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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, September 16, 2026

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Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gf2qfvETMqk>
 - 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 2026-10-26. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:01:12] Chairman Lateef and Ms. Erica Trudinic will be absent from tonight meeting. Additionally, Ms. Lisa Zagafor will also be absent as she is caring for her grandchildren following the joyful arrival of her new grandson last night.

[00:01:31] We are thrilled for Ms. Zagafor and her family and warmly welcome the newest future member of Prince Rainey County Schools. We extend our congratulations to Ms. Zagafor and her family and thanks everyone for their understanding as we proceed with tonight meeting.

[00:01:48] The record will reflect that a majority of the school board was not present at the 6:00 PM meeting. No board member business was conducted and the board did not enter the closed session shown on the proposed agenda.

[00:02:03] A quorum is now present. The clerk will record the members present and absent. 1.02 approve agenda action.

[00:02:19] The chair has advised the board can conduct tonight's meeting without entering closed session. Item 8.01 approval of appointments and release of specific employees was included as an action item on the public posted agenda.

[00:02:38] The chair will entertain a motion to remove the closed session items and relocate item 8.01 to the consent agenda. We are now moving to the approval of the agenda. A motion is now in order for 1.02, Ms. Walz.

[00:02:59] - Mr. Jessie, I move that the Prince William County School Board amend and approve the proposed agenda as follows. Two, move item 8.01, approval of appointments and releases of specific employees to the consent agenda as item 11.04. Three, revise the recommended action for item 11.04 to read that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as set forth in the September 16th, 2026 personnel list presented to the board.

[00:03:28] Four, renumber the remaining agenda items as necessary and five, approve the agenda as amended. - Thank you. Moving to the Pledge of Allegiance, I'd like to invite our student representative from Woodbury Senior High School, Strom Allo.

[00:03:44] - No, Mr. Justice, we have to take a vote on the proposal, but I would like to point out there's one addition to the motion this fall, removing items two through seven from the agenda as well. - Oh yes, I see this. Number one, remove items two through seven from the agenda.

[00:04:01] - So now we just need a vote on the proposed amended agenda, Mr. Jessie. - Mr. Jessie, I'd like to second. - Can we vote, call the names, okay.

[00:04:20] - Mr. Blake? - Yes. - Ms. Williams? - Yes. - Mrs. Wall? - Yes. - Mr. Jessie? - Yes. - Mr. Wilk? - Yes. - The vote is five yes, motion passed.

[00:04:36] Now we move on to the Pledge of Allegiance, correct? I'd like to invite our student representative from the great Woodburn Senior High School, Storm Allo, to lead in the pledge.

[00:05:09] Okay, moving Thriving Future Focus, moving on to Thriving Futures Focus, Ms. Walz. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Thriving Futures Focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfills our vision that every student will graduate on time the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:05:39] The school board is proud to publicly recognize these honorees for their positive contributions to Prince William County Public Schools. Tonight, we celebrate excellence in world language, student support, literacy, writing, and mathematics, achievements that demonstrate the many ways our students and staff are helping to elevate learning across PWCS.

[00:06:02] We will begin with Mr. Justin Wilk, School Board Representative for the Potomac District to recognize our first honorees. - Thank you, Mrs. Wall. The Potomac District is proud to recognize an extraordinary group of students from Forest Park High School who excelled at the 2026 Olympiata of spoken Russian earning an impressive 21 gold medals.

[00:06:24] Sponsored by the American Council of Teachers of Russian, the Olympiata is a statewide language competition that challenges students to demonstrate their proficiency through poetry recitation, conversation, cultural knowledge, and reading comprehension.

[00:06:41] Learning another language requires students to listen carefully, communicate with confidence, understand another culture, and see the world from a broader perspective. These students demonstrated all those qualities of a global collaborator at an exceptional level.

[00:06:58] Their success also reflects the dedication of Russian and German teacher, Nathalie Shamshina, whose commitment has helped students develop both their language skills and the confidence to put those skills to the test.

[00:07:13] I would like to note that not all students could attend this evening as some of our winners have graduated and others had prior commitments. At this time, I invite Assistant Principal Diane Maloney to introduce our students in attendance share a few words on behalf of their accomplishment good evening esteemed school board superintendent supervisors parents and student i am dr diane maloney assistant principal over world languages

[00:07:46] at forest park high school i'm speaking today on behalf of our russian teacher mrs shamshina Exactly 24 years ago, Mrs. Shamshina was standing in front of Prince William County School Board presenting the proposal for the Russian program curriculum. Today, she cannot attend due to an unforeseen illness, but nevertheless, her heart is full of gratitude. The recent success of our

[00:08:21] students in the Virginia State Competition for spoken Russian is not just a reflection of their hard work. It is a testament to the support and encouragement from you all. To the school board, thank you for believing in the importance of language education. Your commitment to fostering cultural understanding and academic excellence has opened doors for our students to shine on a larger stage.

[00:08:56] To our superintendent and our supervisors, your guidance and trust has been invaluable. You have created an environment where teachers can innovate and students can thrive.

[00:09:11] This achievement would not have been possible without your leadership and encouragement. And to the parents, thank you for standing behind your children every step of the way. Their dedication, whether through late-night practice session, words of encouragement or simply believing in their potential, has made all the difference.

[00:09:37] These mutual efforts showed that when a community comes together, nothing can stand in the way of our students' success. The Virginia State Competition for Spoken Russian is part of a national competition sponsored by ACTR, one of the oldest Russian language competitions in the United States.

[00:10:04] It was founded in the late 1960s. The competition consists of three main components: a conversational interview, during which students answer questions and engage in discussions entirely in Russian; a cultural and civilization section that assesses knowledge of Russian history, geography, tradition, and cultural achievements, and a literature component that requires students to present a prepared text

[00:10:41] and recite and memorize a Russian poem. Judges evaluate participants on pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, accuracy, and overall communication skills.

[00:10:57] Every year, we bring home a large amount of medals, not just medals, but gold medals. This past year, we had 33 students from different levels to participate and brought home 20 medals, 21 of which are gold.

[00:11:19] Victory is not just about medals or rankings. It's about confidence, growth, and the power of collaboration. I am deeply honored to be a part of this journey and excited for what lies ahead.

[00:11:36] Thank you for your trust, your support, and your shared vision of excellence. Let us continue to inspire our students to reach greater heights. And I'm gonna ask each student to simply say their name.

[00:11:54] - Now come up to the microphone, please. - Grace McGee. - Hi, I'm Ava Mullaney. - Hi, I'm Nora Updegrove.

[00:12:11] - I'm Lila Tamish. - Hi, I'm Mara Proctor. - I'm Thomas Dance. - I am not a student. My name is Richard Martinez.

[00:12:27] I'm the principal at Forest Park. I would like to thank Dr. Maloney for her leadership in the world languages and continuing this program going. We are an IT program, but we've managed to keep thriving in this program as well as the German language, as well as French and Spanish.

[00:12:42] So it's a tribute to the dedication of the teachers that we have. But I would be remiss to say that when we started entering the Olympiata competitions, getting there was difficult because it starts early in the morning. But I want to thank Dr. McDade and her efforts to make it happen, especially Vern Bakwa transportation, because we have to get the kids on the buses like at 7:30 in the morning to get to George Mason.

[00:13:03] And that's critical time of transportation here to get everyone to school on time. And we were getting charter buses year after year, and the charter buses now are over \$2,000. but we now have the support of Dr. McDade, and she's come on board, and Vern, to make this happen, and I'd like us to continue that, so that our students can continue to demonstrate what it is that Prince William County has to offer to our neighboring counties and the state, thank you.

[00:13:37] - Thank you, Dr. Maloney, thank you, Principal Martinez, and congratulations, Bruins, thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. We now turn to two elementary schools whose accomplishments demonstrate the extraordinary impact of excellent literary instruction.

[00:13:52] I invite Vice Chairman, Mr. Richard Jesse, School Board Representative for the Occoquan District to recognize our first school. - Thank you, Ms. Walts. The Occoquan District is extremely proud to recognize Carey Dale Elementary School for receiving national recognition as a bright spot top school.

