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Fairfax County School Board Work Session, Tuesday, April 16, 2024

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZtaesYf9h4
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-01. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:04] work session underway so we are meeting now for the um audit report for fiscal uh fiscal year 2023 um i'm proud that we have with us esther ko and our auditor general daniel moore our deputy auditor general we do have one member who's going to be joining us virtually um kevin others do we see miss lady online okay so I will wait to do this until she arrives okay great so the way this

[00:00:40] work session will work is we will have a relatively brief presentation from our auditor staff and then we will reserve time for questions so with that over to you miss ko thank you so good morning everyone and we are happy to be here today to discuss the office of auditor general we called ourselves, the OAG, last fiscal year annual report with the board.

[00:01:08] This report has been discussed with the Audit Committee in January of this year. And the Audit Committee believes that the report provides a good summary of the work completed by my office, and then the board and the public can be benefited from the contents.

[00:01:23] And this is why we are here today. So here, even though today Danelle and I are a little bit far away from you all, but I'm still very thrilled to share the highlights of our last year annual report where we focus on the OAG value added services and also we will highlight the ongoing audit plan for the current fiscal year, '24.

[00:01:47] And I would like to take this opportunity first to thank our school board audit committee members as well as our community members. For the public awareness, we have four school board members and two citizen members in the Audit Committee, serving as the voting members. And I also want to start off by saying a big thank you to my staff members, all of us, to focus our independence but yet collaborative work within FCPS. And for our community members, if you are not aware, the Office of Auditor General is make up of eight

[00:02:23] full-time staff members. We have seven auditors and one executive administrative assistant and our auditors carry different credentials which i think one of them is really a hot commodity right now thinking about the irs deadline was yesterday is the certified public accountant so many of us are cpa we are also certified internal auditor certified fraud examiner as well as certified information system auditor and last year my office receive a peer review on our audit work so for a peer review in the context of auditors meaning

[00:03:01] that we are also being audited so unfortunately we cannot be exempted that we receive the highest rating which is passed with no management comments so with that i would like to go ahead you know to go into the report and first off i would like to highlight the mission for the office um if i can just boil down in a very simplistic work, right? There are two major missions. The first one is that we are auditing the ongoing process within FCPS to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and be

[00:03:36] also accountable to our community members. And the second mission is to perform preliminary review on potential fraud, waste, and abuse cases, which I will talk a little bit more when I walk through this report. And at OAG, the Office of Auditor General, we measure our value both at the macro and at the micro level. So I would like to start off with the macro level that you can see that the data, if we can go to page four of the report, about OAG performance against some of the other

[00:04:12] schools within the nation. If we can go to page four and at the bottom, right, so under OAG value. thank you so we are operating at a more efficient level compared to our peers peer audit audit shops in terms of general funds spent on audit function in terms of auditors per student enrollment and also in terms of the percentage of audit plan completed as well as the recommendations accepted by management we also solicit solicited post audit surveys which is on the

[00:04:50] following page five at the top of that that from the audit clients that where it shows statistic of positive working relationship with our stakeholders our questions asked to our audit clients are mostly yes or no questions like for example have you received all the information at the entrance meeting about the audits do you have surprises during the audit like that maybe we just notified you of a finding at the exit meeting then that's not good so we receive also overall positive feedback from our internal audit clients within

[00:05:24] FCPS. So that's the macro level of how we are measuring the work of OAG. And then when we get to the micro level of our work, I would like to focus on the four pillars of works that OAG does. The first one is about risk assessment. Risk assessment is how we select the audit topics. So I know that many of the school board members have very kindly complete the risk assessment survey that we sent out for the fiscal year 25 topic so very thankful for that and then the second pillar is about internal audit work which is our bread and butter in a

[00:06:03] little bit that then now will take a few minutes to walk through the key audit result from fiscal year 23 but at a high level we completed all the approved engagements from the school board that

included six process performance audits, 11 business process audits, and you may wonder what are they?

[00:06:24] So the process performance audits are division-wide driven audit with the focus on compliance, efficiency and effectiveness of the processes, and that directly link back to the mission of OAG. And then the third pillar is the fraud, waste and abuse cases.

[00:06:42] And if we can go to page 8 of the report. So for fiscal year 23, we received a total of 47 cases. And the types and themes are shown on the chart here. And as a matter of fact, we also discussed the themes with the audit committee from time to time during the audit committee meeting that we can unpack each category more.

[00:07:07] And one of the data points which is not on the report because of the timing is I'm happy to report that as of like the end of March, my office received a total of 60 cases which is not on this report again because of the reporting timing.

[00:07:26] And my interpretation of that is because we got more and more school and community members become aware of this channel to report. So again, see something, say something is a slogan that we want to highlight to build stronger checks and balances.

[00:07:45] And for our staff members at FCPS and community awareness also, my office takes all the cases very seriously. We review each case according to the applicable FCPS policy and regulation.

[00:08:00] is the policy 1107, which defined fraud, waste and abuse, as well as regulation 1410, which defined a process of how investigation should be conducted. And then when proven credibility with the case, then the situations will be discussed extensively with the board, the audit committee, as well as management. And the last pillar of work is about outreach and education. So what OAG has done, I think this is kind of not a traditional internal that SHOP will be focusing a lot on is that my office has continued to host

[00:08:36] accredited trainings to our staff members across FCPS. In FY23 is our third year and then this year we continue to provide accredited training via NASPA. What's that stand for is National Association of State Board of Accountancy. So within FCPS we offered accredited training to our staff member that they can get continuous professional education. So topics such as internal investigation overview, FCPS lines of defense has been offered throughout the

[00:09:10] year. And in it in addition to that we have been providing regular technical training to our school-based administrator and finance staff. So here I would like to thank Dr. Reed and also our management allowing OAG to be part of the -- in the training, to be able to work collectively, you know, to raise the checks and balances, to raise what is important to our FCPS employees as a whole.

[00:09:40] So while we can maintain our independence during the audit, we also threw the collaborative way to raise, you know, how we can work together to further strengthen our checks and balances within FCPS. And a slogan that we use a lot, and I know that I borrowed that from a former president of U.S. is we trust but we always verify so we can build up our independence and collaborative effort at the same time with everyone here.

[00:10:08] And we continue our efforts to publish our newsletters. We call it as the audit bus and now we have over 2,500 subscribers and I particularly appreciate the partnership with the school board because I know a lot of you have helped me to advertise it in your newsletters and in your meetings with the staff

members so really thank you for that and currently we are marching on with our fiscal year 24 audit plan which is listed on page 6 of the report yes here we go so listed under FY 2024 audit plan and when we have completed the

[00:10:48] audit plans represent a result at the audit committee and then to have a deep dive discussion if anything of value we will also share that with the school Board, so that we are all aware of the key audit results and the recommendation status.

[00:11:05] So with that, I would like to transition the time into Ms. Danelle Moore to highlight some of our audit results from fiscal year 23. Thank you, Esther. As Esther previously mentioned, during FY23, we completed 6 performance audits and 11 business process audits.

[00:11:26] So I'm just going to walk you through on a high level those results and what our recommendations were. If we could turn to page 11 of the report, that's where it starts. Our first audit was the succession planning and leadership development audit. This audit, we made recommendations for FCPS to develop a formal division-wide succession plan and leadership development plan, and also to evaluate the domains, all domains of the principal pipeline model. Our second audit was IT cybersecurity audit, which, however, is exempt from public disclosure, so I'm going to skip over that one.

[00:12:00] The third audit was the employee evaluation process audit. During this audit, we made recommendations for improving the employee evaluation process, which includes updating the regulation, increasing monitoring of the process, increasing the communication, and also increasing the employee engagement of MyPDE.

[00:12:25] And if we can turn to page 13, that's the page we're on now, when we go into the local school activities funds audit. This is an audit that we perform every year. This is required by the state. We look at all sites with local school activity funds that receive local school activity funds. Last year in FY23, there were 203 sites. And so we were able to go in and determine the cash balances are fairly stated. And we also looked at the financial controls. Out of the 203 sites, we noted 107 sites that had no exceptions.

[00:13:02] 95 sites had three or fewer exceptions, and one site had four exceptions. Also, the outcome for this audit, OAD recommended that there's a recommendation as it relates to increasing the use of MSB and not focusing so much on collecting cash receipts at the school sites.

[00:13:29] Our next audit is our continuous monitoring. This is done on non-appropriated and appropriated funds. And it's important to note that the continuous monitoring for the non-appropriated transactions also are reported in the local school activity funds audit. So we kind of use that as our sample and we report that out in the local school activity funds audit.

[00:13:49] So with our continuous monitoring on a quarterly basis, we use a data analytics software where we can determine some of the, identify some transactions that may be considered outliers and we contact the school and request for documentation. We also perform 10 site visits per quarter to schools just to ensure that the P card is properly secure and things of that nature.

[00:14:13] And as I mentioned, the non-appropriated results are included in the local school activity funds audit. Another continuous monitoring program that we completed in FY23 was the ESSER, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Release, so ESSER III.

[00:14:31] We reviewed the ESSER III transactions and made recommendations to enhance the process to validate pay bands and pay rates for hourly employees. As it relates to our business process audits, we completed 11 business process audits.

[00:14:47] In these audits, I'm sorry, if we can get to page 14, thank you. The business process audits are done when, typically when there's a change in principal or finance tech. In FY23, we did get a lot of requests from principals that wanted us to come in and perform these business process audits as well.

[00:15:07] In the business process audits, we also look at both non-appropriate and appropriated transactions. In addition, we perform our follow-up of audit recommendations to see what has been implemented and make sure all the corrective actions and our recommendations have been addressed.

[00:15:28] And we would like to note, and if you turn to page, I think it's page 15, we close a total of 49 audit recommendations in FY23. Also, I would like to note that OEG has, in FY23, we began piloting a dashboard to share out all the audit results with management on a timely basis.

[00:15:51] So now I would like to hand the time back over to the meeting managers if we have any questions. Okay. Does anyone have any questions?

[00:16:09] I know, Mr. Moon, you submitted a question in advance. Would you like to proceed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for coming a little bit late. Some other obligations back in the office. And I was able to submit a couple of questions to Auditor General earlier today, in the morning, after having gone through your report.

[00:16:35] My basic question has to do with this. Looking at the chart at the bottom of page four, I appreciate the fact that you are sharing with us information regarding how we should be deemed to be, I'm talking about your office, OAG, to be very efficient in its work.

[00:17:01] However, from my perspective, you know, that I want to see, I want our school system to have sufficient level of staffing to do all the work that should be done, as opposed to just to having, just to show the sufficient, efficient staff, just to have fewer staff.

[00:17:27] When you have fewer staff, you can only do less work because I don't expect our staff, we have excellent staff, however, there is only so much one staff person can do. So when you do not have enough staff, not adequately staffed, then for the system of a budget of close to $4 billion, that's including capital budget, that we got to have right level of staffing to provide right level of oversight.

[00:18:00] What do you think about that? Thank you very much, Mr. Moon, for this question. And I have been, you know, thinking a lot about the staffing level, right, at the Office of Auditor General. So, if I have more staff, right, what else that we can do better in our deliverable.

[00:18:18] And I think Danelle mentioned some of them, right, like for example, recently at a school there were quite a lot of turnovers in principals, finance technicians, which are pretty key. And right now we are using a sampling method to, you know, to support, to being able to offer audit services.

[00:18:37] So we cannot do 100% of that, right. So that's one place. And then the other place where I think we can tighten is we have our audit team, mainly we have two individuals in each team. We have an audit lead, like an audit supervisor and an auditor, because the audit that we are engaging in is pretty big for like a process, right, division-wide process.

[00:19:02] So if we do have more staff members, I think it will be beneficial for the audit quality, to ensure the audit quality and also ensure the depth, like how deep we can go in each audit. So at the same time though, I'm thinking we may also bounce off because I know that right now we are at, you know, a budget, you know, a pretty tight situations.

[00:19:26] And as my office is charged to run, to ensure the ongoing process at FCPS as efficient and effective, I really would like to hold my office be the role model in doing that, right, like how to do more with less at a reasonable level.

[00:19:45] So I think to answer your question, Mr. Moon, I think at this point I want to say that we are close to optimal with like the staffing members consider all the circumstances. But if we can, you know, have more, you know, the more junior level auditors, maybe we can do expand the BPA the business process audits to focus on all school that with a turnover.

[00:20:10] Right now we are not at that point. We are more like taking on a sampling basis. Then we also to also add on to that and maybe I'm giving you more information to your questions. Why I say that we are operating at a very close to optimal status is that we have a holistic plan right like one is that we can select all the all the school that with a turnover that's one way another way is that we can promote our hotline which we have already done and together with all of your support we also do a lot of training right so instead of me blindly to find a needle in the haystack

[00:20:49] does someone come to report to us where the problems may exist so it makes our audit sampling more targeted because sometimes even though there may be a turnover, it doesn't mean that the school without a turnover is financial healthy, right?

[00:21:07] So we really need to mobilize our eyes and ears, which are our FCPS employees, to come to us to let us know where the challenges are, and then we can target the resources appropriately. So that's why I say that currently I believe our resources are close to optimal.

[00:21:25] we do more? Absolutely. Could we raise our audit quality? Absolutely. But considering the financial environment and the forecast, I think what we have right now is sufficient. Okay, thank you. Thank you for your response. With all due respect, what I'm hoping is since we have audit committee chair here and auditor general, I'm hoping that audit committee will really look at this issue, not for upcoming school year, because as you mentioned that we are in rather tight budget situation, but for the following year or using, you know,

[00:22:02] perhaps looking at year-end, you know, budget, just give us something to think about for the board to consider because, again, you know, by having all the necessary staffing For a $4 billion enterprise, if we could find a way to even make our system run even more efficiently, I think that potential savings could be a much larger than amount of funding we may need for additional staffing.

[00:22:42] that's, again, I don't necessarily consider our level of staffing less than other comparable school districts as the best of practice.

[00:22:58] Yes. Thank you. If I may add one more comment. That not only we have our full-time employees, right, we also, depending on the other topics that the school board is interested at.

[00:23:15] Sometimes we utilize outside contractors who have specialized the skill set. For example, in the previous, I think two years, we have done the special education review that I'm sure all of you are

familiar with, that within OAG we don't have our internal special, the subject matter experts, so we have to hire an outside vendor to supplement the work of OAG.

[00:23:39] That provides more flexibility of how our office can run, but definitely we can, let's discuss more within the audit committee. Thank you. - Thank you. - Mr. Moon, your points are well taken. As audit chair, I commit to taking that back to the committee. Thank you.

[00:23:55] We have next Ms. Sizemore-Heiser, followed by Mr. Frisch. - Thank you, I appreciate it. I appreciate all your hard work and your team's hard work as usual. Esther, it's very professionally done and very much appreciated. I'm very glad to see the audit results about the succession planning and leadership development, 'cause as you know, I've talked to you about some of our need for succession planning and especially, I think I've talked to both you and Dr. Reed about knowledge management and that piece of it.

[00:24:22] And I see that it shows a medium risk due to sort of lack of formal division-wise succession plan or leadership development plan. So I wanted to, it's maybe a question for you, it might be a question for you, Dr. Reed, in terms of what's the follow-up for succession planning and is there a plan for the knowledge management piece of that as part of the succession planning?

[00:24:46] I think I don't recall, I think Ms. Coe will have to provide what she expected for follow-up on the succession plan. I think when she and I spoke, we weren't necessarily in agreement with the recommendation.

[00:25:02] That was early on, one of the early audits around the principal pool effectiveness. And I have some real concerns about that process and what it's yielding us. And so I think that was one of the conversations Ms. Ko and I had early on about the, you know, making sure that we followed what the Auditor General has recommended, and then also having a conversation about what might best practice be, and if those are in conflict, where we go from there.

[00:25:33] So, because I think one of the recommendations was start a pool for assistant principals, too. And what we know is that the pool in the principal world has really left out a number of extraordinary external candidates. And so, and it's gotten in the way of our ability to hire people outside the system who might be extraordinarily qualified.

