



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Date Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 2h 48m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ifm3eNpWk9s>
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

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.

[00:00:01] - 1.02 approval agenda action. A motion is now ordered in order for the approval of the meeting agenda is amended. Vice Chair or Ms. Zagafor. - Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended.

[00:00:18] Mr. Chairman. - And Ms. Williams. - I second. - Thank you. - You're okay. - Okay, a motion to discussion.

[00:00:34] No discussion. Please vote, raise your hands. - The vote is six yes, two not present at vote. Tradinik Lateef, motion passed. - Number two, right?

[00:00:52] Motion to enter closed session, action. Moving on to the motion to enter closed session, that motion is in order. - Mr. Chairman. - Mrs. Agafor. - Okay, here we go. I move that pursuant to sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Prince William County School Board enter the closed session for the following reasons.

[00:01:16] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia. Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff

actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, or other civil litigation involving school division under section 2.2-3711A7 and eight of the Code of Virginia.

[00:01:45] And three, to discuss the award of a public contract to employee's exclusive representative, which involves the expenditure of public funds. There's so much noise going on. And the terms or scope of such contract where the discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to section 2.2-3711A 29 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:02:08] Four, to consult with division counsel regarding specific legal matters pertaining to A, publicly held real property in the Occoquan Magisterial District, and B, building inspection code pursuant to sections 2.2-3711A, three and eight of the Code of Virginia, and five, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to section 2.2-3711A, 19 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:02:42] is there a second mr chairman mr williams i second discussion no discussion vote please vote is seven yes one not president vote latef motion passed the prince william county school

[00:03:00] board will now enter closed session and return to open session in one hour good evening the prince

[00:04:08] william county school board is now returning can you hear me it doesn't sound like it's on is it on prince william county the prince william county it's not on prince william county school School Board to call this meeting or coming back out of closed session.

[00:04:27] The motion is now in order to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Vice Chair Jesse. I move that pursuant to section 2.2, the S-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of February 18, 2026 to be certified by adopting the following resolutions.

[00:04:48] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only business, public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies, and two, only public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:05:20] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Please vote.

[00:05:38] - Vote as eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Next up is approval appointments and releases, Mr. Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in the closed session.

[00:05:56] - Mr. Chairman. - I have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - I voted.

[00:06:24] - Vote as eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, at this point, in this tonight's meeting, we have a public hearing first before the board meeting begins. The public hearing is regarding fiscal year 2027 proposed budget. And so I read this script here and then we'll have some citizen comment.

[00:06:41] I declare that a public hearing is now open on the subject of superintendents, of the superintendents fiscal year 2027 proposed budget. Any citizen who signed up to speak on the subject may

do so at this time. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of meeting.

[00:07:03] When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record. For the public hearing this evening, we have one speaker, Blake Edward Herra.

[00:07:29] - I'm gonna mix, oh, my name is Blake Herra. My address is on file. I'm gonna mix up a little bit and I don't have a prepared speech this time. So 6.8% increase from last year. Now the board needs to take a good look at their finances. You essentially just wait, you canceled the 14th high school.

[00:07:46] It's \$22 million that you paid with bonds. going to have to pay interest on those bonds so you also have the 16 million dollar plot of land you're going to pay 20 to 40 000 a year to maintain it if you don't manage to repurpose it um and then those bonds have to be paid back so the the bonds probably 500 000 to 1.3 million dollars for you now there was an interest of the aquan supervisor to repurpose the uh the land uh for to turn it into a data center potentially you could get lucky with that now with canceling the

[00:08:23] 14th high school that that brings back going back to policy to uh 264 which i mentioned uh last meeting is it needs to be amended right now the only two options the board has is either build a new school for overcrowding or in it uh or an initiative by the board mr wilk tried that last year it failed so it's not really the great great best option if you're not tracking uh with the most probably one of the most controversial uh laws that are out there is the one big beautiful bill right now there is the funding is going to be essentially flatlined there's going to be

[00:09:02] no increase okay little to increase in title one title two title three ida cte and i uh head start which are essentially flat funded like i said um which according to dr many's budget there's an excessive federal budget which i don't think is being tracked one of the biggest things is that that we've come up in the last few months since December 3rd is this board's relationship with the teachers is severely fractured.

[00:09:32] Now it's great, Dr. Medaig, you wanna propose \$1,000 increase for those who have a master's degree. That's only \$200 increase from last year. Because the board's relationship is fractured, I would encourage potentially looking at something else, potentially a bigger increase in it, maybe something for bachelor's students at a higher step, but obviously bachelor's degrees at a higher step, but that's up to you.

[00:09:58] The other thing is the human resources department is increasing by \$7 million. And you're adding, what is it? 12 additional full-time positions, which is excessive because this building has an absurd amount of oversight over the schools.

[00:10:14] And it's been addressed to the school board previously. I'm not gonna get into that. The other biggest thing before I run out of time is with Mr. Dan, since you, before I run out of time, on page 132 of the PDF, there is no coach to be assigned, no coach assigned for the flag football, girls flag football sports. - Thank you, Mr. Harrah.

[00:10:32] Appreciate it. - Thank you. And he is our only speaker this evening. And so at that point, there being no other citizens who signed up to speak on this subject, I declare the public hearing closed. We will now move on to the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:10:48] That will be led by our student representative, Bula Sarsa from the C.D. Hilton High School to lead us in the pledge.

[00:11:09] - Okay, thank you. At this time, we will be doing our Thriving Futures focus. and as everyone knows, this 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.

[00:11:29] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or an award at the state or national level. Tonight, the school board is honored to acknowledge the PWCS students who won the awards at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Oratorical Program.

[00:11:44] Now in its 41st year, the competition is sponsored by the Prince William County Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. This year's theme is awakening the dream, breaking barriers in the fight for justice and unity.

[00:12:00] Under the guidance of their coaches, many of them, many of whom are teachers, students prepared speeches early in the school year, refine their delivery and work to reflect Dr. King's legendary oratorical style.

[00:12:16] Students represented their school in a regional competition and presented their speeches to a panel of judges in advance of the program. Community and family members attended the program and a panel of judges selected the winning orators. I invite Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District to introduce our first honoree.

[00:12:32] Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. This evening, we are proud to recognize Danielle Odom, a seventh grader, excuse me, from Rippon Middle School for earning the Best Before Judges Award. Danielle is joined tonight by language arts teacher, Ms. Lee Rawlings.

[00:12:50] Danielle, I invite you to share a few words about your significant award. - First, I'd like to thank you, the school board, for giving me the opportunity to come before you tonight. It is an honor, and for that, I am truly grateful.

[00:13:07] I would like to give a thanks to my parents for all the encouragement and the sacrifice that they made for this moment. I would like to thank you, Ms. Rawlings, for all the support, because without you, I would have never discovered my hidden talent for speaking.

[00:13:24] I'd like to give a very special thank you to my principal, Ms. Donahue, the whole of Prince William County, and the alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for creating the MLK Oratorical Competition.

[00:13:42] Thank you all again, and have a blessed week. - Thank you, Danielle, and congratulations to all of you, especially those who spent all those hard hours with you, Danielle, after school, getting you prepared for the speech.

[00:14:01] And again, thank you to Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated, alumni chapter, for hosting this activity to inspire and remind us what black history is all about. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. And now on to Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, the Coles District, who will introduce our next honorees. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:14:17] Tonight, the Coles District will recognize two outstanding students. First, I congratulate Kaveem Ahmad, a seventh grade student from Saunders Middle School for winning the Judge's Choice

Award. Kaveem is supported tonight by Saunders Middle School principal Jeremy Bird.

[00:14:33] Kaveem, would you like to share a few words about this honor? - Hello, I just wanna say thank you to my amazing principal, my coaches, and my wonderful parents for making me a better person.

[00:14:51] Also, I wanna say thank you to Martin Luther King Jr. because of his words, it opened many doors to my life. Also, I just want to say, this whole entire award is not about medals and certificates.

[00:15:09] It's about his memory. It's about preserving his memory for generations to come. This is all I want to say. Thank you.

[00:15:26] - Thank you so much. It is also my privilege to congratulate our very own Beulah Sarsa, a senior from CD Hilton High School and school board student representative for winning not one but two awards at the MLK Oratory Competition, the Best Before Audience Award and the Best Before Judges Award.

[00:15:47] Beulah is supported this evening by Hilton High School Principal Cassandra Crawford. Beulah, you are forward. Would you please share a few words about your awards and your experience? - Absolutely, I'd just like to open by saying thank you very much to everyone who's believed in me, everyone who's given me a chance.

[00:16:04] I am a senior now in high school, which is kind of crazy to believe, but throughout my 12-year educational journey, I could not see myself doing something like what I did last month. So anyone who's ever told me, Beulah, you can do it, anyone who's given me that push, including my principal, Ms. Crawford, including my coach, Mr. Murphy, including all of you on the school board, I thank you, I'm just really thankful.

[00:16:29] Oh, and thank you to my parents, yeah. - Okay, thank you, Beulah. Next up, we have Mr. Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District.

[00:16:47] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. This evening, we are proud to recognize Arwa Zindin, a senior from Garfield High School for earning the Judge's Choice Award. Garfield High School Principal Matthew Matheson is here this evening in support of our Judge's Choice Award winner.

[00:17:06] Arwa, would you please share a few words about this honor? - I'd like to first say thank you to my parents, of course, and my older brother. They've been my personal chauffeurs, my drivers, and they've been my biggest supporters throughout this entire process. I'd also like to thank my sponsor, Mr. Maruso.

[00:17:23] He was the one that kind of dragged me into it. I was busy, I didn't think I'd have time for the MLK Oratorical, and he was like, I know you can do it. I would just try it, and it was completely worth it. I'd like to a special thank you to a friend of mine, Omar, his mom.

[00:17:38] She's amazing, she was incredibly supportive. And I honestly thank you to the panel, thank you to Prince William, because it was incredibly heartwarming to sit in the crowd, to watch those speeches be performed, and to understand that the youth is really trying, even if in heart-wrenching times, even after all of these individuals and their sacrifices and the revolutionary change that they have caused, it's so beautiful to see it continue, and I'm so happy.

[00:18:02] And I'm grateful to express that gratitude to be a part of it. Thank you. - Thank you, congratulations. - Congratulations. I would like to ask all those involved in supporting our honorees this

evening, including family members, teachers and friends who attend this evening to stand in recognition of their support for these young scholars.

[00:18:35] Wonderful, wonderful. Before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you so much, Dr. Lateef. To each of our honorees here tonight, I had the honor to sit and listen to each of your speeches. You were exceptional, just truly phenomenal.

[00:18:53] Your voice, your courage, and your conviction not only honored Dr. King's legacy, it inspired all of us. So congratulations on a job well done, and we are PWCS proud. - Thank you, Dr. McDade.

[00:19:09] Yes, another round of applause. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward with a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:23:01] Okay, all right, thank you everyone for that. That was lovely. At this time, we are now gonna move on to the adoption of the consent agenda. That will be 12.01. Vice Chair Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended.

[00:23:20] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:23:46] - Vote is seven yes, one not present at vote. Wall, motion passed. - Great, moving on next to the acknowledgements and recognitions. This is on for action. Vice Chair Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgement and recognitions as recommended.

[00:24:02] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:24:32] - Vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tridentic, motion passed. - Wonderful, thank you. Moving on to citizen comment time. For those citizens who signed up in advance with the clerk, they 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.

[00:25:11] If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight, we do have 20 citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come onto the podium and state your name and address for the record and then you may speak. I'll call the first five up so you kind of know the order we're going and you can grab a seat up front if you so choose.

[00:25:30] If not, you can just come up when it's your turn. Claire Gillespie, Jessica Rodriguez-Snellings, Parker Hallman, Meg Pomeroy and Anders Parker. Claire Gillespie.

[00:25:47] - Good evening. Thank you, Dr. Lateef, members of the board and Dr. McDade. My name is Claire Gillespie and I'm a theater teacher at Colgan High School. On January 13th, the theater teachers in the district received communication from Dr. Bellino, supervisor for the arts informing us of the new memorandum for theatrical construction of temporary stages stating that platforms over 16 and a half inches more than 10 by 12 feet or 120 square feet and have 10 or more people on it were would require permitting from prince william county permitting office and a four to six month advanced process in addition the stages would need to be

[00:26:23] constructed by a licensed contractor immediately following the memo the new strategic plan was proposed, which includes a detailed section on growing high quality theater programs with appropriate facilities, related resources, and theater courses. It additionally states that we, your theater educators, will be able to combine the student's artistic passion with CTE competencies.

[00:26:44] For example, construction of professional theater. It concludes with a bolded section outlining the ambitious goal of increasing student participation in arts-related student showcases, competitions, and public performances by 3% annually. These two pieces of literature run in direct contradiction to each other.

[00:27:03] And we, theater teachers from across the county, come to you this evening to highlight how, with the limitations this memo presents, we will not be able to adequately achieve the goals outlined by the strategic plan. We, the licensed theater teachers of this county, stand united in voice, and tonight you will hear from many of us and our students, both past and present.

[00:27:27] As we go through our presentation, we will not only reference examples and materials in the binder that is placed before you, we will also focus on the juxtaposition between the new restrictions and the strategic plan with the conclusion and hope that you will appeal on our behalf to the County Board of Supervisors to change this curriculum, design, and student experience altering mandate.

[00:27:51] We know that safety is the priority and heart of this new memorandum. Safety is also at the priority and heart of every moment in our classrooms. We believe, however, that this memorandum has been made without considering national workplace theatrical standards, the guidance of the surrounding districts with which we are called to compete, and the expertise of your hired, licensed, and educated professionals.

[00:28:19] Thank you. - Thank you. Next up, Jessica Rodriguez-Snellings. - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board and Dr. McDade. My name is Jessica Rodriguez-Snellings and I am the theater teacher at Gainesville High School.

[00:28:37] I'm here along with my fellow theater educators to ask that you advocate on our behalf to the county board of supervisors regarding the new memorandum regulating temporary stages and platforms for theater. In place of county permitting, we are asking the board to advocate for an internal review process for theater platforms and for the creation of a dedicated theater position within the fine arts office to oversee theater across the county.