[00:14:16] The 74, a non-profit education news organization, examined literacy outcomes from more than 41,000 schools to identify schools where students are outperforming exposition and reading.

[00:14:33] Researchers projected Carrie Dell Literacy Proficiency Rate at 61%. However, Carrie Dell students achieved 84 proficiencies, 23% percentage points above expectation.

[00:15:03] That performance placed Carydale among the top 5% of Virginia schools for outperforming expected reading achievements. At this time, I invite principal Sarah Thomas to introduce the members of the Carydale team and share a few words on behalf of this outstanding recognition.

[00:15:32] - Good evening. vice chairman uh richard jesse members of the school board and superintendent dr d la tanya d mcday i am shara thomas proud principal former assistant principal and former student of carrie dale um on behalf of our carrie dale community we want to thank you for allowing us this opportunity to rec be recognized tonight for being named the bright stop bright spots top school by 74.

[00:16:04] and as Mr. Jesse said, it's a nonprofit news organization that investigates and reports on education across American schools. We are truly honored to be acknowledged both nationally and within Princeton County Public Schools as a school that is beating the odds by exceeding expectations for students above for students sorry for student achievement.

[00:16:30] Kerrydale ranks among the top 5% of schools nationwide and ranks as the top elementary school in Prince William County in literacy growth and achievement. Despite serving a student population with an 81% poverty rate, our grade 3 students were expected to demonstrate a 61% reading proficiency rate. Instead, they achieved an outstanding 84% pass rate in reading, which

[00:17:03] is identified as a collective effort. Our students K-3 are not just learning to read, but we are reading to learn. This achievement is a testament of our unwavering commitment to evidence-based, research-driven, student-centered instruction. It reflects the strength of our collective staff collaborative staff the dedication of our students the powerful partnership we share with our families and community most importantly it demonstrates our collective belief that all

[00:17:38] students can learn and will learn at high levels when provided the right support and opportunities tonight i would like to recognize the members of our leadership and instructional team who supported our cohort of students my former boss friend and former carrie dale principal miss elisa ferro formal assistant principal and teacher of carrie dale renee ricotto former administrative intern

[00:18:15] kashaki middleton former reading teacher tasha johnson and current staff eileen traxel tori holland michelle nicolai kushana p edjung nicole moran jeremy service and angela rada not all could be here tonight but i do think it's still important that every single person is recognized thank you again for this platform it's a tremendous honor we proudly accept this recognition on behalf of our

[00:18:46] entire carriedale community as we continue soaring higher together thank you um thank you so i've been made aware that I should speak tonight so I just want to say that I am incredibly proud of the work that we have done at Kerrydale Elementary it is truly as Miss Thomas was saying a collective effort any achievement that comes within our students comes from the people that truly believe in the

[00:19:22] students and what they're capable of doing I was honored to serve as the principal of Kerrydale for eight years and throughout those eight years we truly developed a collective efficacy in which every adult surrounded every child with what they needed to be successful I take that journey with me at my new school at Moravisco Hills Elementary where I am proudly serving as principal there those leadership skills and beliefs that I have we are going to build the same system of efficacy and we will see them soar as well but i am incredibly proud to be here on behalf of carrie dale elementary

[00:20:02] school and sore cardinals congratulations carrie dale thank you mr jesse carrie dale was not the only pwcs to school to significantly out form outperform expectations and literacy i now invite mr tracy blake school board representative for the neabsco district to recognize another outstanding elementary school thank you mrs wall the neapso district is proud to recognize minneville elementary

[00:20:38] school for the exceptional literacy growth and achievement like carriedale minneville significantly exceeded the literacy performance projected for its students researchers projected a literacy proficiency rate of 59 however minneville students achieved 80 proficiency 21 percentage points higher than they expected at this time i invite principal ellis to introduce the members of her team and share a few words on behalf of the minneville elementary's accomplishments thank you

[00:21:13] vice chair mr jesse distinguished members of the school board and superintendent mcdade thank you for recognizing minneville for also being named a bright spot by the 74 a national recognition honoring schools that defy the odds through exceptional literacy growth and achievement. I am Deborah Ellis, the proud principal of Minnieville Elementary School and this evening I am joined by Paula Obando,

dual language kindergarten teacher, Katherine Bubenhofer, first grade teacher, Alexandra Miranda, third grade teacher, Tiffany Blose, fourth grade teacher, Jennifer Posgai,

[00:21:52] Title I Reading Teacher, Sadie Penn-Murray, Reading Specialist, Saba Arshad, Administrative Intern, Thais Singleton, Assistant Principal, and Maricela Arboleda, Resident Principal. On behalf of the entire Minnieville Elementary Community, we are deeply honored to receive this recognition. This achievement reflects the collective efforts of our teachers, support staff, specialists, students, families, and community partners. It is a testament to what can be accomplished

[00:22:27] when a school community is united by a shared belief that every child can learn, grow, and thrive. At Minnieville, literacy is at the heart of everything we do. We know that reading opens doors to opportunity and serves as the foundation for lifelong success through high-quality instruction, targeted interventions collaborative planning and commitment to student growth our staff works every day to ensure that all students develop the skills and

[00:23:02] confidence they need to become successful readers and learners now while we are proud of this recognition we view it not as an end point but as a celebration of a shared journey we are grateful for the support of the Prince William County Public Schools and the school board. Together, we remain committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to excel, to discover their potential, and to create a thriving future for themselves and their communities. Thank you again for this honor. We are proud to represent

[00:23:39] Minnieville Elementary and the incredible students, staff, and families who make our school's community such a special place. Thank you. Congratulations to the entire Minneapolis community. Thank you guys. Thank you Mr. Blake. Our recognition this evening takes us from outstanding literacy achievement in our elementary schools to outstanding achievement on the national stage. Ms. Zargarpur could not attend this evening so at this time I invite Ms. Lori Williams school board representative for the Woodbridge district to recognize two exceptional

[00:24:18] students from Osborne Park High School. Thank you Mrs. Wall. The Coles District is extremely proud to recognize Gabriel Hamilton and Michelle Marfo of Osborne Park High School for winning national gold medals at the 2026 NAACP Afro Academic Cultural Technological and Scientific Olympics better known as AXO. AXO provides high school students from across the country with opportunities to demonstrate excellence in disciplines ranging from the humanities and

[00:24:53] performing arts to business, mathematics, and science. More than 600 students from AXO programs nationwide competed at this summer's national competition in Chicago. Gabriel and Michelle made history as the first two Prince William area AXO students to win national gold medals in the same year. Their accomplishments also made the Prince William area program the only Virginia

[00:25:29] Axel program to produce national gold medals in 2026. Gabriel and Michelle, while your projects are very different, both demonstrate what happens when students take what they have learned and use it to investigate complex questions, challenge assumptions, and create new understanding. That is learning at its highest level. We are fortunate to have Gabriel with us here tonight. Michelle is currently enjoying her first year of college and at this time I invite principal Dr. Lisa Marie, I'm sorry, Lisa Marie Kane to share a few words on their remarkable accomplishments. Good evening School Board, Dr. McDade and

[00:26:09] distinguished guests. It is my true honor to be here tonight to celebrate the remarkable achievements of two of our outstanding Osborne Park High School Yellow Jackets. Gabriel Hamilton and Michelle Marfaux, who both earned national gold medals at the 2026 NAACP Afro Academic Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics, better known as AXO.

[00:26:36] Michelle, a recent graduate who is now studying computer science at Virginia Tech and could not be here tonight, she probably has a test tomorrow, and Gabriel, a current Osborne Park High School senior, who joins us this evening, achieved a distinction that reflects extraordinary talent, dedication, and perseverance.

[00:26:58] AXO is a prestigious, highly competitive, year-long achievement program sponsored by the NAACP that recognizes and rewards excellence among high school students of color in academics, science, technology, and the arts.

[00:27:14] To compete nationally, students must first win a gold medal at their local competitions, And students from across the nation compete by presenting original work in a wide range of disciplines. Gabriel earned a national gold medal in the original essay category for his powerful piece entitled Flawed by Design, which examines systemic challenges through the lens of his personal experience with dyslexia.