[00:25:56] So, I think the idea of then setting up another pool that might restrict that at the earlier, I think that's where we had some discussion. And I don't know where we left off with that one. But I think we're in agreement with knowledge management and all of the importance of that. And I don't think we're in disagreement about the goal, making sure we have a strong, you know, leadership development program.

[00:26:19] It's just kind of the tools or the means that we were discussing. But I'm happy to have Ms. Coe speak to that as well. And thank you for the follow-up. If I can complement what Dr. Reed has mentioned, we have done multiple audits about the secession plan specifically for our school-based administrator.

[00:26:40] So what Dr. Reed mentioned was an earlier audit from the hiring and onboarding audit, if I'm not mistaken, because at the time, the administration at that time was really focused on the principal pool process. So during the succession planning, we actually change the recommendation.

[00:26:57] We focus on the risk factor. The risk is that we don't have enough qualified principal. That's the risk. So we open up that recommendation, and Danelle can speak more about that, to really ask the management to retake a look at it in terms of the succession planning, not only for principals.

[00:27:16] Of course, that is the leadership role for school. one of our most important job category, as well as the other roles that within FCPS. What is the succession planning, how the -- making sure that we have the institution remain with FCPS instead of one person left, and then all the knowledge is gone.

[00:27:33] So if, Daniel, you can speak a little bit more about that. Sure. As it relates to the recommendation to evaluate all the domains of the principal pipeline model, we kind of changed it to kind of look at current -- assess currently the principal pool model that we currently have.

[00:27:48] And I believe the HR and senior leadership got together to provide recommendations to Dr. Reed to enhance the principal pool process. And also there was a third window of the principal pool added into the process to expand the principal pool model.

[00:28:10] As it relates to developing a division-wide succession plan, we've been working with the office of professional learning on their recommendations um as it relates to drafting guidebooks for mentoring and onboarding principles um also um developing a plan for expansion for professional development for schedule a employees um there's also a joint work group between the office of professional learning and hr to um to further explore developing that formal succession planning and looking into more leadership development processes and regulations that

[00:28:48] align with the current industry practices. So those are some of the recommendations. The recommendation as it relates to the principle pipeline model, we have recently closed that out, but we are still working with the Office of Professional Learning as it relates to the development of the Division I player.

[00:29:07] Thank you. And I guess I ask that question of both of you because from my understanding from the the time I was on the Audit Committee really is that, you know, your role is to flag risk, right, in doing your audit, flag risk and make recommendations of areas for the executive to address, right, whether it's HR or other parts of the operation.

[00:29:25] So in this case, the risk I see flagged, and please correct me if I'm wrong, is that there's a lack of succession planning and sort of leadership development and the recommendation is for the superintendent staff to develop a leadership development plan and succession model, whether it's using the principal pool or a different methodology.

[00:29:42] And so that's what I kind of want to see is what's then the follow-up in terms of from our operational staff developing that leadership development plan. And I know there's probably oversight from the audit committee to make sure that the risk is then mitigated, right? So it's a fine line between flagging risk and ensuring the risk is mitigated and allowing the operational staff to do the work with best practices and educational best practice is to address the risk that you are flagging, right?

[00:30:08] guess that's the question is I would look for your judgment right on what is the operational and best practices that address the risk that our auditor has flagged so that's that would be my question for you so especially on the succession planning because I think that is vital and I think sometimes maybe we have staff here who have great knowledge that then doesn't get embedded so I look forward to the follow-up on that and we can okay thanks miss size my So Mr. Frisch.

[00:30:38] - Thank you. I appreciate the thoroughness of the report as always. My question is around staffing and the potential use of technology to support our staff. One of the ways that you all look at our schools is the activity funds and other resources that schools have at their disposal.

[00:31:02] I'm curious if any thought has been given to the use of AI for identifying potential problems at the school level, if you've got a lot of data coming in, AI could be used in place of a human, or at least pre-human to identify a potential problem at a school level for a human to then look into.

[00:31:25] It could probably also greatly expand the number of facilities that we're looking at at any given time. Has that been a consideration? - Yes, absolutely, and thank you for the question. I have been attending different conferences as you have mentioned, right, not only for local government auditors, but I also attended some conference host by the National Internal Audit Association, it's called the IIA.

[00:31:52] So they talked a lot about AI and how to really utilize technology to leverage, you know, because hiring talents, hiring auditors is not easy, right, similar to hiring teaching staff within FCPS. In this area, we are competing with some major organization in the Northern Virginia area.

[00:32:11] So my office has done multiple initiatives in terms of using data analytics, including that we have done the continuous monitoring for all the 200 schools to look at if there are any red flags that we can review so that we can better target our audit work.

[00:32:33] The unfortunate part is that many processes within the division are still very manual. And I know that we have been discussed that extensively with management. So even though we have the tool, we have the AI tool, since a lot of the actual documents like invoices, supporting documents, they are not housed within the system, it makes it more challenging because you still need to interact with the manual aspect to it.

[00:33:02] I know that management right now is working on the HRM, the human resource management system. So eventually, in a few years' time, hopefully, that we can have all the data in one system that we can do meaningful data mining.

[00:33:18] Last year, we also utilized a tool supported by a vendor called Diligent. It's the leader within, you know, the data analytics for Auditor. We used a tool called ACL to try to focus on the my time data, which is our time record system.

[00:33:36] We also try to focus it on the online travel system as well. But because a lot of the system and supporting documents are not within that database, it just makes it difficult to profile one holistic look, if it makes sense, to the data.

[00:33:53] So one of the risks, if you ask me, right, for the system as a whole is that how we can migrate our system to the top for the 21st 22nd century then we can utilize the ai2 and other you know technology to facilitate the audit but that's a very very good question so thank you well it raises a follow-up question which is would the board asking for a risk assessment and audit of this issue help expedite the process to getting us to migrate our systems in such a way that

[00:34:29] you're able to use i know this is something superintendent has been confronted with um is taking all of this data that's out there in different formats having to get it into the same format so that they can speak together and the dashboards that uh she and her staff use so um it's a i know it's a herculean task at times to do that perhaps the way to to get that ball rolling is having that be one of the audits that the the auditor does to make a recommendation and then gets followed through on so that we're not having this discussion in five years time got it

[00:35:08] thank you and we will definitely consider that in the next year audit plan thank you hi any further questions from board members uh miss st john conning um so i was looking at your um the audit in terms of the risk factors and the business process audits at schools.

[00:35:34] And I'm wondering if those schools, I mean, just from my own experience, I know one that has, you know, like the fives and stuff, that there was a new principal and a new AA there. Of all of those schools, do we know how many had new principals and new administrative assistants?

[00:35:52] Because I think that would help us as we go through and look at schools having these issues. Is it something that we have to look at in terms of providing the proper training when new people come on board?

[00:36:08] Thank you for the question. And I remember we discussed about it also extensively in audit committee. So it's good that to be discussed with the full school board here. And I believe that the financial services department, I saw Ms. Lee Burden is here.

[00:36:24] They are starting already, you know, to keep track of the turnover and the changes of the the principal and also the financial technician or AA at the school level. I don't know if, Ms. Burden, you want to speak about that? Yeah, I don't know how many principals have left, but I can tell you that in the finance tech ranks, we have had 49 new hires out of about 200 in this fiscal year.

[00:36:54] So that's, you know, 25%. That's a little concerning. We have six vacancies currently or that are upcoming in the next month or so. In addition, you know, to the that's what we have right now.

[00:37:10] And, you know, we're working with them with training, trying to automate some reconciliations, those kinds of things to help them. We also are now requiring mandatory training for finance techs in the first two years of employment.

[00:37:29] Because, well, you know more than anybody probably about how it is in a main office where they are so busy that it's really easy that, oh, their new finance tech is supposed to come over here and do some training. But they get caught up in the day-to-day at the school, and so they have to cancel.

[00:37:46] But we really need for those to be mandatory because, you know, training is also one of the key factors in avoiding turnover. So a follow-up to that is have we looked at the division of labor at elementary schools where the AA is also the finance tech versus an exclusive finance tech at high schools and middle schools?

[00:38:16] So I think this question I may need management to support to respond. We know that the staffing formula, right, for elementary school, the AA has to do the administrative functions for the principals and then also add on with the finance.

[00:38:33] At the same time, I think from an independent point of view that the financial management at elementary school is much less compared to the secondary school, middle school and the high school. So maybe that's the original reason why the setup is like that.

[00:38:50] but I would like to defer to the management for a further comment. Yeah, Ms. Coe is absolutely correct. The thinking has always been that the volume and complexity of financial transaction at the elementary are far smaller than at the middle and high school level.

[00:39:10] You know, they don't have the fundraisers. They don't have the athletic events. They just don't have that volume of funds coming through. And so it's at least for a number of years now, it's always been

that it's an AA and one of their duties is the finance duties at the elementary level.

[00:39:34] - Yes, Ms. Dixit. - Thank you so much for this report. I am, again, I think for Mr. Moon and Rachna, a lot of us have discussed about the staffing of your department.

[00:39:50] Having a school size and the budget of what we have and we're at 0.04% of the internal auditors for every 1,000 student enrolled in a school district. So we are lower than the national average.

[00:40:06] Also with the number of school district internal auditors, and that's again, we are lower than. So how can we effective if we don't have the right staffing and the team?

[00:40:23] because our student population is hopefully gonna grow more. And if we're not be able to look at all the different schools at one point, I guess the way the sampling works for you, it's probably is gonna take about three years to get to each and every school right now.

[00:40:44] So I'm just asking how, so if you have to audit like every school, how much time and more staffing do you need? - And thank you, I mean, we would of course need to do more analysis, so to really think about strategically what is the right number, right?

[00:41:03] That in terms of not looking at the total number of school, looked at the risk profile per school, because each school serve different programs and work a little bit differently. So we definitely can take a bigger look at it together with the audit committee.

[00:41:20] In the meantime, you know, to have more discussion surrounding the data and things like that. I did collect some data from the other schools. They really, really different in shape and form because some of the audit shops that they do more and more school audits, they do lesser process audit.

[00:41:41] And then some other school do not manage the hotline because at OAG, for Office of Auditor General, we spend a lot of time, like really reviewing the cases in details. So I think it will be a more discussion with the audit committee, with the school board as to the risk comfort level, right?

[00:42:00] How much level that we should get as a whole? What is the acceptable risk level? And then to determine, have that set up and then we can determine what is the right number for the staffing. Because at the end of the day, risk is everywhere, right?

[00:42:16] Is what is the acceptable level? And if we believe that due to the turnover that the risk level go up a lot for the school, that exceed the acceptable level of risk, then of course we have to hire. Maybe some of the shorter term strategy is instead of adding more manpower like FTE, maybe we can hire hourly, maybe we can also hire like contractors, companies to do it so that we can have a flexible model. So we can have a deeper dive discussion with the audit committee about the staffing model. Yeah, thank you. So

[00:42:52] because as you you are the the person leading this you understand the overseeing of of our school system our processes and our finances like the utmost importance for the school board like that you know we are functioning in the best possible way so we would love to see how we can support you on that more thank you great well seeing nothing further I want to take the opportunity to thank Ms. Ko, Ms. Moore, you know I've heard it recently said that you know CPA are in short

[00:43:29] supply these days and the acronym is now coolest professional around so I know that's what we think of all of you so thank you all we look forward to continuing these discussions and

[00:43:40] audit committee. Thank you. And with that we are adjourned until 1 p.m. Thank you. Do we have quorum

[00:44:24] yet? Not yet. Oh, Sandy's there. Sorry, I didn't see you there. So we do have quorum, I believe. Okay. So we'll go ahead and get started. Thank you, everybody, for joining us for the afternoon of our work session, and this is on the special education enhancement plan. So I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Dr. Reed and staff to do their presentation, and then we'll open up to board questions. Thank you, Ms. Seizmoorheiser, and it's my pleasure this afternoon to turn the presentation over on the special ed enhancement plan update to Dr. Presidio, our chief academic

[00:45:01] officer who has a team with him and I believe support staff also in the back here to help answer questions. So Dr. Presidio. All right. Well, thank you very much and good afternoon, everybody. I know you've already had a pretty full day of meetings, but we definitely appreciate you making time to put this topic on the agenda. This is some of the most important work that we're doing in FCPS right now, so we're very excited to have an opportunity to share some updates on the enhancement plan for students with disabilities with you today, and I definitely wanted to start out just by thanking our two meeting managers, Ms. Dixit and Ms. Sizemore-Heiser.

[00:45:35] They put a lot of time and energy into helping get prepared for the report today in the presentation, so we thank them for their assistance with that, and we do have quite a team with us here today to help with the presentation, starting with Dr. Terry Edmonds-Herd, who who is our assistant superintendent for the Department of Special Services.

[00:45:53] And Terry has not yet celebrated her one year anniversary in this position, which is kind of hard to believe. She's still pretty new, but she's been doing a great job this year and would really appreciate her strategic and supportive leadership because we wouldn't be where we're at currently without her support.

[00:46:10] And we have some other folks from the Department of Special Services who are helping to lead the work. Maybe I should let you guys introduce yourselves, actually. So just introduce yourself real quickly. We'll start with Judy and maybe just mention the area of the enhancement plan that you're working to lead.

[00:46:25] Good afternoon. My name is Judy Duprey. I'm the coordinator for special education therapy services and I'm one of the co-leads for the staff capacity group. Good afternoon. I'm Mike Bloom. I'm the director of special education instruction and I'm going to be sharing information around goal one instruction and inclusive practices.

[00:46:44] Good afternoon. I'm Dawn Schaffer, director of special education procedural support. I'm one of the co-leads for the Special Education Processes Group. Hi, I'm Leah Skierbski, Director of Operations and Strategic Planning, and I am one of the co-leads for Communication Engagement.

[00:47:04] All right, well, thank you, everybody. I just wanted you to have a chance to at least hear from them directly in terms of their titles and positions before we jump in. And again, I want to say thank you to all of you for the amazing leadership work that you've been doing. As I said, this is some of the most important work we're doing in Fairfax right now, and it's really complex change work that we're leading.

[00:47:23] You know, we're attempting to really change how we deliver services to students with disabilities. We're really attempting to change how we collaborate and partner with families, and how we

support staff in our buildings. So there's a lot of leadership opportunities in this work, and I appreciate everything that the team is doing to position us where we're at.

[00:47:42] Now, today you're gonna hear updates on the plan. I just wanna remind everybody that this is a multi-year plan. It's a five-year implementation plan, and we are in year one of the implementation. There was kind of a planning year as well as we received the evaluation results, which we'll talk about from the American Institute of Research in just a minute.

[00:48:02] But we're still at that first stage. I think there are some pretty exciting updates that we have to share and work that's been done in the last nine months since we had a chance to present to the board and the community on this work last. But we definitely acknowledge that there's a tremendous amount of work yet to do.

[00:48:18] So we're really excited to see what your feedback is, what direction you might be able to give us today for that future work so with that why don't we go ahead and jump in and Terry I think you're gonna get us started this morning or this afternoon well good afternoon everyone again thank you so much for having us as we're eager to share our plan and the developments that have occurred as Sloan said I'm almost in a year in in the position and my first foray into the position was listening to the presentation of the actual plan which was around I think June of last year and since then the plan has really morphed

[00:48:52] revised, been refined, and we're continuing to do that. So we'll go ahead and get started with the next slide. I don't know if I have to do it. I guess I have to do it. So we wanted to start with some presentation outcomes for today. Our first goal is to be able to provide context and information regarding the enhancement plan for students with disabilities and how it came to be. The school board contracted with American Institutes of Research, or AIR, as we'll refer to them in the presentation.

