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Fairfax County School Board Meeting, Thursday, March 26, 2026

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Place Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length 4h 7m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfiUr0mYoLQ>
 - Official School Board page (FCPS): <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board>
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[00:12:48] This March 26, 2026, regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board will now come to order at 7, 12 p.m. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence and a performance of the National Anthem by the Fairfax County Public Schools students in the All-Virginia Chorus under the direction of Luke Frells.

[00:13:10] I pledge allegiance to the flag.

[00:14:25] Can we please have one more round of applause for our amazing students?

[00:15:40] If you would like to review a copy of the meeting agenda, please see the back of the auditorium. To obtain copies of any items or supporting materials being presented tonight, please reference the QR code on the agenda or visit www.fcps.edu/boarddocs.

[00:16:02] Tonight's meeting is being broadcast on Cox Channel 99, Verizon Fios Channel 11, and livestreamed on YouTube and on our website at www.fcps.edu/livestream. Agenda Item 3.03, Music, Theater, and the Arts Appreciation Month Proclamation.

[00:16:23] I call on Ms. Marin for a proclamation. Whereas March has been officially designated as Arts in Our Schools Month, encouraging communities across the nation to focus on dance, music, theater, and visual arts education.

[00:16:40] This month serves as a reminder that all students deserve access to and equity in the delivery of dance, music, theater, and visual arts education. And whereas Fairfax County Public Schools has a thriving fine and performing arts education program with over 630 music educators, over 46,000 students in instrumental and chorus programs, over 430 art educators, and over 20,000 students in elective secondary art, FCPS hosts one of the largest theater education programs in the United States with nearly 60 theater teachers and more than 6,500 theater students.

[00:17:14] FCPS Dance has programs at the elementary and high school levels, dance, music, theater, and visual arts students at FCPS demonstrate the importance of quality, fine, and performing arts education programs to the lives of young people. And whereas FCPS Arts programs are known throughout the state and country as a model of excellence, emphasizing conceptual learning, personal relevance, and innovation, in March and throughout the spring, FCPS School Pyramids celebrate the arts with pyramid art shows exhibiting the works of elementary, middle, and high school students in each community.

[00:17:45] Each year, middle and high school artists are recognized throughout the FCPS Artifacts Awards, the Scholastic Art Awards, and other art recognition programs. And whereas the FCPS Music Program consistently receives recognition as a recipient of the Best Communities for Music Education Award from the National Association of Music Merchants, the 6th Grade All-County Choral Festival is recognized as one of the largest elementary choir events in the nation.

[00:18:09] FCPS Secondary Ensembles garner accolades at prestigious events including the Virginia State Music Conference, Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, National Band Association, and American Choral Directors Association. Our schools have been honored with several national distinctions such as the Sudler Flag of Honor, the Sudler Cup of Distinction, the VMEA Blue Ribbon Award, and the VMEA Honor Band Award. And whereas FCPS Theater and Dance offer a vast array of curricular and extracurricular art experiences, including dance events and showcases, plays, musicals, drama clubs, improv competitions, student-directed one-act festivals, the VHSL State One-Act Competition, the Brandon-Victor Dixon Awards, and the Cappies.

[00:18:47] The Cappies, an international high school program that celebrates theater performance, journalism, and student ownership originated in Fairfax County Public Schools. FCPS theater students and teachers are recognized at this annual gala in Washington, D.C. Now therefore, be it resolved, Fairfax County Public Schools recognizes March as Dance in Our Schools, Music in Our Schools, Theater in Our Schools Month, and Youth Art Month to celebrate and acknowledge every day that fine and performing art education experiences and opportunities are an essential part of every student's well-rounded education.

[00:19:20] - Is there a second? - Second. - Thank you, Mr. Frisch. I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, and myself with Dr. Anderson away from the table.

[00:19:43] Now you can cheer. Agenda item 3.04, Disability Affirmation Month Proclamation.

[00:19:59] I call on Mr. Moon for a proclamation. Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I ask Ms. Marin to read this one as well? Whereas the Americans with a Disabilities Act of 1990 was founded on four principles, inclusion, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and equality of opportunity for all people with disabilities.

[00:20:23] Fairfax County Public Schools, FCPS, is committed to these and the principles of equity, excellence, and opportunity for all students. And whereas, inclusion is an attitude, an approach, and a mindset that welcomes and facilitates participation of students with disabilities in every aspect student life which requires mutual responsibility for adaptation and removal of barriers so that the students with disabilities have the same opportunity to participate in student life

[00:20:58] as any other student and whereas FCPS celebrates efforts to recognize disability awareness and acceptance to increase public awareness and respect for persons with disabilities inform the public concerning their many contributions to society, ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, encourage health promotion to increase community awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities, and emphasize the abilities and rights of disabled persons, and whereas over 30,904

[00:21:36] and approximately 17% of the FCPS students receive special education services and research has shown that students with disabilities encounter more difficulty being accepted by their peers making friends and becoming involved in school and community-based activities and clubs and non-disabled students and whereas FCPS provides innovative and individualized programs to advance the achievement and knowledge of students and young adults living with disabilities

[00:22:12] in the areas of vocational social and life skills and whereas disability is a natural part of human diversity and people with disabilities have the same human and civil rights as everyone else including the right to be included in all aspects of a society therefore we must ensure they are included in the FCPS community by increasing knowledge and understanding of disabilities promoting positive attitudes by creating a cultural respect and inclusion and

[00:22:46] ensuring the school curriculum and norms events and processes are accessible and inclusive of a disability history and disability norms now therefore be resolved that Fairfax County School Board does hereby proclaim March 2026 as a disability affirmation month in recognition of the many contributions and strengths of people with disabilities, and to promote inclusive school communities across our division.

[00:23:18] And now they are for a bid further reserve that the Fairfax County School Board renews its commitment to inclusion for all individuals with disabilities in our schools and communities. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Dunn.

[00:23:33] I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, with Dr. Anderson away from the table, and I am also in the affirmative.

[00:23:48] Madam Clerk, will you please read the vote? It's 10-0-0-1. The motion carries. Congratulations.

[00:24:05] Agenda Item 3.05, Transgender Day of Visibility Proclamation. I call on Mr. McDaniel for her proclamation. Whereas Fairfax County Public Schools is committed to fostering a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment where every student, employee, and family is respected and empowered.

[00:24:27] And whereas Transgender Day of Visibility is observed annually on March 31st to celebrate the lives and contributions of transgender people while raising awareness of the disproportionate discrimination and violence the transgender community continues to face.

[00:24:44] And whereas transgender students, families, and staff are integral members of our community whose talents, leadership, and courage enrich our classrooms, strengthen our schools, and inspire all. And whereas, transgender people have made significant contributions throughout history, including early LGBTQIA plus rights movement activists like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, artists such as Laverne Cox and Kim Petras, leaders like Sarah McBride, the first openly transgender member of Congress, and Virginia Senator Danica Rome, the first openly transgender state legislature.

[00:25:24] Scientists like distinguished neurobiologist Dr. Ben Barres and Dr. Lynn Conway, whose innovations revolutionized computer science and countless others whose courage and achievements have advanced equality and inspired others. And whereas all transgender people have inherent worth and are deserving of respect and dignity from these and other well-known historical and public figures to those for whom it is not safe to live their authentic lives. Wherever they are on their journey, they are valued and valid. And whereas major medical organizations, including the American

[00:26:01] Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychiatric Association have affirmed the validity of transgender identities and support age-appropriate gender-affirming care as evidence-based medically necessary treatment that it significantly improves health outcomes for transgender people.

[00:26:23] And whereas transgender youth face significantly higher rates of mental health challenges, largely due to discrimination, rejection, and lack of affirmation, underscoring the critical importance of inclusive schools where transgender students can thrive with research demonstrating that transgender youth who feel supported in their identity show significantly improved academic, social, and emotional outcomes, and whereas transgender students deserve to learn in environments free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and exclusion, and to have their names, pronouns, and identities honored, and whereas the Fairfax

[00:27:03] County School Board stands with and celebrates its transgender students, families, and staff, recognizing the urgency of its charge to foster a responsive, caring, and inclusive culture by reaffirming its commitment to policies that uphold the rights of well-being of transgender individuals, ensuring access to education and employment free from discrimination and grounded in respect, and whereas the Fairfax County School Board recognizes that learning and growth require ongoing reflection,

[00:27:38] dialogue, and partnership with students, families, staff, and community members to advance equity and understanding. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board proclaims March 31, 2026 as Transgender Day of Visibility in Fairfax County Public Schools and encourages all to promote a caring culture of equity, inclusivity, and respect for transgender people, not only on this special day, but throughout the entire year as well.

[00:28:12] - Is there a second? - Second. - Thank you, Mr. Frisch. I call for, I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Moon, with Mr. Dunn and myself, and with Mr. Dunn and Dr. Anderson away from the table.

[00:28:34] Will the clerk please read the vote? - It's 9:002, the motion carries. - Thank you so much.

[00:28:52] I would like to welcome all those here to support the Transgender Day of Visibility Proclamation to please join the board for a photo

[00:28:59] at the front of the dais.

[00:30:38] - I would like to welcome all those here in support of the Disability Affirmation Month Proclamation to please join the board for a photo

[00:30:46] at the front of the dais.

[00:32:22] I would like to welcome all those here in support of the Music, Theater, and the Arts Appreciation Month Proclamation to please join the board for a photo

[00:32:29] at the front of the dais.

[00:33:52] Madam Chair, that was our final photo.

[00:34:39] Agenda Item 4.01, Virginia High School League and Academic Team Regional Sports Recognitions. The school board is very pleased to recognize the recipients of Winter 2026 FCPS VHSL State and Regional Championships tonight.

[00:34:57] Please note that we will also be recognizing one school for their Fall 2025 VHSL Championship win. Please stand when your team is recognized. After all the recognitions are complete, individual teams will be invited to have a photo with the board. The board would like to recognize the Robertson Secondary Girls Indoor Track and Field Team for winning the VHSL Class 6 Girls Indoor Track and Field State Championship.

[00:35:25] The board would also like to recognize Principal Tracy Phillips, Director of Student Activities Andrew Jimmo, and Coach Luke Chowett for their contributions to the team. Next, for the Fall 2025 recognition, the board would like to recognize the Lake Braddock Secondary Boys Cross Country Team.

[00:35:55] for winning the VHSL Class 6 Boys Cross Country State Championship. The board would also like to recognize Principal Lindsay Kearns, Director of Student Activities Janice Pritchett, and Coaches Jason Switzer, John Ferguson, and Danny Howick for their contributions to the team. The board would like to recognize the Langley High School Boys Swim and Dive Team for winning the VHSL Class 6 Boys Swim and Dive State Championship.

[00:36:32] The board would also like to recognize Principal Larry Stroud, Director of Student Activities Jeff Noto, and coaches Megan Obery, Sarah Clark, and Leanne Stevens for their contributions to the team. Yay, Langley. So if you have Westfield High School boys basketball players, please stand.

[00:37:00] The board would like to recognize the Westfield High School boys basketball team for winning the VSSL Class 6 Boys Basketball State Championship. The board would also like to recognize acting principal Scott Satter, director of student activities, Liza Fumgarner, and coaches Kevin Harris, Ephraim Hawkins, Gary Mendenhall, Vinnie Thora, and Chris Barron for their contributions to the team the board would

[00:37:36] like to recognize the West Springfield rifle team for winning the the Potomac High School rifle league regional championship the board would also like to recognize principal Shannon Metheny, director of student activities Jenny Sabata, and coaches Chris Corbett, Stacy Collins, Stephen Gagliano, Dan Cole, Chris Worrell, and Oscar Stars for their contribution to the team.

[00:38:21] Shooters. The board would like to recognize the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Scholastic Bowl Team for winning the VHSL Class 6 Scholastic Bowl State Championship.

[00:38:37] The board would also like to recognize Principal Michael Mackay, Director of Student Activities Leah Conte, and Coach Julie Fu for their contributions to the team. Please stand. The board would like to invite the members of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Scholastic Bowl team, school staff, and supporters to please join the board for the dais. And then I ask my colleagues to stay put and let us have the rest of the pictures.

[00:40:08] The board would like to invite the members of the West Springfield Rifle team, school staff,
[00:40:36] and supporters to please join the board for a photo. The board would like to invite the Westfield
[00:42:42] high school boys basketball team school staff and supporters to please join the
[00:42:47] board for a photo the board would like to invite the members of the Langley high
[00:44:31] school boys swim and dive team school staff and supporters to please join the
[00:44:35] board for a photo board would like to invite the Lake Braddock secondary boys
[00:45:29] cross-country team school staff and supporters to please join the board for
[00:45:33] a photo the board would like to invite the Robinson secondary girls indoor
[00:46:45] track and field team school staff and supporters to please join the board for
[00:46:49] photo madam chair that was our final photo on behalf of the board i would like to thank all of
[00:48:44] our students coaches principals and parents who came out this evening we are so proud of all of our fcps students agenda item 5.01 community participation the next order of business is community participation we welcome all community members who are here and those who signed up to speak this evening additional information about signing up to provide comments at school board regular business meetings and public hearings can be found on the school board website at www.fcps.edu/schoolboard. During the sign-up process, community

[00:49:22] members acknowledge that they were informed of the school board's expectations for proper decorum when providing comments. These expectations are also available online and with the printed agenda and meeting materials in the back of the room. We ask audience members to be respectful of one another.

[00:49:37] shouting and outbursts will not be tolerated. Please hold your applause until the conclusion of a speaker's remarks. Audience members may not join speakers at the podium and should remain at their seats including when recording video or taking photos. We are grateful to all of those who have come to speak with us today and thank you for your cooperation. School Board members will be listening but not responding. Madam Clerk, please call our first speaker.

[00:50:01] Kaz Kayer. Kaz Kayer. Megan O'Neill. Hello, members of the board. My name is Megan O'Neill. I'm a sophomore at Oakton Theatre and I'm here to talk about the importance of expanding the Performing Arts Department in FCPS.

[00:50:34] Theatre has helped me grow in confidence and helped me to navigate things in the real world like public speaking and working with a group efficiently in a short amount of time. Theatre Arts has helped kids get better academically than sports by improving their mental health and self-confidence. As a

person who has done both theatre and cheerleading, I can tell you that theatre has created a more mentally positive space for both me and the rest of my department.

[00:50:55] Theater has shown me that I have a voice, that I deserve to be heard, and that my ideas matter and are valued. In fourth grade, we were meant to perform a musical for a music grade that unfortunately got canceled due to COVID. If we are able to bring that back to elementary schools, it would develop a love for theater at a young age for more kids.

[00:51:14] As the rise of AI is taking over creativity and blocking off of these outlets of human innovation, we must take action to make sure the kids can learn to be creative without bots and with humans. Me and one of my closest friends, Phoenix Britton, who is also here tonight, want to be the next theater and chorus directors as we are both inspired by the current theater and chorus directors at Oakton High School, Ms. Samantha Gelagil and Mr. G.J. Godinas, because of their belief in us to be our best selves in whatever we do.

[00:51:45] And we want to push that love forward to the next generation of performing arts kids. Thank you for your time and consideration.

[00:52:09] Phoenix Britton. Good evening, members of the board. My name is Phoenix Britton, and I am a sophomore at Oakton High School.

[00:52:26] I am enrolled in technical theater at Oakton, and I was enrolled in acting theater in middle school at Rachel Carson. When I was picking my courses for seventh grade, I was begging my mom to let me take acting as well as technical theater. And luckily for me, she said yes. First semester of seventh grade, I had acting theater one day as well as technical theater the other day, and it was the best.

[00:52:50] As I got to see the teacher who got me into theater every day, that teacher was Mr. Josh Bickford. Mr. Bickford wanted me as one of the two stage managers for our musical. And at that time, I was unsure if I could do it as my mental health was deteriorating badly.

[00:53:11] But luckily, he convinced me to go to one rehearsal. And being in that warm, caring, fun, and supportive environment saved my mental health. Mr. Harmon and Mr. Bickford both inspired me to be a theater teacher in the future so that I can give back.

[00:53:32] I want to give the next generation the confidence, skills, and a place to be themselves that I got. All of the theater spaces, as well as the chorus room at Oakton, are my homes away from home. The prop room is my sanctuary, and the people on my tech team are my classmates, and they are my friends.

[00:53:52] They are pieces of my heart that I cannot imagine middle or high school without. Thank you for your time.

[00:54:22] Mi Tran. Ms. Tran, we're trying to move you over. Could you please respond to the request that you're receiving from our tech team?

[00:54:48] Ms. Tran, you may begin when you are ready. Hi, can you all hear me? Yes, please continue. Hello. Good evening, everyone. My name is Mi Tran, and I am a parent.

[00:55:05] Thank you for the opportunity to present tonight. Today, students have the privilege to take school devices home and access countless apps and tools risking exposure to age-inappropriate content. I am concerned with Gmail, Google, Me, YouTube, and the camera specifically because I've seen upper

elementary students share personal files and photos with lower elementary students via their FCPSSchools.net Gmail account and Google Slides.

