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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, March 1, 2023

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[00:00:48] Good evening. Can I get everyone to come take your seats? We're going to get started. Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the March 1st SEAC meeting. We are going to start our evening by reminding you that if you are at home watching or you're here to please scan the QR code and check in

[00:01:43] so we know you are participating or watching us here in person. We're going to start our SEAC meeting this evening with our opening remarks from Dr. Daniel Smith.

[00:02:04] He is our acting superintendent. Dr. Smith has been appointed by the Loudoun County School Board as acting superintendent for LCPS in April. Dr. Smith joined Loudoun County Public Schools as the chief of staff. He comes from Fairfax County Public Schools, where he served as the principal of Lake Braddock Secondary School, the largest school in the state of Virginia.

[00:02:27] He brings more than 16 years of experience a principal and at the elementary middle and high school level Dr. Smith good evening I just wanted to come and bring greetings tonight the last time I was with SEAC I was in the chief of staff role and so in my new role is acting superintendent I just wanted to come and say good afternoon and welcome and so you could put a face with a name and just wanted to share just a little bit about my charge over the next six months as our school division looks for the

[00:03:06] next leader. Really, when the school board asked me to step into this role, really we talked about four main things being the focus. First, it is about providing the support for our teachers and our schools to do the important and great work that they do every day. So I want to make sure that during this transition that our teachers, our principals, our teacher assistants, they can do that important work, that we can make sure our kids are getting what they need, and that we don't miss a beat with that. We have some exceptional things taking place in our schools, very proud of that work and want to make sure that continues. So that's number one. Number two is we really

[00:03:44] wanted to work to try to rebuild trust in our school division. We've had some horrible things that have happened and we want to make sure they never happen again and we still need to rebuild that trust. So we're doing a number of things to try to, I'm trying to, we're trying to get out, have conversations with our community, with our parents, with our staff. There are several things that we've done in terms of trying to open up lines of communications. Now we do have an Ask the Superintendent site and form that folks can fill out anonymously or put their name to it. We'll get back with them. We're also starting to

[00:04:19] set up listening sessions in each one of the eight districts in Loudoun County. Myself and the school board member, those will start this month in March and we'll do one in each one of the district. So really start to rebuild that trust, be transparent about what we're doing while we're doing it. The third item has been to really continue to examine our processes, our structures, our procedures to see how we can get better. And so there's been areas we've said, hey, we can get better here. Let's do that. We're going to do something different. So we have started to change some of our processes and procedures based on some of the feedback that

[00:04:55] we've received. And so, you know, that goes from anything from, we just implemented a new notification system when we received charges from the community from the Department of Juvenile Justice. So that was a paper format. Now we're doing that in electronic format. So there's a number of different processes and procedures that we're looking at and saying, are we doing this the very best that we can? And how can we do it a little bit better? And so that's the third thing.

[00:05:20] And then the fourth thing that I committed to continuing to do is we are fortunate to have a strategic plan, one LCPS, which I know you've probably heard of, 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence. And so I want to make sure that that work moves forward.

[00:05:35] That really sets the roadmap for our school division. And so we want to make sure that that moves forward in a meaningful way. Just last night, we gave the goal four update to our school board, which we've gone through each one of our four goals. Goal four reported out, and now we'll start back again later this month with goal one in terms of empowered students, and Dr. Jones is our co-chair on that goal.

[00:06:01] So just continuing to move that work forward. And so I will share that with you because that's been my charge over the next six months as we lay the foundation for a new superintendent to come in so that they can hit the ground running, they can continue the good work that we've been doing, but also working towards continuous improvement.

[00:06:18] So just wanted to come tonight and say welcome, wanted to introduce myself, and if there's any ways that I can continue to partner with you, I want to make sure that we can do that. I know you've been very active and continue to be very active in the policy review process, which we appreciate, really appreciate your perspective and the ideas that you bring to that process.

[00:06:39] Those are critically important. And so just wanted to say thank you. I appreciate the partnership and, you know, look forward to continuing to work with you moving forward. So I know you've got a packed agenda. I'm happy to talk to you more. If anybody has individual questions, feel free to reach out. But otherwise, we have a great meeting. Thank you.

[00:06:59] Thank you for coming. I'm going to turn it over to the Director of Special Education, Specialized Instruction. Good evening. How are you? All right. So centering our work, this is something that we have engaged in as a committee. Since September, going back to finding our common

[00:07:32] ground. We have pulled items from each of those tabletop groups to make sure that we are grounded and centered. So let's revisit some of the statements that we came up with. We want our students to be meaningfully included, which of course is always timely when talking about students with disabilities, but we also had our meaningful inclusion subcommittee meeting last evening, which was wonderful. Item number two, we expect high expectations of all of our students. Don't

[00:08:07] lower the bar, okay? And then our third point of finding our common ground, we are committed to improving the system and the process, and that can only be done together. So thank you all for showing up again this evening, month after month. It's hard to believe it's March. Happy March. It's the first day of March. We are also highlighting one of our bumper stickers that we did from our October meeting. Our magnets are back in the back, so please feel free to take a magnet. This was the work of the parents that showed up for that October meeting. They designed

[00:08:46] a bumper sticker that was reflective of our one LCPS strategic plan, so thank you. Before we jump into our presentation we have a brief grounding activity so you can read the directions so at your tabletop groups and certainly you can feel free to join with another group if you're seated in in you know either by yourselves or just in a coupling but please make sure you come together within a small group one person is going to get is going to get the group started then each person

[00:09:20] will share sort of in a round-robin fashion. And then the starter has to have very good listening skills. And you're going to paraphrase the group highlighting a potential common theme amongst the members. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable. You're grounding questions. All right?

[00:09:43] The first one that you could consider is, how do you feel about being here today? Right? Or the second question that you could consider is, what is something you hope to gain from tonight's session? Okay, so we're going to come together in small groups without barriers. We have the two grounding questions that we could consider. Someone's going to get us started. You can share as much or as little about your chosen group question, and then you're going to paraphrase that common theme.

[00:10:16] I'm going to give you about two minutes to do that. Thank you all for participating in our

[00:15:33] grounding activity if we could begin to come back together so we can transition to our presentation for this evening we have some groups that are still very engaged which is wonderful and i know i'm gonna someone said i need to use my teacher voice thank you thank you all so i certainly hope

[00:16:13] that everyone is excited about being here i hope they are eager to learn i hope everyone is feeling comfortable and grounded after being able to connect with one another? All right. We still have some tabletops grounding, which is absolutely fine. But we are ready to transition to our presentation for this evening, which is learning about twice exceptional learners. And we have two

[00:16:51] amazing guests with us here from Henrico County Public Schools. First, we have Mrs. Jenna Conley. She is the gifted education specialist through the Department of Teaching and Learning and Innovation for Henrico County Public Schools.

[00:17:07] And then we have Dr. Sarah Slaughter, who is the education specialist coming from the Department of Professional Learning and Leadership from Henrico. I have had the pleasure of working with both of these ladies in one capacity or another over my tenure in public education.

[00:17:25] and I was thrilled to be able to reach out to them to partner in growing our practices here in Loudoun County Public Schools with meeting the needs of our twice exceptional learners. So I know that they have a fun-filled interactive evening planned for us as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of twice exceptionalities.

[00:17:48] So without further ado, I'll turn it over to Mrs. Conley and Dr. Slaughter. Thank you so much for being here. all right well thank you so much for having us sorry we were sort of in a hurry to get things set up but I think we're in a very good place and we're excited to be working with you all this evening so great to see such an amazing audience for a special education advisory committee meeting

[00:18:22] and we're thrilled to be with you I have had the great fortune of working with Ms. Richardson in Spotsylvania County for oh golly about 17 or 18 years and so worked with her very closely as we navigated a lot of twice exceptionality protocol and processes so have had that experience and now in Henrico County we're working also to to really develop and ensure that we have access and opportunity for all of our students and so twice exceptional has become something that we've really worked together on Dr. Slaughter as a interventionist for Henrico County and

[00:19:02] me as gifted coordinator so we're going to kind of run through a few things with you all this evening. So as for what we'll be learning, so we're going to start with some learning intentions and success criteria. So today are what I am learning about common characteristics of two twice exceptional learners, or 2E, and how I can support them as their parent or guardian. Why? Because when families have a better awareness of neurodiversity, they are more empowered to support their children. And then how do we know that we've gotten what we need to get

[00:19:41] today in our time together is when we'll be able to identify at least one essential skill that we can develop and promote as families that will benefit the growth of our children. And so we're going to begin right off with an interactive activity. I hope you are ready to stand. We're going to play a game called fact or myth. We have five statements that we're going to read one at a time. And if you believe that it's fact, we have a fact side. If you believe that it's myth, we have a myth side and we ask that you walk and stand in those regions. Are you ready to play? All right,

[00:20:19] I love the enthusiasm. Fantastic. Okay, let's hit the first one, please. All right, here we go. Okay, the first statement is children can only have one exceptionality, fact or myth. Children can only

[00:20:39] have one exceptionality, fact or myth. It seems that everyone has settled on a particular answer and you are correct. That is a myth. As we will discuss further, people experience the world in various ways and they are able to have a disability and also be gifted, identified as gifted, and even

[00:21:16] as a multilingual learner. So good job. All right, here's the next one. Statement number two. All neurodiverse children are the same. Fact or myth? All neurodiverse children are the same. Fact or myth?

Yet again, it seems that we have a rousing decision. You are correct. Once again, it is a myth. Well, this is a learning experience, right? That's right. So people in general are unique and

[00:21:53] neurodiverse children are no different. They think and process what is happening in the world in very unique ways that may be different from their neurotypical peers. Okay, statement number three. Neurodiversity affirming parenting is a collaborative process with your child. Fact or myth? Once again, it seems we have all made it, oh, made a decision, mostly made a decision.

[00:22:33] If you answered fact, you are correct. According to experts, according to experts, shifting the mindset of parenting roles in an authoritative parenting style is foundational to facilitating the most growth and change for twice exceptional children.

[00:22:53] An authoritative parent considers a child's autonomy and brings them into the process, letting them know they have an active role in making choices in their lives. It values their ability and independence while parents provide structure and support when it is needed. Okay, statement number two, four.

[00:23:10] Children with dyslexia cannot be found gifted as well. Children with dyslexia cannot be found gifted as well. Fact or myth?

[00:23:31] Once again, the crowd has it. It is myth. Dyslexic children can be found gifted because specific learning disabilities are independent of overall cognitive skills. It is possible for any gifted child to also have a learning disability as well.

[00:23:49] All right, last one. You all have been doing very well. Last statement. To support twice exceptional children, parents must use strategies that presume the child wants to do well but needs support to get there.

[00:24:12] - Yes, and if you noticed that there's a typo, as much should be must, you get a bonus point. Oh, some people are in the middle.

[00:24:28] You must make a decision, fact or myth. Choose a side. middle is not an option, choose a side.

[00:24:45] Okay, and it's okay, this is a learning experience. The answer is, it is a fact. Ideas and strategies that support twice exceptional children presume competence, meaning that operating from the assumption that children want to do well, are motivated to succeed, and need support to get there.

[00:25:04] Presuming competence means that children do well when they have the skills necessary for a task, and we need to, and we may need to work with them to figure out what accommodations they need. It changes the conversation to why can't you, to I know you can do this, what do you need to get there?