[00:49:23] to conduct a third-party review of fcps's special education program i apologize dr edmunds heard we just had miss lady join the meeting so i need to just take care of some um work to get her to join the meeting so if you just pause for my apologies for interrupting sure miss lady i think you've joined us so i need to take a vote for my colleagues miss ladies submitted a request to participate virtually due to a personal conflict all those in favor of approving her request please raise your hands that is mr dunn mr mcleveen miss anderson miss st john cunning miss dixit mr frisch mr moon and myself that is unanimous for everyone here miss lady welcome may we test

[00:50:02] your mic yes can you hear me yes we can hear you welcome miss lady thank you very much thank you i'm sorry dr edminster please continue no problem thank you so much so i'll go back and just begin we were talking about our present presentation outcomes for today our first goal is to present or provide background and context for the Enhancement Plan for Students with Disabilities, the school board contracted with American Institutes of Research, or AIRs, will refer to them throughout our presentation today to conduct a 30-party review of our special education program.

[00:50:38] From that review and recommendations made by AAR, the Department of Special Services or DSS, developed the Enhancement Plan for Students with Disabilities, which contains four primary goals, which the people who presented or introduced themselves talked about a little bit already, but we'll be discussing those throughout the presentation.

[00:50:58] So we're going to begin with providing background on the AIR Special Education Review and its recommendations. We'll talk about AIR, their process for data collection and evaluation of FCPS's

Special education program, the strategic plan planning that has taken place and continues on the enhancement plan for students with disabilities, and strategic implementation of the enhancement plan.

[00:51:23] Number two is to -- our second outcome will be to aim to provide an update on our current and future work around the four goals that were developed for the enhancement plan. And those goals are instructional delivery, goal two is special education processes, communication engagement and staff capacity. And then third, we want to open it up for any discussion that the school board would like to have and any questions that they might have. So we're going to start with the enhancement plan background. The American Institutes for Research was contracted

[00:52:02] by the school board to conduct a comprehensive review of the special education program for FCPS and to identify specific actions to improve student outcomes for students with disabilities. AIR was charged with four goals during that time: to evaluate the system design, structure, and establish processes; evaluate the adequacy of human capital resources; analyze the alignment of services with evidence-based practices; and evaluate the effectiveness of communication with its stakeholders.

[00:52:33] AIR conducted this review between December 2020 and October 2022. review was divided into two phases. In phase one, the AIR team looked at extant data, analyzed documents, reviewed IEPs, and conducted staff and student surveys, staff and parents surveys, and held focus groups as well. In phase two, the AIR team conducted classroom observations,

[00:53:05] reviewed extant data, and also held focus groups. AIR published and presented its final report and recommendations at a school board meeting work session in October of 2022.

[00:53:22] ARR provided 19 recommendations, which were categorized into six main categories, and you see those here. Data-driven IEP development, which emphasized the importance of standardizing our processes and guidance to help staff develop IEPs that are data-driven and with collaboration and input from families.

[00:53:44] Number two was MTSS implementation was to make sure that we have school level fidelity of MTSS implementation in academics and behavior and clarify the relationships between MTSS, local screening processes, and special education.

[00:54:01] Number three was instructional supports and resources. They want to prioritize equity and consistency in school level programming and focus on high quality instruction in inclusion settings. The fourth one was Staff Supports and Resources.

[00:54:17] They want us to promote personnel retention by ensuring manageable caseloads, class sizes, and workloads, and also improve our recruitment efforts to include more details about positions for prospective special education employees.

[00:54:35] And then Professional Learning Systems. We need a comprehensive, division-wide professional development plan, which is also differentiated by the different roles that people serve in our organization and special education. And then sixth and final was also communications and engagement with our staff and families.

[00:54:53] We need more consistent procedures for communicating at the division level, between schools, with families and with staff, with a focus on equitable access to translation services and also improving the understanding of the process.

[00:55:13] So in this part, Phase 3 is a strategic planning piece, and this was led by DSS, where we focused on strategic planning to develop a plan to address the areas outlined in the AIR report. During this phase, the following actions were taken: a steering committee was developed, which consisted of students, school-based and central office staff, parents, and community advocates.

[00:55:38] The steering committee was responsible for developing the special education mission, vision and core values, and to appraise the implementation plans. Also developed were implementation teams and work groups. They were formed, which consisted of 101 school-based staff and central office staff with varied expertise.

[00:56:00] This frame of collaboration you'll see consistent throughout the plan because we can't do this as a department by ourselves. Their responsibility was to develop implementation plans that outline the strategies that support the goals of the plan.

[00:56:16] And then additional community feedback. It was also garnered from associations such as SEPTA, SEPTA, and ACSD, teacher associations and our principal association. And their responsibility was to review the implementation plan and provide feedback.

[00:56:35] The planning that resulted from this phase resulted in the four goal areas that we mentioned earlier, which were instructional and inclusive practices; Goal 2, special education processes; Goal 3, communication and engagement; and Goal 4, staff capacity.

[00:56:57] To move the work forward and continue the work that was being done, DSS also adapted a project management structure. We have four core teams that help to guide the work and meet consistently with one another. teams consist of 27 offices and departments, including central and school-based staff members, and this is also critical to ensure that we move forward as a district and not just as a department. We don't want our work to be isolated. So those four teams are the governance, which is instrumental in making key decisions related to the plan, solving problems that are

[00:57:34] occurring and reduce barriers, and that that team meets twice twice weekly and then there's an implementation teams those are leaders who facilitate and monitor the strategies that are being implemented and outline in the plan there's an ad hoc group that comes together as needed and these are like content experts that we bring to work alongside us such as human resources the communications office we have them to join our work too because they have an expertise that we don't necessarily have and we want to make sure that our work is collaborative and interdepartmental and then there's also the end users group and those are our customers who are impacted by the

[00:58:12] project in the plan and we our goal is to use them pre before implementing something and afterwards to see how well that implementation has gone we wanted to also make sure that we included some basic assumptions and beliefs because we found as we work with certain groups they would bring up certain things that may not have been quite as evident in the plan but they are really core beliefs that we have so we wanted to make sure that we brought those up and expounded on those as well. We do believe that all students deserve

[00:58:48] access to and opportunities for high quality inclusive education. We also believe in the importance of family engagement and partnering with our families which we know that is a key to student success. We also know that our staff will require time for professional development and learning and reflection to make sure that what they do does have an impact on student achievement. And then finally it

is not just the Department of Special Services to ensure that the plan goes forth and that it's implemented with fidelity. We know the importance of working as along with our district to do that. So we've

[00:59:26] developed collaborative structures with departments and teams across the division and this includes important work with our regions too as well to ensure that we have fidelity of implementation, that we're able to identify areas of concern, and we're able to also celebrate successes that are going on with the Plan 2 as well. So with that said, I'm going to turn it over to Mike Bloom. He's our Director of Special Education Instruction, and he co-chairs Goal 1 on instructional and inclusive practices. Thank you, Dr. Edmonds Hurd, and good afternoon again. I'm very excited to share with you some of the

[01:00:06] incredible work that's been accomplished this school year, as well as some of our future work centered around Goal 1 of the Enhancement Plan for students with disabilities, instruction, and inclusive practices. As I present our work, I will be making direct connections to specific recommendations in the AIR report, as well as direct alignments to the FCPS strategic plan. Our work this school year is just the beginning of our five-year plan to improve outcomes and to engage students with disabilities in rigorous learning in their least restrictive environment. Reaffirming Dr. Reed's message to our community last summer as we began

[01:00:43] this work, the Enhancement Plan is our North Star for students with IEPs and 504s. A plan that celebrates diversity and fosters student strengths so that all students can thrive today, tomorrow, and in the future.

[01:01:01] I want to begin by sharing some of our work responsive to AIR Recommendation 3C to promote explicit instruction as a high-leverage strategy to enhance learning for students with disabilities across all grade levels and content areas.

[01:01:17] We are strategically initiating the implementation of high leverage practices or HLPs for students with disabilities. High leverage practices represent the most critical practices that every teacher should master and be able to demonstrate.

[01:01:33] These selected practices are used frequently in classrooms and have been shown to improve student outcomes if successfully implemented. We are focusing our work on the six HLP pillar practices represented in the graphic.

[01:01:49] Those practices identified as the most essential and impactful HLPs for educators to master and implement. One of the six pillar practices, explicit instruction, as highlighted in the AIR recommendation on this slide, is one of the most well-researched practices in special education.

[01:02:09] By teaching educators how and when to use explicit instruction in order to make learning new content, skills, and strategies accessible to students, we will be providing them a roadmap for the design and delivery of instruction that would be appropriate in nearly any lesson, regardless of content area or grade level.

[01:02:29] What a powerful tool for all educators as evidence shows that the HLPs for students with disabilities are not only effective for students with IEPs, they are effective for all students. We're now going to focus our attention on AIR Recommendation 3b: Ensure Quality of Instruction in Inclusive Settings.

[01:02:52] Our current work, as outlined on this slide, highlights and places a spotlight on both the quality of instruction and inclusive settings. Universal Design for Learning is a framework for creating flexible

learning environments that benefit all students. It's not about a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather about providing a variety of options to remove barriers and cater to individual, diverse learning styles. UDL emphasizes presenting information in multiple formats, providing students with different ways to interact with the learning content and demonstrate their understanding,

[01:03:30] and focuses on strategies to motivate and hook students into the learning process. Why Why is Universal Design for Learning so powerful? Research suggests that UDL is powerful in that it creates an inclusive and effective learning environment that benefits students of all abilities by providing a wider range of access points to learning and fostering a more engaging and motivating learning experience.

[01:03:57] When teachers design learning experiences that are accessible and engaging, students feel empowered to choose methods that resonate with them, leading to a deeper interest in the subject manner. This spring we kicked off our UDL phased implementation plan by developing awareness and understanding through targeted professional development. The FCPS leadership team, central office leaders, and school-based leadership teams are in the process of receiving introductory training on the principles and guidelines associated with Universal design for learning. Let's shift our focus to our current work around

[01:04:36] inclusive education. Research overwhelmingly supports the positive impact of inclusive education for students with and without disabilities. For students with disabilities, studies indicate inclusion could lean to stronger academic performance in reading and math and the development of social skills through interaction and collaboration with their peers. Inclusive environments foster empathy and understanding of differences, leading to more accepting and tolerant attitudes towards individuals with disabilities and neurodiverse learners. Aligned to goal one

[01:05:12] of the strategic plan, Strong Start, this school year we have focused on increasing inclusion experiences for students in our early childhood special education and preschool autism classrooms. We're developing a division-wide inclusive education plan that will serve as the foundation for the creation of resources around academic and social aspects of inclusion.

[01:05:36] This plan will have direct links to Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, with an emphasis on equitable school communities where students feel safe, supported, included, and empowered. And Goal 4: Ensuring that students have access to high-quality academic programming and resources to support their success.

[01:05:56] Built into the Enhancement Plan are opportunities to examine our current systems, structures and programming for students with disabilities and identify ways in which we need to shift from a deficit-based view of learning to a different view that emphasizes finding ways for students to learn and thrive with their unique strengths.

[01:06:18] By adopting this inclusive mindset, educators will create learning environments where all students, regardless of background or ability, feel supported, challenged, and empowered to reach their full potential. Now we will take a closer look at AIR recommendation 3A. This recommendation, sorry I went a little bit too quickly on the slides. Alright, as I mentioned, we're going to take a closer look at AIR recommendation 3A. This recommendation asks FCPS to ensure equity and

[01:06:55] consistency in school-level programming, especially the availability and use of evidence-based strategies and programs for students with disabilities. One tool that we are currently developing to help ensure equity and consistency in school-level programming is a Least Restrictive Environment or LRE

dashboard that will be able to share in real-time individual school and division-wide data regarding the amount of time that students with disabilities are included in regular classrooms. Each year FCPS reports LRE data to the Virginia Department of Education for public posting as one requirement of the

[01:07:34] Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. One data point is the percentage of students who are included in regular classrooms 80% or more of the day. The state target for this data point in their last published report for the 2021-22 school year is 72.10%. FCPS fell far short of this target at 48.61%.

[01:08:00] The LRE dashboard will help to identify which schools in FCPS are meeting the state LRE targets and which are not. This information will assist us as we monitor progress toward our LRE goals and as we support schools in looking more deeply into their inclusive practices.

[01:08:20] Although FCPS is not currently at the 72% mark for the number of students with IEPs included in the regular classroom more than 80% of the day, our preliminary data shows that we have experienced a positive increase to almost 60%, 11 percentage points higher than our last publicly reported data.

[01:08:40] This increase is significant for FCPS. Regarding the availability and use of evidence-based strategies and programs for students with disabilities, I want to draw your attention to the graphic on the right side of this slide to highlight our alignment of evidence-based literacy instruction with science-based reading research.

[01:09:00] A few specific ways in which we have done this is through increased teacher training in Orton-Gillingham methodology, which is a structured approach designed to help individuals who struggle with reading, particularly those with dyslexia. The Orton-Gillingham approach is evidence-based and tailored to the specific strengths and needs of each student.

[01:09:22] Benefits to students include improved decoding skills, enhanced spelling, increased reading fluency and boosted confidence which leads to a more positive attitude towards reading. In addition to increased OG training, the Office of Special Education Instruction has also ensured that literacy intervention programs for students with disabilities align with evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research.

[01:09:50] There are many benefits of evidence-based literacy instruction. By systematically targeting the core reading skills, this approach equips students with a solid foundation for reading success. Research shows this approach is particularly beneficial for students with reading disabilities, but it is effective for all students, regardless of ability level.

[01:10:12] AIR Recommendation 3A is directly linked to Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, with its focus on academic growth and reading on grade level by the end of third grade. There is also a tie to Goal 5 as we work to ensure that every student will graduate ready to thrive in life after high school and with the academic, social, and life skills needed to successfully navigate, adapt, and innovate for a sustainable future.

[01:10:42] The final two recommendations in the AIR report that I will speak to today are both connected to our multi-tiered systems of support framework in FCPS. Recommendation 2A centers around clarifying the relationship among MTS, MTSS local screening and special education, while Recommendation 2B is focused on ensuring the fidelity of school-level implementation of MTSS.

[01:11:06] MTSS is a framework through which school teams make decisions using data. This data helps school teams plan for instruction for all students, including students with disabilities, and provide the extra time, support, and interventions as needed.

[01:11:23] work this school year has included enhancements to the MTSS public web page with additional information and resources as well as the development of a MTSS and special education guidance document that was disseminated to school administrators special education department chairs and MTSS school teams that provides an overview of the MTSS process for a student with an individualized education program or IEP a number of efforts have been made to help increase the fidelity of school-level implementation of MTSS, including the addition of quarterly data reviews with region leadership, the

[01:12:00] provision of targeted support to Project Momentum schools, and ongoing coaching and consultation across all schools in FCPS. In wrapping up goal one of the Enhancement Plan, I wanted to share some of the future work that is in development around instructional practices, inclusion, and MTSS. We are continuing to develop resources, professional development, and job-embedded supports around high leverage practices, universal design for learning, and evidence-based literacy instruction.

[01:12:33] Our inclusive education plan will feature both academic and social models of inclusion that provide greater access and opportunity for students with disabilities, greater access to electives of choice, advanced coursework, assistive technologies, social engagement, inclusive environments pre-K through graduation are just a few of the distinctive hallmarks of our work as we begin the 24-25 school year.

[01:13:01] We are also excited about our future work around MTSS. We will continue to expand our resources, supports, and trainings to school teams in our effort to build capacity and increase the fidelity of implementation of MTSS practices division-wide.

[01:13:16] We are developing an MTSS early warning system tool that will help to support schools in using multiple data sources to ensure students in need of supports are identified and provided with interventions. I'm now going to turn the presentation over to Dawn Shafer, the Director of Special Education Procedural Support, who will share information related to Goal 2 of the Enhancement Plan: Special Education Processes.

[01:13:40] Dawn Shafer: Good afternoon. Goal 2 is to increase positive outcomes for students with disabilities. FCPS will implement special education processes and procedures that ensure compliance with federal and state special education regulations and increase collaboration and engagement with FCPS families.

[01:14:06] The first area that we'll talk about is AIR Recommendation 1B, which is to create a framework for parents and staff to enhance collaboration during the eligibility determination and IEP development processes. We have updated our parent information form that's used at eligibility meetings and IEP meetings.

