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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Date Wednesday, April 22, 2026
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 2h 41m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdzwSmGMLJ4>
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-27. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] - Okay, great. Check one, Ms. Wall, can you hear us? Thumbs up? Great, okay, Ms. Wall can hear us. I would like to call this meeting the Prince William County School Board to order notice on electronic participation pursuant to school board policy 139, school board member participation in meetings by electronic communication.

[00:00:20] Jennifer Wall will participate remotely in the meeting by electronic communication because she's unable to attend in person due to a personal matter as she is out of state. We have the first motion, the approval of the agenda, on for action, Vice Chair Jesse.

[00:00:36] - I move that Prince Winnie County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - I have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - We're gonna do a roll call. - Oh, we gotta do a roll call. All right, are you gonna call the roll?

[00:00:52] - Dr. Lateef? - Yes. - Mr. Blake? Mr. Jesse? Mrs. Stradenik? Mrs. Wahl? - Yes. - Unmute? - Yes. - Can't hear you.

[00:01:08] Why is it not working? - I'm unmuted, but we can't. - Yeah. Just give me a thumbs up if you're a yes. - Okay, thank you. Mr. Wilk, okay. Mrs. Zargarpur, thank you.

[00:01:24] The vote is seven yes, motion passed. - Moving on to the motion to enter closed session, a motion to order, Mr. Jesse. - Back pursuant to section 2.2, that's 3711 and 2.2, that's 3712 of the code of Virginia, Prince William County School Board, enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:01:45] One, to discuss with staff the assignment appointment promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, discipline, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to Section 2.2 S3711.

[00:02:05] A1, the Code of Virginia 2, to review disciplining matters for specific students that would involve the disclosure information contained in the scholastic records for the individual students and to receive legal advice in regards regarding some same as provided section 2.2 that's 3711

[00:02:39] a 2 and 8 of the code of virginia three to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters pertaining to collective bargaining, staff, students, and other civil litigation involving the school division under Section 2.2-3711A-7 and 8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:03:07] And four, to discuss and receive briefing by all staff members related to the security of school facility, the safety of persons using such facilities and the actions taken to respond to such matters were discussed in open meetings where jeopardizing the security of such facility pursuant to section 2.2, that's 371A19 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:03:38] - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Dargifor, a second? - I second. - Okay, now please call the roll. - Dr. Laseef. - Yes. - Mr. Blake. - Mr. Jesse. - Yes. - Mrs. Stradek, Mr. Wilk, Mrs. Zargarpur, and Mrs. Wall.

[00:04:00] - Yes. - We can hear you, Ms. Wall, great. - Thank you, the vote is seven yes, one absent. Williams, motion passed. - I miss sort of saying, Jen Wall, how do you vote? You know, like in the pandemic.

[00:04:15] - In the old days, in the pandemic. - Yes. - All right, at this point, the school board

[00:04:22] will move into closed session and reconvene in one hour.

[00:05:26] Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session from closed session. A motion for closed session certification is order 8.01. Vice Chair, Jesse. - I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia closed sessions of the Prince William County School Board meeting on April 22nd, 2026 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:05:54] Now therefore be resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, One, only public business matters lawfully exempted from opening, open meeting requirements were discussed in closed meetings to which the certification resolution applies.

[00:06:14] And two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the board. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman.

[00:06:29] Ms. Zaria Ford. I second. Okay, tonight we have Ms. Jen Wall participating remotely. so all votes will be taken by roll call. Any discussion, please vote, please call the roll. - Dr. Lateef. - Yes. - Mr. Blake, Mr. Jesse. - Yes.

[00:06:45] - Mrs. Stradek. - Yes. - Mrs. Wall. - Yes. - Mr. Wilk. - Yes. - Ms. Williams. - Yes. - Mrs. Zargarpur. - Yes. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. - Moving on to closed session action items, motion order for 9.01, Mr. Vice Chair Jesse.

[00:07:01] - I move that the Prince William County School Board improve the appointments and releases of specific employees that presented in call session. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Second. - Any discussion? Please call the roll.

[00:07:17] - Dr. Lateef. - Yes. - Mr. Blake. - Mr. Jesse. - Yes. - Mrs. Strudeneck. - Mrs. Wall. - Yes. - Mr. Wilk. - Mrs. Williams. - Yes. - Mrs. Zargarpur. - Yes.

[00:07:32] - The vote is eight yes unanimous, motion passed. - And just remind the board, please turn your mics on when you vote just so that people can hear it from home when it, so it's official. Okay, at this time, we will now move to Pledge of Allegiance and we have Ms. Mula Sarsa with us, our student representative this evening to lead us in the pledge.

[00:08:07] Thank you, Ms. Sarsa. Up next is our Thriving Futures Focus and Thriving Futures Focus is always our opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being done, being accomplished in our schools that fulfills our vision that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:08:30] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or award at the state or national level. Tonight, the school board is honored to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of our students, staff, and school leaders in schools. These recognitions reflect excellence across many areas of Prince William County Public Schools, from student leadership and professional distinction to school-wide commitments to military-connected families and exemplary counseling programs.

[00:08:56] I would like to invite Ms. Erica Trudenik of the Brentsville District to introduce our first group of honorees. Ms. Trudenik. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Brentsville District High School senior, Hunter Ringer, whose leadership has made history.

[00:09:13] Hunter became the first high school student in the nation to serve as the chair of a county Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee, an appointment that required approval from the Virginia Farm Bureau, American Farm Bureau, and Virginia FFA.

[00:09:28] His journey reflects remarkable growth from a student who was once hesitant to get involved to a respected leader in FFA. The Farm Bureau and our agriculture community, his dedication, confidence, and commitment to service have earned recognition at both the local and state level, and we are honored to celebrate him tonight.

[00:09:47] Hunter is supported this evening by Brentsville District High School's principal, Dr. Kat Meitz, horticulture teacher, Amy Beard, and his family. Sorry, I had to turn the page. I would like to invite Hunter to share a few words on his impressive accomplishment.

[00:10:04] - First off, I wanna thank the Prince William County School Board for inviting me here tonight. It truly means a lot to have an opportunity to speak and represent agricultural education in our county. For those of you who may not know me, my name is Hunter Ringer.

[00:10:19] I'm a senior at Brentsville District High School, as well as the 2025-2026 Brentsville FFA president. and the first high school student in the country to serve as a young farmer's chair for my local farm bureau, which I like to talk about briefly tonight.

[00:10:35] When I was elected to serve as the young farmer's chair for the Prince William Fairfax County Farm Bureau, I didn't know how to react because being the first high school student in the country meant I had a lot of weight on my shoulders and the pressure was extreme.

[00:10:50] I felt a mix of shock, nervousness, and uncertainty all at once. Even though I couldn't fully explain what I was feeling at that moment, one thought kept coming back to me. I had been given the opportunity to make a real difference in Prince William County through agriculture.

[00:11:08] As the FFA president at Brentsville, I was proud of the work I had done, but I also recognized that my ability to create change was limited. Stepping into this new role showed me that I had, that I could expand the impact in ways I could never imagine.

[00:11:23] At first, I approached this position just like another FFA officer role. However, as time passed, my perspective began to change. Being younger than everyone on the board of directors, it was incredibly eye-opening to sit alongside them and see how individuals with different experiences and backgrounds work together towards common goals.

[00:11:47] These discussions and decisions that reach far beyond anything I would have encountered if I was involved only in the FFA. Through this experience, I had gained a deeper understanding of agriculture, leadership, and responsibility, and I began to see just how important collaboration and service truly are.

[00:12:08] This journey would not have been possible without the support of so many people along the way. I wanna thank my family, my mom, dad, brother, and sisters for continually encouraging me to keep going. Even during when I felt close to giving up, their belief in me provided the motivation I needed to push forward.

[00:12:29] I'm also incredibly grateful to Virginia FFA as a whole, especially the Virginia FFA state officers. I have known many of them since the beginning of my FFA journey, and their guidance and encouragement over the years have shaped the person I am today.

[00:12:45] I would also thank my fellow members of the board of directors for showing me that leadership is not defined by age, but by dedication and passion. They were reminding me that a young person can truly make a meaningful difference in agriculture. Finally, I want to thank my advisor, Mrs. Amy Beard, and my officer team.

[00:13:05] Being able to serve as the big brother and mentor of the team has been one of the most rewarding parts of my journey, and I am incredibly proud of each and every one of you and all that you accomplished for Virginia FFA. Chloe, Luke, Ethan, Abigail, Rachel, and Charlie, keep pushing forward and strive for excellence.

[00:13:25] Continue to build on what we have built together. Leave your mark and make sure Brentstil FFA stays on the map. As I prepared to head to college this fall, I do not know exactly what my future holds. What I do know is that I will be carrying everything I have learned through the FFA and Farm Bureau with me.

[00:13:42] These experiences have shaped my values and strengthened my passion for agriculture. I am committed to continually this work, to advocating for agriculture, to ensuring that people understand it is the backbone of the United States of America. Most importantly, I want others to see that young people like myself can truly make a difference in the world.

[00:14:03] Thank you. - Congratulations, Hunter. The Brentsville District also wishes to acknowledge Marsteller Middle School Principal Lisa Warner who was named the 2026 Outstanding Middle School Principal by the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals. This organization will present Ms. Warner with the award this summer at the 98th Annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference and Exposition. She will also represent Virginia and the National Association of Secondary

[00:14:39] School Principals National Principal of the Year Program. I would like to invite Principal Warner to share a few words on this accomplishment. - Thank you, Mrs. Trodinik. Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the board, Dr. McDade. Thank you so much for recognizing me this evening.

[00:14:54] I am proud of the work we are doing at Marsteller Middle School, and I'm very proud of the culture we have cultivated together as a staff. This is really hard work. And thankfully, we have brilliant and beautiful students and families who make it all worthwhile. I would like to thank my family and friends who have allowed me to pour myself into this work.

[00:15:13] I'd also like to thank my administrative team who nominated me for this award. I am beyond grateful that they believed in me and trusted me enough to think that I am worthy. I'd also like to recognize our outstanding teachers and staff at Marsteller who inspire me to be better every day.

[00:15:29] They are the most highly qualified and passionate educators I have ever worked with, and I would not be here tonight if it weren't for their leadership throughout our entire school. Dr. McDade, I wanna thank you and your team, especially Mr. Harris, who has been a critical support and mentor to me throughout these years.

[00:15:46] And I'd also like to recognize your middle-level team, Mrs. Porter-Lucas, Mr. Grasek, Mrs. Seelock, and Mrs. Alvarado. They are maintaining an outstanding middle-level team. I'm honored to represent our school, our school division, and the Commonwealth of Virginia with this incredible title.

[00:16:03] Thank you so much. - Thank you, Ms. Trudenik, and congratulations to our Brentsville district honorees. I would now like to invite Ms. Lisa Zargapur of the Coles District to introduce our next group.

[00:16:21] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Tonight, the Coles District is proud to recognize Christina Devers of Benton Middle School, who was named the 2026 Virginia School Social Worker of the Year by the Virginia Association of School Social Workers.

[00:16:37] This honor, there's too many S's in that. This honor recognizes her commitment to the highest professional standards and the meaningful positive impact she has made on her school community. Over 14 years with PWCS, Ms. Devers has supported students, families, and staff through initiatives that address the whole child, including Benton Middle School's food pantry, Giving Tree Initiative, therapy dog program, Sources of Strength, Heritage Night, and Mental Health Month activities.

[00:17:04] Her work reflects compassion, innovation, and a deep commitment to student wellbeing, equity, and school success. Mrs. Devers is supported this evening by Benton Middle School Principal Jerry

Piacchese. I would like to invite our Virginia School Social Worker of the Year, Christina Devers, to share a few words on her accomplishment.

[00:17:26] - Thank you so much for that introduction. Good evening, Mr. Chairman, board members, Dr. McDade, and our members of the community that are here tonight. Thank you for allowing me a moment this evening. I am deeply honored and grateful to be recognized as the Virginia Association of School Social Workers, School Social Worker of the Year.

[00:17:44] This award means a great deal to me, not only on a personal level, but because it reflects the collective commitment that we share to supporting students in meaningful, whole child ways. At Benton, I've had the privilege of working with students who arrive at school each day, carrying experiences that extend far beyond academics.

[00:18:03] Many are navigating family stress, mental health challenges, grief, trauma, and unmet basic needs. These realities don't stay outside the classroom. They shape how our students learn, behave, and engage. School social work is about meeting students where they are and ensuring that they have what they need to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and mentally.

[00:18:25] Our role is to act as connectors between home, school, and the community, to advocate for students whose voices may otherwise go unheard, and to remove barriers to learning so that classrooms can be places of growth and possibility. Receiving this award reinforces how essential holistic supports are to student success.

[00:18:44] When students feel safe, supported, and understood, learning can truly happen. Supporting the whole child is not an add-on. It is foundational to equity, access, and long-term success. This recognition also reflects the support of my administrators, colleagues, and leadership who understand the value of mental health and student advocacy.

[00:19:06] I am grateful to work in a community like Benton, one that prioritizes relationships, well-being, and collaboration in the service of students. I would also like to take a moment, excuse me, to thank my husband and my kids. Their love, patience, and encouragement make this work possible.

[00:19:25] They support me not only in what I do, but in why I do it and I am incredibly grateful. Most importantly, this award belongs to the students and families that I work with every day. They continually remind me of the impact that compassion, consistency, and belief can have in a young person's life.

