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Loudoun County School Board, Communications & Outreach Committee Meeting, Monday, March 6, 2023

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[00:00:02] Good evening. It is 5.04 on March 6, 2023, and this is the meeting of the Communications and Outreach Committee. I'm Tiffany Polifko, the new chair of the CNO Committee. Harris Mahadevi is here with me tonight. Jeff Morse sent a note stating that he's unable to attend tonight's meeting, and the meeting will come to order.

[00:00:20] We'll go ahead and move on to public comment, which is the first item on our agenda. It appears as though we do not have any public comment this evening, so we will move right along. Seeing that there's no public comment, we'll go ahead and move on to agenda item number three, the approval of the minutes.

[00:00:37] I move that this can be approved, the meeting minutes from November 7, 2022. Second. All those in favor of approving the meeting minutes from November 7, 2022, raise your hand and say aye.

[00:00:54] Aye. That motion will pass unanimously. Okay, we'll go ahead and move on then to item number four, which is information items.

[00:01:10] So this evening we have item 4.01, welcome and introductions. As we've entered into the new year, there's been a shift in school board committee assignments. So tonight's information items include brief introductions of the communications and community engagement office staff.

[00:01:27] Ms. Sahlgren, would you like to introduce yourself to the group and your staff as well? Sure. Can you hear me now? Does that sound right? Okay. Thank you, Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Mahedvi.

[00:01:44] We thought we would kick off the new year for the school board by introducing the team, and I had them. Everybody wrote their own bios this time. It's very quick, but I wanted you to meet them. I was telling our chair earlier, it's very rare for our team to all be in one room because often they are out on location or fielding phone calls or working on stories or working with the media.

[00:02:09] So I appreciate everyone taking a minute at the end of their day tonight. I'll just let you know that as far as my history, I have more than 25 years of public and community relations experience. I come from the corporate, private, and nonprofit sectors. I hold my MBA and three bachelor's degrees, and I've served as an adjunct professor in public relations and marketing for Northern Virginia Community College.

[00:02:32] I manage this team of 12 outstanding communicators, and I'm fortunate to work with all of them each day, so I want to introduce them to you. To my right is Kim Goodland. You may know Kim as the person who makes sure that the county knows whether or not it's a snow day.

[00:02:49] She's the one sending you all of the information and hitting the buttons to get those messaging out. Kim is a proud graduate of Loudoun County Public Schools who joined the Public Information Office in 2005. She continues to use her strong customer service and organizational skills in our office.

[00:03:07] She's known as the subject matter expert for Blackboard Mass Communication System with LCPS and is the first line of defense on inclement weather's days. She holds her bachelor degree in business administration with an emphasis in marketing. Thank you, Kim. Dan Adams, our Acting PIO and Media Relations Coordinator.

[00:03:26] Dan came to us with over 26 years of professional experience in government and non-profit settings. He holds a master's degree in communications and has held adjunct faculty positions in higher education. Prior to serving LCPS, Dan was the Director of Policy and Communication for Arlington County, Virginia Board and was the Public Information Officer at Grand Rapids, Michigan Police Department.

[00:03:49] He's currently serving as our Acting PIO. Thank you, Dan. Maria Polink. Maria, raise your hand. Maria is our administrative assistant. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications and public relations and has acquired a wide range of experiences since she joined LCPS in 2007. She's worked in human resources and talent development, transportation, and at John Champ High School, and now applies that combination of her communications and administrative skills to her role in CCO. Thank you, Maria. She works closely with Dan, getting media releases out. Erin Robinson is our supervisor of communications. She's to my left.

[00:04:28] Erin joined LCPS in 2021, bringing with her more than 15 years of corporate social media and marketing experience. In her roles with three different world-class companies, she's a proven track record of increasing website traffic and social media engagement. She oversees the creative and content team for CCO, and we will hear about some of their outstanding results this evening as we show you the report. Nicole Eggers, graphic and digital content specialist. Nicole, don't be shy.

[00:04:56] Nicole has more than 15 years of experience crafting stories through design. You might know her as our graphic designer who did the budget presentation. Formerly, she was a book designer with

National Geographic and has been an associate art manager with Custom Inc. She joined LCPS just this year and is responsible for the one LCPS strategic branding as well as the budget and estimate of needs presentations you've seen. Thank you, Nicole. Denver Peshkin, Denver, our internet content and video production assistant. He joined, he's our longest serving person, right? You joined

[00:05:32] in 2002. Yeah, that's fantastic. He started as a technology assistant in Loudoun County High School and holds a bachelor's degree in communications. He transferred to Briarwoods High School as a technology assistant in 2005 and opened the school that year. In 2008, he moved into the community and communications office, where his responsibilities include website content, user experience enhancements, including accessibility of our website, and running the broadcast booth. So he's always here when you all have a school board meeting. Thank you, Denver.