[00:27:42] Michelle earned a national gold medal in mathematics for her innovative research using mathematical modeling to investigate how dysfunction spreads through neural networks in the brain. Together these two made history and we couldn't be more proud of them.

[00:27:59] Gabriel and Michelle exemplify the excellence, determination, and promise of all of our Yellow Jackets and we are incredibly proud of the impact they have made both within our community and beyond. Thank you.

[00:28:15] Gabriel would you like to say a few words? good evening school board members dr. McDade and others this was a great opportunity to be here and I'm glad to be here my essay was very personal for me and presenting it was very hard because I'm going up against 33 other kids it

[00:28:50] was the largest category for the humanities and I'm proud to be the gold medalist for this year and thank you for the opportunity again excellent thank you for being here and thank you miss Williams please continue with the recognition of a leader whose work helps ensure students across Prince William County have access to support they need to thrive thank you the Virginia School Counselor Association has honored and Henry PWCS supervisor of elementary

[00:29:28] counseling and related services with its 2026 VSCA leadership award this prestigious statewide recognition honors professionals who have made outstanding contributions to school counseling through leadership data-informed practices and the implementation of comprehensive counseling programs and throughout your career you have worked to strengthen school counseling not only at the elementary level but across our entire division your leadership has helped our counselors build stronger programs respond to student needs and

[00:30:03] ensure our school supports the whole child you have also played an important role in helping PWCS schools achieved recognized ASCA model program status demonstrating what is possible when strong systems dedicated professionals and a clear commitment to students come together at this time I would like to invite and to share a few words on her receiving this distinguished honor miss henry vice

chair jesse members of the school board and superintendent dr mcdade thank you for recognizing me this evening as the recipient of the 2026 virginia school counselor association

[00:30:41] leadership award this award is especially meaningful to me because it comes from the school counseling community i've had the privilege of learning from and working alongside exceptional school counselors who support students and families every day our school counselors help students feel connected to school, build skills for success, explore future possibilities, and find support when they face challenges. This important work is strengthened by building administrators who value comprehensive school counseling programs and partner closely with counselors to meet the needs of their school communities. It's also supported by collaboration with division

[00:31:20] leadership and central office departments. I would like to thank Becca Schlater and Dr. Darrell Sampson for their leadership and support. I'm equally grateful for the colleagues who share their expertise help us solve problems and work with the college career and student support department to provide coordinated support to schools students and families although my name is on this award the work it represents belongs to many people I am proud of our school counselors and deeply thankful for our building and central office partners who make this work possible thank you for your continued support of school

[00:32:00] Counseling in Prince William County Schools. I'm truly honored. - Congratulations, Anne, and thank you for your leadership and service to our students and school counselors.

[00:32:16] Anne is joined this evening by Director of College Career and Student Support, Ms. Becca Schlater, thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Again, congratulations to all of our honorees this evening. I would now like to take this opportunity to invite our honorees' friends, families, coaches, teachers, colleagues, and any other supporter here tonight to stand in recognition of the important role you have played in the success of our distinguished guests.

[00:32:45] So if you could please stand, we'd like to congratulate you. Wonderful, thank you so much. Before we take a few pictures, Dr. McDade, our beloved superintendent, would like to share a few words.

[00:33:07] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Tonight's recognition shows us what it looks like when we create the conditions for students and the people who serve them to thrive. Our Forest Park students demonstrated that learning a language can open a window to another culture and challenge us to communicate, connect, and see the world differently.

[00:33:25] Congratulations on your 21 gold medals. Kerrydale and Minnieville exemplify the impact of high expectations when you believe that every student can achieve at high levels. Your success reinforces our commitment to strengthening early literacy and ensuring every student develops the skills that become the foundation for a lifelong learning time.

[00:33:52] To our AXO champions, through writing and mathematics, you took complex ideas, asked difficult questions, and created work worthy of national recognition and historical precedence. I know that Michelle could not be here, but Gabriel, congratulations to you.

[00:34:11] And your leadership reminds us that achievement begins when ensuring students have the connections, support, and sense of belonging that they need to not only succeed, but to thrive. Congratulations to each and every one of you here this evening on these remarkable accomplishments.

[00:34:30] We are PWCS proud. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I would like to request our honorees to come forward for photos with the school board

[00:34:46] and to receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:35:27] - You don't get in our photography?

[00:41:28] Congratulations once again to all of tonight's honorees. This concludes our thriving futures focused recognition. Mr. Jessie, I'll turn it back over to you. Thank you. Adoption of the consent agenda, action consent.

[00:41:45] Thank you. Now we -- no. Mr. Jessie? Yes. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. Do we have a second? I'll second. Do we have a second?

[00:42:02] Any discussion? Please vote. Do it by hand. I don't see it, yeah I got it.

[00:42:21] The vote is 5 yes, motion passed. Thank you. Now we move on to Acknowledgement and Recognition 12.01 Approval Acknowledgement and Recognition is on for action.

[00:42:37] Now we are moving on to 12.01 Approval Acknowledgement and Recognition. Ms. Walz. Mr. Chesky, I move that the Prince William County School Board approves the adoption of the Acknowledgements and Recognitions as recommended. - We have a second? - Mr. Jessie?

[00:42:53] - Yes. - I'll second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Jessie? - Ms. Williams? - Thank you, I just wanted to remind our public that we approve these for the month before so that they're already in process and we're able to celebrate at the appropriate time.

[00:43:11] Thank you. - Any other discussion? Please vote.

[00:43:28] Yeah, let's take a roll call. Mine's up, yes, vote yes. - The vote is five yes, motion passed. We're moving on to citizen comment time.

[00:43:48] Those citizens who have signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour, and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics, group government, to the operation and policy of Prince William County Schools.

[00:44:13] Please use proper decorum and manner when at the podium or you will be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting.

[00:44:30] If you do not, the board will recess and I will ask that the room be clear to restore public order. Tonight we have 10 citizens sign up to speak. When the clerk calls your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:44:47] For policy 134, the time allotted for each speaker will be three minutes. The clerk will call for the first five speakers and you may come up and sit in the front row and tell us your turn at the podium.

[00:45:02] - The first speaker is Jessica Young, then we have Angie Trebritola, Kimberly Mammon Orozco, Shailen Klinger, and Hina Ansari.

[00:45:22] - Good evening, I am Jessica Young and my address is on file. Before I begin, I know the superintendent or board doesn't generally appreciate the people that speak, but I wanna acknowledge all the brave speakers at every meeting that come here, even at just nine years old, and speak their truth.

[00:45:37] Gandhi said, even if you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth. Two things can be true at the same time. There are a few things in the world that don't have some good or bad within them. This school district is one of those things. I am a mom of four kiddos in the district, three of which are rightfully and enthusiastically supported in their education.

[00:45:57] One is not. Three students in three different schools in general education excelling in academics, activities, and almost bombarded with a plethora of opportunities laid out by appropriate and proficient staff. My other child, Ryan, in special education at Battlefield is not. He is stifled in his potential progress in communication because when given the chance this year, they hired someone who doesn't use ASL.

[00:46:19] Two things can be true at the same time. We can sit in this room in football fields and auditoriums celebrating the achievements of our athletes and scholars while some of the hardest working students are left to have their families fighting in conference rooms and courthouses for common sense. Two things can be true at the same time.

[00:46:35] We can utilize hundreds of hundred thousand dollars I have helped raise as a PTO president to create amazing programs, celebrations, and support for staff at one elementary school in this district and hear complaints about not enough in a budget for an interpreter communication partner for my son in another district school.

[00:46:52] Two things can be true at the same time. You can spin all the amazing things happening for the many in this district while my son is harmed. You can shout the wins louder than the cries of a family begging for a reasonable request for the same support for ASL that an ESOL student gets in English.

[00:47:09] Unless you don't want him to communicate what happens, maybe keep him silenced. Two things can be true at the same time. You can hire a law firm to defend the district against complaints families make against them and then welcome a former partner of the same law firm to sit here next to the board making policy decisions that affect those same families.