[00:19:44] Thank you for recognizing the profession of school social work and for your ongoing commitment to student wellbeing. I am proud to serve Benton Middle School and will continue to advocate for the supports that our students need and deserve. Thank you.

[00:20:04] - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. I would like to invite Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District to introduce our next honorees. Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. It is my honor to acknowledge all 51 PWCS schools that have earned the Virginia Purple Star designation, a recognition awarded to military-friendly schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting our students and families connected to our nation's military.

[00:20:31] This year, the Virginia Department of Education recognized 18 Prince William County schools, including 14 renewals and four first-time designees. While we celebrate every school that continues to uphold this important honor, tonight we will formally recognize our four newest Purple Star schools.

[00:20:52] Their addition reflects our continued commitment to creating school cultures where military-connected students and families feel welcomed, supported, and connected. Why we all have purple on this evening. School board members representing the newest schools will acknowledge them first, and once we finish recognizing all four schools, we will hear from US Marine Corps Colonel Jenny A. Colgate, commanding officer of the Marine Corps Base at Quantico.

[00:21:19] The colonel will be followed by Ann Henry, supervisor of elementary counseling and related services, excuse me. From the Woodbridge District, I am extremely proud to recognize, for the first time ever, Leesylvania Elementary School and Ripon Middle School as Virginia Purple Star Schools.

[00:21:41] Leesylvania Elementary School is represented this evening by their outstanding, amazing principal, Mrs. Meg McGregor, retired register, Pat Summers, gifted teacher, Lauren Adams, and fifth grade Purple Star Ambassador Kaylin Yates.

[00:21:57] Ripon Middle School is represented this evening by Principal Kristen Donahue, Counseling Director Ada Hernandez, and Counselors Nicole Mourning and Susan Noddle. Next, I would like to call on Vice Chairman Mr. Richard Jesse of the Occoquan District.

[00:22:16] Lizo Venia, Ms. McGregor and Ms. Donahue, if you'd just give a little wave, 'cause there's so many people. I just wanna say thank you very much. - Thank you Ms. Williams.

[00:22:31] The Aquaman district is proud to recognize Marshall Elementary School for their first time designation as a Virginia Purple Star School. Marshall Elementary School is represented this evening by the principal, Cindy, and I'm not gonna mess up your name, so.

[00:22:51] - Comitiss. - Comitiss, okay, thank you. And assistant principal, Dr. April Jensen, and parent liaison Purple Star coordinator, Mrs. Zobie, thank you. And for our next school, I'd like to call the Brentsville district's representative, Mrs. Eric Trandenik.

[00:23:15] - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. The Brentsville district is proud to recognize Victory Elementary School for their first time designation as a purple star school. Victory Elementary School is represented this evening by assistant principal, Mr. Ryan Gast. Congratulations to all our newly appointed purple star designated schools.

[00:23:40] - Thank you, Ms. Trudenik, and congratulations. At this time, I'd like to ask Ms. Jen Wall of the Gainesville District, who is attending the meeting remotely to introduce our special military guests. And Ms. Wall, can you just speak as loud as you can in the mic, and then if our team here can make sure everyone can hear her.

[00:23:58] Go ahead, Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Can you guys hear me okay? - Very good, thank you. - Great. In recognition of our partnership with military families, it is my honor to welcome and recognize U.S. Marine Corps Colonel Jenny A. Colgate, Commanding Officer of Marine Corps Base Quantico and Quantico School Liaison, Mr. Tony Wishard.

[00:24:20] Colonel Colgate began her Marine Corps career after graduating from the University of Arizona and commissioning as a second lieutenant, going on to specialize in aviation maintenance and logistics with early operational assignments in California, Japan, and the Middle East, including deployments in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

[00:24:41] Over the course of her career, she held a wide range of leadership, command, and staff roles, from recruit training at Paris Island and aviation logistics commands in Japan, North Korea, and Hawaii, to senior-level positions at U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, Headquarters Marine Corps, and the Office of the Inspector General.

[00:25:01] She enhanced her strategic expertise with a master's degree from the U.S. Naval War College and industry experience through the Secretary of Defense Executive Fellowship Program at Sikorsky Aviation. In July 2024, she culminated more than two decades of global operational command and strategic service by assuming command of Marine Corps installations, National Capital Region, and Marine Corps Base Quantico.

[00:25:26] At this time, I would like to invite Colonel Jenny A. Colgate to share a few words on behalf of our Purple Star Schools. Dr. Lateef, Dr. McDade, board members, thank you for the opportunity to come here.

[00:25:47] So I really wanted to address the schools and that's to say thank you to all the educators and the counselors For you all to realize how much it means for our military children to be recognized So as you know, I say this every time but we don't stay in one spot So our military children will move six or seven times before they even hit high schools And it's really challenging for them not only to make friends, but to feel like they fit in The education changes from coast to coast if you're overseas and so it's really important for them to come and see a familiar face that Understands the challenges that we face in the military. We're not just contained within the walls of the base

[00:26:26] We have students all the way down to Spotsylvania County Past the Pentagon and so we really just truly appreciate how much you guys put into becoming a purple star school. So congratulations To the victory Marshall. There's the two latest ones, right?

[00:26:43] And for all of you, those that continue to renew the Purple Star partnership with us, thank you very much. And I know that our parents appreciate it. It's a unique experience being a military child. They go through a lot, but I hope that they're more resilient when they come out.

[00:26:59] And that's because of all of you and all the effort that you put in. So thank you for being our partners. Thank you for dedicating your time to our children. And thank you for allowing us to come and say thank you to the board. Appreciate it.

[00:27:16] - Thank you, thank you, Colonel Colgate. I'd like to invite Anne Henry, Supervisor of Elementary Counseling and Related Services to speak on behalf of this recognition. Ms. Henry. - Good evening. I'd like to begin by thanking Dr. McDade, Chairman Lateef, Vice Chair Jesse, and the members of the school board for the opportunity to recognize our Purple Star schools this evening.

[00:27:36] Across the nation, as you just heard, military families relocate two to three years on average, and many military connected students attend multiple schools along the way. more than 80% of these students are enrolled in public schools. In Prince William County schools alone, we proudly serve approximately 5,000 military-connected students, making intentional school-based supports essential.

[00:28:00] Virginia became the second state to adopt the Purple Star Program in 2018. Led by the Virginia Department of Education, the program ensures schools have a military family liaison, provide professional learning for staff, and offer structured transition supports to help students thrive academically and socially.

[00:28:20] This work aligns closely with the PWCS strategic plan by fostering resilient, inclusive learning environments where every student feels valued. PWCS first earned Purple Star designations in 2018 with three schools.

[00:28:36] Today, we are proud to have 51 designated schools. Earlier this spring, 21 schools participated in the Road to Purple Star work session as part of the 2026 designation cycle.

[00:28:55] The Purple Star program reflects PWCS's ongoing commitment to honoring and supporting military connected students and their families. We remain dedicated to strengthening and expanding this work across our division. Thank you for recognizing our Purple Star schools this evening and allowing us to share the impact of this important program.

[00:29:20] - I'm gonna go off script here for a second and introduce Vice Chair, Mr. Jesse, who is a Marine Corps veteran, to say a few words. Mr. Jesse. - Yeah, I'd just like to let people know how difficult it can be to be in the military and raise a family.

[00:29:35] You know, it is very difficult. Not only do we generally move every two or three years, but a lot of times, for example, I went down to Camp Lejeune for a tour, and quickly we went on a six-month tour in the Mediterranean, and our family had to stay there.

[00:29:57] When you came back from the tour and you think you were going to be home and time with your family. Down at Camp Lejeune, most of the time you went out for a week out in the fields on field exercises so that the person in the military wasn't always home with their families.

[00:30:14] It is very challenging. Came up here, I did my last 10 years up here either at the Marine Corps up near the Pentagon at that time or down at Quantico. We do get more time here with the family, but it is very challenging.

[00:30:32] And I just wanna compliment all the parents and say I appreciate you and I know how hard it is and thank you for everything that you do. Thank you.

[00:30:47] - Thank you, Colonel and Ms. Henry. You know, I think it goes without saying, I think we're one of the largest school districts with the, I think only Parris Island might have a district with this many Marines in it. And we're incredibly grateful to, for all of us know someone who serves in the military and for everything you do for our country and what you're doing for us and the families who are sacrificing and even now while we're at war, we truly appreciate the work and the effort that you all do and again, the school board and school superintendent wants to convey every possible privilege we can to you all as we go through this, so thank you very much.

[00:31:27] Next up is Mr. Justin Wilk to introduce our next honorees. Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tonight, I am proud to acknowledge the 12 PWCS schools that earned the 2026 recognized ASCA model program, also known as RAMP designation from the American School Counselor Association.

[00:31:46] This is a record number of RAMP designations for PWCS in a single year, bringing the division to 22 schools with current active RAMP designations. This recognition reflects the dedication, collaboration, and care our school counselors bring to students every day as well as the strength of counseling programs that are making meaningful difference in our schools.

[00:32:09] Through RAMP, ASCA recognizes schools that successfully implement the ASCA national model framework and shows evidence-based improvements resulting in high quality school counseling programs. The school board members representing the 12 schools will acknowledge them first.

[00:32:26] Once we finish that, we will hear from mental health specialist, Lisa James. From the Potomac district, I'm proud to recognize Grant Park Middle School and Potomac High School for their 2026 ramp designations. Grant Park is represented this evening by Director of School Counseling, Kelsey Daniels, and Guidance Counselor, Deanne Lewis.

[00:32:49] Potomac High School is represented this evening by Assistant Principals, Lorraine Sadler and Monica Charles Williams. Next, I'd like to call on the Vice Chairman Jesse of the Occoquan District. - Thank you, Mr. Wilkes. The Occoquan District is proud to recognize Rockledge Elementary School and Springwoods Elementary School for their 2026 ramp designation Rockledge Elementary School is represented this evening by principal Catherine Dennis and Head Lead Counselor Meredith Glaze

[00:33:20] Springville Elementary School is represented this evening by assistant principal Kenny Harkins and second comp and school counselor Joanna Hanger and and Alice Cornelius.

[00:33:36] Congratulations to you all for our next school. I would like to call Brentsville District Representative Ms. Eric Trudanik. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Innovation Elementary School, Patriot High School, and the Governor's School at Innovation Park for their 2026 ramp designations.

[00:33:58] Innovation Elementary School is represented this evening by Principal Kelly Stroud and School Counselors Maria Kisner and Riza Salas, sorry. Patriot High School is represented this evening by Director of School Counseling Terry Snutes and School Counselor Vicki Campbell.

[00:34:18] The Governor's School at Innovation Park is represented this evening by School Coordinator and Counselor Melissa Bach. For our next schools, I would like to call on Neabsco District Representative Tracy Blake. - Thank you, Mrs. Trdenic. The Neabsco District wishes to recognize Neabsco Elementary School for their 2026 ramp designation.

[00:34:39] Neopsago Elementary School is represented this evening by Assistant Principal Therese Carrington and School Counselor, Ms. Lydia Lairmore. Next, I would like to invite Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District to introduce our next nominee.

[00:34:56] - Thank you so much, Mr. Blake. From the Woodbridge District, I am proud to recognize for the second time tonight my amazing Rippon Middle School for their 2026 ramp designation. Rippon Middle School is represented this evening, again, by Principal Kristen Donahue and Counseling Director Ada Hernandez, Counselors Nicole Mourning, and Susan Noddle.

[00:35:18] I would now like to invite Ms. Lisa Zabacar, excuse me, like I haven't been saying this forever. Ms. Lisa Zagapar of the Coles District to introduce our next group. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. The Coles District is proud to recognize Kyle Wilson Elementary School, Benton Middle School, and Osborne Park High School for their 2026 ramp designations.

[00:35:39] Kyle Wilson Elementary School is represented this evening by Principal Deanna Libby and School Counselor Marissa Payne. Benton Middle School is represented this evening by Principal Jerry

Piacchese and Director of Counseling Pandita Gertie. Osborne Park High School is represented this evening by Principal Dr. Lisa Marie Kane and Counselor Rebecca Hera.

[00:35:59] Congratulations to everyone. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. At this time, I would like to invite mental health specialist Lisa James to share a few words on behalf of our 2026 RAMP designated schools.

[00:36:20] - Good evening, Dr. McDade, Chair Lateef, Vice Chair Jesse and members of the school board. Thank you so much for having us. We are proud to recognize 12 Prince William County schools that have earned the American School Counselors Association Recognize ASCA Model Program or RAMP designation.

[00:36:38] This represents the highest number of RAMP designations that Prince William County schools has ever achieved in one single year. and I would also like to note that it is the highest number from any division in the entire state. RAMP is a highly rigorous evidence-based process that requires schools to demonstrate full implementation of the ASCA national model, intentional use of data, and documented impact on student outcomes.

[00:37:11] These designations reflect a tremendous year-long effort and a sustained commitment to equity, access, and student success. This year's RAMP schools achieved remarkable results. There is truly far more impact than we can share about each school within this limited time, but we are excited to highlight just a few examples.

[00:37:31] At Potomac High School, absences among identified 10th grade female students were reduced by 27%. The Governor's School became the first program of its kind in the state to earn RAMP designation, demonstrating a 100% improvement in the number of failing grades from quarter one to quarter two amongst black and Hispanic students.

[00:37:53] Benton Middle School saw a 53% improvement in exclusionary discipline occurrences for identified black male students, and Innovation Elementary School achieved a 44% decrease in absences among first and second grade identified students. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication of our school counseling teams, their administrators, and school communities, and to Prince William County Schools commitment to meeting the needs of each and every student.