[00:55:31] On students' school's Gmail account when composing a new email in the To field or sharing a file on apps such as Google Slides, a student can enter a couple letters, and any student with those letters in their name at the base school and specific teacher's class or group email address outside of the base school will appear for the student to select and send a message gmail and youtube are listed as favorite applications on students google accounts and there are no options to remove them the camera is also activated by default with no way to turn off i'd like to suggest that fcps focus on least privilege cyber security and privacy prior to

[00:56:08] issuing school devices to students switching to an opt-in approach so teachers will need to request specific apps to be activated versus the current process having parents ask the school principal today to request specific apps to be deactivated per student or school-wide. I'd like to request that FCPS send a survey to teachers to identify required apps to supplement learning at an age or grade appropriate screen time guidelines using data from objective sources, not technology companies, as I don't see a compelling reason for elementary school students to have access to

[00:56:42] camera, Gmail, me, and the other vulnerable applications available on their school Google account. When they don't even know how to type or where the letters on the device's touchpad or keyboard, I request them please consider changing to an opt-in approach for me. Nicole Woodward,

[00:57:12] Nicole Woodward, Christina McCormick, Christina McCormick, Patty Karshner. Hi, I'm speaking as parent of a twice exceptional student FCPS has committed to providing a safe and inclusive school environment for everyone and I truly appreciate the

[00:57:51] inclusion efforts of this school division however 2e autistic students tend to fall through the cracks they routinely experience misunderstandings and overwhelm in the school environment our 2e kids need advanced instruction access to enrichment and predictable support there is a real need for for neurodiversity-affirming autism training for all FCPS educators.

[00:58:16] I'd also like to talk a bit about universal design for learning and cursive instruction. UDL means designing lessons to be accessible to all learners. It means presenting lessons in various formats and modeling cursive use in the classroom.

[00:58:31] It means allowing choices of tools like sand trays, whiteboards, or adapted pens and pencils. It means giving meaningful assignments, such as learning to read historical documents. UDL does not mean allowing students to choose between manuscript, cursive, or typing for their writing assignments before they've learned those skills.

[00:58:52] We aren't teaching them to type, and cursive is not being modeled or used in a meaningful way. We cannot expect our kids to choose cursive when they aren't seeing it used in the classroom. Currently, teachers don't have enough instruction time, and Lexia is being overused.

[00:59:09] The 2024 Virginia Writing Standards require students to show grade-level spelling skills when writing in cursive. You can't meet that standard without requiring students to use cursive in their writing assignments. Please consider dedicating at least one day a week to cursive instruction rather than using Lexia and other technology.

[00:59:29] Thank you for your advocacy and support for our students. Thomas Zeinart. Good evening.

[00:59:53] My name is Thomas Zeinart, and I'm a parent of two FCPS students and a volunteer with their Fairfax solar schools campaign. I'm here because I care deeply about our children's future and that future depends on the choices we make today. Solar panels are finally going up on some of our schools. That's really great news but right now FCPS has plans for solar on approximately 34 of its 199 schools and centers. That leaves the vast majority of our buildings and our communities without the benefits solar can bring. With everything going on right now energy prices

[01:00:28] are soaring. Locking in stable, low-cost solar power through purchase power agreements is a smart financial move for the district. School solar creates real hands-on learning opportunities for students, strengthens community resilience, and most critically, helps us mitigate climate change. The window is closing. The commercial solar tax credit is being accelerated towards phase-out. If we delay, we risk leaving savings and our solar capacity on the table. This board has the power to act before that window shuts. In 2021, the board made bold commitments, carbon

[01:01:05] neutrality by 2040, a 50% emissions cut by 2030, an all-electric bus fleet by 2035, net zero new buildings, and a transition to mostly renewable energy. Those commitments mean something. Solar on our schools is one of the clearest ways to honor them. Please act quickly and commit to installing more solar before the tax credits expire. Thank you. Vanessa Hall. Hi, all.

[01:01:44] Hi, my name is Vanessa Hall. I'm an FCPS Pride co-leader and an FCPS mom and alum. I'm sorry there aren't as many of us normally, but we have thousands here in spirit. FCPS Pride appreciates your time and consideration for this Transgender Day of Visibility Proclamation.

[01:02:03] In Virginia, a new day has dawned. We're lucky to have both a commonwealth and school district that respects civil rights and human dignity. Federally, transgender people have lost the right to health care and jobs. In Kansas, transgender people have been stripped of driver's licenses without notice or recourse.

[01:02:23] Nebraska and Ohio have bathroom and health care bans. Also, violence and threats are at an all-time high. Locally, media like the Washington Times or Examiner feel emboldened to repeatedly spew hate and use demeaning language like alphabet people or trans mafia, which frankly disgusts me.

[01:02:41] In advance of this proclamation, WMAL's Larry O'Connor Show profiled hate speech and platformed an IWF activist who's openly mocked disabled students and lobbied against our own transgender students. Previously, O'Connor and his co-host have used the T-slur.

[01:03:00] It's all, frankly, obscene. Such hateful rhetoric and anti-trans lobbying efforts reinforce why we need this day. We all must dare to be visible, to be loud and proud, while people like them try to scare or shame the transgender community and all of us allies into hiding.

[01:03:24] In Fairfax, we're fortunate to have all of you, and you, to protect and welcome all of us in the schools. no matter the legal threats, please actively resist and stand fast against the darkness and dark money and continue to be the steadfast ray of light in our lives and nation so that transgender

[01:03:43] youth and families can... Dale Van Wagner. Keep up the good work. All right. All right. Good evening, guys. I'd like to tell you a story about a friend of mine, Mark, and his fourth grade son, Tim.

[01:04:23] Last summer, Tim went to a local overnight sports camp with all of his buddies, a great camp with great reviews. A week into the camp, Tim called home. He told Mark how great the camp was going. He also mentioned that they give out candy all the time. Not just after dinner and not just as a treat. Candy for finishing drills. Candy for staying focused. Candy for participating. Candy throughout the whole day. Another week goes by. Mark gets another check-in call from Tim. Mark asks about the candy. Tim says they still give it out all the time. I'm going to read you a text message I got from Mark about this whole thing. So, I did meet with the camp counselor a couple

[01:05:01] of times to talk about it, but it was really difficult to bring up because the entire reward system is built around the candy. My wife and I were horrified. I met with him several times because Tim was doing really poorly initially, and it was because he has them eating 17 pieces of candy before lunch. So I tried to ask for specifics, maybe give them some fruit in the morning at least. I asked for them to have a sandwich or something more filling for lunch.

[01:05:25] it's insane. He didn't get it. Then I went to the camp director. The director then went to the counselor, who was upset that I went over his head, but then so generously asked for me to meet with him directly with any food and candy questions to help find a mutually agreeable solution. I really appreciated his candidness, and the meeting was great in that it was finally out in the open. He admitted to using candy as a reward, which they were not supposed to do, and he said that me bringing it up was good for him because it made him go back to look at the candy rewards and make sure he's only using it when it's transformative or enhancing. Oh wait this

[01:06:02] isn't about candy. This is an actual text I got almost word for word about the massive amounts of online time the kids have in our schools and the massive amounts of effort it takes to pare it back even a little bit. We know too much candy is bad. We have a mountain mountain of evidence that too much on-screen time is also bad. Katie Brunberg. All right. Good evening. I am here to address concerns from my colleagues about a decrease in theater enrollment and staffing across middle

[01:06:41] school theater programs. I taught theater at Annandale High School for eight years. I worked tirelessly to build that program, yet repeated de-staffing forced me to leave a community I deeply cared about. My value as an educator felt reduced to enrollment numbers, a reality many theater teachers are facing right now. Now at Robinson Secondary, I see what is possible with strong support, engaged administration, community ticket sales, and theater school connections.

[01:07:05] These resources have led to growing enrollment and expanded opportunities for Robinson students, but this is not the reality for many schools. It is crucial that we find a way to bridge this equity gap at both schools. I was able to build personal connections with students making a lasting impact on their success. Consistency and theater program leadership is the key to building and maintaining these safe supportive environments. When teachers are asked to split staffing between schools, it makes it impossible for them to commit fully to either program. Barriers to students taking theater class include too many elective options, a push to take advanced or remedial academic courses, or a lack of awareness of the class and its benefits.

[01:07:43] We need theater opportunities at the elementary level to promote secondary options. Theater is also often treated as something kids can just do after school. This after-school component, often involving hundreds of students, is not considered when staffing decisions are made. Is it possible to acknowledge after-school theater participation numbers as part of staffing considerations? It feels like

theater teachers are asked to do the impossible task of balancing their full-time 80 plus hour work weeks with finding time to recruit and fight for their jobs i am pleading to you today to help provide pathways that make it feel a bit more possible we need equal access to elementary theater outreach opportunities thank

[01:08:21] you all for the support you have provided our theater programs the district warehouse and stipends have been invaluable to the success of our program since implementation we truly are a district that values all arts disciplines and we hope we can continue that legacy shout out to Andrew Redmond Lake Braddock Theatre alum for the lights and sound this evening thank you Deborah Warden I don't think I can say

[01:09:01] it as well as you my name is Deb Warden I have been an FCPS parent for the past 18 years my youngest my third child is a sophomore at Langley High School I'm here to express my support and concern about the what's happening at the Cooper middle school theater program. I commend FCPS for proclaiming March the Music Theater and Arts Appreciation Month but you need to do more to support and protect the middle school programs as they face decline in enrollment. They cannot exist without support from you in some creative fashion whether it's what the previous speaker just mentioned we need to find a way to keep these

[01:09:40] programs and to protect the positions of these amazing teachers. My kids all participated in performing arts throughout middle and high school while that Cooper all of my kids took theater class performed in after-school performances their experiences that in theater were the absolute highlight of their middle school experience theater gave them a safe place where they could be themselves they learned to overcome fear deal with disappointment and relish in the provider in the pride of performing all very important lifelong skills middle schoolers should be learning to embrace their creativity and

[01:10:16] and discover what makes them unique we need to do everything we possibly can to make sure that these middle school children have the opportunity to participate in theater the the email that came out yesterday with dr reed's statement to the board last at the last meeting talking about how wonderful these middle school programs the video that just came out in the email yesterday from the students saying certainly better than i can the value of middle school theater but as the previous speaker mentioned these teachers can't split time between schools and still have these

[01:10:51] dynamic after-school programs it's just not physically possible these teachers are amazing and they deserve absolutely everything we can do to support them thank you kirsten dillard scott good evening members of the board thank you for allowing me to speak tonight i used to have a manager that said don't come to me with a problem unless you have a solution so here i go my name

[01:11:30] My name is Kirsten Dillard Scott and I stand before you not only as the mom of a West Potomac theater kid, but also a 20 plus year veteran of the field of technical theater. I also stand before you as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee of the United States Institute of Theater Technology, where I am currently helping to reshape the organization that innovates our technical theater standards nationwide.

[01:11:52] With that in mind, I feel an element to why enrollment in theater middle school classes has become an issue is the lack of professional development support, funding, and resources for these teachers. Because of this and because I care, I have personally dedicated in my spare time free lighting

design services, free master classes, and free educational resources to the schools in this region, some who you have mentioned here tonight.

[01:12:20] I started doing this because I know that once you introduce someone to something and you can get them really excited about it it will stay with them for a long time and not every school can afford some of these services but it's not permanently realistic because not everything in this world can be free now while I understand there are some budgetary concerns we have been hearing about this enrollment issue in middle school classes for some time now I come with you with an idea if Fairfax County Public Schools will work to dedicate funding resources to provide consistent professional development in school, master classes, and

[01:12:59] funding for conferences and workshops for students and teachers. I feel that will create excitement around the program again, and thus would come the rise of enrollment into middle school theater programs. Thank you. Helen Miller. Good evening. My name is Helen Miller, and I'm the mother of

[01:13:32] three recent FCPS graduates. Tonight you celebrate the arts and FCPS with a proclamation supporting Arts Appreciation Month. Dr. Reed's Academic Matters presentation says the arts and FCPS are fundamental to cultivating essential student services. Oh, sorry, skills. Yesterday's FCPS This Week email includes a terrific video in which middle schoolers themselves explain the value of theater program. I was therefore alarmed when I heard that our fabulous Cooper middle school program is in jeopardy because enrollment in the theater classes is low. Our amazing theater teacher has been at Cooper over 20 years

[01:14:12] and is a much beloved institution there. Two of my children took theater classes and also participated in the musicals. They found their people there as so many students do and those productions were some of the highlights of their middle school experience. Why then is our theater teacher likely to be de-staffed next year?

[01:14:32] Because enrollment is lower and FCPS is strictly by the numbers. If this weren't bad enough, we're now hearing that fully 80% of middle school theater teachers have lower enrollment next year and are similarly in danger of being de-staffed. With such a high number, this appears to be a systemic issue. In light of the celebration of the arts this week, I can't imagine that this was done on purpose this is all distressing to families it puts our beloved theater teachers at risk and while some would have to split their time between schools inevitably others would lose

[01:15:08] their jobs altogether i hope you will make an exception to the numbers and back up your proclamations of the value of the arts and our students education continue these programs without change next year while investigating what happened trust with the community greatly eroded during the pandemic and has remained lower in the years since. It turns out that trust like theater

[01:15:31] programs. Scott Parfumi. Good evening. I'm Scott Parfumi. I'm currently the proud theater arts director of Herndon High School and I've been teaching in Fairfax County Public Schools for the last 30 years as a theater arts educator. I have the proud distinction of having students currently on Broadway, working in Hollywood, and most significantly right back here in FCPS as

[01:16:11] theater arts teachers themselves. My objective here today is to remind us all how important the arts are and teaching the whole child with my emphasis being on including well-funded programs of secondary theater in our middle and high schools as well as encouraging our leadership to begin funding elementary drama programs and hiring qualified theater teachers to work as specials and our k6 schools

elements of the arts can be found in every one of the five pillars of the portrait of a graduate as trained public speakers our theater students are communicators as members of the cast and ensemble they are collaborators in the work with script analysis and memorization they are creative thinkers and committing to a three-month rehearsal process to the final two

[01:16:50] performances they shot their resiliency and goal-directed perseverance and as they study world-class dramatic literature within a diverse cast and crew of their peers they put their ethical and global citizenship to work indeed our theater students are exemplars of all that FCPS hopes for in graduating well-rounded scholars so how do we as the stakeholders of this county's educational mission ensure that theater and all the performing arts are included and integral to the daily work of our schools we make sure that we have a full-time theater teacher in all 25 of our middle schools and 25 of our high schools soon to be 26 this fall we recruit and

[01:17:26] hire the finest quality educators from around the country and working with colleges and universities that train our future theater teachers finally I want to recognize all the drive and the dedication and the passion that my theater colleagues bring to FCPS. My time left in this great county is coming to an end as I prepare to retire the next school year.

[01:17:46] But I want to know that I left my school as a greater institution for having labored there. So please join me in supporting not only our current theater professionals, but those that are coming in the future.

[01:18:11] Please play the video testimony for Panos Hatsiani. Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to speak. FCPS is now a one-to-one device system. Every student gets a laptop, takes it home daily, and uses it during school for almost every class.

[01:18:29] This started under FCPS-1 before COVID, was expanded during virtual learning, and then quietly stayed as a default after schools reopened. There was no real opportunity for families to revisit that decision after the pandemic, and no meaningful alternative was provided for those who see more harm than benefit.

[01:18:47] Research shows this hurts learning. The 2022 PISA report found students distracted by devices in math class scored much lower. A meta-analysis of nearly 50,000 students linked heavy device use to worse academic results. If each student has a laptop always present, attention drops, this is not surprising.

[01:19:05] You removed smartphones, that was the right direction, but now laptops have taken their place. Kids email each other constantly, watch non-educational YouTube videos, play games, listen to music, during class. Parents asking for less device time, here there is no opt-out without disadvantage.

[01:19:24] Parents are not against all technology. We want guardrails and real choices. First, we need answers to these three specific questions. What were the original goals of the one-to-one device program? What actual academic benefits have been measured in FCPS classrooms? What harms and distraction problems have teachers and parents found?

[01:19:42] These answers need to be documented in a public report. Second, create a technology committee with parent and community input, plus research data to review device policies and recommend changes like family opt-outs, device-like pilots, and tighter controls when technology is not needed.

[01:20:00] The board oversees the system. You should first prove to the community that the benefits of technology in the classroom outweigh the harms. If not, technology in the classroom needs to be reconsidered. Then give parents real choice. Stop making technology an automatic default in every classroom. Thank you.

[01:20:18] Please play the video testimony of Nehal Jain. Good evening. My name is Nehal and I'm an IT professional and also a parent at Churchill Road Elementary School. Being close to technology myself, I am not anti-technology. However, I am also fully aware of its harms. Our classrooms are meant to be safe places where children's minds grow through human connection, play, and guided learning. But kids are spending multiple hours a day, tweens averaging around five and a half hours, and teens reporting about four and more hours daily. MRI studies have constantly shown associations between heavy screen

[01:20:58] exposure and reduced cortical thickness in brain regions that support language, attention, and empathy, a few areas that are critical in elementary schools. That matters because early brain architecture sets the foundation. For students with special needs, these stakes are actually higher.

