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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PWEA URGES PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD TO STRENGTHEN NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

At its June 21ST meeting, the Prince William County School Board will discuss proposed revisions to Prince William County Public Schools' Non-Discrimination and Commitment to Equity Policy (Policy 060). If amended, the policy would also include protections for students and employees pertaining to "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." The Prince William Education Association (PWEA) Board of Directors unanimously supports this change.

PWEA President Riley O'Casey noted, "Our affiliates, the Virginia Education Association (VEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) have adopted belief statements affirming that no student or employee should be subjected to any form of discrimination." She stated further, "the PWEA Board of Directors believes that all persons should be guaranteed equal opportunity within the public education system, whether student or employee."

The American Psychological Association notes that LGBTQ students suffer more frequently from anxiety and depression and are more prone to self-harm and suicide than their peers. GLSEN, the nation's leading organization in the fight to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools, conducts a biennial survey related to school climate. In the 2015 School Climate State Snapshot, it was reported that in Virginia, 68% of LGBTQ students experiencing discrimination at school never report it to school staff.

Citing an Equality Virginia publication, President O'Casey declared that, "more than half of Virginia's 133 school divisions have already adopted protections for students that include both sexual orientation and gender identity. It is our sincere hope that our world-class school division will provide these same protections, not only for our students, but for employees as well."

School Board meetings are held at the Kelly Leadership Center located at 14715 Bristow Road, Manassas, VA, beginning at 7:00 p.m.



The Prince William Education Association is dedicated to advancing the cause of public education, public schools, public school students, and public school employees. PWEA is the local education association affiliate of both the Virginia Education Association (VEA) and the National Education Association (NEA). For additional information regarding the association or to schedule an interview with PWEA President Riley O'Casey, please contact Areibia Wood by telephone at **(703) 361-2444** or email at receptionist@pweaveanea.org.