[00:38:20] Thank you for your continued support of comprehensive school counseling programs. - Congratulations to all of you. And before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words.

[00:38:37] Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. This evening's recognitions are a powerful reflection of excellence, leadership, and service happening throughout Prince William County Schools. Congratulations, Hunter. Your achievement shows what is possible when we empower students to lead, serve, and grow into impact players, making a difference in their community.

[00:38:57] Christina Devers, your recognition reminds us that helping students create a thriving future also means supporting their mental health, well-being, and sense of belonging. Thank you for all that you do. Strong students are made possible by strong teachers, and strong teachers are made possible by strong administrators.

[00:39:15] The Virginia Middle School Principal of the Year is Lisa Warner, and I want to thank you for representing PWCS well, showing strong school leadership by building positive climate and culture,

strengthening teaching and learning and creating the conditions needed for students and teachers to experience success congratulations to you and thank you to the school leaders and support professionals whose schools are strengthening their support for military connected students and families especially to our four new purple star designated schools that are being honored here tonight I also want to thank Colonel Jenny a Colgate for being here

[00:39:52] tonight and for continuing to partner with Prince William County Schools as we continue to do this incredibly work incredibly important work to support our military-connected families and I am so incredibly proud of the 12 counseling programs that are earning national recognition for the care and guidance that you provide to our students in our communities each and every day each of these honors tells an important story about Prince William County Schools a story of dedication collaboration compassion and shared commitment helping every student to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:40:29] And on behalf of PWCS, I congratulate all of tonight's honorees, and I thank you for the meaningful difference that you are making in the lives of our students and in our school communities. And as I always say, we are PWCS proud.

[00:40:50] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:40:58] Diana Galata will direct sort of the traffic for the photos.

[00:46:43] Okay, thank you for that.

[00:49:13] We will now move on with board business. Up next will be adoption of consent agenda for this evening, 12.01. Vice Chair Jesse.

[00:49:40] Someone wanna read the consent, just Mr. Blake read the adoption of consent agenda, if you don't mind.

[00:50:03] Got it in your script or no? - Yeah, I got it right. - All right, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approves a public meeting and consent agenda as recommended. - Mr. Chairman? - Yeah. - I second. - Okay, and that's the adoption of the consent agenda. Do we have any discussion?

[00:50:19] Please call the roll. - Dr. Lateef? - Yes. - Mr. Blake? - Yes. - Mr. Jesse? - Thank you. - Yes. - Mrs. Trudenik?

[00:50:35] - Yes. - Mr. Wilk? - Yes. - Ms. Williams? - Yes. - Mrs. Zargarpur? - Yes. - Mrs. Wall? - Yes. - Thank you, the vote is eight yes, unanimous motion passed. - Next up, acknowledgements and recognitions 13.01. Mr. Jesse.

[00:50:51] - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the adoption of the acknowledgment and recognition as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Just want to remind our public that we do the adoption of acknowledgment and recognitions for the month coming up.

[00:51:10] So these are actually for next month. We've already done the ones for May. Just a little reminder. So in May we'll do for June, even though we're at the end of the school year. Thank you. - Please call the roll. - Dr. Lateef. - Yes.

[00:51:25] - Mr. Blake. - Yes. - Yes. - Thank you. Mr. Jessie. - Yes. - Mrs. Trudenik. - Abstain. - Mr. Wilk. - Yes. - Ms. Williams. - Yes.

[00:51:40] - Mrs. Zargarpur. - Yes. - And Mrs. Wall. - Yes. - Thank you. The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Trudenik, motion passed. - Up next, citizen comment time. Those citizens who signed up in advance with a clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:52:03] 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 disruptions of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask that the room be cleared to restore public order.

[00:52:20] Tonight, we have five citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come at the podium and state your name and address for the record. I'll go ahead and call the five so you all know what the order is. First, Brittany Baker Bigelow, Dr. Shannon Waite, Jabari Baker, Kimberly Melman Orozco, and Hina Ansari.

[00:52:41] Brittany Baker Bigelow. - Good afternoon, my name is Brittany Bigelow.

[00:52:58] My address is 11804 Golden Eagle Court. I'm here today, I'm the parent of a seventh grade student that is enrolled at Lake Ridge Middle School, and I'm here after several efforts to resolve this issue with various levels of district staff.

[00:53:15] I am here today to raise serious concern about a referral behavior code violation, BCS 13. My child was held in isolation for two hours before I was contacted by Assistant Principal Miss Talley. The next day, I was informed she would receive a 10-day suspension and a hearing.

[00:53:34] From that point forward, I've made repeated efforts to ensure that the school considered my child's documented disability under her 504 plan. Instead, I've been met with resistance in due process failures. When speaking with Principal Dutro to ask for services, my child, during her suspension, my child was denied.

[00:53:53] I then had to advise the illegal denial of services and had to call for my own MDR. Although the meeting was held by Assistant Principal Ms. Talley, there were several procedural failures and process violations. Following the hearing held on March 3rd, my child's suspension has been extended indefinitely during the Child Find process.

[00:54:14] From February 19th to present day, my child has been teaching herself. She has only been receiving homework packets and work via Canvas unless I agree to place her in a non-traditional school setting without an IEP or proper supports.

[00:54:31] It was not until mid-April she began receiving one hour of academic support per week. This situation is not just about discipline, It's about my child's legal right to an education and the school division's obligation to follow the law.

[00:54:46] Right now, my child has been excluded, misrepresented, and denied appropriate support during critical time in her development, and this is completely unacceptable. I am asking this board to

take immediate action to correct these failures, ensure compliance with the disability protections, and put the proper supports in place so my child can return to a safe and appropriate learning environment.

[00:55:10] because no child should be pushed out for behaviors directly tied to their documented disability and education should never be used as a form of punishment. Thank you.

[00:55:25] - Shannon Waite. - Good evening, my name is Shannon Waite. My address is 309 Yoakam Parkway, Alexandria, Virginia 22304.

[00:55:45] I am here in support of my family member, Ms. Brittany Bigelow. I fully expect that my comments will be recorded and written into the record, along with all publication of these proceedings, including any transcript published from this proceeding. I implore the Prince William County of the NAACP to specifically request an investigation into the discipline practices that discriminate against students of the global majority, particularly black and Hispanic students in Lake Ridge Middle School.

[00:56:12] As an example, Ms. Bigelow's daughter was initially suspended for five days and then seven days later for 10 days. Both infractions are directly connected with the diagnosis listed on her current 504 plan. However, rather than support, what she received was a referral to the school board for consideration of additional disciplinary actions with expulsion being the most significant potential course of action.

[00:56:35] She is a child with documented mental health needs, official diagnoses, and a documented 504 plan aligned with reports from a therapist and a psychologist. This student has been out of school since February 19th and was denied access to instruction until April 7th by both Principal James Dutrow and Assistant Principal Tammy Talley.

[00:56:57] Both Principal Dutrow and AP Talley have strategically and systematically blocked Ms. Bigelow from accessing instruction for her daughter. Administrators at Lakeridge Middle School attempted to deny Ms. Bigelow her right to an MDR and stalled initiating the child study evaluation process.

[00:57:15] The process was delayed, affording the administration and central office coordinators uninterrupted access to their planned spring breaks without having to deal with the bothersome issue of ensuring her daughter had access to instruction.

[00:57:30] There is so much more to say on this topic, but due to time constraints, I'll wrap up shortly. And I'd like to note that the district and board member Lori Williams received my comments in full for anyone interesting and foiling them.

[00:57:46] There is a problem when the system is set up to incentivize the district to deny a child access to their constitutional right to a faith. Miss Talley, the same person who listed the charges that actually didn't fit the incident when there were appropriate charges existing in the discipline code and the collective group of administrators at Lakeridge Middle School have conspired to ensure the best interest of the district prevail from and they have directly benefited from this.

[00:58:12] And finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge how heartbreaking this entire experience has been as individuals who could and should have intervened before this matter escalated to this moment, it's unfortunate because they're black women. According to doctors Patricia Hill Collins, Dr. Watson, and Baxley, black women have historically served as other mothers standing in the gap, a deeper level of local in parentis, to know that Ms. Bigelow entrusted her child.

[00:58:37] - Thank you, Ms. Wade. Jabari Baker.

[00:58:53] - Good evening, I'm Jabari Baker. My address is 13984 Gary Fisher Trail. I'm here the father of a seventh grade student at Lake Ridge Middle School, following up on the failures and disciplinary process her mother's outline prior.

[00:59:10] I'm here to speak today, not only about my daughter, but also as a parent who trusts the school system to follow this own policies, protect students with disabilities, and ensure continuous access to education, even during disciplinary situations. The school's initiated an evaluation process, including a child find referral, as decisions of functional behavioral assessment.

[00:59:34] Those evaluations were supposed to determine appropriate support in whether her behavior was connected to her disability. For weeks my child was left without meaningful education while the system responsible for evaluating her needs failed to complete its own process.

[00:59:50] My child was removed from school, denied services and left without support while the school failed to follow its own evaluation procedures and guidelines designed to protect her. As parents, we expect that the school initiates an evaluation and will be done thoroughly and accordingly.

[01:00:08] After the evaluation was concluded, the same person as Tally denied my child services, which was a conflict of interest due to her involvement in the previous MDR procedures and failures. This is also directly against the recommendations of her clinically licensed and approved therapists and psychiatrists, and also against recommendations of her student advocate. I expect accountability, immediate corrective action, and a commitment that my child and other children would not be

[01:00:45] left without education while waiting for assistance to do what it's already designed to do. Thank you. Thank you. Kimberly Melman Orozco. My name is Dr.

[01:01:05] Kimberly Melman Orozco and my address is on file. Last month I spoke about how in 2024 I refused a \$20,000 special education settlement offer from in Prince William County Public Schools because it required me to quote unquote sign an NDA with teeth.

[01:01:20] I refused that in part so I could continue exercising my First Amendment right to speak about the serious violations to special education law affecting students in this county. Let me begin tonight by telling something that the public should know but probably doesn't. Seated on the dais next to Mr. Wilk is Mr. Wade Anderson, general counsel for the school board.

[01:01:41] He previously worked at Sands Anderson, a law firm that has received millions of dollars in taxpayer funds from this board for special education disputes. So the public is left to ask a simple question. Is the school board investing in children or in legal strategies to avoid accountability?

[01:01:58] The question comes even more pressing in light of the recently announced 31 million dollar budget reduction. Dr. Lateef, I think I saw you in the media just recently with your public response to that reduction which included potential cuts to after-school programs and specialty transportation?

[01:02:16] So again, I have to ask, why are you putting student services on the chopping block while millions continue to be spent on attorney's fees related to special education disputes? To everyone listening, I encourage you to contact your legislators and request oversight and investigation into both the special education programming in Prince William County, Virginia, as well as the use of public funds for litigation.

[01:02:38] Second, I want to address a serious transparency issue. I've received information from a whistleblower teacher indicating that staff have been instructed by you all to limit written communications with parents to avoid documenting certain matters involving students, including special education violations.

[01:02:56] Basically, they're asking teachers not to put things in writing. Mr. Anderson, I have an email from you dated April 1st, 2023, leaked by a whistleblower. It says, and I quote, All. For those of you new to emails from this parent, our advice is to not respond at all and to also severely limit any emails to others about her or her children to only those that are absolutely critical. Whenever possible, a phone call or Zoom call among staff members needing to discuss matters related to this parent or her children is preferred for the time being.

[01:03:30] Best, Wade. If nothing improper is occurring, why did you find it necessary to try to reduce the written record? FERPA and FOIA exist to ensure transparency, accountability, and parental access to records, not to be worked around. When a system avoids documentation, it raises a fundamental question.

[01:03:47] What is being kept out of the record and why? And this goes beyond my case. Families are being denied meaningful access to records through practices that make it harder or impossible to obtain information while their kids are being denied FAPE. This is not transparency, it's circumvention. And in my opinion, it deserves investigation.

[01:04:06] - Hannah Ansari.

[01:04:27] - Sorry, I had to arrange my papers. All right, thank you so much for letting me come back and speaking again. All was a pleasure, Super Nintendo McDade. My address is on file. And congratulations, you guys. I was at the Board of County Supervisors meeting. I didn't stay the whole time because my bedtime was like a hard 8:30 and I was like, I'm not staying any longer.

[01:04:43] But congratulations for getting some of your money back. I'm curious what you're gonna do with that lack of \$4 million. But anyway, at the last meeting we had a presentation from the Moms of Liberty about an AI policy that they shared with all of you. I was concerned by how few red flags it raised to me that I had to investigate it further.

[01:04:59] I had to do quite a bit of searching on their website to find the document. I actually couldn't even find it again today when I was looking for it, which I don't know if it was user error or not, but anyway. What seemed to be a slight similarity between the Department of Education policy and the Moms of Liberty policy turned out to be the red herring I was looking for. I'm no expert on AI, but I do have a master's degree in information technology, so I'm no slouch.

[01:05:17] Running portions of the Moms of Liberty document to an AI detection module, up to 80% of the document was created using generative AI. When I checked for plagiarism, a far more egregious form of cheating than using AI, at least I think, the document came back with over 60% plagiarized. On a policy document like this, I don't know that I would entirely expect anyone to reinvent the wheel, but it begs the question, did the Department of Education or Moms of Liberty use AI in the creation of this document?