[00:29:02] Platforms are not a decorative extra. They are essential to theater performance. Without levels, performances occur on a single flat plane, making it difficult for audiences to follow the story or identify key moments. Scenic designers rely on platforms, stairs, ramps, and other elevated surfaces to create clarity and dynamic staging.

[00:29:25] Even this room demonstrates how levels help guide focus and shape how a space is used. Under the new memorandum, there is a severe financial restriction on our ability to use these foundational tools. The required county permit costs \$1,500.

[00:29:43] If changes are needed, there is a \$275 fee for resubmittal and an additional fee equal to 2% of the project's value. After that, must pay for an outside engineer or construction company to build the structure an expense that can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars prefabricated platforms are also expensive costing several thousand dollars given the current infrastructure for theater programs

in Prince William County these new costs make platforms unattainable for many schools limiting the educational and artistic opportunities that our students deserve

[00:30:22] Please consider advocating on our behalf for a more cost-effective means of enforcing safety standards and temporary stages and platforms. Thank you for your time and for supporting theater in our schools. Thank you. Next, Parker Hallman.

[00:30:42] Good evening. I thought I was going a little later, so imagine I really brought this all home. Members of the board, Dr. Lateef and Dr. McDade, you will hear from theater teachers from across Prince William County who are passionate about serving our students with excellence, safety, and integrity.

[00:31:05] We ask for your help in opening communication with the County Board of Supervisors on our behalf because Prince William County is now being held to standards that are far more restrictive than those of surrounding counties and even surrounding states that follow established theater safety manuals, OSHA guidelines, and national education theater standards.

[00:31:26] None require this level of permitting for standard theatrical performances in K-12 productions, and because they don't, their students gain the full experience of building, designing, and performing on industry standard sets, experiences that our students will now lose.

[00:31:44] If this regulation remains as written, our county will fall out of alignment with regional norms and workplace expectations. Technical theater is a CTE-aligned discipline. Our students learn carpentry, rigging, drafting, and safety, all skills that transfer directly into construction, engineering, and architecture, as well as the entertainment industry.

[00:32:05] These are real careers with real pipelines, but you cannot ask us to prepare students for professional theatrical work while capping our stages at literally 16 inches off the ground. We cannot teach industry standard construction when the policy prevents industry standard practice.

[00:32:22] We believe strongly in safety. We also believe in the expertise of the trained, certified educators that you have hired. educators who have safely supervised tens of thousands of build hours across decades of their careers. We are not asking to eliminate oversight or ignore risk, but we are asking for reasonable, educationally sound expectations consistent with other counties.

[00:32:47] To meet the strategic plan's goals of expanding high-quality theater programs, increasing student performances, and developing workplace-ready skills, we must have policies that allow us to do our jobs. Tonight we advocate to speak on our behalf with the County Board of Supervisors to put into writing a new mandate so that our students can continue to learn, build, and create at the level that they deserve.

[00:33:13] Thank you. - Meg Pomeroy. - Meg Pomeroy, okay. - Anders Parker.

[00:33:31] - Hello, good evening. I am the student president of Drama Club at Woodbridge Senior High School and have been a scenic designer on the past six main stage productions at Woodbridge. Before this recent memorandum, my peers and I have had the one-of-a-kind opportunity to construct wonderful sets and perform on industry standard stages in high school.

[00:33:56] This is why it breaks my heart to see that the students in this county are now being robbed of this opportunity that I was fortunate enough to have. As the memorandum stands, it is a nearly identical

effect on high school theater companies as the one that a strict ban on sets above the height of 16.5 inches would have.

[00:34:16] This is for two primary reasons. Firstly, that the permitting costs required are simply not feasible in the budget of most high school theater departments. Secondly, that the permitting process takes months when many theater departments have only a small number of weeks to build a set.

[00:34:35] There is an element of risk in many school sanctioned activities, and we trust educators It is with the safety of students who partake in these activities. We trust coaches when students play on a sports team. We trust chemistry teachers when students handle potentially dangerous chemicals in a lab.

[00:34:54] Why are we unwilling to trust our theater educators, all of whom are trained in accordance with OSHA safety and national theater safety, and who all have had years of learned theatrical experience under their belts? I would not have given up the experience that I've had in set construction and performing on this stage, on the stage at Woodbridge Senior High School for anything.

[00:35:19] And I think it is a large part of what has prepared me for my future. And I think it would be a tragedy to take that away from students. Thank you for your time. Thank you. five. Shannon Marie Crown, Steven Shetler, Jared Pugh, Erlena Bellino, Rena Stapp. Shannon Marie

[00:35:47] Crown. Good evening. I'm Shannon Crown. I am a theater mom. My son's teacher Parker Hallman has told you the nuts and the bolts of a new memorandum that requires permitting for school theater sets. As a homeowner, I know how time consuming, expensive, and unexpeditious this process can be. It is unreasonable to saddle our teachers with this. Theater and

[00:36:22] arts matter. They aren't just gravy, they can be the main course for many students. The entertainment world is a multi-billion dollar industry with many career paths. Designers, managers, and technicians in the industry are the backbone of every event in our society. Not only do they work in live theater and the screen but also for political rallies sporting events concerts radio programs olympic games and music parks etc students still reap benefits from being involved in theater even if they choose

[00:36:58] another career path they develop confidence public speaking skills and the ability to think on their feet which are critical for academic and future professional success they learn teamwork time management and the value of contributing to a larger goal whether on stage or behind the scenes theater students consistently score high on the SAT because parsitive participation improves reading comprehension cognitive development and discipline I say let's give these students all of the

[00:37:35] advantages and not stifle them with permits and restrictions theater Teachers are professionals who know how to design create and build safe sets Our county shouldn't want let one bad teacher ruin the theater learning dynamic for all of our children. Thank you Stephen Shetler. Good evening. Dr. Lateef members of the board. Dr. McDade. My name is Stephen Shetler I am the theater arts teacher at Patriot High School

[00:38:14] I'm also the father of a graduating theater student at Colgan High School Technical theater classes are not just arts electives, but are effective incubators for student growth and workforce and independent life preparedness. According to the Educational Theater Association's 2024 State of Theater Education Report, theater classes, including technical theater, are present in 69 percent of U.S.

[00:38:40] high schools, demonstrating widespread appreciation of their value in providing students opportunities to cultivate both creative and technical skills. Technical theatre uniquely blends technology, engineering, art, and math.

[00:38:56] Students learn lighting design, audio engineering, carpentry, costuming, scenic art, stage management, skills directly tied not only to applied arts, but also to STEM and career pathways. The Arts Education Partnership Theatre Counts Research highlights that technical theatre explicitly teaches applied math, physics, problem solving, and safe tool operation while fostering teamwork and communication competencies that serve students well, whatever their future goals may be. When we invest in technical theater classes, we invest in a future workforce that is innovative, adaptable, and prepared to

[00:39:35] excel. These experiences contribute to the advancement of PWCS's profile of a graduate, which aims to prepare students to be critical thinkers, innovators, resilient individuals, and global collaborators. When students engage with theater through PWCS technical and design classes. They develop tool safety and construction skills that are standard in university and professional theaters. You may see these standards at tab D in the binders that have been provided to you. PWCS students that graduate without practice in those standard techniques will be at a disadvantage when compared with their

[00:40:14] peers from other districts and unready for full participation in professional and university theater programs, thank you. - Thank you, Jared Pugh.

[00:40:34] - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board and Dr. McDade. My name is Jared Pugh. I'm a theater teacher at Osmond Park High School here in Prince William County Schools. And thank you for the opportunity for giving me to speak tonight. I'm here to address the recent memorandum issued to theater teachers that places significant restrictions on set construction within our programs.

[00:40:53] While I fully support Prince William County's commitment to student safety, These restrictions unintentionally put our students at significant competitive disadvantage, one that contradicts with the goals outlined in the Prince William County Strategic Plan. The Prince William County Strategic Plan emphasizes excellence, innovation, and ensuring our students can compete and thrive beyond our classrooms.

[00:41:16] Until now, our theater programs have been able to do exactly that. We have consistently produced work that stands alongside what has been created in Loudoun County, Fairfax County, and beyond. And speaking of Fairfax County and Loudoun County, whose districts provide guidance to teachers and band-aids on how to build their platforms, railings and other safety measures that are standardized and go along with the national standards.

[00:41:42] You can see those regulations in example A and B in your binder provided for you. Each area mentioning platforms is also highlighted in tab for your ease. But the new restrictions in this memorandum changed that. While our neighboring districts continue building multi-level, fully realized scenic designs, these new limitations would prevent us from doing just the same.

[00:42:04] In the results, the Prince William County students who have previously been competitive will now struggle to match in productions, match the standards that other productions are doing and directly influence in scoring, recognition, and awards at major competitions.

[00:42:19] Our students compete in several highly regarded events where scenic design is not an afterthought. It is scored in an essential component. These being things like the Cappies and the Virginia

Theater Festival and VHSL One Act competitions.

[00:42:35] As a Cappies mentor myself, I have the honor of seeing shows throughout the region. And I can confidently say that every production that I've seen earned significant recognition has featured a multi-story or structurally complex set.

[00:42:51] This is not a luxury. It is the standard at which our students' work is being judged. If we limit our ability to build safe, well-constructed, educationally meaningful sets, we effectively limit our students' ability to learn the real-world industry standard skills that these competitions reward.

[00:43:11] We also limit their opportunity to represent Prince William County schools with excellence. Theater teachers are not asking for a boundless creative freedom. We're asking for clear, collaboratively developed, safety-centered guidelines with input of teachers, fine arts leadership and technical theater professionals.

[00:43:28] Prince William County has incredibly talented young artists and let's ensure that our policies governing our programs empower them rather than hold them back. Thank you so much. - Thank you. - Erlina Bellino.

[00:43:45] - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, Dr. McDade. My name is Erlina Bellino. I am the director of theater arts for Battlefield High School. Thank you for hearing us out today.

[00:44:00] I come before you this evening, not just in solidarity with the rest of the theatrical educators, but also with student testimony. For as you know, Prince William County Schools, we graduate students every year to a high level and to higher level institutions nationally in accordance with the strategic plan.

[00:44:24] Each leave our halls with invaluable experience and knowledge for their career and college paths. Those who graduate and choose theater as a path no less prepared. When asked to write a testimony we asked many students and they replied and I would like to share some of these testimonies with you all this evening. One student on their experience in technical theater wrote I learned how to not only handle tools but how to work both quickly and safely skills that are proven invaluable in my short tenure at Virginia Commonwealth University thus far.

[00:44:59] Not only did I learn the basics I was able to actively work on the sets for shows I was and was not in, and I can tell you as a graduate of the performing arts program at Virginia Commonwealth University, in order to audition, in order to actually apply, you must have a great deal of experience within that art.

[00:45:24] This advanced level of education helped stabilize my future by advancing my resume and preparing me for the real world opportunities. Another student also majoring in performance wrote, this program, meaning the technical theater program within their county, is highly important to all who pass through it.

[00:45:44] The knowledge gained is not only useful, it is required if pursuing the arts in college or through a similarly skilled program of study. Our graduates can be found in the hallways of Juilliard. This is our Prince William County School graduates I'm speaking of.

[00:45:59] They can be found in the halls of Juilliard, NYU, Backstage on Broadway, and my personal favorite, when I run into graduates that, my personal graduates who are now educators in our Prince William County schools.

[00:46:18] These students are successful because of the dedicated and professional level of curriculum that they receive within our schools. It is our belief, and those of our graduates, that stunting their growth will have damaging consequences to our current and future students alike.

[00:46:36] They will not be prepared for the rigor that comes from a higher institution. Thank you. - Rena Stapp.

[00:46:53] - Hello, I'm Rena Stapp. My name and, sorry, my address is on file with the clerk. It's been a minute since I've been here. Sorry, I'm rusty. Good evening, Dr. McDague, Dr. Lateef, and members of the school board. I'm here to talk about something a little different. I'm not from the theater department, sorry.

[00:47:10] I do love the theater, so yay, go theater. I'm here to talk about civic engagement. According to Virginia law, the code of Virginia 22.1-254 about attendance, high school and middle school students shall be permitted one school day long absence per school year for anyone who is to engage in a civic event that includes lobbying legislators, engaging in protests and other civic events without penalty.

[00:47:36] School boards may permit additional excused absences or require that students provide advance notice. So let's look at what PWCS says. For regulations 724-1, section three of definitions, D of excused absences, let's go to subsection nine about civic events.

[00:47:56] Civic events, middle and high school students shall be excused for one school day for the purpose of engaging in a civic event. Students should provide advance notice of the intended absence when possible. I have some friends whose children are in middle school and high school and are planning on participating in the walkout on February 20th, which is coming up this week.

[00:48:15] There was Instagram posts about it. There have been chats about it. In said posts, they talk about how teachers and schools have already been informed. So that is giving the advance notice. I have a friend whose school sent them an email saying that students would not be able to leave the building or they would be subject to consequence.

[00:48:39] And that goes against what our regulations say. If they should stay on school property, that should not be a problem because they are participating in a civil protest that has already been arranged and is completely legal in the Code of Virginia and in RPWCS.

[00:48:54] As it is Black History Month, it is the perfect time for students to engage in their civil rights in nonviolent, peaceful protests or civil disobedience. Especially with the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson recently, I think it's a great time for everyone to think about doing good things, doing some civil disobedience, and stepping out for your rights against racism.

[00:49:16] Thank you very much for your time. - The next five, Sarah Custer, Kayden Andruzzi, Elizabeth Seipkard, Augustus Seipkard, Owen Meyer.

[00:49:32] So Sarah Custer up next. - Good evening. My name is Sarah Custer and I'm a senior at Colgan High School. Only one PWCS High School was nominated for the Cappy Awards this past 2024 to 2025 season.

[00:49:47] That winning school was Colgan High School. But if we want to rise as a united front into this competition that is theater, then we need flexibility to build and grow, not create barricades that prevent students from developing the construction tech skills they will need post high school. In the upcoming

Prince William County Schools strategic plan, Elevate 2030, PWCS schools received a call to action to create 3% more opportunities for competitions and school performances over the next four years.