[00:25:22] Thank you for playing our game, Fact or Myth. Give yourselves a round of applause. Outstanding. So you've heard this term neurodiverse. We're gonna dive a little bit deeper into what neurodiversity is.

[00:25:40] This term, first coined by the psychologist Judy Singer in around 1998, basically said that neurodiversity is the idea that every person experiences and interacts with the world in different ways.

[00:25:57] While this term refers to all people, it is commonly used with people who have autism, ADHD, a learning disability, another disability, and giftedness. And Jen is gonna talk a little bit more about who our 2E learners are.

[00:26:19] - All right, you all did very, very well. So I have a feeling this is an advanced group. But we're gonna go through some of our 2E learner information. Our 2E learners are both identified as gifted and have an identified disability. Their exceptional ability may mask or hide a disability or vice versa, a disability may mask an area of strength or an exceptionality.

[00:26:43] And so, you know, it's tricky sometimes to figure out who our twice exceptional learners are. Alternately, you may have students who are each disability or exceptionality is masking the other. And so they may just kind of present as, you know, kind of sort of on grade level doing the best we can do.

[00:27:01] Typically, a twice exceptional learner will have a very spiky profile. And so you may see just like, you know, real strength in one area. Maybe you're looking at an ability test or some sort of assessment, and we've got some peaks and valleys in there. And so a lot of times, too, they are just kind of able to compensate for any areas of weakness.

[00:27:21] So, again, overall, they kind of look like they're doing okay. Additionally, we know that our twice-exceptional students really differ from underachieving gifted students in that there's an identified disability, right? With underachieving gifted, we tend to see more of sort of social-emotional issues triggering that.

[00:27:40] But with a twice-exceptional student, it is that disability, and the student is constantly trying to sort of compensate. There's a lot of stress. There can be a lot of anxiety while they're trying to compensate, you know, for the disability. So peaks and valleys and all kinds of interesting data.

[00:27:57] I know Dr. Slaughter and I recently saw a student profile that really spoke to that, where you can have a student who has a 97 on a verbal on a Kogat and yet is also dyslexic. And so very, very interesting profile, but you have to be kind of savvy and know what you're looking for.

[00:28:16] According to the Virginia Department of Education, our twice exceptional students are K-12. They are both identified as gifted and identified as exceptional. And so, too, they are entitled to services in both of those program areas. And so what we want to see is that students who are twice exceptional are getting those exceptional ed services, and they're also getting gifted services.

[00:28:38] If they are 3E, we say maybe we have an ESL student. There are other exceptionalities that can also be part of that. And so those are students who are entitled to services through an IEP, possibly a 504 plan. And so those are some of the ways that we serve our twice exceptional students.

[00:28:59] All right, we're going to move on into some general characteristics of twice exceptional learners. and I will say this is not an exhaustive list but these are some things that you may see twice exceptional learners are highly unique there you know if you've met one two e-learner you've met one two e-learner because they are so very very different and individualistic so the characteristics that you see here it's not exhaustive and in fact you know may or may not describe some of the the twice exceptional students you may have have encountered but wanted to kind of provide some of the main ones here. They may have high verbal ability, unusual imagination. A lot of

[00:29:38] times they require frequent teacher redirection, support, feedback in order to kind of keep chugging along. They often have a wide range of interest and they may be incredibly knowledgeable about certain topics that they're very interested in. There may be extreme written language challenges just like a lot of students with exceptionalities. I mean that seems to be sort of a number one challenge area they may also appear immature have a lot of meltdowns those kinds of things there are strong observational

skills sometimes and even while they can remember things that they're very interested in you know the periodic table or dinosaurs or whatever it is they may have difficulty in other

[00:30:18] areas you know we're working on your times tables and then the next day it's it's all out the window so have definitely encountered that in my day as a teacher they also may struggle to learn some of those basic skills due to cognitive processing difficulties and they're often sensitive about their disability area. All right we're going to talk about three of the you know most likely kinds of combinations we see. We see these in especially a lot of times with our gifted learners and so we can't cover all of them tonight so we had to

[00:30:53] kind of highlight three. I also wanted to let you know a lot is pulled from a book called Raising Twice Exceptional Children. I did bring four copies so maybe we can do a little giveaway toward the end of the night. The author of this book, Emily Kircher Morris, is truly incredible. She is also the host of a podcast called Neurodiversity Podcast.

[00:31:18] So we have some of those resources linked in our presentation tonight that I know will be shared, so you'll have access to that. But in Emily's book, she really talks a lot about how with ADHD and ADD, we see a lot of times some different kinds of presentations. We see the students who are the daydreamers, right?

[00:31:36] They're not really causing a stir, but they're not really doing what they need to be doing because they're daydreaming. You also see the Energizer bunny types, right? Your hyperactive kiddos that are all over the place. And then sometimes you have a little bit of a combination of both. And honestly, like I know as a teacher and as a gifted resource teacher, I saw a lot of ADHD combined with giftedness.

[00:31:58] It definitely is very, very common. And so, too, sometimes teachers misinterpret that. You know, they don't necessarily always connect that to giftedness. They're just like, oh, he's hyperactive or, you know, those kinds of things. So definitely something to be on the lookout for. And the common factor with all three of the disabilities you see here is that there is that high cognitive ability, right?

[00:32:18] So in combination with that disability, you know, we've got some real high cognitive ability there that sometimes is just, again, like we're saying, sort of masking that giftedness. We also know that with that ADHD, even while that word deficit is in there, it really is that these kiddos have so much attention that they can't screen out the things that are around them.

[00:32:41] They can't tune out, you know, loud noises, bright lights, any activity that is going on around them. And so really, if anything, they have too much attention. And it just kind of, it makes it very difficult for them to choose where to direct their attention.

[00:32:57] Additionally, our gifted ADHD kids are a lot of times those kiddos who don't turn in their homework, their desk is a mess, you can't find anything, and yet you give them some kind of assessment, assignment, or test, and they ace it. And so that works pretty well for them, typically like K-2, where they're able to kind of function, but when we get into those upper grade levels, it starts to be a struggle.

[00:33:18] When executive functioning and more of those things kind of come into play in order to be successful, that's where some of these kiddos start to have some issues. Now, with autism, you can see two main areas where you might see students impacted.

[00:33:35] Communication and also repetitive behaviors and also, you know, restrictive patterns of behaviors. We have students who may not naturally engage in reciprocal conversation. Things may be one-sided. They may not recognize, you know, the verbal signals that you give off, the body language, those kinds of things.

[00:33:56] And also, sometimes people think that students with autism may not have a lot of empathy. Well, actually, they often really do. They just sometimes don't know how to express it. And so it's not that they're not empathetic. It's just the expression piece. The repetitive motor things that you see with autistic students may be that they, you know, they want to seek out certain surfaces.

[00:34:17] They rock. There are different kinds of STEM behaviors that they're using in order to kind of self-soothe and comfort themselves. Things like unexpected changes, transitions, fire drills, those kinds of things, without advanced notification support, our students can really become distressed.

[00:34:34] And so, you know, in a school environment, I know today I was at a school and there was a, I think there was an earthquake drill today. And so that kind of thing where students are not prepared for those can really stress them out and cause a challenge in that school environment. Lastly, too, with autism, we may have sensory differences.

[00:34:53] We have sensory seeking, where maybe I like weighted blankets or I want to hug my teacher really, really tight, you know, those kinds of things. Or sensory avoidance, where, you know, rather than walk, I'm going to walk on my tiptoes. I don't like smells, noises, bright lights, those kinds of things.

[00:35:10] And so those are some of the autism spectrum disorder types of behaviors you might see. And what happens is sometimes, even while we're getting better and better at seeing autism and having greater awareness, it sometimes slows the identification of our twice exceptional students.

[00:35:29] Because where we see that, we may not be always recognizing that there are signs of giftedness there as well. Especially because there's not typically that delay in language that we might see with some autistic students. And so sometimes that compensatory skills that they use may just appear that, oh, maybe it's just kind of a quirky kid, but, oh, this kid can read, and, oh, this kid is verbal.

[00:35:50] You know, they don't really necessarily start to think, oh, you know, maybe we've got some giftedness going on necessarily. The other thing, too, is oftentimes we miss those girls with autism because, you know, the focus has always been on boys for the most part. And so it's interesting to me because I've worked with a couple of kindergartners, young kindergartners with autism, but also highly gifted, verbal, precocious, really interesting kiddos.

[00:36:19] And it wasn't until they start to get to, like, first or second grade with, you know, meltdowns and some behaviors and things like that where we really had to kind of change it up the plan. We were at least able to recognize that they were twice exceptional, but we needed to make some changes and get them some autism resource support as well.

[00:36:36] All right, and so the last disability we were going to kind of take a look at is our dyslexia, our specific learning disability. And I know, you know, I just referenced that instance we found very recently with the verbal and the 97th on the Kogat. You know, we have students with dyslexia, and we as teachers are becoming better and better at recognizing it now that the state of Virginia has required teacher training in dyslexia.

[00:36:59] that's been a really great change but we need to ensure that those students are getting the services that they need early you know not when I'm in third grade and I'm just I've been doing poorly all along and now now we're finally recognizing we've got to find them early we really need to be using that Orton-Gillingham approach so that those students are able to really process make those connections between the phonological sounds and the written symbols and so combination we see quite frequently and really you know two there are many more but really wanted to highlight those three for you all tonight because those are typically what we'll see a lot of times with our twice

[00:37:35] exceptional students all right we're going to talk a little bit about the strengths of our twice exceptional learners because we want to come at it from a strengths based approach we want to kind of really leverage what kids are good at what they like and and kind of like build upon that because coming at it from an area of deficit or you know disability if we want to kind of really make them feel good about what they're good at and work that in and so you see here combinations of different kinds of strengths and these are all from a website I think it's Boulder Valley School District it's called the 2E

[00:38:11] quick guide and so great site to go to and we do have it listed in our later on in our presentation as well and so you see here some strengths of the the combinations that we've just shared with ADD ADHD and gifted advanced vocabulary, strong sense of humor. You may see ability to hyper-focus and abundant idea generation.

[00:38:33] There are a lot of times our ADHD kids and our two e-learners in general are very creative. You know, so if you see those kiddos that have divergent thinking, they're creative, you're typically there. I mean, it's interesting to look across all three of these and you kind of see it in all. With your autism gifted, you again see maybe encyclopedic knowledge of their interest. I know one of my little kiddos as a kindergartner knew the periodic table forward and backward and could tell you everything about the periodic table. It was absolutely incredible.

[00:39:03] Also, too, sometimes don't have as much concern for what other peers or even teachers think of them. They're very non-judgmental sometimes. It's not always across the board. And there's a lot of times no filter. And so that honest, direct communication, yeah, there's no sugar coating it. And with our dyslexic and gifted twice exceptional learners, a lot of times we've got excellent 3D visualization. They may be artistic. They see those bigger pictures, patterns, and anomalies, and they may be sort of like entrepreneurial types. So that's kind of interesting too. All right. I think we're going to move in. All right. Into an activity. Yay. So with this

[00:39:40] portion, we're going to have you do some talking at your tables. We are going to share five essential skills to develop as families with a 2E child. Again, highlighted in the book that Jenna shared earlier. But before we share them with you, we want to see what you think. So we're gonna give you a couple of minutes to work at your tables.