[01:05:41] It seems kind of hypocritical to steal the text from someone else, then use AI to generate the text, then claim you created it. Although doing the math, and I'm not very good at math, it is possible that the 40% that wasn't plagiarized is part of the 20% that wasn't generative AI, but who's to say? But the one phrase that was definitely not in the original text in any form was parental rights.

[01:05:59] There's even a definition section of the document, but only parent is defined. What would the combination of parent and right mean? Only one of these terms is defined. To me, I feel like it could mean being involved in your child's education, but that seems too simplistic and the wording seems unnecessarily passive. So if the education to your child is happening to you and you're not an active participant, which is of course not the case.

[01:06:18] I would love to hear exactly what parental rights entail and how we can make them that into parental responsibilities. The focus should be on the partnership between the teachers, parents, schools, and interested parties on making education beneficial. I have some suggestions of what parents could be doing instead of expecting teachers to do everything, like maybe sending their children to school, being mindful of teacher instruction, or not playing on their cell phones throughout the day, or how about teaching your children not to become pacified watching YouTube during teacher instruction?

[01:06:44] Why aren't we putting the onus on parents to say, hey, you kid I made, don't use AI, don't cheat, don't plagiarize, instead the AI policy for the Moms of Liberty says it's the school board or the teachers that are expected to corral and set boundaries. Why aren't those boundaries being set by the parents at home instead? Instead of preaching how parents have rights they do, they also have responsibilities as well.

[01:07:03] They have the responsibility to send their students to school understanding they are there to learn. How about teaching parents that their children shouldn't be cheating, that cheating is intolerant? Considering the aforementioned plagiarism, I'm not really surprised that cheating is considered no big deal. Oh, I ran all the way down at the time, look at that.

[01:07:20] All right, thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Ansari. Next up, Student Representative Manor. Well, by the way, that concludes citizen comment time. We are up next with Student Representative Matters, and we have Bula Sarsa from CD Hilton High School. Ms. Sarsa, our Student Representative, the floor is yours.

[01:07:38] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Good evening to members of the Prince William County community, members of the school board, and Superintendent McDade. Once again, it is a pleasure and a privilege to give voice to the student perspective tonight. I'd like to begin my remarks with an update on the student senate. This Monday, April 20th, our student senators met with Superintendent McDade and provided her with a year in review presentation regarding our student voice committees.

[01:08:01] I, along with senate president Shivani Davis and fellow student representative Karina Grover, had the opportunity to revisit some of our favorite moments from the year, like our student ambassador convening meeting at George Mason and participation at the school counselor summit. We also had the opportunity to introduce some of our future endeavors, like our upcoming Student Leadership Workshop this Thursday, April 23rd.

[01:08:25] It will be our final workshop for the year, and it is the biggest one yet. Dozens of students from various middle and high schools across the county will have the opportunity to share some of their yearly highlights and make plans for the upcoming school year, which is creeping right around the corner. I can speak for myself and the rest of the Student Senate when I say that I am so excited to meet and speak with all of the future leaders attending our Student Leadership Workshop tomorrow.

[01:08:49] And what's a great leader without a great teacher? Last night, the Outstanding Educator Awards at the Hilton Performing Arts Center celebrated teachers and educators whose impact went beyond the

confines of their classroom and into the hearts of students and families. It was a joy to see our finalists and winners get the recognition that they deserve.

[01:09:07] Congratulations to our winners for PWCS support staff, novice teacher, and principal of the year. I believe that I join every single board member and Superintendent McDade in celebrating the Board of County Supervisors' decision to restore the school division's funding.

[01:09:22] As someone who sits up here on the dais and is an incoming political science major, I understand that our local leaders are sometimes forced to make decisions that may not be popular with everyone, or a lot of people, but are still beneficial to their locality or constituents in the long run. I know that I speak for myself and other teachers, board members, and students when I say that last night's debate regarding cutting some of the school division's funding shouldn't have happened at all.

[01:09:46] Because the Board of County Supervisors' duty to fund our schools is an investment into the lives of over 90,000 students at over 100 schools. Restoring this funding allows Superintendent McDade and her team to focus on launching universal pre-K by 2030, a provision that will help so many families.

[01:10:03] Restoring this funding allows those of us here in the Kelly Building to keep transportation services going for our specialty students. Restoring this funding also ensures that our teachers and support staff get the raises they need to stay afloat in a country with a rising cost of living. The impact of a fully funded school division isn't limited to the examples I just provided.

[01:10:22] And again, there are so many factors that go into how much money the Board of County Supervisors decide to allocate here or there, and I understand that. But the success of schools and the students they serve should always be a top priority. That is why the mere thought of cutting as much funding as the Board of County Supervisors proposed to, 31 million dollars, is so concerning.

[01:10:44] Finally, I'd like to get into the most important part of my remarks, student feedback. It is truly the backbone of all that we do student representatives and I am honored to share the results from our inaugural feedback survey. This survey was sent to every middle and high school student voice committee and members were asked to meet and deliberate on their school's top three issues or concerns. Attendance, cell phones or devices, and academic performance consistently ranked in the top three out of six issues.

[01:11:13] There are specific countywide concerns in four areas. First, a lack of consistency in enforcing rules, whether they relate to attendance or cell phones. So for example, an attendance or cell phone rule could be announced and within a couple of weeks, students are getting away without following that rule. Second, students have expressed their dissatisfaction with the cell phone policy, noting that it treats them, just the cell phones, solely as an entertainment device instead of a useful tool that could aid in the learning process. Third, students are noticing that their fellow classmates aren't coming to school and ascribe this issue to an overall lack of camaraderie and school spirit

[01:11:52] among the general student body finally there were survey responses that spoke to an issue with student motivation and effort many students feel as if their fellow classmates aren't coming to school paying much attention to the cell phone policy or simply not doing their work because they are negatively impacted by the school spirit by the school spirit rule consistency and attendance issues that i highlighted earlier it is imperative that our school board members county officials and principals make time to sit in

on various student voice committee meetings within our school division in order to gain multiple student perspectives and work towards

[01:12:28] solutions that benefit as many students as possible svc sponsors and student leaders extend those invitations to your principals and other county officials they are often more than willing to show up and listen that was a lot so i thank you for your time have a great rest of your evening thank - Thank you, Ms. Sarsa.

[01:12:47] We will certainly miss you as we are wrapping this year up and we truly appreciate your commitment to our schools and your commitment to representing your fellow students. Up next, superintendent's time, Dr. Latonya McDade.

[01:13:03] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last night, PWCS held the annual Outstanding Educators Award Ceremony, recognizing educators who received or renewed their national board certification and finalist for the Support Employee, Novice Teacher, Teacher and Principals of the Year.

[01:13:22] This beautiful celebration was held at the Hilton Performing Arts Center, showcasing the phenomenal work happening in our schools every day. Congratulations to our following winners. Support Employee of the Year, Teresa Burnley, Food Service Area Manager.

[01:13:40] Novice Teacher of the Year for Pre-K to 5th Grade, Sylvia Chan at Rosa Parks Elementary School, Novice Teacher of the Year for grades six through 12, Herc Williams III, Fred Lynn Middle School. Teacher of the Year for grades pre-K through five, Carolyn Matthews of Neabsco Elementary School.

[01:13:59] Teacher of the Year for grades six through 12, Amanda Heim, Unity Braxton Middle School. Also would like to congratulate our Principal of the Year for grades pre-K through five, Dr. Keisha Trammell, Gravelly Elementary School. and Principal of the Year for grades six through 12, Stephanie Bretzke, Independence Non-Traditional School.

[01:14:19] Congratulations again to all the finalists and winners that were celebrated last night. Also last night, the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors acted on the final FY27 budget, restoring most of the funding that PWCS had planned to receive under the revenue sharing agreement.

[01:14:38] This outcome ensures continued delivery of high quality educational services to meet the needs of our students, staff, and community. And I would like to thank the BOCS for supporting the needs of our students, teachers, and schools. And I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to the many parents, teachers, and staff members, and community stakeholders who made their voices heard throughout the budget process.

[01:14:58] Your engagement and commitment to our schools played a meaningful role in this outcome. As a result of this action, the compensation increases for teachers and staff outlined in the school board's adopted budget will move forward as planned. In addition, the new athletic opportunities and other student programs included in the adopted budget will be implemented as originally announced.

[01:15:23] Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Prince William County Public Schools. PWCS is dedicated to fostering a positive climate of culture while supporting family and community engagement to enhance the learning and achievement for all students. Gifted education and talent development will sponsor Parent University.

[01:15:41] This will be our fourth annual Parent Advocacy event. This event is designed to help parents and guardians better understand and support gifted, high-ability children, especially around topics like social connection, self-regulation, parenting skills for gifted and neurodivergent children, and family support strategies.

[01:16:02] This year, we're excited to welcome two guest speakers, Emily Kircher Morris and Dr. Matt Zakreski. Our event will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 9th at the Kelly Leadership Center. I hope that you will consider joining us for a fantastic day of insights and learning.

[01:16:22] This week, PWCS is celebrating Administrative Professionals Week, a time to thank our administrative professionals across the division. These team members are often the first voice families here, the first faces that students see, and the steady support behind the daily operations of our schools and offices.

[01:16:40] Their organization, patience, professionalism, and care help keep our school system moving forward. And we are deeply grateful for the many ways that they support students, staff, and families every day. We also celebrate PWCS Transportation Employees Appreciation Week and thank the bus drivers, attendants, mechanics, dispatchers, routing staff, and transportation team members who safely connect students to learning each day.

[01:17:08] Their work begins early, often in challenging conditions, and it reflects a deep commitment to student safety, reliability, and service. We appreciate the essential role that they play in helping every school day begin and end successfully.

[01:17:25] Next week, PWCS will recognize National Apprenticeship Week, a celebration of hands-on learning, career preparation, and strong partnerships that help students see clear pathways to their future. Apprenticeships connect classroom learning with real-world experience, giving students opportunity to build skills, explore high-demand careers, and prepare for post-secondary success.

[01:17:48] This work is closely aligned with 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. As we approach the beginning of May, I would like to remind all families of the upcoming Standards of Learning, or SOL tests, and the end-of-year course assessments.

[01:18:12] These evaluations are essential as they assist us in measuring the progress of our students' learning and the effectiveness of our curriculum and teaching methods. Your cooperation and support are invaluable to ensure that our students are well-rested and attend school every day.

[01:18:28] I'm honored at this time to introduce Dr. Ashley Ryer, Associate Superintendent for Special Education and Early Intervention, Dr. Amy Holub, Director of Special Education, Specialized Instruction, and Ms. Eleanor Contreras, Special Education Coordinator for the Parent Resource Center and Family Engagement.

[01:18:49] Dr. Reier and her team will provide a presentation requested by the school board to spotlight inclusive practices and the progress made by special education in serving students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as well as progress in family engagement.

[01:19:06] Dr. Reier. - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Jesse, members of the board and Dr. McDade, we are pleased to be here this evening to provide an update on special education in PWCS. In the

boardroom this evening are all three of our directors of special education representing the various aspects of this work that come together to make up the total programming for our population of students with disabilities who receive services through Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs, which is totaling over 13,000 students at this time.

[01:19:43] Tonight's presentation will focus on inclusive practices and family engagement. As Dr. McDade shared, I'm joined at the podium by members of my team who will join me in this presentation. I'd like to begin by sharing that both inclusive practices and family engagement are topics that were selected because they are critically important to the work that we do in our schools every day.

[01:20:04] And I'd also like to note that both of these topics has a strong research base. We know that the more time that our students with disabilities spend in general education settings, receiving instruction alongside their peers without disabilities is likely to increase their academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes.

[01:20:25] We also know that our partnerships with families are critical as we make decisions in order for every student with a disability to thrive. Our work is grounded in the commitments of our newly adopted strategic plan, Elevate 2030.

[01:20:41] Namely, commitment one, learning and achievement for all, and commitment three, family and community engagement. We'd also like to call out our core values of equity and inclusivity. We'd like to begin with some recognitions and acknowledgements by thanking the members of our Special Education Advisory Committee, or the SEAC, who voluntarily serve on this committee to provide advisement, support, and encouragement.

[01:21:10] Both topics that we'll cover tonight are ones that the SEAC has a great interest in and we'd like to thank them for all of their support and partnership. We'd also like to thank you, members of the board, Dr. McDade and Dr. Flanard for support in strategic investments that will take place this upcoming school year that specifically support and facilitate our goals around inclusion.

[01:21:34] First, by completing the superintendent's series of commitments to add two teaching assistants in all K through 12 specialized programs, Not only will our students with the greatest needs be supported at high levels, but this will also provide an opportunity for students to continually increase opportunities to be supported through inclusion settings.

[01:21:58] In addition, by altering our ratio of our programs for students with intellectual disabilities at the K through eight level, we're now serving those students at a ratio that is comparable to our programs with students with autism. This is significant because it enables our schools to apply more flexibility in how they group our students, how they think about their instructional needs, and can position them to receive the best possible learning opportunities in a way that is beyond just their disability label alone.

[01:22:31] Whenever we present on special education, we like to begin with the current landscape of this population in our school division. As you can see and have heard in presentations before, we have seen a steady increase in the number of students who have been identified to receive special education services.

[01:22:50] As of December 1st in 2022, we were serving just over 12,000 students with disabilities compared to present day, December 1st of this current school year, where we're serving more than 13,500 students.

