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Loudoun County School Board, 2nd Tuesday School Board Meeting to include a Closed Session, Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Date Tuesday, April 11, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 7h 21m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/816937890?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 2026-10-20. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:01:09] Good afternoon. I'm calling to order this April 11th, 2023 meeting of the Loudoun County School Board. I have been notified that Denise Corbo would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting. Ms. Corbo, could you please state your location, whether this is a medical or personal matter, and if anyone is present with you at your location? Thank you. I am at my daughter's house. I am alone, and this is for, I'm asking for remote participation for personal reasons. Thank you. Ms. Corbo, could you just restate your location? I couldn't catch it.

[00:01:46] Yeah, I'm at my daughter's house. Okay, thank you. I will now entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's remote participation be granted for a health and medical issue. Oh, no, I'm sorry. Did you ask for personal? Okay, my apologies. I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's remote participation be granted for a personal matter. So moved. Moved by Mr. Morris. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Polifko. Is there any discussion? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have stated publicly before,

[00:02:26] I believe it was a few months ago, when the Loudon Times Mirror interviewed me and asked me for my reasons on why I have supported Ms. Corbo in her request for either medical or personal reasons to attend the meetings remotely. And I will state here on the dais that the reason that I have been consistent and my support for her being able to participate, whether it is a medical or a personal reason, is

because to not allow her to participate is to disenfranchise all of Loudoun County because she is the at-large representative. She is the representative for every single stakeholder that is part of Loudoun County Public Schools. Whether we agree or disagree, if she is present and she is

[00:03:04] willing to participate and she is able to be in the meetings, it is my belief that she should be granted access to do so. Again, because to not do so is to disenfranchise all of the voters in Loudoun County public schools. Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Those opposed? Nay. That motion will pass 3-2-4 with Sorotkin and Beatty opposed and Corbo, Mejedevi, Reeser, and Okadeke absent for the vote.

[00:03:45] We'll now move on to item 3 on the agenda. Mr. Chairman, point of clarification, 3-4? Yes, Mr. Morris. I believe the vote was 3-2. 3-2 with 4 absent. Okay, thank you. Yes, it passed 3-2 with Beatty and Sorotkin opposed and Corbo, Mehedaby, Reeser, and Okadeke absent.

[00:04:07] We'll now move to item 3, the approval of the consent agenda. I move that the Loudoun County School Board approve the April 11th consent agenda as posted in BoardDocs. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Beatty any discussion seeing none all those in favor of approving the consent agenda. Please raise your hand say aye That motion will pass Unanimously a board members present with me head of e Reeser and Okadek Bay absent for the vote. We are now going to go into our

[00:04:42] Closed session. Mr. Chair, we're doing disclosures. Are you gonna wait till later? We don't have disclosures tonight on the agenda It's on my printed document. Sorry. I do have it on my agenda as well. My apologies for skipping it Okay, so you go first we will we will return to item two and Start our disclosure starting with Miss Sheridan. Thank you. Mr. Chair as a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda Regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees Specifically as a school board member

[00:05:22] I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee these benefits However affect thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Mr. Morse Thank you as a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries The budget and or health insurance and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees

[00:05:59] Specifically, my spouse is an LCPS employee who may benefit from any potential changes to employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which my spouse and I are included.

[00:06:16] I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public. in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and/or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:06:40] Specifically, I'm enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

[00:06:57] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Ms. Corbo. - As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding employees' salaries, the budget, and/or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salaried benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:07:24] Specifically, I'm enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. Specifically, my son is an LCS teacher. He does not reside with me and is not dependent on me. These subjects include thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included.

[00:07:46] I can and will participate fairly objectively in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the school board for five years. Thank you. - Thank you. Now we will return to item four and I will read the motion to convene the closed meeting.

[00:08:02] I move the Loudoun County School Board recess this public meeting and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following. Discussion of plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity or specific cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities and briefings by staff members, legal counsel or law enforcement or emergency service officials concerning actions taken to respond to such matters or a related threat to public safety, discussion of records excluded from this chapter pursuant to subdivision three or four of section 2.2-3705.2, where discussion in an open meeting

[00:08:42] would jeopardize the safety of any person or the security of any facility, building, structure, information technology system or software system, or discussion of report or plans related to the security of any governmental facility, building or structure, or the safety of persons using such facility, building or structure, which is authorized by section 2.2-3711A19 of the Code of Virginia, and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel,

[00:09:19] as authorized by section 2.2-3711A8 of the Code of Virginia, specifically the legal obligations of public bodies in responding to requests for records under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body pertaining to Loudoun County Circuit Court Matter CR-37536 and requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as authorized by section 2.2-3711A7 and 2.2-3711A8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:09:53] Is there a second? Seconded by Ms. Ogaugbe. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Mehedivey and Reeser absent for the vote.

[00:10:10] We are now in closed session.

[01:44:25] Want to?

[02:07:58] Want to?

[02:29:43] Of closed session. I move that the closed meeting be adjourned, that the Loudoun County School Board reconvene its public meeting, and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting. I further move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting.

[02:30:01] Resolution 31-2223, whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. And whereas section 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law. Now, therefore, be resolved with the Loudoun County School Board, hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge. Only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification applies, and only such public business matters as were

[02:30:41] identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Loudoun County School Board. Second. Seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye.

[02:30:58] That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Reeser and Mehedeви absent for the vote. We're now going to go on to item seven on our agenda, which is the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

[02:31:14] Our pledge leader tonight is Ms. Janet Lewis, who joined the leadership team at Dominion Trail Elementary School as an assistant principal in 2013. Prior to that, she worked in Virginia Beach City Public Schools for 10 years, during which time her administrative experiences included academic coordinator, team lead, summer school administrator, administrative intern, and assistant principal.

[02:31:38] Before serving in educational leadership roles, she was a teacher in Portsmouth, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach Public Schools, teaching various grade levels K-6 and reading. She always strives to positively impact the lives of children, not only in the school setting, but also in the community, serving on the Chesapeake Youth Advocacy Committee as a board member for over seven years and creating after-school programs to target at-risk teens.

[02:32:06] Ms. Lewis holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a concentration in early childhood from Elizabeth City State University, a master's degree in educational leadership from Old Dominion University, and a certificate of advanced graduate studies in administration and supervision from George Washington University. Ms. Lewis is a passionate and innovative school leader who thrives to build strong relationships with teachers, students, families, and the community.

[02:32:34] She enjoys the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of all of her students. Her goal is to create a culture which promotes student achievement by making learning a top priority. Immediately after After the Pledge of Allegiance, we're going to have the National Anthem tonight performed by the Harper Park Middle School Hurricane Harmonics under the direction of Dr. Sherry Montgomery.

[02:32:57] This is the select treble ensemble comprised of sixth through eighth grade choral students from Harper Park Middle School. While this is the ensemble's inaugural year, singers meet before school each week to prepare songs for the special performances and assessments.

[02:33:13] They are a wonderful representation of their community and music in our schools. The sky is the limit for this ensemble as they continue to grow in future years at Harper Park Middle School. At this time, I will ask everyone to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for the national anthem immediately after.

[02:33:31] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[02:35:55] that was wonderful thank you all for being here with us tonight this time we're going to move to item 8 on our agenda which is student and staff recognitions with 801 1lcps spotlight on the academies of loud in school community partnerships turn it over to dr. Ellis thank you I will ask Dr. Tunnell pretty principal of the academies of loud in and her team to head to the

[02:36:32] podium for this presentation good evening chair Suratkin and board members we are We're excited to share the April 1LCPS spotlight with the school board tonight, which highlights

[02:37:08] the important extended learning opportunities and a valuable business partnership at the Academies of Loudoun. My name is Tonelle Priddy, principal of the Academies of Loudoun, and this afternoon, I am joined by Kelly Rebucci, Academies of Loudoun placement coordinator, and Frances Gordon, Academies of Loudoun student.

[02:37:28] Next slide. Our shared vision, mission, and core beliefs guide our collective work as 1LCPS. We place students at the center of our work, helping every student pursue and reach their full potential and empowering them to make meaningful contributions to the world.