[01:21:16] Many rely on predictable routines, human cues, and social interactions. Excessive device use can worsened sleep, attention and emotional regulation for children with ADHD, autism and other learning differences. We must also be cognizant of the legal and ethical reality where tech companies and edtech platforms are under growing legal scrutiny for data practices and untested products used in schools. Parents and districts are suing these companies over privacy and undisclosed tracking. These lawsuits are a warning that children should not be treated as experimental

[01:21:55] subjects. Children are innocent and trust adults like us to protect them and hence we demand the below recommended changes. Limit daily recreational screen time in elementary grades to under one hour during school hours, require independent peer-reviewed evidence of safety and learning benefit before any ed tech AI adoption, mandate strict students' data privacy and opt-out rights, no collection of identifiable data without... Madam Chair, that was our last public speaker.

[01:22:35] Thank you, Madam Clerk. Agenda item 6.01, student representative matters. I call on Ms. McCone. Good afternoon, members of the board and community here with us today. Today, I would like to share the recommendations SAC presented to Dr. Reed today. Over the past several months, The Superintendent's Advisory Council conducted research aligned with Strategic Plans Goals 1-5 and presented a comprehensive set of recommendations to the superintendent.

[01:23:03] These recommendations were developed through student-led research, collaboration, and discussion with a focus on identifying practical, scalable solutions that build upon existing systems while directly addressing student needs. For Goal 1, they focus on student success and future readiness. The recommendation centered on expanding mentorship opportunities and strengthening awareness of academic and career pathways, Such as expanding mentorship opportunities for elementary students through programs such as NHS and FCPS SAC program, increasing the number of pathway nights in sixth grade available to families, incorporating structured advisory lessons in middle school that clearly explain high school pathways and long-term career options.

[01:23:39] For Goal 2, they focused on safe and supportive schools. For Goal 2, focused on safe and supportive schools, their recommendation emphasized improving access to mental health resources and strengthening communication. They did this by creating school-specific Schoology folders with centralized mental health resources, increase the visibility and access of counselors, social workers, and

psychologists, developing student-led communication pipelines, including social media contributions and takeovers, improving communication to families by providing clear information on how to access resources, particularly in times of crisis. For goal three, focus on academic growth and achievement. These recommendations aim to strengthen instructional practices and student support systems, such as

[01:24:18] implementing a one skill at a time instructional framework to promote mastery and clarity of a subject, standardizing small group instruction in elementary and middle schools, establishing quarterly academic check-in advisory periods, and providing more structured opportunities for one-on-one conversations to review grades and connect students with resources. For goal four, focused on inclusion and engagement the recommendations highlighted the importance of creating supportive and accessible opportunities for all students such as developing mentorship programs specifically for multilingual learners including cross-grade support incorporating more hands-on learning and hands-on and engaging learning strategies to support diverse learners

[01:24:57] dedicating advisory time during the school day for clubs and student activities and exploring additional programs such as a question opportunities based on student interest and feasibility For Goal 5, focus on college, career, and life readiness. The recommendations aim to better connect students with real-world opportunities and modern financial knowledge, including strengthening communication between students and alumni through existing FCPS platforms, establishing a speaker pipeline with local government officials, professionals, and businesses, updating the financial literacy curriculum to include digital finance topics such as fintech and online banking.

[01:25:28] I'm not sure if I said that right. Reintroducing the WISE Financial Literacy Test as a benchmark for student preparedness. By leveraging the existing structures and focusing on target improvements, these proposals offer actionable steps towards achieving the goals outlined in the strategic plan. I know I was definitely seeing things the board was already looking at at these presentations, and I am so proud of all the work SAC has put over in the past few months.

[01:25:48] Everyone from the co-chairs to the participating members has such a depth of knowledge on these topics, and the discussion showed that. I really hope those who are eligible in SAC continue next year, and I know there's a lot of people running for my role next month, and I know whoever comes, SAC or not, will be nothing short of amazing. will be sharing the presentation with the board later tonight thank you agenda item 7.01 action item certification of closed meeting compliance in order to comply with section 2.2-3712d of the code of virginia it's necessary for the board to certify that since the fairfax county school board

[01:26:23] convened a closed meeting on march 26 2026 to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the board during the closed meeting. Do I have a motion? Ms. Marron, do I have a second?

[01:26:45] Mr. Moon, all those in favor? Mr. Frisch, Ms. Marron, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself, all those opposed, all those abstaining? mr mcdaniel will the clerk please read the vote 10-01 the motion carries thank you agenda item 7.02 action item confirmation of action taken in closed meeting i call on miss st john cuning for a motion i move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who made multiple direct and

[01:27:22] indirect threats towards another student and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the decision superintendent according to terms and conditions discussed in closed session. Thank you, Mr. Moon. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself, all those abstaining or opposed, all those abstaining, Mr. McDaniel and Ms. Marin. Will the clerk please read the vote? 9-0-2, the motion carries.

[01:27:58] Thank you. I call on Ms. St. John Cunning for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who was charged with an unlawful act in the community, one-count robbery with a weapon, and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent. Second.

[01:28:15] Thank you, Mr. Frisch. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself, all those opposed, all those abstaining, Mr. McDaniel. will the clerk please read the vote. 10-0-1 the motion carries. Thank you. Agenda item 7.0-3 strategic goal report. 2 safe and supported or safe supported included and empowered.

[01:28:50] I call on Dr. Reed for a presentation. Hello Madam Chair and members of the board and all those watching at home. We're excited to bring our goal to presentation this evening and we're going to be sharing some highlights, a reminder to those watching that the board has

[01:29:23] spent several hours already reviewing our Goal 2 report at a work session that was comprehensive and this work session was on March 3rd and it's also online if you want to have an opportunity to go back and review the conversation. So this evening I'll be providing some highlights from Goal 2, but the full report is posted on board docs. A reminder that Goal 2 is our safe, supported, included, and empowered goal, and it focuses on the experiences we want our students to have in

[01:29:58] their journey along with us. As we look at the next slide, the particular strategic priorities around school climate, there are four here, even though there are six measures that fit under this broad theme, but tonight I'll be highlighting data related to these four items: school connectedness and belonging, attendance, discipline, and inclusion of students with disabilities.

[01:30:24] So let's take a look at school connectedness and belonging. We know that when students feel connected, they're better able to make use of their academic experience and their full, well-rounded school experiences.

[01:30:39] So last spring, we launched a student experience survey to learn more about students' perspectives and experiences. The majority of students responding to the survey felt a sense of belonging and reported positive relationships with their teachers and peers.

[01:30:57] Students reported especially high rates of feeling that teachers cared about them and that they trusted their teachers. This is really, I think, a solid data point. This was the first time we put the student experience survey out, I believe, and it was in response to the Board's request a year ago to collect data on student experiences from students.

[01:31:20] So during our work session, we talked about some of the variation that we saw between student groups that responded to the survey, and our team is continuing to look further into this data with a plan of better understanding what might be driving these differences.

[01:31:35] I want to share a few examples from our strategies that are focused on school connectedness. Our schools provide regular opportunities for students to strengthen their social and emotional skills. This

year we used insights from our SEL screener to create resources for schools where we saw division-wide areas of need.

[01:31:55] Schools also held listening sessions with students to co-create resources and co-create solutions based on school needs in their individual context. During the work session we also discussed the importance of offering activities and after-school programming for students including the middle school after-school program as an example where we've seen growth in the percentages of students being served.

[01:32:20] Finally all of our schools provide universal programming to maintain safe learning spaces and to provide support and interventions when incidents of bullying harassment or hate speech occur let's take a look at regular attendance at this point our chronic absenteeism rates were so we're actually very proud of our school staff our family liaisons our principals assistant principal social workers counselors educators and our staff that are working so hard to address

[01:32:56] this attendance and chronic absenteeism issue this rate actually and I want to sure folks at home hear this, this rate includes both excused and unexcused absences. So when we leave to take a vacation or something during school days those count as excused absences and they become part of our school's attendance or chronic absenteeism data potentially.

[01:33:22] But we are proud to note that our measure is actually better, continues to be better than the state and our adjoining region regional partners. So this has been an area of focus for our schools since we adopted our strategic plan and we do see the results as our rate continues to be better and better. So we're very pleased with the overall rate. Having said that this slide shows the chronic absenteeism over time and by some of our student groups. Last year we met our overall

[01:33:56] annual target and many of our student groups saw substantial improvement from baseline this continues to be a reflection of the very hard work that our students and families put in i also want to make a comment about this slide that there are some students in some student groups that really do have health concerns and have significant health issues that require them to be absent and legitimately absent so we want to make sure that we separate our thinking around really the strong encouragement of students to be in school and balance

[01:34:33] that with the very real need that many of our students have to spend time addressing medical needs that at times can be significant highlights of our strategic actions in school year 25 26 we've had three strategies really to continue to improve our rate and I want to highlight a few examples of these. We continue to communicate our attendance expectations so families know when it's okay to send their children to school and when it might be better to keep them home. For students missing school at higher rates, our school teams work with families to create student-centered plans

[01:35:10] that support their consistent attendance, and it may include connecting students and families with health or mental health or other wraparound support services. When students have missed instruction as a result of frequent or extended absences our schools support them by developing return to learn plans and these facilitate a smooth transition back and a path to catch up academically and they offer ipfit which I still am struggling to understand what that ipfit stands for but I will have I'll phone a friend but ipfit opportunities to reduce chronic absenteeism

[01:35:47] Somebody know what IPFIT? Anyone want to? In-person flexible. Oh, it's on the, okay. All right. The answer is right in front of me. In-person flexible instruction time. I don't know that that's what we've

been calling it all year, has it? Okay, never mind. All right, IPFIT opportunities to reduce chronic absenteeism. You heard it here first. So let's, next, let's take a look at limited consistent use of suspension. And I want to remind our community that we do want the use of suspension only in response to serious behaviors and ensure that these sanctions are

[01:36:23] applied consistently. Last year, we had fewer students receive an out-of-school suspension overall. All student groups made progress, and several groups met their annual targets. This progress has reduced the gap for some groups, but we continue to see disparities in our focusing, our ongoing work, and disproportionality in discipline.

[01:36:47] And there'll be more, I know Dr. King's office has worked on restorative justice practices and aligning our discipline matrices. So we continue to work on that as a goal. Again, we saw an overall decline in the percent of students with an in-school suspension.

[01:37:05] And we continue to remain focused on addressing these disproportionalities that we see in this data as well. We have three strategies that we really want to amplify as we address these outcomes. First, we've been revising the SR&R and providing training to our administrators and teachers to ensure that we have clear and consistent expectations around student behavior and the appropriate use of consequences.

[01:37:32] This year, we standardized discipline practices across all schools, including monitoring and supporting schools that had disproportionate levels of discipline and schools logging very few referrals. When incidents do occur, we do support students to reduce additional or more serious disciplinary involvement.

[01:37:53] Lastly, let's take a look at our inclusion data for our students with disabilities. So one of the things that we want to share is this pie chart, which represents our estimated outcomes for last year on Indicator 5 of the Virginia Department of Education's Special education performance reports, which examine inclusion data for students with disabilities.

[01:38:19] And in this chart, it shows that about 61% of our students with disabilities in kindergarten through age 21 spent 80% or more of their school day in an inclusive setting, which is shown in dark blue.

[01:38:36] So that continues to be an area of growth for us and this inclusion data again is important as we look at the indicators that the Virginia Department of Education has on these matters.

[01:38:52] As we look at this chart, the chart summarizes our progress over time on these indicators, particularly 5A through 5C which are represented on the chart as they relate to annual targets. The reason you see the little aqua anticipate progress is because the data has not been released yet, but this is based on our internal review of the data and our understanding of that system.

[01:39:19] We continue to make steady gains in the percent of students with disabilities who are educated in an inclusive setting, and we are now continuing to meet the state's annual target for Indicator 5C. I want to share the three strategies, and again, I'm sharing the strategies because we've been asked, what are the strategies, what are you doing to work on this data, right?

[01:39:44] We're not just reporting the data, but what are we actually providing in terms of strategies? So this year, I want to share the three strategies that we've been using here, which are that we have partnered with external consultants to implement a phased approach to this work.

[01:39:59] We're working with cohorts of schools to provide intensive training and support, including with scheduling and identifying opportunities to increase inclusion at each school. As a part of this work, we're focused on preparing every educator to provide inclusive instruction in their classroom.

[01:40:16] We've aligned teacher performance evaluations to the FCPS learning model and continue to provide learning for teachers and staff in the principles of universal design for learning as well as inclusive practices finally we're communicate communicating our vision for inclusion with students families and the community and continuing to partner with our disability advert advisory and advocacy groups so some key takeaways this year we're seeing progress towards several of our goal two measures and acknowledge opportunities for continued growth while we remain

[01:40:56] committed to creating a school environment where each and every one of our students does feel safe supported included and empowered so madam chair this concludes tonight's highlights of our goal two report and happy to take questions thank you dr reed i call on mr mckelveen for a motion i move the school board accepts the goal two strategic plan report for school year 2025-26 is there a second i second thank you miss st john cunning uh mr mckelveen would you like to speak to your motion not at this time um miss st john cunning would you like to speak to your second I just want to thank the staff for all the hard work that you know we see the statistics we see

[01:41:34] the the numbers and they all look great but what we don't see is all the work that that is done every day by every teacher to support our students and I want to thank all of our staff that does that uh from central office on down to in the school building because the data shows that they're doing phenomenal work and that our students are also engaged in doing the work that they need to do. Thank you, Ms. St. John Cunning. Mr. Frisch. So when I was in middle school,

[01:42:06] I remember being on at recess and for the first time hearing the word gay used as a slur, where I actually understood what was going on, right? I'd heard plenty of anti-LGBTQ slurs previously, but didn't really register what was going on. And it wasn't directed at me, but I will tell you the impact on somebody who knew it by that time, that I was about as gay as a goose was still it was as if I was the one being bullied and I remember when we brought you

[01:42:42] in as superintendent one of the reasons that I was excited was because I don't want you to feel old 25 years ago you served on the task force for the attorney general in Washington to help lead the legislation that led to Washington's first real hard look at solving bullying in public education and so I read this report and it identifies rightly that LGBTQ kids have it worse off than their peers but every report we've had for years has said that and so much of this report deals

[01:43:20] with how we are mitigating the damage of the bullying and so little of this report has to do with what we're doing to stop it from happening in the first place we mentioned that we have some stuff in our curriculum about it that's good we mentioned that we have restorative justice that's good. But what are we actually doing to move the needle in the right direction, especially as much of the culture outside of the building, the school building, is pushing in the opposite direction? And then you get to the chart that explains how we're doing, and you see that gay and lesbian kids are twice as likely to be bullied than their straight counterparts

[01:43:55] in our schools, and that our transgender kids are three times as likely to be bullied than, more than three times as likely to be bullied than non-transgender students, cisgendered kids. And that each one of those have gotten worse over the last school year than they were the school year before. How can

we get a comprehensive approach to the issue of bullying in our schools that Washington saw when you were part of that task force so that we're addressing

[01:44:32] the issue? The number of times I've spoken or listened really at a GSA meeting and heard students say the same stuff I would have said if I was brave enough to be out when I was in high school where they say like oh people say this in the hallway they say that in the hallway it's not always malicious but it's always hurtful and so if that hasn't changed much except for societal acceptance what can we actually do in our buildings to move the needle so that in a year when we get the next report on this we're not seeing that still gay and lesbian kids are twice as likely trans kids are more than three times likely and the numbers are getting worse not

[01:45:07] better on the day that we proclaimed Trans Visibility Day, no less. Yes, sir. It is a dilemma. Even if the overall numbers are down, the percentages continue to increase. I hear the concern. I think as staff work harder and harder to create safe spaces for all children in our schools, even with the rhetoric outside of our schools about many of our children, it's going

[01:45:41] to continue to require all of us to to provide those safe spaces so let me um we will reconvene with staff i think it's it's a conversation we actually had at the senior staff level as well and i i think it does um i think coming back with uh some really uh clear thoughts on that would be important so let me come back um to the table when staff has a chance to talk about how within a school that level of inclusion

[01:46:21] creates a space where we don't continue to hear the language that we do continue to hear. Last sentence. It's a lot easier to learn algebra in eighth grade if you're not worried about what they're saying about you on the school ground. Indeed. Yes, sir. Mr. Dunn. Thank you, Dr.

[01:46:42] Reed. Thank you for all you're doing for our school system. We've spoken previously about spring sprouts and similar programs that are intended to help to reduce the chronic absenteeism rate.

