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Fairfax County School Board Meeting, Thursday, April 9, 2026

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Place Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DR6xiA9ZC14>
- Official School Board page (FCPS): <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board>

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

[00:05:45] The time is 7:05 p.m. and this April 9, 2026 regular meeting of the Fairfax County School

[00:06:26] Board will come to order. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence and a performance of the National Anthem by the Whitman Middle School Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of Elizabeth Vogel.

[00:06:37] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States.

[00:08:55] Can we have one more round of applause for our amazing kiddos? The lady has submitted a request to attend tonight's meeting remotely due to a personal conflict as she as she has a professional commitment and is located in winter park florida i have performed an initial review of miss lady's request and have found it to be in compliance with the school board's remote participation resolution and i have approved the request miss lady she's not on

[00:09:29] yet okay we will circle back when she joins us on behalf of the school board i would like to welcome city of fairfax school board member sarah kelsey thank you for joining us tonight 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 slash board docs tonight's meeting is being broadcast on cox channel 99

[00:10:03] verizon fios channel 11 and is live streamed on youtube and at our website at www.fcps.edu live stream tonight's meeting is also being broadcast in spanish on youtube at [youtube at dot com slash at sfcps](http://youtube.com/sfcps) and espanol and i understand that miss lady is has joined us so i will ask that you please we see you can you please check your audio check correct yep i hear you uh i now ask board members who are physically present to vote on the following all those in favor of confirming

[00:10:43] the chair's approval of miss lady's request mr frisch mr mcdaniel miss marron mr mckelveen miss st john cunning miss dixit mr dannon mr dunn mr moon and myself all those opposed dr anderson will the clerks please read the vote the vote is 10-1 the motion carries thank you agenda item 3.03 arab american heritage month proclamation i call on dr anderson for a proclamation

[00:11:16] Whereas, April is a time to celebrate Arab American heritage and culture and pay tribute to the contributions of Arab Americans and Arabic-speaking Americans.

[00:11:37] This year's theme, Many Voices, One Community, underscores the idea that diversity is not a weakness but a strength, one that enriches American society, deepens our collective story, and honors our differences while affirming our unity.

[00:11:57] And whereas, nearly 4 million Americans trace their roots to an Arab country, Arab Americans hail from 22 Arab nations and are diverse ethnically, religiously, politically and artistically.

[00:12:15] And whereas, for centuries, Arab Americans have made valuable contributions to every aspect of American society in medicine, law, business, education, technology, government, military service, culture, and invented many groundbreaking innovations to include television transmission and LCD screens, the waffle cone, emotion recognition technology, the iPod and the iPhone, surgical developments, including the concept behind coronary bypass surgery

[00:12:51] and internet security advances, such as the digital signature standard. And whereas, since migrating to America, people of Arab descent have shared their rich culture and traditions with neighbors and friends, while also setting fine examples as model citizens and public servants, and Arab Americans have also enriched our society by sharing in the entrepreneurial American spirit that make our nation free and prosperous.

[00:13:23] And whereas the celebration of Arab American ancestry and cultural heritage educates our fellow Americans, encounters bias, misconception, harmful stereotyping, and shared abuses by other ethnic groups, and Arab American Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the great pride and vibrancy of the over 100,000 Arab Americans in Virginia whose abilities and contributions strengthen Virginia's economy, diverse culture, and communities. And whereas Fairfax County Public Schools

[00:13:59] believes in fostering an inclusive community that empowers all students and families, Arab American Heritage Month presents an opportunity to explore and appreciate the diversity that strengthens our community. Through classroom activities and educational programs, we aim to enrich our students' understanding and appreciation of Arab American heritage.

[00:14:24] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board hereby proclaims April as Arab American Heritage Month and officially recognizes the contributions Arab Americans have made to our society. We encourage the celebration of this collective ingenuity, creativity, cultures, and traditions of Arab Americans and encourage participation in educational events honoring their contributions.

[00:14:53] Thank you, Dr. Anderson. Is there a second? Thank you, Ms. St. John Cunningham. I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself.

[00:15:12] That is unanimous for all board members. Congratulations. Agenda item 3.04, School Librarian Appreciation Month Proclamation. I call on Mr. Dannon for a proclamation.

[00:15:29] Whereas April is recognized nationally as School Library Month, a time to celebrate the essential role that school librarians and library services staff play in supporting student achievement and fostering a love of reading and learning. And whereas school librarians in Fairfax County Public Schools are highly trained instructional partners who design and deliver engaging learning experiences that strengthen literacy, research, and critical thinking skills for all students.

[00:15:52] And whereas FCPS librarians and library services staff lead and support innovative programs that promote equitable access to diverse resources, digital tools, and emerging technologies, ensuring that all students can locate, evaluate, and use information effectively in an increasingly complex world.

[00:16:08] And whereas school libraries provide welcoming, inclusive environments that encourage curiosity, creativity, and student voice, providing access to materials that reflect the diversity of our community and broaden students' understanding of different perspectives and cultures, and whereas FCPS Library Services staff curate high-quality collections, support instructional initiatives, advance digital citizenship, and ensure that library programs remain responsive to the evolving needs of students and educators, and whereas school librarians foster a lifelong love of reading by guiding students to discover books that inspire, challenge,

[00:16:44] and engage them while supporting both academic success and personal growth, and whereas the contributions of FCPS librarians and library services staff strengthen our schools and communities by promoting literacy, innovation, and equitable access to knowledge for every student. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board hereby proclaims April 2026 as School Library Appreciation Month and expresses its highest commendation for the dedication, expertise, and impact of school librarians and library services staff.

[00:17:15] We encourage the Fairfax County community to recognize and celebrate the vital contributions of school librarians and to engage with their school libraries throughout the year. Thank you, Mr. Dannon. Is there a second? Ms. Dixit, thank you. I will call for a vote.

[00:17:32] All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself. Congratulations. That's unanimous. Agenda item 3.05, the month of the military child proclamation.

[00:18:04] Whereas April is the month of the military child, this designation was established by former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, in 1986 to acknowledge and honor our youngest military heroes and the significant role they play in our communities.

[00:18:20] And whereas in the 2026 theme for the month of the military child is military children and youth, strength in every story, and shines a light on the everyday courage of military children.

[00:18:36] Their stories, filled with resilience, adaptability, and quiet strength, demonstrates the powerful character they build while growing up in a world defined by service and sacrifice. And whereas Virginia is

home to over 77,000 military-connected school-age students, more than any other state in the nation, Fairfax County Public Schools proudly supports around 13,500 military-connected youth and families.

[00:19:06] And whereas our military-connected students bring a wealth of life experiences to our schools, military families relocate frequently, leading their children to change schools and support networks with each move. These students know firsthand what it feels like to be the new kid and know how a welcoming attitude can help every new student.

[00:19:31] And whereas military-connected children overcome many challenges and have unique experiences as a result of their parents' assignments at duty stations around the world. And whereas FCPS is honored to participate in the Purple Star designation program.

[00:19:49] The 96 FCPS Purple Star schools are recognized by the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Council on Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children for actively supporting military-connected students and their families, and we remain dedicated to ensuring all schools earn the Purple Star designation by the 2026-2027 school year.

[00:20:15] And whereas, on April 15th, FCPS will celebrate Purple Up Day. Purple symbolizes all branches of the military as a combination of Army Green, Marine Corps Red, and Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force Blue.

[00:20:32] We encourage everyone to wear purple to celebrate our military-connected students next Wednesday. Therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board celebrates April as the month of the military child in recognition of military-connected students for their heroism, character, sacrifices, and continued resilience.

[00:20:56] This month provides a powerful opportunity to raise awareness and build support for these children. and therefore be it further resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends our appreciation for the service of all children from military families and encourages everyone to wear purple throughout the month to celebrate our military-connected students and families.

[00:21:19] Is there a second? Go Army Green. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. I will call for a vote. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and Ms. Lady and myself, and that's unanimous.

[00:21:45] I would like to welcome all those here in support of the Month of the Military Child Proclamation to please join the board for a photo in front of the dais.

[00:21:55] I would like to welcome our school librarians and all those here in support of the School Librarian Appreciation Month Proclamation to please join the board for a photo at the front of the dais.

[00:24:00] I would like to welcome all those here in support of the Arab American Heritage Month Proclamation to please join the board for a photo at the front of the dais.

[00:24:49] Chair Anderson, that's our last picture.

[00:25:33] Agenda Item 3.06, Annual Recognition of National Board Certified Teachers.

[00:25:51] Good evening and welcome honorees and guests. We are pleased to recognize those Fairfax County public school educators who have earned or renewed National Board Certification for the 26-27

school year. It is my great honor on behalf of the Fairfax County School Board to recognize our nationals board-certified teachers for their dedication and contributions to the education of our students.

[00:26:16] And now I would like to introduce our division superintendent, Dr. Michelle Reed. Thank you, Chair Anderson, and good evening. I would like to congratulate each of you on achieving or renewing your national board certification. National board certification is a rigorous and prestigious achievement, and we are proud to be here to honor your commitment to excellence as educators. To you, our 2026 honorees, you are part of an elite group of education professionals who can say they have achieved National Board

[00:26:49] Certification. Over the last 24 years, over 500 teachers in Fairfax County have earned a National Board Certification. As educators, you are 10 of the 215 currently teaching in classrooms and serving in leadership positions across Fairfax County Public Schools.

[00:27:09] National Board Certification embodies everything we hope to see in our teachers. This group of educators has demonstrated their commitment to high-quality instruction, equitable practices, family engagement, collaboration, and self-reflection on a national level.

[00:27:26] Thank you for sharing your gifts with the students, staff, and families of FCPS. And now, I would like to welcome two of our instructors from the National Board Certification course, Faizu Alam and Sabra Devers, to read the names of our honorees.

[00:27:45] Good evening. At this time, we will recognize teachers who have achieved their initial National Board Certification.

[00:28:02] We invite you to use the QR code that's up there to access the digital program for more information about each of our honorees. honorees, when your name is called, please stand. Bhumika Saxena from Twain Middle School.

[00:28:23] Additionally, we would like to honor Stacey Perkerik from Wakefield Forest Elementary School, who is recognized for achieving national board certification but was unable to join us today.

[00:28:38] Thank you. Please join me in recognizing the accomplishment of all of our new national board certified teachers. Congratulations to all of them. And you can please be seated. and then I'll hand it over to Sabra now.

[00:28:55] - The following national board teachers have renewed their certificates. Honorees, when your name is called, please stand to be recognized and remain standing until all honorees are called. Carrie Cleary, Saratoga Elementary School.

[00:29:13] Kathleen Gannon, Cardinal Forest Elementary School. Additionally, we would like to honor the following individuals who are being recognized for renewing their national board certification, but were unable to attend this evening.

[00:29:29] Jennifer Cottle, Haycock Elementary School. Krista Gallagher, Lake Braddock Secondary School. Allison Popsoy, Stone Middle School.

[00:29:46] Christopher Rosseller, Bucknell Elementary School. Suzanne Roediger, Providence Elementary School. Katherine Williams, Fairfax High School.

[00:30:05] Congratulations to our renewed National Board Certified Teachers and staff.

[00:30:20] - This time we would like to invite the school board and leadership team to come to the dais for a photo with the new and renewed national board certified teachers we will take two photos the first with all

[00:30:31] honorees and the second with all newly certified honorees and now if we could

[00:31:48] do a photo with just our newly honored honoree on behalf of the Fairfax

[00:32:43] County School Board I want to congratulate this year's national board certified teachers they are to be commended for their dedication to the excellent instruction in helping students achieve success let's give them one more round of applause please agenda item 4.01 community participation the The next order of business is community participation.

[00:33:06] 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's website at www.fcps.edu/schoolboard.

[00:33:26] During the signup process, community members acknowledged that they were informed of the School Board's expectations for proper decorum when providing comments. 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. 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 in their seats including when recording video or taking pictures. We are grateful to those who have come to speak to us today and thank you for your cooperation. School board members

[00:34:01] will be listening but not responding. Madam Chair, I'm sorry, Madam Clerk, please call the first speaker. Did I get a promotion? No. Anthony Lampkin. All right. Well, thank you so much for having me. I'm here representing my two children at Wolf Trap Elementary and my very hardworking wife who takes care of them most of the time. And I'm here to discuss the school calendar. I'm not going to reiterate the problem statement. I think everyone probably

[00:34:41] in the room knows what that is but i will reference a reddit post from a couple of weeks ago titled no you aren't crazy fcps has the worst school calendar and i think that sums up my remarks mostly on the problem statement why i'm here though is uh to support uh mr dunn's uh latest newsletter in um aiming for a very data-driven approach on how to solve the problem i know that there are measures later tonight that folks will be voting on in terms of trying to tweak some days here and there to improve the school calendar next year it's a very important step but it's nowhere

[00:35:20] near enough we need a very common sense calendar and we needed an objective by which we can all collectively work together to get there right now i believe we're at about 50 of the uh the school calendar has a full five day school calendar week and if we all agree on an objective higher than that whether that be 70 75 i believe we have the collective wisdom experience talents in this room as well as maybe some pragmatic review of best practice that will allow us uh to get there and

[00:35:54] certainly from my standpoint and uh and friends uh as well at the school you have some very supportive parents who would love to work with you on this to make sure that we have a very common sense and data driven approach to improving the current fragmented school calendar so thank you very much for having me and listening and here to support as needed thank you julie corell

[00:36:22] hello my name is julie corell before we get started i would like you to know that i'm a graduate i am a teacher i am a parent of a rising kindergartner and when i teach my class i ask that my students put their laptops down when i speak i would like you to do the same everybody please this is exactly the type of problem that classroom teachers have with one-to-one devices we ask and

[00:37:01] we ask and some of you don't comply and we become the police of the devices in the classroom it takes up our time it takes up our energy i'm still asking for some of you to put your laptops down and you're not doing it imagine you're 12 imagine you're eight this is a real problem we're all a part of it we all need to be the solution for it i'm here on behalf of an advocacy group for parents and teachers called fcps parents for intentional use of technology i am the canary in the coal mine here telling you we have a major problem when it comes to our one-on-one devices we do

[00:37:39] if nobody has told you that before from the teacher's standpoint it's because they fear retribution i do not i'm here because i have a kindergarten student who is starting next year we have kindergarten orientation tomorrow i'm so nervous about it because i have worked very hard to keep an ipad out of his hands because i know the damage that this type of device can cause and he will be issued one next year by fairfax county public schools i'm asking you for an opt out option for families who do not want this technology in their children's hands myself i've gone to a mostly screen-free classroom because you see the difficulty that i've had in just

[00:38:17] asking board members to put their device away it's almost impossible for teachers to do so please form a committee to study this issue and in the meantime offer an opt-out for families we are desperate for it thank you angie trerotola angie trerotola emily vanderhoff go ahead angie

[00:38:53] good evening dr reed and members of the school board my name is angie trerotola and i'm here to talk tonight about the current calendar so our current calendar is drifting toward a year-round model without the strategic breaks necessary to make it work it's time to return to a post labor day start and this time end by may 31st first virginia law mandates 990 hours not 180 days let's harness the extra hours to instead maximize a calendar that prioritizes a longer summer that can be utilized in ways that support our students first a longer summer is an economic engine it supports virginia's tourism and allows our high schoolers and educators who need extra income to

[00:39:31] work seasonal jobs to support their families second we need regional coordination across nova when When educators work in one district and live in another, the chance is that their student is off when they have school is high. This causes instructional disruption across the districts. Please consider coming together with districts to coordinate future calendars together.

[00:39:48] Fragmented weeks are a financial burden for families and hurt our most vulnerable. Children need consistency to thrive. When we break the routine, we break the learning. Extending the school year does not increase test scores enough to justify it. We continue to retest students who failed SOLs for their entire academic career but rarely teach them systemic strategies for how to take tests.

[00:40:05] When we begin SOL and CTE testing in April, then release them six to eight weeks later, it's hard to convince students to actually hone in on their learning. Instead, consolidate testing in May as much as possible. This year, some FCPS students are going to graduate on June 1st. So their finals begin once AP and IB tests are done.

[00:40:22] Give the underclassmen their finals with them. If students pass everything for the year, they're done for the summer. If not, bring them back and use those next two weeks to remediate them so they have smaller class sizes with staff that no longer have to worry about seniors or students who have passed so they can focus more attention to the students that need it most for families who opt in you could host enrichment camps like sat prep college application seminars staff who are not remediating could partner with other educators and outside groups to promote other enrichment opportunities a similar scenario could play out in k-8 pass your sol summer is on fail the sol remediate for up to two weeks and retest we don't need a longer year we need a smarter one

[00:40:59] thank you for your time emily vanderhoff good evening dr reed and members of the board my name is emily vanderhoff and i'm the president of fcft i'm here to speak to the three calendar motions before the board tonight i believe that families and fc fcps staff share common goals to both providing consistency and structure for students and also providing the highest quality of education

[00:41:35] possible while these three motions seek to provide that consistency our concern is that it comes at the cost of giving staff the time they need to do the critical planning and collaboration that allows us to provide a world-class education to students. Both families and staff have pointed out that converting Indigenous Peoples Day and Veterans Day to instructional days does not address the child care need that families have raised given that many parents already have a holiday on these days. Staff have also raised concern that it would convey a lack of respect for military-connected families and Indigenous people. Staff also raised concern about how removing elementary early releases would roll back efforts to provide planning parity across school levels. If these early releases are taken away, will comparable planning

[00:42:13] time for elementary teachers be provided? Elementary staff have their own criticisms of how the early releases are currently structured, but this is due to the logistical and staffing challenges related to the child care component and the limited time for deep planning and collaboration due to the number of meetings and other responsibilities during this time. FCFT would love to engage in a broader discussion with FCPS on how to find solutions that address the valid concerns raised by families about the desire for consistency while also ensuring staff have the time they need to provide high-quality instruction.

[00:42:42] Thank you. Christina Kish. Hello, I'm Christina Kish, President of the Justice High School Rowing Boosters, Mom to my Rower, and Snack Lady to the rest of the team. Thank you for this opportunity to speak really, really quickly. I'm here to ask FCPS to please provide transportation for our rowing team to the Occoquan River.

[00:43:15] As a club sport, the rowing teams are abided by the FCPS and vhs rules but we don't have the resources from the county this lack of resources especially widens the equity gap for justice we're the only title one high school in the county and approximately 75 percent of our students are economically disadvantaged with free and reduced lunch program support boosters pays 690 a day to rent a really not great bus that's almost \$28,000 for the season just to get the kids to practice.

[00:43:50] We have to charge \$990 in dues, which is very common for the schools and really prohibitive for a lot of our families. Our equipment is old and failing. That means fewer rowers on the water, fewer coaches on the water. Just as families do not have the ability with the cars or their work schedules to carpool, even though we know that some of the other schools and teams do.

[00:44:14] We're further away from the river than a lot of other teams. It's 45 minutes down on a good day and back as well. A rowing parent from a more fluent school and much closer to their practice river told

me, "Rowing is a sport for those with means."

[00:44:32] We want to change this reality for our Justice students. We really do. And we want our rowing team to reflect this incredibly rich and diverse community that we have. We want every student at Justice that wants to row to be able to row. I look forward to working with you on a solution for this and I get time to thank everybody, the principal, Dr. Garvey, the entire athletic staff, Mace and Supervisor to Humanist, our generous donors and other.

[00:45:04] Alyssa Coleman. Hi, my name is Alyssa Coleman and I am the parent of twin girls at Oakton Elementary.

[00:45:23] First of all, I want to thank the board for listening to families and for looking into solutions to the calendar year that's proposed for next school year. However, many parents and I feel that the current recommendations are missing the root of the problem, which is the widening gap between the school calendar and the reality of working families.

[00:45:43] October 12th and November 11th are federal holidays when many parents are already off and able to care for their children. Replacing these with school days while leaving other days when parents are working off causes families to juggle. The upcoming school year spans roughly 42 weeks, and a statistical analysis shows that 43% of those weeks are interrupted by holidays, teacher workdays, or early dismissals.

[00:46:10] That number will go up because I haven't been able to factor in the proposed early release Wednesdays for elementary schools, which haven't been scheduled yet. When I ran those numbers for this year, it saw 65% of weeks interrupted for elementary schoolers.

[00:46:27] This porous schedule causes a constant struggle for both families and students. For nearly half the year, children are not in school for a five-day week. For working parents, this means expensive child care or stressful juggling most weeks of the year. Finally, we must consider the long-term impact on our students.

[00:46:46] I've heard from neighbors and friends that their children find college exhausting because they aren't used to a five-day academic week. While Fairfax excels academically, This fragmented schedule fails to prepare students for the stamina and the work ethic required in the professional world.

[00:47:03] In a region defined by two working parent households, we need a schedule that reflects our community's needs. I think the board superintendent and the community need to have a hard conversation about reducing the number of teacher workdays, early dismissals, or non-federal holidays. Thank you for creating a schedule that prepares our...

[00:47:22] Telesta Riggs. Telesta Riggs. Please play the video submitted by Stephanie Lundquist-Aurora.

[00:47:43] Good evening. Since you love proclamations so much, try this one. Whereas about 50% of students from low-income households are failing their SOLs, we are resolved to improve their academic outcomes. There are about 74,000 students labeled economically disadvantaged in FCPS.

[00:48:00] According to the Virginia Department of Education data, last academic year, 42% failed their English reading SOLs, 95% failed English writing, 41% failed math, 46% failed science, and 70% failed history. More favorable student-to-teacher ratios would improve academic outcomes, but you caught 275 teaching positions. Meanwhile, you've spent over \$12 million on lawyers this year. That's equivalent to 120

teachers and counting. In some of your contracts, you've selected the most expensive law firms in the country, such as McGuire Woods

[00:48:37] and King & Spaulding, offering to pay their lawyers up to \$1,850 per hour. On the other hand, including benefits, teachers make about \$65 per hour. Dr. Reed told the public that FCPS hired McGuire Woods to conduct an independent investigation regarding the alleged sexual assaults at Fairfax High School. But the contract states, and I quote, the investigation has been undertaken for the purpose of providing legal advice to FCPS, and that doesn't sound very independent. In addition to shifting legal fees to teachers,

[00:49:12] FCPS should have a less erratic calendar to improve academic outcomes. Half of our school weeks aren't five-day weeks, like this one, a three-day school week for no apparent reason directly after spring break. Aside from the learning disruption, forcing low-income families to pay for more child care is regressive and inequitable. You claim to believe in the concept of equity, but what about the children from low-income households? Where's their proclamation?

[00:49:39] What are you doing for them? Thank you. While Nicole Woodward signed up to provide a pre-recorded video, she did not submit one. Please play the video testimony submitted by Kimberly Adams.