[00:06:06] Laura Cruz, our videographer. Laura Cruz has spent her entire professional career with LCPS, starting as an intern in 2011. She holds a bachelor's degree in film and video studies from George Mason University and has earned a total of nine Telly Awards and numerous Inspira Awards for her work with LCPS. Inspira is the National School Public Relations Association. We look forward to seeing her storytelling skills when the Douglas High School short film documentary is produced and shared. Thank you, Laura. Michael Ferreira, videographer. There's Michael. Michael

[00:06:45] comes to us with an expertise in sports photography and video business, in addition to working for LCPS. He's a product of Loudoun County Public Schools and a graduate of the video production program at LCPS's own Monroe Tech. Michael's work has earned him a Telly Award and two NSPRA awards for LCPS. His passion for sports at LCPS makes him our biggest fan. Thank you, Michael. Jeff Riegel, our last videographer. There's Jeff. Jeff is an award-winning videographer who joined us in 2018 after working in video production for various government agencies and

[00:07:21] contractors for over 20 years. And you know you really worked for various government agencies and contractors when that's all you can say about your 20 years. So thank you, Jeff. Since joining LCPS, his work has garnered two Emmy Awards and other nominations, NSPRA Awards and a Gold Peer Award and four Tele Awards. Thank you, Jeff.

[00:07:42] Dr. Christina Arpante, a coordinator of communications. She brings 25 years of experience in elementary, middle, high school, and technical college settings. After serving as a school administrator and professional development provider, she shifted to educational communications in 2019.

[00:08:03] She holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction, gained in 2007, and is working on her accreditation in public relations and APR credential, which is the highest credential we can have in public relations. Thank you, Christina. And Amy Freeman. Amy is our coordinator of communications.

[00:08:21] She came to us as an experienced communications leader for community-based nonprofits. She began her career as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in Kazakhstan. She has international experience with the U.S. Agency for International Development as a communications professional and project manager for an economic rehabilitation program in southern Sudan.

[00:08:42] I'm so glad you're here. She holds a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in French and a master's degree in public policy with a focus on environmental policy. So you can see we have a wide range of interests and expertise and lots of experience on the team. So I thank you all for being here to say hello to our newest community and communications outreach members on our committee.

[00:09:03] So thank you all for being here. Please head out and go home to your families. Before you go, any general questions for the experts in the room? No? All right. Thank you all very much. Thank you. I didn't leave anybody out, did I? All right. Good.

[00:09:21] So just wanted to give you a flavor of the expertise. We're very fortunate to have these experts working on our content. And then our next slide just shows you kind of how they're organized as a department, since this is new to us. So Dan, our acting PIO, handles the media relations, emergency messages, safety and security communications.

[00:09:42] he does a lot of our executive writing is our FOIA officer by law we have to have a FOIA officer we cannot be without one so we always want to make sure we have somebody trained and certified and we're going to need a backup he works with the officer of the auditor general and budget so again you can see the organization Erin is our communications supervisor works on the content management for website and social media most of the team that just left the room she directly supervises now we're thankful that the board saw it to support that promotion because she really does a great job. She works hard on our editorial

[00:10:17] calendar and school stories. She's our lead for HRTD and employee and staff communications. She liaisons with DDI, which is instructional technology. She works with school nutrition and transportation on some of their more nuanced messaging, and most of that is multimedia. Dr.

[00:10:35] Arpante works hard on our school stories. She is our lead assigned to instruction with her instructional background that's a great asset to the department and she's able to interface on all kinds of programming and brings a great deal of expertise. She works with equity, works on our award submissions, and is our LEAF liaison. And then Amy, again, everybody helps us out with school stories. Amy is a key employee and staff communications expert and the newsletters that the staff sees and now the family members see come from Amy. She works as our main student services

[00:11:11] and mental health liaison and with her degree in environmental policy she is our lead for environmental impact stories. She coordinates Peach Jar and she helped getTutor.com and now Engage Virginia organized and off the ground. So just to give you a flavor of how we've divided up the department and how we've assigned things that to people that they are passionate about but everybody works here because they're passionate about telling school stories and that is um the most exciting part of our day now if it's okay with you we can move to the um report from the

[00:11:47] communications department we'll keep it brief reading those bios was the longest part of the evening but was everybody's minute in the sun go ahead board members do we before we move ahead ms salgren thank you very much board members are there any questions yes mr mehedaby thank you chairman um i guess mr robinson i don't i'll take this opportunity since you've been here a little little bit longer now one of the things that I've talked earlier about about our website and you know again we went through this discussion about using a content management system or continuing with Blackboard so I just want to get a feeling I mean since now you've been here a little longer has Blackboard

[00:12:25] served what we you know what we really want to serve you know for example Ms. Algreen when we talked last time we looked at Drupal what Fairfax uses I don't go on technology but they have a different platform which is not Blackboard and gives you a lot more flexibility in how you manage content, deliver content, et cetera.