[00:50:15] Of all the competitions, the one that has the most notoriety is the CAPIs. The CAPES is a writing and awards program that trains high school theater and journalism students to be expert writers, critical thinkers, and leaders across the DMV. The CAPES program feeds a lot of students with passion for theater and drives them to create art at a larger scale.

[00:50:35] Within the DMV area, theater is an extremely competitive world. Of the 12 schools nominated under the following categories: Best Musical Overall, Best Set Overall, and Best Play Overall, each school set exceeded the limitations outlined in the the PWCS memorandum which you can find in example C in the binder. It's our job as students to construct a set that offers theatricality and staging options so we stand apart from the rest of the counties but with these guidelines we aren't even given the opportunity to develop shows at the same scale. The set is the hook in the story it's the first thing an audience member notices as they take their seats before the show begins. Of course a story can be told without a

[00:51:13] hook but in its absence the story loses the fire that initially drew you in. theater is about using space and creating within the space you are given as a theater teacher I once had said theater is liquid if we're given a small cup we can only film the volume within the container we are given school simplifying sets even places tighter guidelines on performers theater is about space and this is important rule that young actors need to learn and will carry with them throughout the entire of their theater career restrictions limit creativity and real-world opportunities for students to put themselves out out there.

[00:51:48] That is why we need to ensure every opportunity is protected without limitations, especially when it involves such an important aspect of theater. Thank you. - Thank you. Caden Andrewsie.

[00:52:05] - Good evening. Thank you for giving me the chance to speak today. My name is Caden Andrewsie, and I will be speaking on the recently issued technical theater safety memorandum. Commit to inclusive practices and equity with an expectation of excellence from every student and employee every day.

[00:52:21] This statement was approved as part of Dr. McDade's PWCS Elevate 2030 Strategic Plan. So, you can imagine my surprise when Prince William County Risk Management passed the new Technical Theater and Theater Memorandum requirements that go directly against the goals our school board is trying to achieve.

[00:52:37] My whole life has been shaped by theater in this county. I took my very first acting and technical theater classes here and will be pursuing this in college with the skills I have obtained through my education. The new Technical Theater Memorandum requires schools to undergo a permit process to build any functioning set, which takes months to acquire and can cost over \$2,000.

[00:52:56] Additionally, any item that will need to be purchased for the set must be made prefabricated by an established manufacturer, costing schools thousands of dollars and limiting students' opportunities to develop creative and technical skills through designing and constructing sets, which are essential aspects to theater education.

[00:53:14] Without these experiences, students miss out on valuable lessons in collaboration, problem solving, and artistic expression that come from bringing a show from creative concept to life. Not only

does this hurt our school's wallet, but the education of students like myself involved in technical theater classes who were promised hands-on learning through set design and construction.

[00:53:35] I've gotten to learn valuable life skills, mathematics, problem solving, and team building working on set construction, many lessons I would not have learned in a traditional classroom setting. By limiting our creativity, we also limit the education and college readiness of our students.

[00:53:50] The lessons learned from the collaboration of theater are essential to becoming problem solvers and change makers within our community. So now I ask, does limiting the accessibility of the arts to young learners truly align with your values of inclusive practices? Thank you and have a good night.

[00:54:08] - Elizabeth Seip-Card. - Good evening. Last week I spoke to you about your \$2.4 billion budget.

[00:54:23] Since then, your FOIA office has officially admitted in writing that records of recruitment efforts for an in-person queue language transliterator since 2021 could not be found or do not exist.

[00:54:41] For years, you have told the public there is a staffing shortage. Your own records now prove that you have not even been looking. This is not a shortage. This is deliberate indifference. This week, I attempted to schedule the mandatory resolution session for our due process hearing.

[00:55:01] I requested a simple, reasonable accommodation, two in-person CLTs, so that my son, the primary stakeholder, could actually participate. As of the close of business today, the district has failed to confirm this basic civil right by refusing to provide a way for my son to communicate in his own legal meeting or blocking the resolution process.

[00:55:28] I received a motion to dismiss my case this morning. The district's council claims that because my son is a 504 student, he is not entitled to accommodations under the ADA. This is a deliberate misinterpretation of the law. You cannot ignore civil rights because it is convenient for the budget.

[00:55:47] We are not fighting a historical issue from two years ago. We are fighting a current and ongoing denial. Every day Augustus sits without an effective CLT. You are accumulating more debt and causing more harm. I have heard the rumors that parents in this county never get due process or that there are no hearing officers.

[00:56:09] Let me be clear, Virginia law requires the district to contact the Supreme Court of Virginia for a hearing officer within five business days of a written waiver. If you will not provide an in-person cued language transliterator team for a meeting, we are skipping the meeting and going straight to a hearing officer.

[00:56:29] This kit and my shirt have represented for years the professional in-person standard my son is legally owed. The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights is now reviewing this case because operational convenience is not a legal defense for denying a child's civil right to language.

[00:56:48] This is our ninth federal report on the issue and the pattern of indifference must end. Stop the excuses and start the recruitment. My son's education cannot wait for you to finally start looking for the people who are supposed to help him here.

[00:57:05] Thank you. - Augustus Seipkard.

[00:57:23] - Can you hear me? - Good evening, my name is Augustus Seipkard. Last week I told you that cued language transliterator is my access, not a shadow.

[00:57:44] Since then, I found out the district has no records of even trying to find me a team for the last three years. While you sit here debating a 2.4 billion budget, I am sitting in class with dead batteries and a screen I cannot see, because you did not look for a CLT.

[00:58:09] I am the one who must work twice as hard just to get half the information. Last Friday, I sat in a class where I could not follow a word of instruction because of the noise and the distance of the iPad.

[00:58:28] I am not a budget-aligned item. I am a student you are leaving behind. I am asking you again, make my civil rights a priority in this budget. My education cannot wait for you to start looking for the people who are supposed to help me here.

[00:58:46] The Department of Justice now has my name and my story. Do not leave me behind again. Thank you. - Thank you, Owen Meyer.

[00:59:01] - Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the school board and Superintendent, Dr. McDade. I'm Owen Meyer of the Occoquan District. I'm a proud graduate of Woodbridge Senior High School and just as proud to be graduating from Northern Virginia Community College this spring.

[00:59:21] I'm here today to get your attention and support for a big student-led community project called Communities for Youth. Last September, I noticed a problem. Students don't have anywhere to socialize with others after school. The most common activities?

[00:59:37] Hang out at Taco Bell, sit in the parking lot. We can do better than that. So I got to work. I delivered a public comment to the Prince William County Board of Supervisors about the need for teens to have safe places to socialize and build community.

[00:59:53] These places are essential for connections in an increasingly online world. My comment sparked something I haven't been able to let go of yet. Several other college and high school students have joined with me to make Communities for Youth a reality.

[01:00:08] With the help and support of Occoquan District Supervisor, Kenny Bode, we landed on one big idea. A free outdoor event at the Chin Center this spring. Here's what we're planning: live bands featuring talent from local high schools, local food trucks from our community, clubs and organizations with booths from high schools, activities and games and all more just for free. Our goal is simple: bring students together to build real community. At our event we want to advertise recreation centers as some as places for community. We want to direct

[01:00:46] teens to programs that the county already has to offer them. We want to show students that the local government can make events like this happen for them. Additionally, we have the support of the Parks and Rec Department already on our side. We're in collaboration with student leadership at Woodbridge Senior High School as well as Colgan High School. We're gaining momentum quickly.

[01:01:08] We still want to expand, so I'm here to ask for your support in two ways. First, help us spread the word to students and families. Second, consider how the school division can partner and collaborate with us to make these free student-led community events regular at recreation centers all across the county please check out our Instagram page communities underscore for underscore youth and join our mission to make Prince William County a place where students are encouraged to build

[01:01:39] community and have safe fun thank you thank you next up the last five will be Mayem Kwaram, Nayima Maloney, Hugh Donnelly, Methiru Diop, and Hina Ansari.

[01:02:01] Mayem Kwaram. - Good evening Prince William County School Board members. My name is Mayem Kwaram and I am a senior at Potomac Senior High School and a member of Y Street.

[01:02:19] I began my Y Street journey two years ago and then I joined the leadership team at the beginning of this school year. It truly is an honor to be a part of such an impactful organization that empowers the youth across the whole of Virginia to advocate for change in public health issues.

[01:02:36] Through Y Street, our members and others in our community are able to learn more about public health issues, such as tobacco prevention through our Share the Air campaign, as well as nutrition and obesity prevention through our hydration campaign, Rev Your Bev.

[01:02:52] Last year, one of our Y Street leaders had the opportunity to sit down with members from our school nutrition department to discuss how we could work together to further promote health and student success by increasing the access, availability and promotion of drinking water with the Rev Your Bev campaign.

[01:03:12] When I think about Rev Your Bev, I think about making intentional choices that truly impact our health. As a lacrosse player, I've learned how important it is to feel my body in a way that supports my performance, my focus and my overall wellbeing.

[01:03:27] What we drink plays a big role in that. The more I've learned about the importance of hydration, the more I've learned how closely they're connected to energy levels, concentration in class, and long-term health. Rev. Your Bev has personally made me more aware of habits I form every day.

[01:03:45] It also allowed me to see how powerful students' leadership can be. Across Virginia, students are having conversations in their schools and communities about healthier options and encouraging one another to think more about what we consume.

[01:04:01] I care deeply about serving my community and I believe that when young people are educated and supported, we create such an impact that motivates future generations to also make the world a better place. It makes me proud to be standing here in front of you today.

[01:04:16] I want to thank School Nutrition for hearing our voice and agreeing to make changes to the wellness policy regulation to expand the definition of water access and I want to thank the school board this evening for their time and attention to student wellness. Partnering with Prince William County will be joining 37 other school divisions as a Rev Your Bev partner and impacting over 390,000 students across the Commonwealth.

[01:04:42] Because of your support, we can reach more students, promote healthier environments in our communities, and continue building a culture where students feel empowered to take charge of their health and their future. Thank you. - Thank you.

[01:04:58] Naima Maloney. - Good evening, Prince William County School Board. My name is Naima Maloney, and I'm a junior at Potomac Senior High School. I have been involved in Y Street for two years, and I've happily spent both of these years on the Y Street leadership team.

[01:05:17] I would like to provide some insight to help you all better understand our movement. So, what is Y Street? Y Street is Virginia's largest youth-led movement focused on youth advocacy for public health issues. Our main focus is to raise awareness about tobacco and obesity prevention.

[01:05:34] We do this through two major campaigns, Share the Air and Rev Your Bev, which Mamay just discussed. By attending community events, educating our peers, and speaking up for voluntary policies, youth involved in YSHE are able to take charge of creating change in their communities.

[01:05:49] I personally believe that a healthier environment makes a big difference when it comes to promoting student success, and I feel proud to be able to play a role in reaching my peers. It is one thing to hear it from a doll, but when it's a conversation among fellow peers in the community and makes a big difference.

[01:06:06] That is why Y Street members work to positively influence and inform our peers so that they can make healthier choices. Among our members, leadership team stands out as a group of dedicated, innovative leaders committed to making positive change. As the members of the Y Street leadership team, we participate in high level community engagement opportunities where we communicate directly with key decision makers such as yourselves.

[01:06:29] I want to once again echo my May's gratitude and say thank you for prioritizing student wellness. I also want to thank Ms. Andrea Early for meeting with our group and agreeing to partner with us. Thank you for your time. - Thank you, Hugh Donnelly.

[01:06:58] - Good evening, members of the board. My name is Hugh Donnelly and my address is on file. First, I wanna express our gratitude to Mr. Blake for his thoughtful response to our group's emails. His professionalism in addressing our concerns truly meant a lot to our group.

[01:07:17] However, I have significant concerns regarding the planned student walkout at high schools across our county. As someone with a history degree, I absolutely respect and even admire students' desires to express their First Amendment civic engagement rights.

[01:07:35] I think it is vital. But doing it so during instructional time is not appropriate time or place. When students leave class, even if they remain on school property, the educational process is disrupted.

[01:07:50] Teachers must halt their lessons and staffs are redirected to monitor students. This sets a troubling precedent that a missing class for political expression is acceptable, which undermines the primary purpose of schools.

[01:08:06] It's not without precedent. The Supreme Court ruling in Tinker versus Des Moines in 1969 emphasized that students' speech is protected, but it loses that protection when it materially disrupts school operations.

[01:08:21] In subsequent cases, in subsequent cases, Shaney versus Northeast Independent Schools in '72 and Dodd and Rambis in 2007 have consistently uphold this ruling. I am also concerned about the idea of school staff supervising these demonstrations.

[01:08:41] This isn't neutrality, it's facilitation. When educators and administrators are tasked managing political events with a specific political message using public resources to legitimize this event during school hours I think is inappropriate on policy our policies are clear in Prince William County regulations 724 - 1 and the code of behavior allows absences only for specific reasons such as defined civic engagement days there is no provision for walkouts during class and treating this protest differently creates a

[01:09:20] viewpoint based expression contradiction our commitment to neutrality the school is not forced to promote these walkouts attendance enforcement and clear administrative directives are already in place choosing not to use them is a conscious decision finally allowing students to step out of class for of political reasons sends a misleading message that such actions are permissible and without consequences.

[01:09:49] This is not supported by our policy or law. I respectfully urge the board to address these concerns and issue a clear communication correction and misinformation circulating among students. Let's affirm the support for civic expression-- - Thank you, thank you Mr. Donald.

[01:10:06] - Maintaining neutral focus and a destructive-- - Thank you. Next up, Metiru Diop. Metiru. - Metiru. - Oh, well, say it again. - Huh? - Say your name again.

[01:10:22] - Metiru. - Metiru, sorry. - Good evening, my name is Metiru Diop and I am currently a senior at Woodbridge Senior High School. Today I am asking for the school board's help with the recent theater set restrictions issued by risk management. At my high school, student involvement plays a crucial role when it comes to technical design aspects of our productions.