[00:49:55] Good evening, Dr. Reed, Chair Anderson, and members of the board. I'm Kimberly Adams, speaking tonight as an individual to ensure our school calendar reflects the needs of our community as an fcps staff member a previous participant in numerous calendar committee meetings and a parent i urge you to consider six priorities re-establish a true calendar committee we need a collaborative group including staff students religious leaders and union partners to align our schedule with surrounding divisions and include everyone's priorities maintain religious

[00:50:30] holiday observances including major religious holidays protects students and staff from academic conflicts and the stigma of requesting time off this was built on community consensus and must remain honor federal holidays we should keep veterans day as a holiday and consider restoring indigenous people's day to a full day off for everyone rather than just a staff development day prioritize well-being over five-day weeks while consistency is valuable the occasional four-day week provides staff and students the essential mental and physical breaks needed for a healthy school life balance starting one week before labor day the current two-week early start was

[00:51:08] only a temporary fix for a specific year it was never intended to be the permanent standard and should be adjusted re-evaluate inclement weather days building in over 10 snow days is often unnecessary we should label the final days of the year as makeup days and remove them once our hourly requirements are met to allow for an earlier summer break. Finally I would encourage you to listen closely to the community and offer room for public discussion at least one full year in advance of any proposed changes. Thank you for your time. Chair Anderson that was our last public

[00:51:45] speaker. Thank you Madam Chair or Madam Clerk. It's gonna be a night. Addenda item 5.01 student representative matters. I call on Ms. McConan. Good afternoon members of the board. I want to begin by addressing the growing number of non-instructional days in our calendar and the impact they are having on students, teachers, and families. As a senior, I definitely appreciate the days off.

[00:52:09] Talking to my peers elicited the same response. In fact, I was made into a devil's advocate for even starting a conversation about maybe decreasing our current amount of 40 days off in order for

increased instructional time and longer summers. The increasing frequency of early release days and schedule interruptions is beginning to affect the consistency of instruction in a meaningful way at the elementary level alone there are 13 early release days and across all levels these disruptions make it more difficult for teachers to maintain pacing and continuity in their curriculum beyond academics this also creates a real challenge for families many parents cannot easily adjust their schedules or find child care during these early release days which adds an additional layer

[00:52:47] of stress outside the classroom the compromise that we had last year was also an instructional issue on these days students and teachers are present but instructional instruction is intentionally limited so that students observing the holiday do not fall behind. While this approach is rooted in inclusivity and respect, it often resulted in a full day where little to no learning took place. Over time, these lost instructional opportunities added up. At the same time, removing these holidays entirely is not a simple or necessarily fair solution.

[00:53:13] Fairfax County Public Schools serves an incredibly diverse population, and our calendar should continue to reflect and honor that diversity. Eliminating these accommodations could create the perception that some religions or cultural practices are being prioritized over others, which would go against the values of diversity and equity inclusion that the division strives to uphold. This presents a complex challenge. However, it is also an opportunity. I believe that the board can work towards a more balanced approach, one that prioritizes instructional time while still respecting the diversity of our student body. This could mean rethinking how these days are structured rather than simply adding or removing them so that we are not unintentionally sacrificing meaningful learning time. I also want to bring back attention to an

[00:53:51] issue that is increasingly relevant in our schools. The lack of clear framework for student operated accounts, particularly those that represent school communities. Without clear guidance, students are left to navigate complex situations such as handling controversy, responding to criticism, or managing sensitive information on their own. This not only creates risk for the students involved, but also for the broader community and the division's public image.

[00:54:13] I believe there is a strong need for a proactive, division-wide framework that clearly outlines expectations in a way that is understandable and accessible to students. This framework should also provide guidance on how to respond to conflicts or crisis in an online setting as well as establish transparency around who's responsible for these accounts and how they're managed. Right now the system is large largely reactive. Action is often only taken after an issue arrives. By putting clear structures in place ahead of the time ahead of time the SRNR we can prevent many of these situations from happening in the first place.

[00:54:42] Ultimately this is about both accountability and support. Student leaders want to represent their school well, but they need the tools and clarity to do so effectively. By establishing clear expectations and safeguards, we can empower students while also protecting the integrity of our schools and the division as a whole. Thank you.

[00:55:00] Thank you, Ms. McCona. Agenda item 6.01, 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 convened a closed meeting on April 9th, 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

[00:55:34] closed meeting. Do I have a motion? Mr. McElveen. Do I have a second? Mr. Frisch. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself.

[00:55:58] All those opposed, all those abstaining. Ms. Dixit. Will the clerk please read the vote? 11-1, the motion carries. Thank you. Agenda item 6.02, action item, confirmation of action taken and closed.

[00:56:14] I call on Mr. Frisch for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who is charged with a crime in the community and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent. Is there a second? Thank you, Ms. St. John Cunning. All those in favor, Mr. Fresh, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself.

[00:56:42] All those opposed, all those abstaining, Ms. Marin and Ms. Dixit. Will the clerk please read the vote? 10-0-2, the motion carries. I call on Ms. St. John Cunning for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who brought nicotine and drugs onto the school property with the intent to distribute, sell them at school, and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent.

[00:57:07] Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. McDaniel. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself. All those opposed? All those abstaining.

[00:57:24] Ms. Dixit. will the clerk please read the vote it's 11:01 the motion carries thank you I call on miss or dr. Anderson for a motion I move to remand to this the school reassignment appeal of a student who assaulted another student on school grounds resulting in serious bodily injury to the division superintendent for further consideration based on the discussion in the closed meeting thank you mr. moon all those in favor mr. fresh mr. Mcdaniel miss Marin

[00:57:57] Mr. McIlvain, Ms. St. John Cunning, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself. All those opposed. All those abstaining. Ms. Dixit. Will the clerk please read the vote? 11-0-1. The motion carries.

[00:58:14] Thank you. I call on Dr. Anderson for a motion. I move to expel the student who committed a serious offense in violation of school board policy by being convicted of one count of possession or transportation of a firearm by persons under the age of 18 and one count of an unlawfully handling a firearm so as to endangering so as to endanger the life limb or property of another is there a second second thank you mr. Dannon all those in favor mr. Frisch mr. McDaniel miss Marin mr.

[00:58:45] McElveen miss st. John Cunning mr. Dannon mr. Dunn mr. Moon dr. Anderson miss lady and myself all those opposed all those abstaining miss Dixon one more time while the clerk please read the vote 1101 the motion carries thank you uh action item 6.03 motion to amend school calendar regarding indigenous peoples day I call on miss marron for a motion I move that the fairfax county school board direct the superintendent to designate indigenous peoples day as a standard instructional day for students and staff for the 2026-27 school

[00:59:23] year and all subsequent years and to create and implement a district-wide indigenous peoples day observance curriculum focused on the history sovereignty and contributions past and present of local indigenous peoples and especially first Americans. Is there a second? Second. Thank you Mr. McElveen. Miss Barron would you like to speak to your motion?

[00:59:41] In response to overwhelming input from parents seeking improvements to the fragmented student school year calendar I am taking actions toward initial relief in the next school year to reduce calendar disruptions. Students need more five-day school weeks.

[00:59:57] This is not the ideal approach, but it is where we all find ourselves. The ideal approach is that the school board has policies that clearly direct the superintendent to operate the schools, providing ample time for planning by all. At the same time, the superintendent also can approach the board with solutions when there are challenges to be addressed in real-time, outside of the policy review of five years.

[01:00:19] Neither of the above have happened to satisfaction at this time. As the next school year draws ever nearer, my goal is to offer solutions with the least disruption possible for students, families, and educators starting this fall. If this and Veterans Day changes are adopted, there will be two more full five-day school weeks in the first quarter of the next school year.

[01:00:40] This will help children regulate to the instructional schedule at the start of the year, setting them up for success. Then the board and the superintendent must finish the needed work to remedy the situation. clear policy, the board, and revisit the out-year calendars beginning with school year 27-28, the superintendent. My goal as governance committee chair is to have the calendar policy finalized as soon as possible, next month, in May, so the superintendent can return to the board with revised calendars for approval soon after. Regarding Indigenous Peoples Day in particular, I will be transparent and say that I debated and discussed this option much before

[01:01:16] bringing it forward. I realize that some families may have plans already for this date, as this is customarily a three-day weekend. As a soccer mom myself, I am aware that sports tournaments can occur on this fall three-day weekend. However, this is a way to add another five-day school week at the outset of the year without massively rearranging the calendar. Also, I consider the 66,000 students we have who can receive free or reduced meals, and another day in school will help their minds and their tummies. Ultimately, I decided to propose it to have the conversation with the board publicly this evening which happens to be the last day of this three-day school week

[01:01:53] Mr. McElveen would you like to speak to your motion or your second thank you so I think it's important to contextualize what we're doing tonight in history so pre-2022 I would say this system had a had a way to involve the community in building the calendar and it was called our calendar committee we heard from a speaker tonight who was a long-time member of the calendar committee and for many years that worked because there was a way to funnel the

[01:02:30] opinions and views of the community into the work of this board which was to annually adopt a calendar but by the time i returned to this dais in 2024 the calendar committee was nowhere to be seen In fact, I remember with Dr. Anderson, we were in a cab at a national conference and we were talking about this and, you know, I turned to her and I said, oh, well, we can just refer that to the calendar committee.

[01:03:00] And staff that was with us in that vehicle said, well, there is no calendar committee anymore. There is a calendar committee. It's a staff committee, but it does not reflect our community and our values. And so what has happened in intervening years is that this board has delegated to the superintendent and staff the ability to determine a three-year calendar.

[01:03:26] And I do not know the intentions of the prior board, but I don't think that their intentions were to, in perpetuity, remove the board from the calendar process. So, tonight, I think we are doing what we can with what we have, and frankly, we are working to correct the hot mess that is now scalding our community that was left to this current board.

[01:03:58] The solutions before us are not perfect. In a perfect world, I would not be supporting this motion before us, but we're doing what we can with what we have right now. So, with that, we are having to turn to federal holidays, and in this case, to Indigenous People's Day.

[01:04:18] So, I am seconding this. I am supporting this. In a perfect world, I would not be supporting this. I think there are many, as the community has made very clear, many other solutions that would make this calendar better. So, this isn't perfect. This is a bad solution to a bad problem.

[01:04:34] We need to do more, and I look to this board to provide leadership in the coming years to do more to address this calendar calamity. And I know that with some later motions tonight, we will have the opportunity to once again, as we have in the past, survey the community, get community voices in this process that has been just so calamitous.

[01:04:59] Thank you. Mr. Dunn. Thank you. I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues to bring forward multiple emotions this evening to address the calendar for next year. I think it's important to start with the calendar did not deteriorate because any one individual or any one school board.

[01:05:23] This is a trend over 20 years, as my newsletter showed. So it's a confluence of multiple decisions, multiple policies that all together work against the interests of families and students and academic outcomes.

[01:05:39] Just today, I received an email from a mother explaining that her child with special needs, because of the fragmented school calendar, at least in part, now receives homebound instruction because the calendar was too disruptive to enable her child to maintain an educational environment in a school setting, depriving that child of access to friends and all the benefits from being around your peers. I've also received hundreds of emails from my constituents and county residents explaining that they are facing financial burdens, logistical

[01:06:16] difficulties and to the point where people are considering giving up their jobs and their careers solely because of the school calendar. Now when I was growing up, when any of us in this room were growing up, the school calendar was not something you thought about. It was not something that tormented and traumatized our parents, but it's gotten to the point where families have expressed in explicit terms that the school calendar is the most important issue in their family's lives. And that is unacceptable. It's unconscionable. At a time

[01:06:51] when so many families are facing economic difficulties, anxiety about the job market with the advent of AI, federal layoffs, and so forth, we need to be able to support the quality of life in this county. We already have an affordability crisis. We need to make sure that we're designing government services to be convenient and easy for people to live and thrive in this county so that is the context within which i

view this school calendar discussion we do have the longest school year in the dmV region and nationally with comparable school districts we have the shortest summer we have the lowest percentage of five-day weeks and this is

[01:07:28] important to understand it's structural it's not it's not because of snow days or extreme weather events it's not because of the incredibly large number of special elections that brought our colleague to the board it's because this is a long-term trend and we need to fix it and I know that together we can tonight is the beginning but it's not the end I will be working with my colleagues in the coming weeks to bring additional motions that will seek to address the calendar through a holistic and comprehensive fix because our job is to set broad policy parameters and then

[01:08:04] to delegate to the superintendent in her operational focus to develop calendars to present to us for approval. Mr. Moon. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for all these calendar motions this evening because as Mr. Dunn stated that this gives us a good first opportunity to discuss in public about what you should do with ever deteriorating school calendars for our families and students and STEM members.

[01:08:41] With that said, what I'm about to say goes to both first motion and the third motion. Third motion being Veterans Day is I am going to stick with our current policy and regulations unless the board changes policy, superintendents changes regulations. Those should govern our decisions. That's how I view it. Regulation 1344.13

[01:09:19] list holidays, Indigenous People's Day is a holiday listed in our regulation. So in as much as we need to provide five full instructional day weeks, I support that. And I am willing to work with my colleague, Mr. Dunn, going forward to figure out how best to provide more five full instructional days for our students and family members but for this particular motion particular

[01:09:58] motion I am looking at 2026-2027 school calendar for the month of October month of October that is the only day that will cause one that particular week not to be five full instructional day week So, that month is much better than other months.

[01:10:22] Other months, that goes into the third motion, Veterans Day, is going to make things much worse for the month of November. So, with that said, once again, I'm going to stick with current policy and regulations until and unless our board, after full discussion with the community feedback, decides to change the policy and regulations.

[01:10:44] but thank you for bringing up this motion because this sets in motion of our important conversation we should have had from two years ago. Ms. Dixit. Thank you to my colleagues to bring this motion and also highlighting the issue. We have heard from the community about needing a five days work week, a school week. Why should we have five weeks work week? So anyways I wanted to say that I like this idea in the spirit and of course it's going to help a lot of our students and the

[01:11:24] community and the families but I am very hesitant to take federal holidays away from people who are either working in federal government or working in any state government, local government because a lot of these holidays are federal law holidays follow and there are a lot of families in Fairfax County which are connected with federal government in some ways and they're off that day.

[01:11:52] So I would like to find other days and I think there is possibility of having other days to be open where they're closed right now or obviously this board did not vote for calendar, right? So I'm open to discussing this with the community and I agree that should be discussed with all the stakeholders. It

cannot be just the board making decision for, you know, for the students and the families. So I'm open to it. I know that some middle school and high school students like that

[01:12:29] break in between because of their workload and sports and other things. But there are a lot of kindergartners or younger students, elementary grade, which obviously the families don't like that. They want those kids in the school. So I like to, you know, support overall this calendar situation and help in as a parent. I was a parent before I got on the board. And as I can see and feel as a parent still, right? So I will work with my colleagues and will definitely support something else, but not taking federal holidays away. So I'll not be supporting this motion.

[01:13:08] Thank you Mr. Frisch thank you I appreciate the contextualization of this is kind of like a stopgap measure and I think the fact that it is front loaded in the school year makes it more palatable despite the drawbacks on the federal holidays front and perhaps the work of the board on the out year calendar the policy and the out years calendar can remediate that issue in the out year calendars so

[01:13:41] And while, you know, I would never choose to start with federal holidays, I think this is a bridge to this process for us. And, you know, the last time the board voted on a calendar, I voted against it.

[01:14:00] And my argument at the time was that the alternative that ended up passing had fewer five-day school weeks than the approach that I preferred. People who remember that time will remember there was like yellow calendars and purple calendars and blue calendars and green calendars and red calendars.

[01:14:19] It was very difficult to keep it all straight. And so as we begin this conversation around the process going forward, I think what interests me the most is like, what is my responsibility as a board member?

[01:14:35] So in addition to working on the policy with my colleagues, I have to understand that the calendar discussion is not divorced from the rest of the work of the board. When we ask for new programs, when we ask for a new approach to literacy instruction or math instruction, or as I've been watching a lot of BBC, maths instruction, those things require professional development and training.

[01:15:02] And so we have to be, you know, thoughtful as we pick this work up and look to the calendars and the out years about what impact we have on the calendar through the votes that we have throughout the year that are not at least on their face anything to do with the calendar.

[01:15:19] Because then what we're doing is if we're removing opportunities for professional development or early release days or planning time, we are squeezing educators from both ends, right? We are putting more on them while at the same time taking away the space they need to thrive and the things that we're challenging them to step up to.

[01:15:38] You know, the first round of... early release days was instigated by the governor's legislation or the the general assembly's legislation on literacy instruction we were a year ahead of them but it was put on us and it opened an opportunity for us to have planning time for elementary school educators who did not have that time and it didn't cost us money to provide time outside of the school day will cost a school system already struggling financially a significant amount of money so we have to be thoughtful about the levers that we pull in this conversation in the months ahead as we talk about the next three

[01:16:17] school years that you know if we want I'm just going to finish my thought and then I'm probably not going to speak to this for any of the other motions but if we want let's say a later start date but

we also want an earlier end date but we don't want to sacrifice the long winter and we also want that week off for spring break we can't have it all right so we have to be conscious of that fact that this is really about priorities that we set as we have this conversation so I appreciate the effort to get us to a point where we can at least make some modest improvements there will be other improvements some of the holidays we typically have will be off next year

[01:16:53] because during the weekend so more five-day weeks that way but this is just a starting point to to get us into the conversation with some modest improvements so I'll be voting for this motion and the veterans day motion as well thank you mr fresh uh mr danny thank you very much um i i i recognize that this is one of those difficult thorny issues that there's no perfect solution that exists um and it's something that you know it's a it's a complex logic puzzle and my worry and full transparency i i've not fully resolved how i want to vote i know i've talked to my colleagues but i'm not fully resolved how i want to vote because i wanted to hear the discussion

[01:17:31] tonight the input and so forth um i did have a few questions for the superintendent if i'm able to ask but um you know there's a range of factors that we need to consider right we're talking about student learning whether it's learning loss over having a longer summer um whether it's impact of having those shortened weeks that we've all seen of a parent of two kids um in different pyramids at different early release schedules um you know child care costs uh student meals uh absentee rates um respect to the diverse communities um in our in fairfax that you know for the first time in years but had their holidays recognized adequate planning and development times for our teachers

[01:18:06] coordination with neighboring counties teacher and community input on all of the above plus the collective bargaining implications right and so again i really appreciate the suggestions and the proposals um i i wish i could just repeat everything that my colleague mr moon said about wanting to look at this holistically from a policy perspective um am i am i able to ask questions Dr. Reed, can you speak, how many planned five-day weeks were there last year?

[01:18:36] I mean, in the current year, I'm sorry, the current year. In the current year? Yes. In the current year, we had 23 planned five school day weeks. Is that including the two, or the 23 minus the two special elections? Sure.

[01:18:51] We had 25 originally planned that should have been 25 five-day weeks, but the special elections brought us down to 23. Okay, and then looking ahead to next year, how many five-day weeks do we have? We have 24 five-day weeks scheduled next year. Okay. I know the state law states that the school year we need to have at least 180 instructional days or 990 instructional hours.

[01:19:12] Where are we as far as that goes for next year? Well, for next year, let me clarify. We've had 180 days every year at least, and we also build in an additional buffer of days for weather or inclement circumstances.

[01:19:30] So even with the, if you will, challenging year we've had this year with weather and elections and so forth, we still have the equivalent of a day and a half above the minimum 180 remaining this year. So next year we have the 180 plus the 10 that we build in as a buffer.

[01:19:50] Okay. And I ask this as a child who used to receive free and reduced price meals. For students who rely on school meals, what options are there when school is not in session, whether it's a federal

holiday or our own. So one of the things that happened this year is we had several inclement days, inclement weather days in a row.

[01:20:09] We actually did provide meals at different locations. For the one-day federal holiday or one-day school closures, there are no meals. For the early release planning, we do send meals home with children on those days.

[01:20:25] Okay. I'm going to probably talk more later, but, again, I really appreciate the comments tonight about wanting to work towards a solution on this and I'm looking forward to having further discussion. Dr. Anderson.

[01:20:43] Thank you. I do want to thank my colleague, Ms. Marin, and Ms. McElveen for bringing this up and to really spur the conversation that started really to germinate last fall. Last fall we had a community member that came to this meeting to talk about the calendar, And that was the first time where it really started to bubble.

[01:21:05] And then it just continued to increase. And there's a lot of discussion around this. We are at a place where we're just trying to salvage something for next year. And I've said this before and I'll say it again. I was a teacher for several years.

[01:21:21] Back in the day when lesson plans were in a book, that book came for five-day planning. And that's what we plan for as teachers. We plan for five-day instruction. You know, you had your things on Monday and on Friday you would have your small quiz. And that is still largely where instruction is in terms of planning out your week.

[01:21:43] And it's hard to have this conversation this week, given that our students, and by the way, my children love this. They will hate everything that I'm about to say. They had spring break last week. They came back, yes, they came back this week.

[01:22:01] Monday was off. Tomorrow is off. I have to think we must be able to do better than this. And again, this is me realizing as a teacher and as a former principal, and I said this during our town hall, we need the professional development days for a lot of reasons that I'll speak about a little bit later.

[01:22:21] We need to be able to have our kids to have consistency. This cannot be our best effort. This is just cannot. I refuse to believe that. These motions tonight, it is an effort to do something for next year just so we could salvage a little bit more.

[01:22:42] Because going from 23 weeks to 24 weeks of five full-day instruction, it's not enough. And so I will be supporting this motion, and I will be speaking a little bit more to some of my other rationale with the other motions to come.

[01:22:59] So thank you, both of you, for bringing this to us. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. I'm going to take a quick turn. I remember watching the discussion in February of 2023, and I had just announced that I was going to run for school board, and I definitely was questioning my life decisions at that moment, just based on the discussion at the time.

[01:23:21] But what clearly came through that discussion was the purpose of the three-year calendar, is that absolutely we did not want to find ourselves in this do loop every year. where we were constantly dealing with all of the nitty-gritty issues every year. So I am all in favor of us figuring out a cyclical way that we can have the calendar discussions that we need to have and still maintain the three-year cycle.

[01:23:45] So my concern with Indigenous Peoples Day specifically is that I believe that the federal holidays are the times that we likely already have support for parents, Where if the day is off, then kiddos are already at home with parents.

[01:24:03] And I understand fully that that is not every parent. I get it. I totally understand. As someone who very rarely gets a day off, I totally get it. But what I will say is right now that is a school planning day, which means that is a training opportunity for teachers.