[01:23:07] And while we serve students across all 13 disability categories, we've seen this growth pronounced in three particular areas. First is our students with autism. Second is our students who are designated under health impairment, which may be due to a health condition that requires special education services that could also capture students who have needs to support characteristics of ADHD or organization or executive functioning challenges and specific learning disabilities, which are students who need supports in academic areas, most often in the areas of reading, math, and writing.

[01:23:46] - Dr. Ryer? - Yes. - Sorry, excuse me one second. Before you continue, I just wanted to clarify for our public and for my understanding, when we're talking about students with disabilities this evening, are we specifically talking about students with IEPs or 504 students or students that have medical disabilities but may not be recognized by the school?

[01:24:05] I just wanna bring some clarity before you continue. - Absolutely, thank you for the interjection, Ms. Williams. I definitely wanna make that clear. For the purpose of tonight's presentation, we are referring to students who have IEPs that prescribe special education services, not to be confused with those who might have a section 504 plan where they receive accommodations or who may have a medical diagnosis.

[01:24:27] So these students qualify by way of an educational label, which is what puts them in the situation where the school division has developed an IEP to support their learning needs. - Thank you, I appreciate it. 'cause special education is a very broad group and it gets very confusing, the difference between 504s and IEPs and what that means to our school families.

[01:24:49] So I appreciate that. - Absolutely, happy to provide the clarification. And so on that note, I am going to turn it over to Dr. Hall about this time, who will be speaking about some progress that has been made in the area of inclusion that is directly tied to the placement decisions that are made by those IEP teams.

[01:25:07] So just yet another point of understanding that the data that we're presenting tonight is actually driven by decisions made by an IEP team. So we are focusing in on that population of students. Thank you. - Dr. Hollum.

[01:25:24] - Thank you, Dr. Reier. The Individual with Disabilities Act, IDEA, establishes the principle known as the least restrictive environment. This requires schools to educate students with disabilities alongside their peers without identified disabilities to the greatest extent appropriate, while still meeting their individual needs.

[01:25:48] Students with disabilities have what is known as an IEP, an Individual Educational Program. This IEP is written at a minimum annually by a team who is knowledgeable about the student, their strengths and their needs.

[01:26:04] The progress you will hear about this evening was identified through a comprehensive needs assessment process and is supported through our continuous improvement plan. Research consistently shows inclusive learning environments benefit students in multiple ways. Academically, students have access to grade level curriculum and high expectations as they participate in the general education classrooms to access that curriculum. Exposure to rigorous standards aligned to one grade level helps promote stronger outcomes in math, literacy, and other core areas along with supporting

[01:26:42] social-emotional development, and a sense of belonging in students. As a division, we pride ourselves in social inclusion opportunities. For example, those available among our unified extracurricular opportunities, where we've seen an expansion, even very recently, with our first-time unified robotics competition.

[01:27:03] Inclusion benefits all. This evening, we will share more about the progression of students along the continuum, with a focus on this particular part of the continuum, that is most prominent in our public schools. We will highlight areas where measurable progress has been made by our students as per IEP teams. Some of the data focuses on students who access the general curriculum and are served on specialized programs which are typically multi-grade and small group settings for the majority of a student's day. We will also spotlight progress made to the

[01:27:38] resource model and within the resource model as students increase access to general education. we will begin by looking at division trends the chart on the left shows the overall numbers of students served in the resource model where they spend the majority of their day in the general education setting supported by general education teachers and special education level one teachers in general education settings and for some small group settings as needed the chart also the chart shows an increased number of students served in this resource model at two points in time the chart

[01:28:17] on the right shows another way division trends show progress with inclusion. This data shows the number of students compared to themselves over two points in time. Each bar shows the number of students who have increased the percent of time they spend in the general education setting. When looking at the overall division, it is noted that each year the number of students who increase time in the general education setting has grown. To highlight further, this progress can be seen at both the elementary and middle levels. This data shows the continued commitment

[01:28:54] of PWCS and IEP teams to support students as they make progress in determining and deciding that such students should spend more time in the general education setting. Steady growth is seen at both levels. Next we'll look at data about students who move from early childhood to kindergarten. Early childhood represents one of the most important opportunities to establish inclusive learning environments for students in preparing them to transition to kindergarten. Research consistently shows that students who begin their educational journey in inclusive kindergarten environments develop

[01:29:31] stronger academic and social-emotional outcomes. The data on this slide highlights the progress that's been made. Next we'll look at kindergartners. Another way to consider progress made in the past three years is the percent of kindergartners who are served in the general education setting. IEP teams have determined and decided that the general education setting is what these students require to begin their k-12 journey. This is an important indicator that early intervention and inclusive instruction are working. Now we'll look at students grade k-12. Another way we demonstrate progress is in looking at students served

[01:30:09] in specialized programs who make progress along the continuum by transitioning to the resource model during a school year at any time an IEP team determines student readiness. This slide shows that last year 8.6% of our students served in specialized programs moved to the resource model because they had made such significant progress and were ready for more inclusion. This year we have continued to see this progress especially as seen in students who access specialized programs k-8 for those with characteristics of autism who access the general

[01:30:46] curriculum to date 82 students have moved from specialized programs to the resource model since the first day of school the data shows are by name and by need conversations and considerations of student progress by iep teams continues to support students in their least restrictive environment to access the general education curriculum we are proud of these students for their progress along the curriculum. As you can see, PWCS is continuing to increase opportunities to ensure we are serving students in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate. Inclusive

[01:31:25] schools depend on strong core instructional systems by knowledgeable educators who understand both the guaranteed curriculum and who have a toolkit of high leverage practices and real-time interventions. Data-informed decisions and high-quality specially designed instruction are at the heart of inclusive schools. One of the most significant ways we are preparing and supporting the division is through ongoing professional learning for all educators. This is provided in response to educators telling us what they need to polish and hone their knowledge and skills. For example, our teachers have

[01:32:01] asked for a summer learning experience solely focused on IEPs and case management. This led us to create and implement our inaugural year of the PWCS pre-launch, which is a dedicated day to our new special education teachers to respond to this need. We are also in our second year of our optional and voluntary new special education teacher induction program called Bright Beginnings. This year we continue to offer paid summer and Monday night learning sessions and we led three full day sessions. Co-teaching is one of the most effective strategies to support inclusion in the general education. Over

[01:32:41] the past two years, we've led more than 50 learning sessions each year focused on building educator knowledge and skills with our co-teachers, including sessions focused on both co-teaching with special educators and co-teaching with English language teachers. In addition to the science of reading, in addition, excuse me, the science of reading professional learning that all teachers have received the past few years, including special ed teachers, more than 80 teachers have self-selected above and beyond professional learning that's specialized in rigorous called Orton-Gillingham.

[01:33:18] This is a multi-sensory reading training which focuses on strategies and supports for students with disabilities in the areas of reading, including those with characteristics of dyslexia. The strategies can be applied across content areas to help diverse learners across the curriculum.

[01:33:37] While some teachers have learned OG through virtual modules or sessions at conferences in PWCS, 50 educators signed up and participated in a five-day in-person professional learning series with us last July.

[01:33:52] We are on track to offer this again this summer for interested special education teachers. We are also proud of our work with campus assistant principals and department chairs. This past summer, we led our inaugural assistant principal launch, AP launch designed to fortify our assistant principals who oversee special education to prepare them for a strong start to the school year.

[01:34:16] This year, we also began a more formal department chair academy that takes place on the same day for secondary department chairs. In these sessions, we go deeper to continue to fortify content and procedural knowledge in these leaders so they're empowered to lead on their campuses.

[01:34:33] This experience also builds a sense of belonging. Our teacher assistants are critical to ensuring that students are educated in the least restrictive environment and receive supports and scaffolds. Our optional TA empowerment program is in its second year.

[01:34:49] We average participation of 850 teacher assistants across the division and offer three different topics on each of four days, one per quarter each year. We're very proud of our educators for their dedication to building and polishing their skills on behalf of inclusive schools we're excited to share about this progress in the area of inclusion and we know that there is more to be done students with disabilities are featured in many aspects of our strategic plan

[01:35:24] elevate 2030 we'd like to highlight some of those this evening first commitment one includes an emphasis on designing tier one instruction for the full range of learners including students with disabilities this is specifically called out in math and targeting instruction to meet the needs of students with characteristics of dyslexia, dyscalculia, and ADHD within core instruction. Additionally, we want to continue and enhance our work around increasing awareness, visibility, and supports for those students with

[01:36:00] characteristics of dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia. This involves outreach to families and community partners as well as the development of the capacity and skills of our staff. We are grateful for our continued work and partnership with our Office of Teaching and Learning in this arena as this is evidently and ultimately a linked arms approach to supporting our students that have success in Tier 1 instruction. Elevate 2030 also calls on our team to evaluate and strengthen our programming in the area of assistive technology, capitalizing

[01:36:36] on emerging technologies and opportunities to modernize. We will continue to expand our post-secondary transition programming in an effort to support all students as they approach their final years with us through graduation and then beyond.

[01:36:52] This includes a redesign and modernization of what is now known as the Vocational Assessment Center. Finally, we want to specifically focus on our students who receive both gifted and special education services, known as twice exceptional or 2E.

[01:37:10] By offering personalized learning opportunities, we want to ensure that their needs are supported and that their skills and talents are challenged appropriately. We are excited about this important work and its inclusion in our strategic plan. None of the work that we've spoken about this evening, from our progress in inclusion to our next endeavors in our strategic plan, would be possible without strong partnerships with families.

[01:37:37] Before I turn it over for the final portion of our presentation to a face and a name that is known well in our community, Ms. Eleanor Contreras, who in our office we affectionately refer to as being on roller skates with the number of community events that she is able to touch down at.

[01:37:55] I'd like to share a little bit more about her work. Ms. Contreras joined PWCS in May of 2023, and since that time, the work of the Parent Resource Center has been noted by VDOE as a model program. So much so that this past summer in July and August of 2025, Ms. Contreras was selected as the single representative from a Virginia school division to serve on a panel and speak at a series of family engagement summits put on by the Parent Advocacy and Training Center, otherwise known as PEATSEA.

[01:38:30] I'll now turn it over to Ms. Contreras to share about our work partnering with families. - Thank you, Dr. Ryer.

[01:38:50] I'm honored to share a brief overview of the Parent Resource Center. The PRC serves as a vital bridge between families, schools, and the community, ensuring parents feel informed, supported, and

empowered as partners in their child's education, particularly in special education.

[01:39:09] Through workshops, individualized consultations, and outreach, we strengthen collaboration, build trust, promote inclusive family engagement so that every student has the opportunity to succeed. Everything we do is grounded in partnership and a shared commitment to elevating every student.

[01:39:32] This past year, the Parent Resource Center hosted more than 60 workshops and webinars, serving over 1,800 families and staff. These sessions remain one of our strongest engagement tools. 98% of participants say that they would recommend them and 98% report that the content is directly useful.

[01:39:55] Importantly, 61% of our participants are returning families and staff showing sustained trust and meaningful impact. Another core service is individualized consultation. During the 2024-25 school year, I facilitated more than 390 consultations, providing tailored guidance to families, staff, and community members.

[01:40:21] Of those served, 60% were families, 22% staff, and 18% community partners demonstrating that the PRC supports the entire ecosystem around students with disabilities. Beyond this, we supported more than 25 outreach events, reaching over 10,000 individuals across schools and community spaces.

[01:40:45] Together, these efforts form a comprehensive, inclusive family engagement strategy grounded in accessibility, responsiveness, and inclusion that directly supports the goals of Elevate 2030 by strengthening authentic family partnerships across the division.

[01:41:06] Last school year, the Parent Resource Center continued to see strong engagement in events, demonstrating families' desire to partner with schools in supporting their children's success. Our sessions are shaped by parent requests and trends shared by schools.

[01:41:23] The events are offered in multiple formats to ensure access for families with diverse schedules and needs. Many sessions provide practical strategies families can use immediately at home. We also expanded offerings to include highly requested topics such as ADHD in girls, sibling relationships, twice exceptional learners, and assistive technology.

[01:41:49] Our programming spans preschool through post-secondary transition, reinforcing that family engagement is truly a lifelong journey. Next, I would like to highlight one of the most impactful services of the Parent Resource Center, our individualized confidential consultations.

[01:42:09] These consultations are truly the heart of our work and have grown by more than 40% during the last two years. During the 24/25 school year alone, we facilitated more than 390 consultations. And as of April 15th of this school year, we have already completed over more than 317 consultations.

[01:42:32] These provide parents, caregivers, staff, and community partners with a trusted, relationship-centered space to ask questions, understand special education processes, and collaborate on meaningful next steps.

[01:42:47] Through these conversations, we support families in navigating IEPs, accessing resources, and strengthening communication with school teens. Demand for this service continues to grow, reflecting increased awareness, stronger partnerships, and a deep trust in the PRC.

[01:43:07] Most importantly, these consultations directly support student success by empowering families as true partners and co-creators in their child's education. When families feel seen and heard, their children experience the ripple effects in the classroom and beyond.

