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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, October 21, 2026

Date Wednesday, October 21, 2026
Place Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 57m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRz2Vj4KfTs>
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-26. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] - All right, the Prince William County School Board is now called to order. We are moving to the approval of the agenda. Motion is now in order, Mr. Jesse. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Blake.

[00:00:16] - So moved. - Any discussion, please vote. All in favor of approving the agenda, hands up in the air. All in favor, aye. Okay, no opposition. Moving forward, second motion to enter closed session. Mr. Jesse. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3.7.1.1 and 2.2-3.7.1.2 of the code of Virginia, the Prince-Brunner County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:00:43] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointments, promotion, performance, demotions, salaries, discipline, or resignation of specific public employees, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to section 2.2 as 3 7 1 1 a in one of the code of Virginia to to conduct the superintendent annual goal setting for the 20 26 27 school year under section 2.2 that's 3 7 1 1 a 1 and 8 of the code of Virginia 3 to discuss with the division council staff action action

[00:01:22] actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff students and other civil litigation involving the school division on the section 2.2 - 3711 a 7 and 8 of the Code of Virginia and for to discuss the discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facility the

safety of persons using facilities and action taken to respond to such matters where discussion in the open meeting would jeopardize the

[00:01:59] security of such facility pursuant to section 2.2, that's 3711A19 of Escala, Virginia. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Mr. Zargarpur. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. All in favor, raise your hands. Any opposed? None seen. Motion passes.

[00:02:19] At this time, the Prince William County School Board will enter closed session and
[00:02:22] and return in about an hour.

[00:03:43] Welcome, Prince William County School Board is now reconvening into open session. We have first up a motion as an order for closed session certification. Mr. Jesse. - I move that pursuant to section 2.2, the S3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of Prince William County School Board meeting of October 21st, 2026, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:09] Now therefore be resolved with the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in a closed session, in a closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies.

[00:04:29] And two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board. Do you have a second? Mr. Chair.

[00:04:44] Mr. Blake. So moved. Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:09] The vote is eight yes. Motion passed. Okay, moving on to closed session. Action items, a motion in order for 8.01. Vice Chair Jesse. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. Do I have a second?

[00:05:26] Mr. Chairman. I think I heard Zargarpur first. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is eight yes.

[00:05:57] Motion passed. Mayor Mrakas: Okay, next up is approval of the superintendent's annual goals for the 2026-27 school year. This is an action item. Vice Chair Jesse. Vice Chair Jesse: I move that the Prince William County School Board approves the superintendent's annual goals for the 2026-27 school year as presented in closed session.

[00:06:15] Mayor Mrakas: Do I have a second? Ms. Chairperson. Mayor Mrakas: Ms. Wall. Ms. I second. Mayor Mrakas: Ms. Wall seconds motion. Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:39] Ms. The vote is 8 yes. Motion passed. Mayor Mrakas: Okay, moving on to the Pledge of Allegiance. We have tonight our student representative from Woodbridge Senior High School, Storm Allo. He will lead us in the pledge this evening.

[00:07:11] Okay, thank you, Storm. Up next is Thriving Futures Focus, which is our opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfills our vision that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:07:27] The school board is proud to officially recognize these honorees for their positive contributions to the school system. Tonight, we celebrate nine PWCS schools that have earned prestigious green flag designation from the National Wildlife Federation's EcoSchools US Program, and six PWCS schools that have earned national recognition as 2026 America's Healthiest Schools from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

[00:07:49] I now invite Ms. Erica Trudenik, School Board Representative for the Brentsville District, to recognize our first group of green flag schools. Ms. Trudenik. Ms. Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Wildlife Federation's EcoSchool's United States program recognized a total of 12 schools in Prince William County public schools for their commitment to sustainability and environmental education.

[00:08:12] Schools can receive green flag, gold, silver, and bronze awards, which honor efforts to integrate sustainability initiatives, student leadership, and environmental learning into daily school culture. Tonight, we recognize the nine schools that have earned the top award, the green flag.

[00:08:28] The Brentsville District is extremely proud to celebrate three schools that have earned the green flag, which is the highest national recognition from the EcoSchool's U.S. program. First, congratulations to Brentsville District High School for earning the green flag designation.

[00:08:44] Brentsville District High School is represented this evening by Principal Amanda Burke and National Science, sorry, Honor Society members, Sarah Chiramel and Elizabeth Paspecu. Next, kudos to Buckland Elementary School for earning this distinguished national designation.

[00:09:01] Buckland Mills is represented this evening by Principal Monaxi-Odedra and International Baccalaureate or IB coordinator, Tessa Swiger. And finally, congratulations to Pennington Traditional School for receiving the green flag designation. Pennington is represented this evening by Principal Michael Kelkin, Social Studies teacher and club sponsor, Aaron Merrill, and Life Science teacher and club sponsor, Emily Henold.

[00:09:26] To all three schools, your commitment to sustainability preparing students to become responsible citizens and leaders who understand their ability to make a positive difference. Congratulations. Thank you, Mr. Dennick. Up next, we have Mr. Jesse, and we'll invite the Vice Chair, Mr. Jesse, to talk about the Occoquan District. Mr. Jesse.

[00:09:47] Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Occoquan District is proud to recognize three elementary schools that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to environmental responsibility. First, Congratulations to Antietam Elementary School for being an ECHO School green flag designation.

[00:10:06] Antietam is represented this evening by Principal Christopher McManus and IB Coordinator Amanda McCurdy and second grade teacher Kelly Clark.

[00:10:23] Next, congratulations to Occoquine Elementary School for receiving a national recognition. Ocquam is represented this evening by principal Buddy Link and STEM teacher Ashley Johnson and finally congratulations to Rockledge Elementary School. Rockledge is represented this evening by principal Kathleen Dennis, first grade teacher Melissa Simpson and fifth grade teacher and echo

[00:10:56] Elements, Echo, Eagle, Lear, Linda, Soot, Sung, Gung, and congratulations to all three schools and the entire occupant district for those outstanding achievements, and forgive me for mispronouncing your name.

[00:11:14] Thank you, Mr. Jesse. At this time, I invite Tracy Blake, School Board Representative for the Neabsco District, to recognize our next honorees. Mr. Blake. Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Neabsco District is proud to recognize two schools that have earned the Eco Schools green flag designation first congratulations to dale city elementary school for achieving this outstanding recognition dale city is represented this evening by principal chantelle baldwin assistant principal ashley tessa mark and fifth grade science teacher caleb burges next congratulations to the garfield high school for earning this national distinction garfield is

[00:11:52] is represented this evening by principal Matthew Matheson, retired IB biology teacher and Green Club sponsor, Theresa Kitchen, and PWCS graduate and former president of the Green Club, Osmond Gonzalez.

[00:12:07] Dale City and Garfield, your achievements reflect a commitment to preparing students not only for academic success, but also for the responsibility of creating a more sustainable future. Congratulations to our school communities.

[00:12:23] - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Wilk, Potomac District. - Thank you, sir. Our futures are thriving and soaring at Potomac with recognizing Forest Park High School for earning the green flag designation from the National Wildlife Federation's EcoSchools US program.

[00:12:41] Forest Park is represented this evening by Assistant Principal Jim Smith and sponsors Ashley Teyon, teacher of specialized programs, and Christina Hep, Earth Science teacher. Forest Park's achievement is an excellent example of how schools can encourage students to look beyond the classroom and consider the lasting impact of their actions.

[00:13:02] Congratulations. At this time, I would like to invite Melinda Landry, Sustainability Coordinator with Energy Systems and Sustainability, to share a few words on behalf of our recognized schools, please. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the school board, Dr. McDade.

[00:13:20] My name is Melinda Landry, and I serve as a sustainability coordinator with energy systems and sustainability in PWCS's facilities department. I'm honored to speak on behalf of the schools being recognized tonight through the EcoSchools program, which is also an internationally recognized framework that empowers students to lead environmental action in their schools and communities.

[00:13:47] While the recognition is important, It's the impact of these student-led efforts that is truly worth celebrating. During the 2025-26 school year, these nine participating green flag schools, plus the three others who received either gold or silver recognition, completed 119 sustainability actions that engaged more than 4,400 students in developing solutions for real-world environmental challenges.

[00:14:17] Together, these schools implemented 92 energy conservation actions and 80 water conservation actions, contributed more than 1,200 hours of outdoor learning and provided over 36 hours of community service.

[00:14:35] Pretty impressive. Students also created more than 10,000 square feet of wildlife habitat, planting native trees, flowers, grasses, and shrubs. They also helped collect and responsibly dispose of more than 31,000 pounds of waste.

[00:14:53] These accomplishments reflect Prince William County Schools' commitment to providing meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom instruction to the world around us

while also developing environmental stewardship, leadership, and problem-solving skills.

[00:15:13] I'd also like to take a moment to recognize Ashley Tayon, who is one of our LEAD Sustainability Liaison Mentors. Ashley is from Forest Park High School. Ashley piloted the EcoSchools program during the 2024-25 school year and served as a mentor to all of these recipient schools.

[00:15:37] She helped expand the program's reach and impact across the division. So a really quick hand for Ashley Taeyan for this. Thank you. So thank you to the school board, Dr. McDade, all of our administrators, the sustainability liaisons that you see here, our staff, and most importantly, our students for making these achievements possible.

[00:16:05] Together, they are helping build a more sustainable future for Prince William County Schools and for our community. So thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Landry.

