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Loudoun County School Board, FY24 Operating Budget Adoption and Public Hearing, Thursday, February 2, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/795330224?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] agenda remote participation I have been notified that miss Corbo would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting miss Corbo could you please state your location whether this is a medical or personal matter and if anyone is present with you at your location thank you I am home I'm alone and under policy 2420 I'm asking for electronic meeting participation due to an ongoing disability and medical condition as recommended by HR TD under federal ADA disability law. Thank you. I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's request to

[00:00:37] participate remotely for health or medical reasons be granted. So moved. Moved by Mr. Morris. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Beatty. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hands and say aye. Those opposed, please raise your hand and say nay. Nay.

[00:00:56] those abstaining. That motion will fail 3-3-1-2 with Mr. Serotkin, Ms. Sheridan, and Ms. Reeser opposed, Ms. Ogadegbe abstaining from the vote, and Corbo and Mehedivi absent from the vote.

[00:01:16] Ms. Corbo, would you like to request participation for a personal matter tonight? Since personal exemptions are limited, and I feel it's best to reserve my personal exemptions for budget reconciliation if needed and also selecting the superintendent I will not be asking for a personal assumption okay thank you with that we'll move to item two on our agenda disclosures and we will start

with miss Sheridan as a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on

[00:01:54] tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related Benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees Specifically as a school board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees While in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Mr. Morse

[00:02:28] Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and our health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, my spouse is an LCPS employee and is eligible to receive benefits.

[00:02:53] These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected, of which my wife is included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public record of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you.

[00:03:08] As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:03:24] Specifically, I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest.

[00:03:43] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. With that, we will move to item three on our agenda, which is the public hearing on the superintendent's proposed FY24 operating budget.

[00:03:59] For those here tonight and those who will be speaking virtually, thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment and public hearing process. The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system.

[00:04:16] Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Based on the number of speakers and the agenda this evening, all speakers have been allotted three, count them, three minutes for each public comment. Please be advised that speakers who miss their time spot will not be called at a later time.

[00:04:33] All audience members shall maintain civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times. Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, and other noise, which disrupts or delays the meeting.

[00:04:56] Obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa. Interrupting speakers. Attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair. And approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other meeting attendees.

[00:05:15] Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, profanity, or other like breaches of respect, nor may speakers target, criticize, or attack individual students during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official.

[00:05:32] Additionally, complaints regarding division employees should be directed to the school principal or appropriate school division official. Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board. Per LCPS policy, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period.

[00:05:52] Violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting. Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in, on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled into a later point in the meeting's agenda, Limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment and for safety reasons or the public comment period ending for the evening.

[00:06:20] And as this is a public hearing on a specific topic, public comment during the public hearing should be related to the FY24 operating budget adoption. Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom prior to the start of the meeting.

[00:06:39] Please provide 12 copies of materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through LCPS TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43.

[00:06:55] The live stream of the meeting may also be viewed on the LCPS website. Tonight we're going to start with our in-person speakers. The first speaker is Sandy Sullivan to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf.

[00:07:22] Good evening. My name is Sandy Sullivan. I'm the president of the Loudoun Education Association, and am an elementary school teacher. First, I want to show you the shirt that I'm wearing today. It says, we can't spell respect without ESPs. In the National Education Association, we consider what we here in Loudoun call classified employees.

[00:07:43] We call them ESPs, Education Support Professionals, because they are educators, and they support our teachers, and they support our students. Those employees need a living wage. There were adjustments made to their now salary scale, but those folks still struggle to be able to live and work in Loudoun County.

[00:08:01] I want you to be aware that bus drivers and bus attendants often have very different experiences and benefits. This is the second time now that bus drivers are eligible for a bonus for attendance, for meeting a certain level of attendance, while bus attendants are not. And those bus attendants are just as important on those buses for safety as those drivers are.

[00:08:21] We're also asking for an item that costs no money, renaming the position of teacher assistants to instructional assistant. That more clearly shows what they do, is working with students and instruction.

In terms of salary, it is much better to see the basement being a 5% salary increase instead of a 5% range from last year.

[00:08:48] The folks on the top of the scale, though, those folks that have devoted years and years service to our students in Loudoun County, those salary increases still do not meet the needs that they have. Teachers need time to teach. Educators need time to teach. Individual planning time must be guarded so that the best lessons and the best work with students can happen. As much as possible, keep the teachers in the classroom instead of pulling them out for training. Subbing and having subs in buildings regularly that are very able and confident to take care of the needs in the

[00:09:22] classrooms is still a challenge. Also consider when you are adding, if you're adding any positions to the budget, to focus directly on student needs and not adults. LEA is ready as always to lobby the Board of Supervisors through the process, through their adoption, and then when it comes back to your side, hopefully with no decisions to make, but just to move forward for a good year.

[00:09:44] Thank you. Andrea Weiskopf to be followed by Meredith Ray. Good evening. I told a couple of in class today doing some grammar one of my jokes was what do you call a noun that's really good at its job a pronoun thank you all I'll be here all day I have a instructional assistant in that classroom he's not paid enough to laugh

[00:10:22] at those jokes he and other classified staff deserve to be paid for what they do for the students of our community. They work hard, they take all the training, and they even listen to my jokes. I do have another one about pronouns. I also want you to remember that budgets are moral documents. I don't have a lot of power in the world. One way I make sure students know

[00:10:59] that I care is hopefully by my words, but they see my silly shirts, my silly ribbons. You don't have to wear a ribbon to show your support for students, but you do need to vote to show your support for students and staff. One reason you see us here is that we don't have

[00:11:27] collective bargaining. So we're left with three minutes to tell you what we need in three minutes, what our students need, what our colleagues need, our co-workers, what the children in our care need in three minutes. We need collective bargaining. Finally, my other joke was, so a friend and I

[00:12:01] were debating about the best pronoun i won i won i thank you black lives matter thank you meredith ray to be followed by jennifer de donato good evening my father was born after the brown versus board decision that desegregated schools in 1954 despite that fact when he began schooling

[00:12:36] at six years old he was not allowed to attend to attend school with white children while he did not attend LCPS schools, we know that LCPS and many other districts fought against equal access to public education for many years. The last school to be desegregated in the United States was desegregated in the year 2016. The people directly affected by these racist and divisive policies are our parents, grandparents, community members, and children. Promoting equity in schools helps to create a level playing field for all students and can lead to a better educational outcome for

[00:13:13] all. In your budget planning, please hold it in the highest importance to continue to fund all positions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as funding any equity and inclusion programs currently being funded or encouraged by the equity report or those who have studied the problems of racism within LCPS. Thank you. Thank you. Jennifer DiDonato to be followed by Heather Gottlieb. Thank

you. First off, great pronunciation. I think you're the only person to get that on the first time. I'm here today to really talk about three things. One thing

[00:13:52] is on transparency. I have three bachelor's degrees, a law degree, a whole number of letters after my name, and I couldn't figure out your budget, right? I went into the meeting invite, and there was no documentation or links there. I finally found a presentation with a whole bunch of hands with hearts in it and a few random numbers, but it didn't give me the information I needed to look at the staffing projections, the number of resources. I was finally able to find the budget paper, but it didn't actually go into the detail of the job roles. It had these categories, but the way it was, it obfuscated how many speech language pathologists you were hiring,

[00:14:31] how many OTs and PTs that you were hiring based upon that of 2019. So my first ask, right, last night we spent two and a half hours with six very highly educated individuals and unable to figure it out without the numbers there so my first ask would be in the future if we could make it very transparent i would love to just see the job roles right i mean we should all have the job roles and how many people we've hired in previous years versus ones we're looking for in the future year if we could just see that level of transparency that would be very helpful the other thing that was concerning was the funding for sped teachers and support staff in 2024 looking at the limited

[00:15:09] information I had. I saw the 36 that we had planned that it says it was for COVID, but that was a money management issue, but they were funded under the COVID release. That plus the 15 due to the 0.9% increase in enrollment next year would target a number of 51 additional resources that should have made it our way into our operating budget. When I looked there, that's not what we were including. We were including 15 additional per the enrollment increase and then 12.7 in hold harmless roles but home harmless roles as we know as soon as someone leaves that that role is gone and as we've seen over the past years attrition

[00:15:48] with teachers is an all-time high especially those in special education so my request is that we take a look at those numbers I would like to see the number of resources we had in 2019 when we were in a pre-COVID state versus those that we have now based off the budget I saw we have a 6.5 increase in the number of students with disabilities receiving support and we had one-third of the number of speech-language pathologists assigned to equip to handle those students.

[00:16:17] That's a mismatch in the level of effort that we're going to be providing versus the level of effort needed for our students. So I would like us to look at that. For those 12.7 resources that are being in that hold harmless state, what we have and what our staff has stated is that those wouldn't go away.

[00:16:34] we have the funding for those and we are excited about those, let's move those into the operating budget to secure those roles and positions for our students in this year. Thank you so much for your help and support, and I hope that you take a look at these things. Thank you. Heather Gottlieb to be followed by Andrew Pihonek. Hi, everyone. Happy Black History Month. It's amazing to me that in 2023, while black people are still being paid less than white people for the same job, while black people are still being sentenced more harshly,

[00:17:09] While black people are still being discriminated against daily, while just this week we watched police murder another black man, that anyone would suggest defunding the equity programs or positions or removing black history from our public schools on the first week of Black History Month, no less.

[00:17:24] The fact that this is lost on people on how this most recent murder of a black man by police is about race is exactly why we need to continue to teach accurate history to our children. Isn't it odd that justice was so swift in this case compared to others? this isn't the first time we've seen police murder a black man on camera it is the first time though that all the officers are black well with the exception of the one who hasn't been fired and is still collecting a paycheck sounds about white doesn't it not continuing to fund all de and i positions and programs would be a disservice to all students not just black brown gay and trans and transgender ones it would actually be a bigger disservice to those white

[00:18:02] students whose parents believe the de and i programs don't belong in school and those parents who may request tonight that they be defunded why because in the real world we must work with with and associate with all kinds of people these students will be at a huge disadvantage when navigating the adult world without the knowledge and empathy the DEI programs teach it is imperative the LCPS equity initiatives and personnel continue to be funded black history is our history and to echo Andrea black lives matter thank you thank you Andrea pihan excuse me

[00:18:36] Andrew Pihonak to be followed by Brenda Bengston as black history month starts and conversations continue about uplifting communities That have been underserved in the past and continue to be It is vital to remind everyone how important three specific factors are to making sure Loudoun County students and staff have a fair learning environment Diversity equity and inclusion three words that make the world's difference to these kids To put it plainly equity ensures that every single student and staff member has equal access to resources Opportunities and advancement without equity. There is no quality

[00:19:14] Therefore it is necessary to continue to uphold diversity equity and inclusion measures that have been implemented in the past Loudon has wonderful programs in place already such as a minority student and achievement advisory committee and an equity committee I urge the board to continue to fund and expand any and all diversity equity and inclusion programs As well as staff positions that ensure these factors are being upheld from author bell hooks Quote, to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.