[00:12:44] So I don't know. I'm not putting you on a spot, but I guess I am putting you on a spot. But, you know, what's your experience then with Blackboard? And feel free. I mean, I think we as a board would like to get feedback in how we can help your department, because it all comes down to dollars and cents at the end of the day.

[00:13:01] So if you have any, you know, minute feedback, I would appreciate that. I'm sure Ms. Falifco will also appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you for asking. I think, you know, we can always expand on our website, as I'm sure you can tell.

[00:13:23] Like, we've done a lot with our homepage to kind of update it as best we can. But I think there are ways for improvement, for sure. Is that right? Yes, I'd agree.

[00:13:45] We'll tell you more. All right. As we do for all of our presentations, we ground them in our strategic plan, so we wanted to organize tonight's presentation along these same lines and first show you a video of some students. We like to celebrate students whenever we can, and as you may remember, Mr. Mahedby, from the COVID days, right, when we had to focus solely on COVID messaging, we left those good news stories behind because we just didn't have the bandwidth.

[00:14:15] Now we have enough people, we have enough of a team that we can really dive deep into those good news stories. So we just wanted to show you this video that focuses on supporting nutrition.

[00:14:38] Apple. Just might taste lime, maybe? I don't know. Lettuce. I don't know.

[00:14:55] Personally, is that a lettuce or melons? I don't know. You can't hurt. I think it could be like an apple. And of course, we all know it was kohlrabi.

[00:15:14] So we did a series of these videos where the students answered and asked some questions. And we got some, we didn't show you the reactions. You might have to go to social to visit that. But there were mixed reactions to kohlrabi. But we try to tie any content that we do into full content packages, and we're going to show you some briefly later.

[00:15:32] Here's the results of that video. When that particular video ran, it was viewed at more than 3,000 times. When we kick off back-to-school time, our most popular videos are very predictably the students, the superintendent's back-to-school message each fall as we kick off school and the accompanying safety and security video that lives evergreen on our website.

[00:15:54] We differentiate between news content packages and campaign content. News content is when we have things as a division to deliver first day of school time to register, when we unveiled our strategic plan, when we focused on our year of the educator campaign, or the fall open house creating connections for staff.

[00:16:16] So we produce news stories each month and we produce these news content packages at regular intervals. Campaign packages may include a little more multimedia focus. So it may focus on social, video, photos, and a campaign package promotes original, engaging, and positive LCPS content that focuses on students, teachers, and staff.

[00:16:40] To level set, here are some definitions. Impressions that we may see reported here are the number of times content is displayed no matter whether it was clicked on or not reach is the number of unique people who saw the content so we'll be focusing on those metrics so one of our most popular and award-winning campaigns is the mental health support influencer series the total social media

impressions for this series are 83 000 which is a more more impressive number than the video views we've created four new social

[00:17:12] media videos as of December 22nd. So what we have done is we've identified key alumni who are young enough that our students can relate to them and who are engaged in all sorts of employment. So Kendrick Olmsted is a Google software, Kevin Rogers is a professional lacrosse player who came right out of LCPS, John Johnson is a University of North Carolina athletic trainer, and Marissa Stark is the National Nashville Ballet as a ballerina. So we highlight these alumni and we let them be the

[00:17:46] experts speaking to how you can balance your mental health in school, how they as high performers met those challenges and they help us raise awareness supporting our students with learning differences. Kevin in particular spoke to his dyslexia and how he balanced his schedule and and found a future college that would support him appropriately as he learned.

[00:18:09] John Johnson supports the mental health of athletes in his daily life and then their high performance. So they really speak to how the students can benefit from really reaching out and getting help where they need it. The series video views are over 30,000 and the reactions are 737.