[02:37:46] Our discussion this evening is centered around Goal 4, which focuses on an engaged community. It states that parents, families, and our community must be a support, guide, ally, and partner. There is no one more deeply invested in the success of students than their families.

[02:38:03] Aligned Action 4.2 is grounded in LCPS strengthening existing and creating new business and community partnerships. As you can see on this slide, some of our focus will include expanding, recognizing, and promoting business partnerships so that we can provide our students, like Francis, with real-world experiences to advance the LCPS profile of a graduate.

[02:38:29] Next slide. The mission of the Academies of Loudoun is to empower students to explore, research, collaborate, innovate, and to make meaningful contributions to the world in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

[02:38:47] One way our students are able to make these meaningful contributions is through our extended or experiential learning, which provides them opportunities to explore industries and careers, research and discover new possibilities and collaborate with others on a professional level.

[02:39:06] Next slide. Partnering with businesses, both large and small, can have a powerful impact on a school and the community at large. With tremendous support and resources from our region's businesses, the Academies of Loudoun has been able to enhance the student experience and provide valuable opportunities to bridge the gap between academics and practical application in the professional setting with experiential learning.

[02:39:35] This type of learning wouldn't be possible without the 400 established partnerships the Academies has with the local business community. Next slide. What does experiential look like at the

Academies of Loudoun?

[02:39:52] It is a school coordinated coherent sequence of workplace experiences through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional classroom setting. It encompasses a wide variety of enriching opportunities for students such as internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, service learning, jobs, and job shadowing.

[02:40:16] A well-planned, supervised, and assessed experiential learning program can stimulate academic inquiry by promoting interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

[02:40:34] Students are able to experiment, try new things, learn in a safe and controlled atmosphere, and receive real-time feedback. This kind of learning helps students leverage real-world examples for inspiration and enhances their experiences in a manner that leaves them with rich stories to add to their developing skill set.

[02:40:55] It is my pleasure to introduce our Academy's Placement Coordinator, Kelly Rebutti, who will share additional details about her role working with students at ACL. Good evening everyone. Working closely with the business and nonprofit communities allows me to promote and help students find experiences in internships, mentorships, job shadowing experiences, apprenticeships, work study, summer enrichment, service learning, volunteerism, and practicum

[02:41:31] experiences. To help students secure these opportunities, I assist students in preparing for interviews, resumes, cover letters, and coaching them through the job attainment process. I monitor student progress and workplace setting, and I help students connect with businesses by creating and offering career fairs, guest speaking events, and on-site interviews with companies.

[02:41:56] Next slide. Throughout the year, I coordinate subject matter expert guest speakers from the business community to come speak with our students in our classes. By providing these experiences, students gain knowledge of workplace readiness, get assistance in defining career goals, strategies, and outcomes, and subject matter experts build connections with the younger generation of STEM professionals.

[02:42:25] For example, this past February, we hosted 20 subject matter experts in the engineering, IT, and entrepreneurship industries to speak to students for AET Engineering Week. It is an annual event at ACL that our students love to participate in.

[02:42:45] Next slide. We not only aim to prepare students academically, but we also prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century professional workplace. The most effective way to accomplish this is through meaningful extended learning experiences that enhance critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills.

[02:43:09] From internship opportunities, students gain valuable applied experience and make professional connections. Students enhance their skills and obtain a realistic current view of STEM industries and engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, physically, and socially.

[02:43:30] Next slide. Another way I work to strengthen existing partnerships and promote new ones with the business community is inviting them to participate in ACL career fairs. On January 25, 2023, we held

the annual Academies of Loudoun Skilled Trades Fair and invited over 40 business partners for a night of networking.

[02:43:56] This event was open to all high school students across LCPS and provided students the opportunity to engage with businesses in the skilled trade industries and learn about various companies and job opportunities. We also host other ACL career fairs for different industries throughout the year.

[02:44:16] Thank you for your time, and I will reintroduce Dr. Freddie. Next slide.

[02:44:33] Projet Aviation is the D.C. metro region's premier aviation hospitality company dedicated to helping people accomplish extraordinary things through the wonder of private flight. The Academies of Loudoun established a relationship with Projet Aviation prior to opening in 2018, and the lasting relationship has been beneficial for both the business and students.

[02:44:56] Each year, their team visits the school to speak with students about the opportunities in the aviation and aerospace industry with a focus on skilled trades, agriculture, hospitality, business management, law, security, finance, and more.

[02:45:12] Additionally, Projects sponsors an annual challenge for the graphic communications pathway where students create the promotional flyer for Projet's annual Aviation Expo. ACL exclusively creates the design used for the flyer and prepares the program for the event.

[02:45:30] The winners of the challenge are gifted a free flight with one of the flight schools who sponsor the Aviation Expo. The Aviation Expo that is held each year provides students with opportunities to connect and network with businesses, universities, and field experts in the industry.

[02:45:46] At this year's Aviation Expo, ACL students had access to over 20 scholarship opportunities that ranged from school-specific scholarships to continue learning in the aviation field, monetary awards, and flight school training.

[02:46:02] Since our partnership began in 2018, Academies of Loudoun scholarship awards have totaled over \$174,000. This year alone, four of the scholarship recipients were Academies of Loudoun students who received a combined total of \$45,000.

[02:46:21] Additionally, Project Aviation takes on two interns as client service representatives to learn about hospitality services in the aviation industry. They interview Academies of Loudoun students and choose the best candidates for a paid internship position working in the evenings and on weekends.

[02:46:40] The interns receive hands-on experience working with ProJet's exclusive clientele when they land at the Leesburg Executive Airport. This opportunity is a wonderful resume builder and provides students with real-world experience that extends beyond the classroom.

[02:46:57] It is my pleasure to bring Francis Gordon to the podium. Good evening. I'm Francis Gordon, and I've attended the Academies of Loudoun for three years. During my first year, I took Introduction to Health and Medical Sciences.

[02:47:14] I then began my current two-year pathway, radiology technology. I am also an intern at Projet Aviation. I first learned about Projet Aviation through the Academies of Loudoun when it was announced that there would be a presentation for aviation and aerospace opportunities.

[02:47:31] After attending the presentation, I was informed that Projet was interviewing students for an internship. I was interviewed, then selected for my current position as a client service representative. As a client service representative, I primarily assist pilots and companies with flight operations, such as ensuring passengers are greeted upon landing, the plane is fueled, and that the needs of the plane, pilot, and clientele are met. Working with Projet's team, I have gained knowledge about the many moving parts to the daily operations at an airport, as well as the different aspects of the business side to clientele relations. Projet has also helped me with my passions and

[02:48:09] aspirations. Flying has always been an interest of mine, however, I've been inspired to start flying lessons. After getting to know the industry, making personal connections with the pilots and crew and familiarizing myself with the common terminology in the airport, I am more confident with starting my flight training this summer. Furthermore, through Projet's Aviation Expo, I received a scholarship for the Unmanned Safety Institute, where I get to learn how to fly drones and learn how drone flying can be applied to different industries. Later this spring, I will receive my first remote pilot's license, after which I can focus on a more specialized field of study, like the use of drones for surveying construction sites or marking environmental

[02:48:48] changes. I wouldn't have had the opportunities or experiences I've had if it weren't for Project Aviation's visit to speak with the Academies of Loudoun in the fall. Through their efforts, I have been able to have a more hands-on experience learning about the aviation industry.

[02:49:04] Thank you for inviting me to speak today. Representatives from Project Aviation were not able to attend tonight, so I have stepped in and filled in on some of their parts. But according to Julie O'Brien, Project Aviation General Manager, our experience with the Academies of Loudoun has been phenomenal. Our very first scholarship winner was enrolled in the culinary arts pathway and now he is a captain for an airline. Over the years we've been able to award over 200,000 in scholarships to students from the academies and look forward to many more in the

[02:49:41] future. We also partner with the school's graphic communication class to design and develop our branding every year for the expo's poster and programs. Amazing talent and everyone wins. It has been an amazing partnership. I cannot wait to see what the future holds. Next slide. Here I believe we can see Francis up there at the Aviation Expo this year. Next slide. Next slide. Those are Julie's

[02:50:17] words. Next slide. A few other highlights. Here captured on the screen the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department comes to speak with students about careers in law enforcement. Virginia Tire and Auto partners with us to provide internship opportunities. Salamander Resort and Spa's executive chef, pastry chef, and market bistro chef do cooking demonstrations for our culinary arts students. Students present yearly in the ACL Maker Showcase. Man Tech, a business partner, is a subject matter expert every year during AET Engineering Week, as is TerraCon. We do

[02:50:54] internship site inspections at all of our locations, conducted by Ms. Robucci. And United Rentals, an ACL partner, comes to speak with students in the skilled trades about career opportunities. Thank you for your time tonight. Next slide. Thank you very much for the overview.

