



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Loudoun County School Board, Specialized Programs & Centers Committee Meeting, Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Date Wednesday, January 25, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 16m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/792792411?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-22. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:01:13] evening this is brenda sheridan and i'm calling to order the specialized programs and centers committee it is wednesday january 25th 2023 and i'm joined by committee members mr morse and mr beatty is there any public comment tonight there's no public comment i don't even see any public so if they're commenting we can't hear you um all right we'll go to item three the approval of the draft minutes for the december 14th 2022 meeting would you like to make a motion yes i move to approve the draft minutes from december 14 2022. i will second those any discussion all in

[00:01:52] favor please raise your hand say aye opposed abstain all right that will carry 2-0 with mr Beatty abstaining we'll move to our information items we'll start with 401 step full day face approach proposal who is taking that first anyone i'm looking for the updated presentation

[00:02:19] so give me just one second sorry about that did you send it to me it's a long time to travel down

[00:02:40] the table geez so this evening we have a presentation for you from our supervisor of

[00:03:14] head start and step alexis duffin who is down at the end of the table she is going to take the lead on sharing some information about a phased approach for moving to full day kindergarten for our STEP program that we would love your feedback on and ultimately board approval.

[00:03:33] So with that, I will share my screen and turn it over to Ms. Stephen. Hi, hello. I'm Alexis. I am so excited to be here. I always am looking forward to an opportunity to talk about preschool. So today I am talking about our starting towards excellence in preschool, which we refer to as our STEP program.

[00:03:55] And I want to talk to you about a full day phased approach proposal starting next year. So this proposal, it is brief, but it's going to go over the why and the how we could potentially move our preschool program from half day to full day.

[00:04:12] So the important thing to start with is how our program currently operates, so we get to know STEP a little bit more. So it is a state-funded preschool program that is funded through the Virginia Preschool Initiative. If you are familiar with Head Start, it runs very parallel to Head Start.

[00:04:28] So Head Start is our federally funded program for at-risk four-year-olds, and STEP is our state-funded program for at-risk four-year-olds. We currently have the capacity to serve 320 four-year-old students in the county. It's important to note that this year we actually are serving around 300.

[00:04:46] And there are four different ways for students to qualify into our program that are listed above. So the income level of our families can go up to 200% of the federal poverty level. If they are homeless, they will qualify into the program. If the parents or guardians did not graduate from high school and have low school achievement the family can also qualify and children who are eligible for special education services so this is actually new previously the requirement was students with special education services with an income up to 350 percent of the federal poverty level

[00:05:24] and that was actually changed just this year so now anybody that is qualifying for special Education Services can also qualify for our VPI STEP program. We currently offer a half-day structure. It is three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. We have 16 students in each of those classes. We have 10 classrooms located in six different schools throughout the county. They are both elementary and high school locations. And our AM students are offered breakfast and our PM students are offered lunch. So I want to talk about the why. So we have our full day

[00:06:01] justification. So I have a few points here. The first one is that LCPS is one of only four localities in Virginia that is only offering half-day programs for VPI, which represents 5.2% of VPI students statewide. The next two bullets I'm going to go into a little bit more in depth on the next slides, but really talking about those Head Start gold standards that we use when we're designing programs and time requirements from the Virginia Preschool initiative guidelines. So here's that Head Start gold standard. A lot of programs will use Head

[00:06:38] Start when they are designing preschool programs because a lot of thought and effort goes into those program performance standards that guide our Head Start program. And again, like I said, this runs very parallel to our Head Start program, so we're serving a very similar population. So I'm going to pause and just let you read from the Head Start program performance standards

[00:06:57] the justification for full day and Head Start. We go back, sorry. I wanted to give you a moment just to read this, I think this has a very powerful message. So we're talking about increased school readiness. So the purpose of this program is to really help close that achievement gap for our

[00:07:33] identified at-risk four-year-olds so that when they get to kindergarten, they are ready and they're ready just like their peers are ready. So having a full day program would really increase that school readiness for our students, which would impact them the moment they hit kindergarten. Another really

important part I want to pull out of this is better meeting the parent needs. This is the biggest piece of feedback that I receive from any parent in our STEP program is that three hours is not long enough. I had a mother last year, we had a great meeting, and she said, you know, I feel like I have to pick between my child's education and getting a job to support my family, and that is a

[00:08:12] very difficult decision to make. So having that full-day program could hopefully help increase those employment rates so parents don't have to make that decision. They can do both. Another important piece to pull out in our justification is the Virginia preschool initiative time requirements half-day program should operate for a minimum of three hours of classroom instruction time per day excluding breaks for lunch our current half-day structure includes lunch within that three-hour time frame so when we moved if we are able to move to a full-day program it would allow the program to remain in compliance with the Virginia preschool initiative

[00:08:51] guidelines and we would be able to have the appropriate amount of time for breakfast and lunch because now they would be attending full day so the requirements for full day are five and a half hours so we would be able to within that time that the students are attending have the five and a half hours of instruction and we would have time for breakfast and lunch all right so that takes me through the justification and kind of that why behind you know why am I here tonight why am I talking about step in full day and now I'm gonna move into the how. So I understand that this is a big change. This is a big implication to our program

[00:09:28] and how we operate. So we are taking this in a phased approach. So I want to introduce three different phases. Phase one for this proposal is for next year. So transitioning four classrooms to full day and I've identified the two classrooms here and I'm going to explain a little bit more about why those classrooms were picked in just a minute. So if we transition from our 10 current classrooms and we have four of them full day and six half day, it would allow us to serve 256 students. So obviously when you increase the number of hours, we're decreasing the number