[00:16:22] - Excellent, thank you, Mr. Will. Congratulations again to all nine of our green flag schools. We now turn the spotlight to six PWCS schools that have earned national recognition is 2026 America's Healthiest Schools from the Alliance for the Healthier Generation. We begin in the Brentsville District. We're Representative Miss Erica Trudenik.

[00:16:39] Miss Trudenik. - America's Healthiest Schools is an annual distinction from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation that recognizes schools that demonstrate an exceptional commitment in nine categories. School health services, local school wellness policy, nutrition and food access, physical education and activity, health education, social, emotional health and learning, tobacco-free schools, staff well-being, and family and community engagement.

[00:17:04] Of the 1,376 schools recognized in 35 states, only 14 were in Virginia, and six of those are right here in Prince William County. Even more impressively, three of our schools earned the prestigious All-Star designation for meeting the criteria in all nine categories.

[00:17:22] The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Buckland Mills Elementary School for earning the 2026 America's Healthiest Schools designation. Buckland Mills was recognized in five categories. Buckland Mills is represented this evening by Principal Minoxio Odedra and third grade teacher Michelle Terhar.

[00:17:43] Congratulations to the entire Buckland Mills community. Victory Elementary School has also been named one of America's Healthiest Schools and earn the prestigious All-Star designation by achieving recognition in all nine award categories. Victory Elementary is represented this evening by Principal Christopher Wray and School Counselor Jessica Kaiser.

[00:18:04] Congratulations to both of our Brentsville District Schools on these remarkable accomplishments. - Thank you, Mr. Denick. I invite Vice Chair Jesse to recognize our next honoree from the Occoquan District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[00:18:21] The Occoquan District is extremely proud to recognize the Tidham Elementary School as one of the American Healthiest Schools and a 2026 All-Star Awardee with distinction across all nine categories.

[00:18:37] And Tidham Elementary School is recognized this evening by Principal Christopher McManus and School Counselor Aaron Shaha and Marcia Cook. Congratulations.

[00:18:56] - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Ms. Zargarpur, would you please recognize our next honoree? - I certainly will, Dr. Lateef. The Coles District is proud to recognize Saunders Middle School as a 2026 America's Healthiest School. Saunders earned national recognition in three categories. Saunders Middle

School is represented this evening by Principal Jeremy Byrd, Director of School Counseling Stephanie Sturgis, and School Counselor Catherine Sharp.

[00:19:18] Congratulations to the Saunders Middle School community for this well-deserved recognition. - Thank you, Ms. Zargapur. Mr. Blake, Neabsco. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Neabsco District is proud to recognize minneville elementary school as one of the america's healthiest schools in 2026 and earned the recognition in four categories minneville elementary school is represented this evening by principal deborah ellis school counselor sarah basler and school parent liaison shayla lee congratulations to the entire minneville elementary community my community on this outstanding

[00:19:57] achievement thank you mr blake i invite miss wall of the gainesville district to recognize our final school thank you dr latina the gainesville district is extremely proud to recognize unity braxton middle school as a 2026 america's healthiest school and all-star awardee by demonstrating excellence in all nine award categories unity braxton middle school is represented this evening by principal aaron sykes thurston director of school counseling gina cobb and school counselor sean bigler congratulations to the entire unity braxton

[00:20:36] and community on this exceptional national recognition. At this time, I would like to invite Heather Wines, Supervisor of Social Emotional Learning, to share a few words on behalf of our recognized schools. - All right, good evening, Chairman Dr. Lateef, Vice Chairman Mr. Jesse, members of the school board, and Superintendent Dr. McDade.

[00:21:01] My name is Heather Wines, and I am the proud Supervisor of Social Emotional Learning here in our division. I am honored to be here to recognize our six Prince William County Public Schools named for America's Healthiest Schools by the 2026 Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

[00:21:19] Those schools you all just mentioned, so I won't mention them again, but this national recognition celebrates schools that are intentionally creating environments where staff, students, families can thrive. Schools may earn recognition across nine areas of health and well-being, including physical activity, nutrition, health education, social-emotional health and learning, staff well-being, and family and community engagement.

[00:21:47] Of the 14 schools recognized across Virginia, Prince William County had six of those schools, the largest of any division in the state. There are only three schools that were recognized to achieve the distinction of the all-star status.

[00:22:03] All three are here in Prince William County Public Schools. This recognition is also a testament to the power of partnership. Our continued collaboration with the Alliance of a Healthier Generation and Kaiser Permanente provides valuable resources and support that help our schools strengthen practices that promote the wellbeing of the whole school community.

[00:22:23] We also want to recognize Vaughn Thomas, coordinator of social-emotional learning, and Brielle Anderson, our wellness coordinator, for their ongoing support of our schools and their commitment to making this collaboration successful. This year marks the fifth consecutive year the Prince William County Public Schools have received this national recognition, demonstrating our continued commitment to creating healthier school communities where every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

[00:22:53] Congratulations to these six outstanding school communities and thank you to everyone who helped make this possible. - All right, thank you, excellent. Ms. Wall, congratulations again to our six America's Healthiest Schools.

[00:23:09] I would now like to invite the friends, families, and colleagues, and other supporters of our honorees who are here in attendance to stand in recognition the important role you have played in helping these schools earn these national awards. For everyone here supporting them, please stand.

[00:23:31] Thank you, and before we take a few pictures, Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Tonight's recognition demonstrates an important connection between the well-being of our students and the health of the world around them. To our six schools recognized tonight, Antietam, Buckland Mills, Minnieville, Victory, Saunders, and Unity Braxton.

[00:23:50] Your commitment to physical, mental, and social-emotional wellness reflects our belief that students are better prepared to learn, lead, and succeed when they feel healthy, safe, and supported. To our nine schools earning the prestigious EcoSchool's U.S. Green Flag Distinction, Antietam, Brentsville, Buckland Mills, Dale City, Forest Park, Garfield, Occoquan, Pennington, and Rockledge.

[00:24:14] Your accomplishments demonstrate the power of environmental stewardship, sustainability, and student leadership. Congratulations to all of our honorees, and we are PWCS proud.

[00:24:32] - Thank you, and at this time, I'd ask our honorees to come forward with a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:24:38] Maria will help guide us as we do this.

[00:30:41] Okay, moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions, 12.01-- - I can do it. - Yeah, 12.01, which will be acknowledgements and recognitions, Mr. Jessie.

[00:31:01] I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the adoption of knowledge and the recognition that is recommended. Mr. Chairman? Oh, sorry, do 1101. We gotta do the adoption of the consent agenda first.

[00:31:17] Okay, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. Second. Mr. Chairman. Ms. Williams. Second. Okay. Please vote, discussion. Ms. Chairman, I just wanted to say on the consent agenda, we have the meetings for the joint legislative meeting that occurred, the minutes from the joint legislative meeting that occurred last Tuesday.

[00:31:41] So if anyone is interested in finding out what was discussed from the BOCS and from us, we'll be talking about ours this evening, our legislative priorities, it's in those minutes. Thank you. - Thank you, please vote.

[00:32:06] - Thank you, the vote is eight yes, motion passed. - Okay, now acknowledgements and recognitions. Mr. Jessie. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the adoption of the acknowledgement and the recognition as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. Okay, any discussion, please vote.

[00:32:37] - The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tradenik, motion passed. - Okay, those citizens who signed up in advance with a clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:32:55] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption in the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have 13 citizens signed up to speak.

[00:33:11] When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. Per Policy 134, the time allotted for each speaker this evening will be three minutes. I'll call the first five up so you know the order. You can choose to come sit up front or stay where you are or like.

[00:33:27] Michelle Rupert, Kimberly Melman Orozco, Barbara Tate, Janelle Anderson, Blake Hara. First up, Michele Rupert. Hi, my name is Michele Rupert and my address is on file.

[00:33:51] Over the past two weeks, I have been receiving reminders to sign an extracurricular supplement contract for my job as a middle school band director. This supplement is sent to all middle school performing arts teachers. I reviewed the documents governing this compensation and found a series of contradictions.

[00:34:08] The Fine and Performing Arts Supplemental Pay document describes our duties as a co-curricular extension of classroom learning and states that the supplement provides compensation for this work yet labels the duties as recommended the all-county music manual also states that these duties are an extension of classroom instruction but that they're required and that compensation for these duties is included in our supplement but the CBA places us under supplemental pay alongside coaches and activity sponsors while elementary string teachers and and high school directors receive stipends as part of their base contracts.

[00:34:47] The contract I'm asked to sign is an extracurricular activity sponsorship agreement. It says that my services are offered freely, solely for my purpose or pleasure, motivated by my civic charitable or humanitarian spirit, and that payment is not compensation.

[00:35:08] I do not understand how these documents can be describing the same position. This is not simply a matter of terminology. By classifying our compensation as supplemental, the division is omitting compensation that should be contributed to our retirement.

[00:35:26] For the past two years, the Saunders Advanced Band has earned superior ratings performing grade three literature at district assessment. I have nothing to prove regarding my commitment to this profession, my students, or the quality of instruction taking place in my classroom.

[00:35:44] I cannot, in good conscience, continue to sign a contract that mischaracterizes my job. In March, the board approved mid-contract amendments through side letter agreements when an issue for track coaches warranted correction.