[02:51:17] It's always good to see you again, Dr. Pretty in tune. Board members, I'll open it up if you have any questions for the team or the students who are here with us today. Mr. Morris. I wondered how long it's going to take you to get your private pilot's license. It should take me, I plan on over the summer taking

around two to three courses a month, so it should take me around a year to get it if I keep on the pace with two to three quarters a month so is flying the drone

[02:51:53] helping you understand avionics as well to me it's a little bit different because with the plane you like you're actually like in control of a moving aircraft well when you're in a drone it's more like a video game Ms. Okedekpe thank you um Mr. Morse actually took my question but I just wanted to say that it's just really exciting to hear about the opportunity that you've had and this

[02:52:29] new interest that you hadn't really thought about. You were thinking about one path and this other path opened up. So it sounds very exciting and great to hear about it. So thank you for sharing. Thank you for your comment. Any additional questions? Thank you very much again for the overview and for spending some of your evening with us on a weeknight. Appreciate it. At this point, we're going to move to item nine on the agenda, which is student school board representatives

[02:53:05] comments. We're going to start tonight with Gustavo Torres, who is the representative from the North Star School. He is a high school senior currently attending the North Star School. In 2023, Gustavo was recognized for his leadership in the community through his work as the president of PAL Youth, the Prevention Alliance of Loudoun at Dominion High School, and as a member of REAL, Raising Education, Achievement, and Leadership. He serves as an equity ambassador representing the North Star School, and recently the Loudoun School Business Partnership Executive Council voted to award Gustavo the Student Innovator Award. His interests include playing chess and

[02:53:45] basketball and listening to music. Gustavo plans to attend trade school to study HVAC and related trades in hopes of owning his own business after high school. Good evening. I am Gustavo Torres, a highly motivated and accomplished individual with a passion for making a difference in the community. As the president of Prevention Alliance of Loudoun, I have dedicated myself to creating a safer and healthier environment for everyone.

[02:54:13] My leadership and organizational skills have helped to establish POW as a leading force in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse. Additionally, I am proud to be a member of RIO, where I work with other like-minded individuals to promote education and leadership development. Together, we try to create opportunities for people to reach their full potential and make a positive impact in their communities.

[02:54:34] Also, like he mentioned, I enjoy playing chess and challenging myself with this mentally stimulated game, whether it's in my personal or professional life. I believe in pushing boundaries and achieving excellence. The North Star School is special to me in many ways, but one of the things that stick out to me the most is how caring everyone is.

[02:54:54] I love how the teachers are all understanding. I know that sometimes we have off days and understand that we have things going on at home. And honestly speaking, if I were to continue on going to my main school, my grades would suffer. and I most likely wouldn't be as motivated to do work. Classes at North Star are much smaller, so they are less distracting, and teachers are actually able to spend time with students.

[02:55:15] If someone needs help, it doesn't understand something. The teachers are always there to help. For example, in one of my classes, the teacher doesn't just give us normal assignments. It gives us

assignments based on what we want to do when we're out of high school. An assignment that my classmates and I are currently working on is about our future.

[02:55:33] We have done so many things that involved what we want to do when we grow up, And we were taught necessary things, too, such as negotiating. This year at North Star, the faculty and staff have worked up very hard to continue to enhance the school community and school culture. The North Star Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS team, continues to spend countless hours preparing North Star students to be stars, which stands for service, trust, attitude, and respect.

[02:56:01] Students have been learning about these impactful ideas and how they can be carried out with real and authentic experiences outside of school. We learn in class discussions how we can serve others, trust others, and be trustworthy. We learn how we can have a great attitude and what respect looks like for ourselves, others, and the environment.

[02:56:19] Students are invited to participate with the PBIS team and provide input on our star focus. We are also reminded through messages and recognition on the morning announcements about how we can be stars and what star behavior looks like. Furthermore, each month, the North Star administration offers an open house-style event called the Star Symposium, where parents, students, and staff can meet to collaborate, share feedback, and build relationships.

[02:56:45] Over 40 students met the requirements for high school, the Alternative Education Program, and the ISAEP, which is a proud accomplishment of the North Star School. At the North Star School, we pledge to stand by the division-wide statement on equity and denounce inequitable practices.

[02:57:01] The North Star staff members continue to enhance a normal inclusive environment in which all students feel safe and included. The North Star equity team has taken an applied approach to equity. We know we must first identify the implicit biases we carry in order to provide equitable practices within our community and in our school division.

[02:57:23] The North Star will continue to celebrate a variety of holidays and acknowledge the accomplishments from a diverse perspective through morning announcements, informational videos, including a school-wide video project recognizing various traditions and celebrations of students during the winter break and in class discussions.

[02:57:41] Our teachers are working to improve their cultural responsiveness to instruction and to create safe, inclusive, challenging, and caring learning environment. I have enjoyed my time at the North Star School. I appreciate everything that everyone has done there for me. Thank you all. And our second school board representative tonight is Charlotte Farrell, who is the student school board representative for Riverside High School and is the Student Council Association president. Charlotte is passionate about politics and plans

[02:58:17] to study political science. In her free time, she volunteers at all the Virginia elections. She also runs a political and current event debate club at her school. Hello and good evening to all members of the school board. I'd like to first thank my principal, Mr. Anderson, the administration, school board, and my teachers for giving me the opportunity to speak here tonight. My name is Charlotte Farrell and I'm Riverside's school board representative and school student council president. I'm extremely fortunate to be able to represent a school that is so welcoming towards

[02:58:52] every person in it. Returning from COVID, our student council has worked tirelessly to bring student, teacher, and staff relationships back together again. We were able to hold all events and traditions as normal with no cancellations. This return to normalcy included dances, pep rallies, senior events, fundraisers, and so much more. Riverside students have brought countless new ideas, events, and achievements to our school this year as well. Our student council planned and executed our first ever winter dance entitled Frosty Formal. This was held at Riverside where we decorated the entire school to look like a winter wonderland. Our student council is also

[02:59:31] running an Earth Day thrift event. Students will be donating clothes that we put out on Earth Day and this will be a three-hour event where students and community members can come and browse through all the donated clothes. This is in an effort to promote the repurposing of clothing and all leftover items will be donated to Mobile Hope in Leesburg, Virginia. Riverside's DECA created an event called Powder Buff to raise money for a toy drive that goes to Sterling Elementary School.

[02:59:55] This was the first time that DECA had done this event and it was a huge success. Powder Buff is where boys create volleyball teams to play each other in a tournament. On the day of the event, each person paid \$1 for admittance into the game and DECA raised over \$2,000 from all student and teacher admittance. DECA has also raised over \$20,000 in total from all of their events such as Pink Week and the Gold Game. Finally, Student Council, Sources of Strength, and Peer all partnered together to create a student versus staff basketball game. Students were able to make a team with half underclassmen and half upperclassmen. The school then voted on their top team who would face off

[03:00:32] against the teachers. During school, all of the students, teachers, and staff came to watch the group of 10 teachers face off against the winning student team in a highly competitive basketball game. Riverside students are constantly pushing our academic standards. We have two students who are national merit finalists, Abby Martin and Krishna Jha. We also have multiple placements in the regional science fair. Matthew Iglesias plays first in the microbiology category and Alzina Amon and Nick Jones both received the aspiring scientist award. Riverside sports have also exceeded our expectations this year. Our senior class has over 30 students that have

[03:01:11] committed to play sports at a collegiate level. The girls and boys basketball teams both made it to regionals this year. Ella Mahaffey was named first team all region for girls basketball and And in swimming, H.T. Trago became the first swimmer on the Riverside team to qualify for states in every single event.