[00:47:27] You can spend more money on one of our lawsuits paying a group of already rich lawyers instead of paying the salary of one interpreter until my son graduates, benefiting one of these bright stars of PWCS that you speak so fondly of. Two things can be true at the same time.

[00:47:43] I've listened to his current teacher state, I don't know how I can instruct him without someone knowing sign language in a meeting and then have the legal department of the district be quoted as saying, we discussed that last year, it is no longer up for discussion. Two things can be true at the same time on the record.

[00:47:59] My son is at an ASL class tonight, learning more that his teachers won't be able to understand and can't support because of the board and its policies. And I can be here committing to you that I will not stop speaking, advocating, or fighting in every court for change for my son and his rights.

[00:48:16] Two things are true at the same time. - Angie Trey-Ratola. - Good evening, Dr. McDade and members of the school board.

[00:48:31] My name is Angie Trey-Ratola. I'm co-chair of PWA's Organizing and Membership Ad Hoc. I'm a Pennsylvania County teacher, and I'm here to remind everyone watching this meeting at home that the time to advocate for school funding is now. I ask that you wear red and come to next week's joint meeting of the School Board and the Board of County Supervisors on Wednesday, September 23rd at 6:00 PM here at the KLC.

[00:48:50] I'm a parent in Fairfax County, and I'm witnessing the unfolding of one of the most embarrassing spectacles that one of the largest and richest districts in the state, if not the nation, could be facing, a blame game between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the FCPS School Board over funding high school crossing guards at some of their local high schools if you watch what the algorithm catches you think this was sudden it was not it was discussed announced and there were public hearings on their fy 27 budget however this afternoon to confirm i was reading it on an article on the annandale today that was published on april 29th where was the outrage done we must stop reacting to things when they become a crisis and instead take actions to prevent them as

[00:49:27] citizens it's up to us to take the time to show up to public meetings for our school systems local county government, our town halls with elected officials. When we say we're too busy because we have all these other priorities, we are teaching our children that it's okay to shrug off civic duty anytime it's inconvenient. When only a couple people who are not paid to be present show up to board meetings, it's no longer e pluribus unum, it's the voices of the few that shape the priorities of one of the most diverse areas of the nation. Now, Prince William County Schools have a revenue share agreement. We can accurately predict how much money Prince William County Schools should receive when they draft the budget for the next fiscal year this is not the case in fairfax county

[00:50:04] schools they constantly return to the budget to cut raises or positions in the spring after pwa and the community organizations rallied at the april board of supervisors meeting to preserve educator raises and our funding some on the prince william county board of supervisors made it clear that they would look closely at how prince william county schools would spend its money moving forward that was after supervisor angry referred to the debacle as a chess match between the boards and said that Lateef had played as queen.

[00:50:28] Well, this queen slays. So let's be clear. It's time for more Prince William County citizens to decide whether they will be pawns or queens who check on the reign of politicians through popular sovereignty. You have power. So write and call your elected officials because they work for you. Most importantly, fill every room where the future of your community, our students are discussed as merely statistics or numbers on a spreadsheet.

[00:50:50] Bring some knitting, bring the kids, fill those seats. I'm not here to get into how the money's spent. I'm here to tell you that if you want your schools to be fully funded, it's time for you to be vocal. For the 67% of employees in this district, these are not your students, they are your children. The budget will determine how much of the Elevate 2030 can come to life.

[00:51:07] Do you want fully funded pre-K-4 essential programs and extracurriculars like robotics and flag football, dual enrollment and expanded CTE opportunities? Then come to a budget hearing. It will also determine educator raises. PWA continues to negotiate for all members of the bargaining units in Prince William County, but the results of negotiation are fully funded by decisions of your elected officials.

[00:51:25] So come next week, Wednesday the 23rd, 6:00 p.m. - Thank you, Mr. Tulloch. - What time is up, thank you. - Next speaker is Dr. Kimberly Melman Orozco.

[00:51:43] - My name is Dr. Kimberly Melman Orozco. My address was on file. First, I mean, earlier, Dr. McDade, you just so fluidly with a straight face talked about early childhood literacy. I honestly do not know how you were able to say that with a straight face. For anyone who wants to know what's really going on in this county, why don't you FOIA request and ask how many high school seniors have read aloud tests and cannot read.

[00:52:07] Ask how many IEPs are added, simply specifically on third grade so you can artificially inflate passage rates by having the test read aloud to them because these children can't read. You should be ashamed of yourself.

[00:52:22] But with regards to, somebody was talking about fully funding, okay? I'm a PhD educated criminologist. I might not be great at everything, but I'm really good at criminal investigations. I've gotten a lot of training on that. And this board absolutely unequivocally needs to be investigated for their use of public funds.

[00:52:43] Specifically, let's talk about your budget. So talk about public funding and asking for more money. You get \$2.9 billion a year. For anyone who wants to look into just a little bit of how this is being spent, look into the 2023-2024 budget that was proposed for legal services.

[00:53:03] Legal services, mind you, that are being paid millions of dollars to Wade Anderson, his former employer, Sans Anderson, is getting millions of this. You all had proposed and approved \$770,000 for the 2023-2024 school year.

[00:53:21] Any guesses how much you spent? 1.7 million. Where did that other million dollars come from? Where did you siphon it from? Was it from federal dollars? And since you came into power, Dr. McDade, the increase of that budget has gone up and up and up every year.

[00:53:41] So let's talk about it. 2022, 400,000, 2023, 700,000, 2024, 1.7 million, 2025, 800,000, but we don't know how much you actually spent yet. And 2026 approved budget, 1.9 million dollars in legal services.

[00:54:02] Can anyone in this audience guess? How much are they allocating for settlement dollars to pay for your failures and your abuse to the civil rights of children? Zero, zero, zero, zero.

[00:54:17] Across the board, you, Dr. McDade, this board is allocating zero dollars. But right before you came, there was \$22,000 there. It's gone. But instead, I also have some FOIA requested documents. You authorized a \$4,000 door so you can lock autistic kids in a padded room that Dr. Waltz, your predecessor, had gotten rid of?

[00:54:40] You better believe you're gonna be investigated for what you're doing to these children. - Thank you. - Shaylin Klinger.

[00:54:59] - Good evening, members of the school board. My name is Shaylin Klinger, and my address is on file. I am a Prince William County resident, a proud parent of students at Prince William County, And I'm also a licensed clinical social worker working in mental health and suicide prevention here in the county.

[00:55:16] And September is Suicide Prevention Month. I'm here because on June 4th, we lost our friend Gil Chavez to suicide. Gil absolutely loved music. It was a part of who he was. And in his memory, his

friends and family have started something called Gil's Gig.

[00:55:33] And it's built around three things: music, connection, and prevention. Through Gil's Gig, we're beginning an annual music education scholarship to help young people access opportunities to find connection through music. And when we talk about suicide prevention in schools, we often talk about counselors, crisis intervention, recognizing warning signs, and resources like 988.

[00:55:58] And those things are really essential, but those things are too late. I wanna talk about what happens before the crisis, because prevention doesn't always look like a counseling office or a crisis hotline. Sometimes it looks like a guitar, or a cello, or a paintbrush, or a theater stage.

[00:56:19] And sometimes it looks like a place where a kid discovers something they love and finds people who love them back. Music and the arts give young people opportunities for expression, identity, connection, and belonging. And for some students, that band room, or that orchestra, or that stage, that theater, isn't just another class.