[00:36:00] I am asking the board to amend our contracts now to ensure that our middle school teachers are classified and compensated in a manner that accurately reflects the instructional work we perform on behalf of our students. Thank you.

[00:36:15] - Thank you. Kimberly Melman-Orozco.

[00:36:31] - My name is Dr. Kimberly Melman Orozco. My address is on file. I am facing this camera because I want to address the teachers in Prince William County. Last time I was here, I asked for the hero

teachers that want to speak out against the IDEA violations that are being committed by this school board to reach out to me, and some of you did.

[00:36:52] Specifically for the school board, your crimes are going to be revealed. What you're doing, the civil rights violations, they are stepping forward. They are reaching out to me. Here's one text message from October 12th, 2026. Hello, I'm trying to reach Kimberly Melman Orozco.

[00:37:09] I'm a PWCS employee and would like to address concerns and potential IDEA violations of my school. There are hundreds, maybe dozens and dozens, but maybe hundreds of teachers that are really appalled at the violations that are being committed against kids with disabilities.

[00:37:25] And I'm asking you to please reach out to me. You can call me, you can text me, you can write me at P.O. Box 10, Gainesville, Virginia, 20156. If you do not feel comfortable reaching out to me, please report these things to the Virginia Department of Education.

[00:37:40] If you include in your email #IDEAviolations, we can FOIA request it. You're not gonna breach anything, as far as I know, again, not an attorney, but you can send it to the IDEA violations to the Virginia Department of Education.

[00:37:58] I also want to address the teachers, excuse me, the parents within Prince William County. Litigating literacy posted today a message that I do wanna read. To every parent who has ever felt like giving up, to every parent who has cried after an IEP meeting, stayed awake researching their child's rights, spent money they don't have, or fought battles that they never imagined to fight, to every parent who has been called difficult, unreasonable, demanding, or accused of expecting too much, maybe you were never meant to be quiet.

[00:38:29] Maybe the very things that make you unwilling to accept excuses, unwilling to look the other way, and unwilling to give up are exactly what your child needs. You didn't ask for this fight. You didn't plan to become an advocate, learn special education law, challenge professionals, or hold an entire school system accountable.

[00:38:46] But here you are. And somewhere along the way, you discovered a strength you didn't know you had. Your child doesn't need you to be popular. Your child does need you to be relentless. and there's something else I've learned. Sometimes the fight you started for your own child becomes a fight that challenges things for hundreds of other children.

[00:39:06] So to every parent who feels exhausted, defeated, or alone tonight, remember this. You are not just fighting a school district, you're fighting for your child's future, dignity, opportunities, and civil rights, and that is a fight worth having. Keep showing up, keep asking questions, keep demanding answers, keep making good trouble, because the people who tell you to stop fighting are the ones who will never have to live with the consequences if you do, until all kids can read.

[00:39:31] You should be ashamed of what you're doing to kids with disabilities. - Barbara Tate.

[00:39:46] - Good evening, school board. My name is Barbara Tate, my address is on file. I want to acknowledge a productive meeting with the Associate Superintendent of Special Education and the new Director of Procedural Support and Compliance. I appreciated their willingness to listen. I also want to recognize Mr. Wilk.

[00:40:02] He consistently listens, advocates for Nathan, and asks difficult questions about special education accountability, even when those questions are uncomfortable. That takes courage and our family genuinely appreciates that. But rebuilding trust requires confronting serious problems.

[00:40:18] Recently, Prince William County Schools provided me 36,781 pages of educational records, including 12,055 confirmed duplicates. And what I discovered within those records is even more troubling. I have identified significant discrepancies in documentation used to support educational decisions and state complaint investigations.

[00:40:39] I now have serious concerns about the integrity and reliability of the education records themselves. A failure to implement an IEP can be corrected, but when parents cannot trust the records documented what happened, rebuilding the trust becomes extraordinarily difficult.

[00:40:55] And here's another number, 3,237. That is how many recorded accesses occurred in my son's Virginia IEP record in one year. Yet Prince William County Schools still cannot consistently implement his IEP.

[00:41:10] One of Nathan's teachers recently stated, quote, Nathan was prompted two times to sit in his chair from sleeping and he did not take his head off the desk in the library orientation. Please let us know if he has a problem with staying awake. If so, what can we do to keep him to be more attentive? End quote.

[00:41:26] Nathan's primary special education eligibility is other health impairment, a sleep disorder. Why are we still explaining a documented sleep disorder to people responsible for implementing his IEP? Meanwhile, Prince William County Schools employs an entire administrative infrastructure devoted to compliance and procedural support.

[00:41:46] 12 procedural support and compliance positions, yet who is ensuring that schools are actually complying? In one formal complaint response, Prince William County Schools said it was, quote, "Perplexed that I complained about missed occupational therapy service minutes."

[00:42:01] Less than a month later, VDOE found that Prince William County Schools was non-compliant. In another matter, a corrective action was issued. September 21st was the deadline. That was not completed on time either. So what exactly is all of this oversight accomplishing?

[00:42:16] Central office points to the school. The school points to central office. And parents are left trying to figure out who is actually responsible here. This is exhausting, but meaningful change requires transparency and accountability. And sometimes the appropriate response is simply, we got this wrong, and then you fix it.

[00:42:36] Thank you. - Janelle Anderson.

[00:42:54] - Good evening, my name is Janelle Anderson. I live in the Occoquan District. My address is on file. This is my third time addressing the school board about locked bathrooms at Colgan High School. I have spoken before this board about students' difficulty accessing toilets during the school day.

[00:43:10] Tonight, I have new evidence obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Colgan has nearly 3,000 students, yet multiple bathrooms are deliberately locked during seven-minute passing periods, before school, after school, during lunch, and during class.

[00:43:27] Students who cannot find an unlocked bathroom must interrupt instruction to request permission to leave class, despite restrictions during the first 10 and last 10 minutes of class. My FOIA

records contain a September 17th, 2026 complaint describing a menstruating student who bled through her clothing after encountering locked bathrooms and a long line at another bathroom.

[00:43:50] No child should experience that humiliation at school. The FOIA records also contain an extraordinary admission. On September 24th, 2026, Colgan High School principal, Principal Litz wrote that bathrooms are locked because the school does not have, quote, the personnel to adequately monitor each bathroom.

[00:44:11] Principal Litz also stated that this practice occurs at other Prince William County high schools. If inadequate staffing is contributing to restroom closures, That is a resource problem that requires a resource solution. Colgan High School is already overcrowded.

[00:44:30] We should be expanding access to toilets, not restricting it. I have searched the school board's published policies and regulations, and I cannot find a policy establishing when bathrooms may be locked or any minimum standards for student access to toilets.

[00:44:48] The school board creates policy. The superintendent implements it. I'm asking this board to establish a division-wide policy guaranteeing students reasonable, timely access to toilets, including during passing periods.

[00:45:05] Students should not need a medical diagnosis, a doctor's note, or special permission to meet ordinary biological needs. School security matters, but so do children's health, dignity, and wellbeing. Every child deserves access to a toilet when nature calls.

[00:45:24] Thank you. Thank you. Blake Herra. Then after Mr. Herra will be Marianne Hill, Tierney Hill, Saul Guzman, Yordi Lopez. The two clocks are off by two seconds on the two right there. So, in case you should know.

[00:45:49] My name is Blake Herra. My address is on file. So, tonight I'm going to speak in opposition to the calendars that were released. They're really kind of sad. I mean, because you have a one and a half week one and you have a two week one for the Christmas break.

[00:46:07] so you already put in more hour you already put more hours in in the sorry we start over Virginia law says it has to be 180 days or 990 hours per for the school year Prince William County does almost over a thousand hours and that's before you take away whatever you call snow breaks so I don't know why we want to design our calendars like that we we are copying Fairfax

[00:46:42] loud in in Arlington well why why do we need to copy them in their calendars why shouldn't they be copying us we for almost ten years we were able to work off of seven hours and we were still able to get the job done like why do we need to copy them they should be copying us because we should be ideally the better school so one other thing I'm gonna one other thing I'm gonna bring up is so you have a one and a half week break and if that's the one you just happen to vote on. What happens if you have a parent that has to deliver a child to another

[00:47:16] parent in another state? So under court order, you have to provide the child to the biological parent. What your own policy states, what is it, 724-1, says that you can issue an unexcused absence. And if I, so if a parent takes their kid out of school, you can claim it as an unexcused absence and you don't have to accept. Like I can provide you the court order and you don't have to accept it. And that's your own

regulation. Even if it says family care or whatever, there's no loophole or anything in there. So you can just issue unexcused

[00:47:54] absence. You can send me to truancy or whatever. Adding more hours to the school day is not making our graduation rates any better. So if you're over a thousand hours, we have these 15 school days 15 of snow days we barely use them why why do we have to have our kids in school that much longer I mean it's not making a difference so regardless of any one of what the eight of you think of me because I've come up here probably I don't know 30 times the new school should be named Potomac Shores

[00:48:34] Elementary it should pass unanimously Mary Ann Hill good evening school board dr. McDade and staff my name is Mary Ann Hill and my address is on file many of you know me I am a parent of three students in the division that all have dyslexia I'm here tonight to highlight dyslexia awareness as a parent and as the chair of decoding dyslexia Virginia PWC reading reading is hard if you have

[00:49:13] dyslexia it is even harder reading is a skill that is either a source of self-confidence or disappointment for dyslexia it needs to be a household name until it is recognized and respected as a disability such as down syndrome and autism our dyslexia students are going to continue to struggle they are going to continue to be teased by their peers they are going to be misunderstood and even treated disrespectfully by our society so I ask the scoreboard members

[00:49:48] please reach out to your districts say dyslexia not just this month of October but all year long. Dyslexia never goes away and most of the population does not know what it is. It is the most prevalent learning disorder and one in five have it whether they know they do or not.