[03:01:29] In track, Sarah Floyd was named the VHSL 5A state runner-up in the mile, and girls field hockey made it to the regional semifinals. Our boys lacrosse team is competing to win its fourth consecutive state championship, and boys hockey made it to quarterfinals this year.

[03:01:44] Riverside boys basketball, boys lacrosse, boys tennis, and boys baseball coaches have all reached 100 victories at Riverside this year. Moving on to the upcoming events at Riverside, our junior class officers have planned our fantastic prom that takes place on May 20th.

[03:02:00] Senior class officers are busy planning our senior trip, shindig, commitment day, and numerous additional graduation events. Riverside's theater is performing their show, Into the Woods Junior, on April 15th. And lastly, our student council is leading an 8th grade expo where the rising freshmen will be able to experience a mini pep rally and a cheerleading routine.

[03:02:20] I'm so proud with how Riverside is thriving after COVID, and I'm honored I got to contribute as the president of our school. I'm confident that the future Riverside students will continue these successes and that our student council will continue to create new ideas and events constantly raising the bar. Thank you. Thank you to both of you for your comments tonight.

[03:02:44] We're now going to move to item 10 on the agenda, public comment. Thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment process. The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and community members and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system.

[03:03:01] Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Based on the number of speakers tonight, which is 55, and the agenda this evening, all speakers have been allotted one minute each for public comment. Please be advised that speakers who miss their time slot will not be called at a later time. All audience members shall maintain the civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times.

[03:03:23] Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting. Obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa.

[03:03:43] Interrupting speakers, attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair. And approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other meeting attendees. Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, profanity, or other like breaches of respect.

[03:04:02] Nor may speakers target, criticize, or attack individual students during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official. Additionally, complaints regarding division employees should be directed to a school principal or the appropriate school division official.

[03:04:20] Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board. Per LCPS policy, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period. Violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting.

[03:04:39] Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in, on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda, Limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons or the public comment period ending for the evening.

[03:04:59] Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom prior to the start of the meeting. Please provide 12 copies of materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through LCPS TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43.

[03:05:22] The live streaming of the meeting may be viewed on the LCPS TV website. So tonight, for the second Tuesday, we're going to begin with our in-person speakers. The first speaker is Suzanne Satterfield, to be followed by Brenda Bengston.

[03:05:54] Core values on the LCPS fact sheet, to no surprise, are not being met. Under holistic support, it states every student should have the support to feel safe, happy, and cared for at school. Yet female students do not feel safe with males in their bathrooms.

[03:06:12] Title IX reports keep increasing. Flynn Spage and Falcone are still employed, and drug use continues. Equity and opportunity, 10 speech pathologists were cut. 13 highly paid union jobs will be added. Trust through listening, public comment reduced to 60 seconds.

[03:06:29] The bogus equity superintendent search for meetings, and you're not really listening sessions where questions were restricted while you watched the clock. Thousands of teachers had no say in collective bargaining, but you had debt to pay to the teacher unions with your vote for their campaign donations.

[03:06:46] Closed meetings continued and independent reports still not released. Showing your true colors of lack of sincerity, we are 11 days into April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and it's only hitting your agenda this evening. Keep up the good work. Thank you. Brenda Bengston, to be followed by Sandy Sullivan.

[03:07:07] A cautionary tale. In 1959, the Society for Indecency to Naked Animals, SINA, was created. This fake organization duped more than 50,000 members and made headlines for four years.

[03:07:25] SINA suggested that naked animals were destroying the moral integrity of our nation, and the solution was to cover them up with pants and dresses for the sake of decency. Alan Abel, a.k.a. G. Clifford Prout, said, I had no interest in actually putting horses, excuse me, shorts on horses or moo-moos on cows.

[03:07:51] Sina was a satirical riff on censorship. It mocked the moral maniacs who were banning films, books, records, and plays during that time period. Stand for something or fall for everything. No hoax.

[03:08:07] Thank you. Sandy Sullivan, to be followed by Ann Donahue. Good evening. Many school board members are aware of LEA's concern of our inability to schedule school visits during the school day to meet with members and not yet members as they desire.

[03:08:29] At this time, other outside organizations were allowed and remain allowed to visit work sites during the workday. Our understanding is that is not available to LEA. LEA looks forward to a solid solution and clear communication about that to all stakeholders. On another concerning note, the potential 13% reduction in speech pathologist positions would task your educators with higher caseloads, many which are already beyond 50.

[03:08:56] Loudon students who need the services of speech-language pathologists cannot expect to have their educational needs met when your educators are required to manage overflowing caseloads. Your speech-language pathologists are already strained. Speech-language pathologist workloads encompass far more than meeting with the students and their caseloads.

[03:09:16] LEA urges you to reject the budget proposal to reduce the number of speech-language pathologists. Thank you. Anne Donahue to be followed by Carrie Kidwell. As of March of this year, there have been 377 school shootings in this country since Columbine, resulting in 199 deaths and 424 people injured, affecting hundreds of thousands of students.

[03:09:42] Most recently, we saw this in Tennessee in an assault that left six people dead, including three nine-year-old children. These incidents, unfortunately, have a disproportionate impact on children of color. Through 2017, this country saw an average of approximately 11 school shootings a year, which is already a horrifying statistic.

[03:10:02] But those numbers have increased sharply since 2018. In 2021, there were 42 school shootings in the United States. In 2022 there were 46 and these numbers only include shootings that occurred during school hours if you were to extend those parameters to look at any shootings that happen on a school on any school property at any time the number would be 303 there have already been 89 gun related incidents at a school this year resulting in 18 deaths and 56 injuries we can no longer see school shootings are rare and I urge you to be proactive thank you Kerry Kidwell to be followed

[03:10:37] by Kathy Ellen Davis. Last year, over 1,000 children and teens died from firearm suicides. 80% of these suicides involved a gun belonging to a family member. Only 4% of non-firearm suicide attempts end in death, while 90% of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal.

[03:11:04] Removing access is the easiest and quickest intervention to mitigate risk. We ask LCPS to actively educate our community by providing Be Smart materials focused on safe storage education and understanding the signs of suicide, increasing mental health care and resources, and updating your suicide prevention page on the LCPS safety and security website which currently has no information. A depressed 13-year-old shouldn't have access to a firearm to end their life. A six-year-old shouldn't access one to shoot their teacher. We implore you to use your platform to do your part to reduce the deaths and trauma that result when children gain access

[03:11:41] to unsecured firearms. Every adult in this room is responsible for protecting our kids, and we're all in this together. Thank you. Thank you. Kathy Ellen Davis to be followed by Guy Tessier. As we've noted, firearms are the leading cause of death among children in the U.S.

[03:12:01] Approximately 4.6 million children live in a household with at least one gun stored loaded and unlocked, resulting in unintentional shootings. As of today, there have been at least 68 unintentional shootings by children, resulting in 29 deaths and 40 injuries nationwide. Every incident is heartbreaking and preventable. Two that I noticed this year that were incidents where a child, after coming across an unlocked loaded gun, unintentionally killed a sibling. A 17-year-old unintentionally killed a 15-year-old. A 3-year-old unintentionally killed a 4-year-old. Unsecured guns are often stolen from cars. According to the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office firearm car

[03:12:40] theft data, four unsecured guns have been stolen this year. According to the U.S. Secret Service, addressing student access to guns is a critical component of any school-based threat assessment intervention plan. Secure storage means storing firearms locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition. Thank you. Thank you. Guy Tessier to be followed by Julia Holcomb. Thank you Dr. Smith and the LCPS administration for the safety and security webpage under lcps.org. I urge all school board members to check out the website if you haven't already. A few

[03:13:18] asks regarding this web page one please publicize its existence broadly a lot of effort has gone into its creation and the contents can greatly benefit parents but only if they know about it can reminder broadcasts and or flyers be sent out at the beginning of each school year and at winter break two make this web page a community project by being receptive to public input about its enhancement please elevate

and consolidate info about secure storage into its own folder and use resources from besmartforkids.org website. Be Smart for Kids is all about keeping kids and schools

[03:13:55] safe. Please update the webpage to reflect current events. I don't see any mention of the Newport News school shooting and how the lack of secure storage of a firearm resulted in a preventable tragedy at school, the mother being criminally charged, and the school district facing a huge lawsuit. Thank you. Thank you. Julia Holcomb to be followed by Elizabeth Boyko. Elizabeth Boyko to be Followed by Daniel Brubaker.