[01:47:00] And my persistent concern has been that the programs like Spring Sprouts help to reduce the chronic absenteeism rate, so it's good from a school system perspective, reporting perspective but it's not child centric in the approach because even going to a spring sprout program does not catch a child up for all the days that they've missed and we've talked previously about like literacy right if you've missed let's say a month of school going to spring sprouts may reduce the number of days you're absent because you know one day of spring sprouts can count as

[01:47:39] two or even three days I think for chronic absenteeism purposes but it doesn't mean that child's back on track in terms of their their reading ability so I was wondering if you could describe some of the efforts some of the programs that FCPS under your leadership has put in place or enhanced to make sure that as kids fall off track for whatever reason it could be illness it could be changing homes but especially low-income students what are we doing to create pathways so they can get back on track so it's a great question mr. Don and I you and I

[01:48:14] have talked about spring sprouts and other if it strategies one sort of tangential benefit of spring sprouts was that we actually saw better attendance even after spring break right so it sort of kept students in that habit of doing school but in terms of providing support I think last month we talked a bit about our walk to read program in our schools that we're seeing some of greatest struggle to stay on grade level with literacy it requires us to on a daily basis

[01:48:48] intervene with children that are not quite at grade level and to do it in small group with high a high level of focus on the very specific skills students need to master so i think we've become a lot more strategic and the data around for example the walk to read strategy is really showing some promise we've also added a program called ecri which is stands for i'm not good with my acronyms tonight uh miss lemon can you clarify what ecri actually stands for please i think it's early i will look it up

[01:49:25] i do apologize because i say ecri so much that i too it's early child enhanced core reading instruction there you go thank you dr presidio so it's a program we started two years ago now with two schools and it's very direct explicit research intervention for first grade it's k-1-2 but for first grade we went from two schools to 10 and now we're 12 schools but it's showing tremendous promise so as we look at research best practice strategies whether it's walk to read whether it's equity utilizing benchmark now in a significant

[01:50:05] way i think we're going to continue to see some uh serious benefit in terms of our reading and literacy performance i was wondering if you could put more information in the friday letter about ecree because i'd like to learn more if possible yes i also wanted to just raise um edu tutor which i know you're familiar with from your conversations with former mount vernon district representative chris munson and that has been deployed in other schools and other school districts but as you know edu tutor has had a hard time kind of piercing the FCPS bureaucracy to expand to more schools and yet it's one of the more effective programs for helping especially

[01:50:44] low-income children so i was wondering if you can speak to any plans or thoughts you have about being able to expand the availability and and support for edu tutor thank you it's true chris Somonson and the EduTutor group has done some tremendous work. We know the power of high-impact tutoring and I know there are some schools that are partnered with EduTutor right now. Ms. Lemon, do you recall, are we expanding that or are we in the process of reviewing expansion? I know they were also recruiting more tutors. We currently, I believe, have three schools that are participating

[01:51:20] and we have found that it's worked best with some of our middle school students with algebra. So are you planning to expand it at all? I think we are always interested in expanding high-impact tutoring. So I will check back in with Miss Amundsen.

[01:51:37] And I know Whitman was one of the early schools. Nope. We discussed that. Right. I think right now it's at Poe and West Lawn. And I believe a school in region one. I have to look up the third school. Right.

[01:51:53] But we certainly would welcome the opportunity to expand. Okay. Thank you. Yes, sir. Mr. Dannon. Good evening. first I want to say I'm grateful I recognize listening to this and reading that this took countless hours from your team all the way down through every educator and every staff member in our schools and I appreciate all the work that they've done because I recognize that having heard from a lot of teachers that you get competing mandates priorities you've got a lot of stuff to balance on top of educating our kids so I want to ask a few questions tonight

[01:52:30] around inclusion for students with disabilities I'm glad to see that under leadership that we've that we've prioritized uh inclusion um as i'm sure you you recognize made it it does seem like the rate of increase is low um and i don't know if the state has the right target but um i think the sense is that we should be higher than where we're at um is our goal to get to 100 inclusion for kids with disabilities or can

you speak to that a little bit please thank you mr dan and i i've actually been asked that several times and that is not our goal we We know that special education really is a continuum of services.

[01:53:07] It shouldn't be a location. So what we want to do is we want to make sure we're providing that continuum of services, which are ultimately determined by an IEP team and the student's family along with staff. So there will always, I believe, be students that are going to require a more self-contained setting for smaller instructional opportunities. However, we also recognize that many more of our students are able to very effectively navigate a less self-contained, right, a less

[01:53:42] restrictive environment. And we always want to, and I know our staff as well, we always want to provide that least restrictive environment so our students have the opportunity to be as fully included as possible i appreciate that um i want to ask a little bit now about um screening to that end so it's my understanding that it's been my experience personally that self-contained often and this isn't i'll say this isn't out of done i know this isn't done out of any malice um but i think that it's it's a system and it's a culture shift that we need and it's been my experience that self-contained is often the default and we um i had a kid about 10 years ago that i that i

[01:54:20] taught for about a year and really sweet kid and his parents came to us right before he started kindergarten and he said um are they're telling us that he needs to go into a self-contained classroom and my experience with this kid is that that would absolutely not be appropriate and i was shocked at how much we all had to fight to get him into general education so um can you talk a little bit about you know um the other thing that well let me first point out the other thing is is if we if we if we and again as you recognize this if we segregate kids at the beginning of the year with the hope that we're going to get them into general education um that already sets them back because they're missing out on the hidden curriculum they're missing out on

[01:54:57] all the norms and so forth so um can you talk a little bit about kind of what the what the ideal screening process is for kids um as they enter kindergarten and are we meeting that expectation so another great question i think that um we have heard parents at times report that it's exhausting right that the feeling is that um in some ways some children have to prove they're ready whereas Whereas other children simply enroll and go to kindergarten class.

[01:55:26] And that's one of the I think that's one of the traditional barriers to having more inclusion is that that need to feel like not only are you parenting but you also have to then advocate for just placement much less the experience.

[01:55:45] So I I know that the team I attended an early childhood professional development even this week where we had folks in talking about in particular our autism program pre pre K and how the younger were able to have our neuro divergent and neurotypical preschoolers together how much can be learned around communication and around social interactions and behaviors and so forth and how much progress can be made in such a short amount of time with very young children.

[01:56:24] So I know Dr. Presidio's team has been working hard on that. Do you have anything you want to add, Dr. Presidio, about kind of how we're working on those kindergarten screening options? Yeah, I think what I would say, I mean, first of all, one of the things that I really appreciate about our strategic plan is having, you know, goal two specifically about inclusion, and inclusion is actually embedded in all five of our goals.

[01:56:47] And Dr. Reed, I think, has established a real strong vision for us in a real moral compass to make sure that this is the priority of the work that we're doing in our schools. So one of the things that we've done is not just at the kindergarten process for screening, but we actually start screening for students that may have disabilities at age two and provide services at that age. But our entire screening process, we're really revamping and reevaluating what we do in our process to make sure that we're exhausting all of the opportunities to support students in an inclusive environment.

[01:57:20] So we're working with national, actually international inclusion experts. And one of the things that they're doing is reviewing every single one of our screening documents and IEP forms to make sure that we start with the presumption that students should be included in the general education setting and can be included in the general education setting if we provide the right supports and accommodations to make sure that they have access to that setting.

[01:57:45] Now again, as Dr. Reed said, there are going to be some students and some families based on the disabilities that they have that they may do better in a self-contained setting, but that is a small percentage of our students. The vast majority of our students, we believe, should be included in an inclusive setting.

[01:58:01] So we're reviewing all of our processes, procedures with an external consultant, national expert, and then we're also working to provide comprehensive professional development that's required for all school administrators, teachers, counselors, instructional assistants, everybody who works with students in the schoolhouse is going to receive comprehensive training over the next several years in these new practices and procedures.

[01:58:25] That's a great segue, gosh. Well, before that, please keep us posted what you need from us, right? We really want to exceed what we've been doing. So talking about training a little bit, I keep hearing from gen ed teachers that there just isn't enough support or training and working with kids with disabilities.

[01:58:44] So it sounds like that's been your experience and you're working on that. Again, keep us close to what you need. I also think SPED chairs have a really important role, and I spoke actually at the podium last year about the importance of retaining SPED chairs. And can you tell me a little bit about how much time, I recognize they have a very important role, I think, in not just admin work and setting up IP meetings and so forth, but actually training and mentoring teachers.

[01:59:09] So can you talk about, as a rough percentage, how much time do you think SPED chairs are spending training and mentoring teachers versus doing administrative work and is that appropriate and what else do you need from us to prove that? So thank you Mr. Downen and I think as with many topics it probably ranges a little based on the context of the school but if I had to make a guess I know Dr. Presidio the instructional services team meets regularly with all of our special ed department chairs so what would you say versus training versus sort of more

[01:59:44] administrative tasks yeah I think I'd probably want to collect a little bit more perspective before I would you know try to attribute a number to that and I do think it varies based on the staff in that particular building so if a special education chair works in a building where there are a lot of new teachers first-year teachers then that individual is going to spend a lot of time coaching mentoring them but also running iep meetings helping write ieps right so if you have a more veteran staff of teachers there's going

to be less of some of those more administrative roles and more opportunities for professional development and coaching but when you have

[02:00:20] newer teachers there's a lot of procedures in the special education world and my wife's a special education teacher there's a lot that goes into supporting and coaching and mentoring the new teachers as well. I appreciate it. I appreciate all the work that your wife does. I want to talk a little bit about UDL. It was mentioned earlier. How are we implementing this without reducing our standards? And I'll take it to go back. So I think that universal design for learning, it's intended absolutely to not reduce standards, right? The point is to maintain high expectations

[02:00:54] often requires high support. I often use the example of the stairs going into the building or the ramp going into the building after a snowstorm, and I can use snow now. I'm kind of getting past it. But Universal Design for Learning says that you would plow or shovel the ramp before the stairs.

[02:01:17] And often we shovel the stairs first, but if we shovel the ramp first, everyone can get in the building. So it doesn't change the expectation that we want everyone to get in the building. We maintain that expectation, but there's a different path that we can move. So universal design for learning enables access to the curriculum and to the learning.

[02:01:38] And it really deepens off and enriches the conversation and what happens in the classroom. But I appreciate the question. Mr. Moon. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for the presentation again. I'll be supporting the motion because you have provided sufficient data, information, and also strategies that we are using and we should be using to meet our goals.

[02:02:02] With that said, we have spent a large amount of time at the work session to discuss this. There are a couple of things I forgot to ask at the time. Maybe I should have done. I missed. Mr. Danner mentioned about video targets for inclusion.

[02:02:21] And just like he, I wonder whether state targets, do you know where those targets are coming from? Are they research-based? You know, I'm not sure. I don't know if these are federally set by IDEA, which is my suspicion.

[02:02:42] We had targets in my last state as well. Dr. Presidio, you're shaking your head, so I think they are federally set. Let's say, okay, if they are federally set, do I just automatically assume that they are legitimate, valid, and research-again-based targets?

[02:03:00] Well, I think we have to believe that there was something that generated these targets. If Dr. Presidio could provide whether that is the case or it's just a number thrown out by a bureaucrat somewhere, I would love to know.

[02:03:19] Yeah, I would say that there's a really strong evidence base for inclusion in terms of the outcomes for students with disabilities learning in the general education setting. a sense of belonging, a sense of academic performance increases are associated with inclusion, less discipline issues.

[02:03:37] So the federal government has established basically goals for states to move towards more inclusion, but the actual numbers are more calculated. Yes, Dr. President, I don't doubt about the first part. And my question is to the actual number. Yeah, the numbers are, I'm not going to say arbitrary, but they're more sent to have incremental increases at the state level to continue to raise the expectation for school divisions.

[02:04:01] Same thing goes with actually a slide number seven, dealing with slide number seven. Did I get that wrong? Maybe slide eight? I got that wrong. Slide number, hold on a second.

[02:04:21] It was about a survey data. Survey data, it's not, it's a five. I see different numbers, right? Percentage right there about how our students answer their experience on the survey.

[02:04:39] For example, 81% feeling they belong at school, and, you know, different numbers for other categories, et cetera. The question that I have, or difficulty that I have is, I don't know how to interpret this.

[02:04:56] When someone says 81%, is that really good, bad, or does it have to be 100% or that's impossible? so this hard hard to interpret those numbers whether i should be satisfied or never satisfied unless it's 100 well i think that one could argue we would want every child to feel a sense of belonging and have positive peer relationships and positive teacher-student relationships so i

[02:05:30] think we're going to continue to work to make sure if it's all possible that 100 of our students would be reflected in the data having said that this is the first time we've done the survey so this is really our baseline so I would hope next year that we would see an increase year over year in the positive percentage area I don't know that was it or see that developed the survey our research group within the

[02:06:03] division. So I feel that the data is accurate, but to your point, it just sits on its face at this point because it's a benchmark. If we could get a thoughtful response, not that your response is not thoughtful, but from Orsi as to since the other one who has developed the survey and sharing with Orsi what the survey data showed and what are you actually shooting for as a school system?

[02:06:33] One last question has to do with absenteeism. I think I expressed my sentiment about this at the work session. Even though we may be doing better than other school districts with 11.9%, to me, almost 12% missing at least 18 days of a school, whether excused or unexcused, that's still alarming to me.

[02:07:00] me and if you could also could you know because that includes both excuse the unexcused yes you could you know segregate the data to show us if you were if you excluded all the excuse the absence what they would show yes sir check thank you mr. moon mr. McDaniel mr. Dan and somewhat took the wind out of my sails on his questions around inclusion but kudos to you I was at the

[02:07:36] ark breakfast this morning and i had a constituent come to me and there was some critiques around inclusion programs the west springfield pyramids i'll be handing those off to the very capable hands of either mr dannon miss anderson or miss st john conning depending on which constituent that may be but um teeing off of mr frisch's comments around the the bullying rates of the LGBTQ community are we tracking data on bullying rates on our immigrant community I think we're

[02:08:13] tracking bullying rates period so I'm looking at Dr. King to note I think part of part of the answer to the question is we don't track who is an immigrant versus who's not because that's not information that we request so we don't really have that level of information available to us but we do track bullying data for all students.

[02:08:42] So we could, you know, I could certainly have Dr. King provide some responsive documents to that. No, that's fair because obviously, and it was alluded to in the conversation around the LGBTQ community, the national rhetoric, and right now the national rhetoric around our immigrant population and community, our neighbors and our friends, is just as salient.

[02:09:07] So if we're seeing spikes in trend data based on what available data we have, if we're seeing spikes or trends around that, we need to be very cognizant of that. There was some conversation around absenteeism rates and chronic absenteeism rates, and I'm kind of wondering, do we know if, I mean, do we have any way of kind of, I guess, not predicting but projecting chronic absenteeism based on certain actions that we can take are there other ways to clamp down on that are there any best practices to clamp down on that i mean

[02:09:44] i know we put a lot of work across the division the last couple of years around chronic absenteeism but what is the data showing us with respect to that so i think that it's um there are seasons that are more predictive than others because it includes both excused and unexcused absences there are certain times of the year families for example take vacation or perhaps leave to go to events or so those can be somewhat predicted I think that we have flu seasons right where we can

[02:10:20] predict certain I'm coughing on cue but I don't have the flu where we can predict more absences right when we have flu season and that type of thing we do put in strategies like double-back busing in some cases to make sure that we are having students attend school I think that sometimes it's just the like when does the Sun come up like there's darker days tend to I think sometimes it's harder to get out

[02:10:55] the door for some students I don't know if there any other predictive pieces I do I do believe though I have an answer on the if we took excused and unexcused out so if I can let miss Neal share that then we can answer that question Mr.

[02:11:10] Moon about the unexcused versus excused yes doctor Reed so when we looked at our students who were chronically absent last year of all the absences about 70 percent were excused and about 30 percent were unexcused so I can put you on a go back yeah so I think When you get down to predictive analytics, Mr. McDaniel, if 70% of the 11% are excused, the campaign of explaining why school is important is, you know, one of our biggest preventive measures.

[02:11:50] I think there are still families that don't understand that an excused absence still counts against the school or the division. And on the unexcused absence side of the house, would an example of that be, you know, taking a day off or, you know, Instead of going to an early release day, leaving early, and just taking the entire day off, that would be an example of an excused absence.

[02:12:13] Well, it would be unexcused if there wasn't an excused reason to take the day off. Like, there are definitions of excused and unexcused absences. I think unexcused would be more likely, as a parent, you think that your student, your little panda, has gone to school, but indeed your little panda has chosen not to.

[02:12:38] Or if I said, you know, my little panda, you know, we wanted to pull her out of school because we assumed that this day was a holiday. Well, that would probably be excused, right, as an absence? Actually, we're probably not going to go through all the – I was just curious as conversations continue to evolve around days on and days off, which the sport is going to be getting into soon with respect to calendar.

[02:13:10] But anyway, another topic, middle school after school programs. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of maintaining that program, and it hits on all the topics we're discussing tonight.

Inclusion, anti-bullying, engaging kids, social-emotional learning, and that's an example of one of those programs that is a reasonable cost but a high impact.