[00:10:03] of students that are able to be served. I told you this year we're serving currently around 300 students and our capacity would be 256 in phase one. It's important to note that this part of the phase is cost neutral. So when a child attends at half day, they receive per pupil funding from the Virginia preschool initiative and when they receive when they are full day they receive double so we would be able to make this cost neutral by not adding classrooms in phase one and we would

[00:10:33] serve 256 students all right so why sterling so phase one we we have a lot of data we have a lot of data that we look at in head start and in step when our families apply to our office it's a it's process so they apply they apply online and then we communicate with the family and we initiate a follow-up so we can ask a lot of questions to understand each family and how what their unique needs might be when we talk to them we are able to assign a selection criteria score so when we apply for head start or

[00:11:11] step it is not first-come first-served it is greatest need so when we are able to assign a selection criteria score we can see which family has the highest need, and therefore they would enter the program first. Now, looking at those selection criteria scores, and if you look at the averages between our different classrooms and our programs in the county, all arrows point to Sterling. So we've decided that to start this implementation, this phased approach, we would like to start in Sterling. We also confirmed this data with the Head Start Community Assessment, just to make sure that this is also something we're seeing across Head Start

[00:11:47] as well, and it was confirmed. So the reasoning behind Meadowland and Rolling Ridge is because of that area of need in Sterling. All right, so that takes us to phase two. There's a little asterisk next to the top because that means there's a budget implication. So at this point, we are proposing to add two classrooms into the budget. So that would include a teaching team as a step teacher and a teaching assistant. If we added two classrooms, we would have a total of 12 classrooms. Those two that would be added I would like to put back into Sterling because now that we've gone if we do this

[00:12:25] we would go full day in Sterling we would be serving fewer students in Sterling so I think it's imperative to add classrooms back into that Sterling area so we are still serving more students with a total of 12 classrooms the two new classrooms ideally going straight to full day transition two existing half-day classrooms to full day we would have eight full-day classrooms and four half-day classrooms allowing the program to serve 256 which is the same as phase one you

[00:12:57] following me on this i know there's a lot of numbers here okay all right so let's talk about phase three so phase three has another one of those asterisks so another budget implication adding two more classrooms to bring our total to 14 classrooms at this point i'm proposing that all classrooms become full day. So all 14 would be operating full day and we would serve 224 at-risk students. I'm a visual person so here's my map. So FY23 shows where we are right now. We have the

[00:13:36] capacity to serve 320 students in 10 classrooms. Moving down the road to FY24, 256 students across 10 classrooms because again phase one is that cost-neutral approach. Phase three in FY25 is actually phase two in FY25 is when we start adding in a couple of classrooms to help offset the decrease in the number of students that are served down to FY26 with 224 students in 14 classrooms. But please note, there's another little dot on that roadmap. So that is really looking

[00:14:09] at adding additional classrooms as needed. So, you know, moving beyond FY26, it's really going back to monitoring that data that comes into our office. You know, what do we see are the needs? what are the needs of the community and that can help drive the justification for additional classrooms and you know help us drive our program forward to make sure that we are serving the correct number of students in Loudoun County. What questions might you have about STEP Preschool?

[00:14:44] Thank you very much for the presentation. I have just I want to clarify that you said there were 300 students currently being served. That's correct. So that my only concern in all of this is then we drop to 76 less in FY.

[00:15:00] Like we're continuing to drop the amount of students that are served. So I feel like that's the dip, and then to encourage going back up. So I want to make sure we remember that that quality of instruction is getting bigger. So we're creating this excellent classroom environment for these students to be in, and yes, we're decreasing the number of students, but we're constantly monitoring and looking for opportunities to grow.

[00:15:25] So with that answer, I'm assuming that if we were continuing to have in the 300 requesting service range that you would change the out years from what it would be next year when we add two classrooms. Is that accurate?

[00:15:42] It isn't just that we're going to wait for FY27 to reassess how many classrooms we need. We'll reassess each year. Correct. Okay. And cost-wise. that obviously is is it can you give us numbers on what that cost is do we know all right so if we were to this this is our rough numbers um a very a very estimated

guess to add two sets of you know the two teachers and the two teaching assistants roughly two hundred thousand dollars okay do we

[00:16:20] have capacity in our elementary schools to add more classrooms if the full-time classes rather than half-day classes we went through this when we went from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten we didn't have enough space and we had to get really creative with with where we put students so do we have capacity um i know you said sterling was was your focus right now because that's what all the numbers say is there capacity to add more full step classrooms if 256 isn't enough so yes and we would need i would need to consult with the people at the end of the table

[00:16:59] and Ms. Lehman to make sure that where there is capacity is also where there's a need. So I don't have that information in front of me, but the broad system answer is yes, and then we would need to drill down to location. Do you want to add anything to that?

[00:17:16] I appreciate that because I think data would also support that taking students who live below the poverty level or even 200% above the poverty level, removing them from their school community where their parents probably walk to school is never a good idea.

[00:17:32] So I appreciate the fact that you stipulated that already. And what is currently the poverty level? Let's consider that, just for a number. Oh, they just released the new one last week. So I can look that up and get it back to you. It is roughly \$26,000 for a family of four.