[01:43:26] on this next slide you will see an overview of the many school and community outreach events supported by the parent resource center this past year these engagements include back to school fairs parent engagement summits school-based resource fairs neurodiversity nights and community partnership events the purpose of this work is simple to meet families where they are by being present across schools and community spaces we build relationships increase access to resources

[01:44:00] and ensure families staff and community members know how to connect with the prc the breath of this outreach reflects our commitment to inclusive family engagement across all communities next i'm pleased to share an exciting highlight from this year the inaugural supporting transitions in education and personal growth from early learning to post-secondary success special education conference and resource fair this event commonly referred to as the step conference brought

[01:44:34] together long-standing traditions of the parents as partners conference and the transition fair into one comprehensive experience and direct result to family feedback our goal was to support families staff and community members across the full educational continuum from preschool through post-secondary transition we welcomed over 300 attendees and offered more than 80 learning sessions focused on literacy behavior transition planning communication strategies and assistive

[01:45:09] technology a key strength was our resource fair which connected families with 55 community partners in one space this conference reinforced that family engagement is not an event it is a relationship a partnership and ultimately a shared commitment to our students on this slide i'd like to highlight our division's continued focus on bringing increased awareness and visibility to literacy instruction this year's step conference featured targeted reading sessions that equipped families

[01:45:45] and educators with practical evidence-based strategies aligned with the Virginia Literacy Act. Participants explored structured literacy supports, accessibility features, and technology tools including emerging AI resources that enhance decoding, comprehension, and engagement with text.

[01:46:06] Families also gained clear at-home strategies to support reading development. A key highlight was the fireside chat with the nationally recognized host of the All for Literacy podcast, bringing national expertise on dyslexia-informed instruction directly to our community.

[01:46:29] In closing, I'd like to share some highlights from the feedback we received following this year's STEP conference. Attendees consistently told us the sessions were practical, responsible, responsive, and immediately useful at home and in classrooms.

[01:46:45] This brings us to the end of our presentation. Thank you so much for your time and support. We're happy to answer any questions you may have. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you so much, Chairman Lateef. I just wanna start by saying thank you so much to our entire special education department.

[01:47:05] The work you do is tireless and it's probably one of the only departments where I feel like the laws change every day and it's hard to keep up with. I appreciate tonight's presentation. It's so impactful. I think this is one of the topics that we don't really talk about a lot from this boardroom.

[01:47:22] We talk about constantly in our schools and with our parents. So I appreciate the opportunity to update the public. I personally would love to see a more inclusive special education presentation so everyone can know all the wonderful modern up-to-date things that we're doing in that department because the work is tireless and never ends.

[01:47:43] It's amazing to see the progress from having special education students who really aren't included in our general education activities, to how inclusive our practices really are, everything from day-to-day instruction, or in my case, my identifier is unified robotics, and to see not only the students work together, but the progress from social skills and development.

[01:48:07] One of the things that I think a lot of people get confused is where that line is from IEPs to 504s or other groupings, so I appreciate the differentiating tonight. Is any of the information covered tonight also applicable to those other groups as well?

[01:48:24] How are parents who don't necessarily have a student or a guardian student have IEPs, but do have 504 accommodations or are neurodivergent, but aren't officially recognized? How does any of that relate to those families?

[01:48:44] - Just wanted to verify a fact before I responded. So when we talked about the continuum of services and students moving along that progression, That really is unique to having an IEP. Almost 100% of the time, our students who are served under Section 504 are really needing accommodations to level the playing field and successfully access their educational experiences, as opposed to having a placement along the continuum of services.

[01:49:13] So that is one distinction. But I will share, in terms of the second portion of our presentation, that the work of the PRC absolutely includes all of those supports to provide consultations to families of students who may have a 504 plan. To your point, to go into more detail about the distinctions and how a student may be considered for a higher level of service, depending on how well they're progressing when being supported with a 504 plan.

[01:49:40] Ms. Contreras did just verify for me that the PRC has done some family engagement and workshops around section 504. So I would also just say, if there are members of the public who are listening and interested in that to take a look at her offerings because there's certainly applicability to Section 504.

[01:49:57] Thank you. - Thank you, I appreciate that 'cause it's such a large area and it does get confusing. And in my house, you know, it's often hereditary. So the adults listening now, I think is good up-to-date information. This is all new.

[01:50:12] Neurodivergence is a term that I think we're all still learning about and it can get confusing. So I appreciate the clarity. I also just want to take a moment to thank everyone who serves on the SEAC community and for our staff. The hand-in-hand cooperation between the two entities is amazing.

[01:50:30] Big shout out to Christy Booyoung, who's served for many, many years. I also want to thank you for your continuous updates and work on gifted times to students. When I first got here in 2013, forever ago, no one even really knew what that was, and that was how I got here.

[01:50:49] I served on the gifted advisory committee. It was one of the things I pushed for initially the hardest and to see the tremendous work that's been done for those students is amazing. I'm gonna stop now and just say, I really, really, truly appreciate everybody's work and the way that we continue to educate our students and families in this topic, so thank you.

[01:51:09] - Thank you and I did just wanna point out before we move on that we do have Ms. Jamie VanEcho in attendance tonight representing the SEAC and so we appreciate not only her service on the

SEAC but her spending a Wednesday evening here with us. So thank you. - Along with Dr. with Lori Williams thank, all of us thank the Special Education Advisory Committee.

[01:51:33] They do a terrific job and grateful for my appointee, Jamie Van Echo at large, who does a terrific job and very grateful for her. It's a large school division with a lot of work that needs to be done and it takes everybody chipping in. And so we're very grateful.

[01:51:49] Mr. Blake. I just want to thank you, Dr. Ryer and your team for the comprehensive and thoughtful presentation. And you know, what really stood out to me was just the intentional focus on inclusion and family engagement, making sure our students are supported and you know, in the least restrictive environments while also ensuring families are true partners in this process.

[01:52:14] And I've seen this with my own eyes, you know, I'm out. I see Eleanor everywhere. So where I'm at, she's at a lot of places. I don't know how, it's just one person. But you know, what we're seeing is, that work translates into real outcomes, right?

[01:52:30] Increased access to general education settings, like you said, stronger collaboration between educators and more opportunities for our students to learn alongside their peers. And I also would just like to highlight again, just that parent resource center and just how important that is to our community.

[01:52:49] I know in my district and in the Neyabskill district, especially, it's very helpful. So that level of engagement from the workshops to the consultations to community outreach shows there's clear demand for family support and guidance and connection.

[01:53:08] And I would just like to ask my colleagues, as we look ahead, we should be thoughtful about how we continue to build on that work and expanding capacity in areas like the Parent Resource Center. Means more direct support for families, helping them navigate services, advocate for children and stay connected to their schools.

[01:53:29] So that kind of investment will pay off, you know, stronger partnerships, better outcomes, and students who are better supported both in and out of the classroom. So at the end of the day, this work is about access, opportunity outcomes, and making sure every student, regardless of needs, has the opportunity to succeed.

[01:53:50] And I just appreciate the work y'all are doing to bring that closer. And I mean, and just to I was at the unified track meets, you know, and a couple parents came up to me and just thank me, you know, like for their child to have the opportunity to be included, just to be able to have, be able to run around, you know, the track and just like, oh, thank you for the, you know, we, this is why we're here in this in this county.

[01:54:17] We love this special education program and what it does for our kids and their inclusion. So please just keep up the good work. Thank you. Mr. Denning. I just want to thank you guys again for this presentation and for some of these items firsthand that I've gotten to experience and know that what you guys do present does happen as well on a personal level.

[01:54:41] So I appreciate all your hard work and I appreciate your time in this presentation and giving it to us twice as well. Always, I like to say that because we've seen it before and I appreciate you answering all of our questions prior to this and adding things and things like that. So thank you very much.

[01:54:57] I thank Erica Trudeni for bringing up this point. I think it's important. The board puts in a lot of work off time and off TV, and we're not in all the meetings, but a lot of time goes into these presentations, engaging with staff and the superintendent staff on all of these issues, and special education is a really critical aspect of the work we do here, and we are very grateful for the presentation.

[01:55:21] Mr. Wilk and then Mr. Jesse. Thank you, thank you. I can add more to the plaudits that you've already received, but I do appreciate your dedication and the amount of hours that you put into this. I know it can't be a very easy job and it's definitely something that a 40 hour week is probably unrealistic if you think about it.

[01:55:40] And being a parent, well actually with two children, one different areas of the spectrum, I've learned throughout being a parent, being in the IEP meetings as a parent and as a teacher way back when, that no IEP is the same.

[01:55:58] Every child has different disabilities. Every child needs different accommodations. And so as a board, can we be assured that we are offering the continuum of services and individualizing services for students?

[01:56:15] - Absolutely, Mr. Wilk. So we oftentimes drive home that point that no IEP is the same. We always like to use the phrase that the I in IEP means something. So what I'd like to respond about the continuum is we absolutely offer the full continuum and we have examples of students who I'm gonna start and kind of describe from least to most restrictive.

[01:56:34] We have students who receive as minimal supports as spending all of their time in general education or maybe supported through a consultative model or even co-teaching that exists in gen ed. Moving from there, we have students who continue to be served in our public day school.

[01:56:50] That's where the majority of our students receive their services within their base or nearby comparable school. And in those instances, the continuum of services that Dr. Hall described tonight is in place where students might be receiving services through general education, a combination of special and general education, or in our specialized programs, which are programs for students that need more time during their day in the special education setting taught by a highly trained teacher.

[01:57:20] From there, we know that we do have two public separate settings here in Prince William County, and that is PACE and the Center at INS. And so those are students who have more intensive needs, but can still be served in our school division within those very focused program areas.

[01:57:38] Beyond that, we do at times have students whose needs are so significant or who maybe have some unique circumstances where we place and are responsible for their education out of district. And so an example of that might be a student who receives their education at a placement made by their IEP team, for example, a licensed public day school.

[01:57:59] Thank you. - Thank you, I appreciate this and that explanation. I also wanna thank you. I forgot if people remember, was it a year or so ago where you went through all the transition services that we offered our students? So I do wanna mention that. I don't know what date it was.

[01:58:15] I'm sure people can pull it up, but it was a great presentation on those transition services and what we offer with community partnerships. This one's pretty pertinent to what's going on and what we

see happening, not just here, but across the country. So across the country, complaints about special education seem to have gone up.

[01:58:31] What trends have we seen in Prince William County schools as it relates to parent complaints? And how are we building relationships with parents to better resolve these complaints? - Absolutely, thank you, Mr. Wilk, for that question. So you're absolutely correct that not only locally, but at the state and national level, there has been a trend of families electing to pursue more formal formats for dispute resolution.

[01:58:56] So the one that you just referenced is the filing of a complaint. We have seen that uptick here as well, but I would like to share my team tracks that data and does a year to year comparison. And just as recently as last week, was able to report a data point that just this school year, when compared to last school year, we've seen a 56% increase in scenarios like I just described where a complaint may have been filed, where a concern is able to be resolved through mediation.

[01:59:28] And so I wanted to make that point because one, we're very optimistic about potentially that trend of utilizing mediation. I think it's significant because in order for a concern to be resolved through mediation, that's beyond just attending a mediation.

[01:59:44] It means that the mediation resolves the concern at hand entirely and the case does not then move forward in that formal dispute resolution process. Mediation is an option that's available every time that there's a formal dispute resolution process engaged.

[02:00:01] It is always our desire as the school division to try to resolve through mediation, if a family is willing, of course, to partner with us in that space. That said, I think it's really important to share and for the public to hear that our goal is to not even get to the point of formal dispute resolution.

[02:00:20] Our goal is always to resolve concerns at the earliest point possible and at the lowest level possible. And so what that might look like is engaging around some of the supports that were shared tonight. Sometimes that can be as simple as my team connecting a family to a school administrator to have a clarifying conversation.

[02:00:41] It might be utilization of the consultation process in the PRC. It might also be involving a member of the special education department, a coordinator or a supervisor, just to have that additional lens and perspective brought to the table.

[02:00:56] But I do think it's very important that we acknowledge that on a day-to-day basis, we really are resolving concerns quite frequently. And so that's something that we're committed to continuing to invest efforts in. Thank you. - I appreciate both very comprehensive responses.

[02:01:12] Thank you so much. - Absolutely. - And I wanted the public to hear that and what we're doing, so I appreciate that. - Mr. Jett. Yeah, I want to thank you for your presentation. I grew up a long time ago, and in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, my sister lived with us and myself, but she probably was at a fifth grade level of her life.

[02:01:46] She had no friends because of the community. I lived in Dixon, Illinois, which is about 20,000 people. the 5,000 of those people were in a mental hospital there. So having the opportunities for kids to be part of the environment, be part of the family, have families and friends and so forth, and went to the Unity event this weekend for robotics and seeing them work there, it's very important that they do that.

[02:02:24] And this is an opportunity. We have complaints, a lot of complaints. our peers on social education. But when you look at almost 2,000 kids, we don't have that many complaints.

[02:02:40] You guys are doing a good job and our division is doing a good job of supporting this and we need to continue. Thank you for what you do. - Ms. Williams. - I'm gonna keep it quick.

[02:02:55] I would be remiss without thanking all of the division and our community partners as Mr. Wilk alluded to. as someone who was an advocate, I said earlier, gifted and deals with, I was an advocate in a lot of IEP meetings.

[02:03:10] Knowing as a parent or guardian that your student will graduate and there's life after graduation. And the way that the division has responded to that and the work, like TOTOS, for example, I know is our first adventure for our students who are in their fifth year. That's why it's called the year after.

[02:03:27] Where they can learn those skills and work that I just wanna say thank you to the division and for our community business partners. It gives our family so much more hope and it also changes the narrative for our other students. The student I advocated for, particularly out of the system, far before we started doing this.

[02:03:46] And I can see, when talking to parents now, the hope it gives and also it just really, really does change the narrative about those students. So I really, from the bottom of my heart, wanna say thank you for that. And I also just really quickly wanna say to the point of what Mr. Wick was saying.