[00:50:08] In Prince William County Schools, that is 18,000 students. Each one of you has students in your district that this pertains to. So do write by them, check in with parents, teachers and administrators. Make sure that they recognize and know what dyslexia is that it is real and that it is a struggle.

[00:50:28] The VLA is doing great things, I will not discount that. However, the dyslexia reach needs to be deeper. Let's make sure that everyone knows what dyslexia is, what it is not, how to live with it and to respect it.

[00:50:43] Decoding Dyslexia is here to help, thank you. - Tierney Hill. - Good evening, school board, Dr. McDade and staff. My name is Tierney Hill and I'm in eighth grade in the division.

[00:50:59] I'm here tonight to celebrate dyslexia awareness and because my mom asked me to. Each of you are receiving a dyslexia awareness bracelet. I hope you will wear it the rest of the month in honor of me. I have dyslexia, so do my sisters and my dad.

[00:51:15] We operate differently, but are just as smart, hardworking, and feeling as anyone else. For parents, teachers, and administrators that are listening, please be patient with your children. We need more time, need to ask a lot of questions, and most importantly, we need to process information the way our brains do it, not the way you think it should.

[00:51:39] Please respect us and realize that no two dyslexics are the same. I have been in Prince William County since the second grade and I stand before you tonight as the face as a successful dyslexia student. However, most are not so lucky.

[00:51:56] My mom and I are going to continue to educate those that do not understand will rally, that do not understand. We will rally around those that need our help. My dad and sisters and I are just one small

example of the face of dyslexia.

[00:52:13] One in five people have it. So let's all learn to say dyslexia, thank you. - Thank you. Saul Guzman. - I would like to say good afternoon to all of you guys.

[00:52:34] I have some things that I'm very upset about and that I would like to say and talk about. - There is so many elementary schools, I've went to two elementary schools, and I have seen a lot of the Hispanic community and other kids who don't know how to speak the English language.

[00:52:53] I would like if any of you guys could reach out to me and help me to see if there's anyone who could help me get translating iPads. I know they're already built in, but it's still hard for them to understand.

[00:53:09] I always help Hispanic kids or people who understand the language, and I would be very helpful. Another thing that I would like to talk about, there is, I'm not gonna say mold, but my school, Fred M. Lynn Middle School, it's very dirty, and it's not the custodian's fault.

[00:53:29] There's dirt particles because of the construction. It's not safe to breathe. It's very hard for me to do my SOL last year because there was construction going on, and I could not read and do my thinking during the SOL because there was construction.

[00:53:46] Thank God Mr. Romero was there to stop the construction men. Also, there was construction men cussing in Spanish when they were doing the construction. It was very disrespectful. And another thing is that stop pressuring the principals. Coming from me, I would like to say that a lot of the teachers and principals and everyone in the county gets pressured, not by you guys, but by a lot of people.

[00:54:12] And it's not fair for a lot of people to get pressured. Now, another thing that I would like to say is the 10-10 rule, I do not like it. I would want everybody to try the 10-10 rule because one time I had to wait two periods just to go to the bathroom.

[00:54:34] Also, for my school, there's only three passes a day. I think it's for the whole county, but I don't think it's fair. A human right is to use the restroom, and if I need to go to the nurse or something like that, I have to use one of my passes.

[00:54:50] I don't think it's fair at all. I would like to thank you guys for listening to me. Thank you so much, and make sure to appreciate the teachers more. Thank you very much. - Thank you. The next five will be Yordi Lopez, Hina Ansari, Adriana Ko, Athena Ko, and Vin Koo.

[00:55:10] Yordi Lopez. - Good evening, Chairman, Dr. Latif, and members of the school board. My name is Jordi Lopez and my address is on file. Tonight I'm back here to speak up for those who are afraid to speak up, but who deserve to be heard.

[00:55:27] On October 7th, I stood here and listened as an adult came before this board and made comments about students based on their sexuality and personal identity. I am not here to tell anyone what's right or wrong. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but I'm here to say that degrading students is unacceptable and we all know that in this room.

[00:55:44] Take a look around this room. Look at the people behind me. Look at the people next to you as board members. What do you see? What do we all have in common? We are all humans, and every single one of us deserves respect, especially of our students. What kind of example are we setting up for our communities and students if we insult young people instead of helping them?

[00:56:03] Last time, I also spoke in Spanish to emphasize the importance of clear communication and services and making sure everyone has a voice.

[00:56:21] no importa su orientación, no importa cómo se identifiquen. ¿Para qué enfocarnos en eso? Lo que yo quiero es su suceso. Para el éxito de nuestros estudiantes es el resultado de esfuerzos de muchas personas. El estudiante, maestros, asistentes, custodios y muchos más, todos contribuimos al mismo objetivo.

[00:56:37] Para los jóvenes que no tienen representantes o guardianes, que hablen por ellos. Yo sé que es difícil, pero creo, no, mejor dicho, yo confío en cada uno de ustedes que van a tener un gran futuro. Y para los padres les pido que por favor apoyen a sus hijos, Involúquense en sus escuelas. El primer quarter de este año se acaba en dos semanas.

[00:56:55] Por favor, hagan algo. Porque al final del día todos queremos lo mismo. Lo mejor para nuestros estudiantes. También quiero decirles que si ustedes son educadores, padres, madres, guardianes o estudiantes y están cansados de este tipo de situaciones, como yo, participen. Asistan a las juntas escolares y reuniones locales. Expresen sus puntos de vista.

[00:57:11] Si nosotros no empezamos a generar cambios, nadie lo hará por nosotros. Los jóvenes tienen la capacidad de crear grandes cambios cuando se les da la oportunidad y cuando participan. También quiero aclarar algo importante. Los miembros de esta junta tienen una vida y una familia de responsabilidades, al igual que ustedes y que yo, ellos también merecen respeto.

[00:57:26] And because our school board members deserve respect, I also demand the same respect for our students. As a former ESO student and Honor Society students, I can tell you that hearing insults from adults at these meetings do not help, and they really hurt to our students. Sorry.

[00:57:43] Hearing my leaders call my community people names or describe them as monsters is also unacceptable. I have come to these meetings peacefully. I have advocated for proper funding for our schools. I have advocated for resources and opportunities for our students, but I will not stand by while students are getting insulted.

[00:58:00] This is not a threat, it's a promise, but if some adults choose to continue showing up and threatening our students this way, then I will come and continue showing up and speaking against it. I am a young person, and I have many, many more years and decades ahead of me to defend our students and advocate for their success and make sure their voices are heard.

[00:58:16] If that's what it takes, then that's what I will exactly do. - Thank you. All right.

[00:58:40] Thanks again, guys. I want to thank you for letting me come back. School Board. Superintendent McDade, always a pleasure. My address is on file. What does it mean to be American? I've been grappling with this question while I continue my own research on racism in this country and how the two elements, patriotism and racism, will always be intertwined.

[00:58:56] And I think there's a fundamental disconnect for some of us from what is required to be American and what excludes you from being American. We've been hearing a lot politically about how people who don't possess certain qualities are inherently un-American, but is that a valid requirement for being an American? According to some, the only requirement to be American is to be white and Christian.

[00:59:14] And while support for that idea comes in the form of quoting the Founding Fathers, I would argue that if the Founding Fathers wanted this to be a Christian nation, they would have written that into the Constitution or the Bill of Rights or any of the innumerable amendments added to the Constitution, but they didn't. And for all my AP government teachers out there, we know the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers have allusions to God, might be modeled after religious texts, but it doesn't enshrine a specific religion into our government.

[00:59:38] This also dismisses how this country was founded, how Western Europeans came here to colonize the free world, genocide the indigenous population, and have the audacity to say that God told them to do it. When you realize Manifest Destiny was a boondoggle, history really becomes much more brutal. But the reason those colonizers came here was to practice their religion freely.

[00:59:56] And what's really funny, if they were alive today, they'd consider most practicing Christians to not be religious enough. So that the idea that you need to be Christian to be American is implicitly un-American. And I just wanted to, I didn't think I'd have that much extra time. I did want to remind everybody about two weeks from now, there's an election going on.

[01:00:13] Some of you might feel compelled to vote. I feel like a lot of the elected officials haven't earned my vote, but there's three amendments on the ballot. They're all very important. One of them enshrines marriage equality, one enshrines reproductive rights, and the other one enshrines voting rights. Just for a frame of reference, I'm gonna vote for all three.

[01:00:30] Do with that what you will, thank you. - Adriana Ko.

[01:00:49] - Good evening, my name is Adriana Ko. My information's on file. I'm the parent of a fourth grader at Occoquan Elementary. Actually, I'm Athena's mom, which is what I'm known as, at the school, and so she's gonna be coming up and speaking after me.

[01:01:04] I did wanna raise the concern about school security as the construction continues on the Occoquan campus. I am aware that there's been some movement on receiving a timeline for that construction, which I really, really appreciate. However, a couple of incidents that have happened recently have kind of raised my awareness about school security, and in particular the additional risks that the ongoing construction bring to the school.

