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Loudoun County School Board, Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee (MSAAC) Meeting, Wednesday, March 15, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/808375613?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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

[00:00:42] Okay. It looks like we have officially begun. Welcome everyone to our March session of the MSAC General Body Meeting. Welcome. We have a pretty action-packed evening today. We are going to be talking about a lot of very important things, throwback to our parent advocacy topics from 2022, 2021-22.

[00:01:07] We've got Dr. Barrett, who's going to be heading that conversation up. We also have our open mic, which I'm so pleased to feature this month. And then the main thing that we're going to be featuring as we get started is our general body election.

[00:01:25] So we're going to try to squeeze all that in in an hour and a half. So let's bear with one another. All right, we're going to go ahead and I just have a quick announcement before we get started. The NAACP Loudon Chapter is their 2023 scholarship applications open until March 31st of this month.

[00:01:48] So if anyone has any seniors that you know of who might qualify, please reach out to the NAACP Loudon Chapter. That's really it for announcements. I'm going to go ahead and open up for our meeting minutes.

[00:02:05] Delegates, you should have all gotten a copy of the meeting minutes. So, is there a motion on the floor? And we have them for February. We're gonna do it for January and February.

[00:02:23] Yes, let's do that. I heard a second. All in favor say aye. All opposed say nay. All right, ayes have it.

[00:02:38] We've got those meeting minutes in the way. We're also gonna hear from our school board liaison, Harris Mehedive, when he comes, about the superintendent search. You should all of us receive several emails about that, but we are gonna get an update to hear about of how that process is going to play out and then at this time we're going to go ahead and run into our role into our um our msac elections for our executive board we have several very great and very qualified candidates so i'm excited to hear what they have to share with us today cheryl

[00:03:13] she's our secretary thank you all very much and we would like to thank all of the candidates who have very thoughtfully put forth uh their backgrounds their ideas and their hopes for msac and we look forward to hearing from them all we're going to first start with the applicants for vice chair and you'll notice when you're speaking that we have you for four minutes and so the clocks there will give you your time as you're speaking and uh for vice chair we have

[00:03:51] three applicants raquel chapman david clemens and trefilia parker and just simply going in alphabetical order raquel chapman we would like to hear from you first okay um good evening

[00:04:27] everyone. My name is Raquel Chapman. I am fairly new to Loudoun County. We got stationed here about six years ago. My husband got stationed at the Pentagon when I was nine months pregnant. This was my first year in Loudoun County Public Schools and unfortunately for me I found out about MSAC as a result of an incident with my son. One of the reasons that I am here requesting to be your vice chair is because I really feel like there is a need for MSAC in this community.

[00:05:05] I felt very unfortunate that I had to learn about MSAC as a result of an incident, as opposed to it being something proactive. It ended up being something retroactive. Proactively, I feel like we really need to get into the schools and get that information out to the parents, especially in Loudoun and where I live out in Western Loudoun.

[00:05:26] My son goes to Waterford, where there really isn't a large minority population out there. There are other types of underrepresented students that could definitely benefit from MSAC, and no one in the school had any idea what MSAC was.

[00:05:42] That was very discouraging for me, but also it has propelled me. I've been at every MSAC meeting since I became a delegate, and I've learned so much, but not only learning about MSAC, but being able to take that information back to my PTO and actively being able to apply and educate the parents on what we do here at MSAC.

[00:06:05] One of the things that the parents really appreciated was that it's not just about underrepresented students. It's not just about minorities. It's about students in general and giving parents that information in order to be a better parent for their kid in the school, to know where to get information, to know what their resources are.

[00:06:26] As a result of being an MSAC delegate, I took a course at Cornell, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certification Program, which really just gave me a lot more insight on diversity, equity, and inclusion and just being able to be a better representative for my school, for my students, and also for my family in general.

[00:06:50] It's not only helped me in the school system with my son and dealing with issues, but it's also helped me in my job. I have been working in the area for the last six years, and unfortunately, after taking that course, I learned that there is a lot of misrepresentation and underrepresentation of minorities.

[00:07:12] So I'm just looking forward to an opportunity to just be the vice chair, be that person that's right with the chair, is doing the work of MSAC and putting it out there and being that resource to our students our children and also to the community thank you thank you so much miss Chapman for what

[00:07:42] you shared with us we would now like to hear from David Clements good evening my name is David Clements this is my first year on the MSAC delegation as well been in Loudoun County school since 2010, and I still have 11 years to go. My youngest one's a first grader. What got me interested in joining was my principal at Sterling, talked to me and said, hey, we need somebody to go,

[00:08:17] and I said, sure, I'll check it out. My experience with minorities started back in 93. I taught ESL to Cuban refugees for a while and been speaking Spanish for about 25 years now, so I have a good feel on Sterling at least in Eastern Loudoun there's a huge representation of Hispanics there so just looking to see what I can do to get more I guess direct contact with the board this year was good but I feel like there was a lot of pushback of well we're not going to help you but if I get up here they might listen a little bit more so we did a good data study last year or this

[00:08:53] year and found a lot of disparities not just on you know income but a lot of educational outcomes especially in eastern and southern loudon so we'd like to get more data on that and more pushback to get more help and um who presented the um the discipline display last last month okay the doctor or mr okay uh mr d nicola last month presented something on discipline and it was to me just one sheet that represented the whole year and i think we need more like a heat map for what's going on

[00:09:31] every month like you were talking about more awareness so looking to fight for that and make that happen so hopefully you'll pick me as the vice chair and if not we do have other qualified candidates as well so thank you thank you Mr. Clemens for your thoughts and your ideas that

[00:09:55] you shared with us all we would now like to hear from Trufilia Parker good evening my name is Trufilia Parker and I would like to serve as your MSAC vice chair for the 23-24 school term I'm a lifelong youth advocate and live a life committed to identifying understanding and addressing issues that are important to young people, especially their education.

[00:10:31] My family and I have lived in Loudoun County for more than 15 years. We have two sons in LCPS, a sixth grader and a rising high school freshman. I came to know and love MSAC when our oldest son was transitioning from private school into the first grade with LCPS.

[00:10:49] It was at the MSAC meetings where I found out about the tools and resources that are available to students and families. It was by attending these meetings that I really learned how to be strategic and effectively build relationships or community with MSAC delegates, other families in my school, while at the same time advocating for my children.

[00:11:10] This engagement helped me to really understand the need for this committee and solidify my commitment to the message and the work of MSAC. As I shared in my nomination package, I have served as an MSAC delegate or an alternate for more than eight years.

[00:11:27] On February 5th, 2019, I along with seven community members and supporters stood before the LCPS school board to advocate for the establishment of the equity department within LCPS. Later, as an MSAC delegate, I was honored to serve two terms on the newly established LCPS equity committee.

[00:11:46] During my time on the equity committee, I provided feedback on LCPS policy and participated in the strategic planning process. I have stood before the LCPS school board on many occasions advocating on behalf of all students and especially those who are marginalized and many times underrepresented.