[00:40:02] Everybody should have a long white sheet of paper and markers. Give me a thumbs up if you have those. Excellent. So what you're gonna do is brainstorm what you think are the five essential skills that 2E students need. You have two minutes to

[00:40:23] brainstorm.

[00:41:01] It would help if we advanced the slides. This is what you're working on. What do

[00:41:02] you think are the five essential skills that two e-learners need? Everyone should have markers,

[00:41:55] so we want to see what your ideas are on your poster paper. Five essential skills that you

[00:42:03] think two e-learners should have.

[00:43:16] Just another minute to write down your thoughts. It's okay if

[00:43:18] you can't get to five. Whatever you come up with, we would like you to write down. So you have about

[00:44:25] 20 more seconds. We're going to start counting down at 10, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

[00:44:43] Thank you so much for those lovely conversations at your table. Lots of good ideas, lots of good thinking about this, lots of deep thinking about this. And we appreciated the clarity questions that were posed. If you would, the brave folks who wrote this down, if you don't mind just putting up on the wall because we're going to just compare our list to what the research says and it's okay if you didn't get all five no worries this is you will not get a grade this is

[00:45:23] all participation if you wrote something it's a 100 excellent thank you so much so again just want to emphasize is not saying that anything you said was wrong we're simply going by what

[00:45:58] the research says and shared with the book that Jenna shared earlier from Emily Kersher Morse So, to dive right in. Skill number one is self-advocacy. So, you can give yourself a little pat on the back if you had something in the realm of that. Having self-advocacy allows children to create structures and supports around them that they need and carry the skill with them throughout their lives. And you're going to see self-advocacy really weaved into all of the skills because as we

[00:46:34] talk about them, we want students to be able to communicate what they need. We want to teach children how to problem solve, how to flexibly think and find solutions to the situations that give them permission to get unstuck when they have a way that works for them. And giving them this permission gives them power to be able to work through things that are difficult for them.

[00:47:00] As parents, sometimes it's difficult to see our children struggling and we want to fly right in and help them. However, when we do that, we take away the child's autonomy and we take away their ability to be able to grow in their problem solving skills because we can't be there for every single time that something difficult arises. Self-advocacy allows students to recognize when they need help and to be able to articulate that help to a person whom they feel safe and comfortable with. Kirshen-Morse identifies self-advocacy as the most important skills for

[00:47:35] two e-learners to master. Overcoming difficulty is a part of everyone's lives and because of disability this need for educational and sometimes emotional support not typically provided to students who are not recognized to have a disability so to dive a little bit deeper there's three stages to help our children get in to develop this self-advocacy skill the first stage is to know when help is needed so it's important for students to think about and to think about ways

[00:48:13] that they can self-advocate by learning about signs in their thoughts, in their emotions, how their body is feeling, and that gives them clues or even if what actions are becoming of that, of whatever they're feeling inside, and to stop and think about why is this happening in my mind, in my body, and why I'm responding the way that I am.

[00:48:35] Sometimes we see with students that they have, to help them identify unhealthy, talk to themselves. I was working with a student very closely and think about last year who would have really

huge outbursts and we really had to work through, "Okay, what are you thinking?

[00:48:50] What are you feeling in your body?" So that he could help problem solve what was going on with him and that was really powerful for him. Some thoughts could be, "I just can't do this. I should quit. It's too hard." Some emotion, knowing emotions are a cue to children to be proactive, to seek help.

[00:49:05] So when my stomach feels funny or when I start having these negative thoughts in my mind, These feelings could be helplessness, confusion, frustrated. Some body signals could be I have sweaty palms, I have an upset stomach, I have a clenched jaw. Some action, some clues for actions could be engaged in a preferred activity as opposed to doing what was being required of them, or chewing on a pencil, pacing.

[00:49:30] So those are some clues for us to identify. And stage two, that's when it goes to actually finding the help. So have a conversation with your child about who they feel comfortable with, and also to think about what do you believe prevents you from asking help?

[00:49:46] What do you believe will happen if you ask someone for help? Because sometimes if they thought, I'm in the, like nobody else understands what's going on, nobody can help me, having them think through that can really help them become unstuck. Other questions in the conversation that are helpful are, in what situations do you think people can help you?

[00:50:04] In what situations do you think no one can help you? who are the people that you trust and what do you expect of someone when they try to help you so they can think about what it looks like to them for someone to help them. And then in stage three, this is when they're actually communicating when they need the help.

[00:50:20] And so it might be easier for them to think about the logistics for how to ask for help. For some students, it might be writing a note or an email or some kind of card or post-it sticky. It could be where it's an impromptu request that they make verbally.

[00:50:39] It could be that they have a specific time and place between classes where they can go and pause and have a conversation with a trusted adult. And then it could also be helpful for them to frame those requests. So when they're calm and they can think about it, to give them almost like a sentence frame to help them communicate what they need.

[00:51:00] And so it's good to be specific, to use natural language, to offer suggestions or possible solution, and then ask for that help or permission. The biggest piece with self-advocacy in all these stages is to allow time for the child to reflect and to do that, of course, when they're at baseline and not escalated.

[00:51:19] So now Jenna's going to talk through some other skills that are important for the students. All right. As you look up at your posters on the wall, I wonder how many of you might have had emotional regulation on your posters. Anybody out there with emotional regulation? Fantastic.

[00:51:38] Okay, that's going to be our skill number two, and it's a big one. Even for us as adults, I know I really relate when I'm learning about emotional regulation to that ability to recognize those emotions within yourself. I mean, we have done that. We know how to do that.

[00:51:54] But students, and especially our twice-exceptional students, really may not be able to recognize emotions. And so, you know, in addition to knowing what they are, we also have to make sure that they don't negatively interfere with daily life. And so this is something that we really have to explicitly work

with our twice-exceptional learners and our ex-ed students as well to, you know, be able to regulate those emotions.

[00:52:18] One thing that you can do as parents is really to normalize emotions. and rather than kind of framing them as they're good or they're bad, you might want to just kind of frame them as comfortable or uncomfortable. That's kind of a more healthy way and positive way to look at it. And so, too, you know, we also want our students to understand that it's normal to have these emotions and their communication for us to guide our decision-making, right, and to assess situations.

[00:52:44] And so that whole, you know, sometimes there are times where it's flight or fright, you know, those kinds of things. I mean, the kinds of conversations you have with students are really important because, you know, as they're growing and developing, the amount of emotional regulation that, you know, they're going to need as they mature, get into those upper elementary years and middle school really increases.

[00:53:04] And if they don't have some of that baseline regulation, it's really going to interfere with their academics. The other thing, too, is that our gifted twice exceptional students may have a really heightened sense of their emotions. okay everything is very intense and so they may have severe anxiety based on you know that awareness of their differences and so that's another thing to kind of keep in mind there oftentimes it may be that they're overwhelmed trying to you know function and then to to have their supplies ready to be able to do what they're supposed to be doing in the classroom at any given time and so things that you know maybe we normalize and don't think a lot about

[00:53:43] they're really kind of a big deal for some of our twice exceptional learners All right, and so, too, Emily Kircher-Morris has provided a very wonderful strategy here, and it's called the ICANN method, and I know we probably have some teachers out there, too.

[00:54:00] We've got ICANN statements coming out our ears. You know, we use those for our lesson objectives, and so this is a real easy way to kind of frame up how we can help our students and our children with regulating those emotions through an ICANN process, and there are four steps here.

[00:54:15] The first one is really to investigate and to build that self-awareness of, you know, what am I feeling? You know, can I name it? You know, a lot of times with our younger students, even without exceptionalities, we really kind of spend a lot of time with our primary students and emojis and, you know, how am I feeling?

[00:54:33] I think we have done a really good job with using social emotional learning all around the state of Virginia. Probably I know in Loudoun, I know in Henrico. And so we have given students a lot of tools. So that's a good place to start. We've got to have self-awareness in order to gain control of our emotions.

[00:54:51] So that's huge. Secondly, we want to be able to communicate. You know, we have ELA literacy, right? We're learning how to read, those kinds of things. But we also have to have emotional literacy skills where we can put our feelings into words and we can talk about it.

[00:55:07] And if I'm feeling dysregulated, I can tell my parent, my teacher, you know, I can communicate how I'm feeling, because that's a big part of this. In terms of, like, you know, our parent scaffolding, there's a lot of explicit coaching that you all can do as parents.

[00:55:24] If you, you know, when you are modeling for your students your own emotions, you know, I know, like, I was trying to come up with some good things that, well, things I do that are not good. But, you know, I come home from work, and, you know, I really don't want to do that initiation of tasks or persistent, you know, the things that I need to do after school, you know, and I'll say something, you know, to my kiddos like, hey, I really don't feel like, you know, doing the laundry. I'm just, I'm so tired from this day. I'm really feeling unmotivated. The kinds of modeling that you do for your kiddos is really helpful so that they understand. And then two, they see you persist. Okay, well, I don't

[00:56:00] really want to do the laundry, but I have to, you know, so model. You also can label your child's emotions. You know, you don't want to dictate to them what they're feeling, but if they're really upset about something, and you say, hey, you know, it seems like you're really feeling excluded from your friend group. You know, does that sound like what you're feeling? You know, have that conversation with them so that you can kind of navigate and help them to come up with the language that they need. And then to, again, normalize talking about comfortable and uncomfortable emotions without judgment. I know sometimes we have maybe, you know, instilled in our kiddos that it's bragging to talk about how happy or great you feel, those kinds of things,

[00:56:40] or that it's maybe it's complaining if you say, I had a bad day, you know. We want to have a really comfortable environment where kids can talk about their emotions, uncomfortable or comfortable. So that is something that we as parents can do. In the Activate stage of ICANN, they are going to activate their problem-solving skills, and there's a lot of ways that you can model that.

[00:57:02] One thing that you can kind of do is if students are overwhelmed with problems, they kind of suggested an idea where if you have a quarter and you put it really, really close to your eye where you really can't see much of anything else, it just blocks everything out, and then you hold it further out, you know, and kind of take a step back and think about your two views.

[00:57:21] It's a great way to have a conversation with your student about, you know, how problems can seem really overwhelming when you hyper-focus on them and you're not looking at a bigger picture. And so, you know, little tricks like that that you can do as a parent to kind of help them Activate those problem-solving skills and work through those uncomfortable emotions The last step is to navigate that emotional dysregulation with specific strategies and there are three R's We have a lot of like little mnemonics going on one is to reset when our our kiddos are in emotional Dysregulation, you know, I know some of the things I see in our social-emotional learning are square breathing

[00:58:02] mindfulness, meditation, counting heartbeats, all of those strategies are great to just reset because we can't really get to anything until they're feeling a little bit calmer and in a better place to kind of reframe and rebound, which are other two R's. And so in those modes, with reframing, it's just a matter of thinking about, you know, is there a better way that we could reframe the situation that you're in and try to solve this problem? And that can be something that you co-navigate you know with your child and finally rebounding is just allowing children to debrief and also to to self-advocate it's hard you know you have to find that Goldilocks moment

[00:58:41] when it's the right time to talk to your kid I know Dr. Slaughter referenced you know you can't have a good conversation necessarily if they are just out of having some kind of outburst or some kind of issue you have to pick that Goldilocks zone where it's not too early and not too late But you want to have those conversations.

[00:58:59] And two, at that point in time, it's a great moment to say, hey, let's go through those I can steps and figure out, you know, what was integrated and what was not and how might we approach this differently in future. All right. And remember, too, guys, problems and discomfort are catalysts for change.