[01:24:21] So we have taken advantage of a federal holiday where most parents, not all, but most parents potentially have the day off, and we're using that day as the school planning time. And my concern with taking that away is where does that school planning go? So where do the training opportunities go? In addition to also being a heavy sports parent, I fully understand that we will have a significant number of students absent that Monday because of the already planned tournaments that people have already bought into for next year. So for that reason, I agree with my

[01:24:55] colleague that I will be following the policy on this and on the third motion just to make sure that we can go ahead and then I am open to having those discussions with my colleagues about how we can shape the policy for the future. So I see Mr. Dunn for a go back. Thank you. I think of the three motions this this is the most difficult for me because historically and I have done the research, as you might expect. FCPS has never recognized Columbus Day, at least within the past

[01:25:31] 20 years, as a school day. And so this would be a change with kids being in school. And so for that reason, I think we do want to get to more five-day weeks, but we do have to take account of the some of the factors that my colleagues have mentioned but one of the things I wanted to draw on is that the superintendent said we're at 23 or 24 weeks that's only if you're disregarding early release days if you actually consider an early release day as not making a five-day week so you have five

[01:26:10] days of school but when the days is an early release day we're actually at a much lower percentage. We're at 15 out of 44 weeks, or 34%, just one-third of the weeks in elementary school. And many of our pyramids, including Mount Vernon, South County, West Potomac, Centerville, Chantilly, Fairfax, Justice, Oakton, Robinson, Westfield, that's a lot of high school pyramids where elementary schools only have one-third of weeks being five-day school weeks if you include early release days.

[01:26:45] In others, it's 43% or 19 out of 44 weeks. I think that's very concerning, and I'll talk about this some more when we have the next motion up, but I just want to put that data out there because I think it's an important point that we need to know the impacts this is having on our families.

[01:27:03] My wife works at a preschool, and one of her teachers didn't show up one day and kept her kids home. Why? Because our calendar is a rainbow hue of colors and it's impossible for anyone looking at it intuitively to decipher which is the day off, which is a student planning day. We need to make it easy and not make it so you need a degree in hieroglyphics to figure out when to send your kid to school. Ms. McConan. Just a comment, just a top, I really hope my friends and peers are not listening to this when I say that I want more five-day instructional weeks. I like this motion

[01:27:41] but I think right now it's being used as a broader representation of the excessive days of this year when it's a little bit different because it is a federal holiday. I think we have to look at each of the holidays and early releases individually so we can make the decision. And I know it's hard to not just take a

win where we can get it with this day, but I don't think making a federal holiday a standard instructional day would be beneficial for staff or students since the inconvenience is already solved for the parents.

[01:28:03] If I could vote, I would not support this motion, as much as it kills me to say this. And I'm happy we're starting a conversation about the calendar committee, And this is a question for Dr. Eder, anybody who could answer it. Since there wasn't a calendar committee since 2022, if I'm correct, how were the decisions about these religious holidays being added, being made?

[01:28:20] What was the process? The process was provided as a board directive in November of 23 that enumerated a number of facets of the calendar, including the holiday list.

[01:28:41] Thank you, Ms. McConaughy. Ms. Marin for a go back. And Chair, is that three minutes or two minutes? I could plan accordingly. Thank you. So, you know, I started my career in the federal government, and these are my thoughts about federal observances at this point in time.

[01:28:58] Okay, our federal-related workforce has been dismantled. So, anecdotally, I'm unsure of how many people are beholden to the federal calendar. I have one friend who's now a substitute teacher in preschool. I have another friend who took a job at a law firm.

[01:29:13] I have a couple of friends who are probably moving out of the area because they both got laid off from state. So I don't think, again, at this time, that we could just say, well, we're all federally connected. And by the way, I was a board member who changed Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. That is how much I care about the intention of that day and keeping it as a day on for learning.

[01:29:31] My husband works for a private business. He is not off on Columbus Day nor Veterans Day or Indigenous Peoples Day. You know, I just want to say that there's times to change. And again, this is at the start of the school year. Now, again, I said this was the one I was most tentative about, but I think saying, well, this is a federal holiday, that meant something different a year and a half ago.

[01:29:53] And also, would it be the worst thing if a parent had a day to themselves? I mean, you know, with their child in school, like, I'm just saying things change, and we know that parents are stressed. But I do respect that our staff are scheduled for that professional development. So I will advocate much more hardly for the Veterans Day motion a little bit later.

[01:30:12] Thank you. Okay, seeing no others, we're going to go ahead and take a vote for the motion that is on the screen. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Dr. Anderson, and I can't see Ms. Lady.

[01:30:31] All those opposed, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Moon, and myself, and Ms. Lady.

[01:30:48] Yeah, I'm opposed. And Ms. Lady. All those abstaining, Mr. Dunn. Will the clerk please read the vote? 471, the motion fails. Thank you. Agenda item 6.04, action item, motion to amend school calendar regarding early release days. I call on Mr. Dunn for a motion. I move to direct the superintendent to schedule no more than

[01:31:24] four early release days per school year. Is there a second? I second. Thank you, Ms. Marin. Mr. Dunn, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes. For many years, Fairfax County Public Schools had what was known as early release Mondays, and there were 30 of them per year. And in the 2004-2006

timeframe, there was a study done by the Fairfax County government, and it found that Fairfax County had the largest number of latchkey kids in the entire country, 30,000. That means children

[01:32:02] who every day, because of early release days, went home and there was no adult present to care for them. It found that there were children in second grade, third grade, fourth grade and so forth and there was no one to care for them. That was a major impetus to get rid of early release Mondays to make sure that children were cared for and were in the constant presence of adults. This year we have 12 early release days at the elementary school level. We essentially have reverted to

[01:32:42] almost 50 percent of the early release Mondays that were abolished several years ago and we have provided this year and last year child care on-site at schools and what we've seen from the data is that low-income children are particularly affected with large numbers up to a third of students at particular schools especially those that are majority low income staying on site now that has resulted in deleterious effects for training objectives that are the whole purpose of early release days. Next year it's been proposed or stated that there

[01:33:19] will be no child care on site. We're going to send the kids home. From a moral perspective, from a public safety perspective, from a child care perspective, I cannot support early release days when we're reverting to sending tens of thousands of kids home with no adult to care for them. At a time when there's a lot of scary stuff happening in our society I also think that we have to take cognizance of the fact that the early release days that are not even listed really on the calendar have never been considered or approved by the school board we've talked often about the three

[01:33:58] year calendar this is the last of the three years it was approved back in 2023 it didn't have these early release days either last year or this year and there's been no motion no effort brought to the school board at any time in the last three years to add early release days to the school calendar so from my perspective as a lawyer these are unapproved they're unapproved and they should not be allowed moreover the stories I have heard from parents hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of parents almost a thousand is heartbreaking the impact that these days the chaos that is bringing

[01:34:34] into their lives is unacceptable this is costing them thousands of dollars in child care logistics are mind-numbing and for single parents and those in the military, the burdens are extraordinary. We have to listen to their stories and I will be sharing those emails with my colleagues.

[01:34:51] Thank you. Ms. Mary. If the elementary school early release days are capped at four by the board tonight, this will already create a less fractured calendar for the whole of the next year and future years. So my action steps are informed by continuous parent input that elementary school early release days and otherwise fragmented instructional schedule are difficult on kids and families.

[01:35:15] Outdated and misaligned school board policies about students' instructional schedule and the lack of action by the superintendent and board as a whole to address parent requests. I fully support educators, especially elementary grade educators, having the time needed and deserve for instructional planning and professional development. I have championed this since I first arrived into office in 2020 and sadly had to lay it aside as we dealt with COVID.

[01:35:38] I recognize the long-time disparity for this time as compared to secondary grade levels. The early release days instituted in 24/25 were in response to new, state-mandated professional development for educators to implement the science of reading to ensure students are reading and literate on grade

level because if kids aren't literate by third grade, it is much harder for them to be successful in school and life.

[01:35:58] I supported that plan, and from what I heard from the community then, they supported it too because they want to support their teachers. that good grace extended by the community has been taken advantage of. I believe that the superintendent can find solutions to provide educators with this time, just not as early release days to students that burden families and disorient students. I join many parents even favoring more time for elementary educators if the scheduling reduces interrupting five full-day instructional weeks and does not rely on early release as the method. Suggestions include adding a whole day to an already existing student holiday rather than several early release days.

[01:36:39] And further, although current guidelines used by the superintendent from board discussion in 2023 not a directive, we did not vote on that, there shall be no more than four early release days annually. This has not been followed. So this is actually our policy, and it's not really policy, but that is what the superintendent is using as the go-to. As to what type of early release days, that is not important for me for this decision the point is to codify as a board policy and a directive to not have more than four early release days because it's clear that the situation has gone untenable however it is the superintendent's job to operate the school division and the school

[01:37:16] board's job to hold her accountable for doing so thank you Ms. Marin uh Dr. Anderson thank you in addition to what was shared I want to offer some context I wanted to understand better what the Mason District community felt about early release days because it's great to hear anecdotal stories but it's really better to have a collective voice just to understand where critical mass lie and so I did a I sent a survey only about early release days and within days there were hundreds and hundreds of

[01:37:55] people who completed it and we ended up in the neighborhood of 225 people before it closed and these were the findings 81% said the early release days were burdensome 81% said they were too frequent 59% said if we were to have if we needed if we must have early release days could there be on Fridays the reason why I raise this is because this dovetails with what I hear from our principals if these days were on Fridays it's just going to be a long weekend that's going

[01:38:34] to be a lost day of instruction. That means my chronic absenteeism rate that I am working so hard to get down is going to increase because it is now considered a three-day weekend. I've always taken issue because I don't think it's clear to parents that early release days for all types are not on the calendar, such as the elementary Wednesdays, the PSAT days for high schoolers, plus so many other days for high schoolers because of testing etc. I am a big believer that our

[01:39:08] teachers need to have regular opportunities for professional development. I've said this yesterday I said it last year I said I'm saying it today and I will say it tomorrow. When we have um let's take the commanders they don't do all their coaching in July and then are hands off for the rest of the year it has to be continuous and I believe the same thing needs to happen with our teachers it just has to be more strategically placed as it is right now it is untenable I also had a question and for some reason I can't find that data piece that asks parents what is it that

[01:39:48] your kids are doing and how engaging it is lots of them are reporting that it is that they're in the cafeteria for three hours in front of a screen. This is not the ideal position and I think we have some really good smart people on this staff who could help us think of something better. So I will be supporting this

plan. Even teachers are saying this is not working because colleagues take this time as maybe to have an appointment. Principals say this is not working because they're trying to

[01:40:24] manage the kids that remain because I do believe we have to provide opportunity for those kids to stay at schools because their parents are not able to pick them up or to receive them at home so I will stop there but I will be supporting this motion and I hope we all can. Mr. Dannen. Thank you very much. I want to I appreciate my colleague Dr. Anderson talking about the timing for this training right because I want folks to recognize like it's not a matter of just putting all these training and professional development at the beginning of the year, and your comment about

[01:41:00] strategic placement, I thought was very fascinating because, again, I have more questions for Dr. Reed here. Again, as a parent of two kids and different pyramids with different early release schedules, what is the best alternative in your mind to the current situation where we have these three-hour early release days, putting aside the quarter-end days early release, the two- and three-hour early release periods right what's the best option alternative in your mind or some other alternatives we could consider you know I think I would have to take that back to the team I know one of the reasons well there were

[01:41:35] several reasons that led us to the current early release several of those clearly were around the required literacy training that the Commonwealth expected and we really we didn't intend for it to be a forever strategy we were hoping as we roll out a new math basal at some point that that would be sort of the last time because we want to make sure that our staff really I think have that opportunity on a regular cadence to meet as groups and review new materials

[01:42:10] we haven't had a math basal curriculum in several decades so we're particularly the literacy one as well the other thing is from a budget standpoint we didn't have a budget to provide training outside the school day because we have to logically compensate staff for that and in a really difficult budget time we we didn't have those funds to do that additionally we had a long discussion around if you take teachers out of the classroom during the day then we have substitutes in the classroom and we weren't sure that that was our best next move

[01:42:48] either instructionally although we appreciate all our substitutes so if you're a substitute out there we do appreciate your efforts but we know it's not the same as the classroom teacher in the classroom so to answer that question I think you know I would need to go back to the team and really have a conversation about where you would place professional development once the school year gets started obviously before the school year and at the end but there aren't a lot of options honestly in the middle of the school year that aren't going to require time either out of the classroom or outside the classroom right I mean it's a fairly

[01:43:26] finite set of options but I think you know we would take it back and obviously have that conversation so as a former substitute teacher I won't take offense to your comments but if we do vote tonight to enact this constraint and again I want to preface that I recognize this is a very difficult logic puzzle with no perfect solution and I'm very wary of adding new constraints without having that broader discussion and encompassing everything else, recognizing on balance the acute issue of the challenge of the current calendar. But what would things look like next year as far as that? Are you going to have teachers, especially at the elementary level, that don't have enough time for planning and development? Are you able to make, with the

[01:44:06] current authority we've given you, are you able to make additional changes such as consolidating those in some of those early release days into a single day? Well, I mean, I think if the Motion passes obviously we go back even pre the early release we were able to Standardize the what I would call Bargain Planning time for elementary staff. I think when we were looking at rolling out for example the new literacy materials We felt like a bit more than that standard amount of planning time was necessary

[01:44:42] In particular for the required training, so I think that we would have to make sure that we had the agreed-upon contractual elementary planning time occurring within the day. However, I don't want to confuse planning time with professional development, right? Our elementary educators, all our educators work really hard, and they need that individual planning time, too, that's not structured or Directed and that's separate from if you will a school planning day where a principal Has professional development perhaps they want to be providing or the I think very few

[01:45:20] Hours during the year that the division has an opportunity to provide professional development on certain topics but the actual Independent planning time we would of course need to make sure was provided. I appreciate that I want to thank my colleagues again for bringing this up.

[01:45:40] Ms. Marin has sent me a range of very helpful information, we've had long conversations. Mr. Dunn, I appreciate all the work that you and your staff have done looking back at the current year and previous years, I appreciate the work that my staff has done and Mr. McDaniel's staff have done looking at future years, and again, I appreciate the discussion tonight.

[01:45:58] Thank you. Ms. Dixon. I'd like to thank again my colleagues who brought this motion and put a lot of hard work into this. Even though I did not get an opportunity to discuss this one-on-one, but I like to share there, here this motion is a little restrictive because it considers all schools, not just elementary school.

[01:46:25] and there's a you know there is like a end of the year high schools usually have like early release days and putting such a strict motion I think is going to restrict our schools to function and and it's I think it's going to impact more than what we are seeing right now our teachers work very hard in our schools and with the salaries they get and not the affordability issues this I would support the staff here and say if they want some additional time, we'll make for them.

[01:47:01] So I haven't done that discussions. I have not engaged with Dr. Reed and all this FCPS staff to have that conversation. I think it's more in-depth in information we need at this point. I hesitate putting a motion right like this.

[01:47:18] It's going to restrict the school year for next year. And maybe we should have this more deep and covered conversation while we're talking about calendar. This is no band-aid approach. So I like to go comprehensive, deep into it, and resolve anything, all these issues we are having.

[01:47:38] But I do agree that early release may cause some issues with a lot of families and maybe we can find another way to resolve that. But at the end, I will say I'm supportive of our teachers who may need this time, and we really have to look out for them.

[01:47:56] Thank you so much. Mr. McElveen. So back in 2014, Mr. Moon and I were sitting at this dais when we made the decision to move away from Half Day Mondays, and that was a generational, lifetime-changing decision, right?

[01:48:19] Something that had never been done in this system, and we said we would never go back, right? We were also promised that same night that we would have world language in every elementary school. We would expand TTT time on Mondays so that teachers would have planning time.

[01:48:38] We would send our students to world language class to their other TTT time activities, and that never happened. So there's a pattern here, and I'll get to that in a minute. There's a lot of things we were promised that did not happen, right?

[01:48:55] But fast forward to two years ago, when we were sold early releases, it was something the principals wanted, so we did it as a temporary solution at their request. But as we have seen, it has not been a temporary solution.

[01:49:16] We were also, as has been stated, promised that we would have planned activities on those days. We would partner with the Boys and Girls Club, we would partner with the YMCA, we would partner with all these groups to get folks in our elementary schools to work with the students and have enrichment activities.

[01:49:35] That did not happen. So when I speak to elementary school parents today, and I am one and we have others at this dais, the biggest complaint that I hear is these early release days. And let me be clear, I want our staff to have their planning time. I think everyone at this table wants them to.

[01:49:50] but we have to do that in a way that we have over many years which is not putting the onus on our parents to find care on random days of the week and I disagree with Dr. Anderson on this I think we should be looking at Fridays I've told the superintendent for several years we should be looking at Fridays for these days because that's when it's most convenient to folks so my question for the makers of this motion is and i'm supportive of this motion but when we say four days how does

[01:50:24] that apply across the system how does it apply at elementary middle and high school mr dunn uh thank you um what we see over the last 20 years is that the average number of days at all levels after the average all levels sorry average for high school and middle school level is 3.55 so 3.55 is less than four. In general, middle and high school doesn't need many early release days. How they're used is up to the operational discretion of the superintendent. There have been generally no more

[01:51:03] than six at the elementary school level since the abolition of early release Mondays until they were brought back 18 months ago for this year and the year before. So four is a reasonable number within the parameters of the last two years, sorry, of the last 10 years, and as a reasonable compromise to provide enough early release days that can be used for end of quarter, other purposes, planning time, but not so many that it is burdening and causing inconveniences to our families.

[01:51:42] I didn't get an answer there, Mr. Dunn. Can you repeat the question? Can you be more specific? Elementary, middle, high, what does it look like? For this year? For what we're saying in this motion, which is no more than four days. Four early release days at the elementary level, four early release days at the middle school level, four early release days at the high school level.

[01:52:04] All levels of school would be four under this motion as currently constructed. Then can I ask the superintendent, how would you operationalize that? Thank you. I would enact four early release days at elementary, four at middle and four at high school, to be honest.

[01:52:24] Is it four? Well, it is. I mean, that's how I would operationalize it, Mr. McElwain. Currently, I believe we have three that cover quarter grading, and then the fourth, I don't know that, you know, we would probably try to find that. But I would obviously work within those guidelines.

[01:52:41] Okay. Thank you. Mr. McElwain, or McDaniel, sorry. I had another technical question for whoever wants to answer the question, perhaps the maker of the motion. I presume that if the motion passes, the intention will be to be implemented in the fall of 26, 27.

[01:53:01] As written, the motion would apply to next school year, 26-27. Yeah, and I've gone back and forth on this one, and I think the discussion tonight is solidified that I'm going to abstain on this.

[01:53:18] I just don't have enough information. I don't know that four is right. I don't know that four is wrong. You know, the data shows middle school and high school is, you know, four is kind of seems to be the sweet spot. I have significant concerns at the elementary level that right now are not clear enough for me to be able to vote up and down. So I'll be abstaining on this motion. Mr. Moon. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to support this motion. I am not going to repeat what Mr. McElvin has

[01:53:56] already stated, you know, going back to 2014, why the board made that decision, which has been really a the board former boards have not been able to make the decision for decades very difficult one we work very closely with dan superintendent dr garza was able to make that happen and was also able to provide a step planning time for our teachers who are concerned about losing

[01:54:32] monday afternoon now again that has been gradually being taken away because with increase in number of early releases sudden jump now we are losing what we tried to accomplish back in 2014 that's very unfortunate and also for the during the pandemic years i was not on the board so i do not know exactly what happened back in 2023 when the last time the board prior board publicly voted

[01:55:11] on the calendar motions and adopted the three-year calendar which ends with this academic year they also passed a follow-up motion at the time to bring back bring back a policy and revised regulation with a community input all that before this board board approves a new calendar going forward what we have on our website for the next two years as the next two years calendar have never been approved by

[01:55:50] this board that's a contrary to the motion passed by 2023 i was not on the board at the time so i didn't remember this until very recently trying to find the record how has this happened that has to be rectified and i'm glad that we are having this discussion even though we are two years behind in doing this four days of all releases that's way too many that's way too many and and i am

[01:56:27] willing to support four days even though so my my some of my colleagues may feel that they may be too restrictive however we used to be able to do this with the four days i think john cunning mr moon i don't think anybody will call to you for not remembering when you you weren't here. So thank you for asking the question about if this applies to all school

[01:57:02] of all great grade levels elementary high school and middle school because that that really has solidified my decision. Dr. Reed what would the impact be for professional development for our teachers if we restrict early release days at all levels, but particularly elementary?

[01:57:30] This evening, I'm not sure I'm able to answer that directly. I think that obviously the professional development would occur for elementary staff in a different way than it has this year and last.

I don't know that it would affect or impact the middle and high school because they're not traditionally using early release for professional development.

[01:57:52] They're using the staff planning days. Do you foresee that there will be a financial impact there can't be this we haven't budgeted for that for next year and we're even with what we have budgeted for still looking at a forty four million dollar gap so I don't think we'll be adding budget dollars to buy planning time outside the day or sub time during the day for that as someone that did work in the in elementary schools and did see the struggle in terms of planning time for teachers and the juggling.

[01:58:32] and did see the promise of some extra courses being added so that teachers could get that and that not happening, a promise that was made by a superintendent that didn't stay her full term.

[01:58:49] I understand what a burden it is for teachers. I understand how hard it is. I know that we had a collective bargaining agreement, and teachers are supposed to work to their contract.

[01:59:04] And I'm here to tell you that we're really lucky that they don't. And I probably am not saying the right thing here and probably will get in trouble because they go above and beyond and work way past those contract hours even without early release days. I can't imagine the stress that our teachers will feel and the stress that will cause to our students.

[01:59:30] I also can't imagine the impact it will have if they don't have the adequate professional development that they need and the impact that that will have on our students. and we're saying limiting it to four days all across the board and if the state or the federal government comes down with something else that we have to do the way we did when we initiated this this year I feel this and because I do know the work that goes on and look I worked in schools

[02:00:08] for 26 years I was not an educator I could never do what they do they are amazing they go above and beyond and they are there all the time. I happen to be there a lot and I happen to be there in evenings a lot because as a family liaison that's when families could meet me. I cannot tell you how full that building was beyond contract hours. Early release gives them at least some breathing room to get some of the work done that they have. I can't support this motion. I have to support our

[02:00:37] teachers. Ms. Lady. Thank you. So I have a lot of points to make. One, I certainly understand the decision made under dr. Garza to get rid of early release days but I will also tell you we were getting a higher percentage of the budget from the Board of Supervisors at that time and planning time was not the issue that it is today also we are facing staffing issues upcoming one of the things in the budget is to reinstate the ART's and the special ed department chairs at the elementary level to a 1.0 from a point five and as dr. Reed just stated we're

[02:01:16] 44 million dollars short of what we need and I'm not going to vote for what the board did last year which was to require teachers to give up a 1.0 not teachers elementary principals to give up a 1.0 to make those people full-time because we lost a lot of steam teachers in that we lost some behavior specialists we lost some emerts in that we lost some counselors in that we really crippled some of our people so I can't do that and because if we have more specials we have more plenty of time for elementary teachers. We don't need anything in terms of early release.