[03:14:27] Daniel Brubaker to be followed by Kristen Washington. The authority to hire, fire, set salaries, wages, working conditions, benefits, and school schedules in LCPS belongs to us, the citizens and taxpayers of Loudoun County.

[03:14:50] We exercise this power through you, the school board. That power is important to us. We deserve to have government and schools that work effectively and efficiently with high quality and good outcomes for low cost. It is why we go to the trouble of electing you in the first place. Government belongs to the people.

[03:15:06] But two weeks ago, four of you took our power and gave it to Sandy Sullivan and her big business, the Loudoun Education Association. Then, one week later, one week after this room was filled with pictures of red herrings as union shills accused us of lying about increased cost, you requested \$3.3 million for 13 new staff positions to handle collective bargaining.

[03:15:29] Why did you do it? You didn't have to give away our power. No law required it. For a year, we warned you it was unnecessary, it would lower outcomes and raise costs and replace teamwork with negativity. But you gave away the people's power to your friends and cronies and left us with this.

[03:15:44] Thank you. I hope people remember that in November. Kristen Washington, to be followed by Asli Nikioglu. Asli Nikioglu, to be followed by Burhan Nikioglu.

[03:16:02] Good evening. My son is an 11th grader at Loudoun County Public Schools. who happens to have long-diagnosed ADHD and anxiety on top of major depressive disorder.

[03:16:18] This is why I'm here this evening. Unfortunately, this past year, he has been subjected to bias, prejudice, and discrimination due to his mental health issues and has suffered real consequences as a result. He was robbed of opportunities and activities that were part of his coping mechanism for his condition for which he has an IEP in place.

[03:16:37] A significant part of his junior year has now been stolen away from him due to capricious, self-serving actions and decisions taken by the school administration with no empathy and care toward my son. He has been practically away since January 27, sinking deeper into depression and anxiety.

[03:16:53] Our interactions at various levels of LCPS has mostly been stonewalling and tone deafness. To our surprise, we received an anonymous support email about two weeks ago, probably from someone at LCPS who is familiar with the matter. They wrote that, and I quote, Many people agree with your concerns, and by no means should any child be removed from any project.

[03:17:12] Thank you. anyway, thank you. Okay. Sarah Anderson to be followed by Catherine Cody. Good evening. I am here on behalf of the Loudness Association of School Librarians to remind everyone that

April is School Library Month. Each year during April, schools and communities are encouraged to recognize and celebrate the contributions that school libraries and librarians make to their communities.

[03:17:43] There are several ways that you can celebrate. One, if you haven't yet had the opportunity to visit any of the school libraries in your district, this is the perfect opportunity to reach out and schedule a time to do so. Two, send a quick note of thanks to school librarians recognizing the dedicated work that they do every day in our schools. Three, continue to fully fund libraries and library programs so that library staff can continue to provide top quality instruction and programming addressing reading information literacy, creative and critical thinking skills, and community building. And four, continue to engage in dialogue with the librarians you represent to ensure that policy work concerning libraries is rooted in

[03:18:20] in the best practices and professional ethics of our field thank you for your continued support and happy school library month thank you Katherine Cody to be followed by Juan Pablo Segura what is the most visited location in the school it's not the main office counseling or even any one of the restrooms it's the school library last semester our library welcomed 17,996 student visitors we

[03:18:52] We also circulated 2,590 books, taught 158 classes across all departments, including science, business, and marketing, English, and learning resources. In addition, we ran a school-wide reading promotion program inspired by Monopoly, sponsored two book clubs, hosted monthly maker projects, led story time for preschool students, directed a school musical, coached, and built two 3D printers.

[03:19:15] All of this was in addition to managing our collection of books. April is School Libraries Month, and today I'd like to invite you all to celebrate by getting informed about what happens in a school library, scheduling a visit to come and see it for yourself, protecting school library budgets, and respecting our LCPS librarians' time and efforts as a crucial part of a successful school. Thank you.

[03:19:39] Thank you. Juan Pablo Segura, to be followed by Liz Bergstrom. We are all here, for some reason, demanding action. Some of us want, and most of us want, more safety in our schools, an increase in teacher pay, or a refocus on the ABCs and the 1-2-3s.

[03:20:05] All these positions and conversations are commendable and a beautiful example of the democratic process, but we are now living in a reality where we'd somehow grown accustomed to our leaders, our elected officials flat out lying to us without consequence.

[03:20:25] The biggest lie of which being the promise to release the independent review, which is why today I sued the Loudoun County School Board to release the independent review. Two rapes happened in our schools, and two years later, we do not know the details.

[03:20:41] We all deserve transparency and accountability from our elected officials, especially when they campaign on releasing the review. Thank you very much. Thank you. Liz Bergstrom, to be followed by Stacey Privman.

[03:20:58] Good evening. We are your Loudoun County Public Schools speech-language pathologists. We understand this is a difficult budget year, however, due to the miscalculations of EDOE. We don't understand why revenue-generating essential student-facing positions are not being fully funded in this proposed budget.

[03:21:19] Speech-language therapy is mandated by IDEA, and limiting the staff to provide these services exposes LCPS to compliance liability under the law. Your speech-language pathologist serves students with much more complex disabilities than ever before.

[03:21:36] If LCPS strives for excellence, it must be excellence for all students, including those with special, complex needs. This cannot be accomplished by cutting positions. Equity in our caseloads and workload compared to other professionals need to be addressed if LCPS hopes to retain and attract speech-language pathologists to fill the current vacancies.

[03:21:59] Please fund the additional SLP positions. Thank you. Stacey Privman to be followed by Beth Goff. The LCPS 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence states that our first goal is to prepare students to be knowledgeable, critical thinkers, communicators, collaborators, creators, and contributors.

[03:22:26] In addition, it proclaims that LCPS teachers, administrators, and staff are the most important factor in helping our students after their parents. Seeing that staff are esteemed, exemplary, supported, and accountable, and that is vital to student success.

[03:22:44] How can you ensure that students with communication disabilities are able to achieve your first goal if you do not reconsider the current staffing standards for speech language pathologists. These standards do not align with LCPS's plan for excellence as they continue to make increases to our caseload and add to the already overburdened workload of SLPs. We ask that you give everybody a voice.

[03:23:09] Actions speak louder than words and every student deserves to reach their full potential. Thank you. Thank you. Beth Goff to be followed by Cara Vesey. We believe that together as one LCPS, our families, staff, division, and community can ensure that all students are able to pursue and achieve their full potential.

[03:23:37] If this is a true statement, then you must reconsider the staffing standards for the speech language pathology positions in the school year 23-24. In decreasing the number of SLPs, you are decreasing the quality and appropriateness of service our students require in order to pursue and achieve their full potential.

[03:23:56] So we must choose who will not receive the best quality services because SLPs are spread too thin. Something has to give when there are fewer SLPs in our district, when there should be more. What is your choice? Please put these positions back into the budget.

[03:24:15] Thank you. Cara Vessi to be followed by Monica Lumba. The board announced a proclamation designated April as Autism Acceptance Month. Thank you all. It is reported that there is 1,925 students with autism.

[03:24:35] it mentions the five C's it noted that LCPS supports these efforts and will continue to provide support and training to students staff and their families if 10 SLP positions are eliminated I don't know how LCPS plans on accomplishing this since SLP is provide the majority of training to the staff and families related service providers generate 450 to 650,000 annually to LCPS from Medicaid billing how is this money not used to support us again we are not overstaffed we are understaffed as a few months ago SLP's covered two thousand

[03:25:11] seven hundred and thirty-five students there are still 249 students in the eligibility process as of this afternoon I have 60 kids on my caseload by the end of the year 65 no one's coming to support me as I

am over the LCPS staffing standard thank you Monica Lumba to be followed by Peter Livingston Evening school board members, I urge the school board to advocate for critical resources for students with communication disabilities.