[00:59:15] So we're going to help our kids rebound from that. All right. Third skill. Look at your posters one more time. I know a lot of you guys have this because I saw it. Executive functioning. All right. And this is a big one because this is kind of like the big umbrella for all the other stuff.

[00:59:33] And so with executive functioning, this is our third essential skill. And it involves not just decision-making skills but also behavioral regulation. So this is huge. The decision-making skills include planning, prioritizing, organization, time management, working memory, and metacognition.

[00:59:52] And then for our behavioral regulation skills, those are going to include response inhibition or impulse control, emotional regulation, what we just touched on, sustained attention, shifting focus, task initiation, some cognitive flexibility, and also task persistence.

[01:00:10] And I know, you know, some of the behavioral regulation pieces, like I know, like working with twice exceptional students, you know, those are things that we had to work on on a regular basis. These are skills that are necessary for day-to-day tasks, and each act in tandem with each other.

[01:00:27] There's like complex, you know, combinations of them all. But great news, these skills can be explicitly taught, so that's great news. And two, their executive functioning skills can be improved. so there is hope. All right, and we're going to talk a little bit about four strategies here.

[01:00:46] Number one is to explicitly teach the skills. Your kiddos really need to know and be empowered in their awareness of the skills so that they can make choices in how to change. You know, if they want to improve in a skill area, we're going to need their buy-in. We need to engage them in finding the environments that work for them and creating supports to accommodate them in those areas of difficulty and also helping them to learn to advocate to ask for support, right?

[01:01:14] We want to get to that advocacy piece where kids are able to be part of the conversation. You have to trust the process and I know this is really hard because this is a long process. There is no quick fix for executive functioning. It is a very gradual process but your child can grow into a confident independent adult with consistent practice and that slow growth.

[01:01:36] We do, again, want to leverage strengths because we need to have positive messages about our twice exceptional learners. And two, we want to maybe apply some of the executive functioning strategies and skills to something they really like.

[01:01:51] Maybe a hobby or maybe a sport so that in looking at how they can apply executive functioning skills to something that's karate or something that they love, they're able to kind of transfer that to academics. And so that's a good way to kind of introduce some of those kinds of strategies. And then finally, when we're using accommodations, it's important to know that we're not enabling children. We're helping them to know the supports that they need so that they can achieve success. So there are all kinds of ways that you can help with that from, you know, I want to teach my kiddo how to load the dishwasher, right? So I'm going

[01:02:29] to post a picture of a perfectly loaded dishwasher. So they have something to reference and use as a tool. So lots of creative ways to work with that. Also too, maybe it's like your backpack at the door, how you want them when they leave, what they need to bring with them. There's so many ways that we can help them with that executive function. And two, their needs are going to change. When they're littles, it may be that they don't need a lot of accommodations, but by the time they're in sixth grade and now we have two binders in A-Day and B-Day and all of those things going on, they may need more.

[01:03:02] When considering accommodations, too, we really want to make sure that our teachers and parents are thinking through what students need to be successful and what is the just right amount of support that they're going to need. If a student needs a tool, maybe they need to type instead of do the handwriting piece.

[01:03:18] Might it be that they need an index card taped to their desk so that when they leave for the day, they know exactly what needs to be in their book bag and do they need to have their instrument for band? You know, whatever kinds of little reminders that we need to provide and put in place, that is what they need. And I'm sorry to tell you there are no quick fixes, and this process is often pretty slow.

[01:03:39] But in giving your child the tools that work for them, that's incredibly powerful. So if you had something about effective social communication on your list, excellent. That is the fourth one that Emily Kirshen Morris recognizes.

[01:03:58] Anybody? Yes? I don't see any smile. Okay, yes, all right, awesome. So as you know, just for anyone, communication is an important piece of building positive social relationships. And so it's important, and one thing about two eLearners that sometimes it's difficult for them to have peer, make friends and have peers because of their giftedness and not always knowing the best way to communicate.

[01:04:26] So here are some strategies we can use as parents. So, one is perspective taking. That is anticipating what the other is thinking. This can be a very daunting task for a child if they haven't had direct or explicit instruction in this.

[01:04:41] And the way that we can help is helping them to understand there's two different kinds of empathy. One is cognitive empathy, and that's where someone anticipates what someone is thinking. And it can be extremely difficult. The other is affective empathy. And our two e-learners who have a profile of autism giftedness often are able to really connect better with affective empathy and that is the ability to connect and feel with another person and it moves toward compassionate acts toward someone to help them alleviate those uncomfortable feelings so ways to coach are to narrate your process with them your thought process with them I know Jenna spoke about that earlier to help

[01:05:19] them see different perspectives that folks may be feeling in various situations. Take opportunities to make inferences about book characters and movie characters, TV characters. Encourage lots of question asking from your child and then help them to understand the nuances of communication, even those facial cues that sometimes 2E learners miss. Another way is communicating with peers. And so 2E children sometimes have a different way of communicating And so we can help them with understanding there's different communication styles.

[01:05:56] So I'm going to kind of set this up as a statement and then how it could be a problem and how we can help. So different communication styles. The problem is communication styles are not the same as neurotypical peers. The solution is we can coach children to learn new skills.

[01:06:11] Explicit instruction about how others are noticing or interpreting their words can make a big difference. Again, leveraging that affective empathy. Being a know-it-all, it can be a problem. And so a way that a solution to help them with that is teaching them basic healthy self-talk skills, practicing pausing and asking themselves, do they want my advice?

[01:06:37] Does this impact me directly? Another problem could be finding like-minded peers. And a solution for that could be connecting with children of similar interests And in the community, online, playing games like Dungeons and Dragons, and not limiting connecting your child with children that are only their age.

[01:06:57] And communicating electronically could be a problem. So a solution with that is having a conversation with your child about appropriate ways to communicate with people in virtual settings. And allowing them to form, and then another solution is allowing them to form relationships, again, with different age peers.

[01:07:17] Another, the next strategy is conflict resolution. And so to help them with that is helping the children to establish those positive boundaries and then giving them strategies to support with communication. One thing that Emily Kirshen-Morse talks about in her book is a five-step apology, so I'm going to share that with you.

[01:07:35] The first step is to say, I'm sorry. The second is to give the reason why you're apologizing. The third is perspective taking. How do you believe the situation made the person feel? how could you tell? The fourth step is preventing reoccurrence. How can we make sure the situation doesn't happen again? And then the fifth is righting the wrong. What will you do to right the wrong or make up for the situation that occurred? And teaching them those effective communication skills can help them with building relationships with peers. And then the fifth skill that we're going to share with you is self-directed motivation. Did anybody have

[01:08:14] motivation on their skills? Okay, well, we're going to talk about it. So small wins with other essential skills eventually leads to this and that self-directed motivation. Again, as Jenna talked about before with executive functioning, it takes time. It's a journey. It's not going to be quick.

[01:08:37] But as we have those little wins and a little win after that and another little win, we gain momentum and our children start feeling that motivation to continue to work toward building these skills. We're going to talk a little bit more about the ingredients for self-directed motivation.

[01:08:57] The first one is agency and so with agency the children are a part of identifying goals and creating a plan. We talked about that a bit when we spoke about self-advocacy and even as parents if we don't think our child's chosen action steps are the right ones we want to still let them do it because then after they do it we can talk about okay what worked what didn't work all right let's try another approach can be hard but it's really important to help them learn from their experiences the second is competence we want sometimes two e-learners can appear unmotivated and deemed under

[01:09:35] achievers and sometimes it's the polar opposite they're deemed overachievers because they want to get the top grades and they want to be the number one all the time and so helping them to have a type of communication that helps them to normalize their experiences and give them permission to express those feelings of frustration vulnerability really helps supports build their competence we want them to channel their motivation toward their goals and we but we need them to believe that we want

them to succeed and continue to scaffold those supports and giving them some accommodations so they can be successful we ultimately want them to build those in trend that intrinsic

[01:10:15] motivation and we want to slowly help them to to work on that there's three different types of self-motivated motivation there's intrinsic there's integrated and there's identified I'll be really brief with this so intrinsic of course is they believe a task has its own value integrated as they feel motivated while recognizing there's a benefit to completing it and then identified as recognizing that there may not be a lot of motivation in the task itself but it has value and the opportunities they'll provide so Kirshen Morris does not promote using rewards because sometimes when the reward is earned then the motivation to do whatever they're supposed to do goes

[01:10:55] away and so Kirshen Morris promotes that using natural consequences can be effective learning tools. And if you aren't able to use natural consequences, to use logical consequences instead. So a logical consequence might be the child doesn't get their homework because they were playing video games. So we're going to take away the video games so you can complete your homework. And that could be a logical example. And then continue, of course, to have communication with your children so that they are able to communicate what they're feeling

[01:11:33] and you can lead help them get to that self-directed path and then for connection there is a path that she shares is called the paths process and so with paths it stands for purpose awareness task hurdles and helpers and successes and so with this it goes back to that connection the conversation with your children to help them to get to the road of self-directed motivation.

[01:12:01] So with purpose, it's really helping to help your children explore why motivation is important for a particular situation, especially if they don't want to do it. Questions you might ask are, what are some things that are important to you? How does it spend your time? What would make your life better? How ready are you for a change on a scale of 1 to 10?

[01:12:20] Awareness is awareness of self. So they should consider their hobbies, areas of interest, relationships with other people, self-confidence in unfamiliar situations, risk-taking, attention to detail, task. So integrating their purpose and awareness of self into the specific task or goal they find personally valuable, so that way that helps them with that motivation.

[01:12:41] And in this portion, they should really establish a concrete goal to help them to complete those tasks. So for H, there are going to be hurdles, and so for them to be straightforward and specific about what those hurdles are, And on the other side of that coin, think about the helpers, what's going to help them to complete those tasks.

[01:13:01] And then for us, celebrate those successes. As I started with self-directed motivation is that we have to celebrate those little wins. So as a goal accomplished, we're going to celebrate that and then set another goal so they can continue to make progress. And you know what?

[01:13:22] Even while I know we – I did see self-efficacy out there. I know you guys. We had a little bit of that piece on the last one. All right, we are going to conclude with a reflection five corners, and so what you see around the room where you see the numbers one, two, three, four, and five, and I know we usually play four corners, but we needed a fifth, so we have those five skill areas there for you.

[01:13:44] And what we're envisioning is we are hoping that you can visit one of the five corners. And the first prompt is going to be that you are going to move to the skill that you feel the most confident in

developing in your child.

[01:14:00] And so of the five skills that we've kind of shared and covered tonight, the one that you feel most confident in developing in your child, maybe you've already kind of gotten a head start on executive functioning. That's one you want to kind of continue with. We're going to start with our most confident, and then we're hoping we're going to have time for a round where we have maybe our least confident.

[01:14:19] We'll see. We may be running low on time. So, all right. Let's start with one. Do we have time? One. Okay. All right. Let's do the most confident. And then when you're there, you're going to see some conversation starters there underneath the number. And so if you want to talk with a partner or partners about how you can work with this skill and develop this in your child, maybe to share any successes that you've had to date.

[01:14:43] We'll give you just a few minutes to talk and then we'll circle back and do our final share out. All right, you guys are free to move. So one is in the corner, two, three, four, and then five is in the back. Where do you feel the most confident?