[00:56:39] It's where they find their people. It's where they find themselves. It's where they find their purpose. And that matters when we talk about mental health and suicide prevention. So tonight, as we're talking about funding 2030, I'm asking this board to protect funding for music and arts education. I'm asking you to protect asset access to these programs across our school and across our districts. And when we talk about student mental health and suicide prevention, I am asking you to give music and arts a seat at the table. I'm also asking Prince William County Schools to work with groups like Gil's Gig and other community partners to explore how we can expand access to music, access to arts, and

[00:57:18] opportunities for connection for students across our county please do not wait until a student is in crisis to decide that their mental health matters because sometimes prevention looks like that call to 988 or a school counselor and sometimes it looks like a kid holding a guitar who finally found where they belong thank you very much i do have buttons for you guys don't forget

[00:57:40] heena ansari hey everybody long time no see um thanks to the school board for allowing me to speak again. Always a pleasure Super Nintendo McDade. Congratulations to the student reps. I'm sorry I didn't remember any of you guys's names from the last meeting. I had too many things written down and my address is on file. I hadn't intended on coming back this meeting but I wanted to continue my social services sort of information messaging and while I was met with some ire at the last

[00:58:18] meeting I think it's super informative. I was reviewing some documentation sent out by the school system, one of the emails from you actually Dr. McDade, and I love that you all are doing so much but I wonder if the messaging, if the messages are getting lost because the sheer number is so great for example there's a recent message about suicide prevention that was buried in an email about the new elementary school I'm curious what advice you're working from that mixes such disparate messages together but as someone who sometimes mixes really strange messages together I try to have a good pivot or analogy to connect the ideas but I have no idea how do you connect the idea that opening a new school is in any way related to student mental health but I love that you're doing that as suicide is an issue that greatly impacts our youth as we just heard teachers do a lot of heavy lifting

[00:58:56] in this aspect of education as well I can't tell you the number of times I've come across teachers doing a sort of mental health triage in hallways and classrooms of every school in Prince William County. Yet do students understand the resources? I see that we're offering free virtual visits for mental health care

and they're amazing but if people don't know about a resource how can they use it? And just as a previous speaker said and I put this notation here, I mean think about Robin Williams. He was completely gregarious and outgoing. Nobody would have ever thought that he was on the verge of unliving himself but he did because he was suffering from depression and he could have used mental health resources but if he got the email from you guys he would have gotten lost after the new school announcement.

[00:59:31] I would urge the school to maybe find student ambassadors to make sure that other students know. To them, I think we all look like a bunch of old people. I'm related, and here's my sloppy pivot. A lot of the Avengers here are attending the Board of County Supervisors' meeting next Wednesday, the one that's also been mentioned, and if you don't want another tire fire like last year, we should all attend and make sure our presence known.

[00:59:49] I'm just attending to make good trouble. Thank you. - The next five speakers is Anna Leonard, Marty Weaver, Rena Stapp, Monon Davis, and Melissa Ridge.

[01:00:07] - The next speaker is Anna Leonard to the podium.

[01:00:34] - Anna Leonard. - The next speaker is Marty Weaver. - Marty Weaver, Occoquan. 9/11, never forget.

[01:00:50] What do those words mean? They mean that I cry as I see videos, hear stories. Remember checking a neighbor and my son's classmates' parents who worked at the Pentagon. And my neighbor, United Pilot, was that his plane? Were more attacks coming?

[01:01:07] Skies quiet, all planes grounded. Finally, I couldn't check on anyone, phones ceased to work. I was glued to the TV, watching the planes fly into the twin towers, the towers burning and finally collapsing, but not before people jumped from windows to their desks rather than burn.

[01:01:25] Heroes running to danger to help in New York and here at the Pentagon, and later to hear about Flight 93 and Todd Beamer's Let's Roll, with those brave souls who took down their plane in Shanksville, the best of America. America was finally jolted awake, but we in the world had been under attack for years before that from terrorists with similar agendas, but known by many names.

[01:01:50] PLO, ANO, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah, and more. 1972, Munich Olympics massacre of 11 athletes. 1979, seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. 1983, marine barracks in Lebanon.

[01:02:05] 241 Americans and 53 French killed. 1985, TWA-847, Navy driver killed and dumped on tarmac in Beirut. 1988, Pan Am-103, 270 killed. 1993, First World Trade Center attack planned by the Blind Sheikh.

[01:02:23] 2000, USS Cole bombed in Yemen, 17 sailors killed. An attack since 9-11? 2009, Major Nadel Hassan shot at Al-Akbar at Fort Hood and killed 13 and injured 32. 2013, Boston Marathon bombing killed 296.

[01:02:42] 2023, October 7th, Israel almost 1,200 killed, hostages taken. My Air Force son spent 15 years flying into war zones. Why? Not because 9/11 was a historical date that Ilhan Omar described as some people did something, but because on September 11th, 19 radical Islamic terrorists hijacked four planes.

[01:03:06] Three hit their targets. Thankfully one plane did not reach the Capitol or White House. But those terrorists killed 2,977 innocent Americans that day. Over 9,000 people have since died from their heroic efforts and more died daily. 9/11 began the global war on terrorism.

[01:03:24] It continues today in Iran and on the streets of America. We are still in danger. That's what never forget means. So what are you teaching? Our kids can't ever forget what they are never taught. Patriotism doesn't seem to be. Students next to me last meeting couldn't even say the pledge and affirm their respect for and belief in America.

[01:03:44] And all who Akbar means to me, look out, something bad is coming. - Rena Stapp.

[01:04:00] - Good evening, Dr. McDade, members of the school board and everybody else here who's listening here online. I'm Rena Stapp, my information is on file with the clerk. I also wanted to chime in that next week, on September 23rd, there was a joint work session between the Board of County Supervisors in Prince William County schools to discuss spending and debt management.

[01:04:19] I wanna bring this to public attention so people can help keep track of how county is funding our schools. Funding public education is so important, not just for the students and their families, but for all property values, for all taxpayers. It affects every member of Prince William County.

[01:04:36] Earlier this week, I attended the Finance and Budget Committee meeting and there was talk about tightening the budget to increase the county reserves. So it's extra important that people pay attention. I do appreciate that there is an early on the calendar joint session so that any potential tax cuts that would affect the budget are being discussed earlier than April, which was, as was said earlier, a tire fire last year.

[01:04:59] So I really do hope that everything can be ironed out in advance, but I do want to make the public aware that this is something that is different and we should be paying attention. As to the person that previously spoke about IEPs as a parent of a student with IEPs, I felt a little slighted, and I did want to help clarify that IEPs aren't made so children can cheat on statewide tests.

[01:05:21] They are so schools can provide services to children in need. I have worked as a reading intervention tutor for four and a half years, and I've been working with students who need a little extra help with reading. Many of those students speak more than one language, so English, reading, and spelling is very difficult. It's such an amalgamation of so many different languages that always breaks the rules.

[01:05:40] I teach them a rule, and then a week and a half later, I'm like, remember how OI makes a sound? We're gonna change that. Just, these ones are the exceptions. You're gonna have to get it from just learning these new words. Also, many students that aren't neurotypical do need different accommodations, including having tests read aloud.

[01:05:58] That allows them to be able to showcase what they do know and how they can perform and show that the schools are accommodating for what they need to thrive in their classrooms. So I just wanted to make sure everyone is aware that IEPs aren't just so kids can score higher on tests and people give them the answers.

[01:06:19] That's not how it works in a classroom. Go ahead and sign up and be a substitute, come into the classrooms, see how it works, and learn firsthand. We teach critical thinking, not indoctrination, so I wanted to make sure we all use our critical thinking here when we're listening to what everyone says.

[01:06:36] Fact check me, please do. Thank you. - Thank you. - Monan Davis.

[01:06:53] - Good evening, my name is Monan Davis, and my address is on file. First of all, to Ms. Williams, my deepest consolation to you and your family. I stand here before you today, Dr. Miday, to bring up one thing and then to address something else that's already been addressed.

[01:07:11] The 30 extra minutes that has been scheduled for employees, some of the administrators are not doing the things that you have prescribed for them to do. By requiring teachers to come in before their 30-minute contracted time to be here, to interrupt in their lunches due to IEP meetings and other meetings that may be necessary.

[01:07:33] Teachers are not necessarily all in the county getting their 30-minute required lunch. While I don't have that problem because my administrator may address it quickly, other administrators are not and that is a problem here in the county. Also, I stand before you today to say that we, as PWA members, are wearing red today to say we support this board and our budget.

[01:07:57] We want to make sure that the revenue sharing system and everything else is still in place and making sure that the Board of Supervisors does not pull another okey-doke, we're gonna give it to you. No, we're not gonna give it to you. Then we are gonna give it to you. Now, as a new resident of the Potomac District, as of next weekend, I wanna say that I am along with my friends.