[02:13:34] And as we continue to go through this budget conversation, and in my role as vice chair of the budget committee, I'm keeping that program first and front in my mind. and you know the cost is the cost we have to maintain that program I've talked to constituents from teachers and administrators to parents to kids themselves to shop owners everybody in our community wants this program to be maintained and that drills right into this presentation tonight so that's all my comments thank you thank you mr. McDaniel dr. Anderson thank you just kind of picking up on the conversation regarding chronic absenteeism just something struck me that I would love to learn a little bit more about because I

[02:14:13] I know we did some of that data dive a few years ago. I would also wonder in terms of do we see more absences, whether it's excused or unexcused, around holidays that fall in the middle of the week or early release days.

[02:14:31] So if that's something you could procure, I would definitely love to get that information. I think we have that data, Dr. Anderson. We can follow up. Oh, we can follow up. Okay, wonderful. Thank you. And just kind of reflecting back on, you know, what was shared earlier regarding creating safe spaces for our students and ensuring that we have the same opportunities and access for our students.

[02:14:56] And I shared this at meeting managers earlier this week. We see this in terms of the belonging of students. And I would gander to say that if my kid is in the 19 percent that doesn't feel as if they belong, then it's a problem. 81% won't be enough because it all depends on your perspective and who's being impacted by it.

[02:15:18] As I mentioned earlier this week during my meeting, manager's meeting, we have discrepancies in all places and safety and belonging and bullying and performance academically and inclusion. And there's a lot of battles that have to be taken by various personnel, it be parents or others to include that to ensure that their children have you know they're on the right side of that data set but we can't legislate our way through some of these expectations because

[02:15:51] our schools are microcosm of the community good bad and ugly and sometimes we do have staff that don't see our kids in the way we'd like for them to be seen. Whether it's a gender issue, whether it is a racial issue, whether it is a cognitive issue. I just wonder how do we get to that place where we, how do we attack those softer skills of compassion and understanding? We could write a number of things and I think an easier place where you've seen some success with that

[02:16:31] is with Algebra 1 and at the middle school level, X number of kids, you've got some data that you're going to look at, and we're going to move kids. So we've been able to see that evidence of that effort. We've seen that impact very quickly, but we're not seeing it in some other places.

[02:16:48] The data that Mr. Frisch referred to, it's very similar year in, year out. The disproportionality data, it continued to stand year in, year out. There's a lot of evidence of effort, but there's not an awful lot of evidence of impact because again it requires a little bit more than the expectation to get people to see our kids differently and I wonder how could we begin to tackle that piece those softer skills that can't be dictated as easily. Yes ma'am so I think it

[02:17:24] depends on the data point we're looking at right I think that the for example the chronic absenteeism the data in the aggregate demonstrates significant improvement when you break the data

down and look at different groups within the data it shows improvement but not a completely closed gap so I think that we're continuing to make progress we're not there yet I think some of the strategies that are being implemented have not been implemented long enough to show the

[02:18:02] progress. I think about the disproportionality work Dr. King's team is doing, the cohorts of schools they've worked with, the new matrices they've developed. It's going to take a year or two to see the benefit of that work, but I think it's solid work, and it's work that's more aligned and more focused than it's ever been, I think, in that area. The training that's been done with administrators in the last two years around that topic is has been more focused and strategic

[02:18:37] than it has been in quite a while. So I believe that when we are aligned with our purpose and our expectation and people have the training necessary we will start to see that progress accelerate. I'll take a go back please. I think that was my time. Thank you Dr. Anderson. Miss Mary. Yes. So this strategic plan was set out by the prior board in July. Well, when you arrived July 2022, you arrived and it was such a great process and we worked through it and we had the

[02:19:13] strategic plan in 2023. And so here we are, you know, seeing the fruits of that labor and knowing what's impactful over time and the strategies. And we have to go ahead and I'm totally for it. I am not suggesting we rethink our data collection.

[02:19:28] But what I have come to realize is that things are different now than they were in 2023, like really different. Our employment, our federal workforce has been dismantled. We have parents in different working situations. We have a different political environment.

[02:19:44] And I just find myself wondering, when I think about the themes we talked about tonight, the middle school theater and other theater, the calendar, some of these things

[02:19:55] what can we how are we going to address these big things and just like I'm aware through my own street data so not the quantitative data but through street data more kids than ever are entering school dysregulated they might not have the you know readiness for school that we would hope families need more support especially with the employment issues it's hard for parents to volunteer in PTAs I hear so often that PTAs can't get quorum people just are not connecting in that way and the technology is impacting kids more than we thought. So, you know, what I'm wondering is when did the board and the superintendent have

[02:20:31] a conversation about the systemic adjustments that could alleviate some of the pressures, you know, more than one thing, like, you know, the schedule of our secondary courses. We talk about theater. It breaks my heart that kids have to choose whether it's theater or music or band or chorus and computers or a world language. I mean, that schedule is just, it really suffocates that opportunity how could we adjust that that's a big thing right that could probably alleviate a bunch of things that's belonging and that's getting you know the kids involved in the arts we know that helps grading and our student rep advocates for this all the time there is not

[02:21:06] clarity still with grading and it's causing a lot of stress on our high school kids and it's hard for them to feel like calm because it's not clear you know the calendar look parents have voiced clearly that they need the school division to help by providing a stable calendar that prioritize five days a week of instruction, you know, we have to be able to listen and adjust our plans in the face of significant community needs. It's okay. That was 2023. We're basing our decisions. Things change. And especially how

does a strategic plan reflect the society-altering work of AI? Because technology is bringing the kids in in a different mindset. So absolutely, we have

[02:21:44] to monitor, you know, chronic absenteeism. And, you know, we need to work towards inclusion and universal design for learning but some of these bigger things I don't hear us talking about and I think they could solve some you know they are part of the solution and we can't just keep focusing on these four goals that we set three years ago. I think our April 24th retreat is a prime time to really talk about is there one of these things we really want to dig deep and and start to chip away at some solutions. Thank you Ms. Marin. I'm going to go ahead and take a quick turn and then we've got some people that would like to go back. I think we need a

[02:22:20] jeopardy for acronyms like a game I think that it would help like solidify all of them in my brain for sure because I have all the army acronyms too and all the federal government ones so it becomes lots of the same ones over and over again the cool part is is that if you ask any kid in our school they can tell you the definition of bullying they know from from like first grade they a hundred percent understand what it is. And what I see happening more than anything is that I think our

[02:22:51] adults have forgotten what bullying looks like. So I hope that parents can kind of demonstrate the right behavior. I also would hope that our national leaders could do the same thing. Unfortunately, we're in short demand for that as well. If we are going to be in the process of disaggregating data, because I like data just as much as the rest of us, when we get to that excuse absences, because of the amazing portal that we have now that we tell why kids are going to be gone. And I know that it's self-reporting, so I get it. But I would love to know how many

[02:23:30] kiddos are out because of medical. Because I do think that even though we are at the other side of COVID, many of us are concerned about sending our kids, including me. You're constantly as a parent trying to make that decision whether or not you send your kiddo. And I know the division's doing a ton to try to help make those decisions but we've got pneumonia going around right now.

[02:23:54] We have bronchitis hitting hard everywhere and I just worry that I think that's a little bit about what I see going on. I think that our chronic absentee rates are definitely headed in the right direction but I always worry about that medical portion so I would love when we're pulling since we're already going to be doing it I would love to to know if we could how many of Those are from medical absences.

[02:24:18] So that's all I had to say, but I'm going to throw back to a few people. We're going to kick it off with Mr. Dan and for a go back. Thank you very much. I'll talk a couple of minutes about, a couple of seconds about belonging and then get back to inclusion.

[02:24:33] But I'm really grateful you've all started measuring this. And I'm really glad that my colleague, Ms. Marron, just brought up the effect of AI and technology because I've shared before that it's having the effect of isolating and dividing people. And so it's even more important, obviously, that we track this measure. You know, I want to point out, too, as we look at the numbers that nationwide, from what I've seen, that the number is about 50% of kids feeling like they belong in school.

[02:24:58] So 81% is really good. I do want to take a moment and just recognize that if we're talking about a class of 30 kids, though, 80% that's five or six kids that feel like they don't belong. And I recognize this is not a knock. I recognize it's very difficult work. But I do want to lift that up, that, you know, we can't forget about those kids.

[02:25:15] And I know that we have an amazing school system that's pushing forward to get to 100% on that. Talking more about UDL, what opportunities are there for teachers to collaborate and share UDL resources with each other? And specifically, not just resources, but actual lesson plans and things like that, recognizing how busy teachers are.

[02:25:35] You know, if I'm a 10th grade English teacher, how easy is it for me to get full-on lesson plans that I can implement in my classroom? So it's a great question, and I know in meeting with teachers, that's often an ask, right?

[02:25:51] How do we share resources across the county if we're using the same tier one curriculum and we want to differentiate materials? Of course, they are differentiated uniquely to the children within that classroom, but I do know that we've talked about some kind of repository.

[02:26:08] I do know the CLTs, the collaborative learning teams, are ways where grade level teams or content teams do connect to provide shared work and goals.

[02:26:24] But Dr. Presidio, you want to talk a minute about sort of how, what is our support for teachers to differentiate materials for UDL? Yeah, I think for UDL, a few things I would say. We're doing division-wide professional development. So we've devoted a significant amount of time of division-directed professional development to UDL, and we try to, in those opportunities, plan collaboratively with teachers.

[02:26:49] So it's not just something that's coming from central office staff, but highlighting teachers that are invested and experts in the work. So that's one way to showcase successes. Another thing that we're doing in our inclusion work is we have our schools working in three different phases. So instead of saying, everybody's going to be on the same timeline to do this inclusion work because it's so intensive in terms of training and changes to systems we started with a group of schools that is in their first year of implementation this year the phase one schools but those schools are already sharing practices resources hosting school visits from for staff from around the county to learn about what they're doing and then we do summer curriculum development

[02:27:27] projects and instructional services as well and what that work looks like is we bring in teachers and pay them to work to develop lessons and materials to be able to share with their colleagues. So there's a lot of different ways that we try to do that. I think it is challenging, though, because, you know, in a large school system, you're never going to be able to, you know, access all of the great things that are happening in schools.

[02:27:48] But we're trying to find opportunities for teachers to showcase what they're doing, share what they're doing with their colleagues, and facilitate that as best we can. So if I'm an 11th grade social studies teacher, how would I get access to those resources?

[02:28:04] if i'm if i'm not in one of those um for schools yeah so we i mean we curate those resources by content area and by grade level and instructional services and we put those together in what we call our planning and pacing guides so those have units and lesson plans that have been co-developed with central office staff and with uh like i said teachers that work through summer curriculum development projects and those are all available through our learning management system i'm going going to ask miss neil also to just pop in with a little moment here yeah i just want to add we also launched micro credentials this year and so one of our micro credentials is on universal design

[02:28:41] for learning and so it's six modules that our teachers can sign up to take and one of those modules is focused in on lesson planning thank you um a little technical question here um what is the data point that's being used for inclusion is it coming from students ips or is it something else i believe it would come from the iep's but um i don't know if there's an additional data point dr presidio you're you're asking about the data that we shared tonight on the video indicators yeah that is derived from individual student iep's and then aggregated up um until we ultimately get

[02:29:17] to the division reporting level um i appreciate it i'll just end with this so i i'm going to continue to push for inclusion um i'm really grateful that my colleagues brought it up today as well. And I know my predecessor, if she's watching, is hopefully proud of us for continuing to push this. But, and I think we have a shared agreement from everybody I've talked with that inclusion is great, but it only works if it's done right. And so I'm looking forward to continuing the conversation on how we can do that. Thank you. Yes, sir. Excellent timing. Mr. Moon.

[02:29:49] Just one quick follow-up on the 70% on absenteeism. When you say 70%, is that 70% of the universe of that absences right there excused is that what you meant or so so mr. Bruno of all the students who were chronically absent last year 70% of those absences so the universe of those absences were excused and again those are as reported by so I can understand that you know if he just

[02:30:19] if he exclude those excused absences and just to count unexcused absences toward absenteeism It could go drastically down. It could be even zero. Thank you. I mean, that's what I want you to know.

[02:30:36] Thank you. Dr. Anderson. Thank you. Unfortunately, whether you're absent because you're excused or unexcused, it is still treated the same way. I think it's just more an internal structure. Just two last things.

[02:30:52] One, just kind of circling back to the inclusion data. Again, it's great work, and it has to be done. But I struggled, and if you remember, Dr. Presidio, we talked about this two years ago when those targets were set, and I wondered, how do you set a target on things that are so individualized, and you have different rotations of kids throughout the schools, you know, year in, year out, it just seems as if it kind of usurps a little bit, the individualization part of the IEP, but that's just a wondering I wanted to share.

[02:31:28] The question that I do have I think it is slide number 12 if you could bring that up. You did a very nice job I believe of sharing the strategies much appreciated. Definitely do a great job of sharing the data. What I'd like for you to talk to a little bit more if at all possible with the data that shows up on this page this is the out of school suspensions. What are the root causes that you and your team have been able to find

[02:32:02] that resulted in the over-representation of black students here and students with disabilities. So that would be Dr. King's team in terms of the disproportionality work.

[02:32:20] Thoughts on root causes? I know you guys have been meeting with principals and school-based staff. Dr. Reed, my team is preparing a report around the first semester discipline, which encompasses this data, and I'd like to add that piece to it, so give us some thoughts after we review the data, because I don't want to misspeak tonight.

[02:32:42] Okay, good enough, because I know we have strategies, but I'd like to get a better understanding of what got us here, because that would allow me to evaluate whether the strategies are meeting the issue. Thank you. Okay, seeing no others, I'm going to go ahead and call for a vote on the motion, which will shortly be on the screen.

[02:33:09] All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Marin, and myself.

[02:33:24] That is unanimous for all board members. Thank you. Agenda Item 7.04, Action Item, Advanced Academic AAP Center at North Springfield Elementary School.

[02:33:40] I call on Mr. Dannon for a motion. Thank you very much. I move that the board accept the staff recommendation to open a new Advanced Academic Center at North Springfield Elementary School, starting with grade 3 in school year 2026 to 2027.

[02:33:57] I further move that the board accepts staff's recommendation that the North Springfield AAP Center serve students eligible for full-time AAP from the following schools. Annandale Terrace, Braddock, North Springfield, Columbia, Mason Crest, and Wayan Oak Elementary Schools.

[02:34:13] Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. Mr. Dannon, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, thank you very much. First, I'm excited for this to be the first official motion I make on the board, and I really want to start by thanking my colleague, Dr. Anderson, for all of your work on this.

[02:34:31] I recognize that this has been a years-long effort and I also recognize that there's other inequities and challenges to deal with at North Springfield and in that area given the breakup of middle school, space issues and so forth, but I think this is a great, obviously a great step.

[02:34:47] As I shared last week, Annadale High School is a really excellent school and I'm glad to play a very, very small part in helping open up a full-time elementary AP center in that in the Annadale pyramid as I shared the proposal recommends establishing a new full-time AAP Center at North Springfield beginning next year to better line services within the pyramid and I say this as a dad of a kid who is tending an AAP Center out of his normal pyramid and it really it'll help reduce student transitions it'll keep advanced learners with their peer cohorts as they progress to middle school and then reduce transitions also mean less transportation for students which is can save time and money and I know a

[02:35:27] this is going to help fix the issue whereby students need to jump around in and out of the antidote pyramid and promote more intact cohorts and have better educational outcomes I also want to add as a side that having spoke with it with a number of educators and ARTs and now the superintendent's team that our AAP materials are really great people love them and want to have access to them and if I'm correct they're they're open to everybody in some fashion so I wanted to share that and again I'm very grateful for the work that's been done to this point. Dr. Anderson yes thank you. Firstly I do want to say thank you to

[02:36:04] the community because that community I remember back to 2019 before I was even on the board this has been their advocacy for a middle school center and for an elementary center in their pyramid. I'm glad that six years later both of these things are well I guess if we passed tonight both of these things would have come to pass. And it was really lovely to see at the community meetings that were held in February that parents were the community members that came. It wasn't whether or not this should be done. It's whether or not their schools should be included. That was

[02:36:41] the advocacy. We did not see it here during the public hearing because no one came. But the question was please make sure that you include our schools and for various reasons I do want to say a huge thank you to the team that came to both of these meetings and did this in fairly short order Dr. Presidio, Dr. Boyd, Dr. Mahoney, Dr. Randolph and I know there's others that came to those meetings that I might be missing but I do also want to highlight the facilities team because they did all of the work with getting the data, ensuring that the space was available, and

[02:37:20] doing that calculation, not once, not twice, but multiple times. There were many, many, many scenarios. This was one of the cases where the work behind the scenes on this was a lot, and it looks nice and clean and easy here, but I think that's due to the efforts of Dr. Presidio and his team, as well as the facilities folks.

[02:37:41] I also do want to say thank you to the principal at North Springfield because she also had her team come and present during those moments and it really gave a lot of comfort to the community that was there that their children will be well very very well taken care of.