[02:01:50] Also, when it comes to early release, I think we need to pay attention, like at the end of the year for high school, of exam days. Once I take my exam in first period, why would you make me go to first period for three more days? Okay, so there's early release days because they do two exams a day.

[02:02:06] I think we have to pay attention when grades are due. I've never been in elementary, but I understand elementary grades are due like two weeks before the last day of school. I'm not saying they're not doing things that are enriching but we're having a dialogue about a lot of different things and I'll tell you as an employee who had to live with what the board voted on the first time that the calendar became all the o days and we had all these days off nobody talked to the employees i feel like nobody took the employees into account we watched our summer disappear and then we watched the ability to present new instruction um or provide assessments disappear because we had so

[02:02:44] many observation days having said that we're a diverse school system we have diverse beliefs cultures and religions and no one is above the other and i think we have to remain sensitive to that um you know in talking about how teacher use these days i think it's first of all let me ask this question dr reed um it's my memory that we as a board did vote to approve for you to do early release days is that correct did we vote to say yes we didn't necessarily say a number but didn't we vote to say yes you could do early release days I don't know that we did miss lady I know we discussed it but I can't recall if we actually voted or not

[02:03:23] voted all right I felt like we did also I think that someone earlier today said that next year if we had early release days there would be no childcare has there been discussion that if we did early release next year there would be no childcare no that was the committee recommendation but I think that what I shared with the committee is that I wouldn't be comfortable moving forward with a recommendation that did not include child care, as we have done.

[02:03:48] Thank you. Sometimes I just hear things come from people in the discussions that we have, and I'm like, it's not the same as my memory. So that's an important thing. You know, the other thing is I will say this, that the early release days at the end of the quarter are a different amount of time than the early release days for elementary.

[02:04:09] Whatever we do, they have to be the same amount of hours. I also would say that I don't think we need an early release day at the end of the first quarter or the third quarter. However, the second quarter, because of middle schools and the number of semester courses and the need for them to create new seating charts for, you know, 150 kids, it's time-consuming in addition to doing grades, so I would advocate that that stay early release day.

[02:04:33] And I guess the most important thing I want to say is that, like, I'm sort of... That was your time. I'm happy to put you on a go-back. Okay. I haven't spoken the whole meeting. Can I just finish? We're going to go ahead, and we have several people on the list, but I'll absolutely put you on a go back. It'll give you more time. I am going to take a very quick turn myself.

[02:04:53] I've been really conflicted about this one because I don't, I definitely hear the community input in terms of wanting, but really I'm only hearing from elementary parents. And so I am concerned because when we started opening up the conversation into the PSAT days and the SAT days and things like that that are going on, I have some questions.

[02:05:19] So the first question is, how many days are we talking about at the end of the year for high school for exams? And how many days is it an early release for SAT? I believe it's just one day for SAT and PSAT.

[02:05:35] So currently, I believe middle and high school have three early release days for grading. and then have several i'm going to phone a friend here um does somebody know the number of days for finals

i'll ask miss neil to help us out here on high school finals and psat day i'm gonna uh psat is an early release so there's one day for psat there's a one early release at the end end of the year for all schools and i think i'm going to ask dr presidio if he can weigh in on uh finals at the

[02:06:08] the high school level and SAT day that's the last week of uh the calendar for high schools finals i i'd have to i'd have to triple check we'll get back to you on that but it's the total days currently for high school is more than four so we would be paring back somewhere in that so it could potentially mean that that kids well and for middle school really too it could potentially mean that kids that would normally have the ability to come home and work on studying for

[02:06:44] the next exam or something like that wouldn't actually have the time to do that or they would be doing it in school with teachers that are trying to actively grade the exams that were taken that morning. The other concern that I have is right now we only have four early release days at the elementary level without daycare like without child care provided so without the ability and could you speak a little bit about what else is being done on those days with some of our

[02:07:13] Well, you know, I understand there are different elementary schools, we have 141 and they all have a different percentage or number of students that are choosing to stay on those days. And in some schools, I mean, we've done clubs, there's tutoring in some schools. There are large group activities, depends on the weather as well, whether they're indoor or outdoor. We have partnered with different groups. So it's really just a wide variety. There's a continuum of opportunities.

[02:07:43] right now that's occurring during those times. And some students are receiving instruction is that correct? Yes ma'am. Okay so in addition at the same time that this all came on that was the budget crunch that actually we lost classroom monitors which some schools were effectively using to take the place of one of the CLTs that was happening during the school day which increased planning time. So we've got all of these factors coming in at the same moment and I am I just don't have enough information to be able to make the decision because I definitely hear from my constituents

[02:08:20] and I definitely hear from you know teachers and just looking at it but I also because I haven't heard any of the high school or middle school student or parents weigh in because no one talked about the fact that this would include their early release days that are traditionally I mean ever since I was a kid 30 years ago in high school, certainly we had the same things happen.

[02:08:45] So because those were not explicitly explained, I did not realize that this would all be inclusive. So this one's going to be a tough one to figure out where to land. We're going to go to go backs, and we're going to start with Mr. Dunn. Thank you.

[02:09:01] I just wanted to start. To the extent my colleagues have perceived that the scope of the motion needs to be adjusted, That's what the amendment process is for, and I welcome their amendments. If you have amendments to the number, if you have amendments to the level of school, elementary, middle, high school, I welcome that and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate.

[02:09:23] First, I have found in my two and a half years that FCPS is too self-referential and insular in its practices. It doesn't compare to other schools necessarily outside of the Wavy Guide. certainly doesn't compare to national peers. Early release days, I went to schools in five different states. I never had a single early release day, to my knowledge, and I've gone back and looked. Dr. Reed, you've been superintendent

in other school districts across the country. You know of many superintendents across the country. Are early release days the predominant form of

[02:09:58] providing planning time to elementary school teachers? Thank you for the question, Mr. Dunn. And I think that, I don't know if I could say it's the predominant form, I do know there are a number of divisions that I've served in and many colleagues, honestly, ours were more often a late start.

[02:10:18] We did the equivalent hours, but before the school day. So there was usually one day a week where school started later for a particular grade band that was working on a particular special project. But I don't, I've also seen early release.

[02:10:34] I don't think they're uncommon, but, you know, I think we have to do what we think is best for our context and our families, for sure. And when there isn't late start or early release, what are some of the options that you've seen in other school districts?

[02:10:51] Because you're a national expert on public education. Well, thank you, Mr. Dunn. I think the options are full days, right, that people have in the calendar. This week, we had a school planning day. It was one of the reasons why we're not in school.

[02:11:08] So I think the school planning days are marked throughout the year. Teacher work days are marked throughout the year. Grading time is marked throughout the year. Those are really common characteristics of a school calendar. I think that many school calendars, you know, are just very, they're varied across the nation.

[02:11:29] Honestly, we were having a discussion recently. There are a number of school divisions that have moved to four-day weeks because of either budget or in some more remote areas for staff retention purposes. There are other divisions that go year-round and take days off around different quarters.

[02:11:49] So I think the calendar has become an interesting flex tool, if that makes any sense. They're also, because of building circumstances, AM and PM types of work, and then there's the option to pay staff for outside the school day type coursework or weekends.

[02:12:13] But again, that requires better funding, and as you know with our JLARC funding reports here in Virginia, those funds aren't necessarily as available here as they are in other states. But it's not uncommon in other states to provide funding outside the school day for staff to engage in professional development.

[02:12:33] We just, at this point, really don't have that option. I believe that, Alexandria, there's a modified school calendar and a couple other places in Virginia where, you know, they'll have, you know, for each quarter, and each quarter is equally, equal length. Then between quarters, you'll have a little break, vacation for families and students.

[02:12:53] But built into those breaks is time for student planning. And so that's another option that we heard during the virtual town hall that Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and I held on Tuesday night. And I think there's a lot of examples out there, best practices, lessons learned, that we shouldn't be laser-focused on early releases as a binary.

[02:13:14] This is the only tool in the toolbox. There are many tools in the toolbox. And I think if we adopt a restriction on the number of early release days, There are other things that we can look to to achieve our goal of providing sufficient planning time. Thank you.

[02:13:30] Ms. Merritt. If what I just realized while listening is correct, then I am embarrassed, not only for myself, but for the board. In the guidelines, which I don't know if they're publicly available, but it's what the superintendent is using per a 2023 discussion with the board.

[02:13:49] It says, quote, there shall be no more than four early release days per school year, parentheses, now designated for all quarter ends. Well, that is exactly what is printed on the published calendar. I won't say adopted calendar, I'll say published calendar. All this stuff that's happening is happening without any policy, without any regulation.

[02:14:13] So I'm left to wonder, if we vote tonight to say no more than four early release days, isn't that already what is happening? What's the problem that we're trying to decide? It's how to get the superintendent to not schedule more early release days.

[02:14:30] And although I don't want to brainstorm because the nugget of this is the policy has to exist, I will say, if we want to brainstorm solutions, how about it's no more than four early release days division-wide, and if a school like a high school needs to release early, as they already do, without any regulation or policy governing it, they do.

[02:14:50] And if a pyramid needs to do something, they do. Or whatever else it is that the superintendent puts into regulation. And I've heard from plenty of high school parents with students who have dysregulation and they're at their wits end. So I can send you my spreadsheet with over 100 different comments that I've received, if not more, that my staff has categorized and themed.

[02:15:11] I have all the themes. I have the themes from the comments. I have the themes from discussion about this 2023 attendance data that is defunct. The goal here is to make it clear that we want something different. But I honestly don't know what that move is now because we already have a calendar with four early release days on it.

[02:15:31] So perhaps the amendment amendment gets made to say, you know, these are division wide and anything else. I mean, guys, this is I'm really stumped right now. Dr. Anderson.

[02:15:49] Thank you. I apologize. There's something going on with my ears. So if you already said this, my apologies. But I'm not hearing very well at all right now. Um, something that Mr. Dunn mentioned earlier regarding your proposals for next year's early release elementary days, that they would be without, um, child care supports at the schools.

[02:16:17] I have not brought that to the board or for a public discussion. I shared with you in a Friday letter that the committee, we have an early release committee made up of parents and staff recommended that that be the case. And I shared with the committee that I could not bring that forward, that we would need to continue to provide care for students during that time.

[02:16:39] Thank you. Can you also share just kind of looking ahead in the next couple of years? What is your thinking regarding these early release days for elementary? So as I shared earlier, I think we began these really limited monthly early planning days for elementary because of the required literacy professional development the hours of which far exceeded the hours our staff had to complete and I appreciated the board's consideration at that time that our staff needed that extra time

[02:17:15] and our elementary educators and elementary principals strongly supported that need this year is year two of benchmark and we continued that work because staff found it very valuable that time

and our intent was to run it through the math basal adoption as well because that's going to be a brand new math basal curriculum with math textbooks and workbooks for the first time in a long time that being said that was my initial thinking was getting us through those two really

[02:17:48] significant curricular moves for elementary staff and it would provide that extra time for individual teachers and also grade levels of staff to be able to familiarize themselves with a very different type of curriculum than we've used in quite a while thank you i remember attending the parent meetings that you held um before before we started this there were two one was at gatehouse and i was there with mr mckelveen and what was shared with parents at the time is that this is for a year for us to meet the literacy requirements and um that they

[02:18:26] they would be limited at that point there were seven how many do we have this year and how many are proposed for next year we added we added a couple this year um they were intended to be monthly this year although i don't think we did one in december and i would have to go back and i'm sure someone behind me is adding it up uh for me but it was intended to be monthly without December so that was what we had that would have been nine right and I well I think so well it could it could have been nine for just these early belief

[02:19:04] days and I think they're in the problem actually I'm not sure if we did we we did not vote on this at all so I wanted to confirm that for a miss lady we did not vote on this it was not a board is a board decision but it was a board recognition that we needed to do something because the state had the literacy work that needed to be done. The hours were too many than we could afford. So it was a place where we were resigned to make this happen. And it seemed reasonable at the time. My concern right now is we're leaving it in place for math. I see a space where we're going to leave it in

[02:19:39] place for social studies as we adopt other curriculum. So it will continue to stretch. And it has grown from 7 to 9 to something else, moving it from Wednesdays to Fridays, which will, I've already shared this earlier, it will impact absenteeism rates at our schools in a way that I don't think we would like.

[02:20:00] I am really worried about that creep without public discussion, public feedback, and public votes by the board because it is based on the calendar for which we are responsible. I do want to clarify it was actually eight this year because I did cancel April because we ended up with the April 21st election and our principals and educators were fabulous and compromising on making that a half day for planning.

[02:20:34] So we were able to not have it scheduled in April so that I believe we had eight then finally. Was that my timer? Miss Lady for a go back. Thank you.

[02:20:53] um you know what i was beginning to say was in despite all the conversation and thank you for the clarity around i knew we had a conversation about the early release days and the need for him but i didn't realize we didn't formally vote so thank you for that clarification and you know in an ideal world you know i don't want extra early release days for elementary um you know for the reasons that we know and have stated um but what i don't know is um what's going to happen with our budget, what's going to happen with specials, what's going to happen with planning time, and I just don't feel like I have enough information to support the motion as written. I think we keep

[02:21:32] using the word planning, and I think we have to realize that this is also PD time. This is not just planning time for teachers. This is learning new curriculum. This is collaborating within teams to

determine how they're going to execute and implement the curriculum. The other thing I want to say is the the sat and psat day that is an unbelievable gift to our community um we provide the sat at no charge at no charge to our seniors in october who it's a school day they have public they have transportation from us to get to school we pay for it it's it's access if we were to

[02:22:11] eliminate that doing that activity that would take us backward in time um and i believe the only students that are not encumbered, and I'm not sure if we still bring them in and do something, is our ninth graders. And perhaps communication can be better around that. But the PSAT in 10th and 11th, and then the SAT for 12th graders, that's a gift to our community because it's college access. So I would never want to touch that. You know, interesting that you mentioned, Dr. Reed, that the other places you worked where they did the PD work on the early end instead of an early release they had a late start and i remember for years we did a late start

[02:22:50] on fridays for clts um the whole system shifted now i was at high school level i didn't really pay attention to what was going on in elementary and middle so i'm not sure if it was just a high school thing but that was an extra hour of planning if you will or pd or collaborative teamwork time that we got every friday um and i don't know maybe that's the maybe that's a different path forward in the future because people might have more time to make accommodations in the morning. I don't know, but I agree that we have to be nimble and think outside the box around

[02:23:21] the best approach to what we're trying to accomplish. That was your time. Mr. Dannon. Let me really throw a loop here. Based on your expertise, I'm reading this as saying early release days. Is there something better to having a late start day versus an early release day? Is a reason that we do early release days here versus late starts?

[02:23:47] I think here the transportation might be really challenging to do late start for a particular grade level that's in the middle of, I don't know, you know, I haven't looked at it because different communities have different appetites for different possibilities.

[02:24:11] So I would have to go back and take a look at that, Mr. Dannen. Makes sense. Just to be clear, how many early release days are we looking at for next school year? Well, and I apologize. We actually scheduled eight this year, so we had two months that we didn't have.

[02:24:27] And because of the cancellation in April, we actually were seven actually this year. So I think we would plan eight again next year. And so that was the thinking. Does that include the quarterly end dates? So it's four plus?

[02:24:43] No, sir, I don't believe it does. The quarter, the four for the year were really intended, is my understanding, to be at quarter end, which is how they were designated. And that was for K-12 to be end of quarter grading.

[02:24:58] They weren't for any kind of professional development or collaborative planning. Those were really about, you know, working on grading. Okay. And my hesitation, again, when I'm wrestling with this, is what I shared at the beginning. that um i recognize this is a very difficult logic puzzle and i'm very hesitant to follow this kind of quick process where we're going to try and rush a few constraints onto that um decision making right so i love the idea that my colleagues have talked about having a reinstuding the community involvement and the calendar committee looking at that data holistically i'm really

[02:25:35] hesitant to to to impose this constraint um especially after talking to elementary teachers the last couple days and the value of this and I'm curious if we were just to change from say four to eight early release days if for the wouldn't have to be the four quarterly under four throughout the year but how difficult would that be for you to impose versus a the you've got the 12 now we're discussing for is eight happy medium or where would you give a recommendation on that again I'm putting you on the spot here well the four are uniquely I don't

[02:26:12] think we want to um one of the fundamental responsibilities of our staff are the communication of progress to parents and that process of grading and you know reviewing assessments is really I think sacrosanct at those quarter moments so I don't think we want to repurpose those four so I think that if we look at other ways I don't know that I have an optimal number I think any number would probably be helpful but you know I think we had planned eight okay and that's again

[02:26:49] when I first read this I thought good we've had seven this year going down to four would be good and then realizing oh there's also the quarterly end dates and so that's where I'm kind of struggling here and considering amending this but I'm going to listen a little bit further and go from there yeah I want to be really clear because maybe the four are completely separate from the early planning the elementary planning days okay seeing no others we're going to go ahead and take a vote

[02:27:20] mr moon chair can i make can i make an amendment please state your amendment uh can we amend four to eight and retaining everything else is there a second i'll check on that mr moon i'm sorry i'm sorry would you like to speak to your motion again i'm thinking through this and i i'm wary of making these additional constraints i would i would as a parent having listened to a lot of individuals

[02:27:57] I recognize that we do need to, and to my colleague Dr. Anderson's point, I'm wary of this prolonging without official guidance. At the same time, I'm wary of providing these additional constraints. My hope is that by splitting the difference here with eight, it gives us a little bit more balance.

[02:28:15] It could still be four early release days, but I think the language up to or no more than helps give us a little bit of flexibility. Mr. Moon, would you like to speak to your second? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Lennon, for your willingness to make an amendment at the dais.

[02:28:33] That is great for a brand-new school board member that we have all heard from many, many parents. There is an outcry right over there.

[02:28:52] We will be, if we do not do anything with number of early releases for the next year, we'll be perceived turning a depth to parents' concern. I get lack of clarity.

[02:29:10] I get teacher leading planning time. I get that. But we also should get current concerns. Problems we have with unapproved calendar for the next year.

[02:29:30] So thank you, thank you. If the motion was not gonna pass, I was gonna not support the next year's calendar. With a compromise, I would be able to do, I would be able to support next year's.

[02:29:48] - Ms. Mary. - So I visited Arlington Public Schools earlier this week see their superintendent host a panel on AI, and I got to catch up with a colleague on that board, and I said, "Hey, tell me how do you do your policy?" She says, "Well, we have a staffer that the superintendent employs who is part legislative, you know, manager and part policy director, and it works. It's a well-oiled machine," with the term she used.

[02:30:14] And there's a calendar for policy development, and once there are changes, the superintendent sends it to the board. The board puts it out for a month of public comment. The board adjusts as needed, and it's published. This is why this experience is the epitome of what happens when the board doesn't do its most critical function, aside from keep the superintendent accountable.

[02:30:34] It's to manage policies. I have been researching, reaching out to members of this board since I first raised this at least March 17th at the Governance Committee meeting, and I am surprised. Well, I'm not surprised. I'm hearing for the first time in weeks what people think, despite emails and texts. I'm hearing people change their minds. This is not respectful of the community. We should not be creating policy and decisions about people's schedules on a whim. The superintendent has

[02:31:08] provided us with zero data tonight, no budgetary implications. This, it takes courage to do this kind of thing, and I am just, Fairfax County kids deserve better, and their parents deserve better, And I'm not even sure what it is that I'm proposing now because the superintendent has so poorly executed whatever it is that she is running her school division by that I'm not even sure what it is I'm trying to do.

[02:31:47] What I'm trying to do is help parents and help kids. And this motion does not help kids. You cannot change the school division on a whim. I do not support this motion.

[02:32:05] I do not support the way this board approaches its work. I was gonna talk about that more in the Veterans Day motion and I will save it for that. - Ms. Dixit. - So my, thank you for the amendment, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Moon.

[02:32:26] I actually have a question about the high schoolers who actually come home early for AP exam days and also for any finals. Would that restrict them if we just put four to eight? Because, you know, if there is exam day, then you know they really just come home at 12 or something. I think that if we had eight days for high school we would have to look at the current four for quarter grading the PSAT the we would

[02:33:02] have to go back mystics it and find out how many early release days are occurring now for finals or AP exams and get back to you on that. I'm not sure if eight would cover all the current half day releases at high school at this time okay having a son just graduated cup just 2024 from high school I remember a lot of days when you know he would come home early because the exam days or AP exam especially and some students take seven or eight APs like my son did that so I'm not like I don't want him to big sit

[02:33:37] through the school and you know all day long if he is done with his exam just because the school board put a policy there. I think giving any number to high schoolers right now, I am not very comfortable with that.

[02:33:54] Maybe it would have been better if we talked about more length with the community just doing a little outreach, just like my colleagues are saying, we're not listening to our community. I haven't heard this from my community. I have not heard much from my community saying they're having a problem with this.

[02:34:12] SO I WONDER MAYBE WE NEED TO DO BETTER OUTREACH TO THEM AND I CAN MAYBE HAVE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS BASED ON THAT BUT AT THE MOMENT I'M NOT COMFORTABLE KNOWING HIGH SCHOOLERS HAVE MUCH MORE EARLY RELEASES.

[02:34:29] WE JUST USE THE WORD EARLY RELEASES. DR. ANDERSON. THANK YOU. I WAS JUST HOPING FOR SOME CLARIFICATION FROM MS. Dan and is it the eight days is that for elementary to be inclusive of the four and a quarter early releases and then an additional for for instructional purposes I wouldn't want to specify what those days would be used for I heard mentioned about earlier about the quarterly end dates maybe not as useful in certain quarters as another so I'm more comfortable with the this language

[02:35:08] I think it's a little bit broader and gives the superintendent the discretion or a little bit more discretion to be able to apply this as needed. Does that answer the question? I think it does but it also raises another question. I can't think of the number of early release days let's say middle schoolers have currently outside of the four the four end of quarters. I know high school it happens because of the assessment but the crux of the issue that I know has been raised to me has been around the elementary schools so I was hoping that this motion would be limited to the elementary schools because it would be the four regular and then the

[02:35:48] four more just to provide some flexibility so I would love that to be an amendment because that seems to be where the crux of the issue is so would you be open to me amending your amendment oh well I guess I can because it's on the floor can i add elementary she could do a second degree amendment because it's an original it's an original amendment i'm sorry i he says you can bring an amendment so okay i would just state just in response to them my one hesitation was i've heard from other colleagues about the importance

[02:36:27] of the high school level of some of those early releases point of order and again point of order madam chair state your point all speakers have to be recognized by the chair i recognize that thank Thank you. Dr. Anderson, would you like Mr. Dannon to finish what he was saying?