[01:10:42] With the help of our director, the Set Design and Construction Committee are tasked with creating the artistic vision behind the show, and students devote hours of their time to make sure that the vision comes to life on stage. So with the requested permits for theater departments and limits issued on platform composition, it denies our students creative liberty and shrinks high school theater as a whole.

[01:11:04] Since my time at Woodbridge, I've performed in all of our productions, ranging from Shakespearean classics to golden age musicals, and performing on a quality set that me and my peers created not only heightens my performance but prepares me for my future within the arts. I humbly ask the school board to be our platform for the arts and advocate on our behalf.

[01:11:23] Through the implementation of self-permitting and the creation of an official policy that works with theater teachers to set standards that are applicable from middle school all the way to Broadway, we as a county can support the growth and furtherance of the arts within our schools. Thank you.

[01:11:40] - Thank you, Hina Ansari. - All right, before I get going with my prepared remarks I did actually prepare remarks. I wrote them down this time too, and I typed them up.

[01:11:55] I know you're shocked, right? I just wanted to say Ramadan Mubarak to everybody who's celebrating. The first fast is always the easiest 'cause you're at full strength. Talk to me again in a week and I'll be like, what day is it? Who is here? So thank you for allowing me to speak at the school board meeting against. Always a pleasure, Super Nintendo McDade. I capitalized Super Nintendo in my speech, just so you know.

[01:12:14] My address is on file. I actually have to say it 'cause I wrote it down. So I was doom schooling on Twitter, as one does, and I came across this video, which made me pause for a second, and I was like, wait, and this student was advocating. I didn't even know that there was a seal on the front of this thing. I don't know if you guys can see it. You can't see it, we can't see it here and here.

[01:12:29] But the student then said Gainesville Middle School. I thought, oh my God, we've gone viral, y'all, but for not a very good reason. You should have seen the comments. I will spare you the details. But

anyway, I wanted to continue my discussion about the Black History Month, and I wanted to incorporate that. And the school board's response, no offense, please don't pillory me.

[01:12:47] So while I was trying to be a well-rounded person, insert your favorite fat jokes here, assigned myself quite a bit of reading so I was researching Zionism and would start in the US government and I was pointed to this book which is Woodrow Wilson's biography. Spoiler alert, there was no overt references in Zionism, 750 pages. I did not find what I was looking for, but what I did find was a whole heap of racism. I know that's shocking, right? And this is the one concession I'm going to give from Mr. Wilson. He was born before the Civil War so he knows, he grew up, well, racism was normal, slavery was normal, all that good stuff. Anyway, so I I wanted to give two excerpts, I'm hoping with time permitting, I'm not sure I've already wasted too much time.

[01:13:24] So before Woodrow Wilson was president of the United States, he was president of Princeton Law School and a student reached out to him at one point and said, and I don't know how he did that because they didn't have an email then. And he said, "I didn't get into the school, can you review my, I guess, I don't know, they didn't have GPA or LSAT, I missed it by 150 years," right?

[01:13:41] And he was like, "You don't belong here," which might seem like an innocuous thing to say, but it's actually a racist dog whistle. If you hear that, usually people are saying that because you don't belong because you're not white. and that's what Woodrow Wilson was saying. The records indicate that, and also the book says it too. So let's fast forward about 25, 30 years.

[01:13:56] Wilson's now the president of these United States, and a group of desegregationists come to him from the post office, and they're like, "Hey, we wanna desegregate." Not the country, not even the workplace, the lunchroom. And he did what you guys did. He didn't do anything. He didn't say anything. He was like, "I'm just gonna punt it."

[01:14:12] And so the question I have to you, and it's a rhetorical question, is what message do you think that sends to that student that came here that spoke on, that advocated for himself. And what do you think that says to all the other kids who might be experiencing a similar affliction, but now they know that the school board's not gonna do anything. And then what do you think that says to the community, people like us out there?

[01:14:29] What are we thinking? That you're just like, I'm gonna punt on racism, it's not a big deal. And to everyone watching, and this is, I'm gonna try to wrap this up. Everyone watching here and at home, for whatever reason, remember these names and faces on the diocese like you, 'cause you're gonna be going to school next year, right? These people are all up for reelection.

[01:14:45] So remember that next year, right? Thank you. - Thank you. So that concludes citizen comment time for this evening. We will be moving on to student representative time.

[01:15:02] And we have Ms. Beulah-Sarsa, our MLK oratorical winner as well, and student representative from the great CD Hilton High School tonight to speak. Ms. Sarsa. - Thank you. Good evening to members of the Prince William County community, members of the school board and Superintendent McDade.

[01:15:20] Once again, I'm very honored and grateful for the opportunity to give voice to the student perspective on the day as tonight. I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking every single faculty member that sponsors their school's Student Voice Committee. Because of you, students have a safe place to discuss

the things that matter to them and work together to implement meaningful solutions to ongoing problems within their schools.

[01:15:41] Moving on, if Dr. Sullivan doesn't mind, I'd like to jump ahead of her and discuss our Career and Technical Education, or CTE, programs. These programs provide PWCS students with the opportunity to grow crucial skills that are essential for success in high demand and highly competitive fields.

[01:15:58] One example of a CTE class is Dual Enrollment Teachers for Tomorrow. This class not only teaches students the mechanics of teaching, but gives them the chance to put those learned skills into practice as a teacher's aide. I happen to take this class and I really enjoy it. I say all of that to say February is CTE month and I look forward to hearing Dr. Sullivan's presentation.

[01:16:20] Today, fellow student representative Karina Grover, Student Senate Pro Tempore, Shavani Davis, and I gained valuable insight into the world of social and emotional learning, or SEL, while participating in the 2026 CASEL Conference. It is a two-day affair, and we can't wait to deliver our presentation on the power of student voices tomorrow afternoon.

[01:16:41] Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the over 90,000 students that I represent directly. You and I both know that this county would be nothing without its diverse population of gifted, curious, and talented students. You and I also know that there are people who think otherwise, that our diversity is a weakness or that it is wrong.

[01:17:02] Remember, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects your right to petition your leaders as you gather with like-minded individuals and speak your mind. In the same vein, Article III of the Prince William County Student Bill of Rights protects your ability to be a civically engaged student, including any protest or walkout that you'd like to participate in.

[01:17:22] Additionally, the regulation recommends that you work with your administrators to ensure the safety of yourself and your fellow students. As you and your classmates exercise your rights either this Friday or beyond, I want all of you to stay safe, protect your fellow students, and never lose sight of your values.

[01:17:41] That will be all for tonight. Thank you and have a great rest of your evening. - Thank you, Beulah Sarsa. Thank you very much, excellent remarks. Up next, Superintendent's time, Dr. Latonya McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. As a brief reminder, a final school board work session on the proposed FY27 budget will be conducted on March 11th with school boards scheduled to approve the budget on March 18th before presenting it to the Board of County Supervisors in April.

[01:18:10] Additional information on the FY2027 superintendent's proposed budget and capital improvement plan can be found on our website. This week, we recognize School Board Clerk Appreciation Week. Our school board clerks ensure the accuracy, transparency and continuity of important work of the board.

[01:18:29] We are grateful for their professionalism and commitment to serving the board and Prince William County community at large. Thank you so much, Laura. You're here, Anna was here. Thank you so much to your entire office for all that you do for the board and for the entire Prince William County community.

[01:18:46] I also wish to recognize National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day, which is observed annually on February 15th. Our school resource officers, or SROs, serve as mentors, educators, and trusted adults who build relationships with our students and our staff and help foster safe, supportive school environments.

[01:19:08] I want to thank our SROs and our law enforcement partners for the care, dedication, and partnership they bring to our schools every day. We have an incredible partnership with PWC PD and our SROs are valued members of our school communities.

[01:19:24] I would also like to recognize Rare Disease Day, observed globally on February 28th. This day was created to raise awareness about the millions of individuals living with at least one or more than 6,000 known rare medical diseases or disorders.

[01:19:42] While each rare disease affects a small number of people, collectively they impact millions of families, including members of our own PWCS community. This day reminds us of the importance of understanding, inclusion and support, and the role that schools play in ensuring every student, regardless of circumstance, has access to opportunity, care, and a sense of belonging.

[01:20:07] Also want to thank our staff, nurses, teachers, and support teams who work every day to meet the unique needs of our students with compassion and expertise. This week is Random Acts of Kindness Week, a reminder that small actions can have a lasting impact.

[01:20:24] Across Prince William County Schools, we see kindness in action every day. When a bus driver greets each child with a smile or a student helps a friend, these small moments build to shape the culture in our schools and reflect who we are in Prince William County Schools. Kindness strengthens connection, builds trust, and reminds us of our shared responsibility to care for one another.

[01:20:45] I would also like to recognize Exceptional Children's Week, February 14th through the 21st, a time to celebrate the strengths, talents, and achievements of students receiving one or more special education services. Our exceptional children demonstrate resilience, determination, and growth every day, and they enrich our schools and classrooms in meaningful ways.

[01:21:05] Speaking of our amazing students with special needs, PWCS invites families to the inaugural STEP conference and resource fair. This is a full day dedicated to supporting students who receive special education services and empowering families with tools, knowledge and connections. This event will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 28th at Forest Park High School. The conference is free and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Registration is required and is available on our website. February is Career and Technical Education

[01:21:42] or CTE month, which is so apropos that we're presenting on CTE this evening. CTE programs are critical in preparing our students for employment in fast-growing fields, such as computer programming, engineering, health science, and skilled trades.

[01:21:57] To present an update on PWCS CTE operations, I would like to introduce our Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Stephanie Sullivan, along with Dr. Sarah Martin, our Director for CTE, and Christine Good, our Supervisor for Career and Technical Education.

[01:22:14] Thank you. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Jesse, members of the board, and Dr. McDade. Thank you for this opportunity to share an overview of the career and technical education programs,

especially as we celebrate CTE month.

[01:22:35] And Beulah, I'm just bringing you with me every time I have to do a presentation. So thank you for your comments as well. As mentioned, joining me today are Dr. Sarah Martin, Director of Career and Technical Education, and Mrs. Christine Good, our supervisor.

[01:22:51] They lead with nationally recognized experience. Dr. Martin has been in CTE for more than 35 years in Virginia, Maryland, and Texas. She is regularly called on to speak at national events and statewide conferences and plays a significant role in shaping CTE throughout the Commonwealth.

[01:23:13] Ms. Christine Good not only leads curriculum development and professional learning for our programs, she serves as president of the Virginia Association of Career and Technical Educational Administrators. She has won numerous state awards for her vision and leadership.

[01:23:31] They are supported by an incredible group of experts who managed to lead the work in over 150 courses. They each maintain expertise across a wide range of program areas and certification needs. and several of them have been in front of you receiving awards from both national and state agencies.

[01:23:56] I am thankful for the board and our superintendent for understanding the vital role that CTE plays in elevating outcomes for our students. Throughout our new strategic plan, you will see the interdependence of career-oriented education with foundational skill development, and not just for current careers, but for the agility, flexibility, and critical thinking necessary for careers yet to be developed.

[01:24:28] The Virginia Department of Education launched the New School Performance and Support Framework this year. For high schools, this includes the 3E Readiness Framework. The focus is on all students graduating with the skills necessary for college enrollment, military enlistment, or career employment.

[01:24:52] Our CTE team targets both enlistment and employment, and I have to say, also attract enrollment as well. Our students are earning credentials to give them success in whatever pathway they choose.

[01:25:10] The true measure of that success is not the diploma in a student's hand at graduation, but rather each student's ability to pursue a successful and rewarding career once they leave Prince William County Schools. After all, the question is not if they will join the workforce, but when.

[01:25:31] CTE ensures students are equipped with the knowledge and language to identify two and four year career pathways at their base school or in a specialty program as they transition to high school. As students select a career pathway, They will also complete a state-approved sequential elective leading to stackable industry credentials.

[01:25:54] The next edge of growth is for all career pathways to culminate with a high quality work-based learning experience like paid internships or school-based enterprise experience. Turning the microphone over now to Christine Good, who's gonna share the next session of this presentation.

[01:26:16] - Thank you, Dr. Sullivan. Tonight, we're gonna share with you an overview of CTE, including what is CTE, the current state of PWCS CTE, and the next generation.

[01:26:32] Career and Technical Education in Prince William County Public Schools serve students in grades six through 12, beginning with exploratory experiences in middle school and culminating in

sequenced career pathways in high school. Today, PWCS CTE includes eight program areas, 16 career clusters, 37 career pathways, and more than 130 secondary courses.

[01:26:57] This work begins with early career awareness and career exploration in CTE through summer discovery enrichment programs designed for rising middle school students in grades five through seven. This provides our explorers with early inspiration and insight into future career possibilities.

[01:27:14] For example, the CTE department offered several enrichment programs last summer, including the Bits and Bytes, Bootcamp for Code Creators, where students learn to program micro bits, Future Fabricators, an introduction to 3D printing, Mechatronic Melodies, building Arduino pianos that light up as music notes are played, and Flavors of the World, an introduction to cooking in the kitchen.

[01:27:37] Our community should be on the lookout for summer discovery registration to open on March 9th. Our middle school programming includes three program areas, business and information technology, family and consumer sciences, and technology and engineering education.

[01:27:56] A key foundation of this work is the Career Investigations course, which all students will complete in seventh grade. This course helps students to identify and demonstrate workplace readiness skills, explore career clusters and pathways, analyze their interests and strengths, and to begin developing the academic and career plan aligned with their goals.

[01:28:16] By the end of middle school, students are not expected to choose a career, but rather to develop a shared language, increased agency, and a clear foundation for high school course selection and future pathways.

[01:28:32] Our high school CTE programming includes a total of eight program areas, 16 career clusters, 37 career pathways, and more than 130 high school courses. There are diverse and robust programming opportunities available to all students in PWCS.

[01:28:50] Of the eight program areas that CTE supports, every high school has courses in at least four areas, business and information technology, family and consumer sciences, marketing, and technology and engineering education.

[01:29:07] In fact, all 16 national career clusters are represented in PWCS instructional programming. And within those career clusters are career pathways. Pathways are sequences of CTE courses that are designed to prepare students for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies and providing hands-on learning experiences.