[00:12:04] Topics ranging from equity in education to ensuring that LCPS curriculum supports a student's ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with diverse groups of peers. In February of this year, I traveled to Richmond, Virginia to speak to the Virginia Board of Education and urge that body to reject the January 23 draft standards and restore the established process for SOL review as directed by the History and Social Science Department at the Virginia Department of Education.

[00:12:36] I am committed to advocating for all of our children and I encourage you to do the same. Our voices are very powerful. I encourage each of you to speak up and to speak out to our elected school board members when we have successes at LCPS and also when we have challenges and concerns.

[00:12:53] My equity and education advocacy extends beyond MSAC and LCPS. I work actively with the youth of my church and side-by-side with women in my sorority to champion for social action initiatives, including voter rights, education empowerment, and to hosting an annual Courageous Conversation for youth, families, and advocates.

[00:13:11] In my professional life, I'm at external relations liaison with the federal government, where I am responsible for community outreach and engagement. I would bring these skills to MSEC. I believe in fostering positive relationships between organizations and stakeholders, And this includes bringing together various communities and individuals in Loudoun County as your MSAC Vice Chair.

[00:13:34] Again, my name is Trufilia Parker, and I'm a candidate for the MSAC Vice Chair. Thank you for your time, consideration of my qualifications, and I hope to get your votes. Thank you, Trufilia, for sharing your background with us and your thoughts and ideas as well.

[00:13:58] We will now go to the next segment of our election. The first three, as I said, Raquel, David, and Trufilia, were all for the vice chair. We're now going to hear from two candidates for MSAC chair for the coming year.

[00:14:16] The first person will be Tonya Bledsoe. Hello, good evening.

[00:14:35] My name is Tonya Bledsoe, and I would like to serve as the Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee chair for the year 2023-2024. Once you have had time to review my qualifications and the application submitted and hear my talk today, I hope to receive your vote.

[00:14:58] I'm a parent, along with my husband, of a sixth grader, and I'm very active as an advocate in the Loudoun County community. I have lived in Loudoun County for over 20 years and have been an MSAC member or delegate for the past five years.

[00:15:14] As a candidate for the chair of MSAC, my top priority is to improve our communication and awareness of MSAC and its mission. It is crucial to engage and involve the community in advocating for minority student education and ensuring that their voices are heard.

[00:15:34] We need to communicate effectively, provide timely and actionable information to the community. What interested me about MSAC and kept me involved in MSAC was the information I received at every meeting that supported my family as we looked to guide my daughter to her educational career at LCPS. Closing the achievement gap for marginalized students is a significant priority for MSAC, but about five years ago, MSAC presented LCPS metrics pertaining to several areas impacting

[00:16:13] the achievement gap, such as discipline disparity, diversity in hiring, and access to advanced placement opportunities. I believe it's time to revisit and analyze these metrics, track our progress, and see how our programs that we have implemented, if they're being effective.

[00:16:33] These metrics and the survey results from the annual MSAC report should be analyzed to ensure that we still are on the right track. I fully understand that this work is a marathon and not a sprint. I have had the privilege to participate and facilitate in the annual Courageous Conversation series sponsored by Loudoun County Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated, which provides minority students and parents a space to share their journey at LCPS. It's clear

[00:17:12] from these conversations that we need to ensure that our students are in a safe environment and that we need to increase cultural competency across the school system so we can create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

[00:17:28] Finally, I will continue to review, continue the review of LCPS policies, ensuring we're working with MSAC delegates, the equity committee and the community to provide feedback, to provide feedback.

[00:17:43] I plan to ensure that we're not only paying attention to the local policies, but the policies created by, at the state level, such as the social studies SOL. I recently provided comments also at the Virginia Board of Education in February.

[00:18:02] Similarly, I have spoken out on several issues at the school board meetings and the Board of Supervisors. My experience extends beyond the community advocacy. I plan to utilize my experience from my professional career as a program manager and change leader.

[00:18:22] If elected as MSAC chair, I will utilize my leadership skills to cultivate a strong team, facilitate collaboration and networking, and to build strong relationships. This will allow us to provide effective organization and streamline the flow of information.

[00:18:40] My name is Tonya Bledsoe, and I'm running for candidate of MSAC chair. Thank you, Tonya, again, for sharing your background, your ideas, and your vision for the future.

[00:19:01] We next will hear from Erin Kunkel. Good evening. My name is Erin Kunkel, and I am seeking your consideration for MSAC chair.

[00:19:31] My husband Ryan and I have been married for nearly 18 years and we have three amazing kids, Aaliyah, she's going to be 14, Declan and Naima. I have served as MSAC delegate at Round Hill Elementary School for two years. As delegate, my focus has been building relationship with our school's principal, administration, equity leads, and the PTO.

[00:19:52] I concentrated on becoming a presence within the school and engaging with parents and families. A product of building these relationships has come with two events. The first, we co-hosted a Community Connections Coffee. Through this coffee, we paved the way for more intense and challenging conversations at Round Hill.

[00:20:09] Because of our efforts, my principal, Andrew Davis, and I both received the MSAC Equity Award in 2022. This past February, we co-hosted our second event. We called it the Kiss and Go Coffee. We had over 90 parents share comments, feedbacks on their need and experiences within the school.

[00:20:28] From this feedback, our equity lead is currently creating a survey where we are gathering data around several different topics, including the hosting of a multicultural event in the coming school year. In addition to being a delegate, this year I am also the MSAC membership chair and delegate liaison. I have brought my people first relationship building mentality to the role of membership chair. This year I hosted the first ever delegates only fireside chat where we dove deeper into the topics of being an influential delegate and how to build relationships within schools. I also started the MSAC Delegates Facebook group to engage and energize the

[00:21:03] delegate body in real-time conversation. As a delegate liaison, I have offered one-on-one consultations as needed. If elected chair, my vision for MSAC comprises the following. First, it is an active and engaged delegate body. Every delegate focused on one cohesive message at school board meetings during general body meetings and throughout the division imagine the impactful changes if every MSAC delegate attended school board meetings dispatching the same message around equity policy improvement and the issues surrounding discipline disproportionality

[00:21:39] second I want to focus on building a solid relationship with each school board member and the entire school board I want to meet regularly with board members to glean the best practices for equity on various issues facing minority and underrepresented students and their families. Since the school year began, we have seen a sharp and alarming increase in racial incidences and offensive language. I want to see the creation and implementation of a reporting system that would allow students and family to report these incidents, enabling students to share these concerns and other issues with a trusted adult within their school. I also

[00:22:14] want to engage with them on issues and concerns as they become come to MSACs awareness. Lastly I want to focus on creating an MSAC signature event. This event rolls out to all schools with all delegates. This goal is twofold. Having an MSAC signature event with a blueprint implementation strategy and with their own and the delegates ability to make it their own helps them to create a presence and forge relationships within their school. In addition, it increases the community awareness of MSAC and its mission in every school. At

[00:22:50] its best, MSAC is an engaged and energized delegate body. At its best, MSAC is creating and building solid relationships with the school board and its members. At its best, MSAC is empowering students, families, and the community around the importance of minority and underrepresented and marginalized group students and every group in this school district. I have elected MSAC chair. I will continue the mission and work towards taking MSAC to the next level as an advisory committee. Thank you very

[00:23:22] much. Thank you very much. I really appreciate hearing from all of our very qualified applicants and thank you all for taking the time to consider this role. I'm sure all of you have been close enough to the fire to know that what you're applying for is it it calls for a lot of your time and passion and we see that you guys definitely have the passion so once again thank you at this time we're going to go ahead and move forward with our voting so every delegate should

[00:24:02] have gotten a ballot if you are a delegate here and have not gotten a ballot please raise your hand okay so if you haven't go ahead and head off to the back table if you do have your ballot you can go ahead and cast your vote. We're going to try to make this process pretty quick because we definitely have a lot more in store and I'm looking forward to hearing from all of our guests today. Okay. All right. So in the meantime, Crystal, can I ask you to collect

[00:24:40] the ballots that have been filled out? Those of you who are ready, you guys can go ahead and fold it in half. It's going to be tallied at the end of tonight. You are going to learn who will be our next chair and vice chair for the 2023-24 school year.