[01:01:33] So recently we had a student elope from the school campus and situations like that are complicated. They happen at every school. I'm not here to talk about that. But it made me concerned about students being able to get into the construction areas due to large gaps in some of the fences that are fencing off the construction areas.

[01:01:56] Additionally, the recent school shooting in Bend, Oregon brought to mind what our policies are when people are entering through the front office. There are multiple places along the construction fencing where there are gaps large enough for a child to get through.

[01:02:15] During a normal school day, we have hundreds of children on campus. I don't think that we should be comfortable with any uncertainty about whether a student can get into a construction area. And the recent incident at the school did not involve a construction site, but I can't help but wonder how different it might have been if that child had slipped between the gates, and what the procedures may have been to get him out.

[01:02:41] I'm also concerned about the number of contractors and workers who continue to come into the school building as different construction issues are addressed. I'm not suggesting that these individuals are dangerous. My concern is that each additional person who needs access to the building creates another security consideration for front office staff.

[01:03:00] I don't think that they should have to bear the burden of determining whether every person who walks through the door is a vetted contractor or subcontractor, whether they're supposed to be there that day, and what areas they should have access to. That's a lot to ask of the people who are responsible for answering phones, helping parents, managing visitors, and keeping track of the students.

[01:03:23] So what I would like to know is if there is a plan in place to check the construction site for any gaps in the fencing, if there's a plan to close off, repair any of those gaps on a day-to-day basis, and if it's possible to have the contractors have some kind of high visibility, and maybe they already do, but some kind of high visibility badge or something that is really visible to help out our front office staff.

[01:03:52] Thank you, Ms. Goh. Athena Co?

[01:04:29] Occoquan Elementary, and my address is on file. I want to talk about something that might seem small to adults, but it's actually pretty big for kids, our playground.

[01:04:56] I have been at Occoquan since kindergarten, and I loved our playground. When I was in first grade, it was removed for construction, And that was okay because we would have a new one soon.

[01:05:17] But then when I was in second grade, we had a blacktop, not a playground. My recess was spent on a blacktop, yes. Then when I was in third grade, I was in a small parking lot next to a music trailer.

[01:05:38] And now I'm in fourth grade, and our recess is spent on sidewalks with construction all around us. I am nine, and I haven't had a playground since I was six. I keep hearing that the school is almost finished and the building is so cool, but the playground and fields aren't done.

[01:06:08] We still can't run and play, even though my little sister can play on the younger grade's playground. I know building a school takes time, but I don't understand why it has taken so long to finish the places where kids are supposed to play, especially for those of us who have been waiting for years.

[01:06:37] A playground isn't just a place to have fun. It's a place where you can get to run around and get experience, play with our friends, climb and take on challenges, and just being kids.

[01:06:57] I was really excited when I heard about the new school. I'm still excited about it, but I would really like it to get to experience the whole school before I leave elementary school.

[01:07:16] I hope the school board will make finishing the playground a priority so that students like me don't have to keep waiting.

[01:07:40] Thank you for listening. Vin Kew. I apologize if I say it wrong. Kew. Hi, good evening.

[01:08:04] My name is Vin Kew and my address is on file. As a Prince William County parent, I wanted to comment on the school calendar survey for for the 2027-2028 school year. I wanted to ask for future surveys to offer a broader range of calendar models for families to consider.

[01:08:22] The current proposal provides three variations of largely the traditional calendar. I appreciate that this year and last year included options with shorter winter breaks, and I thank the school board for

expanding the choices available. However, the options remain fairly similar overall.

[01:08:39] In future years, I asked the board consider a wider variety of calendar concepts to include a longer Thanksgiving break, a full fall break, or even more clustered teacher holidays or workdays to consider longer weekends.

[01:08:57] A fall break can provide opportunities for family travel or enroll in quality enrichment camps or enjoy local activities. A mid-semester reset allows for less competing with higher costs in crowds that we are experiencing now more than ever for winter and spring breaks. The current calendar ends up having a handful of single midweek day off during the no school October and no school November. While these breaks are appreciated, many families cannot take time off from work and our community

[01:09:31] offers very limited full day drop-in enrichment programs for single day closures. As a result, These days do not always provide the best meaningful experience for students. In contrast, a week-long break allows for families greater flexibility to travel, participate in organized programs, or spend quality time together.

[01:09:53] Another calendar concept worthy of exploring is the use of more frequent clustered breaks throughout the school year paired with shorter summers. This allows for spreading out the enrichment and childcare rather than concentrating at all during the summer. We are regularly reminded of the importance of consistent school attendance, and I fully support this message.

[01:10:13] At the same time, many families face increasing high travel costs in very few heavily traveled weeks. Families have limited flexibility. In our case, we took a few days off in the off-season to travel early in the school year, and as a result, we had warnings throughout the school year, despite otherwise maintaining as very strong attendance throughout the school year.

[01:10:34] I respectively asked the board to review additional calendar concepts of incorporating more options such as different week line fall or thanksgiving breaks or more spread out to include both longer breaks and cultural and holiday breaks with more options it would allow for families to give more meaningful feedback and allow for our families to be more represented thank you so much thank you okay that concludes citizen comment time uh up next 1401 is that right am i in the right spot all right legislative priorities dr mcdain thank you mr chairman we

[01:11:12] presented legislative priorities and so we do have our chief information officer mr. Matthew Gilfill is available to take any additional questions that board members may have this evening all right first I'll have mr. Jesse read the motion and then we'll during discussion we can ask questions mr. Jesse I move that the The Prince Henry County School Board reviews and approves the legislative priorities for the 2027 legislative session.

[01:11:44] Do I have a second? Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams: Just to harp on this as much as I possibly can, for people at home and whoever was not present at Tuesday's joint meeting last week, these are the priorities that we take down to the Virginia Assembly and ask for consideration or changes and whatnot, or advocate for or against what's going on down there.

[01:12:13] It is the school board's responsibility and something that we take seriously. But also, members of the public, you're welcome to support us in our advocacy for these priorities. Thank you. Mayor Paterson: Any other discussion?

[01:12:29] Please vote. Thank you.

[01:12:44] The vote is seven--oh, sorry. The vote is eight, yes. Motion passed. Mayor Paterson: Okay, moving on to student representative This evening we welcome Storm Allo, senior at Woodbridge High School. Storm, you have the floor. - Okay, thank you. Good evening, Chairman Dr. Lateef, members of the school board, Superintendent Dr. McDade, and of course the wonderful students and families of Prince William County Public Schools.

[01:13:06] We are now in the ninth week of the school year, with the first quarter coming to a close at the end of next week. So amid the end of quarter chaos, I want to encourage students to take a quick moment to reflect on the past few weeks and to make sure to finish this quarter strong. This week is also Virginia Free College Application Week.

[01:13:25] This is an incredible opportunity for our students considering college or university as a post-secondary option to actively take the next step towards their futures. I heavily encourage our seniors to take advantage of these opportunities and to remember that support is available as you navigate this college application process.

[01:13:42] Similarly, for those of you considering other post-secondary pathways like trade or technical schools, employment or military service, I encourage you to keep an eye out for and explore the internships, apprenticeships, workforce development programs, et cetera, all the other opportunities available throughout the division.

[01:14:00] Moving on, I would like to recognize the student leaders across PWCS who continue to strive for positive change in their school communities. In particular, I'd like to shout out Garfield High School's student voice committees for successfully advocating for and implementing outdoor seating at their school.

[01:14:17] This is a great example of students identifying a need in their community and then working collaboratively with the administration team to address it. So well done for that, Garfield. Two weeks ago, we held our first division-wide student leadership workshop for the year, in which members of student voice committees from both middle and high schools attended.

[01:14:37] During this workshop, student leaders developed their data analysis skills and reviewed results from their respective schools Gallup surveys from the 2025-2026 school year. Using that data, they then identified areas for growth and developed action plans to address them.

[01:14:54] One common theme across many schools was the need to strengthen students' sense of belonging. A positive school experience involves a lot more than just academic achievement, because students must also feel welcomed, supported, and connected to their school communities. So in alignment with one of the major commitments in the division's Elevate 2030 strategic plan, our student senate and our student voice committees are working hard to bridge these gaps to strengthen the positive climate and culture throughout PWCS.

[01:15:21] By using student feedback, our student leaders are moving beyond simply identifying concerns and beginning to develop more meaningful and actionable solutions. Finally, I would like to thank the school board for approving the acknowledgements and recognitions on tonight's agenda, including Dutch American Heritage Day, Family Engagement Month, National Native American Heritage Month, and National Veterans and Military Families Month.

[01:15:46] These recognitions provide even more opportunities to celebrate the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions that enrich our community. They also emphasize the importance of family engagement and recognize the service and sacrifices of our military families. In closing, I look forward to continuing my work alongside our student leaders and school communities to help reach our goals for the strategic plan and to improve the experiences of all members of our Prince William County community.

[01:16:11] Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Allo. Up next, Dr. McDade, Superintendent's Time. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start Superintendent's Time really recognizing the 19 PWCS schools that were recently recognized by the Virginia Department of Education with the 2026 Purple Star Distinguished School Award, bringing our division-wide total to 51 Purple Star schools.

[01:16:39] This distinction recognizes schools that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to supporting military-connected students and their families. Congratulations to these schools and thank you to the educators, administrators, and support staff who continue to make PWCS a place where military-connected families belong.