[00:17:49] I just want perspective. I want everyone, like the public to have perspective. And this is, again, it's at federal level. So it doesn't matter what state you live in. And even though we live in Loudoun County Public School, Loudoun County it is around \$26,000 is 100% of it's that poverty line is \$26,000 for a family of four so when we're talking about 200% of the poverty level we're talking a little over \$50,000 for a family of four in Loudoun County I just want everyone to have that perspective I do brought that up thank you and then the other point I wanted to make and then I'll let the other people here talk to when we when in your I think was in your slide for the head start gold

[00:18:25] standard of and Ms. Duffin knows I'm very well versed in head start because we a lot of people at the table know this right as serving as having served as the liaison for many years to the head start program the last sign and better meeting parent needs for me when I saw that that's the thing that stuck out to me as well and not because getting a job and having your child educated as much as meeting the parent needs to support their students as their children as students and how they can be involved in their children's education and support them at home I know firsthand how much

[00:19:03] this the head start staff work individually with families to make sure they have what they need so that they can support their children as students so that jumped right out at me too but for a different perspective and I just wanted to make sure we touched on the absolute uniqueness for each family and the personal assistance given to each family unit so and thank you all for that pass that on again please mr morse oh we can talk now wonderful thank you so the first question i have is how many applicants do we have annually so i can tell you how many applicants we have for

[00:19:42] the upcoming school year because that process just began and it's around 150 applicants for both head start and step at this moment now is that in line with what you normally see i mean if we were supporting up to 300 that's that's usually around we're about where we normally are now COVID during those years we took a dip so we are back up to our pre-COVID expectations with enrollment at this point in

time January is when it starts to get very busy okay so it doesn't sound like there's a big difference between the application the number of applicants and the

[00:20:17] number admitted so generally speaking most of the students if they if the families do apply end up being admitted? That really depends, again, on that unique situation and our guidelines between. So the Head Start and STEP, the eligibility criteria are different between the two programs. So when we, I say 150, that is 150 families that have applied and based on their original application, they look to be Head Start or STEP eligible. But then based on that family follow-up, we might gain more information to understand a little bit more about their income or their situation, that might change that.

[00:20:55] Okay, how many Head Start students are we able to support? 100. We're federally funded for 100 students. Okay, so we have 100, and then we have approximately 320 capacity for the others. So we could handle up to 420 students in both programs.

[00:21:11] And do we expect to have 420 applications by the end of the academic year, by the end of June? Probably, yes. Okay. And do we expect anything more than that? is do we I feel like I'm kind of trying to pull this out but I'm just looking to see if we're if we are supporting the community that needs this if there's more of a demand than I I think where Ms. Sheridan was heading was you know we might want to ramp up faster in order to support the

[00:21:44] community if the need is already out there. Do not neglect an opinion of Mr. Morse to ramp up something faster like this well but I think this is really important this is important so and I think this has a lot to do too with having a half-day program so families might apply and realize it's three hours and decide no this is not the right fit for me leave me on the head start wait list because if anybody from head start if that classroom fills they are also eligible to be in the step program so I think that's really important to note that the applications it's going to look different and the state actually when I apply for the grant the state tells me somehow they magically

[00:22:24] do an estimate of how many at-risk four-year-olds are in Loudoun County, and that number is much higher than 420. So they're out there, but why aren't they applying? Could it be the three-hour program? Might we see a huge increase if we change to full day? We might. So that, again, goes back to that data collection and really monitoring the needs of our community based on that application process and that interview that's done with families. If that were the primary concern of the family, they would all apply to Head Start, and you'd be able to get their numbers from the headstart program because that's a full day program right it is in our four-year-old classrooms okay so you know the fact that I wouldn't see them applying for the half day and saying I don't

[00:23:03] I'm not going to apply because some of the numbers are half day but others are full day I think they would apply with the hope that they would be in the full day right that is correct and we actually do a single point of entry application process as well so everybody applies it doesn't matter which program everybody applies to one central location in our office and once that information is determined then it's yes your head start eligible or you are step eligible okay so we we might want to look at other reasons why we're not able to draw in the other students who are falling below the poverty line absolutely I think it would be important to identify and to encourage to encourage

[00:23:42] them. The concern with the classrooms, do we have extra classrooms, physical classrooms at Meadowland and Rolling Ridge to handle these students? Because we're increasing the number of physical classrooms, right? Not in phase one, no. So the classrooms that I mentioned in the phase one of the

proposal are current existing classrooms. So we currently have two classrooms at Meadowland and we have two classrooms at Rolling Ridge. So if you take two classrooms and there's an a.m. and a p.m. you have four classes and next year they're only gonna be two

[00:24:15] classes one full day so I would think they would drop in half unless you have other and that's why we're phasing this because if we were to switch the entire program to full day that would be a drastic decrease so we are decreasing the number of students that are served in sterling in phase one with the hope that we would be adding a classroom or two into the sterling area in phase two. Okay. And the last comment is, I think that I would also be interested in other areas of the county, such as in Leesburg, where, you know, the poverty is in both areas. And if we're putting all

[00:24:52] the resources into Sterling, I think we're kind of tilting the scales a little bit against Leesburg. So I would like to consider the opportunity to provide some full day opportunities as well in the Leesburg area. Absolutely. And that's where phase two takes us. So once, you know phase one is just next year so after that moving to the next area that based on our because we we continue to relook at that data what is the data say about the students who are in the program now and the students that are applying for the program to truly understand where we go next and that will help us identify okay thank you absolutely sir baby thank you one

[00:25:30] question is how many students are in each classroom and at a given time 16 so - Okay, so I do have concerns about us removing capacity if there's a need for this program.

[00:25:45] And then going back to finding those classrooms, I assume there'll be CIP funding like that we'll have to come up with if we need more classrooms for some of the schools. Could you talk about the funding calculation from the state? So you talk about that this is funded through VPI, but then there would be some costs somewhere with adding teachers.

[00:26:05] So could you explain where that, if this is funded by the state, we would need to come up with that shortfall right so we receive funding from the virginia preschool initiative with the understanding that lcps provides a 50 local match so part of our program is funded through the state and the other part is funded through lcps um that's helpful then coming

[00:26:34] up to, why don't you talk about the 5.2%, 5.2% of localities are halftime, is that, I'm sorry, one of four localities, where's that number now, sorry.