[02:36:45] Yes. I could barely hear. So this is, I'm struggling here. So yes, please. Mr. Dannon. I'll read my Robert's Rules of Order when I get home tonight. My hesitation, again, goes back to not providing undue constraints on the superintendent to do what she believes is best.

[02:37:03] I specifically did not mention limiting two elementary schools and partially because of the logistics. We've got secondary schools, we've got six through eight middle schools and so forth. Nothing here would preclude the superintendent from releasing a calendar that would have just four early release days at a high school and making other changes as needed.

[02:37:24] But that's why I kept it broad. I guess what I was what I was trying to convey is I don't think there's a middle school problem to be resolved here. They may not even need eight days and I can't even think of my own kid coming home early at eight days. I think the issue has been at elementary.

[02:37:41] So that's why I thought let's hone in at the elementary level because they have 12 this year. That's an issue. So that's why I was going with that. I would like to make that amendment.

[02:37:57] Hold on. Sorry, I misspoke. The parliamentarian did clarify for me that the issue that we would have with you adding elementary school to the issue is that the current amendment on the screen is reserved to the days. adding elementary school would affect it because that is speaking to something that isn't related to the days. What you could do is vote on this amendment and then do a second amendment that would add elementary school to the overall motion. Point of order. Hear me out. State your point.

[02:38:31] Perhaps the parliamentarian can clarify. If the secondary amendment is to change the language from eight days early release to eight days early release for elementary school and four days early or early release for middle and high school that's still a secondary amendment if the language was inserting if the current amendment is to change it from four early release days for elementary school and eight early

[02:39:09] release days for middle and high schools I believe that would be in order but it The other way around is what I think Dr. Anderson is getting at. It is the other way around. Because I want to... Okay, guys, I think we're going to take a brief break. Everybody can figure out what the path forward here is.

[02:39:27] Thank you. And then we'll come back to that. This is the work of the board, is to deliberate, not to adjourn when it gets tough. Thank you, Ms. Marin.

[02:47:02] Board members, please take your seats. Chair Anderson, can I get two more minutes?

[02:51:27] Board members, please take your seats.

[02:56:47] Okay, coming back, I call on Dr. Anderson for a secondary amendment.

[02:57:04] I move to strike the amendment in its entirety and replace it to read as follows. That the school board direct the superintendent to schedule no more than four early release... Okay, it's moving by striking.

[02:57:29] I move to strike the amendment in its entirety and replace it to read as follows. by striking out four early release days and inserting the phrase eight early release days for elementary school students in its place. Is there a second?

[02:57:47] Second. Mr. Dannon, Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your secondary amendment? Yes, briefly, because I think a lot of this has been said. The focus and a lot of the advocacy that I have received has been focused at the elementary level because right now we have the four division-wide early release days And then we have the seven, eight, nine additional days for elementary.

[02:58:12] That is the burden that I'm hoping we could find some way to reduce. If we have a total of eight at the elementary level, it will still include the four division-wide days and four additional days for instructional and professional development purposes.

[02:58:28] It is a reduction. It may not be where we want to be, but it's definitely better than where we are currently. and it will also publicly give superintendent the boards okay to continue with these dates because as of today we have not voted upon them at all. Mr. Tannen would you like to speak to your second? Yes briefly I just want to stress with this that again I've heard from a range of elementary school teachers who have spoken in different sides of this right but the one thing that comes out is the inequity between their planning time and the high school planning time

[02:59:04] And my hope with this amendment is to guarantee them, as we talked about earlier, a little more strategically placed time for development. And Dr. Reed, I stand ready to help with whatever we can to make sure that all my teachers get the planning time and that they need and the development time that they need.

[02:59:20] So thank you. Okay. I'm going to ask everyone to turn off their lights and only put your lights back on if you would like to speak to the secondary amendment. Mr. Dunn. Thank you. Two things.

[02:59:35] I'd like to just clarify that this year, this school year, 2025-26, there is in elementary school level 12 early release days. There's eight that have been referenced by the superintendent, but that is on top of four that applies to all schools.

[02:59:56] So it's 12 in total. So this amendment is positive in achieving a one-third reduction in early release days. Long term, I believe the number of early release days should be further reduced because this provides essentially a transition year to achieving a new normal in the year after 27, 28, and subsequent years.

[03:00:22] I also wanted to clarify because there's been much discussion of early release days at the high school level and so-called SAT days, PSAT days, finals, and such. All of the motions that have been brought tonight are about the published school calendar that is in rainbow hues for different kinds of days, staff development days, days off, early release days.

[03:00:47] On the high school calendar, which I've gone back to verify, there are four. There are four early release days that are noted on the school calendar for this year for the high school level. And you can go to any high school in the county and verify it for yourself because every high school publishes the calendar for FCPS.

[03:01:06] Any of these other days that are so-called for final exams, for SATs, those are not denoted on the school calendar, so they are outside the scope of these motions because the only thing these motions are doing is focused on the school calendar.

[03:01:22] It's similar to if you have at the elementary school level a school-wide field trip. They go to the Air and Space Museum as Bucknell Elementary just did. you come back you probably have parents pick up the kids early right that's not an early release day on the school calendar that's one school a particular circumstance similar a particular school may have final exams on different days than other high schools or middle schools there's a lot of variation across FCPS should there be probably not but there is so we have been focusing the people bringing motions tonight on the published school calendar the one that

[03:01:57] as of now but maybe in an hour or so has not been presented to the school board for approval has not been approved by the school board even though the next two years are published i consider those drafts because the school board under state law sets the school calendar thank you mr mcdaniel i can add i know eight plus four is 12. i just want to make sure i know exactly what this amendment accomplishes we're sticking with four early release at secondary middle and high school

[03:02:32] no are you requesting i am i am looking for an answer hold on stop please are you are you requesting a response from any particular board member i would just like to know if that is in fact true and whoever can answer the question can answer the question i would be glad to answer the question hold on dr anderson go ahead thank you this motion is only speaking to elementary it is not talking about what happens at the high school or what happens at the middle school

[03:03:10] it is only to address the elementary experience thank you so we're going to authorize up to eight is that in addition to the published four so it's eight total i'm waiting to be recognized to be able to answer go ahead dr anderson eight total it is not going to be eight plus one more it's going to be eight inclusive of the four that are division-wide and four more okay so at the At the elementary school level, they will get the division-wide four plus up to four extra.

[03:03:49] Yes. Okay, thank you. I'm abstaining. Mr. Moon. Thank you. I'm glad that board seems to be coming closer to a compromise.

[03:04:07] I could be wrong because we haven't voted on this one yet. I've been doing this work, board work, for 23 years. We don't always get everything you want. We've got to learn to make a compromise, listening different perspectives of our colleagues.

[03:04:27] At the same time, we are hearing from perspectives of various different parts of the community. I think this is good faith effort to let community know that we have heard loud and clearly that we have to do something about number of early releases for elementary school.

[03:04:49] And we'll have further opportunities because I am willing to support Mr. McDaniel's follow-up motions asking about not only for the next year's calendar, but directing superintendent to come back with the recommendations for board's consideration for future year's calendar.

[03:05:09] And I'm also hoping that Governors Committee will finish its work in time for us to look at what they are recommending. Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen.

[03:05:30] I would like to thank Mr. Dannon and Dr. Anderson for their work on this. It was looking a bit like a clown show earlier, but I'm glad that we had the break and had the opportunity to work through this.

[03:05:46] And given that this is an improvement, I will be supporting it. It's not the degree to which I had hoped, but to Mr. Moon's point, we have to compromise sometime. And I think we'll have an opportunity later this year to make further progress. I think our community wants no less from us.

[03:06:08] I'm going to, or Miss Lady. Thanks. I'm struggling here because I find it fascinating that we're honing in just on elementary.

[03:06:25] And, you know, I'm listening to my colleagues say that we're only looking at the exact calendar, which does not mention exam date, early releases, or SAT. But currently, if you look at the calendar, it doesn't designate the elementary early releases either.

[03:06:41] And so I'm just struggling because it's I get this amendment is going to say those are limited to eight, but I'm just not sure what it means for I mean, middle school's correct. I think they need an early release at the end of the first semester because the number of semester courses and the teachers need to be doing seating charts.

[03:06:59] They need more time than just one workday because they have to do grades and they have to do seating charts. And there might be a little bit of that at the high school level. I never understood the early release at the end of the first or third quarters. So, you know, what I'm toying with this is my question is to the maker of the motion or to Dr. Reed, if the no more than eight at elementary were in place, that doesn't mean that four of them would have to have to do anything with early releases at other levels, correct?

[03:07:37] I think that we're going to have to ask the makers of the motion for that clarification, Dr. Anderson. I'm so sorry. Can the question be repeated? The question is, if you're going to say no more than eight early release days in elementary, but the superintendent determines to operationalize that, and none of those days have anything to do with the end of the quarter, where there might be an early release in high school or middle school, I read that that's fine.

[03:08:08] She can operationalize the eight days any way she sees fit. It is my assumption. Go ahead, Dr. Anderson. It is my assumption that four of those eight days would be for early release as we have it division-wide, because all three levels have those early release days.

[03:08:30] Okay. If that's the case, then I'm not going to have to abstain, because I don't read it that way, and I don't see elementary needs at the end of the quarter as being the same. and I definitely do and empathetic to parents and I want to work across the aisle. But I think that, as stated repeatedly this evening, the needs at elementary are different than the needs at middle and are different than the needs at high school.

[03:08:54] And to fit them all in the same box for early release is maybe not the best nimble way of accomplishing what needs to be accomplished. The one thing I would want to put in an amendment is that early release days will all be three hours.

[03:09:07] There won't be some that are two. There won't be some that are three. So no matter what level your child has an early release, it's the same amount of hours. But basically, I'm not sure that we can do what we need to do with new math curriculum in limiting the early release days to four and four. I just would want all eight to be something the superintendent could designate. So thank you.

[03:09:35] May I say one more thing? You may. I can put you on a go back. Yes. I'm going to take a brief turn here. While I understand the intention of the second degree amendment, unfortunately I'm not going to be able to support it because I pulled up Chantilly's final exam schedule from 2025.

[03:10:00] And unfortunately, the way this reads, the senior exam schedule would not be able to happen in the same way that the upperclassmen exam schedule happened because there are four different days for everybody just because of the way seniors happen. The other thing is that we can't get into determining how many hours because exams often get out at noon and so that's far earlier than everything. And so I think that we need to have a level of trust related to the educational professionals that have done this work for years, that have created a schedule that works

[03:10:35] for our individual age groups. I understand that there's consternation related to what's going on at the elementary level, but I would really have appreciated emotion from the beginning that actually went to the heart of the issue and actually gave the superintendent the direction necessary because I think that's why we're here. I am imploring my colleagues to be cautious of the way we are speaking about the executives that work for us partially because it's our responsibility to create the policies that are in front of us and from my understanding this was brought to

[03:11:12] governance in November of 2023 and the can was kicked. So here we are. So I just want to make sure that we continue forward in a manner that's going to be the most beneficial to everyone and unfortunately I'm not going to be able to support this. I still believe in abstaining on the main motion. I'm far happier with it with eight early release days as just if we're going to set an arbitrary guideline here then are we talking about individual kids or are we talking about the entire school? I mean we just don't have enough information to be able to make this decision

[03:11:49] and I really just don't think it's beneficial for us to get into the weeds on this. This is a extremely operational issue. If we want to address the issue related to early release days for elementary school, then we should do that. But otherwise, I don't want to undo the work that the division's already done. So we're going to go ahead and go to Ms. Maconan, and then we have two go-backs. I just want to ask

a few clarifying questions. I also support what Ms. Lady was saying about when we have the early release days, keeping them consistent of either two or three hours, picking one and sticking with it to make it the most simple for parents.

[03:12:30] What I'm understanding from this amendment is that it moved from four early release days, and this is talking about across the division, to a more specific amendment for just elementary school. So this would not impact final exams. It would not impact SAT, PSAT days.

[03:12:48] Okay, that was my question. Thank you. Mr. Dunn. Thank you. Unfortunately, on the screen, we can only see amendment and then followed by amendment. So I just wanted to read if the secondary amendment is approved and the amendment is approved, it would read as follows.

[03:13:05] I move to direct the superintendent to schedule no more than eight early release days for elementary school students per school year. That would be the language in its entirety. So there would be no impact on middle schools, no impact on high schools.

[03:13:24] So the concerns that have been raised about middle schools, PSAT days and high schools, final exams and SAT days are moot. because the secondary amendment and amendment cure that. As has been noted by almost everyone, the concerns that have been raised have been primarily focused at the elementary school level.

[03:13:42] So perhaps the original motion, and I will gladly take the blame, should have focused exclusively at the elementary school level. I appreciate the amendments for fixing that. But I don't think that the school calendar is an operational issue, respectfully. It is by state law.

[03:13:58] reads the school board shall set the school calendar that is the opening of the legislation that has been binding for many years so it's a school board policy matter and we have not approved the calendar for next year or the year after I know there's a following motion to accomplish that this addresses one of the most dire issues that's been raised by families and to disregard the many concerns financial logistical and otherwise requiring students with special needs, to be educated at home because the school calendar disrupts their learning.

[03:14:30] That imposes undue burdens on families, causing people to abandon their careers and all of the income, all of the career advancement opportunities. It's unthinkable to not take some measure, at least on a transition basis, to respond to those concerns that have been raised.

[03:14:47] It's causing torment. It's causing trauma. We need to make this county a great place to live and keep it a great place to live for all of our families and all of our students. Thank you. Dr. Anderson, did you want to go back?

[03:15:05] Madam Chair, I've not spoken on this motion at all. I'm sorry, Mr. Frisch, I did not see your light all the way down at the end. So we will go to Mr. Frisch and then we will go back for Dr. Anderson. Two quick points. I'm likely to abstain on the motion itself when we get there, regardless of if it's amended or not.

[03:15:24] I'll probably support the amendment because I think it's an improvement. Secondly, I will say the question of whether something is operational is always a balance, right? The calendar state code language does say that. It also says that we hire the teachers, and I'm not sitting here sitting in for interviews with teachers to hire them.

[03:15:44] So when we do get to the policy work that we're all looking forward to in the weeks ahead, we'll have to talk about what that balance is, right? So, you know, there are benefits and disadvantages to everything that we decide as a board.

[03:16:00] And there's, you know, for every operational thing that we take on, you know, that takes some autonomy away from superintendents. And how we manage a superintendent has a great deal to do with the types of people we can attract, et cetera.

[03:16:20] up so uh state codes is a lot of things the board is responsible for and many of those things we delegate to the superintendent so i think we're more than capable as a board to to develop a policy that speaks to our role in approving calendars um and whatnot um and the work that we will require of the superintendent to help inform that decision making dr anderson thank you just hoping to reiterate some points and to clarify. The eight total days I shared in my answer to Ms. Lady that

[03:16:56] I assume it will comprise of the year-end because that has to happen because it typically has happened. We've spent quite a bit of time talking about their purpose, grading, report cards, etc. I would not imagine that those would go away. I assume. I'm not directing. The totality, the focus is to reduce the number of days that elementary students have early release whether they're on this calendar or not on the calendar that is the focus it is not to touch what's happening at middle schools at this time it is not to touch what's happening at high schools at this time

[03:17:35] those are not part of the conversation for this amendment it is just what is happening at elementary school and it is an assumption that the year end the quarter end early release days would be included, but it is not a direction that they be included. Perhaps the superintendent just says, you know what, we don't need those at all. But given the conversation that I heard earlier regarding their purpose and objectives, I would not imagine that would be the case.

[03:18:03] Thank you. Okay. Seeing no others, we're going to go ahead and vote on the secondary amendment, which is on the screen, or will be shortly. All those in favor of the secondary amendment, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McElveen, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and Ms. Lady.

[03:18:31] All those opposed, Ms. Marin. All those abstaining, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, and myself. Will the clerk please read the vote? 714, the motion carries.

[03:18:48] The amendment is amended. Okay, so now we have to go back and vote on the amendment, correct? Okay. Seeing no lights, thank goodness, we're going to go ahead and vote on the now amended amendment.

[03:19:11] All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McElveen, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson. I can't see Ms. Lady. My hand's down.

[03:19:29] Okay, thank you. All those opposed, Ms. Marron. All those abstaining, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, and myself. Ms. Lady, how do you vote? I'm abstaining.

[03:19:46] Okay. Will the clerk please read the vote? 6-1-5. The motion carries. Okay. Now we are back to the main motion. So we are going to vote on the amended main motion that is now on the screen.

[03:20:14] All those in favor, Mr. McElveen, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson. All those opposed, Ms. Marin, all those abstaining, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, and myself.

[03:20:38] Ms. Lady, how do you vote? Stating. Will the clerk please read the vote? 5-1-6, the motion carries. Okay. So abstentions don't count as a negative vote.

[03:20:58] Yes. Abstentions count as if there was no vote, so it's technically, it would be like a 5-1 vote, so that's why the motion carries, even though there were six abstentions. Thank you. Okay. Agenda item 6.05, action item.

[03:21:14] motion to amend school calendar regarding Veterans Day. I call on Dr. Anderson for a motion. I move that the Fairfax County School Board direct the superintendent to designate Veterans Day as a standard instructional day for students and staff for the 26-27 school year and all subsequent years and to create and implement a district-wide Veterans Day observance curriculum designed to appropriately instruct students and engage community members in observing the meaning of this day. Is there a second? I second. Thank you, Ms. Marin. Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, I would like to think this is going to be easy. That's what I would like to

[03:21:54] think because we have a policy that says exactly that. I implore you all to pull up policy 3380 section 4A, Veterans Day observance. Although a federal holiday, Fairfax County Public School does not include veterans day as a school holiday school personnel shall follow the calendar of religious and cultural observances regarding veterans day and shall provide students with instructional activities that honor veterans and recognize the role of the military america in

[03:22:30] american democracy this is essentially correcting a policy that we have not been observing and are not in compliance with. That's what this is, point blank. However, I will also say this, these following jurisdictions have school on Veterans Day. Loudoun County, right next door, Montgomery County, across the water, Richmond, Roanoke, Houston, which we compared ourselves to them because they're large. All of these jurisdictions have school on Veterans Day.

[03:23:07] Third point, I'm a veteran. When I worked in Loudoun County for 10 years, we had school on Veterans Day with the expectation of an activity as described here, as already described in the policy, and because I'm a veteran, we kind of put a special oomph in our activities. It was such a proud day for these kids to walk down whatever space we were using, whether it was a multi-purpose room or the gym with their veteran parents to be highlighted and in service and honored and

[03:23:42] recognized. And of course, afterwards, there was cake. So that was always great. This is not this is a thing that we have not been doing. It's in our policy, we need to do it. And it gets us an additional five day week. What I heard the other day in terms of in our town hall that some families said well it's a day that veterans can travel etc it doesn't always fall on a weekend sometimes it's in the middle of the week it's been all over the place because I pulled it for the last 10 years it's been every day of the week

[03:24:18] but most importantly our policy says it should have school this is just going back and honoring our policy Miss Marin would you like to speak to your second being in school for Veterans Day will be a day on for learning and observing this holiday which is already part of the FCPS culture my own kids have done events at their schools on this day on well not the Veterans Day but another day that week in the past veterans have told me they already see the commitment to honoring this observance in our community and I thank my colleague Dr.

[03:24:55] Anderson for bringing this motion and for her service as a veteran to this nation so as I said earlier it's common for businesses and offices to be open for this federal holiday leaving parents seeking

childcare while they work this This midweek day off on Wednesday, November 11th, 2026 this year is unlikely to hinder families' travel plans, as would be more likely for those Monday or Friday holidays.

[03:25:16] Again, our current policy 3380 directs that students should be in school on Veterans Day. This is an oversight by the superintendent that is ready for remedy and it's a major cause for concern, a superintendent who is not implementing school board. I believe I had a little bit more time, is that correct?

[03:25:33] Thank you. I do think it's a major cause for concern to have a superintendent who is not implementing school board policy. I will take this opportunity to share from the governance committee side, since I know there was a question of me having time on the agenda later this evening for a committee update, so I'll just go ahead and say, as governance committee chair, we have an updated draft of the calendar policy.

[03:25:56] It was posted on March 17th for that meeting, and the committee agreed to further work, So I was dismayed to hear today from the superintendent that her staff has done no work on the calendar policy at all, and while the expectation wasn't to bring back content for the next governance meeting, which is this Tuesday, I certainly would think that for the importance of this topic and the level of input we've received, that certainly some work would be done by the best staff to have something ready as soon as possible for the governance committee.

[03:26:27] So we do have that draft policy that combines six policies together, all except for one is out of compliance, goes back to 2011, that we have our policies that haven't been reviewed. So again, I said before, I am eager to get this policy done in May, and also to see how what was passed by the board tonight will be woven into that policy and able to be kept, and perhaps we can even get some more data on the decisions the board has made tonight and how that impacts our budget and uh staff time so again I am committed to getting the calendar

[03:27:03] policy updated in May for board approval because this is what the superintendent needs to then do any further work on updating the policy thank you Mr Dunn uh thank you just to build on the comments of my colleagues uh under regulation 1344.13 which was approved in 2021 by the school board It states that the Friday after Thanksgiving is given as a holiday in lieu of Veterans Day.

[03:27:39] So the reason we have a Friday after Thanksgiving as a school holiday is in honor of Veterans Day. Next year, Veterans Day is on a Wednesday in the middle of the week. And for that reason, I strongly support this motion.

[03:27:56] Existing policy is to have school on Veterans Day. It's a day when my children were in school, all three of them, when veterans would come in and talk about, share their stories, talk about, you know, the sacrifices made by brave soldiers.

[03:28:12] And that influenced all three of my children to pursue military careers. So I strongly support making sure that we have one more full week, that we act consistent with school policy, and that we maintain as a school holiday the Friday after Thanksgiving to maximize family time and vacations, which are long centered around that important national holiday.

[03:28:35] Thank you. Mr. McElveen. So I have a question for the superintendent, Mr. Smith. Can you identify what happened here? Because Veterans Day has always been a perennial debate when it's come to the calendar conversation, and I find it hard to believe that it would just kind of fall off without discussion.

[03:28:59] So was there a year, was there a decision by the prior board to observe it, or what happened? Yes, sir. That was part of the November 2023 guidance provided by the prior board was that Veterans Day would become a holiday.