[01:16:56] we have another accomplishment worth celebrating pwcs recently received the 2026 climate and energy leadership award from the metropolitan washington council of governments for our geothermal heating and cooling renovation at bel-air elementary school this innovative project has reduced the school's energy usage by 73 percent and is saving approximately 125 000 annually in utility costs but most importantly this project has created opportunities for students to experience sustainability in action through hands-on learning students can explore how energy systems work and

[01:17:34] develop a deeper understanding of environmental responsibility congratulations to our facilities and sustainability teams and the bel-air elementary school community this week october 19th through the 23rd is national school bus safety week we are also recognizing america's safe schools week both observances reinforce our responsibility to ensure students can learn and grow in safe supportive environments every school day our bus drivers attendants mechanics transportation professionals school security staff and school-based employees work together to support

[01:18:10] student safety to our dedicated transportation team thank you for your professionalism patience and commitment to transporting our students safely to school every day october is national bullying Prevention Month, an important opportunity to reinforce our commitment to creating safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environments for every student. In PWCS, we recognize that students thrive when they feel safe, respected, and connected to their school communities. Preventing bullying requires a shared commitment from our students, families, educators, and staff. Together, we can ensure every

[01:18:47] student feels a sense of belonging and knows they have a place in our schools. beginning this Friday October 23rd and continuing through October 31st schools and communities across the nation will recognize red ribbon week this year's theme is make a difference be a hero stay drug-free red ribbon week recognizes young people to make healthy decisions while recognizing the importance of positive influences supportive relationships and personal responsibility I encourage our students families and staff to participate in school-based activities and continue having meaningful

[01:19:24] conversations about making healthy, safe choices. As we look ahead, I want to remind our families about several opportunities to explore the many educational pathways available throughout

PWCS. Our family engagement series will host a virtual information session on high school specialty programs on Tuesday, October 27th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

[01:19:47] This session will provide information about specialty programs, career and technical education opportunities, the application process, as well as important deadlines. Applications for the 27-28 school year will open on November 2nd with a general application deadline of February 1st.

[01:20:04] Families should be aware that some programs do have earlier deadlines. I encourage interested families to explore the programs and resources available on our PWCS website. And finally, I want to remind all of our families, staff and community that our annual state of the schools report will be at our next school board meeting on Wednesday November 4th this presentation will provide an opportunity to reflect on our division's progress celebrate student and staff accomplishments examine our academic performance and discuss the work ahead as we advance our elevate 2030 strategic plan I look forward to sharing what we have accomplished together and outlining how we will build on that momentum

[01:20:44] to ensure every student can thrive. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Up next, we have a committee update with Lisa Zargarpur sharing Safe Schools Advisory Council update. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, I'll make this really quick. I went to the Safe School Advisories Council meeting on October 5th.

[01:21:03] We are going to be doing quarterly meetings, which just sort of changes the way we started. I remember every single meeting was always packed of lots and lots of information. But thanks to Dr. McDade coming in and listening to our safety concerns.

[01:21:20] We've got such a great system now. We got to hear about the continuous improvement plan from Don Harmon and then Ron Crow gave us an update on security staffing and resources. So it's so much better than when I first started on the board and it's great to see how it runs itself now.

[01:21:43] It's a great department. I encourage people to come to these Safe Schools Advisory Council meetings. They're open to the public, and if there's any concerns, you can even speak at these meetings. We do have public comment time. So I look forward to the next one, thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Up next is 1801, the waiving requirements of Policy 854, a motion is in order.

[01:22:05] Mr. Jessie. - I move that the Prince William County School Board waives the requirements of Policy 854 pertaining to the naming of a school facility. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blake. I second.

[01:22:20] Any discussion? Please vote. Oh, Mr. Wilk. Yeah, why don't you wait? We're waiving this and you'll talk at the next one. I mean, is that what you want to do? Yeah, thank you. Yeah. All right, please vote.

[01:22:38] Just don't want to be duplicative if we can avoid it. Are we doing SAT words tonight? Yes. In the spirit of PSAT. Thank you. The vote is 8 yes.

[01:22:53] Motion passed. OK, moving on to 18.02. the naming of the school in the Potomac Magisterial District. A motion is in order, Mr. Jesse. - I move that the Prince-Greening County School Board name the new elementary school in the Potomac District, Potomac Shores Elementary School.

[01:23:12] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I'll second. - Okay, now discussion, Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for some context to this request of the board and my colleagues. Just kind of some background information about this.

[01:23:28] Potomac Shores is a sprawling community located in the Potomac District. There's a sliver that goes into the Woodbridge District recognizing that, but the Potomac Shores primarily is in the Potomac District and it is filled with extremely diverse populations.

[01:23:45] This eclectic mix is within an area of this school off of the Route 1 corridor where the school will be buttressed up against condominiums, townhouses, and it's gonna be right near the outdoor auditorium area.

[01:24:02] I know there's another name for it, outdoor area, along with a VRE station, which one day will eventually come, one day. And the goal with this process was to be proactive and engaged with the community as much as possible.

[01:24:20] I mean, obviously we know when a new school is built, the naming will eventually come to fruition. And so my goal over the number of years, as we patiently waited for this school to open, was to speak with the appropriate residents, all residents as much as I could, and discuss and learn more about their thoughts to the school.

[01:24:45] A couple key things I wanna mention with the school itself is that the school's completely immersed within the Potomac Shores community. The school has currently boundaries drawn for only Potomac Shore boundaries.

[01:25:01] And along with that, I wanted to ensure that we had support from people directly with the Homeowners Association and the Board of Directors, and they have recently, well, have always, but formally endorsed the idea of naming it Potomac Shores.

[01:25:19] Part of their rationale in their letter, mentioning in the immediate vicinity, Some of the surrounding neighborhoods have the names of their communities, Swans Creek Elementary, River Oaks Elementary, and the idea is that it would establish a immediately recognizable, identifiable name for that specific community.

[01:25:42] Other things they mentioned, reinforcing connections, sense of pride, belonging. He mentions multilingual, multi-ability, diverse population, and strengthening the identity. So, same kind of things that I talked about there with the support of the HOA.

[01:25:59] So, I just wanna make sure my colleagues know that this is not just me with a couple of people who want this name. When I'm back there with my interactions, 'cause I live right down the road, I'm actually poor. I'm actually, not actually poor, actually.

[01:26:17] Actually, I'm more probably engaged with the Potomac Shores community than my own community. And so these interactions by no means represent every single person. There are thousands of people back there. I love meeting new people. Monday night, I went and spoke to their community security committee meeting at the clubhouse, met a bunch of new people and got their feedback as well.

[01:26:43] I also spoke with the PTO members of at the middle school and the elementary school, the current one in the area, along with the PTO presidents with that as their thoughts as well. These interactions along with being regularly present this summer, probably two to three days a week,

somewhere in the community doing something, have given me kind of the insight that the resounding community overwhelmingly supports naming it Potomac Shores Elementary School.

[01:27:17] When I talked to people back there, what the common themes are, they already assumed it was the name of the building because well, we've always called the Potomac Shores and the building has signage everywhere and that's how it's been referred to in the community.

[01:27:33] Or again, that is the name that people have relatively overwhelmingly, I can't say it's everyone, but that I've heard want the name to be Potomac Shores. So going about the naming process, I think in my opinion for me would be performative as this is the name I would put forward anyways, as the requested name for the board to name for this community.

[01:28:00] So that is my feedback or my comments. - Great, thank you, Mr. Wilk. Anybody else, Mr. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this motion and I appreciate Mr. Wilk's outreach to the community and the community responding.

[01:28:18] I just wanted my constituents and the public to know I'm gonna be voting no because I think that this sets a bad precedence for how we name schools, and this is the only exception to it. I think it's wonderful that footwork has been done, but I don't agree with not having the naming process just because the school is located in a single community.

[01:28:38] We've done that before. It is nothing personal. I just would have rather seen us utilize the regular process that we do for every time we name a school. So that's the only reason. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Mr. Jesse. a little uneasy for me to say this but if we're going to be completely honest with folks we also need to be completely and totally honest i support this whether we went through the regular process

[01:29:10] or not but in addition to this the agreement that we had with potomac shores is that we would name the school after them and they will contribute a million dollars for doing that and this is part of the agreement now whether that agreement was there or not i would support what he's doing but i think it's important for us to be completely candid with people and let us know what's happening so i do support this mr chairman can i just piggyback um miss williams i just want to add a little bit to mr jesse's comment so the public is clear we did not have to do that at any point

[01:29:50] we could have opted out so i don't want the public to think that the primary reason is because of of that or that it wasn't an option for us not to, that those funds were to be used towards the building and construction of the school. So just for full transparency. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. And that just adds it all up to Mr. Wilkes, laid out very nicely part of the reasoning we moved through this process in this way as well.

[01:30:13] Please vote. - Oh. - Oh, Ms. Trudenik. - Can I just ask a clarifying question, Mr. Anderson, can you explain that a little bit more what that money was for, please? I don't know exactly how it was dedicated but it was more of a rebate that we don't have to pay back a certain amount of money in the agreement if we name it. It's not a direct contribution. I just want to clear that up.

[01:30:44] Thank you. I just wanted that clarified. I just also wanted to say I firmly believe that Mr. Wilk has spent many years in support of his community and out in the public listening and asking questions and making sure that he hears people's voices.