[01:29:30] You may recognize several of our specialty programs on this slide, like agriculture, building trades, cabinet making, electricity, plumbing, and TV production. But did you know that we also offer programs in business management and business law at every high school?

[01:29:47] CTE courses and programs also include Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow, JROTC, and accounting. Additionally, we offer multiple pathways in health science. Pathways in hospitality and tourism include culinary arts, as well as sports, entertainment, and event marketing.

[01:30:08] You will also notice several information technology courses and pathways in addition to human services and law and public safety course offerings. And lastly, CTE offers pathways in manufacturing, marketing, and engineering.

[01:30:25] Automotive and aviation maintenance pathways are also available as specialty programs. Enrolled, enlisted, or employed, CTE is for every student, and CTE offers multiple pathways toward post-secondary success.

[01:30:41] Our CTE programs are built on the four foundational pillars of high-quality CTE programming, which mirror the strategic plan's emphasis on rigor, relevance, and real-world application. Competency-based instruction means that our students demonstrate what they know and what they can do as a result of their learning.

[01:30:59] Industry-recognized credentials are available in high school, and CTE students have access to these credentials offered at no cost to the student or their families. Work-based learning is when students apply learning in authentic settings, strengthening community partnerships and aligning directly with our family and community engagement commitment.

[01:31:22] And student organizations like DECA, FBLA, HOSA, and SkillsUSA, for example, develop leadership, communication, and collaboration skills embedded in our mission to prepare global collaborators and innovators. CTSOs host competitions, community service, and professional networking events, which help students build confidence and real-world skills.

[01:31:46] Next weekend marks the start of our state competitive event season, and we are proud to have four PWCS high schools represented at the Virginia DECA State Leadership Conference in Virginia Beach. Best of luck to all of our marketing students who have advanced to state competition.

[01:32:03] Let's take a look at a few data points to summarize the current state of CTE. And you may remember some of this information from recent presentations by Dr. McDade. Participation in career and technical education courses remains strong and continues to grow. Over the past three school years, PWCS enrolled more than 50,000 annually across middle and high school courses, and more than 20,000 unduplicated students participating at the high school level each year.

[01:32:32] A key indicator of success is the number of CTE completers. Completers are students who finish a sequence program of study and also graduate. PWCS has seen steady growth with more than 4,300 CTE completers reported last year.

[01:32:48] This supports the strategic plan's emphasis on on-time graduation and preparing students for life beyond high school. CTE provides structure, relevance, and engagement, factors known to improve graduation outcomes.

[01:33:04] High school students enrolled in CTE courses have opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials at no cost to them or their families. Our credentials may support graduation requirements, entry-level employment, and/or college credit for credit for prior learning opportunities.

[01:33:21] Credential attainment has increased steadily with improving pass rates across multiple credential areas. And as of June, 2025, the Career and Technical Education Department reported 369 registered business partners, reflecting strong community engagement and alignment with workforce needs.

[01:33:40] These partnerships bring the strategic plans, family and community engagement commitment to life by connecting students directly with employers and industry professionals. Work-based learning is one of the fastest growing areas of CTE and PWCS.

[01:33:55] Last school year, more than 2,700 students completed work-based learning experiences, which includes paid and unpaid internships, externships, school-based enterprises, service learning, and supervised agricultural experiences. The CTE team continues to work towards scaling access to high quality work-based learning opportunities.

[01:34:15] We are challenging our business partners to consider how they might mentor and support some of the 20,000 CTE high school students who are eager to learn on the job right here in Prince William County.

[01:34:32] - As we look ahead to Elevate 2030, the work for CTE is clear. We aim to ensure every student has access to high-quality, career-focused educational experiences aligned with high-demand careers in the region.

[01:34:48] The essential question which drives our work is centered around creating meaningful post-secondary education opportunities. Before adding any new CTE programs, we conduct a labor market analysis to confirm local demand and industry growth.

[01:35:06] With Hanover Research, we identified career clusters in Prince William County and in the Commonwealth that offer livable wages, excuse me, livable wage careers and show the strongest projected growth and demand. As you can see in the high growth clusters, they include information technology, business management administration, and health science.

[01:35:28] High demand career clusters are also your business management administration, marketing, architecture, and construction. Marketing is listed however it is high demand but shows low average in growth. To better illustrate this point, The clusters lie in both the high demand and high growth areas you can see from this graph that are information technology, health science, architecture and construction, and business management and administration.

[01:35:57] These are clearly identified as our top four clusters in which we should place our focus and energy for our new CTE programming. Referring back to our central question on how we can create meaningful outcomes, we look at our post-secondary education partners.

[01:36:16] To effectively serve our students and meet local workforce needs, strong collaboration with our college and university partners is essential to ensure a seamless transition beyond high school. Career studies certificates offer students meaningful career opportunities through focused training.

[01:36:34] Programs that deliver the essential coursework required for specific fields such as IT or early childhood education. They're credit based, meaning that their certificates range from nine to 23 credit hours. and they're career aligned. These programs equip students for targeted career fields and support job placement and attainment of industry-recognized credentials.

[01:36:59] PWCS currently offers four career studies certificates. Students enrolled in these programs are not only earning high school credit for RCT courses, but also earn college credit. For example, let's look at our Mechatronics program.

[01:37:17] It's one of our newest programs slated to begin in the upcoming 26-27 school year. Students will take two high school credits that will result in 17 enrollment credits at Northern Virginia Community College.

[01:37:34] Want you all to take a look at that slide. So our next steps in moving forward, our work and focus are on four strategic priorities. The first is to enrich our middle school readiness. We will modernize middle school CTE experiences by integrating emerging technologies, such as coding, digital fabrication, and entrepreneurship.

[01:37:57] and by expanding hands-on learning opportunities. Our new exploratory modules will introduce students to high demand pathways, including information technology, health sciences, and engineering. Our second priority will be to expand our high demand pathways.

[01:38:12] To meet workforce needs, IT and engineering pathways will be offered at every high school. Partnerships with business and industry will be strengthened to increase work-based learning opportunities in those areas. Our third priority is to enhance high growth programs.

[01:38:29] We will reinforce programs demonstrating strong enrollment in alignment with labor market growth, such as our PLTW engineering and biomedical sciences. This includes expanding access to modernized equipment, software, instructional resources, and industry-recognized credentials.

[01:38:46] Course sequences will be updated to reflect our regional workforce needs. And the fourth is to leverage our post-secondary education partnerships. Collaboration with Northern Virginia Community College and other post-secondary partners will expand dual enrollment and career studies certificate offerings and create seamless transitions from high school to college and career.

[01:39:10] These priorities reflect both our vision for the future and the collaborative spirit that drives our progress. I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation to the CTE Advisory Council for their expertise and support. Our work is strengthened by the deep partnerships we share with our business and community leaders, relationships that open doors to real world experiences, industry expertise and meaningful career pathways for our students.

[01:39:37] Together, we are creating a future in which every learner is prepared not only to graduate, but to thrive in a rapidly evolving workforce. And a heartfelt thanks to you, the board, Dr. McDade, and all cabinet members for your continued commitment to investing in our students, our schools, and the future of Prince William County.

[01:39:58] Thank you. - Thank you, and we're happy to answer any questions. - Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, no questions. I just want to thank you all for the presentation tonight. I don't have to be redundant. I'm a big advocate of the CTE programs in this county. I love the welding program at Potomac.

[01:40:15] Definitely think it'd be great to replicate it out west, but I understand instructions in that area and the certification to teach that is hard to find. We have a phenomenal teacher at Potomac High School. And as things come to fruition, I do want to add the plug that by having prevailing wages and ensuring that our students who do go to the workforce are able to come back and work on project labor agreements and such.

[01:40:37] So we hire our own local force. I think that's kind of the culmination of the great work in affording those students the opportunity to have these high wage jobs working for our school division on construction projects and renovations.

[01:40:52] So thank you so much. I appreciate you speaking tonight and doing this presentation. - Thank you, sir. - Ms. William. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. First, I wanna say thank you so much for this

presentation. Like Mr. Wilk, I am a huge advocate of CTE.

[01:41:08] I am a CTE mom. My son is independently, gainfully employed thanks to Potomac High School. Thank you, Chef Evans, forever. And everybody in administration in that building, but graduate in 2019, not a problem.

[01:41:26] I love the fact that in this presentation, we were able to give credit to a lot of our partners because when we talk about CTE, we don't often mention them. I'm gonna put a plug in for our signing day. do we have a date? What's our date? - May 12th. - May 12th. For those who don't know, several years ago, we started a signing day for CTE students, similar to our athletic students, when they go off and do scholarship, or get recognized for their scholarship.

[01:41:53] I love this. I'm gonna ask a couple questions, 'cause this is my thing, and I'm a middle school mom now, and you mentioned about how we're going to evolve CTE and look at CTE in the future for middle school. I'm gonna be a little critical, it's not her fault it just seems like middle school career investigations and pretty much everything we do in middle school hasn't changed much over the years so I'm very excited and I'm not looking for definite answers now my main question as a middle school mom and as a former middle schooler because it feels like it's about the same it could you could you explain a little bit to the public this is one of the questions that I had and it really helped me to

[01:42:32] understand a little bit so a career investigations in those type of classes are based upon some standardized tests our students look at or our standard standardized tests our students get to kind of point them in a direction of a career based could you is that test from like 1924 it just and not to not to be too comical but it's that is a starting point that a lot of our teachers use and it's based on our curriculum but there are so many jobs that aren't our careers that are not captured in that and my concern is for those students who do not fall in that it and that's why I'm being critical because that and again I say it has nothing to do with anyone standing in front of me or running CTE but I'm

[01:43:12] excited about the possibility of having our students explore more what we have set up are very traditional careers in a sense some of them are new and innovative but some of these by the time we get up and running will be obsolete and to some of our students in some degree and I'm not saying that critically because it's not gonna be obsolete everywhere it's just one of those things that I do believe I am concerned about when we talk about coding.

[01:43:34] I'm a robotics mom. You know our kids are coding in very early elementary the way our county is is spreading robotics county-wide. I'm wondering if we what other type of innovative ideas because I know we haven't formulated a plan but we may be thinking about or are we considering that because my greatest fear now talking to my middle schooler I hear things like oh well this isn't on here and I know we can't do every career imaginable right but I'll pick on my family so I do a lot paleontologists right it's health and human services

[01:44:09] however now because it's not an existing career the the sway is going towards one of the blocked careers so as a parent my thing is how do we support those students in between because they don't really understand either right and what does that look like it middle school is also one of those times where we want we hear a lot from our public our students can't cook or they can't sew or they can't those kinds of things so I was just wondering if you could give us like a little like shining star in the future not holding you to it but are those the kinds of things that we're talking about when we're talking about revamping yeah absolutely you're actually mirroring the conversations I've had

[01:44:47] with my staff multiple times about relooking at those pathways and programs and so to answer your first question the inventory that the students take is being modernized and we are looking at new partners in that space because we also want to identify the potential in students not directly necessarily tied to certain things.

[01:45:11] As we are looking at our middle school programs, I think you saw in the strategic plan, entrepreneurship is one of the areas that we are looking to expand upon, some additional project-based learning enterprises. The board may remember that you just approved our opportunity to expand Project Lead the Way in some of our middle schools.

[01:45:30] So those are some of the ideas of the types of programs we're looking at to make sure that our students are getting those really meaningful exploratory opportunities that help them narrow a little in high school. So yes to everything you mentioned, as we look at opportunities, first and foremost, evaluate our data, our interest, and move forward on those new programs.

[01:45:52] - Thank you, and I'm gonna, in the interest of time, just ask if you could please, on slide 24, you talk about work-based learning experiences and I don't know that members of the public or even our students really are thoroughly educated on the difference between an externship, a school-based enterprise.

[01:46:11] Like, I know that we have a lot of opportunities for our students, but I'm not so sure everyone is knowledgeable when you talk about the difference between maybe an internship or an apprenticeship, those kinds of things, because they do matter and it's part of our strategic plan. If you could give us like a little definition of what that looks like. - Certainly.

[01:46:28] Some of our programs have the ability to operate as an actual enterprise. So for example, our culinary students may do some catering jobs or authentic employment opportunities within the program itself.

[01:46:46] Certainly our students in the turf program at Brentsville are a shining example of that, that the field itself provides opportunities. Not to say those students can also participate and additional external internships. So some of our school-based enterprises are involving the technologies and the development and manufacturing sometimes of items within the program.

[01:47:08] So there are multiple ways for students to authentically engage in the profession. And we are looking to make sure that all students have that opportunity. Beulah talked about that a little bit with her experience. It really is about a true work-based learning experience, which sometimes can happen within your own campus.

[01:47:27] - Thank you, I really appreciate that because I talked to a lot of our, I mean, robotics, a lot of our middle schoolers and some of our parents, and the magnitude of programs that we have available, sometimes I think is just, it's so much, and this is an opportunity, I think, to really expand on that and have the public aware of all of the things that we do.

[01:47:47] I especially like that we have business partners as well because I've seen some of our business partners and hire our students and develop long-term relationships, not only with our students, but some site-specific schools or even our whole school division. And I just wanted to make sure that we took the time, really, to speak to that because it's important.

[01:48:04] It helps us keep community and keep our youth coming back and staying within our school division. And I hope that eventually we'll be able to capture some of those graduate stories and have them come back and share with us about their experience as students from the early start of CT all the way through.

[01:48:23] I think that's one of the most powerful things that we have available, tools that we have available to us to encourage our young people to continue to participate. So thank you very much, I'm gonna stop there. I really appreciate everything that you do. Oh, one more question. I know that we were tied with Henrico at one time with internships or apprenticeships.

[01:48:41] There's some sort of friendly rivalry there. I was just hoping that we were coming out on top or very, very close. - Yes, ma'am. you're referring to our youth registered apprenticeships those have changed our work-based learning components and experiences have changed tremendously in the last year and so while those are still happening we are we are leaning more into our internships and our school-based enterprise thank you mr.