[02:37:58] If again this comes to pass the Mason District will now have two elementary AAP centers and two middle school AAP centers and Region 6 will have one middle school AAP center in the Annandale pyramid will have one of each. Again the proximity to the Braddock district with the back and forth really served as a huge barrier for our students and I think we will be very well served with this new center and I can't thank enough the team for getting this done very very very quickly. This was something that was put on to their plate they're already full plate

[02:38:34] very recently and we're able to get here to have a very thoughtful approach and I'm really looking forward to see how this impacts so many of our schools this will hopefully as well reduce that path of students who go into Glasgow because once they get into that pyramid they prefer to stay because we are now moving all of Mason Crest into Poe it makes it a very easy and seamless this transition. There are so many positives that I could spend the next 10 minutes talking about that, but I won't. But I do want to say thank you so much to Dr. Presidio and team. I just want to take a brief moment

[02:39:13] here. First of all, the AART at North Springfield is a close personal friend of mine, and she is absolutely thrilled about this. So I know she will do an amazing job, and I am super excited for her because she was very, very excited to hear that this was a possibility. The other thing that I want to say is we need more, we need to look at our other pyramids that don't have AAP centers so that we can keep kids with their cohorts as they're moving. So as we look towards the middle school work that we're going to be talking about in a few weeks, I want us to continue to look for the connections in those

[02:39:51] in those pyramids as well. So I'm excited about this. Mr. McDaniel. Okay. Seeing no others, We're going to go ahead and take a vote for the motion that's on the screen. All those in favor, that is Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[02:40:14] That is unanimous for all board members present. Agenda item 7.05, action item, motion regarding athletic facility naming rights. I call on Mr. McDaniel for a motion. I move that the school board direct the superintendent to draft a proposal for pursuing naming rights opportunities for FCPS athletic facilities by July 2026 in accordance with school board policy 870 and that the proposal be discussed at a future school board work session.

[02:40:44] Do we have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Dunn. Mr. McDaniel, would you like to speak to your motion? I would. So we know that we're in challenging fiscal environments, and what this motion is designed to do is designed to take policy 870, which was recently updated in October of 2025, and it's to put that policy to use.

[02:41:10] In my view, this is a low-risk, high-yield, low-cost, high-yield move that asked the superintendent and her team to go back, take that policy, and look at how we can potentially monetize our athletic facilities, and we already do that. If you go into a football field, for example, in pretty much, I think, any stadium in this county, you're going to see signs all across the fences of corporate sponsors.

[02:41:33] We're facing a pretty significant maintenance backlog, and, you know, the revenue generated on this, if there's any revenue generated on this, could help to offset that. My staff at my request did some research, and this is very common across K-12 education systems across the country.

[02:41:50] But the one data point we have close to us here in Fairfax is in Arlington County where they received \$10 million, \$10 million to name one aquatics facility by a large corporation. \$10 million is a lot of money.

[02:42:09] I want to remind everyone that we're spending right now, out of operating costs, \$13.5 million on maintenance. So if we can put into place revenue streams that can free our operating dollars from maintenance, we can put that money into the classroom.

[02:42:24] And I think this is a part of a broader conversation in terms of revenue diversification. What I want to emphasize here is, you know, I was talking to someone earlier today, and they were like, well, do you want to put patches on kids and things like that? I'm like, no, we're not turning things into NASCAR.

[02:42:40] Be very clear about that. what we're doing is we're basically saying okay to the people that would pay money to put a sign on the fence of a football field would you pay more money to put a bigger sign on a football field that is it so I'm looking forward to the conversation and hopefully the passage of this motion and then ultimately in July of 26 reviewing this and trying to tackle and chip away at some of the maintenance backlog that we have thank you Mr. Dunn would you like to speak to your second

[02:43:11] Yes, thank you. When I was growing up, I played t-ball. And I wasn't known as, you know, the Lions or the Tigers. I was known as Ben's Welding because there was a local business called Ben's Welding, and it sponsored our team.

[02:43:28] We wore the t-shirts proudly, and we got to play t-ball because of Ben's welding. That's why we had the uniforms. That's why we had the equipment. And there was no objection at all because Ben's welding was a perfectly legitimate business. And the nice thing is it built a connection between the local business community and the sports teams.

[02:43:55] And I think too often in Fairfax County, we keep an arm's length relationship with local businesses. And we need to bring them in. We need to bring them in because there's no reason to keep them at arm's length.

[02:44:11] In an era, I mean, we've all grown up. I turned 50 years old the other day. I've been wearing Nike and other branded gear, Ocean Pacific, do you remember that? For our entire lives, right? We are proud of our brands. We are all walking advertisements.

[02:44:28] We watch how many ads on our cell phones each day. And so to think that schools can't engage in some kind of advertising whenever you go to any athletic or sports facility in this county, you'll see the boosters have all these advertisements all around from their sponsors.

[02:44:46] So I'm not sure what the philosophical or ethical objection would be to leveraging similar types of relationships, which could also be the foundation not just for money to improve our infrastructure, which who has an objection to that, but could also be a foundation for expanding those partnerships to, for example, have apprenticeship programs, have money for our career and technical education where we get not just money but equipment and volunteer time, right?

[02:45:19] These are all part of natural economic relationships that exist in almost every other state. Fairfax County seems to be the exception rather than the norm. And at a time when we have a \$400 million deferred maintenance backlog, we need to be smart. PG County, just across the river, they allow their deferred maintenance backlog to grow into literally billions and billions of dollars. We don't want to reach that crisis point, but our deferred maintenance backlog is growing eight percent per year. If you compound that, we know interest is our friend when it comes to

[02:45:54] savings, it's not our friend when it comes to deferred maintenance. So we need to bring in more revenue sources, especially that don't involve raising property taxes, right? So this all upside from my perspective, and this motion doesn't take any direct action except to study it more closely and to build on potential partnership opportunities. So for all those reasons, I thank my colleague for bringing it forward, and I'm enthusiastically supporting it.

[02:46:23] Thank you, Mr. Dunn. Dr. Anderson. Thank you. And this school board meeting was brought to you by Nike. I don't know. There's opportunities. I'm not against this motion at all.

[02:46:39] I just want a little bit of clarity, which is this is to bring back a plan to which the board will then respond and give feedback and then determine what the action moving forward could be. Is that correct? Yes.

[02:46:55] Thank you. Because I've had a couple of people like, oh, my goodness, this is a thing. and I don't know the history upon which this has been founded in Fairfax County but there's a couple of people in my community that have some questions that we are selling naming rights tonight so I want to make sure that they are clear it is a plan upon which the board will review at some future date to make some determinations and the only thing that I'd like to ask for the consideration of this plan because we have you know disparities and inequities and a lot of other places whatever

[02:47:31] this ends up being this is going to be a collective pot not some individual school pot that's what I would envision is this where well let me share it as a thought this is what I'd like for you to consider in the plan that this would be a collective pot rather some regional pyramid local kind of fund. I just want to make sure that that's stated for the record and I think that's it. Thank you. Mr. McElveen. Thanks. So I want to begin with a process question. So

[02:48:08] why is this coming to us at a regular board meeting as opposed to a forum? School board forums are where we bring motions for to bring items for a work session or. This is a procedural question. The reason is because the policy was changed. So this is in direct correlation Okay, I mean, I've never seen this handled this way before.

[02:48:32] I don't think this is how it should be done, but that's my personal problem. So I'd be grateful for more clarity on that. So this proposal echoes of the past. So I think in modern history, and certainly Mr. Moon could speak to ancient history, but in modern history, I think the first time this board looked at this was in 2009, right after the Great Recession hit us, right?

[02:48:58] And so we looked at park naming rights, school naming rights, all those kind of things back at that point. Then in the 2010s, we looked at this at least twice. We had several significant offers to name stadiums, and I can't go into the details because they were close meeting discussions, but at that time the board decided not to pursue this.

[02:49:26] And so there should be significant reports on the shelf about how to do this. So I don't think it will take much work on staff's part to bring us something to a future work session. But I will say, you know, this will probably be the first time it's handled significantly in the public.

[02:49:45] So I'm certainly open to exploring this. I'm grateful to Mr. McDaniel and Mr. Dunn for bringing it forward. But again, I do have a process question and a staff question just in terms of bringing things back from the past.

[02:50:02] Thanks. Mr. Moon. I don't want to talk about ancient times, but I can talk about a little more modern times, 2009. Thank you. Thank you. Yes. At the time, you know, Paul spent many, many hours discussing this particular naming policy.

[02:50:24] Naming policy. We could not reach a consensus at the end of the day. And I'm sure the superintendent can consult those documents somewhere stored, maybe on the bulldog somewhere.

[02:50:41] And also, I'm looking at the LT members upstairs up there to see who might remember this. Mr. Smith, Mr. Foster, Mr. Presidio, I think, were there at the time when this was discussed that, you know, for example, you know, who can initiate this?

[02:51:02] this is going to require community consent of the affected communities. Who's going to decide the amount and where the money will go and what can the money be used for?

[02:51:17] All those we had really spent hours and hours and hours in a lively debate, but at the end of the day we cannot reach our consensus. I am happy to look at this again and hope that we can reach a consensus this time around.

[02:51:34] So I welcome another opportunity and thank you for bringing this motion. Mr. Frisch. Thank you. I wasn't sure on how I'd move on this until Mr. McDaniel and Mr. Dunn removed the language establishing the Kyle McDaniel and Mateo Dunn Memorial Badminton Stadium.

[02:51:55] So I'm appreciative that that's been removed. And I do appreciate the thinking here to move this forward. I know that I think the last time this topic came up, some of us heard from past board members who shared, like Mr. McIlvain and Mr. Moon, that the topic had had a lot of conversation previously.

[02:52:15] But it's a straightforward way of doing it. The governance manual talks about the different ways that board members can bring things forward, and one of them is a forum, one of them is a motion, one of them is through the chair and vice chair at chairs' meetings. So there's a specific section of the governance manual that speaks to that.

[02:52:32] And so I think it's unusual, certainly, to have something that directs, like, superintendent action that isn't the result of, say, a study or an analysis. But it's not outside the rules by any means.

[02:52:51] And we've certainly ended up there in the past as the part of discussions at the dais. You know, I think the one concern that I would have in any of this is if we went overboard. But we can police ourselves. And if we get a sense that people are pushing for too much or that something is, you know, we start hearing from families that it's gone too far or that some expansion of where we initially start seems like it's too much, then we can always pull back.

[02:53:22] Right now we're talking about athletic facilities. And so, you know, the policy itself is far more expansive than just athletic facilities. So if there are concerns more broadly, I think that policy probably has to be revisited again. don't necessarily have those concerns somebody mentioned NASCAR I would not even necessarily be upset about allowing uniforms to have patches on them or something maybe just one patch you know whatever it takes to help defray the cost of these essential programs I'm all in favor of we talked a little bit this evening about the importance of middle school and high school theater

[02:54:02] arts and performance arts. My partner's teaching in three schools right now. And so anything we can do to bring extra money into these programs until the state steps up and meets its average commitment of funding, I think we need to take advantage of. This is one of those options. There are others, and I'm working on something with Mr. Dunn right now that might bring additional resources so there are different things that can be done to that end um i appreciate the outside

[02:54:38] the box thinking and look forward to the superintendent bringing a proposal forward and i i do hope that there are parameters around the types of institutions or entities or businesses that are permitted and and that we can vet that legally to ensure that uh we're not committing ourselves to anything that would reflect poorly on the school division thank you mr frisch um miss lady thank you i appreciate the mover and seconder of this motion i think it makes great uh sense for us to look into revenue uh sources since we are just at the liberty of the state and

[02:55:12] our and our board of supervisors who um cares deeply about our public schools and and and certainly does their best but we need the state to do their part so i think this is fantastic someone as a three-sport athlete in high school um i think it's exciting but i also i'm wondering if i think this every time i take off in a plane from dulles that i the flight path goes right over westfield high school and why can't we paint the top of that with an act right i mean maybe there's an opportunity to expand this so if we're in a flight path and we can you know maybe we can fund we can we could even maybe a solar panel um um company might might sponsor a

[02:55:52] a roof for us. But anyway, I think this is great. And again, you know, obviously we need to be careful and work with legal around what we can do here and what companies we might engage in some kind of relationship like this with. But, you know, I think at this point we have to be nimble and creative around finding money. So I appreciate my colleagues bringing this forward tonight. Thanks. Mr. McDaniel for a go back. Well, Miss Lady spoke my love language as a pilot which nobody knows i'm a pilot um but i see rooftop ads all the time

[02:56:31] so possibilities i suppose um but i did neglect to thank mr dunn for his collaboration and work on this in my original comment so thank you mr dunn for that um there's a concern that was raised by dr randerson which i agree with i think when the superintendent comes back what i do not want to see and what i will not support when it ultimately comes back is certain schools or stadiums or facilities getting

platinum plated services at the detriment of other schools in our county and i will not support that so there has to be a way from the for the funding model as funds come in to figure out how to equitably distribute those funds i completely agree with

[02:57:09] that um and and you know to to kind of tee off of some comments made in the 8170 policy there's a there's a part in here that says school names will reflect a welcoming respectful learning environment as outlined in our adopted one fairfax policy so i think this policy is good i think it's a great vehicle um for giving it right to the superintendent and saying go forth and do good and come back and we will then take action in july of 2026 so thank you for your support

[02:57:42] mr dunn for go back i just want to mention that uh you know there are many school districts who have already engaged in this. For example, in Loudoun, Independence High School reached a deal with Prince Movers for the naming rights to its stadium, and the deal was valued at 242,000 over 10 years. That's just one of many examples that you can find via Google Gemini or other AI devices.

[02:58:09] But I think there are concerns that the public might have, but they are readily resolved. I mean, these are not new issues. You can exclude certain companies, such as those involved in alcohol, tobacco, vaping, gambling, from the scope of agreements. You can also include morality clauses so that if some company suddenly turns out to be engaging in fraud or other crimes, that you can terminate the agreement. And of course, you can limit the term. You don't want to give permanent naming rights. You want to scope it 5, 10, 20 years. And, you know, the value will be adjusted

[02:58:44] accordingly but through that you through setting up those procedural safeguards you can make sure that the school system is protected right and and narrow the scope but if it's a welding company that's a good candidate i think that's just my vote anyhow thank you okay i have lots of lights still on and i don't know how many of those folks still want go backs oh look at dr anderson yes actually mr dunn began to talk about some of the things i wanted to to talk about what those parameters could potentially look like the only other question that I want to add into the mix for your consideration as you're developing this is who

[02:59:22] determines location and by location I don't mean you know where the scoreboard is located but school X versus school Y is that dealer's choice or do we have a list of things that we will provide to whomever comes to us inquiring about this thank you thank you dr. Anderson seeing no others we're gonna go ahead and take a vote for the motion that is on the screen. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon,

[02:59:59] Dr. Anderson, and myself. That is unanimous for all board members. And we, nope, we're not. Agenda Item 7.06, Virginia School Board Association 2026 Business Honor Rule Nominations. I call on Dr. Anderson for a motion.

[03:00:16] Thank you. I move that the school board nominates Bright Spot Penske Automotive Group and Dreams Salon to the 2026 Virginia School Boards Association Business Honor Roll, which is to be awarded later this year.

[03:00:34] Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Miss Lady. Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, briefly. I just wanted to take a moment to just highlight these two companies because we nominate organizations and companies for what they provide for Fairfax County, whether or not they end up being awarded by VSBA. But it is our opportunity to highlight them and to celebrate their contributions

to us. So I just wanted to make sure that those companies were called out, you know, on record and not just through the consent agenda, just to really say thank you for their contributions to Fairfax County Public Schools. Thank you, Dr. Anderson.

[03:01:12] Ms. Lady, would you like to speak to your second? No, I think she did that quite eloquently. Thank you. Thank you. Seeing no others, I will go ahead and take a vote for the motion. Ms. St. John Conning. I'm sorry, my light was way over there.

[03:01:27] So I just wanted to say that I'm very pleased to support this motion because Dream Salons has done a wonderful job, and I know that I had the privilege of seeing their whole staff show up at Crestwood Elementary and give haircuts to little boys, each of who had their little appointment ticket and were in line to get it, and they partnered with the police department.

[03:01:56] So it was while the young men at Crestwood were waiting, the policemen were sitting there playing Uno with them and just building that rapport with the community. So there was so much going on that was just wonderful. So I'm very happy to support this because this is what bringing in businesses to our schools looks like and how they support our kids is amazing.

[03:02:18] And they're going to be doing girls at Lindbrook in the spring. Thank you. Seeing no others, we're going to go ahead and take a vote for the motion that's on the screen. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[03:02:43] That is unanimous for all board members. And now we are going to take an honest-to-goodness 10-minute break. So be back at 10-12. I didn't speak to a lot of things I wanted to speak to, so I wanted to speak to that one. You've got to go to it. They were so cute.

[03:05:27] Board members, please take your seats.