[01:14:28] It's been revised to enhance the parent, guardian, or caregiver engagement by providing clearly worded questions and language for parents. We are also working to update the present level of performance page for parent input inside of CSTARS, which is our online IEP system, to ensure that staff seek and document that input during the IEP meeting process.

[01:14:53] The language, the updated language, is on this slide, as you can see. It does provide some additional prompts and cues for families to think about how their children are doing and what they think

about that. Next, we'll talk about AIR Recommendations 1A and 1B.

[01:15:15] 1A is to create a standardized process and guidance for how staff should gather and document parent input during the eligibility determination and IEP development processes. and 1B is to create a framework for parents and staff to enhance collaboration during those processes. We have developed the LRE tool which is linked in your show and is also in your appendix to support IEP teams in making individualized data-driven decisions when they're considering the removal of a student from the general education environment. This tool is reviewed,

[01:15:54] discussed and revised as appropriate with the family during the IEP meeting. In addition, this LRE tool goes hand-in-hand with the inclusive practices component of Goal 1. We've also provided targeted professional development to staff to show so that they know, excuse me, how to utilize those new forms and processes and how to engage with parents to gather, consider, and

[01:16:25] document their input across all special education processes. AIR recommendation 1E is to monitor our post-secondary transition planning supports to ensure students across all disability categories and their families have equitable access. I'm really excited to share with you the work that has been done around this recommendation. Our career and technical, our career education services in our office in the instructional services department have done a lot of work around our

[01:17:02] transition toolkit, which is updated for staff, around the transition planning checklist for students and parents, as well as providing timeline checklists for students who are on the adaptive curriculum and students who are on the general curriculum. They've also been very busy providing professional development to staff and providing events for families, caregivers and students. More than 3,000 staff members have participated in professional development with that office this school year and nearly 300 parents, students and families have participated

[01:17:39] in those other opportunities and events. AIR recommendation 1C was to establish guidance for staff to collect and report data more consistently to develop and monitor ieps we've been working on updating our iep progress report form to better align with other school divisions and with the virginia department of education form so that it reflects letter codes instead of numbers in addition to this change we're developing an iep progress report guidance

[01:18:15] document that provides more of a standard format to ensure staff has a clear understanding of those criteria for each code within that form and how to get to those codes. AIR Recommendation 1D is to monitor post-secondary transition planning and supports, and we talked about that on the previous slide. AIR Recommendation 1F is to establish guidance on the placement decisions for students with disabilities.

[01:18:50] We talked about that a little bit with the LRE data collection tool. We've trained, as of yesterday evening, more than 4,500 staff members to use that tool. We also provided two sessions to families via the Family Resource Center.

[01:19:07] Those sessions are recorded and available on the FRC's YouTube site. We're also continuing to refine that LRE tool based on staff and family feedback. In addition to the LRE tool, we've also developed the special education programs description document that is being used internally at this time to support student placement decisions.

[01:19:33] I'm excited to share our future work with you. In the area of understanding and engagement, we are working with our DSS data management team and with our technology department to develop a

web-based version of that parent input form so that families have another method to share their input with special education teams.

[01:19:59] We're also developing functionality on the plot page in CSTARS to allow for the language that was put into that updated form to be directly onto the plot page of CSTARS. I'm excited to share with you that we are beginning a very long process of evaluating students in their native language.

[01:20:22] We anticipate that those efforts will last well beyond this enhancement plan. We're also working to develop division-wide expectations for transition support between school levels and also at key grade level transitions for families.

[01:20:42] That would be preschool to elementary, second to third grade with the onset of VAP and SOLs, elementary to middle school, and then middle school to high school. finally we're working to revise the special education handbook for parents we'll be adding a section on parent guard guardian caregiver input and participation in those special education processes in addition to other updates that are needed in the area of iep and 504 plan development we're working with the dss data management team to continue to to develop and launch the lre dashboard

[01:21:20] so that we can further support schools with the placement processes and conversations we're also increasing staff and parent understanding of the implications of various state assessments and academic programming on those various diploma options that are available to students starting at the elementary level and that will be via coaching and other resources we also will be making the special education programs description document available for families and the public on our website in the area of data collection documentation and reporting

[01:21:59] our next steps will be to update that iep progress report form inside of c stars we'll also be adding that functionality to the other iep progress reporting forms such as short-term objectives and extended school year. And now I'll turn this over to Leah Skirpski to talk about communication and engagement. Thank you, Dawn. Good afternoon, everyone. So now we're going to shift our focus over to discuss how FCPS is addressing AIR recommendations A through C, and we're going

[01:22:38] to celebrate our work toward enhancing communication and engagement between staff and families. This work is in direct alignment with Pillar B of the FCPS Strategic Plan, Vibrant Home, school and community partnerships. So as part of our current work aligned to AIR recommendation 6A accessible access to translation services FCPS is completing a comprehensive website review to ensure 508 compliance and we're reviewing and updating our special education and 504 handbooks

[01:23:12] and glossaries to include consistency or use in consistency and terminology as well as improved readability levels. Future work will include development of accessibility training for families, translated and interpreted to meet the needs of multilingual families, and the Department of Special Services will collaborate with the Chief Experience and Engagement Office to make these resources available on the new FCPS Family Academy, support families in navigating our system, and in accessing special education and 504 communications. The Office of Experience and Engagement has embarked on a

[01:23:50] groundbreaking and collaborative effort to transform the way that families partner and interact with the educational system. The FCPS Family Academy is designed to leverage families assets and be empowered as they support their child from primary years to college and career success and to complement family knowledge by connecting them to actionable learning and outreach opportunities.

The course catalog and outreach opportunities will offer both in-person and virtual workshops, webinars, programs and classes for families in the Fairfax community on a wide variety of topics and will

[01:24:28] provide resources and information for families in one location. Through the Chief Experience and Engagement Office, DSS will work strategically to continuously add more offerings and opportunities. To further address AIR recommendation 6A and increase access to translation services, FCPS will be implementing machine translations through Google Translation Hub and Translation API services. Google Translation Hub will allow FCPS language services to translate various special education and 504

[01:25:06] communications and resources for families across seven languages. These These services will increase our existing annual translation capacity by 169% from 5,200 up to 14,000 documents annually.

[01:25:23] Machine translation services will also decrease processing time currently from an average of 7 to 10 business days down to 3 to 5 business days or less. Google Translation API will allow FCPS to translate confidential student IEP and 504 documents within CSTARS, our confidential online IEPM 504 management system. FCPS is currently working to develop functionality in CSTARS that will allow translations to occur securely within the system. Upon completion of the development of this functionality, training for staff will

[01:26:01] be developed and provided for CSTARS users to access translation services within the CSTARS system. To address AIR recommendation 6B, which is district-wide guidance on procedures for communication between schools and parents, and 6C, centralized systems for distributing vital information to staff from administrators in each school and from central office, DSS has developed a comprehensive communication framework for special education and 504 communications. Here you'll see a visual representation of our overarching communication framework.

[01:26:40] framework. The framework will identify the who, what, when, and how for special education and 504 communications, provide standards of practice for content development and accessibility, and ensure sequential and timely dissemination of information flowing from our internal to external constituents. As part of our commitment to enhance communication and engagement, DSS will develop and launch a new centralized communication resource for staff through the implementation of an internal special education and 504 communication hub webpage.

[01:27:16] Following development of the resource, staff training will be provided. DSS is working collaboratively with the Office of Communications to develop best practice guidance for schools in communication with families and school-based website curation to ensure standards of practice and accessibility to information.

[01:27:39] And here we have outlined a summary of our work as related to communication engagement. In the area of accessible communications, we'll be finalizing updates to our resources for families and making updates to our internal and external web pages to ensure 508 compliance.

[01:27:57] Accessibility training for families will be developed and will partner with the Chief Experience and Engagement Office to add this training to the FCPS Family Academy. In the areas of oral interpretation and written translation, Language Services Central Office staff will be receiving access and trained in the use of Google Translation Hub and this will increase accessibility to translated information for families through machine translation services. Language services will also be identifying and implementing a language services staffing management system and

[01:28:32] this will allow us to more efficiently manage division-wide interpretation requests and provide access to oral interpretation services for families. The The DSS Data Management Team will continue to work on the development of functionality in CSTARS required to securely translate IEP and 504 documents via Google Translation API, and upon completion, training for staff will be developed and provided.

[01:28:59] And to further address our communication and engagement framework, we'll be finalizing our protocols, developing our DSS communication internal employee hub webpage, and developing communication for training in our staff. So now I'm going to pass things over to Judy Dupre.

[01:29:16] Judy is our coordinator of special education therapy services and she's going to be sharing information as related to staff capacity. And finally, goal four has been built around AIR recommendations four and five that in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, FCPS will implement consistent practices and protocols to ensure all instructional staff are highly effective.

[01:29:45] At the time of the review of our public website back in 2022, AIR found opportunities for the division to expand its publicly available recruitment information. AIR recommendation 4C is to expand the information available to prospective employees on the FCPS website.

[01:30:01] Since their review, the FCPS website has continued to evolve and improve for both recruitment and resources. In collaboration with HR, the chief academic office has worked to expand the special education information available to prospective employees. Updates have been made to ensure higher visibility and navigability to positions that are in critical need or difficult to fill.

[01:30:22] These include early childhood special education teachers, related service providers, severe disabilities teachers, and emotional disabilities teachers. Spotlight stories of current special educators are featured alongside our current job openings.

[01:30:37] These stories highlight the different paths to become a special education teacher and the support available to them in their transition into teaching. Additionally, through the Special Education Career Interest website, the team is working to provide more information on the opportunities that exist for individuals who do not have full teacher licensure.

[01:30:55] This includes information sessions, HR contacts to support individualized pathways, and incentives for seeking full licensure while working in FCPS. Moving to the topic of professional development, AAR spent a significant amount of time appraising the division's professional learning systems, and they addressed their findings in recommendations 5A and B.

[01:31:17] They found that the division offers a breadth and depth of professional development or PD, but that we needed to better align our PD with staff roles and identified areas of need for educating students with disabilities. AAR recommendation 5A is to develop and implement a comprehensive division-wide professional development plan with differentiated offerings targeted to the needs of special education teachers, instructional support staff, general education teachers, and administrators.

[01:31:44] To address this, we are currently engaged in a review of special education professional development for efficacy and addressing the needs for all staff. This includes administrators, general educators, related service providers, instructional support staff, and special educators. As this comprehensive review is completed, we will identify opportunities to expand, collapse, and/or combine offerings.

[01:32:06] In tandem with the review and identification process, the Division has already begun to incorporate professional development on universal design for learning and high leverage practices, both of which will be used, will be leveraged to expand our inclusive practices across academic and social settings.

[01:32:24] AIR Recommendation 5B is to develop and implement a comprehensive support plan for novice and or provisionally licensed teachers to include instructional coaching, mentorship, and professional development. While not specifically mentioned in the recommendation, this also includes our teacher trainees. This plan is centered around four domains of responsibility for our special educators.

[01:32:45] IEPs and procedural, instruction, behavior, and community. It should be noted that these responsibilities are in addition to the division-wide requirements for professional development highlighted on the previous slide. The current framework of support is through Great Beginnings cohorts, school-based mentorship, and job-embedded coaching.

[01:33:04] New this year, targeted professional development has been provided during the school day for teacher trainees. These supports have been provided collaboratively by school-based mentors, special education Department Chairs, Great Beginnings Cohort Leaders, and the Offices of Special Education Instruction, Procedural Support, Professional Learning, and School Support.

[01:33:25] This framework of support provides both regularly scheduled, content-specific information and resources, but also allows for dynamic support in response to specific teacher and/or student needs. Shifting to the topic of special education caseload and workload, Recommendation 4A is to disseminate guidance on special education caseloads and class sizes.

[01:33:46] AIR reviewed the guidance document that was created and shared to outline VDOE's special education caseload and class size maximums. The recommendation was to continue to share the document and pair it with technical support to ensure alignment with staffing and student needs.

[01:34:02] To that end, this document is shared annually with principals and special education department chairs. Technical support is provided to special education department chairs through monthly check-ins and problem-solving with central office instructional and procedural staff. Also falling under this recommendation, the Special Education Programs Description Document has been reviewed and updated.

[01:34:22] This document, which outlines division-specific programming expectations for both staffing and instruction, was presented to administrators and department chairs to clarify program expectations. Fidelity of program implementation is monitored on an ongoing basis through both the monthly staffing process, building and building-level assistance from instructional specialists.

[01:34:42] And also related to caseloads, in collaboration with elementary principals whose schools have enhanced autism or EAC classes, a specific position key has been created for enhanced autism teachers. This allows principals to see what staffing should be designated for EAC, separated from other Category B staffing.

[01:35:02] This benefits their ability to hire EAC teachers earlier in the staffing process than they were able to before. It also allows better tracking of this position in terms of retention. Recommendation 4B is to establish strategies to reduce special education teacher workload.

[01:35:18] Within this recommendation, AIR acknowledged the staffing challenges that exist across the nation and made note of the division's efforts to address teacher workload. In addition to extended contracts for special education case managers, workload expectations and recommendations were presented to administrators this fall.

[01:35:35] Some of the considerations presented include protection of planning time, use of substitutes, and teacher trainee expectations. Monthly support is provided to special education department chairs on graduated responsibilities based on special education role and workload.

[01:35:50] These workload factors are monitored monthly through principal briefings, association meetings, and special education department chair meetings. There's exciting work that will continue into the spring and next school year. Under hiring and retention, resumes are currently being reviewed for the recruitment administrator for special services, whose work will focus on special education pipelines, recruitment initiatives, and hiring.

[01:36:14] We will continue to build out our special educator stories on the public web, and we are hopeful to spotlight the outstanding new teacher winners from Regions 3 and 5, both of whom came through alternative licensure pathways. Their stories will further highlight the support and resources available in the division for other candidates considering FCPS.

[01:36:36] Under professional development, we will complete our review of current offerings and continue to identify opportunities to strengthen PD based upon the audience. Going out of the new content on UDL and high leverage practices, we'll be developing practices focused on the academic and social inclusion.

[01:36:52] For our paraprofessionals, in addition to the professional development already being provided to them, we will expand and streamline learning for them in supporting our students across all instructional and social environments. The comprehensive support plan for our newest teachers will expand upon our current practices.

[01:37:10] This includes formalizing Great Beginnings cohorts for years two and three in combination with leveraging school-based induction programs, which will be done through intentional planning with special education school teams. This model will aim to provide shelter and nurture professional growth, which ultimately will influence a teacher's longevity within the county.

[01:37:28] Moving a comprehensive support plan forward requires the division to support professional development across a continuum that includes dedicated time for learning outside of the classroom, job-embedded coaching, and regular check-ins for application of concepts within the classroom. And finally, for caseload and workload, Next year we are planning for a workload analysis, modeled after the Minnesota Department of Education, recommended by AIR's Dr. David Bateman.

[01:37:53] A formal appraisal will be launched next school year using representative caseloads across regions, programs, and positions. This analysis will be the basis on which to start exploring alternative staffing models that will better support our students while balancing the workload for our special education staff.

[01:38:09] And I'll turn it back over to Dr. Edmunds Hurd. - Thank you, Judy. I just wanted to note and highlight some of the items that have been included in the appendix for you. There's the AIR Special Education Comprehensive Program Review that is included. That's the entire report as well as we

developed an appendices document which highlights the different tools and forms and things that were shown in our presentation today. There's also the executive summary which is a high level summary of the different goals which also includes the vision, the mission, the core values which were developed. And it also describes an implementation continuum

[01:38:48] because this is a five-year plan. We won't be doing, of course, everything all at the same time, which would be very, very difficult. So we do have a phased plan that's also available to you so that you can see how we plan to implement. And then finally, there's the website for the enhancement plan for students with disabilities as well. So I wanted to make sure that we highlighted those items are available to you. And with that, I'll turn it over to

[01:39:10] All right. Thank you, Terry, and thank you, everybody, for the presentation, and thank you to the board for your patience. I know that was a lot of information, but, again, there's 19 different recommendations that we're trying to respond to. So with that, let's go ahead and turn it back over to our meeting managers to manage the board's discussion.