[01:08:22] Yeah, those little Swifty girls or Swifty people or the Barbie people, as we were said at the Board of Supervisors. We will be paying attention to what's going on. We will be here at the next meeting. We will continue to show up. And don't think just because we didn't show up yesterday that we won't be showing up to make sure that you're doing what is best, not just for the citizens of this county, but also the students in this county, the teachers who come to this county to work.

[01:08:52] We wanna make sure that our school system stays, the high level school system that it is. Back to the IEP thing, one of the things we had here tonight was talking about the ASL situation. Well, that student would have to be technically getting a read aloud because they speak sign language and the sign language teacher would have to interpret the directions to them.

[01:09:17] That's considered possibly a part of a read aloud. So when you criticize students who get IEPs, think about all the things that you're actually really criticizing before you come up and criticize. With that being said, I thank you all. Have a wonderful night. See y'all next week.

[01:09:32] Thank you. Melissa Ridge. Good evening. My name is Melissa Ridge, and my information is on file.

[01:09:48] I am a teacher of the deaf at a center-based program in the county, and September is Deaf Awareness Month. This past spring, Niall DeMarco was a commencement speaker at Gallaudet University. DeMarco is a deaf actor, writer, activist.

[01:10:04] He returned to his alma mater to address graduates and concluded his speech by saying that he The hearing world will not always know how to write you in. That is not your limitation. That is the limitation of their imagination. Our deaf students deserve to be written in now, not as a footnote or an afterthought or constantly crammed in between parentheses in hearing classrooms.

[01:10:25] Deafness is a low-incident disability, but our students deserve the investment they need not just to get by but to thrive. I'm asking for the school system to invest in our students and to write them in. Last year we gave a total of eight SOLs within our department, four in algebra and four in biology.

[01:10:41] All of the students passed. There were no retakes, there were no locally verified credits, our students passed one and done. That is something that rarely happens. Three things had to come together perfectly. The first thing, the first two play into every assessment, how well the classroom teacher is able to teach the content that is particular to the test and the student's engagement with and commitment to retaining that content.

[01:11:07] The third is specific to deaf students, ASL interpreters. A deaf student can have a brilliant teacher, but their access to the content is only as good as the interpreting team in that class. I'd like you all to try something at home. Hold your hands up, move them around a little bit. Imagine that you're listening to a lecture on the 13 colonies in English, but you have to translate it to Spanish.

[01:11:28] With no pause in the lecture, your hands are still up and moving. The 16-year-old student in front of you has no idea what a colony is, or Europe, or the word plantation. Keep going for 20 minutes until you can switch out with your own team member, except the other team member got pulled into to interpret another class because you lost interpreters to retirement or other counties or to ASL agencies.

[01:11:52] So you don't have enough coverage now. So your brain and your hands and your shoulders have to keep going for another 30 minutes. Our ASL interpreters are highly educated, certified professionals. Interpreting requires mental and physical dexterity.

[01:12:08] ASL is its own language. It doesn't mimic or follow English. that has its own unique word order and classifiers. Further, unless a student has deaf parents, there is going to be some degree of language deprivation even among high school students, as well as unexpected gaps in background knowledge due to a lack of incidental learning that we tend to take for granted.

[01:12:29] Our educational interpreters have to be aware of their language deprivation, aware of where our students are at, and meet them there in addition to knowing the content of very heavy classes that you get at the high school level. I could go on about this for about 90 minutes or longer.

[01:12:48] I'm asking you to fairly and appropriately compensate our ASL interpreters who are the core and the heart of our department. Thank you.

[01:13:04] - Thank you, that concludes citizen time. Moving on to 14.01, the proposed sale of BPSA bonds for the fall of 2026. Mrs. Wall. - Mr. Jessie, I move that the Prince William County School Board A, authorize the completion and submission of the application to the Virginia Public School Authority, also known as VPSA, for the fall 2026 standalone bond sale in the amount of \$177,650,000 to finance certain capital improvement projects for school purposes.

[01:13:41] B, authorize the superintendent or such other officer as she may designate to submit such documentation as is required by VPSA. C, request for the Board of County Supervisors to authorize the application for a fall 2026 BPSA bond sale and to take such other action as may be necessary to complete the bond sale and the direct that this resolution shall become effective immediately.

[01:14:08] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Trustee, a second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Trustee. - Ms. Williams. - I'm just excited by the sales on these bonds for the renovations, but they're a long time coming, especially for some of my schools like Breadlin and Woodbridge and Vaughan.

[01:14:25] I think this is a good example of our tax dollars that work for benefit for our students and the community. So thank you. - Anyone else? Okay, let's call for a vote please.

[01:14:55] - The vote is five yes, motion passed. - Thank you. Time for citizen representative time. We now move to the student representative time. Tonight we welcome Storm Allo, a senior at Woodbridge Senior High School.

[01:15:15] - Storm, you may have the floor. - Okay, good evening, thank you Vice Chair Jesse, members of the school board, Superintendent Dr. McDade, and of course the students and families of Prince William County Public Schools.

[01:15:31] My name is Storm Allo, and I'm a very proud senior of Woodbridge Senior High School. This is my first time sitting on the dais as one of your student representatives, and I'm incredibly excited and grateful for the opportunity to serve our students this year. I've spent the past few years heavily involved in student voice at both the school and county level, so being able to bring that perspective to this table is something I'm really looking forward to.

[01:15:54] One of the things I'm most happy to share tonight is the progress we've made with student voice committees across PWCS. As the school year started, we have student voice committees established in every single middle school and every single high school across the county.

[01:16:10] This is incredible to see because it means that more and more students have a place within their own schools to raise concerns, share ideas, and have conversations about the things that affect them every day. Our student senate has also officially begun meeting, and we have some really exciting plans for this year.

[01:16:25] We're not only looking at how we can strengthen student leadership at the middle and high school levels, but also exploring a pilot program that would extend student leadership opportunities to some of our elementary schools. I would also like to take a moment to say that I'm really glad to see the custodial services employee appreciation week being recognized.

[01:16:46] As students, it can sometimes be easy to overlook the work that happens behind the scenes to keep our schools clean, safe, welcoming and functioning. Our custodial staff are a huge part of what makes it possible for us to come to school every day and focus on our studies, and I think that they deserve to know that their work is appreciated.

[01:17:04] Moving on, as the 10th most diverse county in the United States, PWCS is home to students and families from so many different backgrounds, and recognizing that diversity helps students see that their cultures and communities have a place in our schools. Whether it's the new editions of Filipino American History Month, Italian American Heritage Month, Polish American Heritage Month, German American Day, or the many other cultures represented across our county, I think there's something crucially meaningful in ensuring that all of our students feel seen.

[01:17:33] So thank you, school board, for that. On a separate note, I've also had the opportunity to hear a lot of positive feedback from students about the addition of boys' volleyball as a high school sport in PWCS. It's been really exciting to hear students talk about having this or another opportunity to compete, build community, and represent their schools proudly.

[01:17:53] Go Vikings! As we continue through the school year, I'm excited to keep listening to what students are saying because my role is not to speak for 90,000 students, but rather to make sure that the 90,000 students that attend Prince William County have a way to speak.

[01:18:08] I'm looking forward to serving alongside my fellow representatives, Marley Smith and CJ graham working with our student voice committees and our student senate and making sure that the student perspective continues to have a meaningful place in the decisions that the school board makes this year thank you thank you moving on to 1601 superintendent time dr mcdave thank you mr jesse and good evening i am proud to begin my time by announcing that the national merit scholarship corporation has selected six pwcs students as 2027 national merit scholarship program semi-finalists

[01:18:45] a semi-finalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school be endorsed and recommended by a high school official write an essay and earn sat or act scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the 2025 psat national merit scholarship qualifying test these students now have the chance to continue in the competition for thousands of national Merit Scholarship dollars, which are collectively worth \$26 million and will be awarded in spring

[01:19:19] 2027. So congratulations go to Charles J. Colgan Senior High School, Sajila Ahmad, William Hamilton, and Samuel Chung. From Gainesville High School, Abigail Chang, and from Forest Park High School, Devin Wanchu, and from Woodbridge High School, Sophia Ramirez Jam. We plan to honor our National Merits semi-finalists at a school board meeting later this fall pwcs is committed to ensuring that all students have access to mental health resources they need to thrive in a positive climate and

[01:19:55] culture and we heard a couple of our speakers speak on this this evening i want to take the time to recognize suicide prevention month i want to remind our community that mental health support is available through hazel health a well-established telehealth provider this resource is offered at no cost to parents and guardians and helps ensure children have access to the care that they need.