[00:19:47] Thank you. Thank you. And our final in-person speaker is Brenda Bengston. I'm Brenda Bengston, former student and retired educator.

[00:20:05] In the 60s, I attended five schools in five years because of limited space. LCPS finally integrated, and PL 94142 guaranteed my first job in special education in the late '70s.

[00:20:21] During 31 years at eight different sites in specialized programs at all levels, I experienced growth years with lean or more robust bus budgets. Please support a budget that reflects our values and our needs as a professional organization, encouraging student-centered approaches respecting differences, providing access to resources such as reliable Wi-Fi, supporting faculty and staff, and embracing educational excellence.

[00:20:53] A professional organization strives to improve upon its performance, and we've come far since I was a student. An example, my friends and I were the top three readers in sixth grade, scoring 99 percentile on achievement tests.

[00:21:09] Our first year teacher did not know how differentiate education with independent research or accelerated reading materials the teacher worked to meet others needs while we served lunch in the

cafeteria the bonus we got free lunch and we rode around on the dollies while putting up tables true yet disturbing as my Futura or spectrum teams designed curricula it was based on needs abstract complex problem-solving lessons when I

[00:21:43] When I wrote recommendations to TJ or adjudicated writing samples, it was based on needs. Background is important. Lived experiences and needs frame what we value. Please support a budget that reflects excellence and equity for all students, faculty, and staff.

[00:22:04] Now, since you gave us a bonus minute, I'm going to add a little bit more. Thank you. I could tell you many more stories of my experiences, but as an addendum, I can only express my concern and immense disappointment in the recent news of the state's education funding debacle. I can only hope that the more than 10 million that Loudon will potentially lose will be remedied because it does affect our future, it affects our students, it affects our budgets. Thank you. Thank you. We will now move to our virtual speakers starting with Sarah Freeman.

[00:22:47] I'm here due to the pleadings of my son to stay in elementary distance learning, and I agree with him. Due to my child's primary immunodeficiency and his education journey coinciding with the start of COVID, he participated in homeschooling during kindergarten, in-person for first grade, and distance learning this year for second grade.

[00:23:06] The variety of these modes provides me with a unique perspective. I acknowledge I enrolled him into distance learning, concerned about socialization with his peers and their interactions due to media speculation of online schooling. Happily, I'm able to report my concerns were wrong. The distance learning environment is what one makes of it, and LCPS is an exemplary model of how to do it right.

[00:23:28] My son is enjoying a quality of peer interactions and frequency of those positive interactions beyond his in-person schooling. As he experienced physical and verbal bullying during in-person schooling, his conversations between his current classmates are warm and engaging. They talk between classes, after school hours, and during class when appropriate with the teacher monitoring.

[00:23:48] The school offers a multitude of after-school clubs, which are far more accessible and varied than the in-person after-school clubs. The school encourages parents to connect, too. As a result, we've arranged play dates from trips to the zoo and to the Air and Space Museum. We've planted a garden together and have frequent play dates on trips.

[00:24:06] We've even had a school-wide Halloween party complete with trick-or-treating, pinatas, and pumpkin paintings. School is not only for friendships, though. My son has missed a tenth of the days he did in person, which dramatically impacts his ability to access his education. The flexibility of distance learning also allows him to access his specialists in treatment with minimal interference to his day and that of his classmates.

[00:24:28] If distance learning is removed, how can LCPS create a safe and equitable learning environment without placing an undue burden on our family? Thank you. Thank you. The next speaker is Tim McClintock. All right.

[00:24:48] Thank you. Please continue Virtual Loudon Distance Learning Elementary. Virtual Loudon Distance Learning Elementary is something that many of the children in our area need, A need that has gone unfulfilled for many years until its creation.

[00:25:04] Children with medical conditions that make it in-person learning impossible. Children that have been bullied in school and have found it a safe haven to learn. Children who have conditions that make them unable to cope with the constant distractions of a normal classroom. These other children will have to make do with just a couple hours of instruction a week, have to endure fear, or be constantly overwhelmed.

[00:25:23] That is what they have to go back to when distance learning elementary goes away. Most children do better in person, but with such a diverse community, there's always going to be billions of exceptions. I implore you not to leave these kids behind, not when we now have the tools to help them. Empowering all students to make meaningful contributions to the world is not just a mission statement, but an action to be taken.

[00:25:43] Please continue Virtual Loudon Distance Learning Elementary. Thank you. The next speaker is William Burns Freeman. During first grade, I kept getting sick, and I missed a lot of school.

[00:26:02] Since starting distance learning, I'm less sick. Even on sick days, I can go in class because I can lay down during break. I was also badly bullied in first grade. This year, everyone in class are friends. Please keep distance learning. Thank you.

[00:26:30] Thank you. The next speaker is Mary McClintock.

[00:27:07] Our second daughter's muscle beads are being met. She needs to be monitored 24-7, and if left unmonitored, can have a stroke, seizure, or pass out. On rough days, when she doesn't feel some healthy for medical issues and is crying on my shoulder, she can still learn and thrive and insist on watching her class.

[00:27:22] She doesn't have to go to the school clinic to get her medicine several times a day and lose educational time. Business learning helps keep my daughter safe and healthy. As a parent, I am scared for my child if this program is taken away. What are you going to do to ensure she receives safe and equitable education?

[00:27:42] Thank you. And the final virtual speaker is Heather Hughes. Please fund virtual elementary. I have two children in the program. They have been thriving and doing very well. Their teachers have been nothing but amazing.

[00:27:58] My children have immune deficiencies that make it hard for them to go into the building. They get sick very easily. My son and daughter have been on homebound before. Homebound is not equal. They do not get the same education. They're not taught all the things that they need. With virtual, my children are able to attend school, learn, and have fun with their peers safely.

[00:28:17] Please fund virtual elementary. So many children benefit from this wonderful program and these excellent teachers. Thank you. Thank you. That will conclude the public hearing on the proposed FY24 operating budget.

[00:28:35] At this time, we're going to return to item two, disclosures for Mr. Mehedivi to read his disclosure. Mr. Mehedivi. Thank you, Chair. As a member of the Lantern County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any of the discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:28:57] Specifically, I'm enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees, well in excess of statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I'm included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you with that we will move to item 4.01 responses to FY 24 budget questions miss Willoughby yes thank you so in board docs you will find another packet of budget questions and answers I will also

[00:29:36] make reference that on page 8 we revisited question 18 as HRTD was able to pull together some attrition data and so that has been included in this packet this we have no other open questions at this time so this is the final packet at this point in the budget process thank you board members are there any questions for miss willowby specifically regarding the responses to fy24 budget questions seeing none we will move to item five on our agenda which is

[00:30:12] the fy 24 budget adoption i will go ahead and make the base motion i move that let the loudon county school board adopt the superintendent's fy 24 estimate of needs with staff recommended changes as the school board adopted fy 24 budget allocate 2 million 418 thousand 456 dollars of appropriated unspent fy 23 year end funds for the purposes presented and include the presented language in the transmittal letter to the county. Is there a second? Seconded by Mr. Mahedvi.

[00:30:50] I don't have anything specific to speak to my motion, but Ms. Willoughby, if you wouldn't mind, if you could give, I know there were two staff recommended changes to the superintendent's estimate of needs that hadn't been presented prior to tonight. So would you mind giving a brief overview of what those changes were? I can do that. I also had some information if you wanted me to share to provide an update regarding the state's budget and regarding the shortfall that would be great go ahead okay thank you so as I mentioned I would like to provide an update on the events that have occurred since last week on Friday January 27th state superintendent Barlow

[00:31:27] notified school division superintendents of an error made by VDOE in calculating the basic aid allocations for school divisions this error is due to the calculation not reflecting the provision to hold localities harmless from the elimination of the state's portion of the sales tax on groceries.

[00:31:46] This miscalculation results in Virginia's gold divisions receiving \$201 million less in state aid, of which \$58 million was allocated for this fiscal year. While VDOE has not provided corrected, updated calculation tools, we have calculated the impact to LCPS to be a shortfall of about \$3.5 million for this year and about \$7.4 million for next year.

[00:32:08] Our current FY23 budget is built on the expectation that we would receive \$3.5 million more than we currently will. And as you know, we have built a budget for next year that includes \$7.4 million of state revenue that we thought we would receive.

[00:32:25] If this is not addressed by the state to make schools whole, we will have two issues to deal with. Late yesterday, though, the governor did ask the General Assembly to use, quote, necessary resources to fix this mistake during their budget process.

[00:32:40] So I am cautiously optimistic that this will be resolved. Based on this news and the fact that there are several Senate and House budget amendments and bills still active that could impact our

expenditure requirements and revenue streams, staff's recommendation is to adopt the FY24 budget on known complete information.

[00:33:01] Once the state budget is complete, we can determine final impacts to LCPS and bring forward any additional recommended adjustments to the budget. Our first indication of this will be on February 9th when VDOE will provide updated calculation tools based on the House budget amendments and the Senate budget amendments.

[00:33:20] We will promptly share this information with the school board and the county. The General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn no later than February 25th. I also wanted to provide some information because the question has come up that the county's tax schedule always places the development of the schools and their budget ahead of the state's process this places LCPS at a disadvantage of not having complete information from the state to incorporate into its budget requests for the school board and for the County Board of Supervisors consideration because our process is ahead of the state we are reacting to

[00:33:56] final state budget impacts to LCPS. The Board of Supervisors adopts their tax rates in April so that the treasurer can prepare and distribute the tax bills ahead of their due dates that are due on May 5th and June 5th. Regarding staff's recommended motion, so we do have the TOTE board posted up on the screen and we have two items that we have combined. They are not related.