[01:49:09] Denik well you know what I'm coming in hot like miss Williams I am a CTE mom when I when I joined this board it was something that I was extremely passionate about talking about it and it was probably one of the first conversations I had with you all and also going to the different events that capture this but I would be remiss and not speaking about one of the greatest programs we have in existence right now not to mention we're building a Toro turf grass Academy program I'm a you know I know that we fall under that agriculture umbrella we do not have kids that graduate in horticulture and I think that I've said

[01:49:49] it out loud. I've said it a million times. We do a disservice to these kiddos when we don't talk about this program and what they could walk away with from Brentsville High School. It is a turf grass program to a T. It's extreme. That's what they walk away with. We get a sash in turf grass.

[01:50:04] We don't get a sash in other things. And we shouldn't because the end goal of that program is to walk away with a turf grass management focus. And I have only done some research in the last few months I would challenge us as a school system to do a better job researching because I think we'd blow Henrico out of the water if you looked at what these turf grass kids are actually doing because I've never I've never submitted anything on the things that my child has done and he's had four different jobs in the turf grass industry thus far as a high school student into college some of what these students are doing and excuse me while I

[01:50:44] as Justin Wilkes says pontificate on this for a moment but just just in my last few weeks of research and this is just me personally the students that I know personally so there's got to be more this is there's over 40 graduates in the last couple of years that are currently working in a turf grass industry job or attending college for turf grass management not just any college but barstool sports which is not a great you know source DMV though number one Virginia Tech you know that they're there with kids and there's kids

[01:51:21] begging to get into tech and they're there doing turf grass and it is a full time thing that they're working on they're getting their hands dirty it's great to see what they're doing but just just for an example because I have parents that come up to me and say you're our Brentsville district school board member can you tell us more about this AG program like what are we doing are we working with cows no we're working with toro grounds keeping you know equipment they're getting they're getting to paint the turf

they're getting to paint the field for um the football games for soccer games for our state championship soccer girls team so this is things that we got

[01:51:59] to do and i actually for the first time in this four years i got to paint the field this year and it was quite an experience and within five minutes i messed it up so these kids are very talented um just just so you know some of these kids um have gone on to become golf course superintendents which pays very well huge they've worked for minor league baseball teams they own their own landscaping company stone company they attend virginia tech penn state grad school for turf grass management um they're majoring in marketing which you would never realize but they're majoring

[01:52:34] in it to work specifically in the turf grass industry um and again i would be really crazy to not mention dr drew miller who truly cultivates a love for this industry and these kids who shows them what hard work looks like but also how to make money in this field and that it's super successful but all the fields yes but also to have experiences that you never would get anywhere else like they painted the field for the acc championship he's brought them back every year to do that They've worked for the MLS, for the MLB, for the NFL.

[01:53:10] And recently, I just want to shout her out, Julie Kessler, who's a graduate of this program, won the SFMA Field of the Year, which Brentsville High School won that two years ago. She is a Brentsville grad and won that. I mean, that industry constantly praises Dr. Drew Miller and what he's doing because it's innovative.

[01:53:28] Nowhere else does that. It's a high school program that can compete against college programs. and you know that I've been a huge advocate for these kids to earn dual enrollment credits so that when they go to college they're prepared because what he's teaching them is what they're learning at a college level and he just has put so much time and effort and energy into this program and into each of those children and what they're doing and their further careers I really feel like we've got to pay attention to that because those internships those jobs those things I really don't feel like are captured in this just inside that program not to mention you know I don't know if the cosmetology program, but also those girls are working.

[01:54:07] They're, you know, doing blowouts in the Brentsville district. I know because I see them. They're dying hair. Those kind of things are just great to point out. So once again, I just think any kiddos that are looking for a different alternative style of learning where they can work with their hands and get their hands dirty, look into these CTE courses.

[01:54:28] And don't just read what's there. Do some research. watch our videos because our communications program does a great job on these videos, highlighting our welding programs, highlighting our cosmetology, highlighting our turf program. Please check it out. There's so much more there. And, you know, I really think that this is great for those kiddos that want a different career path that's not, you know, the typical one, and they can be successful in it and find joy in it. And I just love that about it. And I'm so thankful for that program and for everything it's done for my son as well.

[01:54:59] - Well, we are so thankful for you. And our short presentation, we had to love all of our children equally, but we certainly appreciate your emphasis on a very well-deserved recognition of an incredible program. So thank you for that.

[01:55:16] - Ms. Lisa Zargapur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Thank you for this presentation. I wanna just hone in on the Virginia teachers for tomorrow. How many students do we have involved in this? Do we know? Oh, I see a hand in the back.

[01:55:34] 270 ish 270 ish thank you hand in the back is that the same answer you got yes okay cool um can't see who that is but i'm like oh i saw i loved it it was that it was this um so i i love that we do this because uh it it's i wish this had existed when i was in school um it it's a fantastic way to to get people involved in a career like education do we have any information on I mean it looks like you can you can get a lot of credits before you go off to college.

[01:56:10] Do we have any information back on like are these kids able to also get scholarships and you know because college is expensive and you know the least amount of loans and things like that. Yeah do we have any information on how well that's going I'm hoping.

[01:56:28] So we're excited about our partnership with Northern Virginia Community College this is the first year that our Virginia teachers for tomorrow's Juan students are dual enrolled with Northern Virginia Community College and they will have in the two-year coursework they will earn 14 college credits at Northern Virginia Community College that are transferable and are the equivalencies for a provisional teaching license so students will not need to duplicate that coursework afterwards so if they continue on and complete that 20 credit certificate at NOVA then that makes them eligible to finish the associate's degree in full it is a transfer virginia program that they can have take that and transfer into any

[01:57:08] teacher licensure program here in virginia or they would be eligible to apply for our pwcs rtr teacher residency program that's amazing um anything to help save you know you know money in higher education um how many people do we have now working in the county who've been through this do we know yet yeah i'm sorry i don't i do want to shout out though that a significant partnership of this is with our chief human resource office oh gotcha and i know they are carefully tracking and monitoring the students succeeding in it the onboarding of those and i think you just had a meeting the other day um related to it um so we can certainly follow up

[01:57:47] with some exact i would love to know i just i would love to know and um what kind of scholarships are these kinds of like are there scholarships available from our public universities in virginia that people specifically going into teaching can apply for?

[01:58:03] - Oh, certainly. A lot of our colleges are great partners in creating the pipeline for teacher, and there's certainly a lot of opportunities in those spaces for students to earn scholarships to continue their education. - That's awesome. All right, thank you so much. - Yep.

[01:58:19] - I'll go to Ms. Wall. - Thank you for the presentation. Very informative, great program, love the CTA program. I'm also a fan. I won't go into too much more elaboration on that topic, but I do feel like it is important to offer many different opportunities to students beyond math, science, literature, history, because they have so many interests.

[01:58:46] And if we're meeting the needs of our students, we're offering all these different pathways and opportunities while in high school, while it's on our dime, not their family's dime. It's a really, really, really great service. So thank you.

[01:59:01] I wanted to point out, I wanted to say thank you also to the people who are on slide 32, the CTE department and all the individuals who serve on that CTE Advisory Council. That's a volunteer

organization. They put in time and effort and expertise with no compensation whatsoever, as far as I know.

[01:59:21] Maybe a sandwich here and there, I don't know. But I really appreciate the individuals who are willing to serve our community in this capacity. And I want to thank the Gainesville representative, Mr. William Mayer, who is a teacher at Gainesville High School.

[01:59:36] I had two questions. One is, on slide nine, the middle school, let me see if I can pull it up. The middle school, middle school, yes, middle school.

[01:59:54] Is this representative of what we offer now business? I know it says that we'll complete the nine week career investigations. Is this representative of what we currently do or is this something that we will do? - This is current. - Correct, okay. with the exception in a couple of spaces, some schools had some staffing challenges.

[02:00:13] So this is the current framework and standard for every middle school. - Okay, and then does this compete with gifted education or if a student wants to take advanced science, I know that's in the new strategic plan, like advanced science and things like that, or like a research science or something like that.

[02:00:31] Does this compete with gifted education? - It actually depends on the student's whole profile. So if a student is potentially also taking band and maybe Spanish, there will reach a point that decisions do have to get made for students. All students do complete the career investigations course.

[02:00:49] As a student's profile is combined, 'cause we do also like flexibility, there may be some students where that's the case. - I see, okay. So we just allow flexibility within the middle school schedule. However, we try to get everybody through this career. - Yeah, well correct, and especially as we move forward in the new strategic plan.

[02:01:07] Flexibility, options, and choice are really important to us while maintaining opportunities at every school for students. - Thank you, thank you for clarifying that. And then my last question is regarding discovery enrichment, which I think might be the slide before, slide eight.

[02:01:24] My question is, I'm excited about this. - It's pretty amazing. - It's pretty amazing, it's awesome. And my question is, are we meeting demand? As we, I mean, are we like, do we have big waiting lists for kids to get into these programs?

[02:01:42] Or are we right sizing this so that we are offering enough so that individuals who wanna get into it can get into it? Or can we expand it, like if we have a higher demand? I guess we have to, anyway, if you wanna speak to that. - Yes, so we have expanded. We are right sizing.

[02:01:58] There is a high demand for some of these programs, I mean, really all of these programs. So this year we will offer 10 unique offerings. We're getting ready to publish that information here in the coming weeks okay wonderful wonderful and then my last plug I guess comment would be I know we have wonderful and I I think it's slide next steps slide 31 great slide I love what we're doing with CTE and our strategic plan I can't tell you how many times being I'm at one end of the county like the top you know hinterlands up there by Falkyer County in Loudoun County so I can't tell you how many times I've talked with kids or parents who are like

[02:02:38] my kid just wants to do welding but it's an hour away one way so forget it and and that's sad if you have a student who has an interest in a specialty program and it's just distance and time that makes it I

mean welding's maybe not a great example because that's pretty high like materials events intensive but I do appreciate that we're trying to expand it to different schools and different programs because I don't want distance to be the main or and only reason why a student doesn't explore something that they're interested in. Correct that is an excellent example of our goal around enhancing existing opportunities and

[02:03:16] programs to where we know this is a high demand we know this is a great career opportunities and everything from traditional welding to HVAC to all of the fields that require it that's exactly the kind of thing that we would look to expand. One of the things that I know you've had some visibility into we doing a comprehensive audit of all those specialty programs and we are literally gridding and mapping the opportunities for kids and comparing those throughout the commonwealth so yeah i expect that to be a strategy as we unfold the next steps on where we need to do some duplication as well

[02:03:51] again we're really proud of the support and the collaboration we have with our operations teams when sometimes that requires facilities upgrades and changes but that's all part of what we're we're looking at in next steps. - Thank you so much. I really appreciate that.

[02:04:07] Thank you for the presentation. - Mr. Blake. - I just wanted to say thank you for the presentation. And just like all my other colleagues, I am a very big fan of CTE. And like I try to always tell parents in the community, you know, this is Prince William County Schools.

[02:04:26] Like, it's like a puzzle, right? You could figure, you just gotta move, move your kid around until you figure out, you know, they like because we have it here in this county somewhere there's a program but i just want to also um shout out to dr sullivan i was at nova uh the wilbur's campus with dr hill last week and he took me around and showed me all the hvac the data operation center all of you know just megatronics all that was amazing and he he told me you're on fire for the kids out here so i just I just want to shout you out and appreciate you too, Ms. Good, and Dr. Martin.

[02:05:05] And also, you know, when I was over there at NOVA, they showed me, like, the stackable credentials you guys were talking about. And I just thank you because it expands the access and, you know, accelerates the opportunity for our kids over there. And you didn't really mention the data center operations thing.

[02:05:24] And when I was over there, I was leaving, and the freedom kids were coming out, getting on the bus, about to leave, too. So, and if you don't know, I'm talking about the early opportunity kids that are going over there for their college credits. So I saw a lot of it in action, like right there.

[02:05:41] So I just wanted to just tell you guys, thank you for the good job you're doing and just keep up the good work. Appreciate you. - Thank you, sir. - Mr. Jesse. - Well, thank you guys. I'm a fan of all that you do. And I think it's a great opportunity for our kids.

[02:06:00] This is a simplistic question that I think some parents that are wondering about, how do we integrate these programs into the regular core academic program, reading, writing, and math?

[02:06:16] - Yeah, there's actually some crosswalk opportunities in some of the courses. So in some cases, a course could actually qualify for a credit in, let's say, math, for example. And so we have opportunities, actually, to crosswalk how the credits work.

[02:06:33] Many, many, many of our teachers are naturally integrating all of this literacy standards, math standards, science standards in their courses. I know our team does a lot of work in the curriculum development to make sure those skills are being developed. And in some cases, they can actually count for their courses.

[02:06:51] - Thank you. - Yes, sir. - This observation, as we expand more and more of these opportunities, we're also expanding our facility needs. So we keep talking about the danger of our schools being under crowded.

[02:07:11] I think we have to also realize that you guys take up spaces and we need these spaces for the kids. Thank you. - Thank you, sir. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, sorry, just real quick. I wanna piggyback on the end of this experience.

[02:07:27] If you could talk about a little bit of how we have business partners. And then I'm gonna say this last statement and that is we do have, sorry, Lisa brought up a scholarship. Mentioned scholarships, and I just wanna make a special note that we do have some entities, like I know Woodbridge Women's Group and a few others, who are significantly investing in CTE scholarships for students.

[02:07:52] And I mention that 'cause I know that sometimes CTEs are more traditional CTE students, like cabinets or firefighting or welding or automotive, don't always think that there are scholarships available for them but this is something that is new and is starting and I want to make sure that those students are aware because we I know that group had two scholarships over the past couple years for culinary students so trying to find a culinary student who isn't thinking about maybe going to a traditional four-year college or institution I just want to put that plug out there because some of those scholarships do exist and hopefully there'll be businesses or people listening who will want to support our CT graduates because if you

[02:08:31] graduate automotive you still have to buy tools or if you're so those are some of the missing connects and I just want to put a plug out there because it we have done a tremendous job in wrapping around with our Education Foundation too so thank you thank you excellent presentation truly appreciate it if we go to slide 26 if someone could pull that up I think this slide more than anything else in you know we've talked a lot about our our success in our last strategic plan, what the meaning of the next strategic plan is gonna be.