[02:04:01] You know, we do have a lot of complaints And I just don't want the public to always perceive that as negative. A lot of times in special education, the issues that arise are issues that help us grow and learn. So I don't want to discourage families from taking that time out to say, hey, here is a problem.

[02:04:17] I also just want to say to those families and the staff that deals with it, take a deep breath. Because it's emotional. You're talking about the livelihood or the academic process of a young person, and everybody cares. And I think that I just want to say, take a deep breath. We're all there for the same reason.

[02:04:33] And it's one of those things that, as I alluded to when I first started, the laws change frequently and it is a lot of work. And we are a team in trying to make sure that all of our students graduate and leave here with thriving futures and that's the goal. So I just wanna say thank you again for all of your hard work and to our community partners.

[02:04:53] - Okay, thank you. Dr. McDade, anything else? - That concludes our presentation and I just want to say thank you to you, Dr. Ryder, entire team even those that didn't speak that are here tonight in support not of the presentation but that just shows the the dedication to the work and the commitment to the work it truly is a team effort and I'm really grateful for all that you've done and I do want to say that this team has worked really hard to improve this not just the services that we provide but how we support families compliance and procedures from soup to nuts everything

[02:05:31] and special education has improved significantly under Dr. Ryer's leadership and her entire team's efforts. So I just wanna say thank you as well, not just for the presentation, but the work that you do to support our students, our schools and our families each and every day.

[02:05:48] - Excellent, thank you, Dr. McDade. Moving on to 1701 committee updates. We have an update this evening from Ms. Zargarpur of the Coles District regarding our Safe Schools Advisory Council, Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, so can I smash two meetings into one? 'Cause we just had a meeting this week too. that

be appropriate or the floor is mine thank you all right so um both mr genic and i serve on the safe schools advisory council um the one that was on march 23rd uh was we got a brief presentation by um teresa duval who's the director of students uh hearing from the student hearing

[02:06:23] his office she gave a code of behavior update and took feedback from the committee of things to Consider or clarify in the code of behavior. So we'll be looking forward to that presentation soon the Ron Crow ran through a bunch of audit results talked about our SCR SSO structure The turnover rates which actually aren't really too bad a lot of people They will progress through just like in other parts of our division. There's a pathway to

[02:06:58] Leadership and other things within the context of their jobs. We talked a little bit about the ASIS certifications Evolve contract and We got a presentation by Jake Edwards about the Save Save Club Summit. Save Club is students against violence everywhere, and I know Dr. McDade talked about it The night that they'd had it so that was the March 23rd the Monday We had a meeting and Mr. Denick and I were there. We got to learn about the more about their safety procedures and things inside the schools and and what the different codes mean and and just what training isn't

[02:07:38] available for our teachers. Mr. Blake and I happened to be at Hilton High School when we saw students actually practicing some of the procedures and they were taking kids from the PE classes and giving them scenarios to practice because a lot of our drills are practiced in times where we're Not at lunch or not in PE. So it was a nice thing to hear about and talking with some of the students they felt really empowered to be able to be safe in an in a in an instance where they need to make decisions look for exits Help other people that sort of thing. Mr. Jenick. Do you want to add anything to our lovely meeting on Monday?

[02:08:16] They they do in fact do the drills that they talked about that that was confirmed because sometimes they You know they they were wondering does it actually happen and and hearing from two different high schoolers that yes It does happen In their schools and it happens the way that they talk about so It was nice to hear all of that and just what goes into that in the different scenarios and things and to be able to hear from Teachers and principals on on their perspective as well was wonderful. Thanks Lisa, and that is all for our report Thank you guys. Thank you guys for serving on that very important committee and you know safety is always first and foremost and

[02:08:53] everyone's mind moving on next to the we have emotion we have a more matter tonight 1801 which is a confirmation the April 16 2026 board poll motions order vice chair Jesse I move that the Prince William County School Board confirm the poll of the school board conducted on April 16th 2026 authorizing release of the attached pieces, press releases and proposed resolution.

[02:09:27] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote, call the roll. - Dr. Lateef. - Yes. - Mr. Blake. - Yes. - Mr. Jessie. - Yes.

[02:09:45] - Mrs. Cherdenik. - Yes. - Mrs. Wall. - Yes. - Thank you. Mr. Wilk. - Yes. - Ms. Williams. - Yes. - Mrs. Zargapur. - Yes. - Thank you, the vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, great.

[02:10:00] next to I think we're at the end here board matters we'll start with miss wall because she is away and far away and has to get ready for something very important this evening and tomorrow miss wall thank you it's great to be with you I am celebrating the graduation of a PWCS graduate who is now graduating from college which is a very exciting thing to have happen yes and I am also joining

[02:10:30] with the purple clothing in honor of the military-connected child through PWCS, and I wish to point out that 51 schools are Purple Star schools, which means more than half of our schools have earned this distinction, which is really awesome. Thinking about the graduation in my family that's upcoming, I want to congratulate all of the graduates. We are right on the edge of graduation season, and not just graduation season, but also fifth grade advancement,

[02:11:05] kindergarten advancement, and students who are graduating from eighth grade, I guess advancing from eighth grade into high school, which are all really, really important transitions. So I'm looking forward to all of those things.

[02:11:21] I want to congratulate Amanda Heim, who is Unity Braxton's newest and the division's newest teacher of the year. She's an orchestra teacher at Unity Braxton, and I've seen her concerts. She does a great job with the kids, and what an honor.

[02:11:37] And also Dr. Keisha Trammell, who is principal of Gravelly Elementary School. Both of these schools are in my district, so I want to congratulate her for principal of the year. This is very exciting and very, very proud of her. I'm going to keep it short.

[02:11:53] I have a lot of activities that I attended, but I'm going to highlight just a couple of them. since we have been talking about special education tonight i attended um the well i'll talk about four autism acceptance color fun run that held was held at colgan on april 11th and um the unified track event for high schools that was held at forest park and the unified track event that was held at reagan middle school and unified robotics so it's been a theme and i would echo what mr

[02:12:25] Blake said families were as I asked families to share with me their experience with these activities over and over again they were so thankful for the work that is being done for the efforts that are being made by our staff and by volunteers and by leaders of schools to help students feel invited and included into the regular activities of our school division.

[02:12:56] And it was really touching to hear that. And so the end product is how the student feels and what the student learns and how the families experience what we are trying to offer. And I think with that measure, we're doing a great job.

[02:13:13] Obviously, that's all qualitative data. But I wanted to thank everybody for their work. and the presentation tonight highlighted some really important behind the scenes things that we are doing and I have seen a great difference in the time that my students have been students and through my time on the board a great difference in the focus and dedication and interest so with that I will keep it short I wanted to leave you with the words of attributed to Woodrow Wilson advice which I rarely follow which however I do aspire to emulate which is be

[02:13:52] Be brief, be brilliant, and be gone. And so to all, good night, and I am going to be gone. Thank you very much. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Thank you, thank you, and congratulations on your child's graduation. Moving on to Mr. Tracy Blake.

[02:14:08] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. So over these past couple of weeks, I've had the opportunity to spend a lot of time across our schools and our community. And what continues to stand out is the level of engagement, pride and support surrounding our students.

[02:14:26] And I'll just start with this here, just put this out there. Families choose Prince William County because of our schools. They come here to raise their children, to access opportunity, to be part of a system that supports student success.

[02:14:41] That's a responsibility we carry every day up on this dais and everybody that works in the school system. And then so I'll start with the events that I attended. So I was at Garfield, of course, where I attended the second annual community pop-up.

[02:14:59] And again, this was more than just an event. It was a direct support for families, for meal kits, to hygiene supplies, to access to critical resources. It met real needs in real time. And one of the highlights for me was the space created for children.

[02:15:16] It was an Amazon came in there and they created a space. And it was great. were doing all type of different STEAM projects. They had a, instead of Pine Card Derby, they had Lego Card Derby. And it was pretty, yeah, it was pretty good.

[02:15:33] But so when we remove barriers for families, then we create better conditions for students to succeed. And I also had a chance to attend a varsity soccer match at Garfield, where they beat Forest Park 2 to 0.

[02:15:48] You know. And earlier that evening, before the soccer game, I was able to attend the Multicultural Night at King Elementary and that room was just filled with a lot of representation, pride, and connection, a lot of food. They had performances and a talent show or, you know, a fashion show. And so all the families and staff came together to create a space where every student could see themselves reflected and that was important. And last weekend or Saturday I was able to attend the math tournament too. So where our elementary and our middle school

[02:16:24] students got to compete at Benton and uh it was it was impressive and I just like to thank you know our student learning team for creating that opportunity for those kids and then like Miss Wall said earlier I've been to the theme with special education so I attended both of the unified track meets the high school one at Forest Park there were 16 schools participating and then And I was able to go out to Reagan Middle School and attend that unified track meet.

[02:16:59] And I would just like to put a caveat, I know Ms. Wall is not on anymore, but I want to really, again, just thank her for all the time she comes out to this side of the community, of the county, because I don't know if people know, but it takes an hour for me to lead from Dale City to Gainesville with no traffic.

[02:17:18] So I just want to thank her for that. I also was able to attend Phantom of the Opera at Kogan. That was, oh my goodness, great. The Cappies were there, so it was like a really super big deal, they were there judging them.

[02:17:34] And then I also attended the Autism Color Run at Kogan. I attended the Autism Acceptance Fair at Neabsco, and so again, these events are just bringing families, students together in supportive, inclusive and uplifting ways.

[02:17:54] But now I just wanna say over this past week, I'd like to just speak about the budget real quick. And over this past week, we've had real conversations about what's a state for our students here in Prince William County. And there was a proposal that could have significantly impacted school funding, affecting staff programs and services our students are relying on every day.

[02:18:15] But last night the BOCS addressed those concerns and that's all that matters. And again, I'd like to thank the BOCS for making the right decision and funding schools.

[02:18:32] But because we're talking about funding, we're not talking about numbers on pages. We're talking about real impact in our schools. We're talking about classroom support, student safety, mental health services, transportation, opportunities that prepare our students for life after graduation.

[02:18:49] And we're also talking about critical investments, so like expanding access to early learning through universal pre-K and bringing school-based health services to our community. Meeting students and families where they are. So a fully supported budget allows us to continue this work without disruption and ensures that we are meeting the needs of every student here in Prince William County.

[02:19:13] Across all of these experiences, academics, athletics, arts, and community, one thing is clear. When students are supported, connected, and given opportunities to succeed, they rise. And it's our responsibility to continue creating these conditions across every school in this division.

[02:19:31] Thank you. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. I don't know, I'm just passing a message. I wasn't rushing, I promise. I'm always the overtime person. I just want to start my board matters by thanking.

[02:19:48] I spend every election day at the polls, volunteering, whether it's helping pass out donuts I've done to sample ballots, it doesn't matter. It's been 13 years in a row through every weather imaginable. Yesterday I had a very special volunteer named Ivan from Woodbridge Senior High School help come out and he just really wanted to learn what happens on election day.

[02:20:11] So I wanna thank him for his time and for interest in not only the political process, but what we do when you volunteer, how the day works, I know it wasn't a very exciting one yesterday 'cause it was a very, just one thing to vote on, but it means a lot to me to have a student come out of their own volition and take the time to try to talk to everyone who was present from election officers to volunteers, so big shout out to Ivan and to all of the adults that connected Ivan to get him to be able to volunteer yesterday.

[02:20:42] In addition to that, I was able to attend some school events, I was at the Unified Robotics event. I'm a unified coach and for me it was a very special occasion. I never, my godson always helped with Special Olympics and things like that and so I got to brag.

[02:20:57] I got to carry the Special Olympic torch and walk with the students. I want to give a very big shout out to everyone who was involved in piloting the Unified Robotics program. I also want to shout out to Chief Newsham who has a special office with, I don't know, we're getting some feedback.

[02:21:18] But a shout out to Chief Newsham, who created a position within the police force that partners with Special Olympics. And I'm gonna pause real quick, I don't know. Can we pause my time? Can we figure out really quickly why we have some feedback?

[02:21:47] - Don't worry about it. - I think we got it under control. Just to continue on, I also with Chief Newsham and met Rosie, who is the coordinator, and her wonderful special needs animal that travels with her.

[02:22:09] Missed up the dog's name, but it was a great event and a great time. I also went to the community parp up with Mr. Blake and Ms. Wall. I have to tease Ms. Wall a little bit and say thanks for

getting out and doing the Cupid Shuffle. It was great fun and all of the volunteers who, all of us grown people out in the middle of the gym, sweating and doing the Cupid Shuffle was a great event.

[02:22:31] I wanna congratulate Mr. Williams III, Fred Lynn's Novice Teacher of the Year, 'cause I'm running out of time. And I also wanna say we're in that promotion, graduation, finals, testing SOL season.

[02:22:47] Please make sure you get lots of rest, plenty of food, and take deep breaths, because everybody's in the same sort of sense of anxiety, but we've been here all year, believe in yourself, take a deep breath and go out and do the best that you can, because that's all that we ask.

[02:23:02] In stating that, I would just like to take a moment to recognize all of our staff. We honor our staff for Purple Hearts or any of the Title I programs or RAMP awards. Those are things that are above and beyond what our staff shows up to do.

[02:23:19] It's not part of the curriculum or state approved. These are additional hours that our staff takes on. You don't automatically become a Title I school just because you're in a low income area. You have to apply, and it's additional work that's done during the day. So I just wanna call out attention to that 'cause when we talk about budgets and salaries, we don't always talk about all the work that everyone does.