[01:39:31] Great. Thank you, and thank you to everybody for the comments and the information. I know there's a lot to summarize there. So I will go ahead and start with my board members. I see Mr. Moon, so we'll start with you. i don't know whether i should thank you for the presentation there was just so much that my brain is about to explode that uh so with that uh said the recommendations 19 recommendations from air because there was a work by the former board were those 19 recommendations

[01:40:08] all accepted by the board to be implemented yes and certainly i'd defer to any uh board members from the previous board that might want to weigh in, but we had obviously done a lot of collaboration work with AIR.

[01:40:25] They engaged in a two-year process to come to those 19 recommendations, so we made the commitment that we would be responsive to all 19. What we've done here is we've tried to combine some of those together and group them together so that it's a little bit more understandable for people in the system and the public to be able to access.

[01:40:45] So we have the four goal areas, and in each of those goal areas, we've grouped similar recommendations from the list of 19 recommendations. And the attachment that, one of the attachments on that last slide with the links is the executive summary of our plan.

[01:41:00] And that plan really looks at those four goal areas and maps out kind of the implementation timeline over a five-year period for the work that we're doing in response to each of those 19 recommendations. So those 19 recommendations, was it the board's direction to have those all fully implemented within five-year time frame?

[01:41:25] I think yes, to the best of our ability, and sooner whenever possible. So when you look at that implementation timeline, because I can see you've got the document there, you'll see some of the recommendations are going to phase in earlier than others. Correct, I saw. I've seen that.

[01:41:41] My next question is probably very unfair at this point in time, is do we know how much the whole 19, full implementation of 19 recommendations will cost us? I think that's not quite possible to answer fully yet because some of our implementation actions in response to the recommendations are still under development.

[01:42:07] So the ones that would be the most costly really were the ones that Judy was just speaking about in staff capacity. There's a lot of potential costs there. If we changed some of our staffing ratios, there could be significant costs there.

[01:42:22] Professional development is another large category of costs, and some of those things are still being developed. So we can't give a precise dollar figure. Even though you cannot give us a precise dollar figure, I'm not looking for a precise dollar figure, but I'm going to have to continue with this unfair question to you, Dr. Presidio, because as a policy maker who obviously has to make a decision on the budget going forward, are we talking about hundreds of millions of dollars?

[01:42:53] No. Or tens of millions of dollars? No, we allocated, I believe, $2 million was the initial allocation that we received from the board to start the initial implementation of these actions. And then, like I said, we're going to have to determine if additional funding is necessary based on some of the staff capacity recommendations.

[01:43:13] But we're operating within that. But $2 million is just beginning funding to start implementing as opposed to all that is needed for five years, four implementations of 19 recommendations. Well, as Marty just, it's a good thing Marty's sitting here next to me just reminded me, that's in the base.

[01:43:32] So we do have the ability to access those funds in future fiscal years. And there may be the need, again, dependent on what some of those final implementation actions are that would be approved by the board, there may be the need to have some additional funding. But right now, we're operating within the existing budget.

[01:43:48] Okay. I'll just give you just one last question. Amongst the 19 recommendations, is any of them legally required to be implemented? I'd have to do a little bit more thinking on that to give you a better response.

[01:44:10] I would say yes, in some instances. in some instances, they're probably discretionary. When you look at some of the things that we're trying to do for like the least restrictive environment, for example, there's Virginia code that indicates where we should be and as we mentioned, we're not where we would like to be or where we need to be based on the state targets.

[01:44:32] So we're below that and that's something that we need to correct and improve on. So since there are regulations around that from the state, I think those would be the types of things that would be legally required. A lot of the things that we're talking about with professional development, capacity building, those are things that are more discretionary.

[01:44:48] So would you be able to let us know sometime out of 19 which are absolutely legally required for us to? Yeah, so we definitely could do that, and I'm still trying to make sure that I completely understand the new board's process. I think we're using that next steps document process to collect those follow-on items, so we definitely could do that.

[01:45:08] That's not a problem. uh we just want to make sure that we capture that in that next text okay thank you thank you um mr dunn followed by mr frisch thank you um did i understand correctly for the presentation that we are not currently assessing uh students in their native languages get my mic on it's on

[01:45:41] it's blocked by the court oh okay thank you thank you um we some students are assessed in their native languages we have a process that was developed in alignment with all of our legal

requirements with our esol office around what we call a dual language assessment when students are are looking at going into when we're looking to send students through perhaps a special education process where we do an evaluation to determine should we evaluate the student only in english should we evaluate the student in both english and their native language or do we need to

[01:46:20] evaluate the student really just in their native language and many of many school divisions who maybe don't have the the breadth and depth of languages that we do do evaluate you know many of their students say if most of your students are spanish-speaking they may just evaluate them them in Spanish. We are looking to move more towards reducing the use of interpreters because that's really where we are. Our evaluation instruments are normed on English-speaking

[01:46:53] populations and there is concern around the fidelity of those evaluations when you're utilizing an English instrument, English tester, and then an interpreter. So we're trying to move more towards having more evaluations available in native languages for students. The Office for Civil Rights has been looking at this recently, and that along with this process has prompted us to really engage in that long-term work. I'm not an expert in this area of law, but I had understood

[01:47:32] it was a legal requirement to assess students in their native languages. Is that not correct? It's, there's, I think that's, that is what's in the IDEA, but there are regulations that provide for the determination of the best language to evaluate a student. And the issue that we run into is the vast majority, as I said, of our testing instruments are, are normed on an English speaking population so we are we're working to expand um the testing instruments that we use and

[01:48:06] that that will be a much longer term process and and um for the for us when when you say um looking to develop uh materials in other languages are those materials in other languages uh being developed using google translate no um the um there are um i forget just how many languages fcps has so we'll never be able to evaluate every student in in their native language because some

[01:48:38] languages aren't even written um but we we are looking at um adding to um our arsenal of testing protocols and tests that are available when we evaluate students for special education we have to use standardized measures and most of what we have now we have one test that's available in spanish that we don't use a whole whole lot because we use interpreters so we are looking at at broadening the instruments that we have available to use which as i said will be a much

[01:49:15] longer process because they're costly and we must train staff and it's a it's a longer process. Can I ask do you know roughly what percentage of students in the special education program are not native English speakers? Not precisely but we can get that number to you. Is it a large percentage? I don't know Mike or does anybody else know? We'll have to we'll have to look and and say exactly what the number is right now.

[01:49:48] - Okay, so I am a little bit concerned about the use of Google Translate. A 2011 study found that for European languages, it was very accurate, but for Asian languages, everything from Chinese to Farsi, and there's just so many languages in Asia, since it's the largest continent, it was highly inaccurate.

[01:50:12] Now, I think advances have been made in recent years, so it's better than it was, but it still continues to struggle. So, you know, with the shift from human to Google Translate, I mean, I understand that as a cost savings measure, but it could also result in deterioration of the quality of communication, right?

[01:50:35] Because, you know, I say something to them, that's Google Translate, they say it back to me, and so we get off track, and then we get progressively more and more off track as the communication continues. So what is being done to, or what has been done to evaluate potential alternatives to Google Translate that might have greater accuracy for Asian languages in particular?

[01:51:00] - That is a really good point, and we talked with Google about this as we've been working through this process, and they've shared with us that the accuracy of their translations has increased and continues to do so. This is for Google Translate, or for written translations. They said that they're at about 98%, but you're right that there are some languages that are more difficult to translate than others, and I think that's also dependent on the content.

[01:51:27] So what FCPS is going to be doing is we're implementing machine translations, not as much as a cost-saving measure, but just more to increase the capacity and accessibility. Our human translation services and the time that it takes to do that by human translators is often very labor-intensive, depending on the documents.

[01:51:50] So our goal is that we would go through the process in terms of translating those documents within the system, but we will also have human translation services that we'll be able to spot check and read the language and how it's interpreted, so that we would be able to look at that information and make any corrections or changes that we would need to make to those documents.

[01:52:11] And of course, we would not be able to do that for every document, if we're going to be increasing our capacity to translate things that historically we haven't been able to translate for families because we don't have that capacity. Our goal will be to let families know that we've used some machine translations, but they always have the ability to also request an interpreter so that there can be someone that can do an oral interpretation with them and walk through the content of the document if it's something that they would not be able to understand.

[01:52:39] May I just pause, Mr. Dunn? I apologize for interrupting, Mr. Dunn. If I could just ask staff maybe to shorten the responses so the board members have a little more time to ask questions, that would be helpful. Thank you. So has FCPS explored the use of third-party translation firms? I mean, New York City implemented a 411 phone number for everything from picking up trash to fixing roads or problems in the community more than a decade ago, and it offered nearly 150 languages and continues to do so.

[01:53:13] And these firms are, you know, available for United Nations or lots of other, you know, functions, World Bank meetings in D.C. So, I mean, has any effort been made to look beyond technology to, you know, third-party resources that might be able to provide language, not just for Asian languages, but even for, you know, South American or Central American languages like Quechua, and others that might be increasing in frequency in the district.

[01:53:41] If I could just add a little bit to that, we are using some of those third-party services now, and that helps with the oral interpretation for families and students and staff members. As Leah was saying, we want to rely on the human interpretation services.

[01:53:57] The machine translation is really for those tens of thousands of documents that we need to get translated into multiple languages, understanding that it's not going to be perfect, but those, you know, high leverage, high use documents, checking them with, you know, a human translator to make sure that they're accurate is kind of the approach that we're trying to take. So it's really balancing, you know, human

contact with the interpretation and machine translation with these thousands of documents into multiple languages. Thank you. Yeah. Thank you. Mr. Frisch. Thank you. I want to pick up where Mr. Dunn left

[01:54:35] off what would the legal implications be of the school division providing an IEP document that is incorrectly translated there could maybe let me rephrase that could there be legal implications for a document that is incorrectly translated I'm not an attorney I'll start with me either but I will say that our practice is to have an oral interpreter at each IEP meeting so that the

[01:55:13] parent does have the opportunity to participate and provide their input and have that real-time understanding and back-and-forth engagement during that important meeting the English version is always available we haven't looked into the the legal implications and we can certainly do that and get back to you but I did want to assure you that parents are participating in those meetings and we do have an oral interpreter there you know along the lines of what Mr. Dunn was talking about in terms of services there are other services available that folks can use for professionally translated

[01:55:50] documentation as opposed to conversations so I would encourage us to explore those as well. Steps is one that I've used in the past for work for all kinds of different languages professionally translated with a high degree of accuracy so perhaps that's one way to augment the automation and the spot-checking of our automation but I think if the shoe were on the other foot I don't think we would expect if we were talking about English speaking families not being provided documents in their their language you know I doubt we'd be

[01:56:30] having this conversation so I also want to talk about the legal letter versus what's in the best interest of of our kids it seems to me that the recommendations that are made in the AR report are about providing our students who receive special education services with the best education we we can give them to meet their needs and I think we get you know there's the potential of getting lost in the conversation if if we're looking for only what the letter

[01:57:08] of the law is because and even just looking directly at the recommendations from AAR can kind of distract us from the macro level concerns of parents, right? I think if you talk to most parents with students in special education, they will tell you that IEP collaboration is extremely important because it's too often confrontational, too often they don't feel listened to, and I don't think that is something that gets fixed with professional development. That's a cultural thing that needs to be addressed. I think they would talk to you

[01:57:46] about the fidelity of implementation of IEPs from school to school they do not live in vacuums they talk to each other they have Facebook groups together where they talk about these things they know what's happening in other schools when their school is not giving them the services that another school might be providing a friend's family and whether they are an included part of the process you know they are de facto paralegals because we've made them de facto paralegals by not offering them the services that their kids deserve. And so, you know, if this

[01:58:22] board can do anything in implementing these AR recommendations, it is to relieve the parents of that burden, which they have no responsibility to shoulder alone. And then finally, I guess I'll do my next steps, but if you could address, or not next steps, my go back, slide 33, it was referenced alternative staffing models. Can you talk a little bit about what those possibilities are?

[01:58:52] So, I don't want to speak out of my lane, but in conversations with the budget office and HR staffing, the way we do our staffing right now is a categorical model. And so, another way we could, I'm sorry, not a categorical model.

[01:59:15] We used to do a categorical model where if you had elementary school A, you had two students that were learning disability, two students that were an emotional disability, and two students that were physical disability. All of those students would get their own teacher.

[01:59:31] So we've moved to, 20 years ago, we moved from that categorical model to a model that is really more around all of our services together. So if we're looking at how many students are in LD and non-CAT, then those amount of kids would get some teacher.

[01:59:54] If we look at kids who are in more of a self-contained, those kids would get a different allotment of teachers. So we're trying to be more efficient in how -- 20 years ago, we were trying to be more efficient in how we were using staff. So that if a school only had one student that was categorized as an emotional disability student, they wouldn't get just -- they would get just one teacher.

[02:00:15] were trying to be more efficient in how how we allotted that staff so we shifted that model to what we're doing now which is like a point system this this student gets this many points this student gets this many points and staffing is a ratio to that alternative staffing models if you look at other counties everybody's doing something a little different but nobody's really publishing what they're they're doing with as much specificity as what FCPS publishes in their budget book so some things we've as we started to look at EAC and pulling those kids out that would be one one alternative staffing

[02:00:53] model that we could start to look at but in doing that we have to be cognizant of rounding and how rounding would impact the number of staff required so it's really something that's going to be a long-term process and looking at do we make small shifts to what we're doing now or do we go with something a little bigger the start of that is to really assess the workload and start to use the workload model rather than the caseload model to inform those decisions thank you

[02:01:27] we'll put you down for a go back mr. Frisch miss st. John Cunning so I'd like to provide a little bit of clarity even though I'm not staff in terms of the translation because I was a family liaison for 26 years and a Spanish language interpreter the question was whether testing was done in a language

[02:01:51] of the student. And I know that we do do the dual language testing with interpreters. And I think that when you were talking about the testing, the tests are not interpreted because we get the tests that are provided that we have to, that are done in English. And what you're talking about is the testing materials provided in that alternative language. I do know that there's a lot of fidelity with that as an interpreter, and I've seen that done. I will say that some of our tests are outdated.

[02:02:20] I would test, I would be an interpreter for the younger kids and some of the tests included VCRs, like you can't even interpret, like the kids never even seen a VCR. So you're trying to test a kid, even if it's an English model, so we have to look at updating our testing materials even in English. I mean, that's just a fact.

[02:02:41] So that's where I wanted to go. Google Translate is not used when we are doing testing. I just want to verify that that is not, it is an oral translation when you are actually testing a kid, and it's an oral interpretation. In terms of the documents from sitting in IEPs, all of the IEP documents, as far as I know,

and correct me if I'm wrong, are interpreted in the seven basic languages, which would be Spanish, Urdu, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic.

[02:03:09] I think I'm missing a couple of them. What is not interpreted in that language, for maybe perhaps legal reasons, is the actual IEP information for that child. And I will tell you that with fidelity, I have seen interpreters and parent liaisons spend hours with parents to make sure that they understand what's being done.

[02:03:32] I just want to put that out there because I think we're doing a good job. Do we fall short in some areas? Yes. We have one TWE interpreter in the entire county. I remember when we started getting refugees from Eritrea, we did not have anyone that spoke that language.

[02:03:50] I think we didn't have a chimer interpreter, so that's where we fall short And there's I want to just very just emphasize there's a difference between Translating and interpreting and we cannot be using those interchangeably because they're two different things My one question that I do have I just wanted to put that out there because we started to go down the Google translate Rabbit hole in terms of what happens in IEPs and that just doesn't happen I just want to make sure that everybody understands that.

[02:04:22] What I want to ask in terms of our preschool ratios, because I know working in elementary school for our preschool special ed kids, you're not supposed to have more than eight, ten max, and I know that we're starting to exceed that. There may be a few instances where we're exceeding that.

[02:04:44] I wouldn't know off the top of my head, but those class size guidelines haven't changed. Now, we are working on a new model of inclusion for pre-K programs for next year, And we're gonna have nine new inclusion pre-K sites. So those are nine brand new inclusion classrooms.

