

Fairfax County School Board Meeting October 7, 2010: Summary and Analysis

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On October 7, 2010, the Fairfax County School Board meeting was attended by Board members Reed, Moon, Raney, Bradsher, Wilson, Smith (Chair), Center (Vice-Chair), Storck, Gibson, Evans, and Strauss. Superintendent Dale and the Student Representative Cotton were also present. The meeting began at 7:07 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem, and a moment of silence. The Certification of Closed Meeting Compliance, Announcements, School Bus Safety Week, and Custodian Appreciation Week, were announced by reading the Board's website verbatim. Evans recognized school bus drivers though none were in attendance. Moon recognized the custodians in the audience and called the group forward to pose for a photograph. The custodians left immediately after the photograph. This portion of the meeting was ceremonial to both recognize employees and ensure that regulatory requirements were met.

A team led by Assistant Superintendent Noonan presented progress on a project regarding the fine and practical arts. The team presented a video on the value of the project and discussed their progress on fine arts assessments and industry certification participation. The Board posed questions and thanked the team. The questions and discussion about the presentation focused on the Board commending themselves for engaging in the project. In particular, Storck praised himself and the Board for the progress made by Noonan and his team.

. During the Citizen Participation section, only two citizens participated and their comments praised the Board for their actions. The Board discussed their Engagement and Community Action Plan and debated the community's interest in the Board's operation procedures. Storck, Bradsher, and Strauss believed an interactive website would be helpful and Center and Raney thought an interactive website was excessive. Reed settled the debate by putting the entire plan in the context of improvement and the Board passed the plan.

The Closed Session decisions were focused on behavior and passed quickly. The Consent Agenda was presented and no one objected causing it to pass. The Consent Agenda included contracts for a renovation project and leasing/purchasing classroom trailers. The Board did not discuss those contracts in public forum during this meeting. During new business an International Baccalaureate bill was discussed and was not on the agenda. Raney took exception to the discussion of a non-agenda item because he was not prepared to discuss it. Gibson and Raney debated about government interaction with college credits and Wilson sided with Gibson. Storck ended the debate by framing the presentation of the bill as providing information and not something the Board needed to make a decision about at that time.

The Board extended the Request for Proposals for trash collection. Each Board member reported on their projects and the meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. Storck and Gibson engaged in a sidebar conversation during most of the Board reports. The Board debriefed to improve their overall functioning. The consensus was that they only needed to debrief after contentious meetings though they were less likely to debrief constructively after such meetings. A citizen reported that meetings became contentious when behavior, boundaries, or budget were discussed.

Chairman Reed served the role of moderator for the meeting. The center of power for the group was Storck and Gibson who commanded the most attention and received support in every debate. The only Board member consistently presenting opposition was Raney who opposed Storck and Gibson on several occasions. When Raney was able to get some support for his point, the majority of the Board aligned with Storck and Gibson. The Superintendent said little during the meeting and most of the Board members only spoke occasionally. Despite the debates and the concentration of power in two members, the Board appeared to share the common goal of working towards providing a quality education to all Fairfax County students.

**Comment [u1]:** Interesting. The issue has to do with a new VA law regarding acceptance of AP and IB credit. It is an important issue but somewhat nuanced and I suspect the board members didn't want to appear uninformed about it.

**Comment [u2]:** Yes, those are the exciting ones.

[Nice summary. 20 points.](#)