[01:15:06] Oh, I hate to disturb these wonderful conversations

[01:17:11] you're having at your tables, I mean, in your corners. But we are at the end of our time with our presentation. So if you could just thank your group and your partners for the conversation. Going to close.

[01:17:28] Okay. So the last thing we'll leave you with is that collaboration is key. You cannot do this on your own. And so we want to make sure that you know that there's resources coming your way. And we really appreciate your time, attention, and engagement.

[01:17:44] Have a wonderful evening. Thank you for your time today. Thank you to Dr. Slaughter and Mrs. Conley for joining us and giving us all of that information.

[01:18:01] thank you all for your engagement and all of their activities we do have a few slides that are attached that give an overview of our gifted education programming here in Loudoun and I know we need to get ready to transition to our business meeting so we will make sure that everyone gets a copy of this presentation so that you can reference those slides and certainly if there's any additional questions that you may have please do feel free to reach out to our office and we'll connect you with Wendy King, our supervisor of gifted education. Sharon, would you like to take

[01:18:35] like a two-minute break to segue to the meeting? We certainly can do questions. I don't want to take up too much of your time. Yes, I'm Tedra. I'm too loud already. Okay. So we are, we were six students. I say we because we are the students as well. We are learning from our teachers, kids

[01:19:13] at the same time and all of a sudden the number of six changed to ten one is not like always but he or she comes and goes and the number of the teachers as one teacher and two assistants and yesterday when I went there she the teacher was frustrated and she was you know she was frustrated and when I asked her the reason she said number of the students changed I cannot teach I cannot not to not teach the routine learning because our kids are kindergartners and at least that

[01:19:50] these two years they need some more attention and they are not getting the attention so i went through the bylaws and everything from yesterday and today i took the day off to go through them half day off because i have to pay my bills anyway um in there it says ratio of the student and teacher is three seven

I don't actually understand the number but after reviewing and reviewing I believe one teacher one behavioral assistant and two PAs which is four teachers

[01:20:25] well they are teachers all of them for eight students and I asked the principal and Miss Mullen and they said that's what Loudoun County gives us and just like accidentally this morning we were talking and we found out about this meeting today so we rushed carpool today to come here and meet with you and actually miss mullen told us to you are the person in charge so i need your help to help us get our kids more attention because we need them to be skillful for all of

[01:21:00] those and i uh i'm a fighter i fought for my kids since we found out that he is uh this he has autism nonverbal he cannot express himself and he walks in the wall i'm i'm pretty sure many of the parents know that and i fought for four years to get him a medicaid because the bills are way too high for bc for the aba sessions and speech therapist but i have five jobs at the

[01:21:33] same time to pay those bills and now that i am a person who is paying taxes on all five jobs I believe I deserve more than anyone else outside of the United States to be paid and given whatever we need, the support.

[01:21:55] I want more than \$500 to \$23 million budget given to the disability department, or actually to say special education, and instead of \$523 million given to 300 million people in the United States, well, no, it's not yours.

[01:22:19] I have to go talk to Mr. Biden about that, but I will talk to him. I swear to God, I will call him because I am calling him already every day for the other things. I think he will going to deport me somewhere. But we need more teachers in our kids' classes.

[01:22:39] We need more supplies. We help our teacher. We buy for them whatever they need. At the same time that we have big bills, we are generous too. And we do whatever we can for our kids. And if you please, please, please get us one more person to help Ms. Molly Knudsen, our teacher, the best teacher ever.

[01:23:04] She's like, we don't want to lose her because of the pressure on her. And our kids love her. Like the day one, my son went in. He just went into her arms and he fell in love with his teacher. And I'm happy. So please accept and help us with one person to be added to the team.

[01:23:25] also change, make some changes in the Loudoun County rules and regulations because our kids need more attention. And that's, oh, there's another thing that I wanted to say, just one minute. We need an evaluation, like speech pathologist or psychologist, the one we went to, I'm sorry, my first language is Persian, and then I learned Arabic, and then I learned

[01:23:59] english so this is my third language sorry if i am stopping somewhere because i forget the word um we had to go to children's national hospital in baltimore to or rockville somewhere um to get the evaluation and it costs more than two thousand dollars so if we can have a speech pathologist who will not charge us a thousand dollars to see if our kid has um dyslexia or autism would be perfect Also the evaluation, autism evaluation, misdiagnosis are a lot, and we had it, and we need those.

[01:24:39] So if you please put that in your agenda, give it to Biden, or whoever is in charge of the budgeting for the education department. I believe we deserve the money we are paying to be paid back to us through our kids.

[01:24:55] So in future, our kids will be more useful for this country and the world. Thank you. I was just going to say, at this time, we do have a number of questions online.

[01:25:18] Would it be better if I just forward those to our response box?

[01:25:42] Let's take a quick, please, two-minute break. So I need you to, if you need to run to the restroom or get a drink of water, please, no more than two minutes so we can be out of here on time. All members, if you have not signed in at the back of the table, I have the sign-in sheet.

[01:26:01] Please come see me.

[01:29:23] Okay, if you can take a seat, we're going to get started.

[01:29:33] Okay, let's get started.

[01:30:10] She kind of goes to sleep sometimes.

[01:30:25] Let's start there. Good evening. My name is Sharon Trofe, and I am the SEAC chair. This evening we have two members participating electronically. I'm going to let Mr. Metz bring them in for a vote to participate electronically.

[01:30:47] - We have two members who have requested to participate remotely, Elizabeth Bayard and Melissa Waugh. Are there any objections to their remote participation? Seeing none, welcome. - Okay, moving on.

[01:31:06] We're gonna move into... I was going to introduce our executive board. We're having a little bit of technical difficulty. I can see myself, but I can't see what's being projected. So bear with us a little bit.

[01:31:22] As I said earlier, my name is Sharon Trofe. I'm the current SEAC chair. To my right, I have Shanaz Khan, our vice chair of planning. Craig Metz, our vice chair of communication. To my left, I have Liz Crotty is our vice chair of membership.

[01:31:38] Katie Rosenberg is our secretary. And our school board liaison is Tiffany Blefko. To my right and to my left, I have Tedra Richardson, our staff liaison she is the director of special education for specialized instruction i'm going to skip this is this is just a little overview of what seac does and seac is a group of volunteers we have 21 members oh thank you and our main job is to identify the unmet needs of the special

[01:32:14] education community and to interact with our liaisons and share that information with the school board whoops we're gonna move into our public comment we do have two public comments signed up this evening oh thank you we ask that you keep your public comment on general about systemic issues and not focus on your child although I understand that most of our comments center around our children if you are making a verbal comment we ask that you provide a

[01:32:52] written or an electronic copy of your comment because we do use these to inform our business and what gets sent to committee to work on and lastly you have three minutes for comment our first comment is with Lisa Williams thank you good evening my name is Lisa Williams my pronouns are she/her I'm the mother of

[01:33:29] two girls in Loudoun County Public Schools and our youngest is in special ed as i've mentioned previously we rejected reading services specialized reading services last may for those that don't know loudoun county public school has a homegrown literacy program as you move into the tier three reading

services there have been findings against its effectiveness and the current screening assessments have been found not to work appropriately for all both the tier three reading intervention program and the screening failed our daughter and as reported last

[01:34:03] Last month, she's 10 in fourth grade and she mastered the alphabet in November and her major milestone in her recent progress report last week from her certified academic language therapist, a cult, is that her handwriting is now legible.

[01:34:20] With these two successes, our daughter is becoming clear on what she needs to learn and regularly questions why she can't get it at school. Last month, I reported it took over 30 days for Loudoun County Public Schools to accept our partial consent to the annual IEP. This was because I didn't let them modify our voice in the process. You see in November they left our daughter's voice out of the IEP. Our daughter is an active advocate for herself so tonight I'm going to share her words when I asked her what it's been like working with her cult. One, I used to not know how many letters are in the alphabet.

[01:34:57] Now I do. There's 26. I can make references with Ms. S so I can connect the concepts. At school, I got cut off when I did this since they thought it was gibberish. At first, it may sound like gibberish, but that's how I learn, and Ms. S lets me do that.

[01:35:14] Three, I can read more than one sentence since we only work on letters I have learned. This lets me learn words and remember them. Since we work in cursive, it's easier to remember. Four, it is easier for me to feel things so I can learn and remember them.

[01:35:31] Ms. S has different things. Some are magnetic, some sand, some other stuff that let me touch them and learn my sounds and words. Ms. S has special pencils that help me and now I write better. She does the calendar with me every day, so now I know how to read a calendar.

[01:35:49] She follows a specific order with me in my lessons and we don't move on until I know it. I am not timed like I was at school. It's fun, easier, and it helps me. It's fun because she has different things that I learn with. It is easier because she only works on one letter at a time.

[01:36:07] And I'm not timed or rushed to learn in a week. Ms. S is very patient with me when I forget things that we've covered and I don't feel panicked to get it right. She helps me learn using different ways. This is the voice of our 10-year-old who is finally learning how to read and write.

[01:36:26] So tonight, I share her voice here, and I ask publicly for Loudoun County Public Schools' specialized instructional team to consider the needs of the severely and profoundly dyslexic children, those with an ability of less than 5% blended across the three elements of orthographic, phonetic, and rapid naming, and consider their voice in extremely unique needs.

[01:36:51] Please consider partnering with certified academic language therapists. And I will close with a statistic from the International Dyslexic Association. When the correct teaching methods are appropriate, children with dyslexia can successively learn over 90% of the time.

[01:37:11] Thank you. Our second public comment was emailed to me, so I'm going to read it.

[01:37:35] This is from a parent, Aaron Poe. I am writing in the hope that my words and experiences can bring some light to a situation that affects many children. Unfortunately, our experiences have been mostly unpleasant ones when advocating for services that are rightly deserved under IDEA.

[01:37:56] There is minimal transparency when it comes to the options available to our children, specifically our high school children, where the expectation is greater. The VDUE has set forth new policy back in 2020, a world language credit accommodation for those children with IEPs and 504s who may not be able to take a foreign language.

[01:38:17] The reason I became aware of this was not because of LCPS, but rather because of my own research. I presented this at my son's IEP team and was confused as to why this information wasn't readily available for parents, as well as why this conversation had never been an option for my son.

[01:38:35] I asked if this was a school issue or if this was a county-wide issue that the New Virginia Policy 22-1-253.13-4 wasn't fully implemented here in LCPS and was told it was a slow rollout.

[01:38:52] Because of this slow rollout, LCPS essentially has denied children who qualify for this opportunity that may have never had the opportunity to obtain the advanced diploma. There is an opportunity for our special education children to have more doors opened for them that may have been closed before.

[01:39:14] I don't understand how a county that is one of the richest in the country fails to update their policies in a timely fashion to support special education children as well as all of our children. We cannot say that it is for a lack of funding or resources.

[01:39:30] This should be clearly presented to families annually so that there can be an educated discussion about a child's educational future. It is very telling when a parent knows more about the options for their child than the school system does.

[01:39:46] This becomes even more infuriating to parents is when we can produce state policy and guidelines and we get told at the IEP table it doesn't exist or it is not correct. This reflects poorly, this reflects back on, poorly back on standards of teaching our children and helping to provide them with the same opportunities as other children, not to mention the denial of faith.

[01:40:13] As I continue to attend both my children's meetings, I watch firsthand as the I and IEP is being removed. These meetings are no longer about a child, but a number of, or where they can fall on the bell curve. They did a child, when did a child suddenly not have an identity?