[02:05:02] So the class sizes will look a little bit different there because there's students with disabilities and students without disabilities in that classroom. So once we can move to more of a full inclusion model, then those class size ratios are gonna have to change. But again, we are capped at the state and we can't exceed those.

[02:05:18] There may be a situation where a student came in the middle of the year and there was no other place, But that would be an exception. That would definitely not be a common practice. And if I could add just a little bit more information, because our preschool eligibilities continue throughout the year, when we open up new classrooms, it's typically done in the beginning of the school year, anticipating what our enrollment will be like as we move through the school year.

[02:05:48] And as Dr. Presidio said, usually we find during the second semester of the school year, if we've had a large number of students who have been found newly eligible for preschool services, then sometimes our capacity within our existing classrooms is at the maximum.

[02:06:09] And so, again, we work very closely with our facilities team, our transportation team. It's like a big jigsaw puzzle trying to figure out where there are openings in different programs and classrooms throughout the county. but we find that a lot of our challenges do happen later in the school year as more students are enrolled.

[02:06:32] - Thank you. Ms. Anderson? - I'd like to thank you for the information. You guys said the word professional development a lot. And so I would really like to know more about what our plans are related

to professional development, particularly since these staff tend to have tighter schedules than almost everyone else.

[02:06:53] And I would also like to know whether or not we've asked them what kind of professional development they would like because what I'm noticing is that because we tend to have smaller cohorts at each individual school they don't get a lot of time to actually work with their colleagues so I'm hoping that some of our professional development opportunities are actually giving them the time to work together that that folks in other in other schools may already have I'll just kind of open it up for anybody on the team to respond because we do have professional development built in and a number of these different goal areas again being responsive to what the consultants recommendations were and

[02:07:29] definitely your point about making sure that the professional development is being responsive to what educators need is really important particularly and this might be a place where we might want to start the discussion as it pertains to newer novice teachers folks that are coming without that profess that professional preparation there's things that we know that they need that they can't even contemplate that they might need but there's also the immediate things that they're facing in their job that we need to be responsive to and and we're definitely trying to do that in a variety of different formats so that's part of the professional development planning across some of these goal areas but I'll open it up to our goal leads if there's anything in

[02:08:07] your area in particular that you want to highlight and mention with regard to the priorities that we were kind of identifying around PD and how we're working with teachers and administrators around them I will miss Anderson thank you for that I will let you know that we have heard loud and clear from our new staff and from our teacher unions that we need to return to providing sea stars training to our new staff in person at least having that available to those staff that cannot access it as well online and so we did

[02:08:43] start doing that this school year and we will continue to do that as we move into the future. We did do it pre-COVID, I do want to say, but COVID forced us to return to or turn to an alternative model, but that is certainly in response to what we've heard from our staff and I'll let other folks weigh in as well.

[02:09:07] And I would just add that as part of our process, Dr. Edmonds heard in one of her introductory slides, talked about the different groups that are working toward our goals in the plan, and one of the groups indicated was our end-user groups, and those are groups that are really our school-based staff, our teachers, our administrators, members of our community, and so as we develop these plans and as professional development is indicated as one strategy that we'll use to implement, there will be opportunities through these

[02:09:41] different levels of teams to come together and seek input, get input. Right now we're bound by the confines of the professional development days that were allotted during the school year and the different structures. We have moved to job embedded coaching and professional development, which has been really helpful and actually, as research indicates, probably the most beneficial way to implement professional development.

[02:10:06] So when you see the word PD, I think we have to think about lots of different ways that that looks. Not just pulling staff out of a classroom during the school day to sort of provide a sit and get for an hour or three hours at a time.

[02:10:23] Being innovative around the ways in which we provide professional development are going to be really important because of our limited time, limited access, and the workload of our teachers.

[02:10:33] I wanted to just add one quick thing too as well as the importance of the collaboration with other departments that we're just not offering professional development in isolation, but how can we tag along and combine with and collaborate with the UDL model is one of those things that I think of highly is being able to collaborate with, with ISD to be able to deliver that professional development and using structures that we have in place such as when we meet with our department chairs, them going back and delivering professional development to their people as well so trying to utilize a variety of models not just one I'm happy to hear

[02:11:10] that we're diversifying that opportunity I would also encourage us to use best practices related to learning for our staff just the same as we are trying to do with our students and the making model of education is not a great way for anyone to learn anything so I would definitely encourage as much interactive hands-on training as possible particularly as we move towards these these harder harder things that

[02:11:37] our kiddos need so that thank you um miss lady thanks folks um thanks for the presentation can you hear me well we can hear you okay thank you um so a lot of questions and many of which i want to

[02:12:00] revisit. And obviously this presentation is amazing. If and when we're able to do all of these things well. So I first want to touch on the test in the native language. I just want to share my experience and it goes all the way back to my time at Marshall, which yes, was 25 plus years ago, but I will also go back to my time at Chantilly, which was two plus years ago. And I'm going to go back to what Mr. Newton first asked at the very beginning of this. And this is related to funding. I think we would be remiss if we're not honest about the fact that we need more

[02:12:36] funding, we need more teachers. Because we had issues with testing. It was my experience often that when we had English language learners struggling, that it was sort of, you know, it was very difficult to get them tested. It was very difficult because it was sort of like, oh, well, it's their accusation of English.

[02:13:00] And that's what's holding them back and not that they have a learning difference. So I just want to put that out there because we need to be doing this better. And I'm also going to share that too often as a high school counselor, I would go and pull a cumulative folder for one of my students who was struggling.

[02:13:16] And it was obvious there was evidence in that folder from elementary school that that child should have been referred for local screening and never had been referred. And it most concerns me at the middle school level because I feel like, you know, again, it's to me to look at some files when it's that obvious and we haven't done the testing.

[02:13:36] But part of it is because of the workload on our psychologists and social workers. You know, they're the ones needing local screening. They're there at the table and they know this sort of Damocles is hanging over their head around what's already on their plate. And so I just want to make sure that, you know, when we sit with a child at the table, that's the only child that matters right now.

[02:13:57] That is the only person, that's the only kid that matters in our entire 182,000 kids. And we need to do what's right and what's best for that child. And to that extent, I think, yes, you know, it's hard to find psychologists and social workers. It's hard to find, you know, special education teachers.

[02:14:13] But I think we just have to be honest with the public around the fact that, you know, we are short staffed and we actually can do all of this work better, but it's going to cost us money and it's going to cost us, you know, increased staffing. and the other thing i'll say is you know i like that the staffing models is now a workload model because we certainly know we have situations where they literally we've had teachers utterly quit because of one particular student on their caseload where the iep you know they sat for five full days in a room and the parents never signed the iep

[02:14:47] um and or other issues where it just really really just wears on somebody so i'm glad we're doing a workload model um the other thing is with least restrictive i was very very disturbed by that number i believe i heard 42 and we're up to 60 maybe some kind of increase um because i watched that pendulum swing as a director i was like oh my gosh why are we teaching more and more self-contained classes when you know i'll be honest under theresa johnson's the principal chantilly we went way into inclusive education and then that pendulum came back do i need to go yeah your time was up a little

[02:15:24] little while ago okay okay we'll put you down for a go back miss lady thank you sorry for interrupting you um if no one else wishes an initial turn i'll let miss dixit go and then we'll go to i'll take my turn we'll go to go backs thank you so much um thank you for the presentation like uh everybody said it was uh a lot so even though i had seen it a couple of times before but still uh it's a lot lot of share slides. My question is we are we wanted to see that there are a lot

[02:15:58] of students we are I guess not identifying just like Miss Lady said and the early stage what can we do better with especially in the general ed kids were going to gen ed classes but they have dyslexia or ADHD but they continue to that path in being in general they're not in special needs yet 30 percent of our student bodies are out now special needs so there is a waste it's going to i'm not saying it's going to keep increasing but that it's a significant number already so with more kids having anxiety and

[02:16:36] adhd and we're seeing the numbers all is on the upswing um how how do we tackle that more i i don't know if this presentation covered that but I know additional, you know, testing at the second grade level, first grade level.

[02:16:56] I think that's very important because if unchecked, these behavior leads to discipline issue and other concerns later and then we are not addressing them right.

[02:17:12] Thank you for that question and some of my colleagues might want to jump in here. I think there's a couple things maybe at the thrust of your question about, you know, how How are we making sure that we're identifying students who might need additional supports and services even before they'd be identified for special education services?

[02:17:29] I think that was kind of part of that question frame. And I think a lot of that is our MTSS process, which is our multi-tiered systems of support to make sure that we're identifying students as early as possible that might need additional supports. And those are academic supports or behavior/social-emotional supports as well.

[02:17:49] So a component of this plan is to increase better fidelity of implementation across all 200 of our schools with our MTSS processes. So we spoke to some of the things that we're doing there. So for example, one thing is the development of this early warning system tool that will be part of our student information system starting next school year so that anybody who works in that school can see a student's performance on the screening and diagnostic assessments that we give to students at least once a year in

the core grade levels to make sure that students aren't falling behind with their reading proficiency, with their math

[02:18:26] proficiency. It will also provide information on student referrals. It will provide information on student attendance. So some of those other things that might be antecedents of social, emotional, and behavioral issues will also be able to be identified, not just by the school itself, but also will have that information at the pyramid level, the region level, and division level to look for trends or to look for hot spots where we maybe need to do a better job getting those services in place so i think that's part of it and then i i do think the other part is really around the udl work that we're doing that universal design for learning work to make sure that all of our educators special education and general education teachers

[02:19:06] understand how to establish that culture and climate that's inclusive and supportive in all of our classrooms across the school system. So what kinds of things do we need to provide is accommodations and supports for any student, whether or not they have an IEP to be successful, how do we get them engaged, how do we give them choice, how do we communicate better with them, how do we help them reflect on their learning, how do we help them self-advocate for the supports that they need.

[02:19:31] So I think those two things kind of together, the data piece through MTSS and the culture and climate piece through the UDL work that we're doing is going to help us quite a bit in that regard of making sure that you know students that might be exhibiting some early signs of needing additional help get it as soon as possible thank you for the response I'll address why what who's going to get missed out in this process is the advanced academic kids who will do scale all the testing they'll get high scores and Kogat negligee you know all the tests and they

[02:20:08] will have those issues with ADHD or anxiety but then because they're high performing it would not get notice happened with my own son so I'm just going to talk with my personal experience so it was undetected until I thought something is off and I took him to the external psychologist outside of FCPS got him tested even then even till he went to middle school nobody had told me that from school FCPS that something is off he is not behaving in certain way his assignments don't turn in on time there was no red flags until we moved to high school and then I went to school

[02:20:48] and said something is wrong okay this kid needs accommodation and then it was my advocacy that he got in for you know IEP done so if the parent is not advocating it's it's not getting done for a lot of kids that's what i was trying to say yeah no i appreciate you sharing that experience and and you've shared a little bit of it before even though you're still new to the board so i'm learning a little bit more about that experience and and i'm sorry that that your son had that experience we definitely need to do a better job and being able to identify those those risk factors early i i do think the udl work is going to help us it is for advanced learners as well

[02:21:25] so a part of that work is thinking about what are the things that advanced learners need like you know when do they need more support because maybe they're bored and disengaged with the task how can we give them more choice in in ways that they might find more engaging right again that self-advocacy piece that i was talking about how can we even help our students self-advocate to the teachers and counselors when they need help so that that doesn't have to fall back on on parents so i i definitely appreciate what you're saying and there's a lot more work that we need to do there but i do think we're trying to include that that look at advanced learners needs in this work

[02:21:58] as well. Thank you, and we'll put you down for a go back. So I'm going to take my turn, and I could probably talk for two hours to you all about this. So I'm going to start with you, Dr. Reed, and I'm going to apologize in advance, but I'm going to start with my statement that I warned you is going to start with, which is the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again. I think we'll have different results. And while there's pieces in here that I think are really good, the amount of PD is what I've seen year after year after year as the solution to

[02:22:36] issues around special education. And I'm going to pause there. I want to, there's a couple of times that came up about, is this legally required? What is legally required? And so I want to remind folks that IDEA, which is the federal law, I know you had mentioned the VDOE indicators, but IDEA federal law requires that we provide every student a free and appropriate public education in their least restrictive environment. Now, VDOE audits the school system on the least restrictive environment every year. Indicators five is K through 12 and indicator six is preschool and FCPS has failed

[02:23:14] this for at least 15 years in a row. It's going to put that in the air. So I'm thrilled that we're seeing this on inclusion and inclusive practices. I am not thrilled to see the instruction only talking about literacy and math because the AIR recommendations were specifically around all content areas. To be honest I had a lot of trouble crosswalking the way this was organized and the two different slides versus the executive summary with AAR, but anyway, that's not here or there. I appreciate there's an inclusive education framework, but nowhere in this document

[02:23:52] is it defined what the inclusive education framework is, what it's made up of, what the principles are. I'm really hoping this isn't the thing that was submitted to the state last year, because that was based almost entirely on literacy and the LRE tool. The LRE tool is a great idea, but it's a cart before the horse. We can't have a tool in an IEP meeting asking questions about putting kids in the least restrictive environment when we don't have inclusive practices that support least restrictive environment, because the answers are going to be no. I am extremely frustrated because I've been advocating and saying these things for 15 years.

[02:24:32] You know this, Mike. I was in the inclusion work group with you 10 years ago, and we talked about checklists. I appreciate that there's transition checklist in here. 10 years I've been asking for transition checklist but when you add 30 things jumbled into a transition checklist some which repeat from 8th grade to 9th grade without the what and the why and the bucketing and the explanations it just becomes overwhelming i don't know if you had any end users looking at those transition checklists but they're just a jumble and most of the stuff in 9th grade should be done in 8th grade and where is there on the transition checklist a conversation about hey parents think

[02:25:09] about a four to eight year plan. Anyway, I'll take a go back. Well, I do think, obviously you raise a number of good points. I think that right now there's a lot of pressure on the team to deliver on the recommendations of the AIR report. We've also recently have connected the team with Dr.

[02:25:43] Julie Koston who's I think a national expert on inclusion that really to several of you who've raised issues around resources she has a variety of strategies to map resources so that we're not necessarily talking about a significant number of new resources although there will be but it's how we utilize and align the resources we have so I do it's not lost on me that we have long ways to go and we're going to have to accelerate our efforts but and I think the

[02:26:17] LRE tool to your point I mean we can't it's essentially universal design for learning is a general ed initiative right it's it's not a special ed department initiative even though often it falls to special education to explain it and lead it and it's not that's not fair because it's really a general education initiative and we need to make sure that everything that we roll out that's new is done within the lens of universal design for learning as well as the glad strategies for our multilingual learners we don't any longer have time to do everything

[02:26:56] separately so that's one of the challenges i think is integrating all of these strategies when we're presenting something new i apologize that math and literacy are the two that were profile it's clear we need to address all content areas so i think that's a start and we'll look at continuing content areas and to miss dixit's point about the advanced learners we know we have work to do with twice exceptional students as well so that's my initial response i'm happy

[02:27:27] to respond further later thank you um i'll put myself on a go back maybe several um apologies my colleagues we'll start with our go backs then carl mr fish so i want to talk a little bit more about the culture um around this work and taking it from a professional development mindset to a cultural shift in how we think about the work how do we make the work feel less adversarial to the

[02:27:59] families that are encountering it it's i i think that if you're looking for a response i think one of the things we need to really be thoughtful about is not know as a first response which is what we hear at times from families and i know that's not the intent of staff but it certainly has been the impact on many occasions so i think as we think about how best to respond to those circumstances i think putting ourselves in the shoes of families who are coming with their most

[02:28:38] precious their children right and we the future for each and every one of these students is important to our staff and it's everything to our family. So we are working on that culture and climate, Mr. Frisch. Because I think back to the equity symposium last year when I think you talked about equity versus checkuity, right? Checking the box versus doing the work. And I think the cultural issue is what keeps us from to getting the actual equity that these families are looking

[02:29:13] for. There are plenty of families who don't have complaints about the services they're receiving, but many do and you know I just as one school board member I would say a very hefty portion of the constituent services that my office does deals with special education services and families that feel like they're not getting I mean this is the same stuff that was you know bubbled up during the conversations that AR had with families and and others and advocates when they

[02:29:49] were pulling together the resources for their eventual report so I'd like to get us to a point where the frustration is not as palpable when we're having these conversations and you know part of that is probably resources but again I think you you spoke well to the idea of finding different ways to resource this work but ultimately you know I think we've done a lot better at partnering with with experienced advocates in the space around special education in our community

[02:30:26] we need to redouble those efforts i think that's how we address it ultimately and you know last point because then i won't need to go back to the point around language services many families talk about how they're fortunate enough to be able to advocate for their students when i talk to them about being you know de facto paralegals there are a lot of families that do not have the ability to do that and they would love that ability so i worry about

[02:31:00] that a lot thanks thank you mr fish if i could just add a couple quick things i i really appreciate you raising those issues and i think dr reed had some really good comments there's you know a lot of work that we need to do i think just to better prepare our families for what the special education process is going to look like and you know some of those are things that are part of this work making sure that we can get information to them in an understandable way in native languages trying to create opportunities for parents to attend workshops to understand and get the information about how to advocate for their kids so we're trying to do those things we're also trying to

[02:31:38] you know talk to our principals we've been talking to our principals our region assistant superintendents our case managers about the need to have a culturally inclusive and culturally responsive process that we engage in and just to i mean kind of back to dr reed's point that the importance of perspective taking in the entire iep process and and thinking about how to better partner with parents so we know we have a lot of work to do we know that's one of our biggest issues and we are working on that um we do have some good partners that give us feedback in the community septa acsd and others so that's something we'll continue to work on and definitely when

[02:32:15] you're hearing from constituents that that's not happening certainly feel free to let us know because you know that that's something that we're working hard to address thank you um miss st john cunning um so a couple of things um i just want to echo what both miss dixit and miss lady said about either twice exceptional or multi-lingual learners um there's a lot of times when i have seen that Parents are told they need the gift of time because they're trying to learn the language, and it clearly is not a language issue.