[00:18:29] Oh, we can play it, yes, it's quick, let's play it. - I would say overcoming adversity is really important in all areas of life. students sometimes have to dig into their grit understanding and discovering themselves who they are sometimes it's going to be hard and that's true in school during work and life sometimes sacrifices have to be made whether that be missing a party to spend more time preparing for a hard test coming up or waking up a little earlier to give yourself a little bit more time to complete an assignment that you might have but never be too proud to ask for help there's always going

[00:19:05] resources attainable to help you guide you to success and the people around you wanting you to succeed whether that be a teacher or guidance counselor coaches or even your peers. Each of those videos is a part of the series and there are longer and shorter versions so the kids can can benefit from diving deeper with the stories. We try to relate each piece of content we do to the needs of the students and the strategic plan. The next one we'll touch on briefly was our Hispanic Heritage Series.

[00:19:39] This video series was viewed more than almost 5,000 times, generated 640 reactions, and that is across all of our social media. We ran four social media videos and six quote cards, which are static images, featuring 19 middle and high school students across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

[00:19:57] Can we show this one? Oh, wow. - I'm very proud to be a Hispanic woman in this generation 'cause we have overcome a lot of things. and there's a lot of challenges, but we are getting through it. - So my culture is important to me because it defines me as a person and where I'm going in my life.

[00:20:18] It also has built my character and personality and who I am now. - It makes me feel like proud, I guess, because I get to have different experiences. - We are not all the same. There's different cultures within the Hispanic heritage, and I think it's important that people learn more about it because it's such a beautiful culture.

[00:20:44] I'm very proud to be a Hispanic woman. - All right, our winter activities video series was strictly tied to curriculum. We offered five different videos that highlighted activities that you could do at home with your child or your student.

[00:21:05] They can do on their own or together. They were very low cost. And we partnered with the Department of Instruction to provide activities that help students feel more socially competent and connected. The series generated over 10,000 video views and 147 reactions, and that was just in a couple of weeks over the holidays.

[00:21:24] We ran this content over the holiday break to give families something to do when they were at home. Facebook and Instagram. I just realized that I'm not supposed to be speaking to all of these. That's quite boring. So, Christina, why don't you take this next one?

[00:21:40] I apologize. No worries. So we run, and pardon my voice, we run Facebook and Instagram ads to promote and support main content themes or new programs. With the launch of the LCPS dual language immersion program starting in 2023-24 school year we wanted to drum up excitement reaching out to our school community online we ran the LCPS dual language immersion program ads in both English and Spanish. These ads targeted all Loudoun County residents both in English and Spanish both excuse me English and Spanish speaking who

[00:22:20] could possibly have a student or an upcoming kindergarten in LCPS we spend a total of \$210 on the ad campaign so \$105 dollars each for English and Spanish and in a little over a little more than two weeks we reached over 12,000 members of our community generating 744 reactions so that's that's pretty huge for two weeks.

[00:22:44] In 2023, we are running ads for both dual language immersion, tutoring, and geo-specific recruiting ads for HRTD. And we're also going to be running ads for the LCPS Annual Family Survey. When running social ads, we can reach the less vocal residents while generating less negative comments.

[00:23:10] Many people who are commenting negatively on our Facebook page are from out of state. Next we'll move to goal two which focuses on exemplary staff and Erin's going to take this next report. Thanks Erin. Thank you. So to promote LCPS and help with teacher morale and HRTD recruitment we ran a social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram about our returning teacher cadets beginning in September to kick off the school year and it ran all the way through the end of the year.

[00:23:50] Social media posts included a photo of the returning teacher cadet along with a quote about why they chose to work for LCPS. One Facebook post generated 119 positive reactions within one day, and we tied this campaign package into our One LCPS exemplary staff strategy online with using our hashtag WeAreOneLCPS, generating an overwhelming number of online impressions, almost 90,000, and 1,400 reactions.

[00:24:19] And then to continue our work with HRTD, we continue to help them with recruitment, and we continue to do this now. We created one-page flyers for each level of employment, college, mid-level, tenured employees that they can use at recruiting events when they go out.

[00:24:42] And it talks about all the great benefits that LCPS has to offer on one page so it's easy to read and access. You can also find these on the HRTD LCPS website. We created eight recruitment videos that included recent college graduates and teacher cadets sharing why they chose to work for LCPS, and you can find those on the HRTD recruitment page, along with 12 additional recruitment videos that included staff, support staff, including bus drivers, custodians, sharing why they chose to work for LCPS.

[00:25:14] So, and these are, again, they're used on the website, they're used during recruitment fairs, and they'll be used on our social media channels later this year. Oh yes, we have one more to play. This is of

our ASL teacher, one of our ASL teachers at Loudoun County High School.

[00:25:31] Barry Duell, I'm a teacher of American Sign Language ASL here at Loudoun County High School in Leesburg, Virginia.

[00:25:46] The reason I started working for LCPS is that the system here is one of eight or nine school systems in Virginia that offer ASL as a class for the high school students and I think they're very, very progressive with that and the world language is here.