[01:40:32] Each child has a reason for specific accommodations, and when parents get told that their child can only have these accommodations in specific situations, or LCPS makes the criteria so specific that it puts every child into one box, the conversation then is no longer collaborative but authoritative.

[01:40:51] This is a reminder to this group that LCPS is out of touch with the matters of success for our children. I ask that you look at the specific group of families and children and remind yourselves why you entered into the world of education. Ask yourselves, do I have the best interest of this child at heart? If you are unable to answer yes, then you continue to be a part of the problem and not part of the solution. Our children were born with beautiful minds and to foster a growth of success in each of these children, parents and staff must work in collaboration with each other every day.

[01:41:27] Thank you for your time for considering this issue. Those are our two public comments for this evening. So moving right into our agenda. This is actually not old business.

[01:41:46] It's new business. So it's wrong on my slide, but it is right on the agenda. So I apologize for that. The Policy and Compliance Subcommittee met and reviewed draft policy 6350 wireless network co-

location.

[01:42:03] And the committee did not have any recommendations coming out of committee. This policy was provided to all of our members to review prior to our meeting. Are there any recommendations from the floor on this policy? Seeing none, do I have a motion to move forward with a vote?

[01:42:30] jennifer you want to make a motion okay um friendly amendment um that cac has no feedback for policy 63 50. we're just agreeing that there is nothing to put forward from cac right so we're

[01:43:01] just going to move forward with that so all of our our cac voting members um if uh you are in agreement but there are no recommendations being put forward please raise your hand and say aye any opposed any abstentions okay that motion will carry we will put that forward thank you so you were also the members were also sent the February 8th 2023 meeting minutes to review are

[01:43:38] there any questions or comments or additions or changes to those meeting minutes hearing none we will post those we still need one SEAC member to represent SEAC on the career and technical advisory committee this committee meets at 8 30 on the third wednesday of every month so that is if that's an opportunity you would like please email me or contact me we have that with our last

[01:44:11] committee that we're looking for a member to sit on for march observances march is national disabilities awareness month and disabilities awareness month did i said dyslexia awareness didn't I? What did I say? Disabilities again? Oh my goodness. Sorry about that.

[01:44:34] Disabilities Awareness Month. I don't even know what I'm saying at this point. This school year, SEAC has received feedback on the combining of programs, teachers and teacher assistance shortages, which we heard a little bit earlier.

[01:44:53] ASL, another comment we've heard earlier this year, not being available in all the high schools. i.e. funding and low SOL scores policy 5350 parent notification for screening and assessments if you get a if your child is not making benchmark you will get an email from LCPS letting you know that your child did not meet benchmark we have been informed that LCPS rolls out to all of the schools that if a

[01:45:27] student is not meeting benchmark then the RTI teams at those schools should be putting together plans and discussing how they can assist that student and making benchmark in our subcommittee meetings we are seeing that while this is what in theory should be happening we are not seeing that consistently rolled out across the county especially in our high schools and in our middle school so that is still an area of concern. Our monthly executive committee meeting will be tonight after

[01:46:05] this meeting over at Clyde's. If you would like to join us, it's open to the public. Our SEAC awards date is June 6th and our SEAC awards nomination forms, you should have received an email from LCPS today. It went out and we are already receiving nominations of which I am like shocked so people have been waiting for that to come out so we're very excited about that we're sitting and watching them roll in I was like wow our we are now moving on to publishing

[01:46:39] our survey at the end of the month into March it will go out so be watching for that the 21-22 survey data is being analyzed so we can have a report for you hopefully by the end of the school year and I will be speaking to the school board on March 14th to give an update we currently have our nominating committee is Carla Sola Carla I saw you walk in there you are and Nancy Nancy wasn't able to be here this evening I know Carla has been sending out emails to everyone trying to

[01:47:18] solicit interest on serving on the executive committee if you have any questions about any position please feel free to reach out to me i am more than happy to speak with you about any of the positions and what we do here on the board membership we now have 71 schools with pta pto reps yay we're very excited we know some of you are watching from home and some of you make it here to our meetings so we have 25 schools that do not have representatives but we're very excited

[01:47:57] to have the 71 that we have. We currently have 19 voting members. We have two open membership positions. We have three new members. Zena, are you here? I don't see Zena. Jennifer Donato, welcome, and Lisa Williams, welcome. Yay. We have one new membership application that we have received that the executive committee will be reviewing and then forwarding on to the Department

[01:48:30] of special education our SEAC membership and bylaws are on the back table again if you have any questions you can reach out to Liz she's our vice chair of membership and she will answer any questions that you may have a subcommittee reports I'm going to Shanaz you want to give an update on the policy and compliance the policy and compliance met this past month and we were we reviewed policy

[01:49:05] 6350 we are also in the process of reviewing the ie at public expense and we're looking to get feedback from the community as to your experience in that area we will be scheduling another meeting for the end of March and we will keep you posted as to when we schedule that so the transition subcommittee met this past week and we had quite a few good conversations we are really wanting

[01:49:44] parents to be aware of the Schoology group for those parents who are moving who have students who are receiving transition services there is a Schoology group that the parents can join it is on the I'm pretty sure it would be on the parent resource services website it's also on the back table and this group provides resources for our parents and we're building we're working with the LCPS staff to build on that website to include more of what assessments will

[01:50:19] look like we have also been inquiring about our cast program which will be at MADA and so we're looking forward to next year having that up and going just trying to look at see we're looking also to have previous in previous years we used to have a transition handbook which was a really good resource for our parents to look at and see what would be coming up next what would be our ninth graders looking at 10th graders 11th graders maybe a checklist as to what they would be need to be looking for for their students and meeting with the

[01:50:58] transition teacher and so our next meeting we are looking at probably March 23rd it's a Thursday at 4:30 p.m. for specialized programs for specialized reading and math lorraine could not be here this evening but liz karate has an update from her okay sorry about that lorraine would like us to share that topics that are continuing to be

[01:51:36] discussed at our subcommittee meetings include effective literacy screening tools at all levels elementary middle and high progress monitoring tools for middle and high school students who fail to meet expectations specialized literacy and interventions across all levels elementary middle and high creation of an updated instructional match matrix to guide instructional decisions specialized math interventions and the role that MTSS plays in all of this as well and then

[01:52:11] she also wanted me to announce that the next LCPS work session for this subcommittee is on march 7th at 11 30 a.m and you need to RSVP to margaret osbury and we will make sure that we have um

the link to that google form in our minutes as well as our pto pta notes that go out so just to clarify the meeting that will be here on march 7th is a working meeting

[01:52:48] with LCPS so it is different than the subcommittee meeting so it is actually a working meeting the next specialized reading and math subcommittee meeting will be on March 15th and that agenda will be posted the meeting minutes from the last meeting have been submitted to be posted so all of those are going on I have to say that I'm very very pleased with all of our subcommittees

[01:53:22] are working very hard and they have very detailed discussions I really encourage you if you have any questions in the areas that are targeted by our committees to please join those discussions they've been very well attended not only by the office of special education staff but our PTA PTO reps and our members they're a great place to learn lots of information and Liz I give you back to you for your update on meaningful inclusion yes so the meaningful inclusion

[01:54:00] subcommittee met last night and we had a robust discussion on universal design for learning and how it is actually very similar to personalized learning which has already been an initiative within our schools so we spoke about the current successes we are seeing as well as opportunities for expanding access to this at all levels and areas of the county we spoke about potential barriers that need to be considered and will now be working as a subcommittee to determine how best to address those barriers we are waiting some finalization of information regarding after

[01:54:38] school activities which was a topic from a previous meeting and hope to have an update for the committee soon we will be highlighting some of our exciting submissions that we've received to recognize meaningful inclusion in our schools during our april meeting please see the pta pto notes for the link to the google form for that as well to share your submissions it's a great way way to highlight the wonderful things that are happening at your schools you do not need to be a member you do not need to be a pto rep this is open to everyone and we would really like to hear

[01:55:16] from people about the positive things that are happening so that we can share that more widely and inspire others and we have not scheduled our next meeting since we just had it last night but as soon as we have a date I will send that far and wide thank you last night's discussion was was very interesting and we identified several barriers to the inclusion for our students so it was a wonderful and enriching conversation I appreciate everyone that was there and participated

[01:55:51] in that I'm going to turn it over to Tom Ketchum for give us a little update he is our committee member who's been attending the gifted advisory committee meeting and the equity committee yes so thanks on the gifted advisory committee we've been reviewing the social and emotional learning programs throughout the county and how they're being delivered at all three levels from elementary school middle school high school specifically of course on that committee they were discussing the special ways in which those are delivered for gifted students and

[01:56:29] speaking to the coordinator of that I've asked that she sends me some more information on the accommodations that are specifically made for sped students as well to be able to ensure that we can deliver those same services to special education students as well. The equity committee has been reviewing primarily a lot of data that's been gathered over the last year and throughout this school year, particularly relating to incidents of harassment and bullying and similar type of incidents throughout the county. There's been a market increase this year, about 250 or so or more incidents so far this year. Only one of those

[01:57:07] was specifically labeled as an ableism related incident that's still obviously one too many 250 is far too many and of course those are reported incidents that's not necessarily inclusive of all incidents that may have happened there may be some ways in which that data is being analyzed that's causing that number to appear higher than it has in past years and we're still digging into that and one of the things that I'm trying to bring forward to the folks in the equity committee is uh while we have a wide variety of demographics throughout this county which i think obviously make us a very rich environment for learning um i think one of the

[01:57:46] things that i can represent in terms of of a group of students is a group of students that sometimes have a hidden aspect to their group which is for many of us you know whether we're on an iep or a 504 many of our students do not necessarily when they walk in the room present that they are part of this very small group of students, and so trying to represent that voice on the

[01:58:12] equity committee as well. Thank you for that update. Parent Resource Services, if you weren't here for the bus stops coming this weekend, you missed an awesome presentation. It was very well attended and lots of great information. So I'm going to turn it over to Leanne. Thank you. Yes, I was going to say something. We had a record number of people. We had 32 vendors, quite a few new vendors it was very very well received and I thank everyone that helped me with the endeavor

[01:58:50] so look for it next year come every year I know Shanaz does so I just wanted to oh we don't have that's oh I'm sorry I just technology and me so I just have well I have quite a few workshops coming up. The first one is message of behavior and that will be next Tuesday here at the admin building. It's a great workshop. It really digs into you know

[01:59:24] what your child is trying to communicate with their behavior and strategies. The next one is always a very very popular workshop. Again it will be here in the boardroom next Wednesday. It's gonna be a busy week and it's substance use trends and how you can help with prevention and early intervention.

[01:59:46] The third one next week is Diploma Options. And this is a fabulous workshop. It brings together Lee Bennett, who talks about the assessment piece. Nikea Purnell, I think I'm pronouncing her name correctly.