[01:31:01] He's a constant supporter of his families and teachers and principals in his community. And I would like to support him in this motion because I do believe that he is knowledgeable and is making a good decision now for his community.

[01:31:18] Please vote.

[01:31:34] The vote is seven yes, one no. Williams, motion passed. Moving on to board matters this evening, we'll start with Mr. Blake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I get started, I have to give a quick birthday shout-out to my namesake, Tracy, who turned 11 today.

[01:31:52] Happy birthday, and Dad loves you. I hope you had a great day. Now, since our last meeting, I've had another busy couple of weeks out in our schools and community. I joined families at Dale City Elementary for Hispanic Heritage Night, and once again, the family engagement was incredible.

[01:32:11] i spent a couple friday nights with with my red wolves at garfield including an exciting homecoming against forest park it was a walk-off extra point so 14 13 and i also i also joined mr wilts for a boys volleyball senior night against potomac it was good and this is our i wanted to just say this is our first year of boys volleyball in prince william county schools and i'm just amazed how quickly our students and families have embraced it and that matters every time we create another opportunity for for a student to find their thing whether it's volleyball robotics theater

[01:32:51] jrotc cte music or something else we give another kid a place to belong and thrive i also attended the john and ernestine jenkins good scout award evening dinner and our joint legislative meeting that you heard about with the Board of County Supervisors and members of our state and federal delegation. But tonight I want to spend a little time talking about where we are and where we're going. I know before Dr. Lateef talked about how Prince William County is currently ranked 12th

[01:33:29] amongst the school divisions in Virginia by the knee trainings, which is a big deal. But rankings never tell the whole story and you can't reduce nearly 90,000 students and more than 100 schools in the centers to one number but progress deserves to be acknowledged and we should be proud of the work happening across this division at the same time being proud doesn't mean we stop looking at where we need to improve and one area i continue thinking about is middle school both culture and instruction those three years matter tremendously our kids are fighting out or

[01:34:07] figuring out who they are while navigating friendships social media academics independence and everything else that comes with becoming a teenager. We all remember. We need strong instruction that challenges and engages them. We need educators who don't just know the student's name, but they know the student.

[01:34:27] We need opportunities for kids to find their place and feel like they belong. And we need families engaged during middle school, just as much as they were in elementary school. Middle school shouldn't simply be something our kids just get through. Those three years should prepare them to thrive in high school.

[01:34:45] And finally, I want to say something about artificial intelligence. I'm personally in favor of AI in education, not because technology should replace teachers and definitely not because it should do the thinking for our students.

[01:35:02] But because AI is already part of the world our students are inheriting, our responsibility is to teach them how to use it responsibly, ethically, and intelligently. When I visit classrooms, like I told you in the previous weeks, I hear teachers asking students, how did you get there? Why do you believe that? Can you explain your thinking?

[01:35:28] That's exactly how we should approach AI. If a student can use AI to get an answer but can't explain why that answer makes sense, we haven't accomplished much. AI should support thinking, not replace it. So as we move forward, let's be proud of our progress, honest about where we need to improve, and willing to prepare our students for the world they're going to inherit not simply the world we grew up in thank you Ms. Williams thank you Mr. Jesse I also attended several events Hispanic Heritage Night at one of my schools I will be attending some trunk or treats

[01:36:06] also attended a community pop-up at Freedom it I love our community pop-ups in in the fact that they are district oriented it's nice to see our elementary and middle and high schools all in one place so if you're a family you can see where your student may be if you have a young student where they may go in the future depending on specialty programs but just to know the different schools and get familiar with the staff in your district and as well as thank you to all of the community sponsors great food and wonderful giveaways next up I also had mentioned earlier in the meeting that I went to the joint legislative affairs meeting between the school board and the

[01:36:45] BOCS there were everyone up and down the ticket elected officials there it is I think a positive thing to have members officials from federal state and local sit in a room and talk about upcoming legislative priorities what they plan to do and have that one-on-one it essentially is always the same pot of money and if we're in the room together then there's less likely less likelihood that we're competing against each other and that we're all able to be on the same page for our goals and what we want for our communities upcoming events is especially program for high schools if you are a middle school family I would

[01:37:23] encourage you to also attend to attend that and elementary some of our programs like the governor school you may not hear about until you're ready to go to high school but you need the math and some of the other skills prior to applying it's no different than TJ TJ gets pushed a lot at middle school but there are wonderful specialty night program I'm specialty programs and so I So I encourage our families to go and learn about them and prepare for a future.

[01:37:47] The marking period is coming up on the 30th, students and families. You should be checking ParentVUE for grades and talking to your teachers. There is an upcoming Parent/Teacher Conference Day, November 2nd, and also Election Day is November 3rd. I encourage everyone to go out and vote, volunteer, vote as your heart pulls you.

[01:38:08] But there are also amendments as well. So I encourage you to take a student, take a friend if they're a young person with you when you go vote. They're likely to grow up and vote in the future as adults. The last thing I want to mention is a little bit about organization structure, funding, and timing.

[01:38:25] This is the time of year when we start talking about budgetary things. We look at budgets at the state, local, and federal level. One of the things that's going on is like, for example, I'll take one of my students who spoke tonight, Fred Lent, they had Century 21, which is a federal grant.

[01:38:43] This year, they do not have that program. Most families don't know where that money comes from. And so when you come to a school and you think, oh, well, the program's gone away, they think it's us locally. And this is why I encourage families and citizens to get involved, and even our students, to learn about our budgets.

[01:38:58] The school's having after-school programs and activity buses, thanks to other sources of funding. But that really helps our students understand what's going on in our building and our families. where the money comes from makes a difference in what we're able to do and this year I noticed an exciting excitement about funding and it's important to note that the budget we'll talk about this year is money for next year this that's important it's also important to note where the funds come from and what they do and how they work each year is different depending on laws that come out that limit less what we can and can't do how we work collaboratively with our funding sources and I think that that's important not

[01:39:38] only for our adults and our community members to know but also our students so they grow up and be productive citizens and help advocate for full funding for public schools and being a robotic coach I talked to a lot of students and and when I let them know oh you know we're not doing this because this is this way or this is this way they they become more engaged and more connected to their schools and they're also able to help advocate I noticed that we have a lot more students coming to citizen comment time and I think that that's wonderful and I appreciate all of them for coming and sharing with us a different perspective um outside of that make sure you check your grades ask your teachers if there's anything you can do to bump up your

[01:40:17] grade and we will see you at the next school board meeting thank you miss wall thank you um I will start out by saying I love fall um football games marching bands festivals fall festivals trunk or treats veterans day celebrations all of it I love it um and just all of new school materials and now I guess it's laptops but it's just and it's exciting it's always been an exciting time for me so it's been fun these last few months as the weather turns colder and the leaves change from green to golden it's fun to see the learning pick up steam and growth in the students it's really easy

[01:40:57] to see and I love that so hooray for a successful end of the first quarter of fall coming up at the end of this month which is also nice that we have Halloween and the last day of the semester or the quarter at the same time I want to Congratulate battlefield Bobcat cheer team. They advanced on to regionals with a third place finish in districts Which will be the regional competition will be next Wednesday at Mountain View High School in Stafford. So good luck to the Lady Bobcats Battlefield and Patriot will be advancing representing the Cedar run district Also good luck to the Lady Bobcats in their flag football game tonight

[01:41:32] I the game's probably over at this point, but it's been a really fun sport to watch grow this year I finished up with back-to-school nights. Earlier this month, I enjoyed saying hi to a lot of the parents and kids as well. And I appreciated the opportunity to hear comments and concerns and feedback from families.

[01:41:54] It's always really great to be out and about at the schools. Earlier this month, I joined, or earlier, a couple weeks ago, I joined Sudley Elementary for their Hispanic Heritage Month parade, which was a giant undertaking because they emptied out their entire school into their front area of the school

and paraded around, and it was amazing how many kids had come in native attire and waving flags and everything else.

[01:42:20] It was a really special event, so great job, sadly. I also watched, I think I might have mentioned this last time, Battlefield Gainesville and Osborne Park compete in boys' volleyball, and wow, those boys are fantastic. Earlier this month, I also went to the College and Career Fair at Gainesville High School.

[01:42:39] And I know seniors, this is a really busy time. Most of the seniors I know are kind of stressed out right now because they are working on college applications and trying to get letters of recommendation. And essays are really challenging because it's hard to know how to pitch yourself to a group that you don't really know.

[01:42:57] And I know this is a real thing. I've seen this game before three times with my kids. And so I just want to say best of luck for your college applications. You will go to college, you will, it will work out, somebody will want you and you'll find a way to fund it and it will be a great launch of the rest of your life.

[01:43:15] So navigating this crazy time is hard but you can get through it. And I do recommend reaching out and checking out all of our college and career resources including our counselors, our college and career guidance counselors and our webpage which has an astounding amount of information on it.