[03:29:15] Okay, and so what happened is we just failed to update the regulation, is that right? Well, the policy draft is actually sitting on the governance committee agenda on board docs now, even for November 23. The redline updates, they just weren't acted on.

[03:29:33] Got it. Okay, well, that's very helpful. Well, I mean, I will join the chorus who is saying that Veterans Day has always been one of the most meaningful days of the school year, having attended events in numerous schools. Not every school has always done it, and that's an issue that we have to correct.

[03:29:50] And over the years, we've tried to make sure that every school observes Veterans Day in some form, whether it's through an assembly or just in the curriculum in general. But we've mandated that in the past, so I assume that's on the books somewhere.

[03:30:07] And I hope that as this amendment here or this motion here says that we will have a curriculum designed appropriately for this. So grateful to those for bringing this forward and look forward to returning to past FCPS practice.

[03:30:27] Mr. McDaniel. Question. There's language in the motion that talks about development of a curriculum to be implemented district wide. So I guess the question for staff is, is there already a curriculum, or is this going to be a new initiative and a new endeavor that staff has to take on to implement?

[03:30:49] Thank you, Mr. McDaniel. It's my understanding, we did a little bit of research on this, and every year our K-12 social studies team provides resources to support schools in recognizing veterans' contributions and the role of the military in our American democracy.

[03:31:07] This is in alignment with our policy 3380.3, and schools have the flexibility in how they organize these materials. But the Veterans Day 180 doc does offer planning ideas and resources. And since Veterans Day is also included in the Virginia History and Social Science SOLs, for grades K-2, we add additional supports in those guides because we actually don't start SOLs till grade three.

[03:31:37] But all schools share documentation over their activities, ranging from classroom lessons to school-wide events through communications with assistant principals and department chairs already. Okay, and I guess the question is, does that satisfy the request of this motion, or are we going to have to go back and redevelop something?

[03:31:56] I hope that it would satisfy this motion, but I would expect that it would satisfy this motion. Okay, all right, thank you. Ms. Tixit. So I like the spirit of this motion, again, trying to get more five days of, you know, school days, five weeks, five days a week.

[03:32:19] But I do not want to take Veteran Days off, which is already being introduced now. We got this right. I would say we have to align ourselves with federal holidays moving forward. That's what I'm hearing from my community. And definitely this is an honor by federal government to our veterans and other governments too, I believe.

[03:32:44] So I would love to find other opportunities to get to that goal, which we are all trying to do as a board. But I want to engage the community more. I want to engage the staff more. So for that reason, I'm

not going to support this motion.

[03:33:03] And the prior board, who actually, we have three members here, and at least I don't know who voted, I didn't follow that, but they gave this Veteran Day holiday. So I'm thankful to those people who voted for this last time. Mr. Dannen.

[03:33:20] Just briefly, again, with everything else that was brought up tonight, I appreciate everything, the consideration and the brainstorming and so forth. My one concern with supporting this is just I don't want to jump ahead of the good work that the governance committee is doing, looking at this holistically. And for the third or fourth time tonight, I'm not against this change, but not in this way. I would much rather see a broader discussion, the work of the Governance Committee, the work of potentially going down the road, the calendar committee. So again, I appreciate the sentiment here, not opposed to in the future as part

[03:33:57] of a broader discussion. Ms. St. John. Thanks. So I do want to acknowledge and thank my colleagues for bringing all of this up I think it is important conversation I think that thoughtful consideration should be given to increase our five-day school weeks to celebrate our diverse community and respect their religious beliefs and to honor the need of professional development and planning time for our teachers that comply with our collective bargaining commitment I'm gonna say that I struggled with these motions for a

[03:34:33] variety of reasons and I just happen to be out a lot in the community this week And I reached out to such a wide variety of parents, students, teachers, principals, and community members, and got incredible feedback that was one-on-one, you know, just, you know, face-to-face.

[03:34:54] Some of the concerns and reasons that are articulated today by speakers, too, especially this federal holiday, I agree with one of my colleagues that said that this is like a puzzle. I think it's a Rubik's cube that has many nuances, and I have never been able to figure out a Rubik's cube.

[03:35:14] And so all of this should be considered and not fixed with a bad solution for a bad problem. I just don't think that's the way we should work. As for this final motion, I did struggle with this for a lot of reasons. I happen to be a proud person of a military family.

[03:35:33] My father and husband both served in the Navy. My grandfather received the equivalent of a Purple Heart when he was wounded in action during World War I, and his grandfather was a Union soldier during the Civil War, not to mention all my cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews. The Coast Guard installation sits in my district, and even though Fort Belvoir doesn't sit in my district, two entrances to Fort Belvoir do sit in my district.

[03:35:58] So I am also currently proudly representing 68% of the Purple Star schools which support our military students and families. Tonight I read the celebration for the military child and most of us are wearing purple today to show support. The irony of us eliminating the Verdez holiday today is not lost on me. However I do realize our current policy conflicts with our current practice and for that reason I will abstain tonight in hopes that we can move forward and take the time to receive community feedback and thoroughly and creatively as one of my board

[03:36:34] member said come up with workable solutions to balance all of these competing priorities and i'm telling you these are all good competing priorities we have to balance them i'm looking forward to coming up with some creative solutions mr moon thank you madam chair as i said about indigenous

people's day i'm going to stick to what our policies and regulations dictate us to do unless Once we change that, until and unless those policies and regulations are changed, we need

[03:37:13] to abide by what we have on our table. Guidelines, they have never been given to superintendent in public meeting. I have not been able to find them anywhere. The board actually voted to give that to superintendent to develop in a calendar.

[03:37:35] I was not on that board, so I don't know exactly what that board did. But from January 1 to 2024, after I returned to the board, there has not been a public discussion or vote on any guideline to be given to superintendents.

[03:37:53] And I could not find, even for the pandemic years, there was no final vote by any, even the governance committee. There was nothing. We don't do public business in not public setting, non-public setting.

[03:38:13] That will be illegal. If you look at 26-27 calendar, November, you look at the November, first two days in November, days off for students.

[03:38:35] Second week, if Veterans Day remains as a holiday, it's a full day. It's only one week, one week. Third week of November, we have five full days. Because the following week, we only have two days of school going into Thanksgiving.

[03:38:53] Over my 23 years, 20 years on the prior board, we debated Veterans Day issue almost a yearly basis. Most of the times, most of it came down to what kind of a calendar do you want to give to our students for instruction for them?

[03:39:15] It's not that we want to disrespect veterans. No, we go to schools, students of many, many schools have programs to celebrate, honor veterans. And I enjoyed, along with my colleague, Mr. McAlvin, to go there, visit there, and celebrate with the students and staff members.

[03:39:39] But bottom line for my vote is to comply with existing policies and regulations. I'm going to take a quick turn here. This one's particularly hard for me. My husband retired from the military in 2019.

[03:40:00] My oldest was nine, and my youngest was, and I have been with him since the day he commissioned. so it is not lost on me the irony that tonight is the night that we would do this however I agree that we need to fix it in the policy I also agree that our community is split on this we have veterans that want nothing more than to have their kids in school so that they can come in and show what it means to be a veteran and then we have other veterans that a hundred percent want to

[03:40:39] have the opportunity to be able to take their children to their units to be able to show them what it is to be a military member and I think that we have a solution here that we could fix in the policy or the regulation is that this could be an O-Day. This is a cultural observance and we 100% could have this be an O-Day that would just allow for no new or no assessments to happen. I do think that we need to talk about O-Days in terms of the overarching policy related to how they are utilized.

[03:41:14] I have listened to my colleague from Drainsville that has talked quite a bit about the concerns related to instruction that is limited on those days. So I do think that it's something else that we can look at.

[03:41:30] But I think that that's the solution here. So I will be in favor of this only because I do understand that it is in the policy and And I would like to make sure that we look at that moving forward. I

do absolutely think that whatever survey we end up doing related to calendar needs to include this so that we can get the broader picture of what's going on.

[03:41:50] Okay, so we're going to go to Ms. McConan. I'm going to join the chorus of saying that I think our main priority should be honoring our policy. I think aligning ourselves with federal holidays off is important, but our written policy currently contradicts that.

[03:42:06] If we were to change the policy to reflect this alignment with federal holidays, I would support this motion. Right now this motion is to affirm that we are standing by our word in our policy, and if I could vote, I would support this motion. I do think that this policy should be looked at again as governance is still working on it, and I really like Ms. Anderson's idea of an O-Day, so if I could vote, I'd vote yes.

[03:42:26] Okay. Dr. Anderson, for a go back. Just very briefly, I know we had this conversation really, really quickly in governance the last time with Dr. Reed and you and I had a conversation I think even before that meeting or maybe it was after regarding your thinking about this this was not at least in our conversation I don't want to say words I don't want to put words in your mouth but this was not one of these ideas that gave you consternation this was one that you said you could bring that forward but you wanted to let us figure

[03:43:01] it out. Is that accurate? I'm sorry. You're asking me? Yes. So obviously this is a complex topic. So if the board approves that we're going to have Veterans Day be a school day, of course we're going to make Veterans Day a school day. Yes, that's correct. Okay. That wasn't exactly what I asked, but it's fine. The other thing that I wanted to add is essentially what Ms. Anderson said if we have families who want to have their children participate in other things to go out

[03:43:40] into their place of work they should be allowed to do that they should have the opportunity to do so but I will tell you from having done this for so many years these kids are so proud to have their families come to the school in uniform and be introduced by them my mom my dad my aunt my grandfather multiple generations come when you have the opportunities for them to come and be celebrated it is so it can be so amazing I don't know what it's been like in Fairfax but I know

[03:44:18] what it's been like in the schools that I have worked it has been amazing staff members wear their uniforms at the school that day if they so choose it's such a moment and we can get that It is not a diminishing idea to the service of those individuals.

[03:44:40] It is an honor and recognition to their service. And kids, they love it when other kids see how great their parents are. And that's what they get when we have them in schools on that day and to participate in something.

[03:44:55] Again, I've always done a little bit a lot because I'm particularly partial to this. but it can be really really awesome for a lot of our kids. Mr. Dunn. So our existing regulations require Veterans Day to be a school day a student instructional day and currently on the published calendars which have not been approved by the school board to date it's not a student instructional day so this motion is simply intended to ensure conformity with existing regulations. The only

[03:45:34] other way to achieve conformity is to bring a non-compliance report to an EL which I don't think is necessary because this where was informal guidelines but they're in red line those guidelines were never approved by the school board and those guidelines because they're in draft as has been stated by multiple speakers including the superintendent do not take precedence over a published, officially

adopted regulation following published, adopted, and officially approved policy. So just as a legal matter, we have to follow existing policy to do otherwise as ultra

[03:46:12] virus outside the law. If we want to change policy, we can, but that would have to be for a future school year, unless you want to tinker with next year, and I think generally there's been reluctance to do that. So that's where I stand. And besides, as I mentioned, it's in the middle of the week. It's a Wednesday. If it were a Monday, Friday, it might be a different conversation. But in the middle of the week, it's maximally disruptive. Thank you. Okay. I'm going to take a two-second go back and just request that we actually put a designator in CIS that actually

[03:46:48] identifies retired families, because I will tell you that my children are often excluded from military events because of the fact that their father is retired instead of actually being an active duty service member. So that is just something that I'm going to put out there that it is a common problem that I've heard from different parents is that they don't always, that those kiddos don't always get included.

[03:47:11] So just putting it out there. So 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, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[03:47:34] All those opposed, Ms. Dixit. I'm in favor. Okay, Ms. Lady is in favor. And all those abstaining, Mr. McElveen, or I'm sorry, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. St. John Cuning, and Mr. Dannon.

[03:47:52] Will the clerk please read the vote? 813, the motion carries. Thank you. Okay. Everybody please turn their lights off. I call on Mr. McDaniel for a follow-on motion.

[03:48:09] I move this. I move that the school board approve the school year 2026-2027 calendar as amended by the outcomes of motions 6.03, 6.04, and 6.05. Is there a second? I second.

[03:48:25] Thank you, Ms. Dixit. Mr. McDaniel, would you like to speak to your follow-on? Briefly, this is a housekeeping move more than anything. There's been some commentary tonight about the need for the board to vote on a calendar. So in order to button up the conversation on that and my next follow-on motion will handle the next two years, moving approval of the calendar as it has been amended.

[03:48:48] Ms. Dixit, would you like to speak to your second? No. Thank you. Ms. Marin. Can we please receive a copy of the calendar? We're being asked to approve. Ms. Marin, I believe that we are, that the, well, Mr. McDaniel, would you like to speak to the intention?

[03:49:14] Pretty simple to me. We just amended the 26-27 calendar with those three motions, and this motion will approve the calendar as amended with those three motions. Well, in the past, when the board has voted on a calendar, we voted on the calendar in front of us.

[03:49:33] Given all of the confusion that's ensued, I want to vote on the calendar that I expect it to be. I only saw this motion yesterday, so I don't know what the plan is, but I want to see the calendar I'm going to vote on. Point of order. That's not a point of order.

[03:49:57] So I'll continue my turn and say currently, look, we've had votes taken without presentations. We've had motions voted on without being read. I will not vote on a calendar until I see it.

[03:50:14] So when it is presented, I will vote on it. That is part of this process. So whenever the superintendent can get that to the board, we can go ahead and vote on it, in my opinion. Dr. Anderson.

[03:50:33] Thank you. I think Mr. McDonnell kind of answered my question because I wanted to be sure that the calendar that we are voting upon was inclusive of the changes that were just made tonight. There were a couple and I, too, am having some hesitation about voting on a calendar that has that is not clean.

[03:50:55] And so my wondering is, could we just delay this until the next meeting so we can have a clean calendar with the changes that are that were made tonight? We could still accomplish the same thing, but just a little bit later. Would that not be amenable at all?

[03:51:14] I don't see a reason to be candid. Would you like to be recognized? Can I be recognized? Absolutely. Mr. McDaniel. No, I'm not amenable. I don't see the point. We need to get this done tonight because we've had conversations about the community has consternation, and another two-week delay is more consternation. We need to get this done tonight.

[03:51:34] Mr. Dunn. The school board is responsible for setting the school board calendar. It's been mentioned by my colleagues that early releases are not denoted on the published school board calendar.

[03:51:55] I believe that was one of my colleague's comments. So without knowing the dates of the up to eight early release days at the elementary school level, I'm not sure that we even know what the calendar is we're voting on.

[03:52:10] So I would submit that the motion as phrased is your it's improper because we don't know what the calendar is we have to know a budget to vote on a budget we have to know a calendar to vote on the calendar at this point dr. Reed do you know which eight days of the school year the early release days will be for elementary schools no sir I couldn't tell you which eight days I could tell you four of them they would be the end of the quarter days so the middle and high

[03:52:46] school four I can give you and the elementary four for end of quarter but where we would slot the remaining four I don't know that this evening that you know is part of a larger conversation with HR and our associations and Dr.

[03:53:05] Reed how long will it take you to determine when those additional four early release days at the elementary school level what what dates that you would recommend to the school board we wouldn't likely recommend those till after we actually had an approved calendar because those would be part of the staff planning day teacher work day conversation that's a much broader conversation because the elementary early release don't occur within a vacuum and does if that makes sense they're braided together with school planning days and teacher work days so that would usually that's a conversation

[03:53:44] that happens after the calendar is set so generally I'm going to defer to Mr. Solomon about when that group has met of course we're tending to do it multiple years out so if we're talking this coming year Mr. Solomon you would normally we wait until we have the calendar and then we would kind of put all those pieces together and you have roughly I think a 16 member group that does that that's exactly right with representatives across our professional learning department our equity office etc to review all of the relevant factors and to make sure that when we're placing those early release days those professional learning days and the staff development and planning days that they're placed appropriately and that

[03:54:24] they dovetail well with each other so all of our elementary middle and high ones are working well so now that we have this additional information about the direction that the board would like to go as it relates to as an example in this motion Veterans Day this will give us an opportunity to go back look at all

of our work calendars, readjust and then make that determination in terms of where the early release day should fall.

[03:54:48] Dr. Reed, all of the early release days, the official calendar early release days are published on the high school calendar and the middle school calendar and could be published certainly on the elementary school calendar, couldn't they?

[03:55:05] Well, I mentioned that the four quarter days could be for sure. And the other four that only the elementary will be having would be the four I can't give you tonight. Right. But once you determine those, those can be included on the published calendar, correct?

[03:55:22] Yes, sir. Okay. So I would just submit to my colleagues that until we know what those days are, I don't know how we can vote to approve something unless the motion is rephrased to remove the reference to the early release motion and to specify that essentially we're delegating the superintendent to come up with a calendar that we will perhaps ratify by some further act at a later date. Mr. Frisch. Two quick things one when we were discussing the other two amendments that

[03:55:59] I supported I looked at the calendar to make assessments of what those days were going to do secondarily I have no problem approving this calendar tonight and when the superintendent comes back with the insertion of the four days which by the way during that conversation my assumption based on the conversation was that we knew what the four days were going to be and that the superintendent had some discretion about figuring out the optimal place to place those four days and while I didn't support the motion I supported the amendment because of that flexibility

[03:56:34] so I have no problem voting for the calendar here because I already assumed based on the motions we passed what this would look like on the calendar that I've been looking at for planning next year And I would have no problem with us approving additional days down the road if that's something that the board wants to move forward with.

[03:56:57] Mr. Moon. I want to give certainty to community, and that should be tonight for the 26th, 27th school year calendar. Many families relying upon unapproved calendar have already made plans.

[03:57:19] I don't want to further delay that, further delay that. I have a confidence in superintendent, having heard our discussion debate tonight, we're, in a timely manner, putting back to us what our recommendations will be as to how additional four early release days should be used at elementary schools.

[03:57:44] But as far as what is up there with amended motions regarding Veterans Day, I feel comfortable, you know, approving the calendar for the next year. Okay, I'm going to take a quick turn.

[03:58:08] My hand's up. Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead, Ms. Lee. Yeah, thank you. The comment I want to make or question to Dr. Reed is, in the past, the early release days for elementary were done by pyramid or by region, perhaps.

[03:58:26] So I know my colleague mentioned earlier in this discussion of the current amendment that those could be denoted on this calendar that actually was on the screen a second ago. But if they're going to be different by pyramid, then they wouldn't be denoted because they haven't been in the past because they're different from region to region.

[03:58:46] Is that correct? I mean, is it plausible we could do them all at the same time? You're correct, Miss Lady, and it really isn't possible to do them all on the exact same date because of transportation and keeping within our budget.

[03:59:02] So we do half of the divisions, elementaries, on one day and half on the next week. So I think that that is very likely why we haven't put it on the full-on division calendar that's posted, but rather it's sent out by Pyramid.

[03:59:21] That's correct. All right. So for that reason, I agree with my colleagues. I think we can vote on this because we understand the amendments in terms of Veterans Day. We understand it's no more than eight early release days. There's been discussion about whether those early release days should move from a Wednesday.

[03:59:40] I mean I think that those are discussions that can still take place I don't think the impact actually the calendar that was posted and the changes that we've talked about tonight so for that reason I am able to support this tonight thank you thank you miss lady I'm gonna go ahead and take a quick turn does the board approve all of the early release days for high schoolers related to their exam schedules no ma'am okay so I don't see that this is any different we're not really we are not approving every early release that's going on

[04:00:17] across the county because things are happening at different times and oftentimes it's important to do what works for that particular school so I am fine with leaving the superintendent leave or giving the superintendent leave to go ahead and figure out which four days work for in which portions of the division and I have full faith that she will come up with a solution to the problem that we have provided her. The other thing that I feel strongly about getting this is because Ms. St. John Cuning and I were audience members

[04:00:53] in the webinar that happened the other night, and one of the things that was repeatedly said is that further changes were likely going to happen related to the results of the policy. And I would be loathe to actually change the 26-27 calendar again after the policy is set later this year. So I think it is essential for us to go ahead and lock this in now and understand that anything that happens in the policy will move forward with calendars that haven't been approved yet. So I am in full favor of this. So we're going to Dr. Anderson

[04:01:29] for a go back. Thank you. I appreciate the discussion that has taken place regarding approving this and I appreciate what Mr. Moon has said about parents needing to know as soon as possible and I know that was a point when we discussed this back in 21, 22, 23 and while I appreciate the spirit of this I'm not going to be able to support this motion at this time because I do think we need to have a clean calendar for our community to have clarity in terms of what is it

[04:02:01] that's going to be happening. Mr. Dunn. Mr. Moon. Okay seeing no others we're going to go ahead and take a vote for the follow-on motion that is on the screen. All those in favor Mr. Frisch, Mr.

[04:02:19] mcdaniel miss st john cuning miss dixit mr dannon mr dunn i'm sorry mr moon miss lady and myself all those opposed miss marron mr mckelveen mr dunn dr anderson i believe that's all of us will the clerk please read the vote eight for the motion carries thank you i call on mr mcdaniel for a follow-on motion i move that the school board direct the superintendent to bring her

[04:02:55] recommended calendars for sy 2027 2028 and sy 2028 2029 to the July 9th 2026 regular meeting of the fairfax county school board for action is there a second i second miss st john cunning uh mr mcdaniel would you like to speak to your motion uh just quickly again another housekeeping item to lock in some certainty of when the next two school year calendars are going to be brought to by the superintendent for board action which is July 9th of 2026 missing John Cunning would you like to speak to your second yes and a lot of my conversations that I

[04:03:34] had this week there was a really interesting conversation that was brought up by someone that said you know before I really kind of didn't care about the calendar and unfortunately my wife and I split and so the fact that we had that three-year calendar was really helpful when we went to the judge and I had a calendar and we were discussing custody and it was there so that was an implication I would have never even imagined and so there are so many reasons that having that calendar that the rear calendar is important for our

[04:04:09] families some of which we don't even fathom so that is one of the reasons that I think that we should do that. Mr. Fresh. Ms. Marin. I actually have a question for the motion maker so if you could come back to me please when he returns. Thank you. Dr. Anderson. I'd like to amend the follow the follow on motion in its entirety by

[04:04:49] replacing it with I move that the school board direct the division superintendent to bring her recommended calendars for SY 2728 and SY 2829 to incorporate comprehensive community engagement that includes but not limited to in-person feedback in electronic surveys in electronic surveys to the July 9th, 2026, regular meeting to the Fairfax County School Board for action.

[04:05:14] Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. McElveen. Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your amendment? Yes, I would. There are a couple of things here that I really appreciated that were brought forward, which is, one, the board is going to fulfill its duties of approving the calendar.