[01:20:18] Their service provides critical support to families who may not have access to other resources and can ensure students are assisted quickly. To take advantage of these services, parents or guardians can take the steps outlined on our website. I also want to remind families about the specialized programs and services available across Prince William County Schools to meet the unique needs of our students.

[01:20:40] We have our support and services webpage, which provides one centralized location where families can connect with these important resources, and I do want to share a few of those this evening. This includes English learner programs, which provide instruction and services to help students develop English language proficiency while continuing to grow academically.

[01:21:00] For families experiencing housing instability, they can also access homeless student support, including assistance with school enrollment and connections to school-based services. For our military-connected families, PWCS provides programs and resources designed to support students as they navigate the unique experiences that come with military life and transitions.

[01:21:23] And our special education program provides specialized instruction and related services designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. These programs reflect an important commitment within Elevate 2030, recognizing that our students may need different support, but every student deserves access to the opportunities and resources necessary to thrive. I encourage families who may benefit from these services please visit the support and services section of the PWCS website or reach out to your local school based parent liaison. Our parent liaisons are a wealth of information and they can help point

[01:21:59] our families in the right direction whether it be school-based services or resources that may be available in the local community. As a reminder schools and offices are closed on Monday September 21st in observance of yom kippur mr jesse this concludes the superintendent's time thank you thank you dr mckay that take us to board matters let us begin with mr tracy blake of the nyabscow district thank you mr jesse i want to start tonight by recognizing hispanic heritage month

[01:22:36] and to our hispanic and latino students families educators staff and community members thank you for the culture history leadership and contributions you bring to the Prince William County to Prince William County and to our schools every single day since our last meeting I've had an opportunity to spend a lot of time in our schools and rather than just give you a list of everywhere I've been I want to share a little bit about what I've seen and I've seen our students thinking a lot of thinking at Garfield High School Bevel Middle School and Hampton Middle School I I visited, I saw students collaborating, having discussions, solving problems.

[01:23:15] And this is important, being asked to explain why. Why did you choose that answer? How did you get there? Can you defend your thinking? We're not just asking kids to memorize information. We're teaching them how to think, how to communicate, and how to solve problems.

[01:23:33] That's what education should look like. And I saw something else. I was at Minneville Elementary and I visited a few of their DLI dual language immersion classrooms. And when you walk into these classrooms, you see these young people and they're up to second grade now.

[01:23:51] So kindergarten through second grade and they're just sitting there like totally enthralled, paying attention to the teachers, learning, thinking and communicating across two languages. And you just realize this is much more about much more than just learning and learning languages.

[01:24:06] They're building confidence, they're learning about culture, and they're learning how to communicate with people who may experience the world differently than they do. And just a side note, Ruby Rose, she's a DLI. She came home the other day, and she wrote two short stories, one in English and one in Spanish, the same exact story.

[01:24:25] You know she's only in second grade. I was amazed. It's amazing. So if you kids can get into DLI, I highly suggest that you put them in that program. So you literally can just walk into these classrooms and see their future being built right in front of them, right?

[01:24:42] And I also seen communities showing up. Again, I was at Miniville, and I was able to help them celebrate. They got a \$1,000 classroom grant from the Village Resource Foundation. And that's just our community putting resources directly into the hands of our educators and back into the classroom.

[01:24:59] I joined families last night at the Bevel back to school night. And I also wanted to give a shout out. didn't do it last the last meeting but I wanted to give a shout out to Mr. Bach and his team for that for that uh tour the new Octoquine Elementary School is one of one yeah so we we really set the bar high with that school so you're lucky that's in your district Mr. Jesse it's very nice very nice yeah I also had the opportunity to attend the ribbon cutting for the beautiful new Woodbridge Elementary School. So if you haven't seen that building, that's something just very special to

[01:25:38] see. And then there was Penn Elementary. I got to join the students there and staff around the flagpole as they commemorated the 25th anniversary of September 11th. And just think about that for a moment. Not one of those elementary students were alive when 9-11 happened. So again, I just wanted to

thank Dr. Bowles and that whole Penn community for continuing to tell that story and keeping the memories of those we lost alive.

[01:26:07] And thank you to Cub Scout Den 108 for raising the flags and helping lead that ceremony. Those moments matter, and all these visits have also had me thinking about something bigger. And Dr. McDade mentioned it with the mental health and the telehealth.

[01:26:26] We spend a lot of time talking about academic achievement. We should, but we cannot separate academic achievement from the well-being of the child sitting in that classroom. Our young people are dealing with a lot. We're seeing vaping. We're seeing conflict and violence among young people.

[01:26:44] We're seeing pressures on social media. We're seeing kids trying to navigate things emotionally that sometimes adults don't even know they're carrying. We talk a lot about grit and resilience, but we can't just tell a kid, be resilient. Resilience has to be built.

[01:27:01] And kids build it when they know somebody believes in them, when they have adults who listen to them, adults who hold them accountable, adults who let them make mistakes without allowing that mistake to define who they become. That's not just the responsibility of our schools. That's parents, coaches, mentors, neighbors, faith communities, and community organizations. So that's all of us.

[01:27:26] Our kids need accountability. They need boundaries, but they also need connection. They need belonging, and sometimes they simply need an adult who refuses to give up on them. Because if we want resilient kids we have to build a resilient community around them. Thank you Mr. Jesse. Ms. Williams. Thank you Vice Chair Jesse. I just want to start by saying thank you to all of those individuals and groups and everyone here who took time out to send condolences and prayers and love at a critical time

[01:28:00] in my family as we lost someone very close and to Mr. Blake's point when you have someone who is such an integral part of your life in a community member that the difference is noticeable in our family it was our uncle Mike and I say that because to those who are listening to school division that so they knew him as especially at Featherstone and just to finish up on that we won't be having a public ceremony for him he asked for it to be private because he was a pretty no fuss no muss kind of person the one thing that he did ask was for all of us

[01:28:39] make a promise and it was different for every person for me it was to keep going because he was my campaign door knocker event uh hold down the fort guy fill her in when mom went to school board meetings and different events it was uncle mike who went to everything he was the kind of guy that you didn't really notice was there and now that he's not everyone notices that he's not there and so i will continue to keep going as my promise my youngest signs promise was to try new things, so he's playing football this year, and to continue with his academic studies.

[01:29:16] For my oldest son it was to continue to grow and learn and to be independent because he's 25. Mike was the kind of guy that just appreciated being alive and so in his honor I would just like to say that if you are a member of this community and you can hear my voice get involved. He was not the most educated person Woodbridge grad like myself but the impact that he made for showing up on bingo night for showing up at robotics is priceless you don't always have to be a mom or a dad or a grandma you could be a neighbor you could be an uncle mike but the impact that he had on the

[01:29:55] kids is just amazing the love that i've received from all of the students that i've helped mentor throughout the years um every single one of them stopped by my house to wish us um to show us love and

that's what community looks like and so i'm just asking in the honor of my family member who's not here take a couple hours take a day take a moment go up to your school find out where you can can make a difference whether it's a monetary donation it's telling a crossing guard hi i appreciate you it's volunteering for reading in a classroom we need everyone because everyone

[01:30:33] matters and there's no greater person that could have demonstrated that to me than my brother mike and so I just wanted to say thank you and I hope that you will do something in his honor and and something of service greatly appreciated by my family and thank you for the grace for allowing me to miss my fourth meeting in 13 years very much appreciated I'm gonna move on from that and go into some happy things which is happy Hispanic Heritage Month which officially started yesterday I am honored to be a part of a school division that recognizes all of