[01:43:33] coming up I'm looking forward to the PWCS food show I like to go to this every year because they give out free food samples so it's kind of like Costco but better because you can go back as many times as you want and there are lots of kids and families and you I enjoy actually asking the kids which they thought was the delicious most delicious and which was the grossest and their kids are always honest so it's really fun that runs from 5 to 7 and it's at Hilton High School this year so I'm looking forward to that hope to see you there. For the sake of time, I'm going to go to this part. Parents, I appreciate your efforts in supporting your students' learning, and of utmost importance to me is that our

[01:44:11] students have great teachers and multiple opportunities to pursue their talents and their interests. I think we're doing a good job on those areas, and I applaud every effort to improve the quality of teaching in our classrooms. I'm thankful for the privilege of serving on the Prince William County School Board and thankful for associating with such great high caliber educators and professionals in all aspects of our work. So thank you very much and have a great evening. Ms. Sargaport. Good evening everyone. I had a chance to go hear the chorus, the Colgan Chorus Concert was excellent. If they are that good in the fall, I cannot wait

[01:44:49] to hear what the springtime show is going to be. I got a chance to go to Signal Hill for their fall Festival, Trunk or Treat. There were so many kids out there and it was so much fun. Later that night I went to Osmo Park's homecoming game and it got, there was a lightning and thunder so it got delayed. I ended up not staying for the whole thing just because I think the delay was like an hour and a half. Went to the joint board meeting to talk about legislative priorities and I also met with some parents from the Bennett community over concerns that they have that we are working through.

[01:45:28] I want to address really quickly, we've had not just a parent come in, and she's come in several times about bathrooms, but we also had a student mention something. I'm sure someone will correct me if I'm wrong. The first 10 minutes of class, I would imagine in middle and high school, teachers need to know if you're there.

[01:45:46] So that's probably why. I can't say anything about the last 10 minutes, but the first 10 is to make sure that they get the attendance done as a teacher myself I know bathroom can be very disruptive it's especially in elementary school usually when one says that they all say it so but as I was sitting here and listening to the concerns about bathrooms I am wondering what can be done I did a quick search online there are all kinds of digital smart passes Raptor has one and it will

[01:46:21] analyze all kinds of stuff for the school so kids would I guess clock in and out basically it'll tell you who's meeting up if there's a pattern it can limit rooms and all kinds of things so if Raptor has it I'm sure there's other ones maybe that is a solution I do know that there are some places that use it but I don't know what those products are but at any rate if the board's gonna be tasked with or asked with making a policy I would be more comfortable knowing whether a policy what what's needed in the schools what

[01:46:59] do the principal say they need if a digital hall pass would solve the problem that would be great but I don't want to just jump into policymaking without hearing from them so that's about it fall is also my favorite time of year. I look forward to next week where we have more Trunk or Treats and more concerts coming up in the winter season. And we're ending the first quarter, so I hope everyone is doing well. Get your homework done, get your assignments done, and make sure you're staying in communication with families and the schools. Have a great night, everyone.

[01:47:35] Mr. Denning. I just wanted to start off on a positive note and thank our students that came to talk. Tierney, thank you for your bravery and speaking tonight. Thank you for our bracelets. Everybody put one on. I think everybody has them now. So thank you for that. Continue to advocate for yourself and your community and your friends. And I think you're going to go great big places one day and have an impact on this world. So keep at it. And Saul and Athena, thank you so much for coming and talking. You did a great job and what a nice suit too. Good job. That's awesome. Thank

[01:48:13] you for coming. It's so important for you all to have your voices heard. I also wanted to say thank you to Brentsville District High School. I had a great time today. I went and filmed my board brief. Tomorrow we are doing the grand opening of the turf research center as a part of our Brentsville turf grass management program. If you don't know about the program and you want to know more, look it up. It's an amazing opportunity in our county. It's doing great things. So I'm looking forward to that it's been a long time coming and I'm thankful for my colleagues for their support in the funding for that and so I'm very happy

[01:48:50] about that I also wanted to correct the record to say that our graduation rate has increased over the last three years every single year over the last three years so the numbers show that it's it's on paper it's readable you can go look at it in as part of our strategic plan and it's to continue to make that number go up. So I did want to bring that up. I also wanted to bring up the fact that, and I say this every year, so I'd like to say it once and hopefully not have to say it again, but I think it's going to continue to be a problem. We do have a clock here that we abide by. We did add a minute

[01:49:28] to that time. We used to only have three minutes like you all. We now have four minutes. I think it's incredibly disrespectful for us as elected officials to go over that time when we ask you all to stay under a certain time. I would like to ask that our board agree that our mics shut off when our four minutes is up. We are no more important than the people that we ask to come in here. I also want to say something

else. I'm a proud Christian. I'm a proud American and a lover of this country. And I will never, ever, ever be ashamed of my love for Jesus, my love for this

[01:50:04] country, my love for the amazing opportunities this country provides. So I just wanted to say that I'm also a big fan of freedom of speech and people coming in here and exercising that. People have fought and died for that right, so I of course believe in it.

[01:50:21] But I do believe that if we have a time limit, we should stay under that, so happy end of the first quarter. Make sure you make all those corrections that are needed, those of us who are last minute, so thank you guys. Mr. Wilk. - Oh, I always get to follow that passionate speech.

[01:50:38] Thank you, I love Jesus too. So I do, I'm gonna be quick tonight, succinct. Definitely want to thank my colleagues for entrusting in me and going along with what we did with the naming of Potomac Shores. As I talk to them on one-off, I'm perfectly fine accepting if there is any scorn from my district since it's in the Potomac District.

[01:51:00] I don't think there will be much. I actually see already online, people are elated in that community. So that is good. The other things, just mentioning, spent a lot of time last week. Mr. Blake and I went to the Boy Scout dinner, the John and Ernestine Jenkins dinner.

[01:51:17] That was a great event to support scouting. I met with a Boy Scout troop two nights prior to go over to help them with their badge for government relations or whatever. And they had some great questions. I mean, I was impressed how they expounded on certain topics like school overcrowding, redistricting.

[01:51:40] Again, I was not anticipating that. A lot of times when I go to these, it's more like I don't like the lunch food or can you fire my teacher or something, but these were quite profound and I was really impressed with the questions that they had prepped for the meeting.

[01:51:55] As Mr. Blake said, we went to a boys volleyball game between Forest Park and Garfield. did a bunch of other things too. Multiculture night at Potomac Middle. I could go through the gambit. But anyways, looking forward to the next couple days. Trunk retreats are coming up.

[01:52:12] And yeah, a lot of fun and exciting festivities happening for Halloween. So anyways, I'll be very under two minutes. So there you go. I'm done. Thank you. Mr. Jess. Thank you. As I said before, I have not been able to get out to a lot of different events.

[01:52:34] and don't see myself doing a lot as far as getting out to different schools and so forth in the foreseeable future right now. But I did work on, in my last newsletter, focused on some academic achievements for the Occoquan District, and my plans are to continue emphasizing some of that work and how well some of our students are doing and some of our schools are doing.

[01:53:03] So with that I ended my conversation, thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Jessie. First off, I wanna thank the Hill family for continually coming and advocating on behalf of dyslexia.

[01:53:21] As an ophthalmologist, it's, you know, many of the students with dyslexia show up at my doorstep first, and then as my wife who's a pediatric neurologist, so we do appreciate all of those who advocate on behalf of students struggling with dyslexia and we appreciate that.

[01:53:41] On that note, I spent, I was grateful to be invited to Colgan High School's Finn Friends had their dinner before homecoming and I enjoyed that at Tony's Pizza and it was a great event and absolutely

thrilled to sort of participate in events like that across the county and truly appreciate it and very grateful for the community and culture that they have created over there, especially across our special education students.

[01:54:09] I want to point out tonight, we did vote on the superintendent's goals. She has ambitious goals as always each year. They align with our strategic plan as she noted in her comments this evening. We continue to raise the bar and the threshold for the scores that we expect, the achievements we expect to see from our students across all demographics, whether that's special education, English learners, gifted and talented, and everything in between, and everybody.

[01:54:40] We are committed to making sure that we raise the bar for every level of every student and every grade, and that's really important. We've had tremendous success over the last five years with our first strategic plan in achieving many of the goals we set out for.

[01:54:57] This board remains highly focused on those goals. Those goals have real results. Those results have been increased graduation rate too. I think we adjusted to 96.1 last year. That is a record graduation rate for the county.

[01:55:15] We've had increased achievements on all of our SOLs and we have more students taking AP dual enrollments, Cambridge and IB courses than ever before. Also scoring higher on those exams than ever before. Prince William County Schools remains a place where we wanna reduce barriers to programs, reduce barriers to entrance to high-level courses, rigorous courses, courses that demand a lot of work on behalf of the students, because we know that that helps them in the long run launch that thriving future we're all hoping to see them do.

[01:55:56] And so I think the other real results that you've seen from all of this work that we've done over the course of five years, not just scores. So one can talk about scores, one can talk about grades, one can talk about classroom, but it's also in real dollars.

[01:56:12] We have more students winning real dollars, high school scholarship dollars to go to college, post-secondary programs than we've ever had before. Last year was a record number, we continue to do that. If you wanna talk about affordability and you're one of these politicians who likes to talk about that, There's nothing more real than putting real money in the pockets of real families and helping those students get the most out of their public education, and that's getting some money to help them go to the next level.

[01:56:44] And I'm very proud of that achievement that the school division does, and we still look at that every day because we believe we can do much more. We think we've just scratched the surface on that. We believe every student in this division can achieve at a high level, and every student can win scholarship dollars, and every student can get to where they'd like to go.

[01:57:03] And that's sort of the work that we're doing. And tonight is a very important meeting 'cause we did vote on the superintendent's goals and we voted unanimously to support them and we'll continue to do that. Thank you all very much, have a great night.



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