[03:12:33] Coming back together, I call on Dr. Reed for Agenda Item 8.01, Academic Matters.

[03:16:47] Good evening. I'm excited to highlight the strategic role that our fine arts play in advancing student engagement and academic rigor in Fairfax County Public Schools.

[03:17:05] Our fine arts program includes studies in the visual arts, theater arts, music and dance across grades kindergarten through 12. These disciplines are integrated into our broader instructional framework and contribute meaningfully to students' development of essential academic and durable skills.

[03:17:24] Here in FCPS, we believe that these fine arts are not peripheral offerings, but rather core components of a well-rounded education. In Fairfax, we believe that the arts are foundational, in fact, to developing the durable skills that our students need to thrive, particularly in today's world.

[03:17:45] Through visual and performing arts, students build creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and persistence. Our commitment to early universal access ensures that every student, regardless of background, thank you, has the opportunity to develop these competencies.

[03:18:06] Additionally, research consistently demonstrates that the arts participation strengthens literacy, numeracy, and executive functioning skills. In fact, often mathematics is viewed as the study of patterns, and patterns where they show up in art as well. So our arts are both an academic discipline and a

vehicle for broader student success. At the elementary level, we prioritize universal exposure to music and the visual arts. Every student participates, ensuring early access to structured arts instruction.

[03:18:45] And I'll say quite honestly, having worked in other states, this is not always the norm to have the arts be a focus and accessible to every elementary child division supported initiatives such as instruments for all directly ensure equity of access for all of our young students additionally our elementary students engage in rich experiential learning through annual music and art field trips as well as authentic performance and exhibition opportunities such as the all county choral festival and pyramid art shows. Summer enrichment opportunities extend

[03:19:22] learning beyond the school year as well. These early experiences build foundational skills, confidence, and artistic identity. At the secondary level students pursue advanced art pathways, explore specialized interests, and participate in annual field trips as well. Secondary fine arts Students have expanded opportunities for recognition beyond the classroom, including artifacts, cappies, musical performances, and competitions.

[03:19:53] In secondary arts classes, students learn to communicate complex ideas in their disciplines as well as documenting their creative processes in carefully curated portfolios. These portfolios reflect iterative cycles of critique, revision, and refinement, which are comparable to processes we find in research and development in other fields.

[03:20:15] Students also gain experience with industry standard tools, technologies, and software, which strengthen their real-world readiness. The durable skills developed, including creativity, critical thinking, and disciplined work habits benefit our students whether or not they pursue arts-related careers.

[03:20:34] The fine arts also significantly expand access to advanced rigorous coursework within our high schools. have access to honors, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and dual enrollment opportunities across art disciplines. These courses are aligned to our honors framework and require engagement with extended standards, advanced repertoire, authentic assessments, and independent work.

[03:20:59] Currently, the data is on the board here currently, 33.8 percent of high school students enrolled in fine arts courses participate also in weighted coursework, which is an increase of four percent year-over-year. This growth reflects both strong student demand and expanded access. Fine Arts directly advance goal four of the strategic plan by increasing both availability of and enrollment in rigorous coursework. To illustrate the impact of these programs more directly, we will now hear from teachers and students in our advanced Fine Arts courses.

[03:21:35] Their reflections provide insight into how these experiences shape their academic growth, development, and future aspirations. So, Madam Clerk, if you would please roll tape. Academic and creative risk are the same. We employ really the scientific method in the way that we approach our artwork. You test out some ideas, you give it a try, you fail, you reflect, you try again, you fail, you reflect, and then when you're happy with the process, then you show and you put it out there for people to see.

[03:22:08] think about IB Math, IB English, but IB Dance, well, how many students are interested in dance and would love that rigor in something that they're really interested in doing? So IB Dance, IB Art, IB Theater, those type of classes offer that access and prepare students for college and beyond just like any

other subject matter. I am in IB Math and History, and we do lots of research there and i wouldn't say that dance research wise it's any different we have to always respect

[03:22:45] cultures and respect the dances they've made and these dances have a different meaning behind them so you have to go and be super in depth with your proposals if you don't get that assignment down academically like you're not going to do as well in the class and also the writing obviously you to write a lot for your pieces the way we have to do our digital portfolio too that's like and because that helps with um like scholastic documentation for when you're do your college portfolios i mean really i could use my digital portfolio as my college portfolio once i'm done

[03:23:22] with it i think that they're really good for preparation for college classes in art we start from year one with learning about dances in the y and then they start with learning globally and to IB dance individually what is your why so that in an admission process is very helpful because they know that okay this student didn't just pull this out because they're trying to get in here this is actually connected they're actually connected to what they want to do IB dance does specifically help me in being able to go in that process with combining psychology and therapy with dance I've

[03:24:02] had a couple of schools who specifically saw that i was now a team captain of the dance team and i've been on it so long and they're interested of expanding and asking me more questions about dance and why i want to combine these two things and how it really like connects with each other all of those things are 21st century skills so again even if they decide that they don't want to pursue dance as a career they feel like they still gotten something out of taking dance that that they can use wherever they choose to go in life.

[03:24:32] - The class really teaches personal commitment. It teaches time management. It teaches all the things that they are gonna need to go off into the world if they wanted to start their own lawn mowing business. They'd know how to make their business card. They'd know how to create an image for it. They'd know how to go and talk about their work and receive feedback from people because that's part of our critique process.

[03:24:53] - There are always gonna be due dates in everyday life, even after school. And learning how to take quality photos, how to submit professional statements about future work. Measurements. Yeah, measurements, learning, scaling, and stuff like that.

[03:25:08] They're all useful everyday skills that you can just simply learn by being in our class. This dance studio has become a place where I can be myself. It's basically a safe place for us where it doesn't feel uncomfortable to be vulnerable.

[03:25:28] So I'm joined this evening also by Maeve Nash, Susan Silva, and Tara Taylor from our fine arts office. So I appreciate them staying this evening to be a part of this presentation and also to provide any answers if I need to phone a friend.

[03:25:49] So in conclusion, following early universal exposure in elementary school, 65% of middle school students and 39% of high school students elect to continue in fine arts coursework. Students engage in authentic learning experiences and public performances that require preparation, discipline, and high standards of execution. These participation rates and outcomes demonstrate that students are choosing, challenging, meeting rigorous expectations, and succeeding in advanced environments as we continue to prioritize engagement and academic excellence across the

[03:26:27] division fine arts programs are already contributing meaningfully to both goals the evidence suggests these programs are fostering connection sustaining commitment and measurable achievement which are outcomes aligned with our strategic plan so thank you madam chair and the board for our academic matters this evening thank you so much and thank you to our staff who hung around to get to this portion of the conversation uh mr mckelveen great well well thank you to um uh tara susan and may for being here we appreciate it sitting through these long meetings um so first question

[03:27:07] is um the slide stated that we've seen an uptick of four percent uh in the weighted arts classes do we know what's causing that that's a good development when i think we often hear that students are stretched for electives so i think we have a theory here from uh dr taylor or dr silva one of you come on up also put some honors weighted credit for our honors classes a couple years ago it also increased that participation because students were getting

[03:27:43] a bump in some of their advanced arts coursework um also the push for these advanced academic rigor has been a good push for us but that's part of the reason that we also added those bumps or advocated for them is because our students wanted to have the opportunities to increase their rigor and their gpas in those studies how are we similarly how are we seeing offerings around the county and things like ib dance ib art ap you know advanced art those kind of things how are we Are those opportunities expanding?

[03:28:17] Are they contracting at different schools? I think what we heard also with middle school theater, we're having struggles sometimes with our elective offerings and enrollment in general across arts disciplines. So I think the incentives with our students that like to be academically competitive, it's helpful to have these courses that are helping with their GPAs or helping with their advanced diplomas to then stay competitive, as well as getting their high-quality arts education.

[03:28:51] Great. Another question for you is, can you speak a little bit about how you're internationalizing our arts programs, whether through IFTA or other means? I'd like to welcome Maeve to the podium. She came to our office.

[03:29:06] She was actually my interim when I was out on maternity leave a couple years ago, and then she stepped into the position of special projects manager and runs the IFTA program. She's done some incredible work with continuing the globalization and the global programs for IFDA. Yeah, thank you so much for that question.

[03:29:23] I'm happy to share. So all of our curriculum have standards that are pertaining to global art. And so one effort that we are making to continue to expand that even outside of school during our summer arts enrichment camps, Institute for the Arts and Elementary Institute for the Arts, we are working on introducing an international component.

[03:29:45] So we're in the first stage of that plan. This summer we're offering four new classes, a global art survey, a global dance survey, a global theater survey, and a global music survey where students will be learning Vietnamese water puppetry, Chinese traditional dance.

[03:30:02] And we are hoping to continue to expand that program to include opportunities for students to visit us from abroad and for our own students to study abroad as part of our summer enrichment camps. That's fabulous. invite us this summer to see that work ongoing. So a separate issue is all-county chorus.

So one question I've always had is why do not all of our elementary schools participate in all-county chorus? This is something that should bring together all populations, all students, and

[03:30:36] you know there are always a number of schools that are absent. That's a tough question, Mr. McElveen. I think we give the opportunities to teachers to participate as they see fit, and we can continue to encourage all teachers to participate and help them find the ways to do so.

[03:30:57] Is it they just have too much on their plates, and this is one other thing? So we need to think about... Or maybe various life reasons that particular year that might hinder them from doing it. They might be the only staff member at that school that can support it. They might have family demands, right? So there are particular years or times that teachers are not able to participate in the work or the additional work to participate in that program. There may be a way to pair schools so that students at multiple schools can work together to participate. Our elementary school teachers are also not currently compensated for the extra time that all county

[03:31:36] course takes. Right, yeah, so that's an issue, so thanks. I think last question for now is on the Scholastic Awards. So earlier this year you shared with the board in a Friday letter the move away from Scholastic to the new thing, and by the way, we didn't get the invitation, so I'm sorry I was not there. I know a number of us weren't able to be there. Susan, you know I would have been there if I could have been. But can you speak a little bit about that transition?

[03:32:06] Right. I will. I know Aaron Stratton was really central to that transition to move to something they now call artifacts, which includes only Fairfax County students. I don't know if one of you have a more, Susan? Yeah. Unfortunately, with Scholastic, we stepped away. There was a lot of challenges with just the cybersecurity. And so it was actually an opportunity for us to develop

[03:32:43] a program that really highlights what we do best in Fairfax County Public Schools. And so we created our own program this year, and it is aligned with our curriculum and the program of studies and everything that happens specifically in the art classrooms. Whereas Scholastic was also open to we were a regional affiliate as you know and so this just gave us an opportunity to highlight what we do best. Did I answer your question? Great thank you. Mr. Fresh. Thank you

[03:33:23] very good questions Mr. McElwain. So one of the issues that I think has been present in a lot of these programs since the pandemic and to some extent before has been recruitment challenges and there are a lot of different reasons that this happens. Some places you have strong programs from elementary through high school so they kind of feed themselves and the reputations help sometimes a teacher who's been around for 20 30 years leaves retires and things dwindle and I've

[03:33:57] been thinking a lot about how we support teachers in that because they shouldn't be the victims of circumstance right and you know I look at CTE for example the tremendous care we go to to explain to parents the benefit. We have marketing campaigns around our CTE programs to convince parents that this is a great path for your kid. What can we do better to, A, support educators, particularly those

[03:34:28] who are having recruiting challenges? The number of strings or choir directors, etc., that I hear basically, you know, going on the road to sell their wares at schools, you know, downstream from them in the hopes that these kids will arrive with an interest in their program you know you don't have a lot of other academic areas where that has to happen in order for you to keep your job what can we do to

better support these educators in that work with best practices off-the-shelf toolkits on how to do better recruiting marketing from our communications department to families

[03:35:08] directly about the value of their kids being involved in choir and orchestra and band and in theater all of the above how it impacts the rest of their education so even if you want your kid to be an engineer it's really great if they're also learning to play an instrument etc so good questions I think that there's a lot of pyramid work I know many of you have attended pyramid performances where like all of the elementaries get together and then with the middle school so they start building those connections before class sign up I know that different departments have

[03:35:45] communications teams embedded within them. Instructional services, I assume, has some support for communications built into the department. So I think the idea of maybe utilizing those people within ISD to create videos or create other communication, I think those are all great ideas. Because at Central Office, we know where these programs are struggling because we're looking at enrollment numbers and we know who is about to get the phone call about like, hey, how's their program go right so like we know who needs help how do we help them without expecting them to reach

[03:36:21] out because they've got a million other things on their plate and what can we do from a central location that doesn't further stress you know educators who are already stressed in just the general idea that these are programs that parents should be encouraging their kids to participate in That's a great idea. Dr. Presidio, thoughts on how centrally the arts department might provide that level of support?

[03:36:52] Well, you're looking at the arts department in the auditorium right now. So it's a small but mighty team who works incredibly hard to support every one of our instructors and the students in the program. And we are trying to do our best there. But I appreciate the line of questioning because we, I do think, have some opportunities to do more.

[03:37:10] of the things that we're doing right now is partnering with our counseling department to make sure that all the counselors and schools and our dss's are having conversations with parents and students about all the positive reasons to actually take our courses we've partnered again with our counseling department and teachers in the schools to try to create opportunities for students and families to come and see what some of these experiences actually look like so that they can hopefully make some authentic connections that way I do think we need a more sophisticated marketing campaign though we're not you know we're educators that's not our strength so

[03:37:51] we've got some room for improvement there for sure particularly through social media and other means so that is something we're talking about but I think there's some untapped potential definitely with more direct marketing campaigns that way well we've got a great communication team I do have a couple really quick numbers questions so on slide five it says that there's been an increase in the the advanced fine arts courses of 4%.

[03:38:12] Do we know if there's also been an increase in general fine arts participation? - Not likely, or we would have noted it, but I don't know if you have other data. - I think right now we're struggling.

[03:38:29] We're struggling across our arts disciplines. I think to answer and to speak to what you're saying about recruitment, and one thing I would like to say that I didn't say last week. I came to Fairfax County, I didn't grow up here, But I came here because of the incredible arts programs.

[03:38:49] And this was one of the few places in the United States I could become a theater teacher. I was a music kid growing up because we didn't have it. The school board over my 20 years here has been an incredible support and the value that you place in all of our arts disciplines. And you continue to represent that.

[03:39:05] So thank you. Dr. Reed, you're one of the most supportive superintendents. And she goes to all these shows and stays the whole darn time. so we have incredible support with our district leadership in the arts right now as i know many of you know robin being a dss mr frisch your partner being in the arts mr moon and ryan and all of you there's many elective offerings that also have a lot of worth and then there's also a lot of pushes for academic rigor so a lot of our performing arts teachers are finding that

[03:39:39] that recruitment is becoming a big part in a lot of their job, right? So I know with Dr. Presidio and Aaron Stratton, our manager, we're looking at creative ways of how, one, we can centrally recruit, like CTE did such a great job of the open community meetings to increase the knowledge of all of our arts disciplines, as well as creative ways for staffing.

[03:40:05] For an example, an idea to discuss was possibly looking at our extracurricular programs that are not included in staffing for theater and how we might be able to make that a course option. I don't know if that's an option. It's just something we're thinking or to explore, to find creative solutions.

[03:40:22] But right now it's hard for students to find room for all of the things and all of the things have value. Especially when they're getting pushed to do other things by a lot of external forces. And that 4% number is great. My big fear in all of it is one of the reasons that exists now is because it was a response to the other pressures of, well, my parents don't want me to take that because I can't get an extra GPA point, right?

[03:40:45] Yes. So if we know that it's grown by 4%, it would be interesting to know if that has grown the program or not or if it's the same kids who are already in these fine arts classes who are just taking the advanced fine art classes because we should want to see the overall number growing too, right?

[03:41:06] So I think this is something I'm going to continue to focus on what are we doing to support educators in the recruitment challenges and it'd be great to see some CTE style marketing around the benefits to the academic you know the rigor that parents are after can be benefited from these programs too. And we're interested in the fine arts office and Aaron's doing a great job of getting that data so we're going to continue to work to provide all of you with that but thank you for your support we really appreciate it thank you. Thank you Mr.

[03:41:38] Mr. Krish. Mr. Moon. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lee, and thank you, Dr. Taylor. I have a couple of questions. First of all, I'm going to start with the accessibility issue, especially for students who are interested in playing instruments but may not be able to afford to have their own instruments.

[03:42:01] I know that school system will lend instruments to students to be able to use, but at the same time if my recollection is coming back that we collect those instruments at the end of the school year and those are and so during those very precious summertime the students who do not have their own are unable to continue practicing or enjoying music with the instruments of their choice is there a way for them to be able to continue using school systems instruments over

[03:42:37] summer. I know summer months is maybe, you know, time to refurbish, repair, and retune those instruments at the same time. Those are the time where the students may have more time to develop

on music if they have instruments. Marina is the best resource or a music specialist on this, but I do know that they have worked in special circumstances with students who would like to retain those instruments. I'm sure that that's something that the team would continue to explore that's a greater need. But I do not know how you know how widely that in thought

[03:43:13] such opportunity existence of such opportunities known to students or with a with the families who are unable to provide their own instruments to their students. Right and that and that Instruments for All program is during the school year I definitely think that our team and Katrina could look into options.