[01:31:11] our different cultural celebrations and in my neighborhood I am one of ten houses that is not of Hispanic heritage so I appreciate all the new learning and cultural experiences that we share in our neighborhood and that our students share in school so thank you for celebrating that and I appreciate that we continue to do that run out of time so I'm just gonna keep it brief congratulations for my new school Web Ridge Area Elementary School their school mascot is the Phoenix and their logo is together we rise and I couldn't think of a more appropriate school motto for the first school

[01:31:47] opening under our new strategic plan for 2030 I'm gonna stop there and I'm just gonna say please please please come to this program especially program fair on the eastern side on the 29th fifth grade parents and up thank you thank you Miss Williams mr. Wilk are you no I cannot handle this but thank you um don't mean to be laconic tonight but I think it's important to just get some things of what's been going on first I want to thank Mr. Bach for your expeditious approach to handling a lot of the bus issues that

[01:32:25] I've had and by the way we haven't had a lot but the ones I've had your team has been diligent and really helpful and I appreciate your willingness to actually have the conversations with the constituents who may not be happy a bus stop has changed or such and I realize you know that will make people unhappy but there's a lot of bus stop changes and it's it is what it is we have to work we have to be and look out for the operations of the school system and ensure timely arrival and dismissal and so it is how it is and that's how it was formulated and uh we're doing a great job

[01:33:03] job with the on-time arrivals i uh did visit uh six schools like mr blake visited schools i visited schools. Um, it was great. A couple highlights. Uh, I really enjoyed, uh, going into Washington Reed, the remodeled pre-K program from the colors, which were effulgent to the commodious furniture in the classrooms. It felt almost like, I don't want to say like a play land, but it was cute and warm and, and refreshing with the changes. And I know a couple of you

[01:33:41] went there. And I appreciate that, Ms. Wall, Mr. Blake, I think. And other members, I would encourage you to go because it takes students from all over the county. It's not just my school. So it was amazing. I visited pre-K classes in some of the other schools as well. What I really enjoyed, no matter what school I went to, it seemed like they were all still doing the same activity. I forgot how many hand-washing activities I watched, but kind of being a germaphobe. I was big and really happy to see them washing their hands all across the board.

[01:34:15] So that was great to see. The other thing I really was particular about and keen in my focus was looking at physical goods in the classrooms. And I was surprised, pleasantly surprised, because there were

a capacious amount of physical resources in each of the classrooms.

[01:34:36] So going from middle to elementary school, just, again, I was popping in and out of rooms. This was not like some deep observation. I stayed in the rooms a little bit. There were textbooks in a middle school Spanish class, so actual textbooks.

[01:34:51] I was pleased. I saw every room I went into, kids were writing, physically writing, whether it was vocabulary words, question of the day. One school, a little classroom in Triangle Elementary, had, you know, pre-made books that were like kid dictionaries where the kids wrote in the definitions in the thing.

[01:35:13] I was very pleased at the blended learning. You know, I was at a back-to-school night as the dad for my son last night, and one of the rooms, I was kind of put on the spot because of the iPads, and they knew I was the board member.

[01:35:29] and my thoughts are this the reality is we're not going to get rid of ipads we need to integrate them technology is important it's not going away it is the future ai we hear about uh the numerous stories over and over uh of you know how that's going to impact our world i do obviously support blended learning and having the resources that are physical as well whether it is textbooks one thing i asked my son's ela teacher is so when your kids are reading novels are they reading out of their e-reader? And she said, no, no, they have the books. So anyways, I'm supposed to be shorter

[01:36:04] tonight, but I just wanted to put out some of my observations from my visits, and thank you all. Have a great night. Thank you, Mr. Wilkes. You handled it well. Ms. Wall. Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Ms. Williams, that was a special tribute, and I'm so sorry for your loss. Mr. Wilkes, I concur.

[01:36:24] the colors were effulgent and I'm also a big fan of hand-washing. As we settle into another exciting year I want to thank our students, families, teachers, and principals and staff for the tremendous energy and dedication that I have observed over the opening weeks of school. I've had the privilege of visiting schools in my district and meeting with families and it's it's been really wonderful to see the energy. It's always fun to see the kids in the building I will say. The month started out with Battlefield High School's back to school night was great we had a lot of parents there I love seeing high

[01:37:02] school parents engaged because sometimes you know we think we we don't we need to just let them do their thing but they still really need us and so thank you to parents who showed up. I also joined families at LV elementary school they had a new Sunray family breakfast where new students and parents were warmly welcomed into the school community in a very small group and it was a really nice gesture and I think it helped new families recognize each other face to face and build meaningful connect connections so I commend the school for doing that I recently participated in a joint board meeting regarding the Governor's School Innovation Park where regional leaders discussed you know the

[01:37:38] opportunities that are available through Governor's School and I want to put out in a plug parents if you think your child may thrive at Governor's School or Thomas Jefferson High School please please talk to your school counselor and be on the lookout for those eighth grade information nights at our middle schools where there will be more information you can ask questions and gain information and learn about both of these advanced academic opportunities. I'm looking forward to back-to-school nights and we're going into the season where we get to be out and out with the community and with the parents. All of my schools are having back-to-school nights and I'm gonna try to go to all of them. Wish me

[01:38:16] look it's it's a little crazy because sometimes there will be a popular night everybody has back to school night you know three or four schools all in one night so we'll see how that goes but I do really value each school in my district um one of the greatest joys of serving as a school board representative is recognizing the accomplishments of our students and this was why I was thrilled to be able to highlight Battlefield High School in my most recent board brief I've only done two and this is my third so I highlighted Battlefield and it's a great video I must say not thanks to me but thanks to our amazing audio visual staff and I urge the community to check it out on

[01:38:56] PWCS YouTube and here are some of the remarkable accomplishments of this really amazing school especially the students and their achievements so well done battlefield let's see as we move through the first month of school transportation has remained as always a favorite topic of the beginning of the school year and I would just want to thank Mr. Bach and his staff for engaging and responding to the concerns of individual families and communities so thank you very much I too will be at the meeting next week for the Board of

[01:39:33] County Supervisors and the school board and I want to thank those who have advocated for strong schools because strong schools build strong families and and strong communities. And I want PWCS to be as strong as it can be from the very most humble child to the very strongest community.

[01:39:54] And so for all of you who do advocate for PWCS schools and work so hard, I really say thank you. And then, whoa, I just have 17 seconds. To close, I want to share a few variations on a theme. Bean by bean, we fill the sack. In Scotland, they say, many a mickle makes a muckle.

[01:40:13] another way to say it is little drops of water little grains of sand make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land and a famous chinese proverb states a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step van gogh himself said great things are done by a series of small things bound together this is truly prince william county schools we are filling a sack making a muckle a mighty ocean a thousand mile journey and a beautiful masterpiece remembering this makes the world effort worth it good night everybody thank you thank you i just like to say to miss williams my regrets on your

[01:40:52] mike uh you know one of the things we did today as you can see i'm not real comfortable being the chair and going through the stuff but you know we also i i asked about the students uh i i really hate when we have like 20 students or 15 students standing up there and we go down and somebody says the name even tonight when we asked the name of the staff i had no clue who they were other than

[01:41:26] they were standing there but for the students somebody said they don't they're uncomfortable let's help them become uncomfortable let's let's if we consider if you have a team have somebody designated on the team that will talk for two minutes or so so get used to it some of these high school kids are going to go out and they're going to be good at sports again and they're going to be interviewed with people so you know teach them how to do that you know i'm learning how to be more comfortable up here i want our students to learn how to be more comfortable up at the mic

[01:42:04] i would like for them to have a picture taken standing at the mic and i just found out today how they can get pictures so maybe we should tell them and the parents where they can go to get the pictures that are being taken it's a big thing to be here and so my suggestion is that we make it I have not attended many events and I don't see myself in a near future being able to not because I don't want to this is a situation at home at the moment this is just getting better but we're

[01:42:40] not there yet so we're dealing with some issues but I thank everybody and I look forward to seeing you and I appreciate it. That being said if there's nothing further to come before the board I now declare this meeting adjourned.



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