[02:23:39] When teachers show up for back to school nights, that's not their regular nine to five hours. They don't get any extra supplemental income for that. And which just been a mile since we really took time out. I know some of my board members have done it tonight to recognize when we see our staff in the evening and on Saturdays and on weekends and at special events, we don't hold nine to five jobs in this. And it's all about building community and doing what's right.

[02:24:02] And so I just wanted to take time to say thank you. And I want the public to understand that they don't get extra overtime for that. It's part of their job. And that's really more akin to like elected officials, work life where we don't have breaks. In addition to that, I'm running out of time, but I'm gonna go a little over and we're all used to that.

[02:24:19] I just wanna say thank you. I wanna take a moment and say thank you to this board and to the board of county supervisors. You know, one of the things that we've done is built community. Dr. McDade, you and your team have been very instrumental in that and one of the things I think that we forgot in all this debacle and debate about who's gonna fund who and who's gonna do what is we do work together well.

[02:24:42] Last year's proof. We had a little hiccup this year, but I think for me, the lesson learned is communication. We can do amazing things in this county when both boards work together and that's why the county looks the way it does today. We all come from one pot of money.

[02:24:58] It doesn't matter if it's school money or county money. It's one pot of money. I know from being here and sitting in the seat for as long as we have, that when we work together, we can do amazing things. We're all human, get sidetracked. And I think what we're seeing is the county ready to take ownership of things that have just simply been placed on the schools, whether it's been COVID or my first vote on the board was for a pool.

[02:25:22] It is time to really think about how we can be proactive together in those veins. And I just wanna remind people that as adults, we say things from the diocese and we're human beings, but we've

proven that we can be community, we can be one. And I hope everybody takes a deep breath after this budget season and we get back to focusing on that.

[02:25:43] Big shout out to all those who helped us advocate. PWA was there last night, they're new. One last thing, Ms. Jessie, I'm sorry. I'm gonna say it and I apologize. We're in a new administration, we're in a new county. We gotta think that way to keep the ways of the past from creeping back up on us and being divisive.

[02:26:01] So thank you to everyone. Let's keep going and being collaborative and being one community. - This is Agrafar. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Well, just to continue the discussion a little bit about the revenue share agreement, those are not normal in most school districts across the country.

[02:26:18] They, you might find them here and there. In Virginia, there's a few areas that have them. And the benefit to a revenue share agreement is that it can improve long-term planning, transparency, and predictability. So I know there was some concern about reaction of teachers and school board members and whatnot, but it really has been the, for what, 29 years, I believe?

[02:26:42] Has, yeah, it's almost three decades of this revenue share agreement. I work for a different division that does not have one. We are still, I won't know whether I'm getting a raise or not, we have staff that are being moved in some positions that are being cut because they already know that they're not going to receive the money.

[02:27:01] So the revenue share agreement alleviates that stress on not just the division trying to figure out how to staff the schools, but also the employees of the division. I wanna thank PWEA for their engagement on this. They really showed up. They wore the red for Ed yesterday.

[02:27:18] And it matters that teacher voices are present. It matters that community voices are present. I'm thankful that the Board of County Supervisors was able to figure out our funding part at least and moving forward, I would look forward to having conversations to make sure that we don't have any gaps in communication or understanding.

[02:27:37] Today is Earth Day, so I hope you do something wonderful to reduce, recycle, reuse, fix something, wear an old outfit, whatever. was started in 1970 and it's turned into this idea of adopting the reduce reuse recycle mentality to help minimize environmental impact that said we also have the student environmental action showcase coming up this weekend at Woodbridge High School and I look forward to that because the kids are charged with coming up with ideas on sustainability through projects energy conservation water quality and natural habitat preservation and they come up

[02:28:17] with really great ideas so that'll be at Woodbridge between I think 10 and 3 so I think we also have an art show here this weekend as well don't we yes there's an art show speaking of art shows I got to go to the central art show here before I'd come to that art show which was amazing the art oh my gosh our kids are so talented but I got to talk to our art teacher from Bennett Elementary and she was talking a lot about the process how you teach the kids different things and to put together this whole project the the pieces that they did looked so professional made me want to sit down and learn how to do it too so I thank her

[02:28:56] for that conversation I got to go to the Colgan autism awareness color run my fellow board members I had some board members show up but they didn't run with me next time you guys come on

gotta run with me well I didn't run either I walked but it's okay I also got to go to a West talent show at Westgate and I I gotta tell you, Dr. McDade, there was a little kindergartner girl.

[02:29:18] She is gonna be one of our teachers. Her talent was to teach us how to draw an octopus. And before she did that, she gave us octopus facts and made us count eight wiggly legs and stuff. It was great, she was awesome. I really enjoyed going to that.

[02:29:34] I'm trying to see if there's anything else. I believe we are done. I'm gonna take my 30 seconds and go. - Erica Trudenik. - Thank you. I just want to shout out again to Cedar Point and Amy LaFleur.

[02:29:49] I went and saw Frozen Junior, which was just so exciting. They did an amazing job. They did an awesome job pivoting with the new regulations with the set and being able to get all of that done. They have an amazing group of parents and staff that really just helped to make those productions truly awesome to see those kiddos and how excited they were.

[02:30:11] And Elsa had an amazing voice. I assume she'll be moving on to the middle school and high school level and we'll hear more from her. So that was super fun to do. I also just wanted to touch on month of the military child. As a retired military spouse, when we transitioned out of the military and into Prince William County Schools, it was a surprise to me how there was conversations that did occur about our military service and talking about that.

[02:30:38] And then as I transitioned into this role, knowing how much we do for our military families, I'm thankful to Prince William County Schools for that and for recognizing those students and their sacrifices and what they've been through in their lives. I think that it's important for us to not only honor our service members, but honor the kids that stand behind and the spouses that stand behind those service members as well, so that's a big deal.

[02:31:04] Like Lisa talked about, the Safe Schools meeting is wonderful. I just am thankful to have the security team that we have, the professionals that are in that field that can teach us so much and talk about what we do on a daily basis to ensure that our kiddos are safe.

[02:31:20] And to the class of 2026, you only have a few more weeks left. They're attending their last proms, playing in their last games, playing the fun games around town. It's so fun to see them smiling and giggling. And I hope they're soaking up every last second of the last few weeks in those hallways at school and enjoying those moments.

[02:31:43] And I hope you guys finish strong and make it through those last few weeks and finish all your tests and work and get excited to move on to that next chapter. Thanks. - Mr. Wilk. - This has been mentioned a couple times, but I was able to attend, hard to believe, the 10th annual Unified Track Meet at Forest Park.

[02:32:03] I had 15 schools, Tracy, maybe it was 16, but 15 schools, three different districts. And of course, thank you to Mr. Blake, Ms. Wall, for joining us and attending the event. I wanna thank two very dedicated teachers, Ms. Taeyan and Ms. Ivesik, who have put it on for the last 10 years.

[02:32:24] With that, again, passion and fervor, it doesn't seem like it ever runs out. So thank you so much. There have been a number of multi-culture nights. Seems like this is when it starts up with the spring season. Attended Ashland, Potomac Shores, and then Forest Park.

[02:32:41] Forest Park was, I never expected, I was astounded to see the building as packed as it was with students. And when I went into the auditorium, it was like standing room only, it was crazy. You know, students were going wild and cheering on their classmates doing cultural dances and stuff, and I was like, wow, this is great.

[02:33:03] It was great to see that there. I do want to recognize Principal RJ Lucciati, who inaugurated the Gauntlet event. Basically, it's for PADI. They take fourth graders, fourth grade participants, and they go through a number of challenges, whether it's having a debate, going through the interview process, a news broadcast, improv.

[02:33:26] It was a great event, and the students really love it over there at PADI. Let's see, Lisa took the Earth Day thing. good uh good potomac senior high school had a community celebration event uh this past saturday um it was i think it was a very effective strategy to take in partner with the two other schools on panther pride drive they're all right next to each other as the kids matriculate up mary williams and then potomac middle school but a great turnout there let's see attending my wife's shows has

[02:34:04] almost become perfunctory as a spouse and so but even if i wasn't uh the forest park theater production put on sister act um it was phenomenal i mean you have to have a you have to have a solid lead to play whoopi goldberg's character and she was phenomenal um and yeah it was it was amazing it was a great show look forward to going to potomac high school's uh show this maybe it's it's next weekend.

[02:34:33] Potomac Middle is this weekend. It was cool yesterday, I was at the polls all day, like Ms. Williams was mentioning. I was a precinct captain of two of 'em. But what I liked most about 'em was seeing the first time voters.

[02:34:49] That was really cool and really showed the civic engagement. And as a former civics teacher, I think it was great to see it come to fruition where they start and now they're voting. I think it was amazing. So that was the election night. I do want to thank, of course, our Board of Supervisors.

[02:35:08] I was at last night's meeting. I definitely want to thank my direct counterpart, Supervisor Bailey, and then Chair Jefferson, who also were original supporters of fully funding the education. And then, you know, the entire Board. Last night, I was there along with Mr. Blake, Ms. Williams.

[02:35:27] Ms. Williams gave a passionate speech. So it was great to be there with my colleagues. And of course, Mr. Blake alluded to the engagement there, but I don't think it would have been possible without the support again of PW, it's okay. PWEA and their engagement, the entire team across the board.

[02:35:46] And yeah, so that's it. - Mr. Jesse. - Thank you. As I mentioned earlier, I did go to the UniFi robotic event and I think in a few moments, they're gonna put a picture up on the screen the one of the teams that was there they evidently Lake Ridge Middle School had two teams and both teams got championships awards and as well as creative design award unified team award and collaborative excellence award

[02:36:24] and it's really good as I said earlier that these kids are able to get involved and do something that the other kids are in the schools are doing so they don't feel isolated and alone by themselves so i just again compliment our division for all that we're doing in that area uh i did go uh to see my county board of supervisor kenny bode on monday and to talk to him and just say you know what's going on and why what position are you taking and so forth

[02:37:01] i'm not saying i convinced them to do what they did but it was good to have a conversation with them and i want to thank the five democrats on the committee that voted for us to do this uh to get the what they did uh i also last night went to the outstanding education ceremony which is great and uh for election day mrs jesse actually is doing well enough now she spent an hour and a half handing out ballots and stuff at election day.

[02:37:36] So she's getting around, so this thing. And I just, again, want to thank everybody for everything that we do. We do have a great division. We can do some things better, but we are still a good division.

[02:37:53] And thank you for your time. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Great things happened in our school division. You've heard from all my board members about the amazing things. There were sold out shows at Phantom of the Opera at Colgan High School a few weeks ago, amazing performances there.

[02:38:09] I went to the Western and Central Art Fairs, which were held at the Kelly's Leadership Center, which everyone should really take it. If you have a chance to go to, the Eastern one is this weekend at the Kelly Center, and boy, is it great. I think it's open to the public from 10 to four, and you will see the work of our students as they progress from elementary, middle to high school.

[02:38:29] It is all set up there. There's an elementary division, middle and high divisions. I had a chance to meet with some of our art teachers and we talked about some of the great universities our students who get accepted for arts. You know, Rhode Island School and Design, Belmont University in Tennessee, so many of these great design schools and art schools and VCU and our counselors, our high school art teachers help these students prepare their portfolios to get accepted into some of the best places in the country.

[02:39:02] And so we're doing well, you know, across the athletics, across academics, across science, across art, and it's a real privilege to be chairman of a school division that is demonstrating such strength across so many, so many categories.

[02:39:21] You know, I wanna point out that the unified track meet, I couldn't make it to, but I've had so many folks talk to me about how great the event was and how amazing it was and how inclusive it was. And I just continue to be so blown away by our unified efforts across, whether it's robotics, track, sports, basketball, and it's just amazing, and even our gym classes.

[02:39:44] I wanna thank the Board of County Supervisors for last night restoring the funding for the school division. I am grateful to all the Board of County Supervisors, even the ones who did not vote to do that. I am grateful.

[02:40:00] You know, I've been briefed on everything that they're concerned about and what they said. You know, I'm committed to working with all of them, even the ones that, you know, may disagree with me about how to move forward. So, you know, in the eight years I've served on this board, we've never had an issue like we had this year and we don't wanna see this again.

[02:40:17] And so moving forward, I'm committed as a school board chair and as a representative of the entire county to work with the representatives elected by their magisterial districts on issues that matter to them as far as it regards to our schools. And I'm committed to doing that and I'm willing to start tomorrow.

[02:40:34] And so we wanna make sure this doesn't happen next year. We wanna make sure that our county is well-funded across all its important facets and that's police, fire, Commonwealth Attorney's

Office and our school division. And it's really important. And I understand the tensions that exist, but I will never stop advocating for our school division and for the great work our teachers do.

[02:40:56] I'll remind everyone that, you know, We have 90,000 students in the school division in a population of 500,000 people in this county, a little under 500,000. That's about 120,000, 130,000 parents. That is a lot of grandparents. And we are the largest employer.

[02:41:11] 17,000 people work in our school division in some capacity or another. Over half the county touches this school division. And so it's really important to know that over half the county cares what happens here and supports the work we have here.

[02:41:27] That's why you have sold out shows, standing room only events, because our community cares about its schools. And the more we care about them, the more we invest in human intelligence. You know, we talked about artificial intelligence. Let's invest in human intelligence so our students have the best chance moving forward in this world.

[02:41:45] So thank you very much and have a great night, everyone. Thank you.



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