[03:25:45] Speech and language services empower students to self-advocate and communicate their thoughts and feelings, an essential life skill. According to CDC, one out of five children experience a mental health disorder in a given year. These issues also concern our students who already have complex needs and communication deficits.

[03:26:04] There is a strong correlation between communication skill development and positive outcomes in promoting mental health. SLPs provide highly specialized services to our students by facilitating communication options and social cognition that builds a platform for good mental health.

[03:26:22] This is not a time to reduce funding for this student-facing essential service. In fact, LCPS should be at the forefront by realizing this emerging needs of our special need students and revise the staffing standards I firmly believe the school board will support increasing the SLP positions thank you thank you Peter Livingston to be followed by Sherry Holdridge so you're all now under investigation by the Biden administration I'm curious Ian will you go ahead and release a statement now about how pleased you are will you wait

[03:26:59] till they're done investigating it Tuesday we call the Biden administration far right-wing MAGA Republicans as much as it pains me to say this why on earth are any of you up here except for Tiffany none of you should be making policy decisions while under investigation by the federal government sorry erica but even the Biden administration doesn't agree with your vote to abandon your campaign promises and hide the truth even though you i don't believe any of you should be making any decisions for the future of lcps i see Denise plans to push even more money into virtual lcps i'm curious why you discontinued the funding the gap on our title one eligible schools which are predominantly economically disadvantaged yet you want to blow millions on 231 or 230

[03:27:37] overwhelmingly wealthy, able-bodied, non-IEP, nearly entirely English-speaking virtual louding kids when the state of Virginia offers free virtual public education. I'm sorry, but these are not liberal values, conservative values, or American values. It's just more elitism from the soon-to-be federally indicted school board. Thank you. Sherry Holdridge to be followed by Liz Crotty.

[03:28:01] Good evening. You've heard my colleagues speak about LCPS Plan for Excellence and the vision for all students. My heart is breaking because we work for the children. This will not happen.

[03:28:18] They will not achieve their dreams if you don't continue to fund these positions. The planned mission is empowering all students to make meaningful contributions to the world. Do you mean all? Your first goal is preparing students with the five C's to be communicators. This won't happen.

[03:28:37] Your second goal is cultivating high-performing teams of professionals. That won't happen. Cutting these SLP positions will cause low quality performance by the staff members. That kills us. It will prevent students from being successful communicators. That breaks our hearts. This is not best practice. Please use the revenue that we bring in to fund our SLP positions so that we can continue to do the best for our students. Thank you. Liz Crotty to be followed by Rebecca Cook.

[03:29:13] I am here tonight to speak in support of our SLPs. I am a parent of three children with IEPs. I want to share with you one example of the kinds of things that our SLPs do. Our SLP wrote up a business

proposal to allow her to operate a snack cart to be used for learning purposes for our elementary school's autism program.

[03:29:35] Our SLP uses her planning period each week to take the students around the school to visit staff so that they can work on their communication, math, and other functional skills while selling snacks. This activity provides so many rich opportunities for learning that are engaging and fun for our students and that lead to growth.

[03:29:53] Our SLPs, OTs, and PTs are highly trained, knowledgeable professionals who are capable of adding great value, but that is only possible if they aren't being given high caseloads that don't consider the intensity and needs of the students. I am asking you to please restore the related service positions and to fully fund the needs of our students with disabilities.

[03:30:13] I love our strategic plan vision statement every student will reach their full potential and achieve their dreams thank you thank you Rebecca Cook to be followed by Michael McCabe I'm a mom of a second grader with autism and speech delays LCPS found him eligible for an IEP under autism and other health impairments but unbelievably he was denied speech services to the bewilderment of his developmental pediatrician and speech therapist this

[03:30:47] started a two-year-long battle with LCPS. We had to hire an advocate. LCPS paid for an independent education evaluation. The results proved he had significant delays and the school finally agreed to give him services. The entire process was expensive and unnecessary for us as well as for LCPS. Countless days over the two-year span of staff time were wasted debating our single case. If you are making budget cuts, look into stopping the culture of roadblocking special services for special needs kids. Cutting the SLPs is not the right answer. This will only create an issue with even more children falling through the cracks. Our family is fortunate to have the

[03:31:27] resources to fight for our child's needs. There are far too many who are not as lucky. By cutting these positions, you're shifting the burden of budget cuts to kids who need the support the most. Thank you. Michael McCabe to be followed by Scott Smith. Members of the school board, my name is Mike McCabe and I live in Sugar Land Run and I'm confused. I was under the impression that the

[03:32:02] school board considered the Loudoun Education Association to be a valued advisor. The LEA provides one vehicle for teachers to bring their concerns to the board and reports that it has influenced board decisions. What I'm confused about is the board's plan to voluntarily change its relationship with the LEA from decision maker and valued advisor to co-decision makers with veto authority. Why make the change? Why spend over \$3 million to change this relationship? Board

[03:32:39] members who plan to vote to approve this new arrangement have been declared pawns of the union. The board could easily put such criticisms to rest with a clear, comprehensive statement explaining why the board sees a need to spend over \$3 million to change its relationship with the union. Thank you. Thank you. Scott Smith to be followed by Alicia Brand.

[03:33:13] Hi, everyone. I'm here with some good news. My daughter, a week ago, she passed her GED, and she's out of this school system an entire year early. We had to do that because you guys could not keep her safe. To this day, vicious bullying happens daily. It crushes her, and it comes from kids within this school.

[03:33:42] You guys talk about wanting to help children and protect children. I suggest you start with our bullying problem. It's real, it's bad, and it's destroying my family. I also want to leave you guys with this. There's a lot of court dates coming this summer, starting with the one last week. I think the report will be coming. Now we have the United States investigation. I have little faith in that investigation, though. I don't believe that investigation will be good at all.

[03:34:16] I think it will be a whitewash. Thank you. Thank you. Alicia Brand to be followed by Julie Witkowski. Ms. Ogedebi will propose April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

[03:34:36] It is disappointing that she is the one making this proclamation. While raising awareness about sexual assault is crucial, her motives are performative and deceptive. She ran on a platform of transparency and voting to release the independent report, yet she voted against it.

[03:34:57] In doing so, she turned her back on every victim, betraying the trust of her constituents. Her lack of response to recent emails seeking help on serious hate issues is another sign that she prioritizes her own self-interest over the welfare of students.

[03:35:15] It is wrong that she is the one carrying the torch for a cause that demands sincerity and authenticity. As a community, we must not let performative actions replace true advocacy and accountability.

[03:35:32] We must hold Erica Ogadegbe accountable to her campaign promises. Julie Witkowski, to be followed by Jeremy Wright. In addition to many common challenges to other educators, speech-language pathologists do not get substitutes, but we are expected to meet student service times and to meet deadlines even when we're not at work.

[03:36:01] In addition to my many responsibilities, I have attended 137 hours of meetings this year that I know of. That's almost 20 workdays of indirect student time. Of those hours, I have attended 15 hours of meetings, or over two workdays, while sitting in a hospital with ill family members, dealing with my own illnesses, and even while taking a break in between funerals.

[03:36:26] I was thanked, but I was not paid for those 15 hours. Had I not asked and been granted the ability to attend these meetings virtually, I would have had to cancel more therapy to attend more meetings upon my return to work. We are spread much too thin.

[03:36:43] We cannot afford to lose positions. In fact, we need more positions. Thank you. Thank you. Jeremy Wright, to be followed by Casey Heung. It's time to drop the charade regarding collective bargaining.

[03:37:04] This is a majority Democrat board, and a large portion of LEA dues are given to Democrat campaigns. If you follow the money, the funding is circular. I know the board likes to act as if they're opposed to collective bargaining, but many of you and your political views are suspiciously aligned with each other.

[03:37:22] As a member, the LEA did nothing for me when I opposed vaccine requirements or involuntary masking policies from the school board. You have been in lockstep with each other on those and many other issues. Collective bargaining takes the choice away from employees to decide whether they want to be represented by the union or not.