[00:26:07] We have a really good, strong department. I really enjoy working with the parents and students here at LCHS, the other members of the world language faculty group and the other ASL teachers here in ASL.

[00:26:23] We're a good group, and we really discuss things, and we really try to support our students as much as we can. We are one LCPS. And Amy is going to take us through our next slide.

[00:26:50] So I am pleased to talk about Year of the Educator, which is a new initiative that will start this year in September. Year of the Educator is a joint LCPS and Loudoun Education Foundation initiative. Each month, a randomly selected LCPS staff member receives a gift of over \$500, Loudon Education Foundation coordinates the gift, and together with the superintendent, members of LEF, and the communications staff visit the selected staff member to surprise them with a gift.

[00:27:22] This year, we've had six recipients, and the recipients were elementary teachers, an elementary teacher, a middle school teacher, and high school teacher, as well as a nutrition worker and a custodian. The prizes have included tickets to Nationals game, an entertainment gift pack, including gift cards to streaming services, and a night at an luxury hotel and luxury resort.

[00:27:44] To celebrate and promote this award each month, we include an article on the web, as well as a Facebook and Twitter post to congratulate the winner. Our Year of the Educator social media post drives some of our highest online content. In November, our Year of the Educator winner social media post garnered over 300 total reactions on Facebook.

[00:28:02] As always, coverage of our teachers, staff, or students drives the most positive interactions on our social media outlets. And I'm going to continue talking about our staff newsletters.

[00:28:21] We have a staff newsletter that goes out twice a month after every school board meeting, on a Thursday following every school board meeting. I coordinate the staff newsletter, and it includes a message from the superintendent, as well as highlights of good news stories and other updates that are pertinent to staff.

[00:28:39] Typically, these newsletters receive over 10,000 views, with our highest view occurring this time period on October 27th, the October 27th edition, which had nearly 13,000 views. That particular newsletter featured the Creating Connections opened house and featured the COCO's one LCPS video.

[00:28:58] Thank you, Amy. And I just wanted to reiterate with our communications and community engagement office liaisons, the team you see before you really does work to consult across the division, both with schools on their good news and with division offices, each with their area of expertise.

[00:29:20] So we're really working to transform the communications flow from a single, hey, can you send this out for me, right, just like an old-fashioned public information office, into a more modern content marketing office where we're really driving engagement with families.

[00:29:38] So we're producing content. So when we have information to convey like tutor.com or a new sign up for the Titan Family Portal where they pay for their lunches, we're really trying to drive their engagement and get them to come on board to share the good news.

[00:29:55] And we have seen a swing in all of our social media results from a mostly negative and, shall I say, troll-based comments to real people engaging with real stories and really sharing and being positive overall with the news that we're sharing as a division.

[00:30:11] So even when we have something that is less exciting, like here's how you pay for lunch, we're getting a lot more positive results because it's part of that overall communication stream where the community members can count on multiple touch points of a marketing strategy, multiple messages to reinforce, many reminders to get them there, rather than a one-off email, and then where did that go, right?

[00:30:35] What do I have to do? I can't remember it, and now I'm behind. We want our families to feel engaged and ahead and positive about their interactions with us. So that leads me to goal three, an enriched division. And this is a campaign we're very proud of that Erin's going to walk us through.

[00:30:52] This is the Black History Chespra Award winner. Yes, I'm excited to say that this Black History is My Story social media series won a Chespra Award in the fall of this past year. And CHESPra is our regional NSPRA division.

[00:31:12] So the goal of this social media series was to highlight student and staff voices to celebrate black history during the month of February. And we partnered with the Office of Equity to create this series. And we ran, similar to our Hispanic Heritage one, we ran videos and quote cards featuring middle and high school students.

[00:31:34] Each of them was given a prompt, Black History is My Story, and then they talked about why it was their story with one word and a quote. The social media campaign received 159,000 impressions last year with over 2,000 reactions.

[00:31:52] And it really fulfilled our communications goal of generating positive social media engagement with our schools and our school community. And so we ran it again this year with a few more students and staff. I think we had a total of, we had eight social media posts, two quote cards, and six 30-second videos, all of which were shared on our social media accounts.

[00:32:19] And I do not have the results for those as well, but I am hoping that they will be just as successful. And Mr. Mahedovey, you asked about website earlier. We have made some small changes with big results on the website, but as you know, we are limited within the platform that we're working.

[00:32:39] So, for instance, if you have visited the family and parent information page or the student information page, at the top you used to see an alphabetical list of links. Well, there is still an alphabetical list of links for families to visit. But what we've tried to do is put some often used resources or requested resources at the top in a more visual manner with a headline and a description.