[00:25:04] And just go ahead and raise your hands. You don't have to get up if you've filled out your ballot. Thank you.

[00:25:40] All right, and you know what? We're going to go ahead and make the most of our time because we have our school board liaison here. So I'm going to ask, when he gets a moment, Mr. Harris-Mahedovee, are you ready to share, give us an update on the superintendent search?

[00:26:01] Okay, great. So I can read off a little bit. Good evening, everybody.

[00:26:23] So I'll go through a couple quick updates as far as what our time frame is as we're going through the superintendent search. I know I was here last time. I think there were some good questions that were asked about what is the process we're going through. And I think you must have, and I'm pretty sure you must have got at least a survey to begin with and subsequent emails or if you're part of the different sort of groups in meeting with a consulting company in terms of providing the feedback of what a profile of a superintendent we're looking for. So those are something that are happening. So I'll share some dates of it.

[00:27:02] But I'll come back to, I'll start backwards. So right now we have, based on the time frame where we started for appointing the acting superintendent and the past superintendent there is, by Virginia code, there is X amount of days that we have to make sure that we appoint a superintendent so based on that our target date right now is the school board meeting of May 30th where there'll be a public voting announcements of the next superintendent at least tentatively that's the date right now that's been where we working towards the final final decision on the candidates

[00:27:42] will be on May 23rd but May 30th is when we'll we'll take a vote on it there will be interviews will be conducted back and again May 19th and May 20th and And then May 18th and May 13th, I'll speak to that a little bit.

[00:27:59] So we're still working through what we call developing a profile of a superintendent candidate. If you were involved in the process last year, you probably were, you know, provide some input as far as what can a superintendent we're looking for to lead Loudoun County for the next foreseeable future.

[00:28:18] The survey is the first sort of attempt in developing that. And then there has been a number of meetings looking at the schedule right now, beginning this week since March 13th, where the consulting company, the GR firm who's helping us find the candidate, they've been meeting with a number of different sort of groups in collecting feedback.

[00:28:38] So I'll just share some of the meetings that they have taken place so far, or at least they were scheduled to have taken place. So starting March 13th, I believe they met with SEAC, LEAF, the Career and

Tech Education advisory committee as well and I believe they were they also it's in schedule here they also met with the equity and MSAC as well that's that's what scheduled for March 13th and then Tuesday March 14th they had meetings to meet with the principals both middle school and high school

[00:29:14] principal elementary school principals there was also a stakeholder meeting with students as well and then there was also a meeting with the parents on Tuesday as well with I guess a group of parents at Dominion or Potomac Falls.

[00:29:31] I think that's how it listed up here. That meeting took place as well. So these sort of meetings will continue through the end of this week. And again, there are multiple placeholders to meet with, again, different principals, different parents, groups that would like to come and share their perspective to it and similar to our students as well.

[00:29:52] So that'll continue developing a profile. Once they develop the profile, then they'll go out and find the candidates that can potentially apply for LCPS So again, we don't know what the numbers are again, we are hopefully Optimistic but the same time pragmat being pragmatic given all the news that we heard about Loudoun County in the past couple years We don't know what that pulls gonna look like But we hope that we, you know, again, this has been talked about, Loudoun County is still one of the best school divisions in Virginia, if not in the country.

[00:30:30] There's excellent things that we are doing, the students are doing, the teachers are doing. But again, there's a great story sometimes that are not shared outside with people here about everything that's been posted in the media and the news. So we hope that the good news about, the good information about Loudoun County and all the hard work that you as a parent are doing, the students are doing that cuts through all the noise and we do find good profile of candidates that can apply to our school system.

[00:31:01] So May is when we'll start the interview process. The board will get the packet of all the candidates that apply and we'll work to begin finding maybe the top 10 candidates. I think right now there's some semifinalist candidates.

[00:31:17] I guess I should say not 10, but we'll find a pool of candidates and from that we'll find three finalists. There is a, so just keep this in mind, around May 18th, I think that's what's tentatively scheduled right now. Similar to last time, each board member appointed two parents or you can say constituents from the district to be on a panel's interview process.

[00:31:41] So the total of 18 community members, I should say, parents slash community members that also interviewed those three candidates as well. So they actually got a chance to meet with the candidates in person and interview them. And each of the individuals provided the feedback to their respective board members.

[00:31:57] And so that kind of went, so it's not just the nine board members making a decision. So if you add the 18, I think it's a collective body that will hopefully help in making the decision of what the superintendent itself. So right now, based on the schedule, it looks like May would be the timeframe for us getting the candidates and going through the interview process.

[00:32:18] and hopefully by May 30th is where we'll take the vote and select the next superintendent. So I would encourage that if you haven't joined into one of the parents, you can say panels and stakeholder panels and providing input.

[00:32:35] I think those sessions are still happening. I believe there's one still happening tomorrow evening. And I don't know, right now I have it listed as Briarwoods or Heritage High School at 6:15, to 6:15 to 7:15 tomorrow.

[00:32:50] So again, maybe we can confirm exactly what is taking place with the Briarwoods or Heritage High School to provide you input besides the survey itself. So in a nutshell, like I said, they will build a profile of a candidate by end of March, and go out recruiting.

[00:33:09] Hopefully they'll take a month to find good candidates. And then May is when we start sort of going through the interview process and then subsequently selecting the candidate. So that's kind of the process right now. I don't know if anything else you would like me to add or, okay?

[00:33:26] All right, thank you. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mehenneby. So at this time, we're going to call up Dr. Charles Barrett, who is going to talk to us more about the parent advocacy conversation that we missed last year.

[00:33:51] Unfortunately, we weren't able to hear from him, but we know that he's got a lot of great information to share with us. So I'm going to go ahead and take that. Good evening, everybody.

[00:34:09] How are you? You say it louder. Thank you. Hope I can roam around the building. Can you hear me? Wonderful. All right. I am Charles Barrett. I'm a school psychologist by training.

[00:34:26] I'm in year 15 here in Loudoun. I currently support about 65 psychologists who are assigned to various school buildings here in the county. I practiced myself here for 13 years, and it's a great, great, great place to work. Love it here. Hopefully my clicker works.