[02:09:07] I think in the four years Dr. McDade's been here, this has been, I think, the guiding sort of question and the guiding, as a parent and as someone who lives in the county and someone who sends our kids to the schools, this is the question I have, right?

[02:09:22] How do we create, and by the way, the whole thing should be bolded and then I would bold and underline this one, so the meaningful, how do we create? And if the press is watching, by the way, and I appreciate the articles on the walkouts, I appreciate the articles on the budgets, I truly appreciate things that may be controversial that the press wants to cover.

[02:09:42] I'll never argue about what they'd like to cover. But if I were in the press, I would cover this statement. This should be a headline. And then the article should follow with what we have done in this county to answer this question or what we're trying to do.

[02:09:57] How do we create meaningful post-secondary outcomes for all students, whether they choose to enroll, enlist, or seek gainful employment after high school graduation.

[02:10:13] That is the sentence of the evening. That should be the headlines. That is the work our strategic plan has worked to answer and what we're trying to do. This is the question that parents who immigrate to this country, parents who are working, You know, 12, 14, 16-hour shifts who come home, they hope that we can help them answer.

[02:10:35] This is the question that our folks answer, that people want answered. And I think whether it's CTE or whether we heard from our theater teachers this evening that they are learning these skills in their theater programs that will lead to meaningful post-secondary outcomes, whether they're doing it in robotics, as Ms. Williams said, the things that will lead, whether they're doing it in the extracurricular activities and non-curricular, all of those things we are trying to build within the strategic plan to move this school division forward to answer this question.

[02:11:12] And you know, if I'm writing for Inside Nova tonight, this is the headline. And then I would probably call Dr. McDade for some quotes and some questions and answers on this. Like, what have you done, Dr. McDade? I think it goes from universal pre-K all the way up to what we're doing.

[02:11:32] I rarely talk about what our citizen commentators come in to speak about. I don't think in eight years I've done it many times. But I will say to the point that you heard eloquently from the theater teachers about what it's just more than theater and what they're learning.

[02:11:50] I want those folks to know and everyone in the community know that the school board is well aware of the issues that we're facing, concerns in singular issues or issues that are affecting our school division, and the school board continues to be thoughtful about how we can best solve these problems moving forward, whether it's in our theater, whether it's in our CTE programs.

[02:12:13] And the school board is focused on this work. Dr. McDade is focused on this work. I want everyone to understand that there is not anyone who comes here to speak to us or to address this board that we ignore. Everybody on this board takes really very seriously what we hear from folks.

[02:12:30] There's no back and forth with citizen comments. There's no, you know, a lot of that. And so everyone thinks, well, did they hear us? Did they listen to us? I can tell you that I've worked with each board member here and everyone on this dais for a solid, I don't know, two to eight years, and I can tell you that they all listen.

[02:12:47] But going back to this sentence, I would put this on the front page of the website tomorrow, Dr. McDade and say, hey, if you missed our presentation, this is it. So anyways, I want to thank you. Whoever wrote the sentence, I don't know if we pulled this, is this in our strategic plan?

[02:13:04] Who wrote the sentence? Do we have an author? Someone -- It was collaborative. Okay, it's collaborative. We guide work on essential questions in our space and always work to answer essential questions. Well, I mean, you know, if learning is really about asking the right questions first, this is where we start.

[02:13:24] So I appreciate it. Thank you very much. - Thank you, sir. - Okay, with that, that ends Dr. McDade. Do you have anything else to add to superintendent's time? - No, Mr. Chairman, that concludes superintendent's time. - All right, we're going to board matters. I think we started last time with Wilk.

[02:13:41] Today we'll start with Blake. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. I'd also, I'd like to start off by thanking Laura and all our clerks for school board appreciation week or school clerk,

school board clerk appreciation.

[02:14:01] Now, over the past few weeks, I've had the opportunity to be in many of our schools, and I just want to start by saying this, our students are showing up in powerful ways. So at Neyapsco Elementary, I had the honor of joining Congressman Eugene Bindman and Dr. McDade to recognize Ms. Lydia Lattimore.

[02:14:26] She was the 2025 Virginia Counselor of the Year and is a 2026 ASCA national finalist. And that's out of, I think she's down to six people in the whole country. So that's gonna represent Prince William County well.

[02:14:42] Congressman Vindman presented her with a congressional record. He entered on the House floor, honoring her under-wavering commitment to students, her innovative engagement strategies, and her laser focus on social-emotional learning. And that moment mattered because when school counselors are recognized at a state level and then acknowledged by U.S. Congress, it sends a clear message, supporting the whole child is not extra, it's essential.

[02:15:10] Ms. Lattimore represents what happens when academic support and social-emotional development work hand-in-hand and our students are better because of it and I thank her for that. And so then I also, like I said earlier, I had the opportunity to tour the Nova Woodbury's campus.

[02:15:27] Thank you, Dr. Hill, for the personal tour from the provost. I felt important. And I'll be honest, seeing that the scale of their workforce programs firsthand was impressive. Like I said, the HVAC labs, the data center operations, they had health care pathways, the stackable credentials aligned directly with industry demand.

[02:15:51] And when I was there, one of the kids was doing a mock interview with Microsoft I put one of the data center operations. Yeah, it was wild. So when K through 12 and higher education align with workforce needs, powerful things happen.

[02:16:09] And our students aren't just graduating, they're stepping into opportunity like you heard earlier. And then there's the talent. So I went to the All District Honor and Select Choir concert with Ms. Wall and Ms. Zargapur.

[02:16:25] And then we followed by the All District Band event. but there were so many people at the chorus. I don't think Ms. Agaraport could get out of the parking lot, so she didn't even come. She couldn't even get out of the parking lot at Gainesville, so then me and Ms. Wall went to the other one, to the other event, which showcased extraordinary discipline, artistry, and these students aren't just performing, they're demonstrating focus, collaboration, and commitment.

[02:16:52] And then at Hilton High School, I got to attend the VHSL Cardinal District One Act competition, so this was good. The theater students competing at a level, at that level reflects the depth of our fine arts program and the courage it takes to perform live and under pressure.

[02:17:13] After that, I also had a chance to visit the Prince William Rowing Club, Erg Sprints at Colgan, which was just pure grit. And they had like vomit buckets by each Erg. It was wild. So the kids were like really, it was, it was, it was, I've never been to one of those.

[02:17:31] that was a very good good event. I got to see Ms. Williams and her robotics team at Potomac Middle. There was about 61 teams there competing. That was a good time. I hit Spelling Bee at Miniville

where we had a repeat champion, which shows that excellence is repeated. It's not luck. It's preparation. And speaking of Spelling Bees, I want to remind everyone that the Prince William County Spellaby will be held on March 10th at 7 o'clock at Garfield.

[02:18:10] And then since we're talking about Garfield, you know, the school of champions, I just do want to congratulate them on the Cardinal District Boys Basketball Championship last Friday. They beat Potomac to end the season 24-1.

[02:18:32] I want to say congratulations to Coach Bell, who was the district coach of the year, and and your son, JJ Bell, who's the district player of the year. So excellence clearly runs in that household. But I will stop that 'cause I'm way over my time.

[02:18:48] But I would like to just leave with this one last thing. There's one last quote from Jesse Jackson, and that's it. Never look down on anybody unless you're helping them up. Thank you. - Good one, good one. Miss Williams.

[02:19:04] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe there is a pitcher to go up from our lovely, hopefully they can get it up. Since it's pick on Mr. Wilkin, Potomac District tonight, I know, I just, I promised robotics begins and ends the year for a lot of our students, especially middle school arena at Potomac Middle School.

[02:19:25] So I promised Ms. Carrera, she actually gave me a t-shirt that I said I was gonna wear and bust out like Superman, but I forgot. And Potomac, excuse me, Prowl at the Potomac. I just wanna congratulate all of the teams that went.

[02:19:41] I have a special shout out to Mr. Dean Ahmed, who was in charge and ran the entire event, who is a Prince William County homegrown robotics student, someone I know I have seen from afar grow up. I am so excited to give him his props, as well as Ms. Graff and all of Petonic Middle School who was there, especially the loan janitor who was working his hind parts off, trying to keep up with all those middle schoolers.

[02:20:09] I bring this up just 'cause I never missed the opportunity to tease Mr. Wilk and to brag about my robotics teams, but also Dean Ahmad is a perfect example of what is capable of our Prince William County students when they graduate and how they give back.

[02:20:25] And I also am excited because students like Dean often leave our schooling and they go off and they start businesses, whether it's nonprofit, we have students here tonight talking about some of the things that they would like to do. And it just brings me back to the strategic plan and I am very thankful for the division for hearing my cry, especially for all of our student entrepreneurs because the businesses that they start, whether it's middle school or high school, are legitimate businesses.

[02:20:55] And what you don't know in your paper life running a business can hurt you. So I'm glad that we are filling in the gaps for those students. Special shout out to my Fred Lynn teams. One of my teams hit number six on the ranking board for the first time all season.

[02:21:10] It was a joyous occasion and I just wanna say a special thank you to all those who help with robotics throughout the year because it is a year long activity for most of us and it's, that was my Valentine's Day on Saturday. I also wanna give a special shout out to the Y Street students from Potomac High School that were here earlier.

[02:21:29] I did get a chance to meet them at VSBA. I am so proud again of our students taking the step out there to do new things and to advocate, not only for themselves, but for their student body and others at large. I also wanna make sure I mention that there will be the first inaugural STEP, which is Supporting Transitions in Education and Personal Growth Conference and Educational Resource Fair on February 28th at Forest Park High School from 9:30 to 4:00 p.m.

[02:21:59] It's free, but please register. If you need more information, it's on the website or you can contact the Parent Resource Center. This is a huge deal for a lot of our special needs students and families. This is geared directly towards them. I personally am very excited. And then I will just end with this.

[02:22:15] We often hear a lot from our citizens when they come from citizen comment time or via email that, for example, tonight since we're citizen comment time, the young man who came and spoke to us from Gainesville. I think that these are educational opportunities. First, congratulations, because you have to feel safe enough to come and say something.

[02:22:33] So that says a lot for our division and for this leadership. And so I wanna congratulate the young man for taking the courage to do so, but also to take a moment to say how much this institution, Prince William County Schools has grown, that a student felt safe enough to come and talk to us.

[02:22:49] But I also wanna use this opportunity to let the public know that if you don't hear it here during a board meeting, there are so many things that we don't get to cover. This four minutes is the only time board members get to talk about whatever. And if it's not on an agenda, you may not hear it, but it doesn't mean we're not doing it.

[02:23:05] So I would encourage you to go past the board meetings, look at our policies, talk to people, find out about this administration and where we are today and where we're going forward. And with that, thanks. - Jennifer Wall. - Thank you. First of all, I want to say thank you to our school board clerk, deputy clerk, and assistants in the board office.

[02:23:25] You guys are awesome. And you do so much behind the scenes that nobody sees. And you support us in so many ways, so thank you. And we have a gift for each one of you in the back. Please take it before you leave, and I guess for the rest that are not here.

[02:23:42] But anyway, we really do appreciate you, thank you. To theater teachers and students who are still here, yay, you made it to the end of the meeting. We are very sympathetic to the plight that you find yourselves in. We don't like it either.

[02:23:57] And I do hope we can find a way to get through it together. It's not a problem of our making, but we are very sympathetic, and we appreciate hearing from you tonight. I know it's late and it's a school night. School starts at oh dark 30, so it's terrible.

[02:24:14] One of my gripes is how early high school starts. I want to highlight events in the Gainesville district and across PWCS that I've attended since we last met. After our very boring January and Snowcrete storm, I went out to a million events.

[02:24:32] A basketball game with Battlefield in Gainesville, Scholastic Bowl on February 7th at Osborne Park where I met the Colgan team and the battlefield team and those guys, those kids are so smart. I went to Erg Sprints, the Prince William Rowing Club sponsored that and saw the family event where the parents and their kids competed together.

[02:24:53] I would have died doing that. District nine honor choir event, the Viboda all district band event where we highlighted our amazing student musicians. Wow, guys, these guys play at a professional level. I swear they are better than most regional orchestras and bands.

[02:25:11] On the 9th, I went to Mountain View, and I heard Kevin Sherry, the author of I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean. I don't know if you know that book. He's a children's author, and he gave the most energetic and amazing presentation. I was super motivated to become an author, and the kids loved him.

[02:25:29] Gravely Elementary School had a spelling bee, and a second grader won it. I mean, I'm telling you, this is so amazing. Her sister came in second and was a fourth grader, and then another girl who was also a fourth grader came in third. It was amazing.

[02:25:45] The second grader won it, guys. It's amazing. Kudos to parents and teachers. I went to a concert at Bull Run. It was a chamber orchestra pyramid concert, so Mountain View and Tyler were there too, and they played a song called the Rubber Chicken Dubstep, and it's written by Sam Renolfsson, one of our teachers here in Prince William County.

[02:26:04] and who incidentally was my son's first string bass teacher. I stopped by Bull Run to the eighth grade most improved celebration and this was such a special moment because teachers had taken a minute time to write a paragraph to each student individually.

[02:26:20] They were nominated by the teacher. The teacher stated in writing why they nominated that student and I just love that. Woo, my time is fast. I stopped by Innovation Elementary for their multicultural night. That was their first multicultural night. Thank you for inviting me.

[02:26:35] I went to Sinclair for their STEAM night and I wanna give a shout out to Unity Read Robotics, their VEX team for showing up and giving kids a chance to drive a real robot. I went to All County Orchestra, that was amazing. Those kids were so fantastic. And Prowl at the Potomac where one of our own grads, Dean Ahmad, led that whole event and it was probably one of the best run robotics events I've been to in a long time.

[02:26:58] Went to Tyler Elementary School's PTO meeting. Parents, we thank you for being so supportive of our teachers. and a Bull Run outreach parent liaison meeting at the Bull Run library, where the liaison went to the community and invited people to come and answer questions about how to mark attendance online, how to sign up for sports, 'cause we have like a new thing with that, you know, for getting onto like physicals and registering for concussion training and everything else.