[00:26:58] It's one of only four localities. Yeah, one of only four localities, is that, does that mean there's 5.2% of all students in the VPI program statewide are halftime, or LCPS makes it 5.2% of all students? - No, that's the, if you add up those four localities, it's 5.2% of the VPI program in the state.

[00:27:17] - Okay, so how many kids take part in this program statewide then? - I would have to look that up and get that back to you. - And then what are some of the success metrics of this? So we talk about that this is going to help the kids throughout the school. Are we keeping track of the students as they go through here?

[00:27:33] - That's a great question. I'm so glad you asked. So have you, the Virginia kindergarten readiness program. So VKRP that we're doing in kindergarten is also implemented in preschool. So this is a great way to really collect data to understand where our students are coming in from at the beginning of the year, and the progress that they make towards the end of preschool, and then how they are ready to enter kindergarten.

[00:27:54] So we're tracking them for multiple years. So we see them in preschool, and we see them in kindergarten. And that's in addition to other assessments that are done through our curriculum. - But then do we like lose track of them after kindergarten, or we follow them throughout their education career? - Well, everything will live in their files, so in their QM folder, in their online files.

[00:28:11] So that's testing data like map data lives. So it is official data that we have collected from those students. So it lives with them. And ideally, you know, we're working with kindergarten to ensure that they understand. And, you know, I've met with kindergarten teachers before to really discuss that, hey, our kiddos have had, you know, a year of instruction.

[00:28:31] So let's discuss what they've learned and, you know, what they're coming in with to make sure that they're using that data. And then also we are able to track any kind of progress that we're seeing throughout the program. Okay, but then since we've been doing this, are more of these kids graduating from high school?

[00:28:48] Like, that's what I'm asking. Like, you know, they're succeeding in some bits, but do we have an appreciable statistical difference in the terms of the kids who go through this program and that the fact that they graduate from high school versus kids who don't go through this program? It's like, is that, we apparently have the data.

[00:29:03] So have we looked at those numbers? We haven't looked at them per se, but we can certainly collect that data. we have enough historical data of students who have been in our Head Start and VPI program and where they are in Loudoun County. We can absolutely get that information for you.

[00:29:20] - Yeah, if you could provide that when this comes back up, I'd appreciate to see that. I think that's it for me, thank you. - Okay, Mr. Morris. - Might make it easier if we go short-term instead of going to graduation.

[00:29:37] For instance, the performance in first grade. I mean, what kind of metrics are we seeing for the students that are coming in into that class that don't have a step, compare that to the population of the children who have completed that year.

[00:29:53] That would probably be very enlightening. And I think probably be a lot easier to calculate. I too would like to know about the high school, but I think getting that number is gonna take you some time, so. - Right, and you know, I honestly think that if we're looking at this data, it would be really, and I don't know how to even collect this, but it'd be really important to see the students who are from the same backgrounds, are at risk identified because that's what I want to compare I want to be able to compare the students that have entered that are in first grade now that didn't have step preschool program where are they compared to the ones who did have step preschool program but not just any student in Loudoun County I want to see the at-risk so that's the apples-to-apples that I would like to be

[00:30:33] able to compare and I'm not completely sure how to collect that kind of data is there data person in the house but I think that would be the most powerful statement because if we just compared to any other child in Loudoun County they they could have had their own private preschool program. We don't know if that is really the important data that's showing the value of our program.

[00:30:51] So if we wanna see the success of our students and compare it against something else, I think we need to compare it to other at-risk students that have been a part of the county that didn't have that

opportunity. - And I think that if you're looking at the two schools in particular, that you have a broader base that's probably closer to the economically disadvantaged students that are captured there.

[00:31:11] They may not be the exact same situation or circumstances, but I think that that would be of some benefit to see entering in what are their first round of scores? What do they look like compared to another student who is at the same school, who lives in the same community?

[00:31:28] Because again, I think those are pretty close to apples to apples. They might just be Fuji versus some others, but. So I'll go back and just to support what you just said, which is dead on. These are students, the students that are served through Head Start and Step are students who wouldn't otherwise go to preschool.

[00:31:47] wouldn't have that opportunity correct so comparing them to their to their actual peers is really important to get the data that mr. Beatty is looking for do you still have a robust recruiting effort yes and then and it's I'm assuming it's still the rule that your head start classrooms have to stay full yes that's correct absolutely okay so is that a waiting list or do you pull from step so both we we do have a waiting list but we don't want to ever keep a kid so it's head start is our highest need right step comes in right after and it's a delicate balance of

[00:32:24] having a wait list but also not having a kid wait on a wait list and not be served so we often will move if a if a child if head start is full because we are funded for 100 students if head start is full that child can be served in step okay thank you um do we have any say we weren't worried about cost neutral for fy 24 do we have more classrooms that we could use for full-time great classroom but she's proposing would be our with it which is oh yes I think we

[00:33:03] would need to get back to you on that particularly the location I would like to know that and the cost of it okay just so that we have that data at hand if we want if we want to make any other recommendations okay thank you the sooner the better so we can wait till Monday we'll get it to you as soon as possible um no i would completely agree comparing kids in the same socioeconomic groups to absolutely

[00:33:41] because otherwise yeah it wouldn't make sense statistically but i would push back on only going up to first grade i mean that's good information but we're responsible for the kids from k through 12 pre-k through 12 so i think we should at least be doing our best to make sure that whatever programs we put in place are actually helping them so then i'll throw the question to dr tyler because i can see you um is this is this data that is accessible and if you would like to come