[00:34:45] There we go. I do a whole bunch of things in life, but nothing beats the time I get to spend with kids directly. I'm not assigned to a building anymore, but I try my very best to touch kids and see kids every chance I get. So there's a little bit about me there, but I want to talk to you today about a couple of things.

[00:35:04] I'm told I have 17 minutes. I'm going to talk fast, but I'll share these slides with Ms. Bush, and she can probably share them out to the delegates and others in the audience. But connection content, give you a short challenge, tell you some stories, and then end with a closing.

[00:35:20] Connection content, short challenge, and end with a closing. So here is our connection for today. Read that. Let's read it out loud together. Ready? Go. I won't overwork myself. I won't bring unnecessary stress.

[00:35:40] I won't compare myself to anyone else.

[00:36:04] Determine who, sorry, who I am. Say it again. one more time and yes too many times we focus on the wrong things in life so i see some of my school-based colleagues here i see some parents and friends from different places enough is enough and you are enough with whatever you are dealing with good to see it so it's a little encouraging for you today as we go along today so i want to do a couple things um and first thing i want to say is this and a couple of the candidates kind of alluded to this and when they

[00:36:43] we're sharing with you, knowledge is power. I think we've all heard that adage in some way. But access to information, income, is key. What I mean by that is schools have a lot of information, a lot of information, a lot of knowledge, therefore a lot of power. For my school-based colleagues, these are some

friends from Goshen and Harper and Mercer, I gotcha, and forget, and other places here too, how do we, my challenge to you is this, how do we provide access to

[00:37:23] information? Schools are complicated places. And because we work in schools and understand all these acronyms and IEP, FBA, BIP, all these things, it has nothing to do with intelligence. It's a different language. So my challenge to my school-based colleagues here, how do we provide access to information that empowers families to be their most informed advocates for their children. Let's continue. So a couple learning objectives for our content, and I want to give you some concrete strategies. It's a lot to unpack, but some concrete strategies for engaging in

[00:38:02] effective advocacy to achieve equitable outcomes. We have longstanding, I would say, stubborn inequities in this county discipline achievement other areas but how do we achieve equitable outcomes for our students and then share some practical ways that you can advocate for your children at your school it's going to be three quick points at the end of what you can do starting tomorrow even tonight advocate for your children at school i'm not going to talk at you want to talk with you so i might call on some friends to give me some feedback and then we'll

[00:38:40] continue together. So, just some quick slides about MSAC. Follow them on Twitter and Facebook. Some other things here, I won't go through these slides, but you can read about the MSAC mission statement. There is a tremendous need for MSAC.

[00:38:56] And what I've learned in my 15 years in Loudoun is that MSAC, I believe, has a lot of untapped potential. So I wanna share some things that might even be helpful for the delegates and everyone here this evening. So, all that you can kind of read for yourself.

[00:39:12] but we have all seen this image in some ways. Let's have a little quick discussion. What is the image on the left? I'm looking for two E words. The image on the left is representing what?

[00:39:28] Are you sure? Tell my students, when I say, are you sure? I'm not saying you're wrong. Won't you be confident in your answer? What's on the left? Are you sure? Are you positive? All right, equality, and on the right, are you positive?

[00:39:45] Okay, very good. equality, and equity. When we see these terms, a lot to say about it, but I want to show you this. This is not meant to be any shade or criticism, but this is not a positive statement. I've probably said it, teachers have said it, and we mean well.

[00:40:04] We mean I love them all the same. Who here is parenting more than one child? Do you parent your children the same way? I have four brothers. I know who you are. Good to see you. I have four brothers, and my dad said, I love you all the same.

[00:40:23] But I also parent you or raise you differently. Different personality told us that. I know you better than you know yourself. He was right. So we cannot treat all kids the same because we see here all kids are not the same.

[00:40:39] You see me live and in person, and on a good day, I am every bit of 5'5", right? I'm the kid in the purple shirt there that might need some more boxes. Now, for too many times, we focused on the wrong thing in this image.

[00:40:57] We focused on the boxes. Charles is short, so he needs more support, right? And that's fine. But what I want you to do is think about this idea. Fundamentally, the fence is the problem.

[00:41:13] And the fence represents systemic barriers. Not any one person's fault, but they exist nonetheless. It's how we fund schools, it's racism, it's poverty, it's homelessness, it's all these larger societal issues, barriers that prevent meaningful access to opportunity for students, and I'm going to show you this slide here and tell you why the fence is the issue. Kids' height did not change in those images.

[00:41:46] When we get the true liberation, we see that when we remove those systemic barriers, everyone has meaningful access, which is the game. They can participate and engage and see what's going on. So yes, individual students do need different supports and services, but as we're doing that, MSAC, how do you focus on fences? How do you focus on policies, Mr. Mejedevis, that affect everybody in the school system? That's the real issue beyond the individual.

[00:42:23] Supports that we are providing. Make sense? All right, I'm going to keep going. Now, I want to highlight this quick, quick book. Every time I speak, I seem to come back to this Enrique's journey. Who's heard this book before? It is a fantastic book. It's going to, it's a blockbuster thriller. You can read it in about two days. It is such an engaging book. But what I want to show you, this slide has a bunch of things that I talk about to psychologists and educators, but I'll skip that for now. What I want to focus on here is going back to my school-based colleagues.

[00:42:56] So Enrique is 17 years old and leaves Honduras to find his mother who left him 12 years before to come to the States to make a better life for him and his sister. Her plan was to come back soon, end up being 11 or 12 years, now 17, and he takes that journey from Honduras to I think Texas to get to North Carolina. I was embarrassed when I read this book, having served Parkview High School in Sterling Park for 13 years and did not know the harrowing journey that kids go through. The image

[00:43:31] On the book covers shows a child on top of a train and they literally ride through these communities on trains by themselves, 10 years old, 12 years old, 14 years old. But look at this slide here. The blue image says, why should I trust this person who is saying that they're going to help me and my child? I've heard that before, and it wasn't true. What that means is throughout the story, Enrique's mother gives several people thousands of dollars to get her immigration

[00:44:04] papers, get her green card, and they take her money away. Fast forward, they get to Sterling, get to Leesburg, get to Waterford, get to Round Hill, get to Ashburn, and they're around these tables in our problem-solving team meetings, and we say, trust us. Sign these papers. We'll take care of your child. We'll get more services. We'll get more support. Another person in a position of power, family might be reluctant to trusting. Again, back to my school-based colleagues, when people push back, when families push back, it's not you, but who we represent at time.

[00:44:42] Sometimes giving them some more time to understand the process to build relationship goes a long way than becoming more comfortable. Make sense? All right, I'm going to go on to my advocacy in one second. This is a long warm-up, but I think it's going to be helpful. All right, so here's some strategies I want to tell you about. First thing, you have to know what you want, and we want a lot of things because a lot of things need to change, and that's all valid, but first know what you want.

[00:45:19] And be as specific as you can. We want to decrease inequities by X percent. Dr. Childs, our research expert here, he can tell us more about those things, but know what you want and be specific.