[00:34:25] They are two distinct adjustments, but we are just combining them into one recommended adjustment. The first is to reduce the funding for two pre-staffed custodians for a savings of \$53,569. At one of the budget work sessions, there was discussion regarding the pre-staffing of these custodians.

[00:34:48] Currently, in the superintendent's assessment of needs budget, they are funded for six months of work. However, upon discussion and timing of opening a new school, we are reducing that to only two months' worth of funding. So this \$53,000 in change represents four months' worth of savings.

[00:35:06] The second piece is related to the school board compensation per policy 2150, and this is adding an additional \$32,598. dollars when the superintendent's estimate of needs budget was prepared we had only calculated a two percent increase to take effect after the next election in January or to become effective in January after the next election a two percent increase for one year upon clear review of the policy the policy actually included language to do two percent per year since the last time the

[00:35:42] school board's compensation had been updated and that was back in 2008 so this is the additional amount to bring forward those salaries based on that policy when you combine those of reducing the savings from the custodians and adding back in compensation we have a net reduction to the budget of \$20,971. So we are starting off the budget with that \$20,000 available to allocate and or to reduce the county transfer by. And with that, I'll turn it back to any motions that the

[00:36:21] school board may have. Thank you. I'll now open the floor for questions or amendments to the budget. Mr. Mahedmi. Thank you, Chair. I'd like to make an amendment. I move to amend the budget by adding four additional math resource specialists to start math intervention pilots across five elementary schools for the cost of \$495,564. Sir, second. I will second the motion. Mr. Mahedvi, would you like to speak to your motion? Thank you, Chair, and thank you for seconding. So coming out of COVID,

[00:37:00] I think we as a collective board have made, again, there's a lot of lessons learned. There's a lot of findings. Early reading and reading specialists was a big effort that we made in the last budget cycles. And again, I'll speak more about the math. Math is another area where we have seen a lot of, I mean, at

least seen or heard from a lot of studies that was done that math is another area where there was an impact coming out of COVID. Now, again, our staff and the teachers and IFTs

[00:37:36] are doing excellent work in trying to catch up our elementary kids as best as they can. But I think there is also we need to provide additional support for the students that need help. So I'll qualify that.

[00:37:53] So, for example, similar to reading specialist, where if a student is not reading up to, let's say, the grade level or needs some support, reading specialist sort of pulls some students out in group settings and help and and support that I believe and I think think one of the teachers came in one of the public's one of the public comment period also and spoke to about the program I think this is something that would really benefit it normally I would like love to have it done across all elementary but I know

[00:38:30] the budget is challenging but at the same time kind of going with the same philosophy and spirit I had that we need to do some more pilots before we just roll it out across the entire division so I'm requesting that we start with five elementary schools now the request is for four because the superintendent budget already includes one which came out of current governor's initiative which was only providing half half a resource so we've gone ahead and and sort of made one resource available so I'm hoping that the board can support in at least going because we want to get a good

[00:39:10] breadth of assessment across multiple school versus one school. So that's why I'm asking about that we we support at least five positions across five elementary schools to do that. One additional thing to add this program the math intervention program it's currently it's currently supporting our special ed populations already.

[00:39:35] What this would do is to similarly offer the same program so we're not introducing a new program or new materials but also make it available for a our general ed populations in elementary. So the first grade second grade third grade fourth grade this one teacher one sort of specialist can provide that support for which is much dire needed across the elementary.

[00:40:02] I know we provide a lot of support in the high school, middle school, but I think the earlier we catch it, earlier we address it in elementary, I think would be tremendously beneficial as we go through it. So I'll be, if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer. Discussion on the motion?

[00:40:22] Ms. Okedegape. I just have a question. So first of all, I appreciate the motion and the idea. my question is do you have a corresponding offset to help to fund the positions I think this is a great idea I just am curious where where you would find the funding for that I think we have some challenges this year in terms of overall funding availability and especially with this error that occurred in Richmond recently and the understanding that we're going to have

[00:41:00] to if that if we aren't made whole by the budget process going on in Richmond right now we will have to find it in other places so I'm curious what your thoughts are about that miss of debate I think excellent question so typically for the last three board cycles we've done we've always done the same approach where we would offer something and then reduce it so you're you're absolutely write about that question. So there was a deliberate for me to not I do have other motions to help

[00:41:37] reduce that to bring that in light but at the same time I I want to make sure that we focus on whether we as a board believe that we need to provide the support for math in elementary. So I want to

make sure we decouple that versus because now in the in the past what happened is So let's say we're going to go through multiple.

[00:42:01] I know there's multiple motions folks are going to make for reducing the budget in order to balance it up, but I don't want that to weigh against what we as a board needs to make a priority of what we want to do in this particular cycle. We have also done a very good job about sending a budget that is what the ask is or even reduce further.

[00:42:23] Again, you know, the first year budget cycle, I know Mr. Suratkin would chuckle. I think we were trying to be fiscally responsible and make sure that we were trying to do the right thing by sending a very thought out, very balanced budget, only to get further cut down by the supervisors.

[00:42:43] So I just saw anyway, that's a moot point, but I want us as a board to weigh this particular request on the merit of what's been needed, and we'll as a collectively board will work on, I have a couple more questions in terms of reduction ideas that we can work on finding the \$450,000 in this \$1.5, \$1.6 billion.

[00:43:05] So that's why I want to decouple them and not tie it to something else because then we lose the main sort of priority of why we're trying to make this initiative. I hope that helps. Mr. Morse. And then Mr. Beatty.

[00:43:21] Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I want to start off by saying I appreciate getting the heads up And having you discuss that with me prior to the meeting, I think that's very valuable for collaboration. And I also like the idea of a pilot, of a small effort.

[00:43:37] The challenge I have right now is that I don't know, looking at that as a half a million dollars, I don't know if there are other priorities that other board members are going to surface during this meeting that I would create, I would think, a higher priority. And for that reason, I move to lay the motion on the table.

[00:43:55] There's a motion to table. There's a motion to table. It does require a second. Is there a second? The motion has been seconded by Ms. Okadegbe. There is no debate on the motion, and it does pass with a simple board majority.

[00:44:17] All those in favor of laying the motion on the table temporarily, please raise your hand and say aye. Those opposed, please raise your hand and say nay. Nay. That motion will pass 6-2 with Mehellevy and Sorotkin opposed and Ms. Corvo absent for the vote.

[00:44:35] So that will be laid on the table until a later point this evening. Additional amendments. Mr. Morse. Okay. Something that's going to help us with this discussion. Looking at the motion, the motion includes \$2.4 million that we're assuming is coming out of the unexpended, appropriated 2023 budget.

[00:44:59] And my question is, last week when we were briefed on the difference between the three plans provided by the Board of Supervisors, I believe it was \$0.88, \$0.89, and \$0.89.5, we came up with a \$6 million deficit for the \$0.88 plan.

[00:45:17] Is this \$2.4 million going to reduce that amount, or is that already accounted for in the brief that we got last week? The \$2.4 million is not included in the FY24 superintendent's estimate of needs, so it has no impact on the funding scenarios from the county.

[00:45:36] So if we are pulling funding forward on expenditures that were to take place next year, these expenditures, I assume, were in the needs-based budget that was provided to us? They were not included in the needs-based budget that was provided to you.

[00:45:57] we disclosed the information knowing though that we would want to highlight that there had been concerted effort leading up to the preparation of the budget and knowing that this is a question that typically comes up during the budget adoption process if we have scrubbed through the budget for items that could be moved forward so in terms of trying to present a fiscally constrained budget we went ahead and was proactive and pulled those items out but we identified them during the presentation and it's included in the motion because it does require school board action to appropriate the FY 23 unspent funds on any of those type of

[00:46:35] items okay I think that's very unusual it's something we have not done in the past whereas there is a need in 2024 that was not captured in the needs based budget and so staff made an assumption that that was going to be handled outside of the normal procurement process or appropriation process.

[00:46:56] So, I mean, that makes it difficult for us looking at this because really these are 2024 procurements and they should be part of our discussion as such and not already pre-identified for end-of-year funding.

[00:47:11] There may be additional items that at the end of the year we decide are more important than these. And we are already, we're just halfway through the year, and now we're already setting aside \$2.4 million of the current year funding. And added to that is the risk that the \$3 million that the governor's or the VDOE error, which is still outstanding, could compound this issue.

[00:47:37] Now we're \$5 million off. So I would, I don't know how I'd like to handle this. I'm just, it's challenging because I think that we're taking it out of the budget in which it belongs, and it should be part of the discussion and not set aside as priorities because the board has not selected these as priorities.

[00:48:04] Ms. Reeser. Is the amount that you're proposing to reduce the amount that Mr. Morse is referencing above the amount that we could keep as end-of-year funds? In other words, would that be going back to the Board of Supervisors anyway?

[00:48:23] Yes, based on the first quarter projection that we had presented, we had identified \$21 million as the appropriated unspent balance at that time. So we did go back and look at this based on the information from the state and the \$3.5 million revenue shortfall that we could be looking at to make sure if we needed to make an adjustment and we feel confident that we can manage the revenue shortfall along with this funding requirement that was included in the January 10th.