[00:34:08] use a microphone that would be great good evening i know that in the past we've been able to get data on students who attend these programs and we've gotten questions about students experiences and outcomes and trying to control for differences other than whether they attended a preschool so we've done this before in the past several years ago so being able to get access to their data and as they end all as long as they enter the system we get a consistent student id and we don't

[00:34:46] have a lot of movement there may be a point where if we lose 30 or 40 percent of the initial cohort of kids we can't reasonably draw conclusions maybe after third or fourth grade so we may be limited by what you call in statistics attrition meaning kids move and we just don't have a representative cohort but we've done before and it's something that I think as long as we get the student IDs and we go

back say five years and we look at age five through their 10th their their their year 10 experience in lcps and look at pals maybe when they get far

[00:35:23] enough along in the sol scores so we can we've done that before in the past great i would love to see the data however you can bring it so that it is valid and and not affected by attrition or anything else i think that would be really great committee members can so we have consensus of the committee if you could work on that we would appreciate it okay we'll do that thank you any other comments or questions on this item great presentation thank you thank you for listening appreciate it absolutely all right we're gonna move to 402

[00:35:58] Hillsborough Charter Academy calendar all right this is gonna be an easy not not as much thinking for you I think we have mr. Vickers here to present HCA's proposed calendars for the coming school year so first of all I want to say to everyone happy national school choice week two of you last year were the recipients of a scarf such as this and mr. Beatty this is I promised very clean I just just opened it out of a bag but that's for you sir so and hopefully

[00:36:36] mr. Morrison you know hopefully you're wearing it very regularly yourself so every night perfect that's great so I did want to say that we have a process for our school calendar just as Middleburg Community Charter School does and our process is that we first of all have to wait until LCPS has adopted a calendar and then we work from there we always want to make sure that our calendar has at least as many hours of direct instruction actually we always

[00:37:15] try to make sure it's a little bit more of direct instruction than the school system has. Now that doesn't necessarily equate to the same number of days. So, you know, what you're going to see in the calendar is that our calendar, which has now been adopted by our board of directors last Wednesday, a week ago today, has 170 student days, but it has 1,233 hours, And which equates to roughly two days more than LCPS.

[00:37:48] And we do that for a number of reasons. Well, for instance, this week, all of our teachers are down in New Orleans at a conference, IT, EEA conference, a technology conference.

[00:38:03] And so because of that, we build in an extra 30 minutes per day. And that's what adds up to the total number of hours. But I did submit this to Ms. Lehman and Sophie Burke and HRTD and Caroline Gabriel in DTS earlier in the month.

[00:38:26] And then what I generally do is at this time of year, I bring it to the SPCC and answer any questions you might have. But then my understanding is then you take it to the full board for approval. And so that is what I'm here for tonight.

[00:38:44] And I have another item, obviously, at 4.04 in just a moment. Thank you. Does staff have any concerns about the calendar? You said it was going to be super easy. And any board member comments or questions? Mr. Morse? So 10 fewer academic days for the students compared to LCPS, right?

[00:39:04] Because it says LCPS has 180 and you have 170 HCA student days. So how much longer is each day? each day is 30 minutes longer okay yeah and so when you take all those uh 30 minutes and multiply it by the 170 that's where you end up with it's very close to two additional um standard elementary days for lcps and then as you'll see in the calendar there's also um five days that uh hca

[00:39:39] has uh as pd days and um you know those are highlighted on the one uh calendar in yellow for you okay so two and a half hours per week 40 weeks that's 100 hours um i mean that that's 10 days right there so sounds good to me questions discussion all right so is this item we can move

[00:40:16] to the board for consent correct do we do we don't need to bring in and go ahead and make a motion if you want to there's no reason to hold it right there's nothing for staff yeah i could i move to suspend the rules second all in favor of the motion to spend the rules please raise your hand say aye aye that carries three zero mr morse i move to uh recommend to the full school board approval of the hillsborough charter academy uh draft 2023-24 student calendar been moved and seconded any discussion all right all in favor of the motion to move the hca calendar to the full

[00:40:55] school board for approval please raise your hand and say aye aye that carries three zero thank you very much board members without objection um we're going to go to 404 so that um mr vickers doesn't have to stay any longer than necessary has that thank you ms sheridan and uh what i want i mentioned ITEA in the conference that all of our teachers are attending and that does include our art music PE school counselor librarian they're all down there with our steam teacher and as well as our six classroom teachers and I'm

[00:41:30] back here still so but I was going to say to you that one thing that we're very excited about is that we have been recognized for the fourth consecutive year as a stem I mean we always add that a in there as you know for the arts but we've been recognized as a stem School of Excellence by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association for the fourth consecutive year they've only been acknowledging schools and again it is international it's not just nationally for four years and our school has been recognized all four and we're very proud of that and I just wanted to share that with the board

[00:42:08] thank you and congratulations those are amazing statistics and and certainly something to celebrate board members i just hope they're able to celebrate new orleans because that that sounds like a pretty good deal they've sent pictures they're doing fine thank you very much for coming tonight all right we'll go back to item 403 practical nursing update are you taking that

[00:42:40] to start dr ellis thank you i will thank you so this evening i have with me ray mitchell chief of schools and Carolyn Solaris our supervisor of adult education programs and we will be presenting some information to you again ultimately we will need a board decision on the future of the practical nursing program the board has received several written communications since starting in July regarding this issue and some of the challenges we had and we think it's important to have a conversation about those challenges the things that we've