[04:05:30] So I'm very much in support of that. Doing it in batches, again, the community has really been appreciative of knowing what their plan was going to be for more than one year at a time. The only thing that I'm asking for is to incorporate community engagement because we've all have done different things to hear from folks.

[04:05:51] We need to do it a little bit more structured. I'm happy to do another survey for my community on the calendar, but I'd rather not do that. I'd rather it be division-wide rather than just Mason District specific. And I purposefully use some words like incorporate comprehensive community engagement because I realize the timetable. This is two months away, three months away, but we are still Fairfax County, a very large division with lots of resources, but it is still three months away. We are not, I am not expecting, as I talked to you earlier, Dr. Reed, I do not believe this is a space where we're going to do a pyramid meeting to talk about the calendar.

[04:06:28] No, I believe that this makes sense to incorporate in whatever in-person meetings you have that are coming up, whether it be community conversations, staff conversations, family groups, and other groups. I think that's a great way to get some in-feedback discussion, as well as what most people can have access to, which is an electronic opportunity to give feedback through a survey, which I know we have plenty, and I'm hoping we could tweak them a little bit to get that out, and really supporting our family liaisons and others to support our families to give their feedback

[04:07:06] we should not have calendars that are just churned out year in year out without having community feedback or input to it we need that because right now what we're receiving at least what I'm receiving are all of these anecdotes that need to be compiled in a way for me to be representative of my community. We all need that information, and I'm hoping that you all can be supportive of collecting feedback from our community. What I shared back here, I think in December,

[04:07:41] that I'll raise here again, I think every couple of years as we are moving towards a structured calendar policy, it's going to be one of my advocacy points for the policy that we stop, We pause. We take stock. We hear from the community that is living and experiencing this calendar.

[04:08:02] How is it going? And we use that to inform the decisions that we are making. So this is an ask for information, not in a way that I'm hoping is not going to be crippling, because I do realize everybody's plate is full. It is not going to be additional meetings, but it is going to be a digital ask. That's going to be the new thing. And then whatever meetings that Dr. Reid and her staff already have that are on the books.

[04:08:33] Mr. McElveen, would you like to speak to your second? I see this as a way of getting back to normal, right? Reincorporating community voice in this process, which has been missing for the past four years or so. So although this falls short of what I would have liked to see, which is adding community voice back to our calendar committee, it does get us to the point of regularly surveying our community just as we have in the past.

[04:09:02] So this is a positive step forward, and I look forward to seeing the results soon. Mr. Frisch. Thank you. Two things. One, on the subject of engagement, I have had for my entire time on the board heartburn over the idea that we call it community engagement and that it is anything other than informative, and it's certainly not instructive, right?

[04:09:28] you could get 10,000 families representing the entire school division with no scientific weighting based on, you know, demographics or what proportion of the school division might share their views, what have you. And so what you end up with is, you know, we used to get these – and by the way, staff works incredibly hard to get these responses, right?

[04:09:51] And so – but we would get these surveys that said, like, 80% of students feel safe. OK, those responsive students, and they are a subset of which groups and which schools and which areas and which regions. And so people tend to weaponize the data in the engagement surveys, and it's not necessarily scientifically sound, right?

[04:10:15] It is informative, not instructive. And so my hope is that as we continue to do engagement, that we will do more to make the engagement reporting instructive more than informative. want to know when we get and by the way 15,000 families is a huge sample size to work with for something that could be scientifically instructive most people would dream of having that kind of a sample size to work with so that's one thing otherwise it's all anecdotes some anecdotes are heavier in one area than

[04:10:52] another second is a question for dr. Reed my big fear in engagement on this subject in particular let alone doing it every single year and I'm not saying opposed to it but this is the fear if we don't do this properly is that we will continue to ask people what they feel about x y or z and may not be able to deliver on elements of that in conjunction with other elements of that and so we will continually disappoint people who think that well I keep telling you that I want this but maybe that's not possible how

do we make sure that when we are engaging the community that we are also setting realistic expectations about what's

[04:11:29] possible based on choices people make right everything is a choice that they weigh one thing against another right a longer summer means you know less time here you know how do we make sure that in the messaging around the engagement that people are walking in clear-eyed about what is possible yeah I think that's gonna be tricky and we're gonna have to look at the survey tool and we're gonna have a pretty quick turnaround to look at the data so we're not going to be able to have much that will be open-ended but you're right I mean there are a

[04:12:08] finite number of days and finite number of hours within the day so it's a it'll be tricky I think to draft a survey that's going to provide if you will that instructive feedback so I appreciate the sentiment well and you know a lot of stuff can be conflicting and so I'm supportive of the motion to have engagement because I think it's important you know and perhaps I'll make a goal of the of the year ahead working with colleagues to find a way to better support

[04:12:42] staff so that the reason the research we get back on the engagement can be looked at in a scientific way that tells us X percent of families feel a certain way and that we're not just saying X percent of families who responded feel a certain way you know you can apply strong rigor to that kind of assessment and and and feel reasonably certain that what you're getting is accurate. Mr. McDaniel. I just want to say I thank Dr. Anderson for bringing this um you know based on the conversation of the level of community engagement you know one of my

[04:13:21] biggest concerns with these motions tonight was that there was not time to do that community engagement so this fixes that and we can put it in place as a regular cadence um ideally going forward. Ms. St. John Cunning. Yes, I also want to thank Dr. Anderson for bringing this. I mean, I was a family engagement region rep, so engagement is really important. My issue was with the word comprehensive because that looks different in different ways, and there's a two-month period, but you express that. You recognize that and appreciate that, you know, and are willing to

[04:13:58] look at what we get in our surveys, which we all know are problematic in terms of who responds to them or not. And this is something that I think we could start looking at further down the road as we're developing policy and thinking about how we maybe look at a calendar committee or something so that we codify this in a better way. But I think that listening to our families is important. And this is one of those issues where there are so many competing

[04:14:32] priorities. And we are not going to be able to please everyone. But I think we're going to try to come to the best solution for our students and our families and our staff. So thank you for bringing this motion. Dr. Anderson. Mr. Moon. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm inclined to support this motion, but I have a couple of questions to make out of the motion and also governance committee chair as governor's committee is currently are you speaking to the amendment or are you speaking to the main motion amendment then it's dr anderson but i'm gonna ask them

[04:15:11] i'm sorry i'm sorry okay why don't i why don't i continue anyway the point i'm trying to make a governor's committee is working on carrying the policy i haven't seen it yet but i'm sure that they will finish this one up quickly in time if that includes any newly developed guidelines for the superintendent incorporate in coming up with recommendations to the full board for consideration and approval.

[04:15:48] And if you look at our current policy, any changes in guidelines should, let me see, I'm going to give you exact language.

[04:16:04] It says the guidelines shall be revised appropriately if there are changes in requirement or legal holidays, okay? School board shall solicit comments and suggestions from the school community when modification of the school calendar year are under consideration.

[04:16:23] And standard school year calendar is based on set of guidelines earlier to every year in a consistent manner. All right. So what I'm trying to say is if we are directing the superintendent to get community input, engage the community, I hope that we do not duplicate that for the guidelines.

[04:16:46] So consolidate what the development of new guidelines should include for community engagement, along with what superintendent, we are directing superintendent to engage the community to bring us a recommendations for board consideration on July 9th.

[04:17:10] Both of them should go together hand in hand. Thank you, Mr. Moon. Okay. Seeing no others. Nope. Nope. Oh, Miss Lady. Sorry.

[04:17:21] Thank you. So I thank Dr. Anderson and Mr. McElveen for bringing this, and I believe 100% in the community engagement. But here's my question. We've done things a lot since I've been on this board that involve community engagement, and it's been my experience sometimes that when people's individual communities are not all in agreement, that what follows is abstentions on votes.

[04:17:54] And I'm raising this because my sense is we're going to find out, which is what's been happening in my email, is that everyone is advocating for their religious holiday or their cultural observance days.

[04:18:11] And I completely understand and support that. So I guess I'm not I'm not really making a question. I'm trying to sort of hopefully create an expectation that when we do all this work and we hear back and hopefully it's instructive that everyone on the board will do what's right in the end in terms of voting for a calendar.

[04:18:42] I just, I might not be articulating myself, but I just have seen situations where, like, I know in Trainsville, like, I can't, on every vote, I can't make every single one of my constituents happy, but there are situations where I'm at the dais where I have to make a choice, and I make choices based on what I think is best for students and for learning and for our kids and for the majority of the people I represent.

[04:19:11] So I hope that what we get back is instructive, and I hope my colleagues will, you know, sit with that, evaluate it, and then come prepared to cast a vote, understanding they can't please everybody. Thank you.

[04:19:27] Dr. Anderson, did you want to go back? Yeah, just very quickly. I think I got a little bit confused regarding the comments. Abstaining from a vote is a choice. It's not a mandatory activity.

[04:19:43] It's a choice that a member makes. for whatever the reason, you know, I could have abstained from the boundary vote because my community was not happy, but I looked at it holistically and saw that there were more that benefited Fairfax County and voted to support it because of that. It is always a choice as to whether or not you're going to abstain. I rarely abstain. I vote no because that's my position.

[04:20:11] I don't see the abstention as a fallback. I use it really when I don't have enough information to really make a decision. And that's been, I can only point to one time when we're doing the CIP when Mr.

Gordon was looking for some information for me.

[04:20:30] So that's just how I approach it. So I'm not sure if the community engagement results will push anyone into an abstention category. I don't think it should. I don't think it should. But I'm hoping that we are still not going to shy away from the community engagement because the results may not be what we are hoping for because we need to include our people.

[04:20:57] We talk about voice being a part of what we do in Fairfax County, and we have not had that voice in the calendar for the past several years. So hopefully we can return to that as a practice. Do I think it needs to happen every year? I do not. But it needs that we need to pause at least a couple of every couple of years and take stock and ask people how is this thing working for you so we can make the right moves in a comprehensive structured way rather than me polling the Mason district or you polling whatever district you represent in order to bring forward their concerns.

[04:21:32] Thank you Dr. Anderson seeing no others we're going to go ahead and vote on the amendment that is on the screen. All those in favor? Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, and myself.

[04:22:00] Ms. Lady, can you verbalize your vote? Yes, I'm voting for the motion. That is unanimous. Okay, so now we are back to the main follow-on motion as amended. Ms. Marin. Thank you. I had two questions for the maker of the motion.

[04:22:21] Is the point to have the 27-28 and 28-29 calendars approved before the next school year begins? So approved before the school year begins. That's my question for the motion maker. From the language of the motion, it says July 9th of 2026.

[04:22:43] And I believe the next school year begins after that. Okay, thank you. And so if so, is the plan to approve them at the following week at the July 16th meeting? The language of the motion says the superintendent will bring her recommended calendars to the July 9th meeting.

[04:23:02] So that means that's the first time the public's seeing them and we're going to deliberate on them. I would defer to the chair on the scheduling of the mechanics, but the way the motion language reads, it has to come back by the July 9th meeting.

[04:23:19] So walking through the timeline, this is how I see it. The board has to act swiftly to give clear direction to the superintendent and the policy. So that's got to happen immediately, as soon as we can. Governance is discussing this on Tuesday, April 14th. I did just send another email about it, and it was posted on the March 17th meeting as well.

[04:23:38] It now has the November of 2023 version posted as well. So those are both on the April 14th agenda. So Governance had planned to discuss it not only on April 14th, but also April 21st, and that would be the earliest, if we wanted any feedback from the superintendent, that would be the earliest.

[04:23:58] The upcoming regular meetings after April 21st are May 7th, May 21st, June 11th, and then June 25th. July 9th is the meeting in the motion. So when would we post this publicly to hear the superintendent present it?

[04:24:16] Then we need to deliberate, give our community time to comment and get that feedback, and then act. So I don't think July 9th, that would only leave us one week for having a discussion publicly about the calendar before we turn around and vote for it so I just want to understand that that's my is is that I'm

expressing this because I don't think the motion the dates is accurate and I'm trying to clarify the motion says the superintendent will bring her recommended calendars it does not say the board

[04:24:48] will act on them and our where does oh for action so I have an older okay well then that is not usually how we do things. Usually the superintendent presents something, then we have a space for it, and then we return to vote on it. So if that's going to happen here, that leaves one week for us to gather input from the community in the middle of July, and I don't think that's a good plan. So I would advocate that it comes to us sooner so that we have time to listen to the

[04:25:22] community and give ourselves that time. Mr. Frisch. When I read the language of the motion, I pictured it as going backwards from that day that the like other things the chair and vice chair would work in chairs with the superintendent to cadence the work leading up to that day including when dr anderson brought the motion on the community feedback all of those things would have to be staged in such a way i think we added two additional uh governance committee meetings

[04:25:56] TO SPEED THE PROCESS ALONG FOR THIS AND THE TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND SO IN MY HEAD IT WORKED I'M NOT CHAIR SO I'M NOT MAKING THAT CALL THANKFULLY BUT I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT IN CHAIRS WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT THEY CAN FIGURE OUT GOING BACKWARDS FROM THAT DAY WHAT THE CADENCE IS AND THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT I IMAGINE WOULD BE HAPPY TO BRING THAT TO US IN A FRIDAY LETTER THAT LAYS OUT WHAT THAT BACK TRACK IS I'm going to take a turn really fast, and then we'll go to Mr. Moon.

[04:26:30] The intention here was, as the board direction has been quite clearly, is that it would be brought for new business on June 25th, and it would likely be a presentation that evening, which would give plenty of time for community input. And both of these calendars are already published.

[04:26:47] I believe that one of them is already published, but I believe that there's a draft of the second year out. I will speak to why I am in... wholehearted support of this is that my hope would be moving forward in order to maintain that three-year cadence on the calendar is that it would become part of our organizational meeting that happens in the first meeting in July every year. And so that way we can determine within the policy however we would like to state community engagement needs to occur. But this gives a clear direction and part of the board's organizational package when we also are presenting our own calendar for the year,

[04:27:27] that it makes sense to just have that be part of the cadence that we are approving the third year out. And so I do believe a lion's share of the work has already been done here by the calendar committee. And so I don't think that this is impossible.

[04:27:43] I think that I agree that the concern here is that governance does need to move quickly in order to move that. I believe that the clerk is about to add to the annual calendar, and we were updating the board that we are hoping to have a work session on the calendar policy on May 5th, which would give us plenty of time to then schedule it for action.

[04:28:09] And so that's the intention, understanding that it was coming to the governance committee shortly. So hopefully we will be able to keep that cadence and move quickly and also continue to take community input as we go. So I think that a lion's share of the community input has already been done over many, many years to collect what's happened.

[04:28:31] And we do need to continue to engage the community, but much of that work has already been done. So, Mr. Moon. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Meron, that I have not had a chance to look at what's been posted in the governance committee's meeting, but I will do take a look at those.

[04:28:52] i do not know whether those documents include you know something that i have i mentioned earlier set of guidelines whether it's going to be different from before and and you know in the past in the past i don't know what happening i don't know how this was done in 2023 the last time the last board you know voting on the calendars but in the years past because you know this discussion could take hours just like tonight just like tonight and a lot of times we scheduled

[04:29:27] work sessions to discuss every little detail about the calendar at the work session rather than at the board regular board meeting like this we have preliminary discussion work session and then when the act when the action is needed to be taken then it gets brought to the board when the board feels ready to actually vote on the calendar that it was brought to the full board, actually regular meeting. But, you know, as, you know, Madam Chair stated that you feel comfortable as far as timeline

[04:30:06] is concerned with a governance committee and work almost done in time for the full board's consideration on the policy change or a new set of guidelines for superintendent to use. I'm fine with that. Okay. Seeing no lights, we're going to vote on the amended follow-on motion that is on the screen. All those in favor, Mr. Fresh, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Ms. St. John Cunning,

[04:30:42] Mr. Dixit, Mr. McElbeen, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Lady, and myself. that is unanimous okay agenda item 6.06 approval of human resources related policies policy 4425 lactation support programming policy 4520 employee organization recognition and policy 40 or 4950 sexual harassment I call on mr.

[04:31:21] moon for a motion thank you madam chair I move that the school would approve the following hr related policies as revised and detailed in the attachments on bold ox with the leave for a clerk to make a technical grammar and formatting changes that's policy 4425 lactation support programming policy 4520 employee organization recognition and policy employee organization recognition and policy 4950 sexual harassment is there a second i second miss marin Mr. Moon, would you like to speak to your motion?

[04:32:00] Madam Chair, first of all, I thank you for removing this from the consent agenda. I only wanted to have somebody explain to the board and the community as to what you are trying to accomplish from this policy 4520 related to employee organization recognition.

[04:32:23] Mr. Solomon. Yes, sir. So policy 4520 relates to our employee organization recognition procedures. As part of the collective bargaining process, as was presented at a previous board meeting, many of the topics that used to be discussed with our associations are now governed by collective bargaining agreements that have exclusive representatives.

[04:32:50] Outside of those covered topics, compensation, benefits, working conditions, hours, etc., employee organizations do have the ability to exist in FCPS, and there's a certification or recognition process that they go through with my office.

[04:33:09] I think this, you know, looking at this particular policy, 4520, it makes reference to, these are small letters, I'm going to make it larger,

[04:33:31] affinity groups. You know, we do have a number of affinity group organizations, groups, and are they remaining as affinity groups? who are today able to go through another round of formal recognition by this board?

[04:33:52] There would not be a need for them to be re-recognized. That is the philosophy section of that policy, basically saying that the board, as a school board and as a school division, we value the input that we get from affinity groups. We value making sure that we have that representation across our employee workforce and across our school division.

[04:34:14] So anybody who, or any affinity group that is already existing would not have to go through that re-recognition process. So those organizations are already involved in doing different activities, including inviting school members to participate in their activities, and those can continue on, correct?

[04:34:39] Correct. All right, thank you. Those are the questions I want you to have. Ms. Marion, would you like to speak to your second? No, thank you. 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, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, and myself, and Ms. Lady, with Dr. Anderson away from the table.

[04:35:10] Agenda item 6.07, action item, strategic governance manual, factual errors, and typo corrections. I call on Mr. Frisch for a motion. I move that the school board approve the correction of factual errors and typos to the strategic governance manual as detailed in the agenda item on board docs.

[04:35:34] Is there a second Mr. Moon? Second. Thank you. Would you like to speak to your motion, Mr. Frisch? Sure. Now the world gets to know my hobbies, so I apologize. But when I was chair, I had this dream that I would talk to Ms. Anderson about of a governance manual free of errors, free of typos, with the same pagination and hierarchical enumeration throughout instead of using Roman numerals in one page and letters and numbers on another.

[04:36:10] Seemingly no rhyme or reason as to which version was chosen, using different voices on different pages in different sections. One day these can all be fixed, but this is just the first step in that process. And so about eight weeks ago, I was talking to Ms. Marin on the phone, and she said, my staffer's been working on some corrections to the issues in the governance manual. I said, funny you should say that. I have a hobby. I have a, in my head, I kind of picture it in three steps, and it's like descending order of controversy, right? The first step is not controversial as far as I'm concerned.

[04:36:45] It is typos and factual errors. The second step is also not controversial, right? It is the hierarchical enumeration so that it's all consistent throughout and then the third step is the stuff that we all talk to each other about one-on-one it's like I wish the governance manual did this I wish it did that this doesn't keep with current practice blah blah blah so what we have in this first round which the governance committee passed on to the board one or two meetings ago is the typos and corrections and so if you scroll through it you'll find typos and corrections that are fixed there are two big buckets of red text that you'll find in the

[04:37:20] document. The first one, and this is the biggest offender of errors in the governance manual currently, it refers to the Ignite strategic plan, which was the previous strategic plan. So the first big bucket of red text in the amendments is replacing the first reference to what was in the strategic plan back in the day with what is in the strategic plan today.

[04:37:46] And then much later in the governance manual, there's another red section towards the end about the superintendent's evaluation we use uh as a board and that's on like page 90 we use the vboe's guidelines for uniform performance standards for the superintendent and until 2023 there were seven standards and those were included in the governance manual when that changed we started using the eight standards that are currently used since 2023 but the governance manual was not updated to have all eight standards so the next big bucket of red text that you find in the governance manual is the replacement of the seven standards with the eight standards.

[04:38:26] So that covers what we're voting on here. There's, you know, some commas removed. There's some double spaces after periods that are removed. There are typos. There are words that should have had a space between them but didn't for some reason, probably the victim of being copied from a PDF at some point in time.

[04:38:47] So help me move one step forward on this dream of having a clean governance manual. Thank you. Mr. Moon, would you like to speak your second? Not really, except to say that, you know, we could use artificial intelligence to help us.

[04:39:04] The only thing I will say is that my habit or my desire is to, in the next phase, along with correct numeration throughout, I would also like to make it match the rest of our documents. So I will be working with Mr. Frisch to see if we can clean it up and make it look more like us just a little bit. So seeing no others, we're going to go ahead and take a vote for the motion that is almost on the screen. Okay. All those in favor, Mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel,

[04:39:44] Ms. Marin, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cunning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannen, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, Ms. Lady and myself with Dr. Anderson away from the table. Okay, moving right along.

[04:40:01] Agenda item 7.01, performance review, asset protection, EL7 monitoring report. Each year, the school board assesses the superintendent in part on the basis of the school board or school division's reasonable progress towards achieving the 2023-30 strategic plan goals and adherence to a set of 13 executive limitations found on page 14 through 31 of the board strategic governance manual this the superintendent provides annual monitoring reports to the board for each

[04:40:38] executive limitation the board then votes on whether or not the provided report is in compliance or if corrective action is needing needed i call on dr reed for a monitoring report on executive limitation seven thank you madam chair members of the board and public this evening i'll be presenting executive limitation 7 which discusses asset protection so the school board's executive limitation 7 is listed here in text on this screen and at the time of this report to the best of my knowledge information and belief we have gathered information and evidence that I believe supports compliance with this

[04:41:16] board's executive limitation associated with this topic so this evening I'll be sharing some highlights and just a reminder that the full report is linked online to board docs. There are nine areas of executive limitation seven indicators one through four are on the slide here and indicators five through nine can be seen on this slide. While I'll be sharing selected indicators this evening the entire monitoring report again is publicly available on board docs.

[04:41:47] So, under the newer newly added information, I want to share that in the fall of 2025, the Board did approve awarding a contract to proceed with a comprehensive facilities condition assessment and the development of a framework for the renovation queue.

[04:42:05] This will provide accurate data for capital renewal funding projections, validate our maintenance backlog, inform the next renovation queue, and future planned capital infrastructure improvements. Further, our risk management group upgraded its software system, which enhances the review, processing and accessibility to information, and further strengthens communications and streamlines responses to claims that are submitted to FCPS.