[03:37:41] It is the school board's responsibility to consider employees who choose not to be members of a corrupt bureaucratic organization. The signature verifications were never released to anyone other than a third-party organization. So how can anyone trust that the LEA has the required majority from the pool of employees in the county?

[03:37:59] How can we trust that the school board did their job in making sure those verifications were legitimate? Thank you. Casey Heung, to be followed by Sharon Trump. Hi, I am here to advocate for the board to reinstate funding for the essential speech-language pathology positions that were cut in the proposed fiscal year 24 budget plan.

[03:38:24] I would also like to invite and encourage board members to come and shadow an SLP in a school for a day to gain understanding of what a day as a school-based SLP looks like. I ask again for you to please fully fund the SLP positions.

[03:38:42] Thank you. Sharon Trofe, to be followed by Abby Platt. Good evening, Chair Sorokin, school board members and staff.

[03:39:00] My name is Sharon Trofe, and I am the current Special Education Advisory Committee Chair. On March 14th, I presented the SEAC quarterly report to the school board, sharing our grave concerns with cutting teaching and related service provider positions and requested that the school board reconsider its position during reconciliation.

[03:39:20] Since that time, I have received numerous supportive communications from the Loudoun Education Association, school administrators, teachers, related service providers, and teaching assistants, all thanking me for an open and honest report of the current situation impacting our students.

[03:39:39] While special education staffing may not have fallen below the VDOE minimum required staffing, LCPS is not staffing to the robust staffing standard advertised. On behalf of the special education community, I again request that the school board approve funds during reconciliation to staff the LCPS staffing standard.

[03:40:01] Thank you. Abby Platt to be followed by Carrie Michonne. I see on the news that anyone unhappy with LCPS must be part of a loud minority.

[03:40:21] Part of a conservative group that wants to destroy public education. But you are the ones that hired the former head of the Virginia Democratic Party as your legislative liaison, paying his firm \$75,000 this year.

[03:40:38] What would happen if you paid Ian Pryor \$75,000 to be a legislative liaison? I'm thinking that would be a pretty big story. But how is hiring a Democratic strategist to push your agenda in our schools and in Richmond any different?

[03:40:55] You're hypocrites, you're liars, and your policies are harmful. You should resign and take your dirty politics with you. Thank you. Carrie Michonne should be followed by Laura Sibley. To all the teachers in LCPS, collective bargaining will apply to you regardless of your membership in LEA, so learn what that means.

[03:41:22] For starters, it means the 10 speech-language pathologists that are slated to lose their jobs, Well, 13 admin staff will get six-figure salaries in the new collective bargaining unit, including the LEA president, who gets a \$100,000 raise.

[03:41:39] I don't see reading specialists being added. I don't see additional speech therapists being added that are so desperately needed. But we're going to fund union costs? Are you kidding me? For crying out loud, teacher's got a challenge coin. Parkview's falling apart.

[03:41:55] It looks like equity is alive and well in LCPS. Oh, and teachers, collective bargaining means that LEA will represent you with any work dispute, but only if they choose to. They get to choose. And it means ineffective and incompetent teachers are protected from dismissal, and it goes on and on.

[03:42:14] And taxes, the taxes, and we have \$8 eggs. Come on, people. Thank you. Laura Sibley to be followed by Brian Davison. This is my 26th year as a speech-language pathologist and my 18th year in Loudoun County, And I'm a parent of a Loudoun County student and a graduate.

[03:42:39] And I love my career. I really do love my career. My job is really, really hard, though, the day-to-day job. And I just, when we found out in March that they were cutting positions, or that's what we were told, that they were cutting positions, and that just made me think I need to speak up and tell people more about what our job is on a day-to-day basis.

[03:42:58] And I just wanted to make sure that everyone knew that we see students for therapy, we evaluate students, We attend countless hours of meetings that while we're at the meetings, we have to make up therapy that we missed. We do lots of paperwork. We bill Medicaid that brings in revenue for LCPS that we do not see.

[03:43:16] It doesn't come back to us at all. And I just wanted to point out that any reduction in SLP positions, as well as not having subs, and honestly, the limited respect that we get, it's frustrating, and we need more, not less SLPs.

[03:43:33] Thank you. Brian Davison to be followed by Brandon Michon. So one of the earlier speakers mentioned Judge Fisher considering releasing the Blankenship sexual assault report.

[03:43:54] Now, obviously, a lot of y'all are very worried about that, but your attorney, Falcone, is really terrified over here. Because you see, if he lets y'all testify under oath to a lie that he knew was false from the Blankenship report, he can be disbarred. Remember that.

[03:44:12] Now, there's a U.S. Department of Education investigation going on. Batusa, is that a witch hunt by politicians? Batusa, can you look at me when I'm speaking? Do you have any respect whatsoever? Speaking of lying, Daniel Smith said during the public transparency meeting that you had no idea what my FOIA request was, even though it was a topic for consideration for a closed meeting, including tonight.

[03:44:39] Is a requirement for your new superintendent to be a congenital liar, just like all of y'all are? I think we would prefer you cancel that requirement from the job statement, Ian. Thank you. Brandon Michonne, to be followed by Jessica Smith.

[03:45:01] \$500. \$500 is all it takes. \$500 is all it takes to buy votes here. \$500. If I knew it was that easy, I would have donated \$500 a while back so we could have got back in school sooner.

[03:45:18] Altuza, you promised or proposed the vote for collective bargaining. Yet, my guess is what you care most about is your next stepping stone politically and what campaign contributions could possibly come from a union alliance. Ian, from what I hear, you're not planning on running again. Why not burn the city down as you pass through?

[03:45:35] What's the cost of you? A few thousand dollars? Erica, you promised to release an independent review. Then, voted not to. So, you've shown that our best interest is not your best interest. \$500 is all it takes for this school board.

[03:45:52] It's been never about the teachers. You hear them tonight. It's not about the teachers. It's always about you guys. \$500. That's all it takes. Thank you. Thank you. Jessica Smith to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf.

[03:46:21] Tonight, April 11th, 2023, will be the first time ever that Loudoun County Public Schools will take a vote to proclaim April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

[03:46:37] Loudoun County Public Schools is proclaiming that now, now is the time to take action as leaders in our community to create safety for children, youth, faculty, staff, and families in Loudoun County Public Schools.

[03:46:54] Whereas a community, we share the responsibility for raising awareness about sexual violence, protecting each other from sexual violence, supporting victims when it does occur. and bringing perpetrators to justice.

[03:47:13] This proclamation should pass unanimously in hopes you all enact the words of which you proclaim. Thank you. Andrea Weiskopf is our final in-person speaker tonight.

[03:47:39] In Luke 16, the words in red tell us that we can serve one master, God or mammon. A school board member decided that educators can only serve one master.

[03:47:56] the school board, or the union. And that is why I need the Loudoun Education Association. To our students who are receiving special education services, to our students in general education, to our students who receive free or reduced lunch, to our students who don't see themselves reflected in their teachers or in our material, to our students who suffer from anxiety, to our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer students.

[03:48:34] All of you belong here. Don't forget that. Black lives matter. - Thank you. We'll now move to our virtual speakers. We have 16 signed up. And the first speaker is Scott Pacula.

[03:49:08] - I'm here. One third of the speakers have expressed their support and interest in keeping virtual distance elementary available.

[03:49:24] The reasons cited by various community have been a focus on academic success, safety, and also of students that have experienced medical concerns. It is important to note that we have not been able to identify any suitable alternatives for families which need virtual distance elementary.

[03:49:47] And given the overwhelming public support and the clear importance of this program, I urge you to consider continuing virtual distance elementary in perpetuity. Thank you. - Thank you. Ki Pan.

[03:50:07] - Loudon Distance Learning Elementary. It is the only equitable program that provides synchronous learning that is on par with in-person instruction for families that need it. It also provides a safe and secure learning environment for kids.

[03:50:23] There is no bullying. Our children are doing exceptionally well in this program. They have been able to focus on their studies and avoid in-person conflicts. They have, we have seen huge improvements in our children's report cards.

[03:50:56] Thank you. Thank you. Meredith Ray. I see a caller by that name. Renee Champaglia. Learning program, and I'm asking you to continue to fund the program for kindergarten through fifth grade.