[00:48:54] budget presentation that the superintendent presented additional discussions or amendments mr. Beatty I would like to make a amendment to the budget I move that the school board remove the equity lead stipend from the Department of Instruction for cost savings of four hundred eighteen thousand eight hundred forty eight dollars and that the school board removed the position of equity director for cost savings of two hundred sixty six thousand nine hundred sixty five dollars and for staff to provide the 60-day reduction

[00:49:29] enforced notice to the incumbent per policy and regulation 7920 and that the school board removed position of equity supervisor for cost saving of \$159,205 and for the staff to provide the 60-day reduction enforced notice to the incumbent per policy and regulation 7920 and that the school board

removed the position of culturally responsive instruction specialist for cost saving of \$157,157 for and for staff to provide the 60-day reduction in forced notice to the incumbent per policy and regulation 7920 and that the school board removed the three equity and cultural responsive instructional facilitators for cost savings of three hundred sixty three thousand four and

[00:50:08] sixty five dollars and for staff to provide the 60-day reduction in forced notice to the incumbents per policy in regulation 7920 and that the school board removed the support position from the equity division for the department of instruction for cost savings of hundred two thousand seventy two dollars and for staff to provide the 60-day reduction in forced notice to the incumbent per policy and regulation 7920 and that the school board remove all operations and maintenance expenses from the equity office from the budget for cost savings of two hundred twenty thousand two hundred fifty dollars for a total savings of one million six hundred ninety five thousand nine hundred sixty two dollars is there a second second motion made by mr. Beatty seconded

[00:50:46] by miss polifco mr. Beatty would you like to speak to your motion yes chair thank you so people are always asking me about how controversial the school board must be but honestly I don't think it's really that the case you know we have an obligation to find an education you know and there's a history that education being appropriate enough and it's been it's been good for our students and I would say that 99% of this budget is pretty run-of-the-mill providing fair wages for teachers and you know and it's not it's helping teachers because they're the people that teach our students who we have to provide that education for and you know this is the appropriate way to do that but I think there's one thorn in school board conversations it's a burr that keeps sticking to those discussions on education and that has been equity and I think

[00:51:25] we all support the idea of working towards the common good. Again, providing an appropriate education, but we also have a tradition of removing faith or ideology, if you will, from schools in an effort to make schools more accommodating. However, that vacuum that we've created, that vacuum of faith, it kind of allows other ideologies to enter our classrooms. Now, again, we all believe in something, whether there's a higher power, money, wealth, power for power's sake, adulation, flattering, and whether it was a correct decision to remove faith from our schools. You know, we've really remove one belief system in a higher power and i think we've replaced it with the belief in the inevitable perfectibility of man and i think that's equity as it's understood through these

[00:52:04] positions because it looks at everyone's differences and imperfections differences that must be removed and it attempts to smooth them over into one outcome for everyone and our efforts to impose a secular faith on students is one problem but the faith of equity is flawed the belief that it's just a system that keeps us down rhymes mirrors and copies from previous class struggles. If men were perfectible, we'd learn from previous injustices of radical reorganization.

[00:52:29] We can see how the principles of equity found in communism lead to top-down power structure, and I could say what was capital to Marx becomes supremacy to Kendi. My beliefs lead me to say that mankind can work together by recognizing those at the top need to give back more. You know, one of my heroes, Cicero, talks about the princeps, the leaders who have an aptitude to govern. They're trained in our common humanity, with a broad understanding of what makes us humans, what people. They need prudence, the knowledge to do what is right in any given situation. They need reason, not emotion, to act justly. They bring the grit and fortitude to keep a firm grip on any situation, especially

[00:53:05] when it's difficult. And they need to be moderate and temperate in these applications. They cultivate the justice, liberty, and peace that we're all seeking. And I would say, and I would argue that equity is far from this natural ideal. Equity, again, as understood with these positions, is really based on this raw emotion, harnessing pains and trying to get power. As it's applied, it tends to break us apart rather than bringing us together because it points out our differences and drives us into groups. It lacks true justice because it's not based on reason. It's a shallow grounding.

[00:53:36] It means one person's pain and emotions become a demand on another person, regardless of the merit or the justice of the claim. You know, we can look at the TJ merit scholarships notification problem, and because equity, college counselors wouldn't work with their students to help them get those scholarships this hurt those students in that program and those students you know that TJ's students tend to be some of the best and this is this leveling had a downward effect for everyone so I would I just would say we're not helping our students with equity since it's leading children to follow their passions it co-ops the rational pursuit of truth with the emotions of power and most importantly it's an ideology that disrupts the peace and there's no place in our

[00:54:13] schools and I hope you'll support me in refocusing our schools back on education and not indoctrination Further discussion on the motion? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Beatty, for your comments. And I absolutely support your motion to take this \$1,695,962 and put it back to where it needs to be, which is actually educating our children, because that's what our school system exists to do.

[00:54:49] It is to educate our children and think about what we could do with that money if we're actually going to talk about equity being the idea of giving every child what they need to succeed. If we're going to give every child what they need to succeed and maximize their true potential, then we should be focusing on putting those dollars back into the classroom with the people who have their boots on the ground, who are working with children very hard every single day.

[00:55:21] Let's talk about our first grade students, the children who spent a majority of their extremely formative cognitive developmental years during COVID. They didn't get to go to school and interact with their peers and develop their social skills, which is fundamental to being able to learn how to learn. And we should also remember that there are probably almost one-third of our students, I believe it was in the year 2021, did not pass the phonological awareness literacy

[00:55:57] screening. The most equitable thing we could do for students is to teach them how to read. Because if they can't read, they can't formulate any ideas about the world. And if we're going to take ideology and infuse it into curriculum, before we prioritize teaching children how to blend and segment letters to form words, before we teach them phonological and phonemic awareness, We have our priorities out of whack.

[00:56:29] And I would further like to state that the people who are benefiting most from the, what is it now, almost projected \$2 million we have in FY24, I would argue that it's not the students.

[00:56:45] It's the people who are receiving the paychecks for those positions. So I support Mr. Beatty and I support him because his idea is grounded in what is best for our children, for students, not my children, not your children, but all of the children that we serve in Loudoun County Public Schools, all 83,000 of them.

[00:57:10] So I would suggest that we take some of that money and put it back to grade one through five teacher assistance because we were going to remove 20 of those positions. So I would say let's put some of that back in there, and it looks like that would cost us \$960,389.

[00:57:27] And furthermore, when we start talking about our special education students who are in need of speech therapy and occupational therapy and are not currently, we have students that are not getting those services. I hear from parents on a daily basis that are telling me that their child is not getting what they need in their IEP, and it's because the providers aren't there so why don't we take some of that money and put it back let's let's look at hiring another occupational therapist let's look at hiring another speech therapist and let's talk about those positions that are going away in special

[00:58:04] education those hold harmless positions that we say well covid funding is what was going to take care of that but we don't have that funding anymore so those positions just disappear and meanwhile we have special education program classrooms that are being taught by teacher assistants not special education teachers we have classrooms that are over capacity according to state ratios and teachers are told to deal with it so that's not equitable and that's not helping our students so let's go ahead and talk about actually doing what needs to be done for the kids

[00:58:41] that we serve. Thank you. Additional discussion. Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I'd like to start by reminding everyone that the initiatives that are part of this, that are the basis for this motion began as a result of the previous board doing an investigation and determining that the program was needed. So it long precedes our board because there was a need seen by a, and I think

[00:59:19] it's important to point out, since we've talked about ideology and politics, that it was a majority Republican-endorsed board led by a Republican chair that decided to start the Department of Equity. Moreover, for those of us that have done college visits or work in the professional workplace outside of education, diversity and equity initiatives are part of the global workforce this is not something that is unique to Loudoun County

[00:59:53] Public Schools this is what is expected of our students to understand how to respect and work with other cultures and other colleagues with other beliefs and other lifestyles colleagues with other experiences socio-economic backgrounds and race and ethnicity so if we're going to prepare our students for the global workforce they have to be able to do that now finally I'd like to say that if we're going to look at what students need take some time to talk

[01:00:33] with some of the students that are equity ambassadors or the students in our schools some of them sit up here on the dais with us without fail 100% of the students have spoken to who either participate as a volunteer or have had interactions with the positions that have been created as a result of this program found it positive and beneficial we do not have to cut programs in order to be able to meet the needs of special needs students or any other program that we want to ameliorate or strengthen there was a long budget process that

[01:01:12] allowed for the opportunity for board members to talk about other needs that were priorities there is the opportunity tonight to make motions to add those positions without deducting anything else in fact it is our charge to add positions that we think are need-based and to ask the Board of Supervisors to fund them we do not have to abandon a program that is meeting students where they are and effectively improving the opportunities that in the past were not available to our students so I will not be supporting this motion thank you

[01:01:42] mr. Morris obviously being a member from the previous board I was I was involved in this from the very beginning from from the start of the equity committee and there were clear clear signals given to the community through that assessment that that the community has issues and I think everyone in this room would agree that that our environment is not perfect and that it can use some improvement in areas of diversity equity and inclusion I'm not

[01:02:21] a big fan of the of the fanfare and of a lot of the a lot of the publicity and a lot of the efforts that come out of that. But I would say that the idea has merit. It has merit here in Loudoun. But what happens is we find flaws in the interpretation and the execution of a good idea. I have no doubt in my mind that there are areas that are taken well beyond what I consider the pale, well beyond what I consider productive. But what that doesn't mean is that

[01:02:56] the idea itself is flawed. Is there a valid issue? I think we should be able to say yes, there is. We need to fix the flaws and not throw the baby out with the bathwater. If there are issues with this program, we need to fix them. I can't support this because we have a program in place that was put in place and we made a heavy investment in it. And a lot of the pieces, again, I was not a proponent of, but the board voted for it and I supported that because it was the

[01:03:33] board initiative. And without us even assessing the impact of that program, we want to gut it. I'm not a fan of that. That doesn't make fiscal sense. If we're going to implement a plan with fidelity, we're going to have to make sure that there is an impact being felt, that it is the impact that we desire. And if we don't have that information, then let's talk about what we're going to do with the program. But I think it's really premature to gut the entire program without us having a thorough assessment of the value it's providing to the community. We need to assess the

[01:04:11] impact, react, and this is the old adage, measure twice, cut once. I personally can't support this. I haven't had a lot of time to reach out to staff to find out if they believe that there has been an impact. I don't feel that the board has really had time to collaborate on this discussion. There's no assessment of the impact and the last thing in the world I want to do is start riffing employees because we're trying to make a statement. If we're going to assess it properly then we make

[01:04:45] the decisions but at this point I'm not ready to commit to that decision. Thank you. Ms. Sheridan. Thank you Mr. Chair. I came in here tonight knowing of the motion and I wasn't going to say anything because I didn't want to give the idea that our equity department didn't have value any credence. But after the inflammatory and tone-deaf comments made by some of my colleagues supporting this, I cannot be silent up here on the dais. As somebody who has represented the most marginalized

[01:05:19] students in Loudoun County for the last 12 years, and who asked over and over again for six years before the Equity Committee was finally put into place in 2019 by parents coming in here during budget meetings and demanding that we do something I'm sure mr. Morse remembers that those days as well demanding that we do something and take a look at how our students who are marginalized for a variety of reasons were not given the same opportunities as those that are not and do not fall into those groups so

[01:05:55] into in April of 2019 the previous board put into effect and into an establish the equity committee we also had our equity assessment being done at the same time and I'll admit in 2019 and in all the previous years my lens was always one of socio-economics and the disparities that existed not just

because of the community I represent but because of my own experiences as a child I've learned so much more about myself about others I'm able to have

[01:06:33] difficult conversations about the differences that I share with others and that is the value of our equity program it is enabling everyone to sit at a table and and share and be able to be empathetic with the differences of others and the struggles and the achievements of others and celebrate our differences rather than extinguish them and not acknowledge them because truly

[01:07:04] our differences are what we should be celebrating. To bring this budget motion tonight without a budget question only served to not inform the public that it was under consideration. It served to not inform your colleagues that it was under consideration. There is no opportunity for public input on this motion. The public hearing is over. I believe that this motion is grounded in fear.