[00:45:37] Are you knowledgeable about the issues that you are advocating for? A lot of information out online, school board meetings are great to come to, board docs, all those are resources that we have to

make ourselves more knowledgeable about what we're trying to advocate for.

[00:45:57] Can you defend or support your position? When you have an audience of a school board member or a principal or another person, can you defend that position, the who, what, when, where, why, and how? Well, that's important.

[00:46:14] Timing is everything. So sometimes it's not the right time to push for an issue, although it's valid, though it's necessary, But recognize opportunities to act on something. So first know what you want, and then recognize when might be the time to act on this issue because of the confluence of a variety of things that might be coming together.

[00:46:38] All right? Number three, build strategic relationship or partnership. My wife works in policy, federal policy, and I've learned from her this fancy word for coalitions, which is basically people that have the same goal, but they represent different agencies or constituencies. Mrs. Nolan, are you back there? You are. So Mrs. Nolan, a couple years ago, she might not even remember this, but at the time, I guess you were MSAC chair or vice chair,

[00:47:14] you were in some leadership role, and Mrs. Nolan at a school board meeting made a statement with the current SEAC president. It was a unified front about an issue. I forgot what the actual issue was, but it's not important right now. The issue is that that issue affected students that MSAC represented and also children that SEAC was representing. That's an example of a partnership, of a coalition. Who else would share the concern around the issue that you are trying to advocate for. So who are your partners? Who has shared investment? How can you build

[00:47:50] collaborative coalitions in support of your goals? Number four, gather evidence. And evidence is not just numbers. We think data is just, you know, numbers and percentages and all these things.

[00:48:07] That's important. But the most important data or equally important data, at least, would be qualitative input. What are families saying in your community? What are people saying in your school? That is equally important as percentages and numbers and things that are also helpful to make your argument. So gather evidence to demonstrate that what you're advocating for is actually beneficial to the children that we are all serving. Last two, use consistent

[00:48:42] and effective communication one of the candidates mentioned this as well in in their speech it would be a powerful uh showing if every school had their msac delegate every school board meeting saying the same thing school board cannot ignore 91 buildings represented with the same message

[00:49:10] So I encourage you as you meet and plan, think about what are the talking points, what is the message, how do we organize, organize, organize to get the message out consistently and effectively.

[00:49:26] And then you follow up with a tweet or a post and share and like and all those good things, right? Last one, engage and evaluate. because advocacy priorities evolve over time advocacy is also an iterative process meaning we revise as we go along and what worked three years ago might not be working now things change times change we have to be mindful of what are we doing now that's effective or necessary for

[00:49:58] the current climate okay so those are my six points use consistent effective communication engage and evaluate well the last two here's my challenge to you as i sit down very quickly a couple years ago another school psychologist here dr desray vias and i were writing for ebony magazine i wrote a

parenting column for a couple months and we had this piece called new year new beginnings and basically just some ideas for families to at the start of the school year how can you be effective at supporting your child? Now, my dad's a preacher. My grandfather's a

[00:50:37] preacher. So I got three points and I'm going to sit down. How's that? Here's my three points. I'm going to sit down. First one, be proactive. There it is. Second point, be present. Third point, be persistent. What's up, Sean? Be proactive. Be present and be persistent. Proactive. Don't wait for your child's school to call you.

[00:51:06] You call your child's school and make them know who you are. Proactive is a powerful, powerful tool that we have. First one, so reintroduce yourself. And when I say pledge your support, your support looks differently depending on what you can do.

[00:51:24] That's not always being at the school during the school day, but that's volunteering whenever you can, however you can. That's being available to take the call from the school when they call you. All those things are still ways that you can be supportive of your child's education. Be present. Again, not only in person, but being available to partner with the school. So be available, be present, which is possible. It makes us available to support your child's teacher and school events, however that might look for you. Quick story here. Those

[00:52:03] young men. It's my dad and me. Long time ago. I think I was in fifth grade. Story is I was in speech therapy for six years. Had a really bad stutter and hated speaking in front of people. So why I'm up here now talking is a miracle. So what I learned, I went back to my hometown, Freeport, New York, up in Long Island a couple years ago. And I went to see my third grade teacher who was now a principal. And her secretary was my school secretary when I was in first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, Mrs. Walsh. Mrs. Walsh said, Charles, is that you?

[00:52:41] I said, yes, it is, Mrs. Walsh. This is probably 25 years later. She told me your dad yelled at me when you were in first grade, and she did not forget that. Now, my dad did not yell. He was very stern with her, and what he said was you have to be patient with him. He stutters give him time to speak. And she did not forget that over 25 years later. So how you advocate and show up for your children, it matters to people in schools and they don't forget it. So part of being present

[00:53:18] is advocating for them and speaking on their behalf. What you know is right. Last one, be persistent. School-based folks are here too. This might not be a popular answer, but I'll say it anyway. No might be the final answer, but no oftentimes should not be the first answer. I work in schools just like a lot of my friends here, and sometimes the answer is no, and it's a valid

[00:53:51] answer. You can't do everything you might want for your child, right? But in most cases, we can find a way to compromise and make something happen. So no might be the final answer, but it should not be in most cases the first answer at least come in and talk to me about it so be persistent and there's always a way to elevate your concern to somebody else you might not get what you want ultimately but it's always a channel to go to someone else and talk about what you want for

[00:54:26] your child so be present i'm sorry be proactive be present and be what's the last one persistent all right here's my closing very quickly two years um two days ago march 13th 2004 so what's that um 19 years ago this man passed this is bruce ferguson bruce ferguson was my youth minister or youth leader i

was a kid growing up in in new york and i did not know how much bruce ferguson impacted my life until after he was gone you will never find a bigger champion committed

[00:55:05] dedicated person than Bruce Ferguson. This man's whole life was kids and children and doing what's right for them. So when I think about him I think about what he taught me what he showed me. If you won your class spelling bee in second grade he made the biggest deal out of that in church on Sunday. But we thought that we were just geniuses for doing little things but the confidence he gave us and opportunities to grow were just amazing. My last thing, what Brother Bruce modeled for me

[00:55:41] has informed most of what I believe about serving children. Prepare after me, love them unconditionally, support them unwaveringly, and advocate for them fiercely. That's what he did. He loved us unconditionally, supported us unwaveringly, and advocated for us fiercely. And that's what we're trying to do on behalf of students tonight.

[00:56:11] I'm going to stop, hope that was 17 minutes or so, or so. So thank you for your time. I will send these slides out to Ms. Bush and she can share them with your network.

[00:56:31] - Wow, MSAC. I give myself all the credit for inviting him tonight. All right. So I do want to give our LCPS liaison, Dr. Ryan Tyler, a moment and an opportunity.

[00:56:52] I know it's a hard act to follow, But just if you had any comments about what he said and anything from a staff perspective to add to his comments tonight. So the man, the myth, the legend.

[00:57:07] So building on what you heard, to give you an example, about a month ago we started the course enrollment season, meaning students and families are selecting courses for next year.

[00:57:25] And this is a great opportunity for families to think about to what extent are we seeing to it that our student is being challenged. The idea of you hear the acronyms, AP, honors, and kind of explaining that.