[04:42:35] Also a new risk management website portal was added to the FCPS website for claims submissions, which improves the receipt of claims and customer service. As part of evaluating the division efficiency and effectiveness, our chief of staff has done an excellent job of leading a review of operations using our Baldrige framework to identify areas for improvement.

[04:43:01] We submitted our final application in December of 2025 and we had our team of examiners review the application as well as engage in a site visit last month. We anticipate receiving the official feedback report next month or June.

[04:43:20] It will be May or June of this year. In November of 2025, our Safety and Security Department established and facilitated the inaugural meeting of the Continuity Working Group to support the development of office-specific Continuity of Operations Plans.

[04:43:38] Individual departments have begun preparing their Continuity of Operations Plans using a standard template that detail which critical functions and equipment must be considered during an emergency. Atlas was launched in May 2025 as a new intranet solution for FCPS staff.

[04:44:00] It serves as a centralized hub that consolidates departments and topic information and shares essential updates to reduce information silos. There were 14,000 active users during the last week of February 2026, and we surpassed 29,000 total users for the month.

[04:44:22] We've also strengthened our memorandum of understanding practices across the division, including the creation and ongoing tracking and monitoring of MOUs. These actions include, but are not limited to, a completed inventory of all of our FCPS MOUs.

[04:44:39] We've developed a central MOU library and content on Atlas where staff can access templates, flowcharts, and guidance documents on how to draft an MOU. The Chief of Staff established a cross-departmental data governance team.

[04:44:55] This team is tasked with prioritizing, developing, and approving the standards and practices necessary to ensure secure, accurate, and effective data use across the organization. This team will focus on knowledge management and communication to ensure that approved governance procedures are clearly communicated, easily accessible, and fully integrated into routine practice.

[04:45:20] Within the data governance framework, we also established a responsible data use team. This team exists to ensure that FCPS data practices are aligned with legal and ethical standards, reinforcing our commitment to student privacy and responsible stewardship of information. Finally, we continue to collaborate closely with the Virginia Department of Education and school divisions across the Commonwealth to advance common approaches to student data privacy. Shine a light on success

[04:45:59] is a new video series on the next slide please thank you that showcases unique stories highlighting the work of our schools and departments these videos are shared in various settings and they've been I think really powerful communication tools our office of communications is also developed

a story tracker to provide a data dashboard of storytelling that reinforce the strength of our FCPS MADAM CHAIR, THIS CONCLUDES THE PRESENTATION FOR EXECUTIVE LIMITATION 7, ASSET PROTECTION.

[04:46:35] I'M HAPPY TO TAKE ANY QUESTIONS ALONG WITH OUR TEAM WHO ARE HERE. I KNOW THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MEMBERS THAT HAVE STAYED THIS EVENING TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS. SO I WANT TO THANK THE TEAM, THE ASSET TEAM, YOU WANT TO STAND UP, PLEASE, SO WE CAN JUST RECOGNIZE YOU AND THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE THIS EVENING.

[04:46:53] THANK YOU. MS. BURTON, DO YOU WANT TO INTRODUCE THEM? SURE. Three of my top performers, Director of Procurement, Michelle Pratt, the FCPS Comptroller, Seema Ajuat, and our Risk Manager, Nancy Piech.

[04:47:14] Thank you all for being here. Appreciate it. I call in Ms. Dixit for a motion.

[04:47:30] Sorry, I just pulled it too hard. I move that the school board finds the superintendent in compliance with Executive Limitation No. 7, Asset Protection. I further move that the school board approves the monitoring report based on the superintendent's reasonable interpretation of executive limitation number seven, asset protection, as outlined in the strategic governance manual.

[04:48:00] Is there a second? - Second. - Thank you, Mr. Dannon. Ms. Tixit, would you like to speak to your motion? - I just want to thank all of Dr. Reed, Mr. Burden, and the three ladies here. Thank you for your work and support.

[04:48:15] And in the interest of time, I will talk later, another day. Mr. Daniel, would you like to speak to you a second? Now I can't say much. I wanted to just extend my appreciation for all the work that you all do.

[04:48:32] I know it's 11.48 on a Thursday night, and on top of what's been a busy week and a busy year doing this sort of thing, I also recognize that this work, people sometimes get frustrated with headquarters and so forth, but this kind of work can save us a lot of money.

[04:48:50] This work can make us operate better. And I recognize that you put in a lot of hours on behalf of our teachers and our staff and our kids to do this. So I just I thank you all for your work here.

[04:49:10] Mr. Dunn. Thank you. For some reason, whenever we talk about the facilities condition assessment, it's usually near midnight. Something not good about that.

[04:49:26] Can you just provide a brief update on where we are? I see we approved it fall of 2025. I would just like to know whether we exercised option one and option two because options were built in, if that's been implemented, if a vendor's been selected, when the vendor will start work, when the vendor will finish work, so that then we can get on to the development of a new renovation queue, and also have better data to compare apples to apples, all the schools in the county, including their athletic fields and other associated facilities.

[04:49:59] So I do know that a vendor was selected and that work is underway already in terms of options one and two I don't believe we've exercised them yet We've locked in the costs, but we haven't moved forward with the exercising of them yet. Is that correct? Miss burden and mr Gordon. Yes, so but they Actually, mr Gordon you want to give just an update on the work that's been done so far. Yes, ma'am So,

starting over spring break, so last week, we actually, the team actually got out there, AECOM is the vendor selected, and started looking through assessments that we've contracted for them to do.

[04:50:36] We expect them to be complete in the December-January timeframe coming forward. So, it's a process working forward, and no issues at this point going forward. And the FCA is leveraging all of the historical data that we had gathered from recently renovated schools, or Ms. Szymanski before your appointment had gathered with her team, is that correct?

[04:51:03] Yes, so the purpose of the FCA is to go through and do a facility assessment, look at all the key systems within the facility, follow the general guidelines or industry standards. So it's a visual inspection, non-intrusive, non-destructive. So it's a visual inspection.

[04:51:19] It takes into consideration the age of assets, and it also looks at work order history. So the answer is, yes, we go back in time and look at the status of our facilities and equipment. And so option one and option two have been costed, but is there an intention to execute those options?

[04:51:37] I think one of the things we were reviewing is we were trying to recall what the whole conversation was. So we were going back to looking at notes for that. But there is absolutely consideration for that. Because I know there had been money allocated like in 2023, and then the school board allocated more money in 2025.

[04:51:55] And I think if I recall our previous discussion from a year ago, like the AECOM bid came in under what we thought it would be. Yes, sir. And so, I mean, we have costed it and we've locked in the cost. There was a benefit to doing that. I think we're just wanting to make sure we review the notes and follow the direction that we believe we have.

[04:52:14] Okay. And if there's obviously any confusion or anything, you'll come back to the board or for consensus or something. Yes, sir. All right. Thank you. Mr. Moon. thank you madam chair but considering the hour are some of my questions in writing i still gotta ask you this question uh do you consider school board members on asset to the division our most important asset if so how do you protect mental and physical health of school board members trying to make sure you get plenty of rest and not to have a board meeting from 432

[04:52:51] to go all the way to midnight I think thank you yes sir miss Marin yeah so the biggest thing for me well it's two big things for me in this report one is that number nine about annually reviewing existing leasing agreements contracts and MOUs I know for a fact this isn't being done because of the part you know the joint facility review committee work that I embarked on in July 2025 the team

[04:53:24] tried to find MOUs there they weren't all covered you know recovered but there's ones created by FCPS created and held by other agencies such as the county government the Park Authority athletic boosters club and private sports club and to your team's credit they try to obtain need information and I see that now there is a path going forward but we do not have a clear accounting of our MOUs, how much money we spend, I would say give away. The range of out-of-date MOUs, the most

[04:53:56] egregious, is 1987, the MOU for school-age child care or SAC. And I recognize that this is not all on the school division to fix, but I have not seen enough movement towards getting this rectified.

[04:54:13] You know, the MOU can be a tool to direct these other partners to find other solutions. And the more we just stay at an impasse with these partners, the worse it gets for our kids. I mean, at this point,

we're now using instructional dollars to pay for facilities, and we have a community use program that's run amok, really.

[04:54:36] So continuing to let this fester, it's not an acceptable option. And no one in elected office in this county or paid to be a leader should be fine with the status of how the \$9 million in public facility assets are being stewarded in this county. But I can't change it alone.

[04:54:53] I also think the policy work is incomplete. Not included in this is 5028, the System of Inventory Management. That's pretty essential to risk management. The data security policy, 6220, data security, data processing recovery, and contingency planning, that policy under IT has not been updated in 11 years.

[04:55:17] It's from 2015, even though we are actively creating an AI policy. And the 5,000 policies dealing with finance were brought to our attention by our deputy clerk for us to review, which we'll be doing at the next week's governance committee meeting. So I just, you know, overall this report is pretty circular.

[04:55:38] I don't see the data, the reports, the footnotes that would reference what is actually happening. How many MOUs are out of compliance? How much money are we losing because we have an MOU that only accounts for a million dollars in for all of our community use?

[04:55:54] The audits, we have an audit around, I think it was, I started to dig and then I said, you know, this is too much. facility is a maintenance audit report from 24 but overall it's just it's very hard to understand what's happening because it's not in order of the executive limitation content so but number nine for sure is completely not compliant mr. Dunn mr. Moon thank you okay seeing no others we will go ahead

[04:56:32] and take a vote for the motion that is on the screen all those in favor mr. Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. McElveen, Ms. St. John Cuning, Ms. Dixit, Mr. Dannon, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Moon, and myself. All those opposed? Ms. Marin? All those four. Okay. Ms. Lady is affirmative with Dr. Anderson away from the table. Will the clerk please read the vote? 10-1. The motion

[04:57:10] carries. Okay. Annually, the board will review each executive limitation at the time of the monitoring report is provided to determine if revisions are needed board members may offer amendments to executive limitations at regular meetings provided they send the final amendment language to the board and clerk at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to which it's speaking at which it's to be considered at this time no amendments have been submitted in advance of the meeting executive limitation asset protection was placed on the consent agenda for approval later in tonight's meeting to maintain the current language for the year ahead with the consensus of the board and with the

[04:57:47] understanding that we do not have staff in the room we are going to ask that we move academic matters to next next time but we would like to go we know we have staff here so we would like to go ahead with agenda item 8.02 which is the strategic plan update so I call on dr. Reed for a strategic plan update thank you madam chair and thanks for moving academic matters too I think it's given the hour and the extremely important asset that our board is for their rest I think that it's I appreciate it this evening I'm really excited to share our

[04:58:23] strategic plan update for April and as a reminder to our public each month we share an update of this work to highlight the efforts in FCPS as we pursue our strategic plan goals this evening we have our director of multilingual learner services rich polio is here also dr. Doreena Walsh a senior manager and

Karen Kleiber another senior manager in the division so we're really grateful you're here this evening to be part of our conversation tonight this is part of goal one and the selected measure

[04:58:58] we're looking at this evening is that multilingual learners meet expected growth and reclassification criteria so as we look at the next slide providing ELD services is something that's important under federal law the ELD or English language development is a vehicle that provides multilingual learners with access to the curriculum ensuring that language is not a barrier to students right to learn research that is provided by our division staff has said that to become fully proficient

[04:59:33] generally takes five to seven years for students as they work to develop the complex academic English of textbooks and high-stakes testing experiences. The data is clear in terms of looking at the metrics that once our students do reach this proficiency, they often are not just catching up there, they're often outperforming their non-multilingual peers.

[04:59:57] At the elementary level, we've been very recently utilizing an evidence-based English development curriculum which we're calling benchmark Express which is a companion piece to our core language arts materials this ensures that language literacy and content understandings are developing in tandem rather than separately in our middle and high schools there are a couple different approaches one is a designated ELD course and one is a co-teaching support curriculum where multilingual learners work alongside content area teachers in looking at

[05:00:34] basal development curriculum resources. Those are used to ensure consistent access to high quality rigorous instruction for all multilingual learners. And really they're designed to eliminate variability across schools and ensure that every student receives the same level of rigorous instruction. Just as we've realigned literacy instruction through the science of reading, we're now applying that same rigor to how our multilingual learners are mastering academic English. Our new resources support teachers by shifting the teacher's role from curriculum design to implementing high-quality instruction. In other words, instead of focusing on what to teach,

[05:01:15] teachers can focus their expertise on how they're teaching and adapting, personalizing, and internalizing lessons that meet the specific and unique needs of students in their classrooms. To provide, on the next slide, to provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum for the first time, we did adopt these materials that are on the slide, both for elementary, middle, and high.

[05:01:41] And the Benchmark Express, as I mentioned earlier, is designed to pair with the core language arts curriculum, Benchmark Advance. The English 3D, which is used at the middle school, focuses on academic discourse. and the high school lift curriculum uses authentic content to engage students in purposeful language tasks with cross-curricular texts, equipping our students for critical thinking across various content areas. The pathway series for our most proficient multilingual learners is also specifically designed to prepare students for rigors and more advanced coursework. So from foundational

[05:02:20] language and literacy to developing precise academic discourse. These three programs form a K-12 continuum that really moves from access to agency by empowering our multilingual learners to thrive.

[05:02:37] So to see the impact of the basal curriculum, let's see it in action and hear from our teachers and staff on the ground. Madam Clerk, if you would please play the video.

[05:02:58] Our multilingual learner students are students who come to Fairfax County public schools with a language other than or in addition to English and have been identified for services in learning English. Having a basal English language development curriculum really ensures equity that we're covering all of the pieces that teachers need to be effective in instructing multilingual learners.

[05:03:21] So we're supporting reading, writing, speaking and listening through a very rigorous curricula that provides students that opportunity to develop their English language proficiency. Inglés es un poco difícil, pero aprendiéndolo con el tiempo no puede ser tan difícil.

[05:03:37] I have learned new words with this material. I can already understand a little with my teacher talking about in the class. And also when two people talking about, I can understand the words a little.

[05:03:54] Overall, this curriculum is beneficial for the students because it is something that it is a continued, consistent practice. It has a specific routine that they follow from unit to unit, but also I think it's beneficial for us teachers too because we have all the materials available in one place. Since I have students at different levels and different needs, my time and effort can just go in to adapt some of the materials to that specific needs or add scaffolds or modify certain materials, certain portions of the lesson just to meet the student's specific needs.

[05:04:33] The orientation of the curriculum toward the explicit teaching of academic language is helpful. This is language that the students need. They need to be able to understand it, to be able to use it effectively in communication. They need it for success in school and in the professional world.

[05:04:51] I like the workbooks because they provide, like, the definitions of words that I haven't heard yet. And it does help me in other classes on how to construct a sentence and make academic words in the sentences. At elementary, they have their language arts block for Benchmark Advance, and then 30 minutes of that is small group time where the multilingual learner teacher comes in and provides the lesson on Benchmark Express.

[05:05:18] - Benchmark Express matches Benchmark Advance. It just pulls out specific language features, pre-teaches vocabulary, provides support for writing to really supplement the standard curriculum of Benchmark Advance. - I teach kindergarten through sixth grade, so I see that progression of skills.

[05:05:37] The supports that we see in Express and Advance do help the students with their confidence in their reading and writing, speaking. I do see overall speaking in longer sentences, more complex sentences, it's more intentional.

[05:05:53] I've seen improvements academically but also in their self-confidence. When I got here I didn't even know like the basic and now I am going up and up and up. How does it make you feel? Oh, like a genius. It makes me feel happy because I know and I'm getting to that point that I can speak fluently.

[05:06:15] Excellence, equity and opportunity. Well, then, I just hope you're proud when you have a chance to see the work on the screen that is happening every day in classrooms all across this amazing school division.

[05:06:37] The power and promise of public education is alive and well here in Fairfax. For our community members, the upcoming date for the Goal 4 report is listed on the slide, April 23rd. And, Madam Chair, that concludes this month's strategic plan update. Thank you, Dr. Reed.

[05:06:52] Mr. Frisch. since you're here so late I just want to thank you all for being here but also for the impact that we just saw on the screen here I remember when we first embarked on the work around the science of reading and I would visit elementary schools and hear about how resources were being deployed to train staff in a new way of educating students and you know it took a while but as we

[05:07:30] got resources in to support the work and trained people up and to learn when we were initially looking at the basal materials that they would be multilingual and that the support behind it would be there as well you know as difficult as the state has made it on school divisions in the last year year and a half as it relates to our multilingual learners the work that we're doing

[05:07:58] here in fcps is a tremendous accomplishment and you know i hope everyone that you work with knows how much it's appreciated so no question just praise thank you okay mr moon Thank you. I didn't want to disappoint Mr. Pauli by not asking him any questions.

[05:08:29] So you are here. Thank you. Thank you for staying with us. I mean, your mental and physical health is also important, you don't ask, to this division. Doing fine. So with that said, I think this is something that I had, and I mentioned to you at least a couple of times before, but it is worth repeating it.

[05:08:49] As a former ESS student, multilingual learner, myself one aspect of the esl program i was in that i found to be most beneficial i mean this is one person's case granny dad granny dad was flexibility of the program esl program for esl teacher to be able to send me to regular classes and regular classroom teachers being prepared to

[05:09:28] accept me to stay there as long as I want. I could always go back to ESL class and do that. And also at the time that the school I was at, the ESL program, the ESL class was instead of having a one fixed period, it would, Monday could be first period, Tuesday could be second period so that I could go and visit regular classes.

[05:10:02] I think I got the most, that was the most beneficial aspect of that program. At least, this is one person's case. I don't know whether we have ever tried that, ever thinking about trying it. Well, I think it's a both and, Mr. Moon.

[05:10:20] And actually, it was at Justice High School today. Speaking of, you know, it's our school, the largest number of multilingual learners. And we talked, we had a great discussion about ensuring that our multilingual learners have access to work throughout the day with their native English-speaking peers and former multilingual learners. So that is an emphasis of this program. It's not that students are with this curriculum all day. This curriculum grounds students in real rigorous instruction, specifically at the high school level, as you've discussed. I think it works with the content area that students

[05:10:56] are doing in social studies and science. And we do give students that flexibility to ensure that we want students our multilingual learners we know that they only make growth when they have rich discussions with their I guess English proficient peers so that is a large focus of our program particularly at the high school level. Ms. Dixit. I just wanted to say thank you for the work you're doing it's amazing it you can see that in school and anytime I go to school and see the ML work

[05:11:34] students working with the workbooks and and the small groups they work with the teacher i was mind blown actually when i saw the ml whole class doing a portrait of the graduate presentation and the whole class is so supportive of each other like it is like they like cheer each other on like it's a very supportive environment um so it just feels um like a place you can belong to and i've seen that in several

schools so that program itself is like i think um bringing the students together bringing those um you know making like a something they can belong to and

[05:12:13] i see that in the video here too so i just wanted to thank you for the work you do and and it's really helping a lot of students thank you i'll keep it short um because of the hour but i really do want to thank you and all of our multilingual learner teachers that are down on the ground because i've seen the work that they do they're amazing and any program and any teacher and any district that can have a student say i feel like a genius i don't care what kind of sol score you

[05:12:53] have i don't care what kind of grade you have that feeling is what's going to make that kid be successful and that's what we're really all about so thank you dr reed i know it's late however this morning we had an awesome meeting with other board chairs and other superintendents from around the northern virginia with our new secretary of education and our new state superintendent for education and you shared a story about um what saac is doing i did and i would very much like because I think that the board needs to hear it along with everybody else just

[05:13:32] to understand how amazing these students actually are and how hard what they're doing and I am going to set a challenge to the board to do the same thing so well thank you madam chair I was sharing this morning that our superintendent advisory council one of the groups that was doing a study chose to really work on supporting their multilingual peers because they really wanted them in more of their classes so they wanted them to be able to exit the WIDA assessment categories more quickly so they felt intuitively that the WIDA

[05:14:10] assessment was seeming like a barrier so they English speaking students took the WIDA assessment and they had a hard time passing it because it's a really difficult test to take even if you're an English native speaker so they came to me in the SAC group and said, Dr. Reed, why did they make the test so difficult for our non-English speaking students? Because just even the test itself, the way it's structured and how it poses the questions, it's extraordinarily difficult even if you're a native English speaker. So I'm going

[05:14:46] to be providing that for our senior leadership. We're going to have an opportunity to experience taking that WIDA assessment shortly. I wasn't going to tell them ahead of time. So I don't know if they're going to be studying up. But I actually was really proud of our students for taking that on.

[05:15:03] And I think there's something to that. I think that there's, I really, we're going to take a much closer look at that because if our native English-speaking students are struggling to pass a language assessment, that strikes me as a bit of a problem.

[05:15:19] And I'm sorry that I let the cat out of the bag. However, I do think that it would be a helpful thing. Well, it's late, they may not remember. Yeah, they may not remember. I do think that it would be a cool thing for the board to do as well, just to see. But I think that there are two points here, right?

[05:15:35] There's advocacy in terms of making sure that the test actually is representative of what it needs to test. But it's also interesting, because it could be looked at the other way, is that maybe kids that we think are proficient in a certain way, We know that kiddos that go through ESOL classes and go through the different levels are more successful in all of their other education after they exit the program.

[05:15:59] And so it would just be very interesting to me whether or not there are lessons learned that could that could strengthen the rest of our our instruction. So I just wanted to make sure the board had an

opportunity to hear the story as well. Yes, ma'am. We're on it. Okay. Agenda Item 9, Consent Agenda. Our adopted rules of parliamentary procedure, Robert's rules provide for a Consent Agenda listing several items for approval by the board in a single motion.

[05:16:31] Many items listed have gone through board approval and documentation has been provided to all board members and the public in advance. Items may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any board member prior to the meeting.

[05:16:48] The consent agenda items are on the screen or will be, however, they are also on board docs. And so we are going to, we will make sure that they are posted on the screen momentarily.

[05:17:04] However, we can look at them in board docs. Is there any objection to approving the consent agenda that is on the screen?

[05:17:24] Hearing and seeing no objection, the consent agenda is approved. new business or agenda item 10 new business the following are new business agenda items there will not be a vote on these items this evening but action is scheduled at a future meeting agenda item 11 board committee reports i call on miss marron for a report of the governance committee so i did share a bunch of updates but just the highlights april 14th and april 21st are going to be the next two governance committee meetings we'll talk about ai policy and calendar policy at

[05:17:57] both. The agenda for April 14th is posted, and April 21st will likely continue what was discussed on April 14th. And just an asterisk that there are several policies being discussed by our Facilities Planning Committee, CPDC, and that is on Monday. So lots of policy next week.

[05:18:19] Agenda item 12, superintendent matters. In light of the hour, I'll pass this evening. Agenda Item 13, Board Matters, in accordance with the board consensus. Due to the late hour, we will be skipping board matters this evening. So we are adjourned at 12:18 AM.



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