[01:07:43] It is the fear of the haves losing something and the have-nots rising, when really equity is about reflection, viewing the world from someone within someone else's lens, and then taking action to ensure that those who want more have access to it, that those who have skills but not the advocate to help them achieve it have access to it.

[01:08:18] That's what this is about. If everyone just took a moment to learn something about someone who is different than you, you would understand the importance of our young children, our high schoolers, participating in these programs and participating in these conversations.

[01:08:45] The amount of students that applied to serve on the equity committee is astounding. The amount of public that want to serve on it and now don't understand why they weren't picked because there's only 33 seats on the equity committee. when we started at 25 and we've increased it because the community supports it.

[01:09:04] The community who was part of the development of our strategic plan just in this last year are Loudon stakeholders who supported equity initiatives throughout and is embedded throughout the entire strategic plan. Our community does support it and therefore I will not support this motion.

[01:09:23] I stand against it. I denounce the thought of taking out our equity department And I champion the work that has already been done since it was established. I look forward to continuing it this year, and I hope it continues far beyond my time here in LCPS.

[01:09:42] Thank you. Ms. Ogedekbe. Thank you, Chair. I will just say very briefly that equity in education is a core value and, in my mind, the basis for why we have public education.

[01:10:00] It supports our work as we work to provide all students with the opportunity to succeed. The reality is that we need to acknowledge inequities in order to reach equity.

[01:10:16] If there were not opportunity gaps and no disparate outcomes, this could be a conversation. We are not there yet. We need to support and celebrate our diversity, work to reach equity, and finally ensure that our students, families, staff, and community feel safe, seen, and included. Thank you.

[01:10:34] Last spring, I had the chance to attend Light Ridge High School's first-ever Enlightenment Assembly, which was an amazing event, including performances by the school's band, jazz ensemble, theater, choir, equity committee, Black Student Union, SASA, and many others, capped by an on-stage forum with students and staff members from Lightridge talking about diversity, talking

[01:11:08] about acceptance, talking about what it's like for them being different. And it was organized entirely by the school's equity ambassadors and supported by the school staff's equity leads. It was the single most powerful school visit I have had over the last year. It makes for a stronger, more cohesive, more empathetic student body, and a better school.

[01:11:37] And I saw it. I saw it among the students that day. Would it have happened without the equity department, without equity leads, without empowering our students to have such an event? I don't think it would have. Acknowledging our differences, celebrating our differences, talking about how to reduce discrimination, finding ways to reduce disproportionality in discipline, in gifted programs, that's not divisive. It is education. I will not be supporting this motion. Additional discussion.

[01:12:12] Mr. Mahedvi. Thank you, Chair. I think many of the colleagues already have expressed eloquently, and I think I would not be supporting this motion. There are two parts I'd like to share. I think Mr. Morris sort of tried to summarize it well.

[01:12:31] I mean, I think if there are questions about a certain program, I think there's a process to look at it, to collect feedback and then evaluate and then make adjustments as much as support the program and I think it's the my colleagues already talked about it I also believe that new programs should be above anything I mean I think there should be an opportunity to review the program and to see how well it's well it's doing or what adjustments need to make and so there's no such thing as like even you know not having a thought so I kind of disagree on that notion of that but the the premise of

[01:13:10] completely going around and removing the entire program I I do find really challenging for even coming up here through a budget cycle to be making a motion to completely cut cut off the entire program I think if there were concerns if there are issues if there are legitimate reasons I think there's a process to do that we did for earlier early reading we did assessment for it student mental health we did assessment of it and there's a ways to make adjustments to it to either if you

[01:13:44] want to remove the program or if you want to make enhancement to the program there are multiple ways to approach it versus just coming up here and removing the entire program so again for that reason I would not be supporting one thing I would like to make a make a comment I think I agree with some of the comments one of the one of the comments being made about we need to put more resources coming out of covet and so my motion was exactly that and i again it's tabled it's not it's still going to come back but that's kind of goes back to where i was hoping that this board

[01:14:21] would have a different approach to it where we focus on the priorities versus trying to manage this plus and minuses thing about it so i do hope to bring that motion back up but i hope you consider that from the nature and Ms. Reza said this is our budget I mean even if you give the supervisors \$459,000 additional on top of that it's it's a good ask because that's where we're putting we're providing the resources back to back to our students and I think I you know again I'm disappointed early a little bit set back in terms of being table but I hope that the board doesn't

[01:14:59] just go back to plus and minuses and really focus on how do we as a board address the priorities of initiatives versus just doing plus and minuses of that. So I do want to plug that in there. But again, coming back to this motion, I would not be supporting this motion.

[01:15:17] - Additional discussion. Seeing none, we'll place the amendment to a vote. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Those opposed, please raise your hand and say nay. Nay. That motion

will fail 2-6 with Reeser, Sheridan, Morse, Mejedevi, Sorotkin, and Ogadeg Bay opposed.

[01:15:38] We are now back to the base motion for additional amendments. Ms. Reeser. - I move to amend the budget by eliminating the athletic fees from revenues for a revenue reduction of \$950,000.

[01:15:53] - Is there a second? I'll second. Ms. Reeser, would you like to speak to your motion? - Thank you. We began a few years ago looking at eliminating fees. We eliminated half of the athletic fees and then in subsequent motions and subsequent years, we revisited eliminating the rest of the athletic fees but decided to first remove parking fees and then waive AP fees, test for the first handful of AP tests for our students.

[01:16:27] So I wanted to bring this back around to the board to revisit our initial discussion to attempt to eliminate all of the athletic fees so that our students can participate without the hurdle of having to pay a fee in something that I think is quintessential to a full rounded educational experience and without having to go through, especially for the students who would a, have to first figure out that they can ask for fee waivers if they can't afford it, and second, to have to deal with bringing that form in

[01:17:03] and turning it in, which I think carries some stigma, whether it's private or not, but also for the students who wouldn't qualify for a fee waiver and wanna be able to participate in sports without having that barrier to entry.

[01:17:19] - Additional discussion? - Ms. Ogedekbe. - So again, being first year through the budget process, I think, again, I really appreciate this suggestion because it is a problem, right?

[01:17:38] You don't wanna have hurdles for participation. I agree with the spirit of the motion I do just have questions on where that funding comes from I think one of my questions and this goes back to the topic earlier around use of end of year funds if there are opportunities to perhaps fund some of these additional pro program options both the original motion that was offered by Mr. Mejedevi and this motion that's being offered by

[01:18:13] Ms. Rieser through end-of-year funds that's a question and again I'm sorry if this is out of order I'm just trying to figure out how we will pay for it could I respond or go ahead so the end of year funds can only be spent once and since this is something that is part of the perennial budget it would need to be part of this process rather than a one-time expenditure the athletic fees are shared between the central administration and school base additional

[01:18:51] discussion mr. Morse hi just for clarification the the reduction of revenue coming in to LCPS does not include the opportunity for the schools because the schools share in this as well so are you also are we zeroing it out so that the schools are impacted by this as well I expected that it would be handled the way the first half was may I interject please miss will be athletic fees are a revenue source solely to the school operating fund you may be

[01:19:25] thinking of the prior when we used to have parking fees parking fees was a shared revenue stream so what we have done we have reflected on the top for the reduction of the \$950,000 athletic fee from our regular revenue streams.

[01:19:43] And then to maintain a balanced budget, we have increased the local transfer request by the same amount. Additional, Mr. Madby. Thank you, Chair. So again, I know this motion has come up every year, I think for the last two, three years.

[01:20:04] And I've, you know, again, but where I could bring it back is, again, sports is good. It's not a need. It's a, I mean, again, it's nice to have, but math intervention is what we need now.

[01:20:22] So between two of them, I'll come back and always again focus on our money on where we provide resources for elementary students. So with that, I would not be able to support this motion tonight. Additional discussion?

[01:20:40] Ms. Okedekbe. Thank you, Chair. And again, my apologies, but can you provide a little more context for we made the adjustments from the local transfer, so what does that logistically actually mean? So the school board must adopt a budget that is balanced, meaning that the revenues equal the expenditures.

[01:21:07] And so there's kind of two actions going on on the TOTE board. We have expenditure changes, and then we also now have a revenue change. And so since there wasn't a corresponding adjustment to reduce an expenditure to maintain the balanced budget, we went ahead, since it was on the revenue side of the formula, and made whole the budget by saying, Okay, we're going to reduce \$950,000 out of this revenue stream, but to balance back, we're going to get \$950,000 more from the county.

[01:21:38] We're going to ask for \$950,000 more from the county. Just to follow on to that as far as the process, we won't know what our final revenue is until the county finalizes the local transfer that they're going to give to LCPS as well as the state finalizing their budget for the year.

[01:22:01] And so at that point, if what our adopted budget was requires more revenue than is provided from those sources, then we go into reconciliation and we reduce our budget to match the revenue that we have at that point.

[01:22:20] Additional discussion? Ms. Reeser. Thank you. That's a perfect segue for me to respond to Mr. Mejedevi's comments. Your motion and my motion are not competing with each other. Actually, to go with your own rationale, we should ask for what we think our students need.

[01:22:37] And if we don't get what we ask for, which has been the case every year since we took office, we will then have to decide how to prioritize. Thank you. Mr. Mahedemi. Thank you, Mr. I do agree with you on that.