[00:57:42] To what extent does our student know that they can access college-level content, challenge themselves, and start to step into the real world and see their potential? So some of what Dr. Barrett has shared with you, this is a wonderful season to whether it's thinking about, is your student being challenged?

[00:58:04] There's honors courses in the middle school level, there's advanced placement, there's dual enrollment courses, there's pathways for propel and level up, students who may not have been identified by a traditional gifted program selection process.

[00:58:21] So what Dr. Barrett has shared, There's many opportunities and kind of windows and pathways throughout the school year where you can act on that. And this is a great season for that. You're thinking about next year. February 22nd was the first wave of teachers working with families to make recommendations, but schools, I see middle school principals here, schools will be reaching out to families after July 1st when those students go to the next grade and thinking about, I see your pathway, you're doing well.

[00:58:53] Have you thought about coding? Have you thought about kind of reaching into some opportunities and some pathways that will challenge you and to see yourself doing real-world, authentic, challenging problems and see yourself working with adults to solve problems?

[00:59:12] So just an idea of an example of opportunities that are there that are concrete that are available to you. That's all I would add at this point. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. And I just wanted to thank you for, you know, even the seed that you planted.

[00:59:29] I know that just about everyone in this room can identify with the question, have you ever considered? You know, if you never thought yourself worthy enough to do something, you know, have you ever considered that you might run for MSAC chair or vice chair? Have you ever considered that you might take a coding class?

[00:59:45] We're more capable than we think. So I want to call up at this moment Ms. Tiffany Lang and our own Erin Conko. These two parent delegates have been very present, very proactive, and very persistent in their role as delegates.

[01:00:02] So I ask them to come and just say a quick five minutes to just encourage those of you in the room who are still having problems perhaps or just some questions about what it looks like to move out as a delegate or just as a parent who wants to be more active in your school.

[01:00:22] So at this time, Tiffany, and then afterwards, Erin, you can come up as well.

[01:00:35] Hi, everyone. My glasses. See the screen?

[01:01:06] I can see that. All right, so I only got five minutes. I guess it's like less than that now. Really quick, first of all, I want to say it's been such a great experience for me being part of PTA and how it started for me I'm sorry PTA MSAC how it started for me is I was already active at my daughter's school Sanders Corner where I was you know just involved as a parent and then I would get in contact with the principal and I had questions and different concerns that I had

[01:01:42] that's when he recommended me to be a delegate to the PTA and then they emailed me and asked me if I would do it so my first year my daughter was their first grade we were just active on PTA and then second grade she's now in fifth that's when I became an MSAT delegate so that's how it worked out that's how I got involved and that's how I learned about it and ever since then I've just been you know obviously very involved now I would like to say this really quick and that is

[01:02:18] when it comes to MSAC, you don't have to wait for opportunities to come. You have to bring up the opportunity. You have to let people see what the opportunities are. So I'm going to give you an example really quick of what happened last year. So last year, I pretty much said to my PTA, listen, as an MSAC delegate, we are always bringing, you know, the meetings, you know, things that we've learned at the meetings, and we're always bringing things to you. Obviously,

[01:02:54] I'm talking about myself at this point, but nothing is being done whenever I share ideas and things that we can do, and so this time, I said that we can cut the red tape. Not everything needs to be outside of PTA because we have funds, so how about we support MSAC with doing something that's actually in our control and in this case it was using some money that we already have in the budget to purchase some books that will provide representation particularly in this point where I

[01:03:33] was advocating for was black students African-American students where we can have black boys as the main character on cover of books because the school was lacking that black girls as the main character, books on Africa, and books on African-American history. So after I did all of that, the treasurer

at the time contacted me, and he just so happened to be here, David. And he called me immediately after the meeting, after we got off, and he said, Tiff, I would love to support you.

[01:04:12] And it was his support that really got the ball rolling. So sometimes all it takes is just to let your voice be heard right you offer ideas which is what I did and you work with your PTA and your school principal with these ideas that you bring and allies allies are helpful because David was my ally he was a he was the treasurer so what made that so perfect is that he knew exactly what we had in the budget he understood the numbers he knew what was being used what wasn't being used because even though I'm on the PTA and I'm MSAC and they're going through the treasury report I'm

[01:04:50] not going to know what's in it sometimes like what can we use David understood so he was like tip we could totally do this now the great thing is that at first we were like okay that's provide an opportunity for all schools to have this and so then David had this great idea to do a 10 for 10 where we would do raise money for the entire county but we didn't have to because at this point we had enough money in our budget so we supported a local black-owned business and purchased the

[01:05:22] books from there and now all of those books are in the library and all of that was what we put it in this summer and I'm going to show you some pictures now so the good thing what's the solution the solution is this and this is the blessing because of that one act now every year going forward, MSEC has a line item in the budget. So going forward now, like as we speak today, MSEC has a line number in there. So we always have a budget to purchase books for students of color. So this year we're going to do, you know, another group and so forth. So, you know,

[01:06:01] the dream got bigger, right? It just gets bigger. These are pictures of when the books came in. We ordered them in May. They came in and here we go. So that's me, David, and our principal, Mr. Jakes, taking a picture with some of the books that came in. This is my daughter. These are some of the books. So as you can see, we have black boys and black girls as the main character because the key is, is that when a child is reading a book and they're not on the cover, they're not able to imagine themselves doing that.

[01:06:34] So for me, it was very important that black boys and black girls were able to imagine themselves being adventurers, world travelers, and things of that sort. And the reason why I wanted to curate is because books on just black people on the cover is not enough.

[01:06:51] It's about what's in it? What's the context? Is it joyful? Is it going to get them excited? Is it going to help them dream big and want to do better? Is it going to help them see that they're leaders? So that's what I was looking for as I was curating these books, and also that children learn about black history before colonization.

[01:07:08] So we got books on Africa where they were able to learn ancient history and things of that sort. So that was important to me. And so these are examples. And then this is a little video. The books are good. And that's it.

[01:07:38] That was the summer. Thank you. So that's it on my presentation. I encourage you all just continue to be active. I'm obviously still very active with my daughter, and every time I see things that need to be addressed, I contact the teachers directly as well as the principal, and things usually get done, and I'm very proud of that.

[01:08:02] Thank you, MSAC. Thank you, everybody. Okay, and I'm going to call up Erin Kunkel at this time, and I have to apologize to Erin. She had some amazing pictures to show you, and I did not upload

them. So my apologies to Erin as you approach.

[01:08:22] Still great work. I'll just wing it. Bear with me. So I'm here just to share with you a little bit about my experience in creating a relationship within my school. My story is probably just the same as everyone else in this room. There was an incident with my son. I didn't know what to do, who to speak to. And so I kind of went in and it was, I always joke that I went from being Aaron at the school to Mrs.