[00:33:04] We're in the process of taking a look at how some information is presented on the website. Last year we went through an audit process where we pulled all of the website content as much as possible into Blackboard. Because during the years where everyone was working remote, there was an urgency to get online information up just so everyone could have access to it.

[00:33:24] But what that meant was the easier platforms like Google were housing some information that made it unsearchable on our website. So we've just pulled all of our departments within the division back into Blackboard, with the exception of the Program of Studies, which is beautiful and still maintained outside of Blackboard.

[00:33:44] That'll be the next step. So all the pages are now inside Blackboard, and now our challenge is how can we make them more accessible? This would be with the goal of making sure that that easy-to-use translate feature at the top of the website is usable by our families. It's much easier if you're already on your mobile device where you've opted to look at content in your own language, whether it's English or another language, to continue to do so.

[00:34:08] But if we post PDFs or if we post alphabetical links that don't alphabetize when you translate them, it doesn't make much sense. So we're now digging deeper on our website, making sure that everything is accessible and making sure that that web content is posted on a page wherever possible, rather than in a translated document, because the translator on the page will read the page, and that's what we're after.

[00:34:33] What that will allow us to do is to further examine our analytics, and if and when we can bring a new website to life through a budget decision, that we'll say, please consider when we bring it to you. It will completely align with our strategic plan because that would allow us to make sure that all the translations, all the accessibility, and all of the information is in a platform that's really the most accessible to all families.

[00:35:00] So we're working on the first step, right, to get everything into our own platform, and then we'll take a look about whether this vendor will continue to be the best solution or if we should look other places. And an update on Twitter. We are aware of the good work you all are doing.

[00:35:18] So we do pull a Twitter search every day to make sure that if we need to provide more information or if you're using the information we gave you, we're always happy to see the news retweeted or re-shared across all platforms. So thank you for sharing the highlighted information we send you.

[00:35:34] If we can send you more in the school board update or if there's a different way to tag you, we're happy to help you amplify the news of the school system. So thank you for doing that. And then goal four, an engaged community. We'll talk a little here about Blackboard notifications.

[00:35:51] So though Blackboard does run our website, it also is our primary mass notification system, and it interfaces with our student information system, so we can always contact our families with a current list and immediately if we need to. So just to give you an idea of scope and scale in our large school division, nearly 40th in the nation, in July through December, the six-month period we've been looking at for all these analytics, we sent almost 18 million messages through Blackboard.

[00:36:21] This past year, year over year, we sent slightly fewer, 17 million.5. The reason for that is very strategic. We are really trying to streamline the messages that go to our families and make sure that if they should be presented in a newsletter, that that's how families receive it.

[00:36:39] If it should be a standalone Blackboard message because it's important, it's snowing outside and we're not going to have school, we're going to send it, right? But we want to make sure that we're matching the way we send a message to families to the way they'd like to hear about it and receive it. And there are some things that we might not send in a Blackboard message as frequently as we used to. For

instance, if you visit school websites, you will see that each school website has major messaging down the side in the form of buttons. Students can easily access tutor.com. They can access mental health resources. So we maintain those important messages in other ways instead of constant Blackboard reminders.

[00:37:19] Where are we here? Oh, yeah, there's some examples. Staff messages, community meetings, immunization, late bus notifications, and even our surveys go out through Blackboard. We'll quickly go through these last couple of slides. Peach Jar is, by policy and regulation, how we send out flyers to families electronically.

[00:37:40] Here you can see we've distributed 533 flyers in this six-month period, and the open rate is about 32%, so that's a very good average for a self-selected marketing piece, and people do rely on these electronic flyers for information.

[00:37:56] As you know, we've launched our ombuds office. Communications did support the launch of this office with posters, flyers, bookmark, web page. Hi, LCPS student. Oh, hi. We won't show this. We'll see it. All right. And then, in the interest of time, we'll turn this over to Dan, who's going to talk to us about media coverage. It's always our goal to have media coverage in our local community.

[00:38:22] We want to make sure that the people who live here and work here are getting our news. The good things that you all do, the good things that Division does, the students do, right? But we also realize that our news is national news, and we get a lot of coverage because of our proximity to the nation's capital and we really try to work with all reporters whether they're national or local to make sure they have the accurate facts and I'll turn it over to Dan about that. So as I'm sure you're aware LCPS has no shortage of media coverage. Here are some examples of headlines from Q1 and Q2 but much like the social media that Joan talked about the CCO team is working

[00:39:02] very hard strategically and proactively to swing that pendulum of sentiment. We've expanded our use the meltwater platform to improve our media release distribution build relationships with media personalities and archive releases for future use and easy access in q2 we created and opened an online media center for media partners to be able to go back find past media releases find out the rules for visiting schools and so on since the beginning of the school year

[00:39:34] we've approximately doubled the amount of media partners that we release our information to well Well, I can keep talking.