[01:22:54] Again, so with that understanding, again, the math intervention special is currently put on table. so this could be I mean I would support it if we were to support providing direct recesses to elementary schools and I'll be happy to support it provided that that that gets supported first that's kind of where I'm coming from so can I make a motion to table miss research motion there's a motion to

[01:23:32] table is there a second seconded by mr. Mahedive there's no debate on the motion all those in favor of the motion to table please raise your hand say aye those opposed please raise your heads and say nay nay that motion is going to fail was it to miss Polifco were you in favor or opposed in favor of tabling so that motion will fail three five with Sorotkin Sheridan Morse leave Beatty and Sorotkin and Sorotkin opposed so we are back to discussion on the amendment

[01:24:12] I'll be supporting this amendment I certainly don't see a conflict between funding academics and funding athletics and in fact there is a strong and really undisputed research-based link between participation in athletics and academic performance and then on the fees side I have been very consistent

in supporting eliminating whatever fees we can during the course of my term including athletic fees and I would be happy to do so again today is there any additional discussion on the motion

[01:24:48] Mr. Mahedvi this motion was already passed but I guess just I'll speak to that so I agree with you I mean this is not about sport versus academics I don't mean to or if I was trying to imply that was not the intent or that's not what I was trying to say but I think between the two of them I think I mean I'll put on everybody up here that where how do we prioritize things I I mean I've supported I mean I believe I made the motions to remove our AP fees last to last budget cycle and supported the reducing our sports fees to half in the last budget cycle along with the board.

[01:25:28] So I did support that and I do support that. But I think it's tonight when we are trying to make some again decisions on how to bring more support for elementary students that's where it's coming from.

[01:25:43] And I think I just find it that we are willing to make a big amount for fees, which is, again, it's warranted and it's perhaps needed. Before we actually try to provide support for elementary kids, that's the challenge I'm finding here at the board.

[01:26:02] And so that was my point I was trying to make. Additional discussion on the amendment? Mr. Morse and then Mr. Biddy. So I'm challenged because I'm back in the original position and I didn't support Ms. Ogadegbe's motion to lay this on the table.

[01:26:18] But, you know, we keep coming up with these ideas, and this is the reason why I laid the first motion on the table is because what's the next great idea that's going to come, and are we going to continue to add this on top of the budget? The superintendent provided us a needs-based budget, and typically the reason why we ask for that reduction with your addition is because staff has given us their recommendation, and they didn't recommend whatever it is that we're coming forward with today.

[01:26:46] So it certainly makes it easier as we sit up here and make the decision. If we have that offset and then we can prioritize with board members that have submitted these ideas ahead of time, we can prioritize those in our minds and we know exactly what we could support.

[01:27:04] And if we want to support it all, great. If we don't, if there's one or two specific items, that works as well. But when new items come up that we're unaware of, and those are great ideas, but they come last minute, then we're not prepared. So that's the challenge we're facing right now.

[01:27:20] I think what I'll do is I'll just abstain from this motion and we'll continue on with the process. Thank you. Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Chair. I look at the budget. I look at what's coming out of Richmond. At this point, I just don't think we can add a lot more because it's going to end up being a burden on the local transfer.

[01:27:40] I think that's where the end result of this is all going to end up. So I'm not going to support this motion. I'm still considering Mr. Mehevee's motion for the math specialist. I have some questions that we weren't able to get to but at this point I won't be supporting the athletic fees because I think it again goes back to the, you know, athletics are incredibly important but I think we have to be more prudent about where we're removing our revenue sources.

[01:28:04] Additional discussion? Mr. Mahadevi? I don't want to keep beating the same horse but again I don't want to make it a point about athletic fees versus not but again this looks like it's not been tabled so we'll be taking a vote on it as a board. Again if this would have come after the positions we're looking for

elementary kids I would have supported it but since we're not tabling it and this work would be happening in ahead of the time I cannot support that tonight

[01:28:38] additional discussion seeing none we will place the motion to a vote all those in favor please raise your hand say aye aye those opposed that motion will oh those abstaining thank you so that motion will pass 4-3-1 with Beatty, Polifco, and Mejedevi opposed, and Mr. Moore sustaining from

[01:29:09] the vote. We're now back to the base motion for additional amendments. Ms. Ogadugbe. Thank you, Chair. I move to include in the budget \$130,000 to fund costs associated with year one of a comprehensive violence prevention program through an expanded partnership with laws, and to remove the HRTD representative for co-curricular position for savings of \$148,380

[01:29:47] for a net budget savings of \$18,380. Second. Seconded by Ms. Reeser. Ms. Okadekebe, would you like to speak to your motion? Thank you. Yes. Our response as a school system and a community to the two assaults in 2021 is multifaceted and ongoing.

[01:30:06] In addition to looking at accountability, policy, incident response, and coordination with law enforcement, and communication, we also need to take a more proactive and comprehensive approach to stopping violence and look to ways to incorporate a trauma-informed and survivor-centered approach to incident response.

[01:30:28] Laws offers domestic violence and sexual assault services to the Loudoun community and has an established partnership with LCPS. I'm proposing an expansion of the partnership with LAWS to establish social norms for behavior, introduce bystander intervention training, and support additional mentoring activities, enhance and expand the toolkit, including knowledge and skills of staff and faculty around issues of sexual violence and assault, develop a coordinated community response teams approach to leverage school and community wraparound services.

[01:31:02] I had initiated a conversation with laws in December and shared with Ms. Reeser the concept of expanding on our partnership with laws to establish a more comprehensive and proactive approach for prevention. The two of us had a preliminary discussion with laws about their services and have subsequently provided details to staff who will engage with laws to begin discussions about the proposed expanded partnership.

[01:31:27] Finally, I do want to acknowledge that the development of this program will require involvement and input from many stakeholders, including parents. And as the proposal moves forward, there will be opportunities to review and provide feedback. Thank you. Additional discussion on the motion?

[01:31:46] Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to explain a little bit more to my colleagues how Ms. Ogadegbe and I went about this. She and I started having some conversations about trauma-informed and student-centered, student-focused and survivor-focused.

[01:32:06] opportunities. There was a lot of feedback from families, parents, and even students around the idea of teaching some of these concepts related to prevention of sexual violence and violence against women generally. And Laws is a trusted community partner. I've taken trauma-informed classes from them for continuing legal education. I was not aware that they already had an existing relationship with LCPS, which Ms. Ogadegbe informed me about. And as we started talking about this more, like many things that are board-driven, there can be a chicken and egg

[01:32:44] problem. Do you have the program ready to go before you ask for the funding, or do you have funding before you explore what something could look like? So as we did last year with other items, we allocated money. One of the examples I can give is the CAST program. We allocated a certain amount of money with the program to be developed that was a program that went through committee to be developed this may be more appropriately handled on the staff side that that's really for the board member whose initiative it is to work out with the superintendent but I did talk with her about the fact that we could have a placeholder in the budget and then

[01:33:23] conversations could occur about what this would look like how much whether it would be taught through health and PE, whether it would be taught in advisory, whether it would be opt-in or opt-out, and there are details to be worked out, and like I said, it could go through committee or it could be handled a different way, but it's a small amount of funding, and if the funding isn't there, then it can't be explored at all, so I just wanted everyone to understand, given the way we were being responsive to a situation, it didn't come up through committee the regular way a policy change might or a program implementation like IB.

[01:34:03] Thank you. Additional discussion? Mr. Mahedvy. Thank you, Chair. So, Ms. Octavey, what position are you looking to eliminate? It's called the co-curricular, but essentially it's the position that's supporting the stipend management.

[01:34:18] I am putting forth that as the recommendation after speaking with staff and getting feedback from Ms. Boland on priorities for HRTD. There were two positions proposed in the budget for central HRTD.

[01:34:34] And so the recommendation is including consultation with her. Thank you. I know, I don't know if Mrs. Sorokin has a view, but I think this is something we've been working in the Curriculum Instruction Committee for a long time to get that position in place so we can really review the staff and positions across the board.

[01:34:57] So I kind of find it challenging that even though the idea of supporting the engagement with laws, and I'll speak a little bit more about that. but I think just to reduce remove this type of positions for that reason I cannot support but I think coming back to laws I think for my my sort of discussion with the staff is that it's it's a lot more than one person to be engaged with that and and to work with the county in continuing to establish that so again if this is a position just to like for my for example from a project

[01:35:36] manager position just to start coordinating I can see that but I think removing the staff in positions I do find it challenging at this particular point but we'll be looking to hear from other board members too. I just have a question about the 130,000 is a nice round number is that for a staff position or is that a placeholder what what what would that 130,000 be used for if known it's a placeholder for overall costs of the program it is

[01:36:09] not for a staffed position it could be that that could help to support project management for a year one of a program there are also potential costs around developing materials and printing that would not be there if this program wasn't in place there are not costs associated with the partnership with laws if that makes sense because they are a community partner with the with a poor

[01:36:46] mission to help augment and provide educational resources and violence prevention programming so it's not payment to laws but there are costs associated that are estimated at this point and

again the intent is to have a placeholder so that we could begin to develop in more detail what this would look like if I may can I also address mr. Mahedevi's comments I one of the

[01:37:20] questions that I had and I know it it's been a topic in general questions from the community and then just as we're looking at positions as we're funding positions looking at you know the portion of new positions that are student-facing or not and when I spoke with miss Boland about it it is the reduction of that position doesn't mean that stipends won't be managed it does mean that there will need to be creative ways to address that work which will

[01:37:57] continue because there have been an increase in stipends I one of the questions that I had posed as well is that when you have change in my in my work world we talk about this three-legged stool of people process and technology and so I think that it would be an opportunity without the additional people resource to see if there are some ways through either process improvements or technology to make that stipend process a bit more streamlined

[01:38:33] and efficient so that we don't require a full FTE to manage that work thank you additional discussion Ms. Polifko thank you Mr. Chair Ms. Ogadigvie I do I absolutely appreciate where you are coming from in this initiative and I think it makes it makes a whole lot of sense to want to provide more for our our students in terms of arming them with ways to know how to keep themselves safe and to recognize situation situations that they're in there that become

[01:39:09] unsafe to protect themselves and also to assist other students who are observing something happening that shouldn't be happening and how they can how they can react to that in an appropriate manner I think my only concern is would we when we bring more partnerships in we bring more tertiary activities into the school day I know you you had mentioned you know this hasn't been ironed out yet exactly where this would take place and how it would be taught and when it would be taught.

[01:39:40] Ms. Reeser spoke about whether this would be opt-in, opt-out. One of my big concerns with bringing programs like this into the school system is the idea of ensuring that it's something that parents really do want for their kids and that they would need to have the full capacity to determine whether or not that's something they want for their children, whether they choose to opt-in or choose to opt-out.

[01:40:05] That's very important to me personally as an individual. And it would be the only difficulty I have in supporting this right off the bat is the fact that those details haven't been ironed out. And I understand it's the chicken or the egg, and we can't know all of that this evening.

[01:40:24] I do appreciate where you're coming from, and I absolutely support arming our students with the knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and recognize other unsafe situations when they occur. But I just have difficulty moving forward with it when we don't have all that information in front of us right now.