[00:43:18] done to try to mitigate those challenges and and our recommendations to the board moving forward mr morse and miss sheridan you'll probably remember back in 2018 we had lengthy discussions about this starting in the ad hoc committee for the academies of loudon regarding different pathways students can take significant low enrollment in the nursing program over many years and the potential for shifting it to an adult program we had hoped to shift it to an adult program to increase enrollment that that hasn't really played out as we had expected

[00:43:55] i don't think covid helped that and it's it's still posing a challenge so we wanted to provide a brief history and then miss mitchell will go into the many details of the things that they have been working on this year so the practical nursing program was approved by the school board to be a part of Loudoun

County Public Schools on June 11, 1974. The program was originally housed at the Monroe Technology Center, and then it moved to the Academies of Loudoun when the Academies building opened. It was originally offered to high school seniors

[00:44:33] and postgraduate students, and in the fall of 2021, the program transitioned to the adult education program housed at the North Star School where it is currently located. That was sort of a phased approach moving it from the academies of Loudoun to the North Star School. Students enrolled in the practical nursing program have included LCPS graduates and some not. They are still enrolled in the PN year two program. For the past four years, so 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, LCPS has not

[00:45:13] met the 80% required pass rate on the National Council licensure exam or the NCLEX exam. So this is the exam that the practical nursing year two students take after they complete the program and programs are required by the State Board of Nursing.

[00:45:34] This is not Virginia Department of Ed. This is the State Board of Nursing that regulates these programs. Requires an 80% pass rate. As you can imagine, another math problem, if enrollment is very low, every single passing score matters to reach that 80%.

[00:45:51] So in May of 2021, the Virginia Board of Nursing conducted a site visit and the program, which had been conditionally approved because of our low pass rate, continued to have us on conditional status until those NCLEX pass rates were received.

[00:46:10] Here's a brief program enrollment history. I can provide numbers much further back. I don't think I can go back to 74, but I could at least go back to 2013, and enrollment is historically low.

[00:46:27] So even when at the Academies of Loudoun, when there was a limit of 20 per program year, 20 people in PN1, 20 in PN2, we never got close to that number ever. And you can see that numbers continue to remain low.

[00:46:46] And now I'll turn it over to Ms. Mitchell who will provide some more information. So, as you can see, we have the information that we get when they send the notification. They have first-time test takers, which is presented here on the screen.

[00:47:05] And it is important to note that you can take a test for the first time, but have graduated years ago. For example, if a student completed the program in 2020, but they didn't take the NCLEX until 2022, that score would count for 2022.

[00:47:24] Another example is that we just received a student who took the test this month and graduated in 1997, and that student did not pass. So right now, our pass rate would be impacted by that, right?

[00:47:40] So we have students as far back as 1997, 2010, another student took the test that counted for us 2019 and 2 in 2021. So it's not about their graduating year, it's when they take the NCLEX and how that impacts us.

[00:47:58] So for our current status, we were, Adult Education received a notice from the Virginia Board of Nursing about some things that are required with that conditional approval.

[00:48:13] And it is contingent upon the 2023 and 2024 pass rates. But the example I just gave, we have a student that graduated in 97. So currently, our 2023 pass rate is zero. one student has taken the NCLEX, and we would need to get that to 80%.

[00:48:32] So for every four out of five students that test, regardless of when they graduated, we would need them to get at least an 80%. So part of that notification is that there is a submission of a comprehensive plan regarding the transition of how we are only having adults enter.

[00:48:52] So as Dr. Ellis stated on a previous slide, some students that are in the second year that would be finishing the program are LCPS graduates from academies. Moving forward, if we were to continue, they could be graduates of any school system, but they would just be adults only.

[00:49:11] They would not necessarily have to come from Academies of Loudoun or any other program. So that was part of the requirements that we had to submit. We also had to submit a comprehensive plan regarding the curriculum mapping, the type of courses that were going to be taught, and a quarterly report which has to be sent in on the first Monday of January, April, July, and October.

[00:49:38] And the January report was submitted and feedback has already been received from that report. Another part of the order was that all students, faculty, and board had to be made aware of the conditional approval. It also has to be published on the website.

[00:49:57] The conditional approval also has to be reflected on any publications, so when Carolyn creates the adult education program that is mailed out, if it were to contain the practical nursing program, it would have to be stated that that program is conditionally approved.

[00:50:17] We also have to make sure that the program is in compliance with all of the Board of Health Professions requirements. The program currently has 3.5 full-time employment positions, and we currently have 1.5 of those positions hired.

[00:50:34] There was one full-time instructor that resigned a few months ago, and there was also a program coordinator that left in October. That program has been advertised since October. There was one candidate that was offered, and they withdrew because of salary.

[00:50:54] So part of the comprehensive plan when it was submitted in October, we received feedback, and the feedback from the memo that was received was that we had to include existing conditions, goals, and objectives, and next steps.

[00:51:15] Part of that information that was received noted the number of staff that we have in the program, and we have to submit all of the efforts that we put into place in order to recruit staff. HRTD has been very supportive of that and has supported us looking at ways to recruit instructional staff and a program coordinator beyond just the LCPS website.