[02:32:52] And a lot of our parents, particularly our parents from other countries, will defer to the educators. And it's very clear because I speak both languages that it's not a language issue. So I think when we're talking about changing that culture is also changing that culture in the school.

[02:33:12] fortunately because of my years i've been able to say you know as a parent you have the right to request that and i think making sure that parents know they have the right to request the testing even though even the teachers advising know at the very least you'll get some information and so we've seen you know if somebody can inform our parents get that information out there uh we have a lot of parents that are strong advocates that really are working to get the services for their kids and yet the other the flip side of that is the stigma attached in many cultures to special education where sometimes parents will even refuse the services.

[02:33:46] So I think that we have to look at the flip side of everything that's going on. And I agree with what Mr. Furst is saying, I mean, like, I have called IEPs educational legalese. Even if you speak English, you go in there and the IEP is done in code, you know, sometimes it's like, you know, we use acronyms and even in English, a lot of parents are reluctant to ask.

[02:34:10] acronym for you try doing it when you're interpreting I mean it's it's really frustrating so I think that getting that out to the parents and having the parents have that information my question that I really want to ask and I have no idea but I do know working with a lot of special education teachers they don't like sea stars is sea stars the only vehicle that we have is there another vehicle and if it's so bad like can we switch thank you for that feedback

[02:34:46] C-STARS is currently our vehicle for doing IEPs. You were around when we did them all on paper, pre-C-STARS, and C-STARS is certainly a step up from the quadruplicate copies that we were doing

prior to C-STARS, where if you didn't press hard enough, the person who got Goldenrod did not get a copy.

[02:35:10] So it is a step up. We are currently watching what's happening at the General Assembly around some of the special education legislation that has been at hand there.

[02:35:26] One piece is around the use of Virginia IEP, and we're working with the VDOE and the vendor of Virginia IEP to take a good look at that as well. Thank you. Mr. Dunn? Thank you. I just wanted to say thank you to all of you for all the work you're doing to implement the AIR report and because I see a lot of progress being made and I just want to recognize that.

[02:35:55] I also wanted to recognize that part of the culture of no probably emanates from the fact that the federal government has been underfunding special education for decades, which means, you know, the needs are this and the funding's here, right? So it's not that our people on the front lines are unwilling to help.

[02:36:12] It's just sometimes the resources seem lacking. So, you know, I just want to highlight two things. One is, well, number one, I'd like to make a request. If you could maybe just take the AIR report, all the recommendations, put them in a spreadsheet on one column, and then just second column say, you know, which of the recommendations are addressed in this plan, just so for transparency like i understand what's not being addressed by this plan and what is being addressed just because you know i i don't have the knowledge base or time to do that but i'd appreciate if you could so i can then you know we can maybe allocate more resources to address any

[02:36:51] unaddressed uh recommendations and secondly the major um issue i've i've seen in the ar report and conversations is is inconsistency right like the people on the front line the teachers and and principals are stressed because the protocols and procedures and the forms, everything are, you know, they're asked to make it up on the fly and so that can cause a lot of frustration for parents who may have children at more than one school and they're seeing different things implemented and it's the procedural irregularities, I don't want to say irregularities, but inconsistencies that cause a lot of the inefficiencies and so to the maximum extent that you can make it easy by establishing consistent forms, processes, you know, using

[02:37:28] like google forums or things like that um so that it it makes it easy for the people on the front lines to go in those meetings they have a clear set of idea of what they have to say the the procedure in which they have to do it then that will alleviate alleviate a lot of the concerns and problems that i've heard both from parents and from school-based administrators and teachers thank you well-timed mr dunn um miss lady thank you um great conversation i just had a couple more

[02:38:04] things um one thing is i'm just making this comment because 504 has fallen here a slight bit but if i i didn't make the comment at the time and i look back at the graduation uh report if you look closely at that the students with 504s um had among the highest graduation rate um and i'm just making this point because it's been my experience as a dss that those 504s often come from our most absolute areas where those parents know how to advocate for something that's not being identified

[02:38:37] through an IEP so that's just sort of a point of observation I'm also curious UDL when did UDL come into the academic atmosphere like where's the genesis of that and when did it start well that is a great question so we had been doing work to Dr. Reed's earlier point with UDL out of our special education

department, but UDL really, as Dr. Reid pointed out, is a general education approach. So it was really this past year that at the leadership team level, the senior leadership

[02:39:14] team level, we really talked about trying to think about what we fundamentally need to change in some of our service delivery and some of our philosophical approaches to serving students, not just students with disabilities, but again, multilingual learners, advanced learners in the general education setting.

[02:39:31] And we made the commitment that UDL was going to be really a cornerstone of that work in terms of developing the types of classroom cultures and environments that we want to have for all of our students. So we started building capacity this year by building some internal capacity of folks in our schools that could be supports to do turnaround training and lead some of this work in their schools.

[02:39:55] And we're continuing that training this spring. And then on our August Staff Development Day, the focus of that day is going to be on UDL for all of our teachers and educators in the system. And we're going to continue to build on that professional learning throughout the year and beyond.

[02:40:10] So kind of that shift and that movement with UDL to the general education setting is something that really took place firmly this year. Well, I understand that. I know when we started doing it in Fairfax, like how long has it been in existence maybe in another system? brought it to Fairfax who told us about it well again UDL is a concept and approach has been around for for many years and we were doing some of that work for probably at least 10 years in Fairfax and DSS but that again was something that you know Dr. Reed really encouraged us to look at

[02:40:46] as a cornerstone strategy in all of our general education settings and again senior leadership team members were able to weigh in on that and we all agreed that that was something that we wanted to really prioritize our time and attention with thank you i asked the question because i just want to um thank dr reed and point out to the public and my colleagues that there are a lot of things coming to fairfax that are that are new that she is very uh so well read on and well versed in um different ways to approach teaching and learning and i'm very excited about udl i i continue to

[02:41:23] learn a lot about it as my wife is one of the people doing turnaround training so that was sort of the point in my question um i just also want to reiterate when it comes to pd i'm going to go back to what ms anderson said we have got to ask folks what they need from us and there's sometimes i know there's a reference to c stars being made available in person i think that too often we have fairbuss county faculty who believe they cannot ever be out of their building um but i think there are sometimes we need to require in-person learning and we also need to use udl when we do teaching

[02:41:57] right i mean you know we sometimes do sit and gets instead of allowing recognizing the fact that we are educators and our teachers also have learning differences um and to try to work for those and just to make sure that when people walk walk away from the pd that they feel like they're better informed and they're in a better position to inform and improve their practice the very following day um thank you another thing i want to say is just this okay thanks did you feel we had one other thing you can go ahead and finish it or i can put you on a go back uh no i'm fine okay

[02:42:32] do you want to go back miss lady uh not at this point thanks mr moon thank you just a couple of comments on translation service that when earlier one of the board members asked about number of students who are both multilingual but with the needs for special education i don't have a number we don't

really have a number so i went to go over five report uh in that i saw one of the numbers was for the amongst the seniors there was a 444 so if i do just a rough very rough math you multiply

[02:43:11] that by 13 could give us somewhere between 5500 to 6 000 so that's a substantial a number of students who are both you know needing language services and also special education services having said that mr don earlier mentioned about especially something about asian languages As someone who speaks an Asian language, someone who can tell also the quality of a translation for that particular language, I must tell you that I have been disappointed with, especially

[02:43:50] with Google translation. The machine is, to me as a board member, when I send out my thing, which will be just automatically translated if we went to google translation into the particular language i feel very embarrassed that that is something that i am sending out that i can't tell i don't know about you know mr mr mclevin who is also fluent you know another nation language about the quality of a translation that is something that i know it's a machine it's getting better and we may say that it is better

[02:44:28] to provide that than nothing but I think we need to do a better job of quality control of especially more important documents if that requires additional a translators full-time or hourly I think that's something we should look into. Thank you Mr. Moon, Ms. Anders Dixit. Thank you so much I have a question about executive functioning which is again a part of a lot of special needs

[02:45:06] students especially with ADHD they need they have they don't have executive functioning and that poses a challenge even later as adult in their life there's a classical strategy for success in high school and I'm being told that every instructor does their own thing on strategy success not a benchmark it's not a standard model could you please tell me a little bit about that sure Thank you for that question, and I'll try to be as brief as I can, but a number of years ago we changed the name of that particular elective course to Strategies for Success.

[02:45:45] The previous name was called Basic Skills, and throughout the county we were getting messages that that course was really being used as a study hall for many students who were receiving credit for that course. And so we had an emphasis that we wanted to place on providing students with disabilities in that elective course, the strategies that they would need to be successful students and set them up for success in life after FCPS.

[02:46:11] And a big portion of the materials provided to teachers centered around executive function skills. And so we messaged that out probably six or seven years ago with an expectation that those courses are following a planning and pacing guide that was provided by our Office of Special education instruction that had different domains of executive functions, and we also had a workgroup that last year was developed using some of our grant funding that put together

[02:46:45] explicit lessons covering the different components of the lessons within that coursework. And so we've tried to do some creative things with that course, but certainly our message is that there should be some level of consistency from school to school regarding that course in terms of the materials they're using, the lessons they're providing, and the executive function skills that they're developing.

[02:47:12] In the special education elective course, there's time built in so that teachers can work specifically with individual students around IEP goals. So you might have some large group instruction targeting certain components of executive functioning, but then you might also have some individualized follow-up with those students as well.

[02:47:31] Thank you. So this whole elective, which is for many, many months, obviously my son didn't learn anything because, again, it depends on the teacher or instructor. I hired a private tutor for one hour who actually told him how to make a binder, and that was all he needed, how to organize his papers so he can turn in his homework and assignment.

[02:47:59] This is basic skills for me. It's like, you need to teach that in, like we need to teach that in elementary, middle school level because some of the kids who really don't function that way, their basic issue is how to organize their paper, especially with like, I would say boys, it's more common.

[02:48:18] And I don't think we teach that at, you know, any organization or executive functioning at elementary school level. Would you please speak to that? if i could and then mike can add a little bit more i think i think we're trying to do that but we're not doing that well right now so we have built out lessons that schools can use that are part of typically part of at the elementary level their responsive morning meetings what we're looking at trying to do though for next year is to actually adopt a curriculum that would be you

[02:48:53] know have a very strong scope and sequence in terms of what should be taught when it should be taught in every one of our classrooms at the secondary level as well because students still need to support with some of those skills at the secondary level so we're trying to adopt a curriculum that we would have in place for for next school year that would really work on executive functioning kind of slash sel slash organizational skills almost if you will because we've tried to create our own and i don't think that's really catching on at the level in depth that we would have hoped that it would have so we're really looking to adopt something that's going to be a little bit

[02:49:27] easier to use right off the shelf thank you on my last comment is if if you any teachers and FCPS and administrators here a kid is bored in the classroom there is something going on with that kid right that's like the red flag it's either like earlier you mentioned there the coursework is easier for them or it's not interesting for them that's where we really need to get them that's That's, like, I think by the time we find out what's happening with them, it's already too late and we diagnose it.

[02:50:02] So they're getting bored. They're acting out. I guess that's where we need to get them. Thank you. Dr. Reed. So I'll take my turn now. So I wanted to start with Goal 2, Special Education Processes.

[02:50:22] The AIR recommendation recommends that we monitor post-secondary transition planning. However, all of the stuff around post-transition secondary planning is checklists and toolkits, which doesn't actually monitor.

[02:50:38] It's just a one-way checklist for parents and toolkits. So I want to know how we're monitoring post-secondary transition planning. That's number one, because I don't see how any of that is monitoring. Second, AIR recommended that we better record and report data collection to more consistently monitor and develop IEPs, but all the suggestions are around progress reporting, it's not about collecting data.

[02:51:04] Progress reporting is a result of the data collection, it's the result of collecting and analyzing data to then show the progress in the IEP goals and objectives, but it's not actually data collection. So what are we doing to ensure consistency and fidelity of data collection and analysis to then get to those progress reports, number two.

[02:51:24] Number three, on the IEP progress reports, we are switching from a number to a letter. However, AIR recommended we get away from a standard reporting because it is unclear what 1, 2, 3, 4, A, B, C, D means in terms of making progress towards each goal or objective.

[02:51:43] So I would like to know what we're doing to actually implement the AIR recommendations to get away from a standards-based reporting and progress reports. AIR also recommended that we monitor, sorry, I already talked about that, IEPs and checklists. I also want to know, in the transition IEP 303 that we have there, you list a whole bunch of credit accommodations, but the SPLAVC is not listed as a credit accommodation, although VMAS is, which is only available for like one section of an English SOL.

[02:52:13] So I'd like to know why the SPLAVC is not listed on the transition IEP 303. I'll pause there. Go ahead. Thank you for those questions. This presentation was meant to show the current work and for sure monitoring post-secondary planning is going to be in our future work. Remember this is a five-year plan. In addition to data collection, we did choose to match the rest of -- most

[02:52:49] of the rest of Virginia in terms of how we indicate IEP progress reporting and moved from 12345 to a more descriptive letter-based system, there is also the expectation that's been in place and will continue to be in place around sharing the data with families and the information about how you got to that progress report code.

[02:53:21] The 303 transition IEP, talking about the splavica not being on there, that is a special permission credit accommodation, and there's a different form that's also used that's not on there.

[02:53:39] We can take a look at our transition plan and just make sure that we're in line with what we should be doing on that. Well, I understand those forms, all of those require different forms or things. It's just listed as a possibility, and when it's not listed, then it gets forgotten about.

[02:53:55] And what I'm hearing from families is it doesn't get offered when often it needs to be because it's newer. It was implemented in 2018. So I think if we're going to list possible credit accommodations, we should list all of them. That's all I'm saying. And in terms of -- I'm just kind of surprised data collection is so vital to IEP progress reports that it isn't part of current work, and it isn't more specific listed as to what future work is going to be.

[02:54:17] I need to go back. Anyone else needs to go back before I take another go back? I know you need to leave. I promise I won't be too long. Anyone else want to go back? May I indulge my colleagues in a couple more go backs before we leave? We're still an hour and a half before we're supposed to be done and I won't take that long, I promise.