[01:40:41] Thank you. Additional discussion? Ms. Ogadeke. Thank you. I appreciate that. I will just say I think that we have to take measures that are preventative and proactive.

[01:40:57] And that is also in the spirit of where this is coming from. A lot of our responses by the very nature of responding are reactive. And the problem to begin with is violence and not having behaviors that are in line with keeping our students safe.

[01:41:24] And it's not just a schools issue, right? This is a community issue. It is staggering to think about the statistics around sexual violence. As a woman, as a woman with a daughter, as I've sent her out into the world, it is terrifying, right?

[01:41:42] And so I think that we have a responsibility to do all that we can, and I think families are asking us to do all that we can to keep their children safe when they're at school, and that's why I'm bringing this forward. I absolutely agree with you.

[01:41:59] Families and parents should be a part of the discussions about how this works out. I also want to be clear that while we are talking about an expanded partnership with laws it's not the intent that laws would somehow come into the schools and kind of independently offer this this is about providing LCPS with the knowledge and the toolkit and the skills and the resources to be able to incorporate that there's a lot of details to be worked out I know when I spoke with dr. Smith he

[01:42:35] also is you know looking to see what those details will be but whether it's staff working out some more details or working through committee at the end of the day I agree with you there will be community involvement in understanding what this is and certainly again either opt-in or opt-out as we have with many other aspects and think about family life education families can opt out of that and so um i i appreciate and hear your concerns but i do think it is incumbent upon us to

[01:43:11] to take action that is preventative and protective and proactive thank you and so stipends has certainly been an area of focus for the board over our term uh certainly we had a lot more people out in the audience last year talking about stipends than we do today and it's certainly been a vexing issue at times. So while I did appreciate the idea of providing more resources into stipend

[01:43:47] management because we've been waiting for the kind of tiered stipend or standardization of stipend system for quite a while and I think there was a strong board direction to go in that direction. That being said, I was skeptical that it required a full-time staff member to just be looking at stipends as a full-time thing going forward. And so I appreciate this amendment from Ms. Okadegbe. I think it's a very worthy cause. I think it could help,

[01:44:23] and I'll be supporting it today. Additional discussion, Mr. Mahedby, and then Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Chair. So again, the people process technology, I mean, I think one of the challenges we had, we always have, and I think this is sometimes not, I think I'm going to say this, because we as Aladdin County has grown, almost doubled it up in the last 10, 15 years.

[01:44:49] In terms of building facilities, in terms of student population, now, there's always a question that comes back, boots on the ground versus support staff that's needed to make things happen. So this is, again, a very fine balance.

[01:45:08] And I think from what I've learned for the last three, four years is that we never had the right support staff in place to support our administrators and teachers back in the classrooms.

[01:45:27] And that's been the biggest challenge. So we saw, again, this idea about, well, let's improve the process, certainly. But overall, what we saw is that we add more and more stipend positions. In fact, one motion tonight was to remove all the equity leads, stipends, and so on and so forth.

[01:45:48] Again, so the idea about reviewing stipends, it needs to be a continuous cycle. And I think given how large our organization is, the number of stipend positions we're opening up, I think it's about

time that, again, we have something dedicated for that.

[01:46:05] And it's easy for us to come and say, well, let's do a stipend for this and let's do a stipend for that. In fact, I was making a, you know, again, I'm not making tonight a budget motion. But my hope was that we would add some stipend to our special ed class, self-contained classroom special ed teachers because it's a really challenging environment for them.

[01:46:28] And so what kind of incentive do we provide for that? So I'll get off my high horse, and Ms. Boland, I don't know if you can speak to, you know, the people, process, technology, but I think more on the value of what you're looking for in this position. Absolutely.

[01:46:43] Thank you for the opportunity to speak to it. So this, as you said, during the fiscal year 23 budget, the number of stipends were, the number of fine arts stipends in particular, were significantly increased.

[01:47:03] The total number of stipend positions that we support is approximately 160, with over 3,000 employees serving in those roles. And each of those employees that receives a stipend is processed through HRTD, just like an employee, on an annual basis, which represents onboarding and off-boarding those employees, as well as those that serve in athletic roles.

[01:47:35] And so not only was this position to be charged with the kind of hiring process of those stipend roles, but the goal was to have them collaborate and work closely with the assistant director of athletics and the athletic directors of all the high schools with school building leaders across the division to focus on monitoring and tracking individuals serving in athletic stipend roles, coaching positions, and ensuring that new hires were properly onboarded and off-boarded.

[01:48:11] I don't know if that helps. It does help, Ms. Baldwin, thank you. Additional discussion on the amendment? Seeing none, we'll place it to a vote. All in favor of the amendment, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Those opposed? That motion will pass 7-1-1 with Mr. Mahedavy opposed and Ms. Corbo absent for the vote. Oh, my apologies. So that'll be 6-2-1 with Mahedavy and Polifco opposed and Corbo

[01:48:44] absent. Additional amendments? Seeing Mr. Mahedavy. I move to bring the math initiative item that was put on table back on the floor. There's a motion to take the matter from the table. I will second it there's no discussion on the motion all those in favor please raise your hand say aye aye thank you that motion will pass unanimously of board members present so the motion to amend the budget by adding the four math resource

[01:49:23] specialists is back on the table and I'll reopen discussion on the amendment miss Rieser I want to direct a question to staff about why only one FTE was sought to serve in this role. Thank you, Ms. Reeser. So the position was added in response to the governor's initiative regarding math specialists. And as Mr. Mahedby alluded to, our allocation

[01:49:55] from the governor's initiative is \$42,367. And so we made the decision to add one position partially funded through the state funds and partially funded through LCPS local funds so without the initiative would you have been seeking math instructional specialists not at this time no thank you additional discussion mr. baby my question to mr. medvy and I guess probably to staff is where would

[01:50:32] these positions go is there a plan for that or is this just a placeholder and then it's up to the Department of Instruction to figure that out dr. Ellis so our plan with the one position and would be the

same for additional positions we would work with the school improvement office to look at the school's data and identify the schools where math is a concern and place those those individuals at those schools so they would be school-based

[01:51:05] positions additional discussion miss polifka thank you mr. chair again i just have a question Following up on what Ms. Ogudegbi mentioned earlier, where will we reduce the budget in other areas?

[01:51:25] And I guess we can talk about that now or we can move on later, but that's a pretty large chunk of money, and so I want to make sure that we're looking at not just increasing the budget but also reallocating some of that funding. Mr. Batby.

[01:51:43] Thank you, Ms. Polifko, and I think this is, again, a good question again. We already added \$950,000, which doesn't even apply to anything to help our kids coming out of COVID. We as a board, whether we were on the winning side or the wording against it, we already added that money.

[01:52:01] So, again, I want us as a board to make this whether we agree on the priority. And I can speak a little bit more about the program and what's already happening in the grounds, Ms. Reeser. I'll address a little bit more about that. But I think we, again, I'm kind of beating on this horse, but I think we should make it at its own initiative.

[01:52:23] And again, there will be opportunities for us to look at other areas. I do have one major item where I do plan to bring it back to the board in making decisions on how perhaps close to \$1.4, \$1.5 million. But I do want to bring.

[01:52:40] but at the same time I want to keep it where I think you made a made a excellent point earlier saying that we need to be when during the the point about the equity was being reduction in equity where we need to put our funds we need to make it a priority as a board where we're coming out of COVID where we provide the right amount of resources to a to our staff and to our teachers and I think this particular motion sort of kind of kick-starts that and again I'm not asking for every schools to do it but the idea is we want at least have a pilot running across five schools or more depending upon what the budget comes into there and that's the intention and

[01:53:19] I can speak a little bit more about what's happening already on the school grounds in a minute Ms Sheridan thank you chair my question is directed at staff you indicated that the one specialist is at the with is from the governor's directive correct and so you weren't just doing the one is this the position that if staff were to create math resources is this the actual position that would be created or is there other are there other positions that would do this effectively that maybe we already

[01:53:57] have in place or or would be just a different role than than what was brought by the state mr. Mahedvy wants to respond but just really briefly I think I I think it does make sense to pursue math specialists in the schools.

[01:54:20] I think the teachers and students would appreciate the support. And so even though it was not in the superintendent's estimate of needs and wouldn't have been if it were not for the state funding, that certainly doesn't mean, I don't mean to imply that math is not a concern and we wouldn't look at that in the future.

[01:54:42] It's certainly on our roadmap and we were trying to prioritize many things when developing the estimate of needs. And there was not a different position. We did wanna make sure that the resources

were in the school directly supporting students.

[01:54:59] - Thank you, I appreciate the answer and the clarification. - Mr. Madby. - Thank you, Chair. So from what I've gathered, and I think one of the staff, actually a second grade teacher came and spoke to the full board too, I think a couple of weeks ago.

[01:55:16] So many of the schools are already putting some sort of program in place using whatever amount of money or teacher staff, et cetera, are doing. At least I know of three different elementary schools that are using their own resources to do it. There's a program called Bridges to Intervention, and I'm sure many of you might be aware already.

[01:55:35] It's a math intervention program that we have made available. In fact, we as a board support it. I think it's in this budget perhaps. It's to add about \$452,000 already for special ed students. So we're buying those kits and we're buying the programs, et cetera, for our special ed students.

[01:55:56] This just formalizes in many of the schools and makes it available for our gen ed students. And that's in a much more simplistic way that I can put it. I can answer more questions. Additional questions or discussion?

[01:56:15] I'm going to support this amendment. I was, while I'm grateful for the minimal amount of money that we're getting for this from the state, it was, okay, we're going to put one position at one school. What about the other 50-some-odd elementary schools that we have?

[01:56:32] So increasing this to five math resource specialists would roughly equate to, okay, we're going to put these at the 10% of our elementary schools that have the greatest need for math remediation or help with math. I think that's the right level of effort for a pilot or to see how this goes rather than just leaving it as at one position and then not really being able to measure how effective it is because there could be a lot of other circumstances or outliers or whatever that would affect.

[01:57:09] If we have five schools' worth of data, then I think we'll be better able to measure how well it's working and whether we should expand this to additional schools in the future. Mr. Morse. Just briefly, should this pass and be kept in the budget through reconciliation, the one thing I would ask is that we have presented to the board the metrics that we're going to evaluate the program on and that we come back within a year or two years to see if it's being spent effectively and seeing if it makes sense.