[02:00:03] She talks about the special accommodations. And then, and I'm sorry, it's a new person. was Tracy Jackson will be presenting on diploma, the actual diploma, standard diplomas, advanced diplomas. So that'll be next Thursday again here at the admin building. And then the following week we have a brand new workshop for us, but this was presented at the Mental Health and Wellness Parent Conference this past January. So it will be presented again on the 16th. So the following

[02:00:38] Thursday it's culture identity and mental health what families need to know so it's a new workshop for us so please come out and then I'm pleased to announce I've been very busy we're having the summer resource fair again it's been absent for the last three years due to COVID we're going to have it last year and then something came up I can't even remember so this will be the first time it's here in person it will be in this room and it will bring together both county agencies nonprofit agencies and for-profit agencies that have summer

[02:01:15] programs for students with disabilities so it will be targeted for families with students with disabilities but not all of the programs will necessarily be disability related so Girl Scouts Boy Scouts and so I'm looking forward to that that is on the last Saturday in March no it's the 23rd of March so please come

out for that and that is all of my workshops for March the one thing that Tedra said that I could announce the position has been posted for my

[02:01:53] parent partner it was posted today so if you know anyone that's interested in working you have a fabulous co-worker it's 25 hours a week and we're looking for the desire is to have a parent with students with disabilities because we're really nice balance that way I'm especially a teacher by training so that's our hope it's not a requirement I'm sorry I don't know so it's it's just

[02:02:32] been posted today so you can go on the LCPM LCPS website and it's under a teacher assistant for the office of special education and and that is what is listed as and I'm excited to get a partner so oh and then the other thing is we're moving in april but i'll see you all before i move sure was it no will it be possible

[02:03:10] for the parents to have not bcba sessions but um to make us familiar with what the teachers do um so i don't want to be a bcba but i want to know like if my kid wants to say i need water he can use his device or he can sign for me is there a workshop for those things sure if you look at the back table it has our offerings for the whole year we did an assistive technology for parents at the beginning of the school year I think it was the very first workshop that we did and I am always willing to talk to you

[02:03:50] about workshops that you're interested in so my information because I did ask Ark of Loudon but it was too expensive for me yeah and I spent on me as well as him so so you he was by the way he was approved for Medicaid so I'm happy now I'm telling them how to do it to be approved as well because we are doing the same where we are going through the same thing So so reach out to me. This is my information Please feel free either call me or email me and we can chat. Sure. Thank you so much. You're welcome. Any other questions?

[02:04:21] Okay, so our next month's, thank you, SIAC meeting will be a business meeting and a subcommittee working meeting So as we our subcommittees have been meeting and working and been very productive this year we have a lot of information to compile and as we began to develop our asks for the year that we want to make sure that we're outlining them in a way that we can present them in the annual report so we will have a working meeting next month.

[02:04:59] everyone is welcome you can sit in on one committee or a variety of committees as we start to wrap up for the for the year this this um april 12th is the week after spring break so it won't be the first wednesday because that is during spring break this year oh okay so a parent resource services is moving on the 11th and you're moving okay so you're moving to the

[02:05:30] Douglas building in Leesburg out of the admin building. Okay. The Douglas building is in Leesburg, but parent resource services is currently housed in the admin building. They're just moving their location to the, to the Douglas building in Leesburg. Okay. We're going to get an update from our school board liaison, Tiffany Polifko. Thank you so much. I would like to bring your attention

[02:06:06] to a few policies that the Loudoun County School Board went through last night and share some good news with you about a few of the amendments that ended up passing with regards to some of the feedback that SEAC had so I'll start with the discipline committee committee policy 8215 that's in school disciplinary measures we approved a motion in section K which was tracking to include documentation of the length of time that a student is removed from class if that should occur so I'm pleased to report that to you as well as policy 8260 which

[02:06:43] is reporting of student conduct I wanted to bring to your attention that with regard to the reporting requirements we did add a new section we did end up passing that amendment to add a new section so that when preparing reports the superintendent will will also create an aggregate report that will include and identify the number of incidents pertaining to students with disabilities, and that information will be made available to the public. And finally, with policy 7530 and HRTD, that was the duty to report child or student abuse and neglect. We did develop a little bit of a discussion around the fact that it did not include mental abuse, according to the

[02:07:23] Code of Virginia. And ultimately, we ended up sending that policy back to committee. So we'll continue to review that. And some of the concern was that staff wanted to ensure that we have an operational definition of mental abuse, and there was additional discussion around how that is a difficult thing to measure. It's very simple to take an observable view of any sort of physical abuse or sexual abuse, well, in some cases, but I think mental abuse is particularly difficult. So we did ultimately end up moving that back to committee, and hopefully we can get that resolved

[02:08:00] fairly quickly so we can move forward. Finally, I wanted to report on a few special education classroom visits that I was able to complete at Hillside Elementary. I was able to visit the early childhood special education classroom there, as well as the emotional disabilities classroom, and it was a great visit. And I can see that the teachers that work with those students clearly love their students. They have great aides over there, and the administrative staff was very supportive and welcoming of my visit, and one of the concerns that ECSE has in particular

[02:08:38] is a lack of behavioral assistance. So IAs are amazing, and they do phenomenal work with these kids, but as many of you know, especially with our early learners when we're dealing with behaviors, a lot of times those behaviors are occurring because they don't have the communication skills necessary to express their desires and their needs in an inappropriate way so I just wanted to share that with the committee that there is a request and a and potentially a need for BAs in those

[02:09:10] classrooms thank you I do want to say thank you to our members for Tiffany and Erica I can never say Erica's name right for supporting our SEAC feedback so when we give feedback we compile a document sometimes it could be you know 10 pages long of recommendations where the policy and

[02:09:45] compliance subcommittee does a lot of research on the policies and the code and what different counties are doing and we give we try to give very thoughtful and well-researched feedback So on the policies that have been coming through, I just want to say thank you for taking our feedback and looking at it carefully, which is very nice to see.

[02:10:11] We haven't had that in the past, so that's very nice to see. And turn it over to the Office of Special Education for a review. All right, we will start with Mrs. Katie Clark, our supervisor of special programs and the pre-international baccalaureate work group that has been working on the planning for next year for Heritage High School and Loudoun Valley High School.

[02:10:42] Guys, come on up.

[02:10:52] Good evening. I'm Katie Clark, supervisor of teaching and learning special programs.

[02:11:12] Thank you all for allowing us a few minutes tonight to share with you about our LCPS pre-IB program. Here is our quick agenda. We'll try to keep it short, but this is our agenda for our quick presentation. This evening, I have the pleasure of introducing our two wonderful IB coordinators.

[02:11:32] Our IB coordinator at Loudoun Valley is Mr. Skavarch, and our IB coordinator at Heritage is Mr. Yoribari. We are also lucky to have with us tonight Mr. Adam, Principal of Heritage, and Dr. Ross, Principal at Loudoun Valley.

[02:11:48] The LCPS pre-IB program is directly aligned with our LCPS strategic plan. It directly connects with Action 1.1, providing rigorous and culturally responsive instruction to ensure deeper learning, and specifically 1.2, develop accessible, specialized programming.

[02:12:14] This slide shows our international baccalaureate timeline. This school year, we are planning for authorization to become IB World Schools at both Loudoun Valley and Heritage High School. We are currently enrolling current 8th and 9th grade students into the LCPS pre-IB program for the 23-24 school year.

[02:12:40] During the 23-24 school year, we will have our first year of LCPS pre-IB, and we will have our authorization visit in early fall. Once authorized, we would offer our first year of IB courses for 11th grade students during the 24-25 school year.

[02:13:02] We will hopefully be fully implemented in the school year 25-26 with our first IB diploma candidate. This is our LCPS pre-IB enrollment timeline.

[02:13:17] Shown here, you can see the student opportunities pre-lottery interest window was open from December 1st to January 20th for rising 9th and 10th grade students. The lottery was run by our research office on January 24th.

[02:13:37] Offers and waitlist statuses were updated for students and student opportunities on January 31st. Student opportunities remains open today for any interested students in the LCPS pre-IB program. This slide shows the feeder schools that will be feeding both Loudoun Valley and Heritage High School.

[02:14:06] Now I will turn it over to Fernando, our IB coordinator at Heritage, to discuss the IB diploma program. Thank you very much, Katie. So the IB Diploma Program is one of four different programs offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

[02:14:26] It is their signature program, and it is the program that we will be offering at both Heritage and at Loudoun Valley. This is the symbol of the IB Diploma Program, and it really, I think, gets at the essence of the mission of the IBO, which is to try and develop lifelong learners who are respectful and caring and that understand that other people with their differences can also be right.

[02:14:57] To that end, and to answer that question, the IBO developed the learner profile, which has a lot of similarities to the Virginia 5Cs. And you see here that the learner is at the center of the diploma program as well as the holistic approach to an IB education and IB philosophy.

[02:15:22] In terms of instruction in the approaches to teaching, you see that there are many opportunities for students to pursue their own interests. There are every single one of the courses that you take have an internal assessment that usually gives a lot of choice to the student in terms of how they're being assessed and in terms of what they are researching and inquiring.

[02:15:48] And you see that commitment in the IB approaches to teaching to the holistic approach that IB has in terms of developing both local and global contexts to whatever is being studied, that it connects to something regional as well as international.

[02:16:09] And then you see that focus on developing effective collaborators and the direct connection there to the learner profile. And also, not to mention, it is an education that's really designed to remove barriers to learning and to let students explore their strengths.

[02:16:29] In terms of the approaches to learning, there's a lot of similarities here with what we were just talking about with the twice-exceptional students, where the focus is on building skills that are transferable for whatever path students go into after high school. You have self-management skills and research skills, thinking and communication are stressed in the IB diploma program. And now I'm going to turn it over to our IB coordinator at Loudoun Valley, Michael Skowarch. Good evening, everyone. So at this time, what I'd like to

[02:17:06] describe is what does the IB program look like at our schools? And there's really two ways in which the IB diploma program looks. The first is to talk about the full diploma program or a diploma candidate. And what that looks like is a student who takes six IB courses, which are two-year-long courses, over the course of their 11th and 12th grade year. Furthermore, beyond these six courses which span a variety of different disciplines, they would take a seventh course called the Theory of Knowledge, which is an interesting course where students learn how they learn and develop a sense

[02:17:43] of how knowledge is built across the variety of disciplines. The next activity that they would complete is something known as an extended essay, which is a larger research project where a student gets to choose something they're passionate about and deep dive into the research and understanding of it. The last piece of the diploma program is something known as the creativity, activity, and service requirement. And what that is, is an incentive to students to build themselves into the areas outside of academia. Creativity would be the support of some aspect of their creative nature, be that music, be that art. The activity part would be investing in some

[02:18:23] aspect of physical well-being, could be the participation in a sport, and lastly the service component would be building and giving back to their community in some way. When we talk about the IB diploma program, this is one aspect of it, the full diploma that a student can take and graduate with and take on to their next adventure. Also, all of these courses can be taken piecewise. A student who comes to Loudoun Valley or Heritage will have access to take one, two, three or more of these courses in their pursuit of whatever their passions might be. With that in mind, these courses do come with college

[02:19:01] credit depending on a student's score. So oftentimes they're comparable to AP in that regard. So these are college-level courses. Students can take over two years and while they can pursue the full diploma, they have access to individual coursework as they navigate. Much like College Board with AP exams, individual students will need to file their accommodations for final IB exams for consideration with the International Baccalaureate Organization, just as they would do for AP exams with College Board.

[02:19:31] So with that in mind, one of the things that we notice about the IB is that IB diploma candidates are sought after by colleges and universities alike, and the reason for that is that the skills that students build in these courses are transferable skills that will benefit them no matter what career path they might choose.