[01:08:51] kunkle really fast. Like everybody had to know I'm serious about my kids and their education and how they're treated and how they feel comfortable and safe at the school. And so I really just kind of walked up to the principal and said, hi, how are you? I'm here to help. I want to volunteer. I want to get to know the school. I want to know what I can do as a parent to support you in supporting my child in his education and my daughters they're at they were at the school at the same time as well and so we really started talking and having these conversations and when the call went out for an

[01:09:27] MSAC delegate I was like okay I'll do it I want to do it let me do it I'm ready I'm excited I'm passionate about this I'm all in and so we started having conversations and the conversation centered around the very first question he asked me in our first meeting and that was how are you? Every event that we have hosted at our school since I've been a delegate has always been centered around that question. How are you? We wanted to know how are you as a parent? How are your students? How are things going on at home? You know are you happy? Are you sad? Is it stressful? Do you need something?

[01:10:04] You know what can we do to support you? And then we grew the questions out from there. We call them driving questions. So these driving questions are how do we interact with our parents and families? How do we associate with, how do we make associations with events or with things that are happening? And how do we get feedback that can turn into actionable items within the school that are, that range from very easy changes to, you know, the more complicated things that are happening, addressing issues. And my first few meetings were very stressful to me because I was

[01:10:39] like I'm coming in here and I'm asking them to make a seat at the table for a very hot button issue and that is the education of minority students and all underrepresented students in this district I didn't know how people were going to accept that I didn't even know how the PTO was going to accept that so my approach has always been to be excited like if I'm excited you can't miss it you have to be excited with me like this is a good thing we're changing things in school we're improving things we're making spaces for everybody's voice to be heard and now when i

[01:11:14] show up at the pto meeting they know exactly what they're getting from me if i come in and i'm like oh yeah it was great they'd be like what happened what's going on where's our update they know that they're getting the details my reaction how did i feel about this what's happening with this go to this resource do you need a resource i've got a resource for you do you need to know something about this i've got that they know me from the minute i walk up to the front door to the minute I walked to the cafeteria. I walked through the building and every parent knows who I am.

[01:11:43] Every school teacher knows who I am. They know they can count on me. They know that I'm there not just as an MSAC delegate, but as an involved parent. And the way you do that is you just have to take that first itty bitty step. And that's putting yourself out there, taking that little leap of faith and saying, this work matters. It's important. And I told Talia last year when she invited me to kind of take on a bigger role in MSAC, I told her I'm not afraid because the work we're doing isn't wrong. What we're advocating for is not wrong on any shape, size, or form. We're

[01:12:20] doing the right thing and the best thing for our children's education and trying to meet our children's need and bring everybody else along. And so don't have the pictures, but I promise they really cool. We had two events. Our first event was a community connections coffee. We sat down and we went through question after question after question. The equity team at Round Hill sent out questions to the equity department to say, can we ask this? No, you might need to rephrase that. Okay, let's rephrase that question. We centered it around questions. How are you?

[01:12:53] How has your experience been at the school? How do your children feel at the school? Do you feel that your culture is being represented? Do you feel that you have access to materials to help your students grow? And parents gave feedback. It was a small turnout, but it was enough to get people talking because the next couple of weeks after it, people came up to me and said, oh, I would have loved to answer that question. I have so many thoughts and ideas. And so when we came back this year, I said, okay, what's next? Let's do it again. Let's take it a step further.

[01:13:25] And our new equity lead, Mrs. Lubin, she is so amazing. If you have not gotten to know your equity leads in your schools, take some time and set up a meeting and talk to them one-on-one. Our equity lead, Mrs. Lubin, is amazing.

[01:13:42] She is taking things by leaps and bounds. I'm like, I know this can be a tough question, and she's always in my corner. No, no, no, Erin. No, no, no. We can ask that question. We're going to get to the heart of this question. I want to ask that question. I want to know. And so we planned our Kiss and Go coffee, and literally the catch was, parents, drop your kids off, we will provide you with a really great cup of hot coffee, show you all the beautiful artwork, and while you're at it, will you please stop and answer these five or six questions.

[01:14:12] And they were centered around, glow and grow. What are we doing well? Where can we grow? What can we change? What can we do better? How are you? What do you need? What can we do better for you? and we had 90 parents that offered feedback and comment we had kids running up and down showing their artwork we had so many parents tuned into these questions and when we sat down for our debrief and went through all the questions we came up with several action items a multicultural night we sent out feedback to our pto saying we need a virtual option because everybody's parent can't

[01:14:47] be there at two o'clock in the afternoon so please have a virtual option we are asking survey questions about how we can improve the school how we can align with the school improvement plan how we can do things better and so interacting with the school for me has always been about let me show up if I show up and you see that I'm happy and enthusiastic and ready to do the work whatever it is and I can volunteer in any capacity I have even sold cupcakes and bake sale I'm like I'll a co-paste. If that's what you need me to do, I will do that. If you know I'm willing to work, then perhaps you will partner with me. And so that's just been my way of getting connected to

[01:15:26] my school in dialing in, is just keep developing those relationships and showing up in places. I was at the school dropping off my daughter's lunch yesterday, and the front office, the secretary at the front office, she said, it's been like three weeks. Where have you been? I'm like, well, I'm really busy these days. She's like, no, we need you back. We need you to just come back and come talk to us. I'm like, about what? Did I miss a meeting? What's going on? And then I got an email from the principal. Let's meet next week. So we're having a meeting. That was just it. I hadn't been seen in the school. Let's get an update. And

so I just want you all to know, it is possible to connect with your schools. It's possible to develop the relationship. It's not easy. I might make you

[01:16:05] think it's easy, but it's not. I'm usually stressed out and sweating it if it's a big deal, but I'm always willing to do the work and if you show up and you make sure you're there a presence and you're ready to do the work they will line up to support you you just have to take that first step so that's all I have for you thank you thank you so much Erin and I'm going to find a way to get those pictures out to you guys because they are amazing I did get a chance to take care of them to watch them for myself so we have about a little less than 15 minutes I promised an open mic and

[01:16:44] And we've got some amazing people in the room. I want you guys to ask your questions to Dr. Barrett, Dr. Tyler, Mr. Mejedevy. And we also have, I believe we have Mrs. Spurlock in the back. Oh, there she is. Okay. So, or if you have any questions or comments about MSAC in general, we invite you to take advantage of the mic at the tables.

[01:17:06] But just share your thoughts. We put in our flyer that we wanted to know, you know, what your learning experience is or you have any ideas about that. We're in the process of updating our annual report, so we really want to hear from you. So, again, if you have any questions or comments, please, at this time, feel free.

[01:17:29] So you can come up. If you have a comment, you can go ahead, and we'll ask you to grab a mic and just go ahead and click that little button so that everyone can hear your questions or comment. And before you speak, Sri, one quick note.

[01:17:45] just when you speak just be sure to introduce yourself we're gonna give since we're a long time about 30 seconds per individual and obviously let's just keep it informal and be respectful hi I'm Sherry and my son goes to Goshen Post he started kindergarten so this has been my first experience with MSAC or just Loudoun County Schools and every time I come to this meeting it's so

[01:18:23] informational I get a lot of knowledge about about what's happening at the school and just navigating Loudoun County processes I guess so I really appreciate these meetings and it just happened to be a another parent mentioned it to me and so that was really just a comment just to say thank you for providing all the the speakers it really is helpful as a parent to just

[01:18:55] there's things that I'm just not aware of so thank you thank you we've got a student voice in the room we want to showcase that hi my name is Milo Jackson and I'm reading a letter from that I sent to MSAC and I'm gonna pull it up on my phone right now so give me like two seconds okay my name is Milo Jackson I I use they, them pronouns.