[01:57:41] because i think we do a lot of pilots and we never follow up so i think this is an important opportunity that if we do move forward that we that we get briefed on on the success thank you and i i completely agree with that as well additional discussion seeing none all in favor of the amendment please raise your hand say aye aye those opposed please raise your hand say nay that motion will pass 7-1-1 with polifco opposed and miss carbo absent for the vote we're now back

[01:58:12] the base motion for additional amendments. Mr. Mahedvy. Thank you chair. So I'd like to bring back the there are two different roles that again I appreciate Mr. Moore's comments however we have gone ahead and supported a number of positions without getting a proper sort of feedback. Now I'm going to bring bring to light a position we supported last in the last but cycle called student activity and engagement coordinator at every high school. This year the superintendent

[01:58:50] and the staff is asking us to add one more student support advisor position every high school. So from what I've gathered is that again the student support advisor position is something that the

principal have asked for and it's needed.

[01:59:09] Now I can say well they don't really have it at the moment. However again and I'll let the staff sort of address it but many high schools have actually converted the student activity engagement coordinator into a student support advisor positions because that's the really need that they need.

[01:59:25] Now, using your philosophy, I mean, we all agree with that. We should evaluate many of these positions that we support and say, well, we added these 17 positions across all high school, 17, 18, how effective this has been. Now, they have been effective, but effective in a different role.

[01:59:43] So I didn't want to make a motion, but I do need to have a discussion on about, So we have total about 34 positions, and I'm presuming it's 1.87 million right now for the 17 new positions that we'll be adding.

[01:59:59] I don't want to remove arbitrarily, just remove the entire positions. My intention was that perhaps we reposition these student activity engagement coordinators to student support advisor positions.

[02:00:15] I understand it might require reapplying for those resources, but then again, if this was done last year with the hope of those positions playing, supporting in the student activity, but eventually we're being used for student support advisor, I think we're better off having the student support advisor positions in place.

[02:00:36] So I just wanted to open up this conversation saying, OK, so we have 17 plus 17, 34 positions, but 17 of those positions today are already being used for student support advisor. Can we address and, you know, again, perhaps, you know, look at, maybe convert the, change the applicant, apply the job description differently, review those positions, how they're done, and then next year come back and say, well, maybe we should look at student activity and engagement coordinator in that capacity.

[02:01:07] So we have an opportunity here to address it at \$1.8 million, which will cover the budget, make it even. And again, it's not to take away, it's just simply that we would not be, we'd just be repurposing the existing positions which are already being used for that purpose, just not adding 17 new bodies in addition to that.

[02:01:29] So, you know, just have a discussion on it, and then we can perhaps make a motion and see where we go from here. Dr. Smith. Yeah, happy to speak to it, and I'll share a little bit and then ask Dr. Ellis to pick up anything I might have missed.

[02:01:45] And so I would say, you know, in terms of this, it's the first time I kind of heard this and talking through this a little bit, but I can share that these are two very different positions. And so, you know, while there have been a few high schools that have shifted some of the role because of the need for the student support advisor, that's not all of them.

[02:02:04] And so the intent of the student engagement activities coordinator is really to get kids engaged in activities connected to their school. I think Mr. Sorokin spoke to it earlier around we know kids are more successful in school when they're connected to their school, when they're connected through activities, they're engaged with their school. And so that position is very different than when we see a student support advisor.

[02:02:24] so we have not had any I've had any conversations with high school principals about changing an existing position but we did talk about and they identified a real need with a student support advisor in terms of working with our students in terms of behavior in school behavior out of school to to and from alternative placements making sure the supports are in place the the person that's in the building provide that support whether it's attendance discipline academics kind of that that that whole piece and so I'm not I wouldn't I don't think I'm prepared to speak to removing existing positions and we have people that are in those positions

[02:03:02] and converting them to a completely different position in my mind around up from a student engagement coordinator to a student activity student support advisor Dr. Ellis what else might you add to that no I think you you hit the key points that I would say Dr. Smith there is a budget question i'm trying to find the number for you for reference but there is a budget question that addresses the difference between the two ms okay thank you chair i just as a follow-up

[02:03:42] mr mehedevi you mentioned that you've heard that there are that people in the existing positions are actually fulfilling the role of this proposed position and i'm um i mean i'm just wondering where that's coming from and from your perspective, and then just a response from staff as well of where is that perception coming from?

[02:04:05] I think Dr. Smith already alluded to that, that some principals already repurpose the positions, so he can speak to that. And so in terms of that, when I visited schools, I have seen where principals have reapportioned positions.

[02:04:29] I've heard from some principals around the student engagement coordinator how they've tried to pick up some of those roles because that's a need. But I've also seen in schools that have used, whether it's other staffing, differentiated staffing, and other supports for the student support advisor because that is such a need to support students.

[02:04:45] So it's not always the student engagement coordinator that's moved over. I think they've picked up some of the responsibilities when principals have seen that's a need and that's a real gap. We've seen them use other staffing for student support advisors because that's a need. and and I would just follow up then I think that that's an important consideration that it is not just the the staff that are in these student engagement roles but that there's a gap and kind of the result is if there's a need people who are who can do a little bit more will fill in and meet that need

[02:05:20] I I know this is just a discussion but I will say I understood and supported in the superintendent's expression of the needs this new role for the student support I don't know the title but the student support advisors I think that it is filling a need that's very important just to provide that support and really

[02:05:55] be a coordinating role where students are in need of services or supports from different places and bringing that all together for a more cohesive experience to meet their needs thank you additional discussion mr. Mahedby thank you chair so I think to summarize it I think if that's from from what I've gathered again is that the student support service and student support advisor position and I think dr. Smith sort of alluded to I think it's it's a

[02:06:32] much-needed position where I was going back to and I think as a couple board members but it may not represent the last budget cycle when this board supported the student activity engagement

coordinator I do have my questions and concern that I didn't quite you know again it's it's okay to describe the different difference between the two of them but again you know for an example mr. Moore sort of kind of highlighted and I think mr.

[02:06:58] Sorokin also agreed that we haven't done as much pilot and get some feedback of what the positions we added and how effective or what they're what what impact they have because it's nice to have I mean I can have more more resources I mean you can have five more resources in every high schools and definitely would be well warranted here we just review removed a step in positions in the name of people process technology for change so I'm just asking this and again I didn't make a motion so there's nothing to vote on and against it but the fact that we added 17 positions last time around which is

[02:07:35] perhaps needed where we student support advisor so how are we going to evaluate that those positions I mean once you add a body it's always there I mean that's that's my concern comes back I think what I've learned in all the three years is once you add the body and I'm sure it can be used I mean nobody denies that you cannot use a body or a staff in in in the school but is it what the intentions were is it really being effective where things are and that's kind of where my entire question for this tonight was.

[02:08:11] - Ms. Reeser. - Mr. Chair, so without, also without making a motion, could I raise a different topic? I could make the motion if you'd rather go that way, but if I had been making a motion, it would have been a motion to add \$162 million to the budget in order to bring the pay for the universal scale up to a living wage for our staff.

[02:08:35] And I thought it was an important discussion Just to highlight in case other board members are not aware that in order to, and this was a budget question that Ms. Ogadegbe had in the packet, in order for our staff to be able to make a living wage in Loudoun County Public Schools, we would have to increase our budget by \$162 million.

[02:08:56] I'm not making that motion. I don't think that motion would pass, and I don't think it would be responsible to make that motion. But I think it lends data and credibility to what we hear a lot of our educators and support staff come in and tell us during public comment.

[02:09:13] Since many of us may not be here to work on the budget next year, I hope that this will serve as a placeholder to embolden and empower future board members and the superintendent to continue working towards keeping, taking good care of our staff as we have with our policy, our benefits, and our bonuses throughout the last four years that we've been here.

[02:09:36] Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Okadeke. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Ms. Reeser. I appreciate your bringing that forward as a discussion item because it definitely wasn't a motion that I was planning to make either, but it's a very important conversation to have.

[02:09:54] we are serious about supporting all of our staff we have to look at what it costs to live and work here and it's a very important conversation to make sure that we don't forget we need to continue to have I know that during the last session there were some significant gains that the board and the school administration work through to establish the universal pay scale and that resulted in some tangible increases for staff but it is absolutely something we need to keep coming back to so thank you so much for raising that as a discussion item and if you look at what

[02:10:34] this board has done over its term we have you know increased employee salaries i think almost as much as we possibly could given the our constraints on the revenue side and the fact that we still have

positions on our lower end that are below the living wage I think absolutely is a testament to how far we still have to go even with the progress that we've been able to achieve thus far so I think it's absolutely worthy of discussion we're certainly not gonna you know get the 162

[02:11:10] million dollars all in this year but I think it absolutely has to be a goal to get everyone above the living wage, completely agree. Mr. Madhavi. Thank you, Chair. Again, this is not for, I do support that. I think perhaps we can direct the superintendent for the next budget cycle that they do make, you know, again, a lot of this particular board's request and consideration to do the best to increase the salaries of, to bring it back to living wages in Loudoun County.

[02:11:46] It's not the most cheapest place to live. So it's very difficult for our custodians, bus driver, bus attendants, and many of the staff who are getting paid not the living wage. So thank you.

[02:12:02] Are there any additional amendments for their discussion? Seeing none. Well, before we do that, Ms. Willoughby, I know sometimes we have to do a housekeeping motion in order to get things to balance. Do we need that based on where we are this year?

[02:12:19] No, but I'll give just a brief recap. So what we're seeing with the budget is that the total school operating fund budget has been increased by \$456,213 so that the new FY24 school board adopted budget will be \$1,668,232,008, which is going to represent a 6.9% increase over the current year's budget.

[02:12:44] The local transfer is increasing by \$1.4 million. I mean, you see the amount there, the \$1,143,014,205. That's going to represent a 7% increase over the current year's local transfer amount.

[02:13:01] And we are balanced. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. So we will place the base motion to a vote to adopt the superintendent's FY24 estimate of needs with staff-recommended changes as amended as the school board adopted FY24 budget.

[02:13:18] All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Those opposed, that motion will pass 6-1 with Beatty and Polifco opposed and Ms. Corbo absent for the vote. As far as next steps, the school board will be presenting our adopted budget to the board of supervisors on Thursday, February 16th at 5 p.m. and that will be here at the LCPS administration building. Seeing no further business, we are adjourned. Thank you, board members and staff.



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