[02:27:24] Oh boy, wow. Okay, I guess I'm mostly done. I appreciate everybody who came out tonight. I had a lot more to say, but I'll have to wait for another time. Thank you and have a great evening. - Lisa Zargarpur.

[02:27:41] - Good evening, everyone. Ms. Wall just said something that I think bears repeating. She said, given the theater issues that I am grateful that everyone brought to our attention, kind of upset that I didn't hear about it before the meeting, given that I've got a niece who's in CFPA and I texted her and she goes, "Oh, I forgot, my bad."

[02:28:06] Anyway, I really love that, as Wall said, this was not a problem of our making. And together, we're going to have to work on solving this. It is very concerning that suddenly, now the work that's been done for decades is now in a different level of scrutiny.

[02:28:24] And the arguments, especially the ones that the students came forth talking about with how many skills they learned from building sets and things like that. I don't think people, the theater goers, appreciate it until they hear it directly.

[02:28:41] So thank you for your advocacy this evening. I got to attend two Pyramid Concerts, and being in Kohl's District, my district touches almost every other district. So when I saw that Hilton was having one, I showed up for it, and it was all Mr. Blake's schools.

[02:29:00] But I have to say, because I'm like, oh, I don't know anybody here. The kids were so good. These were elementary students playing, and then the middle school played. I got to go to the Pyramid concert at Colgan, which only had two of my elementary schools, and one in my middle, and then the high school played.

[02:29:24] And again, it was just so amazing to hear all these fourth and fifth graders playing so well together. And they were engaged, and they were well prepared for the concert. And it just was a great place to be.

[02:29:40] I went to the district choir concert. My niece was in that. So I stayed to the bitter end. And that is why I could not get over to the other one, because I could not just rush out of there. But it was a-- I'm sad I missed the band concert. But the district choir concert was amazing. I went to All-County Strings concert.

[02:29:56] And the select group, I sat there thinking, this was the audition group. And then the other group came on. I'm like oh my gosh we have so much talent in this county and I hope we continue to cultivate these talents in our kids and give them these opportunities because they were so well prepared before I forget to say this thank you to our clerks they are like the little cat herders of the of the school division they have to remind at least me several times to do certain things every once in a while I also went to the the Prince William rowing event

[02:30:33] that was held at Colgan I was there with at the same time mr. Wilk was there got to learn a little bit more about how the program has been expanding and that was really amazing to watch how hard these kids work what I remembered I until I got into the room I hadn't remembered this but rowing is a team sport but when they do these competitions it's sort of an it's an individual thing and it's really cool to see teams from all over the county cheering on people from just the people from any team anywhere because everyone recognizes the hard work that goes into that sport thank you for for hanging here to the bitter end I

[02:31:11] hope for no more snow days I'm going to be done with it and move on enjoy the rest of your third quarter and have a good night Erica Trineti first of all I want to thank I do see that you're still here so that's good on you I wanted to thank you I'm sorry I forget your first name my apologies but when you got up there Ms. Zargarpur and I were discussing that we thought we were gonna get a shark tank style I mean you are like ready to go on TV and present to them you did an excellent job I love that you're collaborating with the

[02:31:50] supervisors with Parks and Rec I love that you're using the resources here in the county that you're aware of I don't I don't know if you participated in the internship that the county provides the county government but you would be an excellent candidate for that so you may want to look into it it pays well so shout out to you and also shout out to the girls that spoke about rev your Bev that's awesome and it

looks like the week for rev your Bev is coming up in March so hopefully the school system will shout them out and do some sort of promo with them talking about rev your Bev and so thank you guys for talking and raising awareness I love hearing from our students here thank you for

[02:32:28] coming here and staying late hopefully you make it to school on time still so I want to begin by saying that I respect freedom of speech and I truly respect the men and women who serve selflessly to protect our right to exercise those freedoms. I've listened carefully to the speeches tonight and I've also spoken with drama teachers in our district about some of these concerns. As a drama mom I understand the incredible skills my son personally has built with great programs that started as early as kindergarten shout out mr. dove for your

[02:33:06] great drama programs and so I understand and I heard you and we're having discussions and hopefully we can get something out to further explain that to you all as well I do feel the need to address something just because someone says something here in this room tonight doesn't make it true well I may not always see eye to eye with every one of my fellow board members i do not believe that any of them sit here idly or fail fail to care about the people they represent the public is not always aware of the work that happens behind the scenes the conversations the planning and the private

[02:33:46] discussions that take place specifically to protect students and do what's best for kids those discussions happen with dr mcdade with with others as well and some of those conversations must remain private not out of secrecy but out of responsibility and care for our students. So I hope you understand that. I hope you can take that in. I hope everyone has a great week. I know that our winter sports are closing out. We've got some cedar run district champions. I don't like to mention one because I always feel like I leave somebody out. So there are a few in our district that have occurred. I know spring sports are starting and our spring kiddos are

[02:34:25] excited that the snow is melting off of their fields, so they can get back to it. Shout out to those seniors, to those 18-year-olds that are super grown, super, super grown. Respect your parents, love your parents. They brought you here, and you're still going to need them. Love, Mom.

[02:34:47] All right. Excellent. Justin Wilk. Well, I had no trepidation of saying this originally, but since Woodrow Wilson came for three minutes tonight, I do want to address this matter. what was said a couple weeks ago even months by the young man from Gainesville was abhorrent and as my colleague said a lot of this stuff that we talk about goes on behind the scenes especially when it becomes a behavioral issue I do want to say in the last couple weeks oh I thought I heard something in the last couple weeks I've had a good discussion with Carl Brower of the NAACP in Prince

[02:35:26] William County today I talked to Miss Devereaux who's a regular speaker in here about the code of behavior as Ms. Trojanek brought up two weeks ago about the work I've been doing with the code of behavior both of them brought up great perspectives on the matter stuff that I necessarily did not think about and I'm pleased to hear as was mentioned before that our division has already worked with this family proactively and has more meetings coming up and we'll be working with this group to look at the code of behavior and communication protocols and things like that so sorry that fired me up but thank you

[02:35:59] the Woodrow Wilson quotes. Finally to my theater teachers as you know I have a unique perspective in on this being married to a theater teacher who has dedicated the last 21 years of her life to the forest park theater program. I like it was said best the juxtaposition of the new strategic plan and the

goal of what we're doing with expanding theater programs and this new permit requirement at the county level i understand the frustration i know the work that goes into this i know there's programs that only subsist on the sales of their tickets to use that funding for the next show

[02:36:38] as a way of doing it it's a lot easier also saying that hey we can reuse sets but not every theater has the room and storage to keep sets for future usage i understand it the division we're working to figure out ways of resolving this i really appreciate those who came and spoke tonight i i I will tell you this, if you are able to bring this type of crowd to a Tuesday Board of Supervisors meeting, 7 o'clock, I know I'm not joking, if you show up there in force and speak to that group who actually is the county government, I will happily join you in solidarity.

[02:37:14] So just let me know when you're all coming there to speak because I'm willing to talk to my counterpart as much as possible, but I think a show of force is going to be more compelling to that group to maybe take some more action and figure out a way so we don't have to have these red tape and bureaucratic craziness that goes with the sets and stuff like that moving forward so I don't usually say a lot anymore during this but I was fired up so thank you thank you thank you mr.

[02:37:45] Wilk vice chair Jesse well thank you along that line I just want to say this you know there's a saying you're preaching to the choir because I think you know that the majority of this board supports you but there's only a limited things that we can do what I will say is that if we are the choir you need to find a minister you need to find and talk to the people who can do something about this it might be the board of supervisors it might not be but that's

[02:38:22] who you need to address because we have to abide by certain rules and in this case as you know i think our hands are tied and some of you said we should advocate for you and if uh mr wilkes is going i'll i'll go along with him make sure he doesn't get out in trouble if i can as most of you know i'm somewhat restricted uh at the moment what i can attend and what i cannot attend for

[02:38:52] other reasons. I also want to say thank you again for letting the MLK people come in today. My wife started that program and ran it for 17, 18 years and at this last ceremony, this is her last one where she is actively participating in the program. So she loves these kids and this program and it's something dear to her heart.

[02:39:23] I also want to say that the clerks, we need you and we appreciate you very much and is happy that we have you and it's a well-deserved privilege that we honor you.

[02:39:42] I also want to talk to somebody I talk to frequently and I'm going to miss because I understand this is her last board meeting for a while. Ms. Patel, you know, so I'm going to miss you.

[02:40:03] I know you're not going to be gone all the time right now, but this is your last board meeting, so thank you very much. I'm going to put my glasses on because I have a note, but I can't read it. The other thing I want to say is one opportunity I did take this time, I went over to Occoquan Elementary, new building, and took a look at that uh i hope that it's open in uh for the spring break but if not it'll be

[02:40:39] open next fall uh it's going to be an amazing building and something good this county does a lot of good work uh we take care of the buildings and so forth so it's very i'm very proud of our county and our school board uh with everything they do so with that uh and my uh few minutes Thank you.

[02:41:05] All right. Thank you, everyone. First off, thank you to our board clerk, Laura Mills, and our other clerks for everything you guys do for us. We truly appreciate it. I didn't know it was your last meeting, Ms. Botella, but I'm still going to email you and call you. I don't see how this being the last meeting matters in that regard.

[02:41:25] I don't understand that. Next. Very good. Absolutely. And your promptness is truly appreciated, yes. Our student, Bula Sarsa, this evening reminded us in her remarks today that we are an incredibly diverse school district.

[02:41:46] And it is truly our strength, as Dr. McDade will always say. And nobody on this board, nobody in this community likes to see what happened at the incident in Gainesville Middle. And it's unfortunate. But she also reminded us, Bula said, that, you know, there are folks in this community that don't like the diversity that our school represents and that has, and that we celebrate and that we have, and so incidents like this have happened, will happen, will continue to happen, and the best we can do as a school division is the work that I think we've been strongly committed to doing, and that's standing up

[02:42:25] for diversity, equity, inclusion. We have a diversity, equity, inclusion, and compliance office that works on Title VI, VII, and IX. We are highly focused on that work. We have brought new energy to that work over the last four years with Dr. McDade. We're committed to professional development, bias training.

[02:42:42] We address code of behavior, conduct violations. We do everything we possibly can and we engage with the community on that work we do. Can we stop these things from happening? I've always said what you see in the community, you'll see in the schools.

[02:42:59] Whether it's bad behavior in the community, you'll see it reflected in our schools 'cause we are the same people. And so we do our best to make sure the next generation is better than we are. So I appreciate her statements. On the matter of the walkouts, lot of press about it the last few days.

[02:43:16] Let me be crystal clear on this for everyone that our school division does allow and honors free speech from students. We heard a speaker today who brought up a great case, Tinker v. Des Moines, which is a pivotal case actually for student rights and for free speech.

[02:43:37] The Supreme Court ruled that they established students do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate. The core takeaway is that public school officials cannot censor student speech unless it causes material and substantial disruption.

[02:43:59] We can argue, the only thing we can argue in this statement that the Supreme Court ruled is what is material and substantial disruption. And that can be decided by a court. But in our school, we have a long tradition Prince William County Schools of honoring and letting our students protest as long as they do it peacefully with respect and abide by our code of behavior. And that means they work with the administration to plan for these things. And there is going to be an event this Friday.

[02:44:31] But when students don't abide by those norms and practices that the school division has held with deep regard over a long tradition, then we will enforce action when students don't abide by the code of behavior. And that is important for everyone to know. We did not enforce action against any student for their right to protest or their protesting. We did it when they broke a rule and left school property or did something along those lines. And that everyone needs to be clear

[02:45:06] out whether it was the decision on roe v wade when students walked out whether it was october 7th and the ongoing genocide war what the students stood up against in israel whether it's this ice out whatever it is the school has a responsibility and we all have a responsibility each of you in this room to make sure our children know how to use their free speech responsibly and that is the work we do also as a school division the question of substantial disruption and material disruption

[02:45:40] we do everything we possibly can to minimize any disruption to the students who stay and try to do their learning and so we work very hard on that you know a judge may decide differently but that that's for some court to decide if someone doesn't like the way we do it but we are committed to that work and I think it's very important for us to say that and to say it out loud because this has become an issue over the last few days and we're gonna see more of these but I you know I be caution anyone to use the case law when really the the the argument there is whether it's substantial and material

[02:46:17] disruption and our school division works very hard to make sure there's none of that on the theater I agree with the folks on this board I said it earlier in my comments on CTE. We are aware of the issue. The school division is subject to all codes regulations set by state and county. And, you know, there are a lot of layers to why this has happened. And it's concerning to all of us here. It's concerning that this law isn't being enforced evenly across the Commonwealth and putting us at a disadvantage.

[02:46:52] That is a problem. I think with Mr. Wilk and Mr. Jesse now wanting to go over to the Board of County Supervisors, that's a great idea. I also think it's probably a great idea to tell the rest of the state that it's unfair that we are being singled out for this and, you know, if Fairfax gets angry at us because we say, you know, hey, I'm not sure why you're not getting enforced like we are.

[02:47:16] Well, I'm sorry that that news got out. But we will do what we can as a board to talk to our colleagues on the Board of County Supervisors, to our colleagues at the state, and it may be a state code that neither the supervisors can deal with as well, and that might be where it is.

[02:47:35] So I want to be very clear that this board is very sympathetic to this, understands this issue, and is working really hard on this. Last, for the young man that came to speak tonight on youth engagement, it's great. We really, truly appreciate the work you're gonna do and keep it up and email our Spark Foundation or Dr. McDade's office to see if the schools can participate in any way to help support your effort.

[02:48:01] Or call Erica Tradenек, she's ready to go. And then, and last, you know, I'm gonna read the line of the day. How do we create meaningful post-secondary outcomes for all students whether they choose to enroll, enlist, or seek gainful employment after high school graduation.

[02:48:22] I truly believe that this is the work this board has focused on, has done well with, and will continue to do so. And if you're writing a story about tonight's meeting, that's the story. Good night.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com