[03:43:33] I'm gonna go even one step further. Okay. You know my my own kids were fortunate to have their own private teachers to teach their instruments because I was not able to teach them at my home. But there are many, many students out there that were unable to have the similar opportunities, have their own teachers to help them improve their skills. Do you think there is a way for us to help those students over summer, especially I'm going back to the summer, in a more, you know, reasonably more affordable way of doing it? Institute for the Arts.

[03:44:11] We have, we're very proud to have brought back tuition support this summer. So we offer tiered tuition that supports students who qualify for free and reduced meals. We offer music classes. If a student wanted to, they could take a full day of four different music classes.

[03:44:30] And the camps do run 8.30 to 2. So it's a significant amount of time. We have a beginner guitar class, a beginner keyboard class. We're going to be teaching a traditional Korean instrument this summer. And then we have two sections of a class called Band Jam in which students bring their own instruments and they become part of a band and they rehearse together and then present something in the final showcase.

[03:44:54] For students who come to us and they don't have their instrument of choice, we help them procure that so that they can use it over the summer. Could you put all that information into writing and share with me and my staff? Yes. so that I can publicize those opportunities to our students and community.

[03:45:13] One last question. This one probably goes to Dr. Taylor. Since Mr. McAvee mentioned about all-county chorus, I've been going to all-county chorus for many, many years. Oh, wonderful. Every time, it brings so much joy to me, and I appreciate that.

[03:45:33] However, I don't know how you select the conductors. If you put for the last 30 years worth of conductors, let's see whether that pool of conductors is diverse.

[03:45:49] Well, that's a great question, Dr. Moon. Something for you to consider, because I have not really noticed diversity among conductors. That's a great question, and Lauren Dinkoff is our general music specialist who does such a great job at running that enormous event.

[03:46:07] I'll definitely ask her about that question, and we'll get you that information. Okay, thank you. That's a great question. Ms. Lady. - Thank you. Perhaps my participation in sixth grade all county chorus all those years ago, 40 plus, is the reason that I have such a love for the arts.

[03:46:28] Love IFTA, thank you for the shout out for IFTA. And I love how Fairfax County provides such robust offerings in the fine and performing arts at our schools. But per the comments of our community members earlier this evening, we heard about declining enrollment in theater arts.

[03:46:44] I believe the shift away from fine and performing arts is because parents favor what they consider academic electives. Many parents believe that a transcript full of traditional academics is the golden ticket to get into a good college. The reality is quite opposite.

[03:46:59] Admissions officers are looking for students with a deep, sustained passion and the ability to see a project through from rehearsal to performance. Standardized testing. Data consistently shows that students involved in the arts outperform their peers on the SAT. On average, students who take four years of arts and music classes score nearly 100 points higher on the SAT students with a half year or less. And the competitive edge in a sea of high GPAs an applicant who has mastered a difficult concerto or curated a gallery show stands out as someone with discipline, focus, and a youth voice. So it's been mentioned before we did add weighting to several of our

[03:47:35] classes in the arts and this did help create a competitive edge if you will. I'm here to say that we need to do more dual enrollment opportunities in our arts. We must treat the arts with the same academic weight as our stem courses currently we do offer dual enrollment theater with northern virginia community college allowing our students to earn college credit while honing their craft but it's time to expand this we need de pathways for choir band orchestra and the fine arts if a student is performing at a collegiate level in our top tier symphonies or studios they deserve the college credit to match this move would signal to parents and students

[03:48:10] alike that the arts are not just extracurricular their rigors academic pursuit when we talk about about the working world, we talk about skills employers are desperate for. Collaborative intelligence. In an orchestra, if you don't listen to your neighbor, the whole group fails.

[03:48:26] This is teamwork in its purest form. Resilience and feedback. An art critique or dress rehearsal teaches students how to take constructive criticism and turn it into excellence, a skill many adults struggle with. I can't emphasize this enough. The collaboration and the ability to take constructive criticism, what happens in these classes is just off the charts. And And I want to acknowledge all of our educators.

[03:48:49] Our art teachers aren't just instructors, they're mentors, they're conductors, they're curators who often work late into the night and through their weekends. For so many of our Fairclays County students, the band room, the black box theater, or the ceramic studio is their safe space, as we've talked about earlier. It's where they find their people. In an age where student mental health is a primary concern, the arts provide a community of belonging, it can quite literally be a lifeline.

[03:49:11] The arts are not a break from learning, they are the heart of it. So you have my full support. I do believe that we need to, especially in light of the new ways that our schools are being evaluated, that we have a lot of students, let me just finish, who would benefit from a dual enrolled course, and our metrics will be improved in many of our schools if we can offer that across the fine of performing arts.

[03:49:38] So I have the utmost support for the work you do, and I hope parents are listening, And I hope that, honestly, if your kids lean in that direction, please lean with them and let them embrace it because it's fantastic and they will grow in so many ways as a result of being in these classes.

[03:49:57] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Laney. Ms. Mayer. Yeah, so I already have my calendar booked for the last weekend of April and into May for the musicals. It's unfortunate so many of them happen on the Thursday nights of board meetings. Honestly, it does create a scheduling problem.

[03:50:15] So here is what I wanted to share. So, you know, if the intention is equity and access, then how specifically are we achieving that? How are we measuring the progress for that? Because I'm trying to reconcile how a school division offers innovative opportunities like IB and advanced theater, while there are some schools that can't send their kids to all district chorus.

[03:50:38] And how are these decisions reconciled with the equity lens and the budget lens? How has it decided to offer more advanced focused instruction for the older kids, but not ensuring wide and quality inclusion for those younger kids, like every school having a presence at the all-district events?

[03:50:58] How are you actively looking at it that way? So I think the AP, dual enrollment, and IB arts are, you know, courses that students are taking at high school. The sixth grade chorus, all-county chorus, I'm not entirely sure how that sits within the school day, but I don't know if one of you can explain that.

[03:51:28] Yeah, well, I think that's a problem. It shouldn't depend on the school. It should be, if this is an equity thing, every kid, every school should have a presence at these district-wide events. This is how some schools get reputations, for better or worse.

[03:51:46] It starts with a lack of access. I also just want to share about instrumental. So I was a band kid. I started playing piano second grade private lessons clarinet and fourth grade I went all the way through I had the equivalent of an SAT test in in piano Okay, memorize 64 pages of classical music impressive. So I love musical instruction. So begrudgingly my kid in fifth grade took trumpet and Or was it sixth grade? I think it was sixth grade and he was like it was like January or February and i was like are you getting lessons in school no he wasn't getting lessons at school so i'm like

[03:52:24] wait a minute because i got lessons in school mr counten's shout out he's still up on long island but like we had banned we had lessons so we're expecting kids who are fifth and sixth grade to just learn an instrument without instrumental instruction and i didn't even i mean again i didn't realize it because i was like of course you're gonna that is just so he didn't he quit he quit seventh grade um and he even the pyramid did a great job they brought everyone in to like the older kids played for the younger kids and ours is like okay he's like okay I'll do it mom he didn't want to do it so all these things I think matter and if we want to again it's this

[03:53:01] question of we're going to provide this very very best to a small group but could we do that other ways you mentioned dual approach but maybe it's the middle schools coming together to do that musical I just can't get over if we're really going to talk about equity we have to address that there are some kids who are not getting a good enough foundation if at all to even set them up to continue and then we have these issues with we have under enrollment in theater and the arts and all these things so um these are the questions like with goal two i'm trying like how do we really make these decisions we cannot fund everything how do we do this better and those are

[03:53:36] all one i just really appreciate all those thoughts and your and your passion for the arts let me just say that to the only thing that i can add to that as as not the music specialist that stands in front of you, is that I do know for our arts programs, we are working with the school schedule, the school demands, the teacher, the particular teacher, to cater those offerings to support as many students as we can, while also giving student choice. I get it. It's a systemic thing. Yeah. So bravo, pun intended. It's just that we need to do something different, I think.

[03:54:14] So, yeah, it is challenging, even when we looked at the stipends and how we could redo the stipends to also then engage uniform expectations across the schools. So schools were all getting a musical or a play or certain experiences across the arts. It's challenging when you're looking at the particular school, like Whitman, maybe the transportation, how they can participate in the after school activities or additional rehearsals, depending on the discipline.

[03:54:38] so it's looking working within those individual schools along with the ones of the community to then meet shared expectations which I think we can continue to try to do even better thank you miss st. John cunning um so I think that the fact that we do have such a fabulous arts program and we can sit here and I don't want to say that because that's not the word we can sit here and about how we want to make what is already a great program and recognized throughout the country as

[03:55:16] great programming how we can make it better is really a great opportunity for us i think everybody on this board really supports the arts i do i do want to just mention i mean i'm not going to ask any questions but i do just want to mention that we do have to have more marketing and one of the things is that great art show you put together at the lorton arts center where all of our teachers have their artwork displayed and we we have to market that i mean that's just the work of our teachers that is highlighted and i think we need more community input to come there i i want to

[03:55:55] shout out that i saw a a piece there that i mean that was made that was made by an elementary school teacher and usually um you know it's the high schools that you're trying to get that vertical articulation, but this elementary school teacher had a piece there called Threaded Truths. She worked at Crossfield Elementary, and I immediately thought this could go with Lewis. This could go with Lewis High School. I connected them, and she came and did a presentation to the leadership program students, and they are now working on a project together with an elementary teacher from Crossfield that came in to talk to them about her project

[03:56:34] when they were celebrating John Lewis' birthday, and it was a very important social justice piece that she did I know you guys know which piece I'm talking about and I'd love to see that cross-pollination of an art teacher coming to a leadership program talking about social justice and I think that's one way we can it's one example of I'm sure many things that are happening out there and these are the kind of things that we have to market and now we have all these kids at Lewis that are learning from an elementary school art teacher wanting to do some art that they can incorporate into their social justice

[03:57:11] programming so that's the kind of stuff that I think we need to celebrate and we need to get out there and thank you just thank you for all the work that you do mr. done first of all thank you for everything you do as a aspiring actor when I was young I got to be Charlie Bucket pretty cool I think I think there There's an obvious source of the problems here.

[03:57:43] We had the pandemic, right? Pandemic wiped out an entire generation of students who might otherwise participate in theater and band, et cetera. But we know how valuable these programs are because theater teaches public speaking. It teaches social skills, right?

[03:58:00] Band and music give kids identities. You're part of a group, right? And it's a positive group. In addition, music and theater and everything, it reinforces all of the kind of parts of the brain that are part of STEM. And that's the careers of the future.

[03:58:16] So I think one of the problems we have is that we don't invest at an early stage, right? If you don't invest at the front end at the elementary school level, you're not going to get many students going into middle school. And we have two magnet schools, the only two magnet schools, Hunter Woods and Bailey's.

[03:58:36] And they both are founded on the curriculum developed by the Kennedy Center for Changing Education Through the Arts. We've had former SDPS teachers that have gone and found private businesses to teach what they call arts integration. And it's cheap. I looked into it for one of my schools.

[03:58:55] So on a system basis, for investment of tens of thousands of dollars, we could potentially make some of our elementary schools, maybe one per pyramid, you know, arts integration magnet schools for those pyramids. And then, you know, promote a whole pipeline all the way through middle school and high school.

[03:59:13] And that would be, you know, revitalize these programs because we need numbers, right? I mean, it's not, this isn't, we don't need to have Timothee Chalamet tell us, like, you know, ballet and opera are old-fashioned. These are still vital programs and valuable and valued by the community.

[03:59:29] The other thing I would suggest is that we consider partnerships with private businesses. There are all these teachers out there teaching piano, guitar, you know, all kinds of musical instruments. Why don't we bring them in? You know, we can make them adjunct teachers. And if we don't have the money to support them in other countries, they, you know, allow teaching to happen during the school day, you know, as an elective.

[03:59:54] You may not get course credit for that or an after-school activity. and to expose kids to more opportunities for music, for theater, for whatever. And those people get paid by the students, not by us. It's just there are ways we can really partner with business in the private sector to be able to offer our students more and revitalize our programs along the way while broadening their perspectives, broadening their minds, and delivering that world-class education that is really the core mission of SCPS.

[04:00:22] So I look forward to furthering the conversation and have more out-of-the-box thinking about what we can do to deliver on that. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Dunn. I'm going to take a brief turn, and then Miss Lady needs to go back. So when I taught at Kansas State for the engineering department, what I noticed more than any other students with any of my other classes was that my engineering students were more often artists than musicians because the line between the creativity needed in engineering and the creativity needed in other disciplines that are traditionally considered the arts is so

[04:01:02] fine. And so, I mean, that's really where the idea behind STEAM came from, is that it's a push to move towards across. So I do think we can get there by pushing STEAM into all of our elementary schools as a point of entry to kind of get the creativity going related to how the arts can work.

[04:01:25] You know, we have great things going on in terms of making sure every kiddo gets music and those types of things and opportunities for band and strings and all the things that happen in elementary schools. And I will never forget the recorders that came home the day before a snowstorm for my oldest.

[04:01:43] That was awesome. The other thing that I would say is we have an entire, that same kiddo is now in leadership and goes to events all the time in order to support the school. And so I do think that we have an entire group of kids out there that could serve as marketing for us. And we need to connect the dots more because I think that we have kids that are in all these, that want to create the videos for us that

want to do all these things. Let's use the strengths that we have to help with the marketing campaign rather than have it just be something else that we feel that we have to put

[04:02:22] on our plate. And so I would love to get the student voice in this more and have kids help recruit because it may not always just need to be. There's nothing necessary. I know that the timelines don't always work, but if you could figure out rehearsals that they could come with elementary kids for a short period of time. You could get higher level kiddos from the high schools involved. It doesn't always have to only be our teachers. And so I would love to look for other opportunities. My parents were both thespians at Falls Church High School, which I grew up

[04:02:59] hearing all about all the time. I was not. However, I was heavily involved in the arts in high school and digital I had my own digital show when I was a senior so I am right in that with what's going on now and so I saw the precursor of how that was all built around particularly with related to digital arts and I'm just so impressed with the fact that we haven't given up we're going to keep fighting to make sure that our kids see the engagement and I just want to encourage us to keep doing that so I think that you have the right board to focus on that for right now and I I can't

[04:03:36] wait to see where else we go so miss lady for a go back yeah I didn't really ask a question so my question is can we look into dual enrollment and more of our classes I understand what the requirements are in terms of the 18 hours but I just feel like if it's important for a number of reasons in one being the accreditation so can we can I get some sort of assurance that we will look into that yes ma'am I believe we will look into that thank you thank you Thank you, Dr. Reed.

[04:04:11] Thank you, staff. Agenda Item 9, Consent Agenda. Our adopted rules of parliamentary procedure, Robert's rules provide for a consent agenda listing several items for approval of the board by a single motion. Many items listed have gone through board review and documentation has been provided to all board members and the public in advance.

[04:04:32] Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member prior to the meeting. The consent agenda items are on the screen. there any objections to the consent agenda hearing and seeing no objection the consent agenda is approved agenda item 10 new business the following are new business agenda items there will be no vote on these items this evening but action is scheduled at a future meeting agenda item 11 board committee reports I call on Mr. McDaniel for a report of the comprehensive planning and development committee thank you at our last meeting we moved forward a couple of policy items that were sent to the board for, you know, board approval.

[04:05:11] We decided to defer some of those and to get more feedback from staff. But most importantly, and what I'm most excited about, because as of 30 seconds ago from the consent agenda, we just passed our new community members on CPDC. So we, unfortunately, there was a slight scheduling snafu, and the next meeting was mistakenly scheduled for spring break, but now our, the actual next meeting will be on April 13th.

[04:05:37] Thank you. Thank you. Agenda item 12, Superintendent Matters. I call on Dr. Reed for Superintendent Matters. Thank you, Chair Anderson. Given the lateness of the evening, I will simply wish our community a joyful, renewing, refreshing spring break.

[04:05:56] And look forward to seeing students and staff coming back afterwards excited for a strong finish to the year. So thank you. Agenda item 13, board matters. In accordance with the board's consensus

due to the late hour, we're going to go ahead and skip this item for this evening. Agenda item 1401, convening a closed meeting. The board will now make a motion on March 26, 2026 to go into closed meeting 2.1, discuss personnel matters pursuant to section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia, and consult with legal counsel regarding specific matters requiring the provision of legal advice by

[04:06:36] such counsel pursuant to section 2.2-3711 A7 and A8 of the Code of Virginia, specifically personnel. Do I have a motion? Mr. Frisch. Do I have a second? Mr. McElveen. All those in favor. That is Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Lady, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, and Dr. Anderson and myself.

[04:07:01] That is unanimous for all board members. The regular meeting is now recessed at 11:06 PM and the board will meet in closed session.



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