[00:39:54] Keep talking, Dan. For Q1, Q2 of this school year compared to last year, media coverage stories are up approximately 5% at 13,500 stories. The year-to-year comparison, 22 to 21, overall stories are actually down 15%, but public sentiment or the sentiment of the stories are actually up 4%, so we're moving that pendulum in the right direction.

[00:40:25] We have fairly significant broadcast exposure, especially here in the DMV. It's very steady Q1 and Q2 of this year outside of December, and it peaked in December with approximately 988 stories.

[00:40:46] And finally, with FOIA, we've done quite a bit of work with FOIA this year, even though FOIA requests overall are down. We have a total of 153 FOIA requests during Q1 and Q2 and Q22 compared to last year, 353 total requests.

[00:41:06] We updated the FOIA guidelines as of July 1st, making sure that we've provided some consistency. We now utilize the GovQA platform more to its ability to be able to provide cost estimates, now also being able to provide invoices and receipts, and we're looking at continuing to an improvement by actually being able to utilize it to take online payment.

[00:41:32] Right now, the only way that you can pay for a FOIA is by check. Due to the increased volume of requests received, we have since formalized a more concrete payment structure, like I mentioned, with the assistance of LCPS legal counsel, thanks, Wes. All of this can be found on our website, and we'll continue to utilize that GovQA platform and try to maximize its use.

[00:41:59] And the last thing we'll cover in this evening's update is our tv viewership we don't want to forget about that beginning in 2021 we stopped live streaming committee meetings with the exception of equity msac and seac that being said the school board meetings are the highest viewed with october 26th meeting on budget and enrollment receiving about 4 000 views average viewership of the regular second and fourth tuesday school board meetings is a little over 2 000 views meetings broadcast and streamed include those regular school board

[00:42:34] meetings, attendance zone boundary work sessions, CIP and CAP work sessions, and if you select committee meetings. Let's see here. Your December 13th board meeting was the highest viewed with over 3,100 views. Comcast and Verizon do not record our TV channel viewership, so this is based on a pure count that we can do. So that concludes our quarter, our half yearly report of all the things we've been up to and hopefully um that helps you get a picture of how communications and community engagement office works and um i'm ready to take any questions or we can move on to our next item

[00:43:16] thank you miss saugren and staff board members do we have any questions at this time for staff thank you chairman so i guess my only question i think in respect to time i don't want to stretch it out um you know one website i know while we come back and update it what i've seen is that Between SEAC, LEAP, and MSAC, there is no consistency in finding any information.

[00:43:40] I mean, there are LCPS advisory councils, but it's very difficult to follow and to do that. So I don't know if you can provide some support for all the three of them to bring some consistency to that. It's consistently provided to all those three parents who are associated with MSAC, SEAC, and LEAP as well.

[00:44:05] That's just one ask of your department. We had the luxury when LEAF was recently chartered to sort of take the best of all their websites and make sure we had a really good framework. And it's become a model we're looking at for the other advisory committees.

[00:44:21] Thank you. Without any further questions, we'll go ahead and move on to our next item, which is 4.03 Policy 3070, Safety and Emergency Related Communication.

[00:44:38] Again, this is an information item, and I would like to let everyone know at this time that Mr. Mahedovey has asked for a hard stop at 6 p.m. So in the interest of time, we'll try and move through this item as quickly as possible. Luckily, it's only an information item tonight. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:44:54] We just have an example or two by the request of Mr. Morris to show you. Basically, we're here to review the red lines recommended by legal counsel for the updating of Policy 3070 as an information item with the community. But we were asked to bring just an example of what this looks like.

[00:45:11] So very quickly, I'll show you that 3070 governs safety and emergency-related communications. And in the policy, it states that these types of elements should be communicated to the community. So there's seven, eight bullets there. And then on the next slide, you'll see that if we send a message about something untoward in our community, an incident, I won't call it a crisis, but an incident, we do cover those highlighted areas of the policy. And you can see the purple language here. Mr. Morris had just asked us to bring a few examples of what the policy looks like when it's translated into action. So there are a couple more

[00:45:48] examples that you can see in the deck at your leisure. I know we're concerned about time. I will say if we could fast forward to the next and the next one. So when we do rely on an outside partner to support our messaging. This is what a family might see. So you would see an email from us and then we would attach the subject matter expert, the owner of the process, whether it's the Leesburg Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, we would actually attach their media release. Oftentimes the law enforcement entity will post something on their own website or release their information. This way our families are hearing it from us and not seeing it online