[02:54:35] Okay. So, goal number one, I'm going to flip to my notes on goal one, instructive and inclusive practices. AIR recommended instructional and inclusive practices, but there's nothing -- and also talked about programming, inclusive programming, but I don't see anything about programming in here outside of literacy, which we were already doing for a different purpose.

[02:55:00] I understand there's many things we're doing that can impact special education students, but I don't see anything specifically around programming. It also called for monitoring fidelity of implementation of inclusive programming, but I don't see what we're doing to monitor fidelity of implementation.

[02:55:18] Slides 15 and 16, we talked about increasing PD for literacy instruction. Are we doing any other increase of PD or other instructional practices? We talk about building the capacity for literacy and mathematics and then high leverage practices through PD, but we don't really talk about what high leverage practices we're looking at.

[02:55:39] So I'd love a little more specificity around what those are. In instruction and inclusive practices, we don't talk anything about removing barriers. So I'm just curious if there's anything talking about removing barriers to inclusion and when we talk about inclusive practices.

[02:55:57] that would be interesting to know. So I'll pause and see, can you give me some examples of high leverage practices that you're talking about? Sure, so thank you for those questions. If you go back to slide 12, slide 12 lists out the six pillar practices that in FCPS we're going to be focusing our attention on. And so if you look at the pillars that are below that particular graphic, using explicit instruction is the one pillar practice that I highlighted in my

[02:56:36] comments because it linked directly to AIR recommendation 3C but as you look at this graphic you can also see the other five pillar practices that are going to be the focus of our attention so I won't read them all out here but examples are listed there collaborating with professionals to increase student success I do see those I guess I was confused because these seem like things were already doing I mean if we're not collaborating or using assessments or establishing consistent and respectful learning environments what are we doing?

[02:57:12] So I guess I was looking for more specificity than that and you don't need to answer that today I just that seems like kind of the basics of our strategic plan it seems like the basics of our goals from before so I I would look for more specific specificity than that so that's where I'm a little confused on that piece of it. Can I just add that the high leverage practices were developed by the council for exceptional children in collaboration with the University of Florida back in 2017 and they recognized that there were a number of college graduates specific to special education that weren't coming

[02:57:49] into classrooms equipped with the critical skills needed in order to be successful and so these 22 practices that were established by that collaborative partnership formed the basis of the high leverage practices that we're linking to when we're creating our resources, when we're looking at engaging our teachers in these high-leverage practices.

[02:58:12] With the large number of teacher trainees, long-term substitutes, provisionally licensed teachers, their college prep programs may not have included many of the aspects of these high-leverage practices. So even though these are things that, yes, we would assume we should be doing, we realize that the skill level of many of our teachers aren't aligned to what many of these practices say we should be doing in our classrooms with our students.

[02:58:38] I think that's helpful, but I think perhaps having more information about what specifically those are would be helpful because, again, that sounds like we're making up for what teachers aren't getting trained on as opposed to, I guess, what I was looking for is what we're doing to address the AIR recommendations in terms of moving things forward.

[02:58:54] So I'd like to add just a couple of comments, too. When I look at those things and think about a couple of comments that were made earlier, around consistency that I think that those are areas that we need to still continue to work on when we talk about our special educators being in the in the school building they don't always collaborate with other professionals that are in the building sometimes it may be a schedule issue sometimes their voice being heard at the table isn't always there and so I would think that a couple of these things like collaborating with families I think those are just best practices that we can always continue to build on and make sure

[02:59:33] that we're working with our staff, with our parents, with our administrators too as well on these high leverage practices that we know will work for all students. And can I add one more thing quickly? If we shift to slide 13, the very next slide, the idea around inclusive practices encompasses a lot of different things that are outlined in this plan and indicated in this slide under our inclusive education pre-k through 12 section in that fourth bullet

[03:00:08] we do talk about inclusion being more than just reading and mathematics we talk about when we're developing resources when we're putting forth this plan we're going to be including components not only around academics but also around social components of inclusion and then we give some examples like our core classes, not just reading and mathematics, our specials and elective courses, and even our non-academic parts of the school day. But again, if we're going to create a mind shift or a culture of inclusion, it's a mind shift that takes place beyond the academics within a classroom.

[03:00:45] And so we've tried to capture some pieces without being all-inclusive around the different areas that are going to be definitely areas of focus as we move this work forward. With all due respect, I appreciate that. And I guess where I'm struggling with this is the recommendation. The AIR report was presented two years ago. The recommendation was ensure quality instruction and inclusive settings, 3B. And we're talking about create resources around academic and social components of inclusion. That's something we've been talking about for 10 years.

[03:01:18] I was hoping in response to a two-year study on special education and two years later, we'd have more specificity on what that looks like. And that's what I'm, where you're hearing some of my frustration is that when I read a bullet that says create resource on academic and social components of inclusion and nothing more, that's something we've agreed on 10 years ago.

[03:01:42] So what more do we have, Dr. Reed, that we can, the board can look at to know what that looks like? Well, I think we need to, I think the colloquial term probably is show and not tell, right?

[03:01:59] So we need to be clear about what that model looks like. I think, to Mr. Bloom's point, the strategies that were described are best practice. We need to be really clear about what that looks like in classrooms here in a consistent way, which I think will also help us with our universal design for learning rollout because they're very integrated strategies.

[03:02:22] So point taken, feedback, heard, and we'll go back to the drawing board and clarify this in more detail. Just a couple more things, I'll be finished. On the communication engagement goal three, I read a lot about communication.

[03:02:38] I didn't read a lot about engagement. There was a lot here about, we had a lot of conversation about translation, but again, that's communication, right? We heard a lot about handbooks and glossaries and things on the website, But I didn't hear a lot about engagement outside of the, I think there's 297 folks who did the transition programming through the, I think, the Family Resource Center.

[03:03:02] But I would just love to see a few more strategies around actual engagement. And then goal four around staff capacity. I think ARR recommended issues around staffing allocations and inefficient staffing allocations.

[03:03:19] It would be good to see some recommendations around staffing allocations. I've heard from several principals about the concerns about our staffing formulas and sort of how outdated our staffing

formulas are. And I think that would have been helpful to look at in goal four around looking at staffing formulas.

[03:03:34] And the same way we're looking at the last big picture thing I'll say, and I'll stop here, well, two things. One is I would love to see more about specific ideas on programming, staffing. And then we talked a little bit about 2E kids. There's something in here about ID kids, but there's nothing about the kids in between, not even in recognition.

[03:03:53] those who struggle to pass the SOL, those who go in and out of self-contained settings. We need to recognize them as the category, and that's not done here. So I'll stop there. I have a lot more, but I'll stop. You know, again, we shared this presentation and the AIR report with Dr. Costin, and we're looking forward to visiting with her in the coming days in terms of staffing allocations and how we might best map resources.

[03:04:22] And I think we'll be able to bring several scenarios forward to begin looking at and perhaps trying different scenarios in different locations to see which ones might be most effective and impactful here in Fairfax. So I'm looking forward to that work, and I know the team is as well.

[03:04:39] Mr. Dunn, I need to raise your hand. yes sorry um I just wanted to ask what is the progress with the equitable access to literacy team especially addressing the needs of current secondary students in need of literacy instruction I'm looking back at Noel she is here and she is leading that work so if you're if you're okay you probably give a better answer than I will on that or I've been here all day waiting so thank you mr.

[03:05:10] done. As you all are aware, our equitable access to literacy plan is for pre-K through 12, and most of you are also aware that the primary focus for these first few years have been on the pre-K through six in alignment, and actually even up to eighth grade in alignment with the Virginia Literacy Act. We do recognize that as we make this shift, there are high school students who have not had the benefit of some of the instructional practices that we're now employing and many of our students are doing just fine they have you know they have come through and our data

[03:05:49] tells us they are reading on grade level and they're successful in their classes but we also know there are students who have yet to to meet that that benchmark some of them have foundational reading skill issues, and some of them are in the comprehension area. So we're currently working with special education. We're looking at the different interventions that we do have for, especially for those students who are several years below grade level. Often those students are special education students, but not always, but mostly they are, and what kinds of supports we can give them. There's

[03:06:26] definitely challenges. There's challenges with often those students would benefit from having intervention every single day, but that's not how our schedules work in high school these days. So there's definitely challenges we're constantly trying to work through to figure out how to provide those direct services to the students who need it most. Thank you. I also wanted to ask, I mean, so far we've only been really talking about FCPS in relation to the AIR report. So are there any school systems across the country or in Virginia or in the DMV area that have gotten it right that we're looking to as like, this is the gold standard for special education in the United

[03:07:04] States? And if so, are we adopting any of their best practices, lessons learned? I think that's a great question. I mean, we've got a couple different groups that we partner with. One is the school

divisions of Northern Virginia and Region 4, where we meet and partner and share best practices and problems of practice and support each other in that way. We're also part of a consortium of large suburban school divisions. So places like Charlotte, Gwinnett County, all the way out to California. That's another kind of group of thought partners that

[03:07:42] we do work with. I wouldn't say anybody's got it just right. I think there's a lot of similar issues and challenges that school systems are facing, but those are opportunities where we can learn from each other. So, and just again, new school board member, where is FCPS in kind of the ranking i mean i'm aware of just in my district many families moving to fairfax county because of the quality of our special education as compared to other states uh sometimes other countries so um i mean obviously if people are moving here we must be pretty good but where are we kind of in the informal rankings as it were compared to other school systems yeah i mean i

[03:08:21] think that's another great question i think anecdotally we hear a lot of similar uh stories from from families that move here because we do offer services that you know their previous school division didn't offer and then we also hear stories like you know many board members have shared today where we're not getting it right we have inconsistencies and growth to make so i think you know we know and we recognize and i think in this plan we really recognize you know as i tried to mention in my kickoff there's some complex changes that we're trying to undertake first and foremost starting with how we deliver services to students and being more inclusive with that which is miss sizemore heiser has pointed out that's kind of the foundation

[03:09:00] of everything else that flows after that so that's going to be the the major point of focus when we work with our consultant is really working on our inclusion programming and our service delivery um to get that right but i mean there there are a lot of things that we're doing well also and we do hear that for many families that access the current services that we have um and and the air report which i've read is a great report do we have an informal target for when all of the recommendation i mean i read it there's not a recommendation that doesn't make sense right they all we should adopt 100 of it but do we have a target of when we expect to implement 100 of

[03:09:38] those recommendations i mean do we have here by year x this will be fully implemented the the current model for that is linked on board docs which is the executive summary of our plan for each goal area it kind of maps out what the major actions are that we're going to take in response to those recommendations and then it has a time kind of continuum that talks about when we're going to develop the work when we're going to implement the work when we're going to you know scale the work and sustain the work so we're trying to get everything done in that report and be responsive to all those recommendations within that five-year period of implementation and we're just wrapping

[03:10:14] up our first year of implementation work all right thank you thank you is there anyone else else does it go back email oh yeah good mistakes it okay oh miss miss st john cunning yeah i know sometimes i sound really pollyanna-ish but uh based on what i saw in new orleans and based on anecdotal um evidence of so many people coming here specifically because of our special education

[03:10:49] i don't think there's any place where we can say there's a ranking uh but i know people that have even moved out because of lower housing prices in our area, and then they moved back, and they say, I'm moving back to a two-bedroom apartment because the special education services for my kids were nothing compared to Fairfax County Public Schools.

[03:11:12] I think that we're very fortunate that we have someone like Ms. Sizemore-Hysmore, who has been an advocate for special education for years on the board. And I know that I defer to her for her expertise in guiding us along this work. And I know that sometimes when we sit in these work sessions, we're picking out like all these little inconsistencies. But I think that's all because we want to make something better. And I think that we get so bogged down in that sometimes that we don't look at the overall picture, which personally, Mr. Dunn, I think we

[03:11:51] are the gold standard and i really want to command staff for doing that i do think that the biggest thing that we need right now is personnel we need we cannot implement any of this if we don't have enough qualified staff and if they are not adequately compensated so we're going to do this work we're going to have to meet that challenge and we're going to have to pay our teachers what they're worth um and i know that these are challenging budget times um but i don't see any other way around it because that is the greatest investment we can make because bottom

[03:12:29] line that means we're investing in our children thank you miss dixit i remember my question thank you so the current process and the future process what is it going to be a stark difference for parents were coming to discuss their students IB or 504 plan because like earlier everybody was saying that it's very one-way kind of communication it's like this is the form fill it out now do this

[03:13:05] do this and your parents have to just kind of unless you didn't know what to do they just follow the you know what they're being told but before parents come in yeah if there's no you know is it going to be like this is the like a flowchart or like a lab webinar for them to get engaged like this is the whole engagement piece so I just wanted to know if the future parents are going to feel more comfortable than we were when we came into this process part of the the work

[03:13:39] of goal two does focus around parent education as well as engagement and there is there are plans for additional webinars and additional information to be shared so that parents can feel more engaged and more included in these processes for sure thank you for that okay In the IEP discussion, in my experience, my son was never included, and he was not part of any of the meetings.

[03:14:15] I don't know if that is the case in most of the other situations, but that's my experience. And I felt like he was the actual stakeholder who was a recipient of the services, but he didn't know what -- I had to tell him what we discussed and what he's going to do.

[03:14:32] But what was actually happening in the classroom was not the same what we discussed on the paper. It never got implemented. And then parent doesn't know what to do then because you're trying to work with your student and getting their grades up and making sure they've come, you know, do all their classes and you're learning your own life.

[03:14:58] So how much of the responsibility is this to of a parent to chase down this process? Thank you for that and thank you for that insight and sharing your experience. I will say that in Virginia students are part of their, should be part of their IEP process from eighth grade or age 14, whichever comes first.

[03:15:23] And so we do highly, highly encourage and really want students who are of those age and grade to participate in their IEP meetings. I can share my experience as an elementary special education teacher, I won't say how long ago, a while ago, that I started including my students in their IEP meetings in third grade because I agree with you.

[03:15:47] I think it is important that they are involved and that they know that all these people who care about me are talking about me and they want me to do well and they care and they really are talking about this. Not that they need to come the entire time, but we are working around that.

[03:16:05] There's a Virginia Department of Education, I think it's a VDOE initiative called I'm Determined, and there's a large summit, usually it's at JMU in June, where students with disabilities come and families and really learn about that self-advocacy piece that you're referring to.

[03:16:29] Thank you. I'll just finish out. I don't see anyone else. I know I was very harsh and very rough, and I understand that as Ms. St. John Cunning said and Mr. Dunn said that many people come to Fairfax County for the special education services, and that's a large part to your hard work.

[03:16:45] I will say from my role as being a parent advocate for a long time, I also know many families who leave Fairfax County, but I want to tell you why I'm pushing so hard. I'm pushing so hard because the outcomes for people with disabilities are terrible.

[03:17:01] The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 60 to 70 percent. The college completion rate for people with autism is somewhere around 35 percent. The graduation rates for people with disabilities are much lower. The SOL passage rate is much lower. The interaction of the criminal justice system are much higher and the disproportionality is much higher.

[03:17:21] The reality is nobody is the gold standard is the answer. There is no gold standard because if there was a gold standard, these would not be the outcomes, period. So there is nobody who is the gold standard in special education across the country because these are the national outcomes. So that's why I'm pushing so hard because this is a generation of students who as adults have terrible outcomes and we can change that. And we have a golden opportunity here to change that. And it is one in 33 with autism. That's not even

[03:18:00] talking about other disabilities one in 33 that's a lot of people who are going to have a terrible outcome from unemployment criminal justice if we don't change that there is no gold standard period we can be the gold standard so let's do that this is not gold standard this is not i'm sorry to say i really am i know you've worked hard but it's not but we can do that and we can change this and we can be that beacon for other people to follow so we don't have a 60 to 70 percent unemployment rate for people just working age people with disabilities nobody is the gold

[03:18:40] standard when it comes to this period and we need somebody to be and I will keep pushing until we are thank you I think there's no more go back so with that I will say on that note this meeting is adjourned