[00:51:40] Carolyn has helped look at other venues such as LinkedIn, social media, Glassdoor, looking at nursing homes where they employ CNAs because that is a natural pathway to go from a CNA into practical nursing. So there are multiple things that have been done to help recruit staff to be a part of this practical nursing program and meet the requirements by the Board of Professions in terms of their licensing. This past December, a site visit was conducted, and they sent a report

[00:52:17] that of the 12 regulations that they studied while on the site visit, 10 of those 12 were either fully or not able to be verified due to missing and or incomplete documentation and evidence. The primary person that would be responsible for gathering those things would be the program coordinator because that person is a certified nurse. So because that position has been vacant since October, the documentation that that person would submit, adult education doesn't have. So the

[00:52:53] Health Board of Professions has given us 90 days from the date of the letter. So while they visited on December 13th, they sent the letter January 9th. So we have 90 days to fulfill all of the requirements from the site visit and work toward bringing the program into compliance. So a few slides ago I mentioned a quarterly report where they have to be submitted on the first Monday of certain months. So the one for January was submitted and there were three of the 12 categories

[00:53:30] where there was some information that they needed and it was around the clinical hours and experiences. Again, something that the program coordinator would be responsible for making sure that those clinical hours and experiences are set up for the enrolled students. And another piece of information that they wanted was an update on the hiring status, which Carolyn did send in to them yesterday. So what are our challenges? Lack of applicants for both instructional positions and

[00:54:06] the program coordinator. And not to sound like a broken record, but the program coordinator is key. That is a requirement by the Virginia Board of Health Professions. We have to have that person in place in order to continue the program. The part-time person that was just hired recently was hired with an end-of-year contract because we can't comfortably say that we're going to continue if we don't find a program coordinator. Carolyn is checking every day for applicants and the one person that she offered to was the only applicant in that pool

[00:54:42] there have either also been suggestions by the health board of professions and those people have not reached out they've not been interested so that person would be responsible for the second bullet which is fulfilling the requirements to bring the program into compliance as Dr. Ellis mentioned, low enrollment impacts our NCLEX. If we are looking at right now eight students in one year and nine students in the other, and I'll get into that in just a little bit, we're looking at a certain number of students that have to make 80 percent or higher in order to even meet the

[00:55:21] pass rate, not to even mention all of the other requirements that the health board of profession says that we have to meet. The last bullet, students are on probation due to low test scores and potentially being dismissed from the program. So just recently, as early as today, Carolyn met with six students who were previously on probation. And those students are not meeting the academic requirements, and they are not succeeding in terms of being able to pass the NCLEX. So of those six students, two of them will stay on probation until March, so giving them one

[00:55:59] additional quarter, and four students will not be returning because they have just not been successful with all of the supports that have been put into place. So we have four of those students will not be returning into the program. So now we get to what are our options. So I spoke with Dr.

[00:56:22] Charles Mangram, I'm sorry, Dr. Randall Mangram, who is the director who has been supporting the adult ed program, who conducted the site visit, who is our main point of contact, and there are three options based on the current status of the practical nursing program. We can continue, but we have to bring the program into compliance within 90 days. One of the major parts of that compliance is having a program coordinator. We can pause the program, which is to support the first-year students into another program and refund their tuition and continue with the second-year

[00:57:01] students with proper instructional staff or we can close the program or end it rather than if we would completely be done with this program and we could at some point start it again but if the main difference or the main two differences between pausing and ending is if we pause and we start the program again the conditional approval and all of the compliance issues stays with us if we close the

program, and let's say three years from now, we want to try it again, that conditional approval and all of the compliance issues is gone.

[00:57:41] It's like deleted part of our history. Pausing and or continuing, we have to have a program coordinator. So right now, we're looking at leaving that position open, hopefully trying to get someone within 90 days.

[00:57:59] But if not, we may have no choice but to end the program. and/or pause it. And Dr. Mangrum would walk us through what that process would look like.

[00:58:14] So currently, that 90 days brings us to April 9th to meet those requirements. From the site visit, hire a program coordinator, and the remaining instructional staff.

[00:58:31] Carolyn has worked with other agencies to provide us with substitutes. But again, they are not, they are having to be helped by the one full-time instructional staff member is there so it is like a substitute when we have in our classrooms where they may have some knowledge of working with the curriculum but they cannot fully pick it up and be independent they need a lot of support which that takes away from the one full-time staff member that we have in place as I said earlier all high all newly hired staff will be end of year just simply because if we hire them with

[00:59:10] continuing contracts and we don't know if we're going to be able to continue that would put us in a predicament that we didn't want to have so the newly hired person that is part-time was notified that it's an end-of-year program and that would be the same thing with the other staff that we have the other positions that we have open if a program coordinator is not hired by April we are going to suggest that we sunset the program because we can't function without a program coordinator, and even if we do, because we're now seeing that the 80 percent pass

[00:59:48] rate could be problematic, even with the program coordinator, we still may be conditional approval because we won't make the 80 percent. So we could bring, if we get a coordinator and we can work to bring the program into compliance for all of the other requirements, but we're not making the 80 percent, we're still going to be conditional. So a lot of information. Please let us know what questions you might have. And Ms. Sheridan before I turn it back to you I did just want to take a minute to thank Ray and Carolyn for their really truly astronomical efforts over the past several

[01:00:27] months in this in trying to keep this program alive essentially. It has taken a crazy amount of time on both their parts and Carolyn has all the other adult education programs as I know all three of you know so it's been it's been really hard and this is a hard conversation because not one of us wants to offer fewer options for students or or adults but at this point we we really have come to this point where we need to we need to make a decision moving forward thank you dr ellis and and i concur and and thank you both for the work that even just to get to the

[01:01:06] point where you can make a recommendation to this committee and then i'm going to assume to the board that the amount of effort you've put in to recruit students and the staff and support the students already in the program is tremendous and it doesn't go unnoticed we see we see what you did and what you tried to do and it's it's important and it isn't without merit and without value so I know this is really difficult to bring forth something that doesn't feel good so thank you for your efforts and and sometimes we just have to reprioritize and that seems what it well it's not

[01:01:43] even that if i if we go back and we look at the the fact that we've not been able to hire a coordinator the program right there is at best is paused and then um so i am opening up to the other members of the community to get their thoughts mr morse thank you madam chair the uh what is the program coordinator pay compared to our RNs for for the other positions so because it is the even though it's an adult program it's housed under lcps it's a teacher's salary has