[01:19:34] I'm a ninth grade student attending the North Star School and Heritage High School. I live with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and ADHD. Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome is a rare connective tissue disorder that affects the whole body. Connective tissue is the glue.

[01:19:50] It keeps everything together. So my connective tissue doesn't work. It's there, but it defectively doesn't work. So Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome affects everyone differently. There's 13 different types. don't have time to get into it. But for me, I live with chronic widespread pain. I get, I deal with chronic fatigue and I get injured so easily. It's a pain. But Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome is a lifelong condition. I will live with it my whole life and it is disabling. I am one in 3,000. I'm also a

[01:20:29] student who utilizes an IEP and a 504. Regularly using, regularly using the elevator, I use the disabled stall or some of your students may know it as the big stall. I leave five minutes early from all my classes. I get extended time on everything and when needed I use mobility aids.

[01:20:48] I'm an advocate for representation of disabled students in schools. I started a project in March which is Disability Awareness Month where I've highlighted laws and influential disabled people and so much more. And it started a couple Fridays ago in the morning show at North Star.

[01:21:10] I'm working with our teacher who does the morning show to get these more on there. We don't have a lot of time during the morning show, so that's partly why I'm here, partly why I'm on another committee to make what I have made into countywide advisory lessons.

[01:21:27] But I'm more than my disability. I'm an active member in theater at Heritage High School, come see Into the Woods, an active member in my community, a sibling, a cousin, just a kid, and a Grey's Anatomy fanatic, and a person just, I have so many strengths. I started my year attending Academies of Science at Heritage, and Heritage, sorry. I only attended AOS for about a month, month and a half, and this is, I ultimately made that decision to drop out because I didn't feel represented in my disability, and I didn't feel like I was accommodated properly.

[01:22:05] When I was at AOS, I quickly started falling behind in math, partly because I have a more complex educational background. The problem with the math curriculum is Tutor.com, which was widely given to your students, isn't a resource, and it's because the math curriculum there is built by a teacher there, by an AOS teacher, and that means I can't get outside tutoring either, which are both things I needed. I only got maybe 20 minutes sometimes after school, and it wasn't enough, and I kept

[01:22:44] falling behind, and the curriculum builds on itself, so I couldn't do the skills after where I started falling behind. I also noticed multiple times that this school isn't built for me. I mean it's built by ADA standards. All your schools should be if they're not checking. But things like study pods. My science classroom only had high tables. Like tables that were like this high maybe more. You needed high chairs. So if I was in a wheelchair, no access to any desk. My math classroom, the

[01:23:19] way our desks were structured, it was hard for an able-bodied person to get behind between the wall and the table. So if I'm using an aide, also not possible. But the main issue beyond it is I never met a disabled person when I was out there, and that's for a reason. The statistics show this too. Out of all of the academies, and I am not counting 504 plans because I could not find that information. Only 4.8% of students have an IEP. Now, let me preface this, the academies and heritage,

[01:23:54] similar size. The IEP population at Heritage High School is 14.2%, double. The heritage and academies, I mean, they have similar populations. Why is this happening? I just, I didn't feel represented and really if I did and if I was able to have an accessible building and accessible experience and I got the accommodations I needed I believe I would have graduated with an academies of science diploma and that's something that I won't get back because it is a four-year program

[01:24:30] disabled people were not dumb we're some of the smartest people in the world and we're so talented but we deserve the gifted programs that are given to our peers. And we deserve equity within our education and within our world.

[01:24:51] We deserve rigorous programs like the ones at the Academy's 11. Thank you for listening. Thank you, Milo. Thank you so much for representing your disability.

[01:25:11] We have another question or comment. One, two, one, two. So more so than just a comment, my name is Gerald Moore, and I'm the founder of an organization called Mission Fulfilled 2030. And we create tech and STEM programs for black and brown boys.

[01:25:29] And what I want to know is how can we better facilitate LCPS creating more partnerships with programs that can have out-of-school time with minority students, especially the young men?

[01:25:45] Because we know that men in our school system are not in a high percentage. So I never had a black male educator my whole K-12 experience. We know that representation matters. We know that visibility of people in the tech and STEM fields matter that are black and brown men.

[01:26:06] That's what our organization does. So we have a program running right now called Youth Tech Entrepreneurs for Middle School Boys. And it runs at Trailside Middle School. And I just wanna know how can we better facilitate partnerships with LCPS so that it's been a struggle trying to work with LCPS to offer a free program.

[01:26:28] So in a partnership with Jack and Cook Foundation, we're able to do this program. And it's been really a struggle to just get the schools to disseminate the information. So how can we facilitate that better? - Thanks.

[01:26:44] - You can maybe after this thing you can. This is Harris Madhvi, I'm one of the board members. we can touch base after that. I have a kid in the trail side, so I know about the program, so I'll be happy to talk and see what we can do. Thank you.

[01:27:04] - Hi, Trefilia Parker. I am a delegate at Eagle Ridge Middle School, and I had a comment on the superintendent search, the survey, and I did send this into the email that was provided, but I thought it was very impactful and powerful at the end of the survey where there's an opportunity for you to provide a recommendation on a possible candidate.

[01:27:26] However, the field only allows for 40 characters, so if you're really trying to provide someone's full name, a possible email address, or the district that they represent, the space doesn't allow for you to do so. That would be a recommendation if you could extend the field capability there.

[01:27:41] Thank you. - Thank you for the feedback, I'll pass it on, thank you. - So our open mic time, we're gonna have to cut it a little short because we wanna make time for our announcements for the new MSAC chair and vice chair.

[01:27:56] So do we have one more question? We've got time for one more question, and then I'm going to go ahead and ask Crystal if you can head up. Anyone else have a question or comment?

[01:28:19] Go ahead. We've provided this list behind me just to kind of jog your memory, your thoughts, just if anything comes to mind. Because, again, we've got some great resources in the room, and our equity director, and, of course, Dr. Tyler and Dr. Barrett, and Mr. Mahedovey.

[01:28:37] So I want to take advantage of them being in the room right now. Not a question here, but a statement. On the precipice of announcing the chair and vice chair, I just wanted to say thank you, Ms. Bush, on your leadership.

[01:28:58] Just thank you. As a new delegate here, you've been outstanding, and just wanted to say thank you. It's a distinct honor to announce our new chair and vice chair for 2023-24.

[01:29:23] I know, drumroll, I'm getting warm just in this row, my goodness. All right. So our vice chair for 2023-24 is Ms. Trufilia Parker. Congratulations. And our chair for next year is none other than Ms. Erin Kunkel. Congratulations to both of you all. I think MSAC is going to be well served by both of you all, and I think we're going to be better for your service. So thank you once again. Thank all of you all for coming tonight. Thank you for our

[01:30:02] panelists, for our delegates, for sharing your thoughts and ideas, and thank you all for participating. Have a great evening.



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