[02:19:57] So with that, once again, I'll bring back to the forefront that we are currently in our candidacy phase, we're moving through authorization, and we're taking all the steps necessary to become an authorized IB World School, both at Loudoun Valley and Heritage. We are excited for this opportunity to be able to offer to Loudoun County, and we are still open and encourage enrollment and we'd love to see

students interested to submit interested through our student opportunities portal. For further information feel free to reach out to myself Michael Skavarch at Loudoun Valley High School or Fernando Uribari at Heritage High School and there you'll find our contacts as well. In the back we actually have some resources that you

[02:20:37] can find where we have the IB learner profile and some brochures about the school if you'd like to learn more but we're very open so feel free to reach out and with that we're open to taking any questions that you might have so my understanding is the IB program is an application based program not currently currently you have a lottery going on but in the future you see this as an application so once they enter the lottery what is their actual criteria

[02:21:14] what are you looking for in an applicant in this lottery or you're just going to select out of the lottery without yep it's a pure lottery so students are selected so the lottery process really applies

[02:21:54] to students who are without who are outside of the heritage attendance zone or the loudon valley attendance zone is there a bus system that will bring the candidates is the ib an equivalent of a high school diploma is that this is the first thing i have elementary kids so we're not here yet But it sounds like that's it, but with some benefits, right?

[02:22:30] So as an answer to the transportation question, the answer is there is transportation available. It will work on a hub stop system. So a local high school that's nearby your residence, there will be a hub stop system set up for students to be picked up from that location.

[02:22:52] And final details of that will be determined by the transportation department once we know what students are coming. The last piece is about, is this like a high school diploma? So it's important to note that as students navigate our process, they're meeting all the requirements for a Virginia State diploma as part of those IB courses, and that the IB diploma as a separate entity is something they earn on top of their Virginia State diploma.

[02:23:21] One more question. How are the students being notified of this opportunity? Are they hearing it through their counselors? I know an email was sent out, but I unfortunately did not receive that email. I have no idea why. But I just wonder how are the students?

[02:23:42] Great question. So we actually have a multi-tiered communication plan. So we have communications going out countywide, as well as communications going out at individual schools. And earlier in the year, we actually visited our feeder middle schools during their lunch to promote the program.

[02:24:03] Furthermore, we've actually generated different slides that have gone out into advisories across the county. And I forgot, those were a large part of our lives. So there was four informational nights that were also offered at four different high schools for each of us.

[02:24:19] So actually, a total of eight different nights offered and were available to the community. The program entrance point right now is for rising ninth graders and for rising 10th graders.

[02:24:35] And there was targeted communication sent out to parents of that group, of that grade level. Valley or Heritage High School to be able to accommodate those students in this program?

[02:25:02] Absolutely. So the process for bringing a student over follows a very typical process we have for any student who would be changing from one school to another. So it's really our departments are very

thorough in making sure that all of that student's requirements and needs are brought over.

[02:25:20] And each of our counseling departments are very cognizant of that, and each individual student is really on our radar. And part of our roles as IB coordinators is to work closely with the counseling department to make sure that all the needs of all of our students are being met.

[02:25:44] And with that, I think we'll say thank you so much for having us tonight. Thank you to Mrs. Clark and members of the Pre-International Baccalaureate Work Group.

[02:26:21] before I jump into an overview of the special education annual plan application I do have some announcements that I wanted to share and then our regular vacancy updates and then I also have an update on the information that we shared with our special education designees regarding COVID recovery and compensatory services so first and foremost welcome to our three newly approved SEAC members we are happy to have you here and so thank you for your continued support over the course of this school year and certainly looking forward to your support for years to come.

[02:26:57] Kudos to a special event of when the bus stops coming. I did want to give a special thank you to Leanne Kidwell, Jenna Arndt, Suzanne Birch, to all of our transition teachers, all of our CAST teachers that were present, our Project SEARCH teacher, and our SOS teacher. It truly was an amazing experience. On Saturday, I was able to bring my mom and my daughter with me, and they enjoyed especially hearing our student panel presentations and then of course going through and meeting all of our vendors and of course our vendors had really great goodies out on the tables

[02:27:33] but it was just nice to make those connections so thank you again for that experience. An update on special education vacancies currently across special education teachers we have nine elementary teacher vacancies, 6 middle school teacher vacancies, and 11 high school teacher vacancies.

[02:27:53] For teacher assistants, we have 14 elementary vacancies, 7 middle school vacancies, and 29 high school teacher assistant vacancies. Guidance that was provided to our special education designees on COVID recovery and compensatory educational services, we had the opportunity to meet with our designees last month after our SEAC meeting.

[02:28:19] We reviewed the timeline of the mandatory school closure period. We defined and went over what the VDOE had defined as recovery services. Within the individualized educational planning process, we reviewed the following aspects that teams should be going over, which is a review of data from August 2019 to March of 2020 and then certainly from that point on to the present. Teams are encouraged to consider students' performance prior to COVID.

[02:28:56] They need to review services, student participation, and student performance from March 2020 to January 2022. Teams were encouraged to consider the students' current needs and effective of disability and plan appropriately for the provision of a free appropriate public education.

[02:29:16] Teams were encouraged to document all determinations in the present levels of performance, services, least restrictive environment section and prior written notice sections of the individualized educational plan. And certainly parents and school-based teams are encouraged to contact the Office of Special Education for additional review and support within the planning process for our students.

[02:29:42] and this will be an ongoing topic for our SPED designees as we continue to move throughout the second semester of this current school year, okay? Now we will jump into our annual plan application

for federal funding.

[02:30:03] I always like to start, and that slide is inaccurate, but I do always like to start with who are we serving? Based on our December 1st, 2022 child count, we were serving 9,445 students, so that is my error. do I do apologize the annual plan application and I will provide a PDF draft copy to Sharon so that she can share it with all of you so that you can look at the actual plan but this is an overview it is organized by all of the certifications that are required by the Virginia Department of Education we do

[02:30:38] support the Loudoun County Juvenile Detention Center we give a narrative overview of how it was supported and implemented over the 2021-22 school year it contains the proportionate share calculation for parentally placed students that are eligible for special education and related services we've completed our maintenance of effort as a school division and then it breaks down the application of funding for school age students in title 6b 611 for 6b And then application for 619, which is Early Childhood Special Education.

[02:31:16] Our timeline is giving you an overview this evening of what our annual plan application is. You will have the month of March to go over that plan and provide the Office of Special Education feedback and recommendations. In April, we will present twice to our school board, once on April 11th as an informational item.

[02:31:38] The presentation will be very similar to this one. and then as an action item on April 25th by the school board and then final submission is due to the Virginia Department of Education with the superintendent's signature by May. Ms. Richardson or Dr. Richardson can I ask a question? My understanding is the regulations require that SEAC review the annual plan before presentation to the school board. SEAC's next meeting is April 12th and you're proposing to propose it to the school board on April 11th. I understand that the committee

[02:32:14] the committee will next meet on April 12th. The committee will not review until April 12th. - Thank you, Mr. Metz for that feedback. We will review the calendar to see and adjust our timing accordingly.

[02:32:34] - Thank you. - You're welcome. All right, our grant applications for school age funding, we're requesting approximately \$13.8 million. And then for part B for preschool funds, it comes in approximately \$190,000.

[02:32:56] This is a level funding that is requested in accordance with how the allocation was provided to LCPS for this current school year. We know that the final grant awards for LCPS will be issued the summer of 2023.

[02:33:12] The last several years, the Virginia Department of Education has allocated the first 20% of grants on July 1st, and then they give you the remaining 80% of the grant funding on October 1st. We have not gotten any preliminary recommendations or allocation information yet, but certainly as that information comes out, the Office of Special Education is more than happy to provide SEAC with updates.

[02:33:39] What does our grant support? It currently supports 130 special education teachers, five teacher assistants, two coordinators, two supervisors, one audiologist, one program assistant, one specialist, one behavior specialist and one financial analyst.

[02:33:58] Our preschool grant allocation supports two early childhood special education teachers. The additional activities that are supported are purchased professional service for specialized instruction in reading, math and behavior.

[02:34:14] And the Office of Special Education also supports additional purchases of materials and supplies for special education teachers and related services providers. You will note once you get the actual grant application itself, you'll see the maintenance of effort information which denotes that all other activities and supports and services required to meet the needs of students with disabilities in LCPS are met by local and state funding.

[02:34:44] Our proportionate share calculation is a regulatory requirement to identify and serve students with disabilities that are parentally placed in homeschooling programs or private schools within our locality. LCPS utilizes the proportionate share for the direct provision of transition planning for students ages 14 through 21 inclusive and speech language services as outlined within a student's individualized service plan.

[02:35:14] The division will also provide consultation services to private school staff and families regarding instructional strategies and the appropriate interventions for students found eligible for special education and related services as outlined in their individualized service plans.

[02:35:31] Currently the calculation based on the 9,445, given the number that are parentally placed out of that total number, LCPS has to set aside \$81,137.96. In summary, the annual plan and funding applications have been prepared in accordance with the Virginia Department of Education guidelines.

[02:35:57] And represent the compliance within the federal IDEA law and the Virginia regulations for programs governing students with disabilities. After review of the plan by SEAC and approval of the superintendent, the plan is due to the Virginia Department of Education by May 12, 2023.

[02:36:15] And as noted, thank you again, Mr. Metz. We will look at the calendar to see if we can adjust when information is presented to our school board. If you have any questions, we will try to have the answers. yes that's a great question the question was is is there a reason why speech and language therapists are not included in the annual plan application and that is because our related service providers such as speech language pathologists

[02:36:53] occupational therapists and physical therapists are able to provide services that are billable to Medicaid and since Medicaid reimburses LCPS for those services, which is a federally funded program, we can't put personnel that bill for Medicaid services in our annual plan application. The federal government would view that as double dipping. So all of our SLPs, OTs, and PTs are locally funded. I'm just asking because I've had

[02:37:28] my son in lcps for 17 years and for 16 years every year i had they have asked or the iep team has said my son doesn't need us they want to remove the speech language services i have a child with autism and a diagnosed language disorder i just don't understand why this county doesn't have a speech therapist. Well, we definitely have. We are fully staffed for our speech-language therapist. I'm certainly happy to speak with you after the meeting about your individual concerns.

[02:38:11] Thank you all. That brings us to the end of our meeting tonight. I do want to say that SEAC is very concerned about the cutting of 12 speech and language pathologist positions. That came through the budget and when we speak to or I get to speak again to the school board on

[02:38:46] the 14th of March we will be reviewing our areas of continued concern and those are teacher staffing and teacher shortages and the possible loss of those special speech pathologist positions there's 12 of them that are we are slated to lose beginning last year we started hearing from the community from our parents that their speech and language services are being cut and we even heard from speech therapists in the

[02:39:23] community saying what's going on there are students who need services that are not getting them so we are very concerned about that and we have a low number of speech therapists that also limits the services that they are providing it makes their caseloads high and they don't have then the time to fulfill all those hours and then it limits students being able to be identified because we don't have the the service providers so we are very concerned about that so when we prepare for reviewing to go back to the school board with our

[02:40:00] concerns and review where we are, those will be reviewed again. Any concerns from the community, please email me. We will be working on that. The policy and compliance subcommittee will be meeting to review those. Shanaz?

[02:40:18] Okay. Got it. I just wanted to make sure we're all sitting here with concerns. Yes. We just wanted to make sure Dr. Shanaz. Yes. So please feel free to reach out with any concerns. All right.

[02:40:33] Thank you, everybody, for coming.



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