hear about them. I will say when Battlefield had 3,200 students, it was a lot worse. And now that we're at capacity of 2,000 students, it's, while there are still bottlenecks, as we have at Colgan and Osborne Park and Gainesville High School, just with a lot of kids arriving at the same time, especially a lot of drivers, you're gonna have bottlenecks.

[03:55:19] But I do believe that the situation is improving. Let's see, I have 39 seconds, okay. Thoughts on snow and leadership. Dr. McDade, you've got one of the hardest jobs. on your shoulders, and I think as leaders, it's critical for us to understand what is in and what is out of our control, whether it's student behavior, student words, snow.

[03:55:41] I've seen it phrased this way, control your perceptions, direct your actions properly and willingly accept what is out of your control. And most of what we experience as leaders is outside our control, but our choices and our values are always within our control.

[03:55:57] So as we move forward and think about those things, we have strong values and we have made good choices. And I think the community appreciates and can recognize that. So thank you to your team and you for your leadership on this and so many other issues.

[03:56:13] Thank you, Dr. McDade. - Ms. William. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll start by saying happy Rosa Parks Day. It's February 4th has been designated in honor of her. And as you've heard already, it is Black History Month. Did you know that Virginia is the birthplace of racial categorizations, started by colonists, which started even before the foundation, I mean, before America actually was founded and existed.

[03:56:43] I bring this up because we're in Virginia. Love Virginia history. It is important because it is something that still continues on today. And America has never existed without people of color. Why this is important and we study black history is because it is integral not only to learn about people who are different from you.

[03:57:04] It removes the fear, allows you to connect, build community, learn something new. But when the fear remains, it often breeds division. Since the founding of Black History Month, it celebrates its 100th year anniversary today.

[03:57:21] Well, this year in 2026. It was originally started by Dr. Carter G. Woodson as a week because he understood and recognized the importance of learning about black history. not only as a week, but all year long.

[03:57:37] Dr. Carter G. Woodson was a Harvard graduate, the second black man in the nation to earn a PhD from Harvard. He was a member, he is an honorary member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, which is one of the nine black Greek organizations, as well as Sigma Pi Phi.

[03:57:56] And for those who are not familiar, it is the nation's oldest black fraternity founded for black professional men in 1904, and Dr. Carter G. Woodson is also a native of Virginia.

[03:58:14] Yeah, a lot of Virginia in black history today. It is important that we integrate not only black history, but all people's history in the story of America. We all contributed to building this country and to bringing it to where it is now. It's even more important in today's time when black history and other people's history, other people of color's history is being challenged regularly in what we teach in our k-12 education it is our job as educators to and well our job and responsibility to learn grow maintain and exercise not only a sense of wonder but continuous

[03:58:48] curiosity as leaders it is our duty to ensure the next generation has learned the full inclusive story of america from all of its contributors and that students and those who don't know have the opportunity to visually see, tactilely feel, and study all of those who made contributions to this great country. When you see yourself in the information that you are learning as you grow up, you learn to have pride in yourself and your ancestry and that is extremely important. I can

[03:59:22] testify to that as not having very many examples in my youth growing up. I had to go find them on my own. Our students should not do that. They should see them in the classroom in every subject, no matter what the subject because I have 44 seconds left I'm going to finish it up by saying thank you to everyone who contributed to getting our students back in the building for snow the the most important thing is that we are able to open efficiently and on time and safely and I just want to send a special shout out to all of our schools that provided meals just to show you a short example when schools aren't open Fred Lynn itself on the 29th served 708 meals on the 30th

[04:00:01] 1,652 meals, on February 2nd, 1,602 meals for a combined total of 3,962 meals, and that was just at Fred Lynn alone. So please clean off your sidewalks, let's get these kids in schools, especially for our most vulnerable population.

[04:00:18] Thank you. - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, before I get started, I do wanna just thank the rest of my colleagues and say thank you to facilities, to Mr. Bach, to the custodial staff at all the schools all over the county, they did an excellent job.

[04:00:39] I mean, we might wanna sell a contract out to VDOT and help them out, I'm just saying. But yeah, thank you guys. We really appreciate it, the community appreciates it, families appreciate it, the kids appreciate it, and the board does too, so thank you.

[04:00:57] This year holds, as Ms. Williams said, this year holds special significance As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary, we are also marking our 100th anniversary since black history was first formally recognized in this country.

[04:01:13] As she said before, in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Wilson established what was known as Negro History Week because the contributions, experiences, and truths of black Americans were being excluded from the dominant historical narrative.

[04:01:29] What began as a week grew into what we now recognized as Black History Month. And that origin matters. Black history was not created to divide, it was created to correct erasure. As we reflect on 250 years of America, we must be honest about the full story.

[04:01:47] Black Americans have helped build this nation at every stage, economically, culturally, intellectually, and morally. Often without recognition, often without protection, and often without the full rights promised by our founding ideas.

[04:02:03] Yet, through resilience, innovation, leadership, and sacrifice, Black Americans have profoundly shaped this country and our commonwealth. As you heard from Ms. Williams about all the Black history in Virginia. And I'm proud to join our students, families, and educators in recognizing and celebrating those invaluable contributions, past, present, and future.

[04:02:26] And at this moment matters, not just because of history, but because of what is happening right now. At a time when there are those who are actively working to restrict how history is taught, which stories are told, and whose experiences are valued, Black History Month takes on an even greater significance.

[04:02:50] Efforts to erase, sanitize, or silence parts of our history do not protect our children. They mislead them. A nation that cannot tell the full truth about its past cannot fully understand its present or responsibility to shape its future.

[04:03:07] Black history exists because it was once deliberately excluded. Its continued recognition is not about preference or politics, it's about honesty. Teenage black history affirms the humanity and lived experiences of millions of Americans and ensures that our students receive a history that is complete, accurate, and empowering.

[04:03:29] This is especially important in public education. Our classrooms should be places where students see themselves reflected, where truth is not avoided and we're learning builds understanding rather than fear when students understand history fully they are better equipped to think critically emphasize empathize with others and participate meaningfully in our democracy preserving black history is not optional it is our responsibility a responsibility to our students to our communities and a responsibility to the integrity of public of education itself.

[04:04:03] So as we honor this 100-year milestone during America's 250th birthday, let's be clear. Black history is American history. Telling it fully strengthens our schools, our communities, and our country.

[04:04:18] Thank you and good night. - Mr. Jester. - I yield my time. - Wow, all right. Well, yeah, here we go. - Here we go.

[04:04:34] - No, no, I don't have a lot to say other than saying thank you to the board for voting to approve the strategic plan. I think it's fantastic. You know, we've spent the last few months celebrating the successes, but now, you know, the rear view mirror is gonna be smaller than it is always our front windshield, which is what we have to look forward to.

[04:04:54] And we have a lot of hope, aspirations with this new strategic plan. So as we move forward, looking at that front windshield, I am excited and I am thrilled, and I am happy to be moving forward with this board. And I thank them all for all the hard work they're doing the staff and Dr. McDade. Thank you all at this time.

[04:05:10] The school board meeting is adjourned.



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