[01:02:22] has it ever been the idea broached through hrtd to make it a competitive i mean if you do an assessment of the pay for that position i'm certain it doesn't come in at the level of a of a teacher it's a coordinator position i would assume that if hrtd did a compensation study that it would come in significantly over that is that not the case it's similar to for example the specialized um instructors at the academies of loudon and those are also on on teacher salaries and and recruitment there is is sometimes challenging in those programs so conversations

[01:02:58] have have led us back to that the conditional if we were to get back and clear everything except for the 80 is that a guarantee that we would be granted conditional approval again or is that just an opportunity that maybe we would be granted conditional my understanding is it's just a maybe we still have because we've been conditional for how long now yeah i think it was 18 19 okay So at some point, they're going to stop granting us conditional.

[01:03:33] Absolutely. Right. And so in prior years, the conditional was the pass rate. So now our challenge is not only the pass rate, it is the hiring of staff as well as the other compliance issues like the clinical hours and experiences, as well as some of the other things that that program coordinator would be responsible for helping us do.

[01:03:53] Are there any other programs in Loudoun County that the students can migrate towards to get the same training and the same certifications is there some place that we could help them or point them that they could go and continue this their pursuit for nursing yes the Virginia Board Health of Professions we would work with them first and Carolyn correct me if I'm wrong some of the agencies that she's worked with to even recruit staff they have the CNAs which is what academies of Loudoun does those students are enrolled in that program so even with working

[01:04:32] with some of the health the nursing agencies around here they're very few which was one of the reasons why Carolyn was working so hard to try to keep the program going because they have programs for CNAs but practical nursing is there just aren't that many opportunities but there are a couple of them are there some at the community college level that they could enroll in they don't haven't no that was yeah carolyn was trying to collaborate with the community college to help support that and it's just not there so if we decided to end this but we want to support the

[01:05:09] students that have already started that journey is there is there a road is there a way for us to help them to get them through the pn for the second year students we potentially could use the existing staff to help them finish because those second year students even if we look at 90 days april 9th they're right there at the end it's the first year students because even though they're two years they look at it as pn one two and three so the p and three students are in the second year and those that would be the group that we would really work to support to help them finish

[01:05:47] because those are the students that would be eligible to take the NCLEX thank you any other so one question with the fact that someone can take the exam after being in the program for 25 graduating 25

years ago so if we close the program does that affect people's ability to take the exam and then if we reopen it later on will they come back and with those potential you know will their ability to pass the test affect

[01:06:17] our pass rate no because if we reopen the program again it will be under a completely different code number so we starting from scratch no so whatever if a past student signs up to take the class they will use the old code so it

[01:06:46] would not affect us. Thank you that's helpful. So is it fair to say staff's recommendation is to close the program? I'll just state right here that I am in favor of that as well given all of the parameters that have been outlined tonight Mr. Beatty. Actually one more question is this I think you were kind of going with but this is this an alternative to like a four-year nursing program for a bachelor's degree is this where does this fit into because the NCLEX is like the exam you

[01:07:19] take to become a nurse correct? This is a two-year the four-year is usually for the RNs. What would you be what would you be after you completed this program just an n p and they would become licensed practical nurses practical nurses oh that got it okay thank you do you want to weigh in on your opinion to help guide staff i'm i think closing it makes the most sense at this point and i agree

[01:07:54] but you need direction from the board because it was adopted by the board in 1974. yes i i do believe um and i did actually consult with mr falconi earlier today to make sure my my understanding was correct and he he and i both agree that because the board officially adopted the program in 74 the board would need to take a vote to end the program mr morse yes the um if it requires additional funding to get those second year students through the program and successful

[01:08:33] that's something we should know as well because i think we'd be willing to try to make the adjustments and you mentioned also refunding the first year students there will be a cost associated with that so someone should when this brief comes before the full board we'll need to know what those numbers are as well thank you miss mitchell correct me if i'm wrong but i i believe we would we would proceed with refunding the first year students and doing everything we can to continue to hire a coordinator um but then get the second year students through that april date so that

[01:09:08] they could be able to take the NCLEX is that correct um so carolyn and i would work with dr mangram who i said is our point of contact and so um i told him that we were presenting to our school board and the committee um and he suggested we contact him after a preliminary decision was made and then he would support us through whichever option and so we have until April 9th with just the 90 days and that's so close until the end of the year that we could have a plan in place to make sure that those second year students are meeting their clinical hours and should they choose because they

[01:09:47] don't they could choose not to take the NCLEX but should they choose they would have an opportunity to do so does it make sense to continue to seek a program coordinator if we're not going to I mean we don't even have students signing up for this so no so because of the unique situation it has not been advertised to accept students for the 2324 school year so even if we left the position open for program coordinator again it would be until the end of the year and that would

[01:10:23] just be someone to help support to make sure that we are transitioning the first your students correctly um and whatever compliance things we do need to do um would help support us but they would be aware that it would be until june and that's it and i move to suspend the rules second motion to suspend the rules all in favor please raise your hand say aye aye that carries three zero did you want to make a

motion mr morris yes i move that uh we forward to the full school board a recommendation to close the program i second that any discussion all in favor of the Please raise your hand and say aye.

[01:10:59] - Aye. - That will carry three zero. And thank you very much for all of your efforts and everything that you've tried to make this successful. It does not go unnoticed. We appreciate you bringing the recommendation so that we can move forward to assist the students that we can and then not continue to have this just continue to lapse.

[01:11:21] So thank you. All right, any new business? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you all very much.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com