[00:46:26] somewhere else and saying, what happened? So we do release their information as a follow-up to any message we've sent. So that's how it looks in action. And I'll turn it over to Wes to take us through the policy. Thank you. There are just two red lines that legal proposed in response to the special grand jury report recommendations. We previewed those, I believe, first during the work session on december 13 22 at that school board meeting the first one addresses specifically the recommendation number one which is to incorporate language that ensures that the

[00:47:05] division provide as much information relevant information as legally permissible to relevant stakeholders and community members regarding the safety and security incidents that either take place on lcps property or at lcps school-sponsored activities or events and so we've memorialized that language or proposed that language be memorialized accordingly on page three under paragraph c the second item in terms of a red line we proposed is under d limits on information distribution and that language proposed language just wants to ensure that there's no missteps in

[00:47:43] terms of us and school officials complying with applicable privacy limitations and regulations and legal authority there. And so those are the two specific changes that we would propose under this. We presented them at the Facilities and Operations Committee earlier, actually late last month, and now we're doing so here.

[00:48:10] Thank you very much, Mr. Allen. Board members, are there any questions or comments, feedback, or amendments at this time? Mr. Mejedevi? Thank you, Chairman. So, Mr. West, thank you.

[00:48:25] I think those two, I think we saw in the finance and operations committee i did get a chance to look at that uh one thing i did come back um is i guess the this is something i'm bringing back to all policy what sort of training we're providing to the staff when it comes to this policy so there's no information available so i don't know if that i wrote up something about from a training perspective like developing a training program so if you have new staff coming into our school system or as we move staff around there's a consistent sort of training that goes about the policies and how do you communicate when

[00:49:03] you communicate so that's what i want to bring back is saying not only that we communicate and you know and all the definitions of that but do we have the training program and do we offer the training program to the appropriate staff to make sure that that's that's completed that's my ask because

otherwise asking us to just put in policy without having to be able to train them how to you know training about the policy itself or some fashion communication of the policy that's what my hope would be that we can add to that so thank you mr maheri and as a clarifying

[00:49:38] question um when when you say training do you mean kind of FERPA training or kind of this policy specific training or what training in general yeah i can read what i wrote i mean again so communication uh i wrote a section h training so communications and community engagement office will develop a training program to cover all aspects of this policy and provide training to staff um identify to communicate safety emergency communications to stand student parents staff and board so it's just very generic but that it states that you have a program to communicate all aspect

[00:50:16] of this policy to the right people and so it's not missed or it's not there's no gap of that and that's something i like to keep bringing up in every committee is that we can't just ask the the staff to do things without providing support for that. That's the intent. Thank you, Mr.

[00:50:35] Mejedevi, for your feedback. I don't have any further questions or comments at this time related to this policy and where it is right now as an information item. I think that once those changes are made, if we feel those changes need to be made, we could probably bring this back as an action item at the next Communications and Outreach Committee meeting. Yes, staff is happy to bring this back as an action item to the committee meeting. You also would have the option to take it forward to an information item to the board depending on your your cadence it's your

[00:51:08] choice. Thank you Ms. Salgren. Yes Mr. Mehedewi. Thank you chair. So Ms. Salgren I know it went for FNO is this maybe the question for Mr. West is something we'll take in front of LEAF or any other advisory advisory group to get feedback on it is it or just it's straightforward enough that we can we don't I mean I don't know how you feel Ms. Polifko there's something that needs to go in front of them to get feedback, or this is just more of a recommendation coming from grand jury that we, as a committee, approve it and just send it to the full board? I don't know if you have any

[00:51:46] thoughts on that. Ms. Saugren? This committee was put forward for public feedback for the one-month period when the other seven policies, for a total of eight, were sent to the public for feedback, so we have incorporated that feedback. Thank you, Ms. Saugren. So then in that case, Mr. Mahedvi, I think we would probably be in a position where we could move this to action at the next committee meeting. Okay, so we'll go ahead and move on now to number five on the agenda, which is new business.

[00:52:14] Before we break for the evening, does anyone have any new business that they would like to discuss? Seeing as there is none, the business portion of our meeting has concluded. Our next meeting is set for Monday, April 10th, 2023 at 5 p.m. right here in this room. The committee typically meets on the first Monday of every month, but April's meeting was moved due to the spring break holiday. And with that, we'll go ahead and go to item six, which is adjournment. Thank you for your participation this evening. We are adjourned.



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