[03:51:18] Our 100% synchronous program is meeting the needs of students that don't attend school in person for a variety of reasons. Many of my students are fully able to participate with instruction and interact with their teachers and peers in a less restrictive environment than they would if they attended school in person.

[03:51:34] Virtual learning is a vital alternative learning option for some LCPS students. We use engagement and personalized instruction to create an innovative safe and welcoming learning environment that gives students the confidence to attend school and to advance their learning. Our students are healthy safe supported engaged and academically challenged.

[03:51:54] Nearby districts in Alexandria Prince William and Frederick County Maryland are continuing to fund their online learning for elementary students. LCPS has a model program that should continue as well. Please fund the elementary grades for next year. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:52:10] Ruth Kiefer. For our school division to keep it in place by combining the elementary and secondary sections into one K-12 program, the needs of its students socially, emotionally, and academically.

[03:52:42] Why send students away to programs that are not remote as our innovative program and lengthen the registration time frame for entries.

[03:52:58] We should not be turning away any students who can benefit from what we have to offer them with our methods of safe, equitable, and high-quality instruction. All students deserve this option. K-12. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:53:15] Kurtana Rahmani. Do not have a caller by that name. Tim McClintock. So far, the only reason I have heard that this program must be closed was because of the high cost per student.

[03:53:31] I agree. \$3.4 million for only 88 students is very high. But closing this program without considering the cause of the high cost would be doing a disservice to the children's serves. From the public meetings I have observed, it appears that there was no survey to judge the amount of interest, nor was it broadly advertised when it became available.

[03:53:49] And then teachers and staff were hired to cover what was essentially a guess of about 250 plus students. There is no reason for this program to cost so much per student, especially when you consider that the previous year it actually cost less per student than most other options. i'm asking you to please not take away what has been discovered to be an essential service for these kids because of mistakes made outside of their control thank you thank you the same she advocates and knows needs are different my mother-in-law has left behind a legacy of love

[03:54:26] bullied children and kids who learn better virtually parents emailed success stories but you haven't emailed us back our medically fragile child is learning in a safe environment have you ever held a dying child in your arms? I have, and so have many parents in this program. Why should a

[03:55:05] child with health issues be sent to homebound? Many families district-wide need this option. Some school board members and teachers are in IT. Will you allow a successful elementary school program to succeed or fail? What will be your legacy? Thank you. Sarah Freeman. I am here in support of

Virtual Distance Learning Elementary. Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with the Superintendent Dr. Smith. During our conversation, he reminds that the majority of children do better with in-person school.

[03:55:44] If this line of thought is why he has not yet supported funding VDLE, then it is the missing that the majority of children are not all. And LCPS's duty is to provide free appropriate and public education to all children. There is a valid population that materially benefits from a virtual education, and this program has not been advertised properly.

[03:56:01] LCPS supports many programs that benefit them until they give to children. These are all wonderful and beneficial programs, as does VDLE. VDLE also benefits a segment of the population whose health...

[03:56:18] ...have listed as LF.

[03:57:00] LF. Okay, we'll move to the next speaker, Jani Cho. ...is equitable and free, appropriate public education, which is an important part of the Individuals with Disability Act.

[03:57:29] Students need their federally protected rights supported. The virtual learning teachers have been an awesome, dedicated, and passionate about my children's success. My children has been protected from bullying classmates' incidents. My older, K-12 program, thank you.

[03:57:59] Thank you. Betty O. He, like others in the program, contends with significant health issues.

[03:58:18] This free and appropriate educational program is vital to their continued education. Not only does the virtual distance learning elementary program benefit this segment of the student population, there's also a valuable benefit to those elementary students whose own good health allows them to attend in-school classes without fear of contracting a serious illness from their classmates.

[03:58:37] Children with fragile health are also easy targets for bullying, which my grandson has personally experienced. The VDLE program is a win-win. Thank you for the opportunity to voice support for Loudoun County's Virtual Distance Learning Elementary. Thank you.

[03:58:54] Heather Hughes. We have come to you every board meeting asking you to come and see the school, see the children interacting with each other, to see how amazing these teachers are. We have asked for a survey and there never was one these children are in virtual for a reason whether that's medical being bullied or just learn better online.

[03:59:14] You say that virtual was only covered under covid funds for the last two years but have you stopped to think about these children in the school that you're taking away from them. They are safe and learning the virtual teachers work all day long helping these children learn. What are you going to do to help these children feel safe when you send them back into the building.

[03:59:32] These children deserve a safe and equitable education.

[03:59:47] It's not equal. These children deserve the best, just like all the rest of the children that are in the building. Please keep virtual elementary. Thank you. I'm speaking tonight in support of funding virtual learning as a K-12 program next year.

[04:00:06] Students in our elementary program represent a diverse population of learners who thrive together in an innovative online learning environment. These students work in partners and in groups,

collaborating to work on projects, all while receiving the differentiated instruction they each deserve.

[04:00:26] Unlike other online programs you've heard about tonight or homebound instruction, this program meets the full needs of students with 504 plans and IEPs while providing a full day of rigorous, differentiated instruction with many opportunities for social engagement.

[04:00:43] You will continue to hear from families and educators who have seen success in and believe in our program, all asking you as our school board to streamline virtual learning next year to serve as a K-12 program. Make the equitable decision by funding virtual learning K-12.

[04:01:00] Thank you. Thank you. Valerie Smith. Virtual distance learning elementary school program is a necessity for the vulnerable children and the families it serves in the most life-impacting ways. The children who attend this school and their families have been notified that the elementary school program is being discontinued.

[04:01:21] I'm asking this for that you please personally speak to these children and their families.

[04:01:25] Why don't you ask a child that attends a distance learning elementary, or they might say that they are able to go to school and take their many medications that have serious side effects multiple times throughout the day and use their complex school because it truly means the world to the students, and they deserve an equitable education in a way that is safe for them.

[04:02:08] Thank you, and please change your mind. Thank you. And the final virtual speaker is Benjamin Smith. Okay, that will conclude public comment for this evening.

[04:02:29] With that, we'll move to item 11, the acting superintendent's report. Dr. Smith. Good evening, Chair Sorokin, board members. Tonight, I'm pleased to share with you some of the exceptional things taking place around our school division, along with a few operational updates. Just one second.

[04:02:45] We're going to get the slides up. All right. There we go. All right. Just before spring break, we hosted the second community listening session at Trailside Middle School.

[04:03:02] Harris Mehedovy and I engaged with about 40 communities in Sorokin of the Blue Ridge District.

[04:03:23] The Loudoun County High School Band and Color Guard performed at Monday's Easter Egg Roll at the White House.

[04:03:36] LCPS has earned the 2023 Energy Star Partner of the Year Award for the Sustained Excellence from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy for the 12th consecutive year. LCPS is one of 74 organizations nationwide to receive this award for energy management and the only school system with more than 10 years as a sustained excellence partner.

[04:03:58] Key LCPS accomplishments that contributed to the award include LCPS added energy conservation and efficiency measures to 28 of its buildings. These measures and ongoing conservation efforts across the division helped to achieve \$7.2 million in utility cost avoidance in 2022.

[04:04:17] LCPS received top honors in the 2022 Energy Star Decarbonize Your Design Challenge for exemplifying excellence in energy efficiency and CO2 reduction through the design of two LCPS elementary schools, Hovatter and Elaney Thompson Elementary.

[04:04:34] In addition to this award, 26 LCPS schools received Energy Star Building certifications excellence. More than 300 LCPS high school students participated in the 41st annual fair on March 22nd and 23rd at Rockridge High School.

[04:05:02] Five students, Aria Aguagual, Samantha Brown, Zoe DeWitt, Jagadipram Madpitil, and Tyler Smith, will advance to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, which is the world's largest STEM competition.

[04:05:20] The International Science and Engineering Fair will be held in Dallas on May 14th through the 19th. Congratulations to all students who participate in the science fair, and good luck to the five who are advancing to the international competition. The hallways leading to the Rolling Ridge's art and music classrooms have bloomed into an enchanted forest filled with representations of wildlife, flowers, and trees, thanks to the work of Rolling Ridge art teacher and artist Olivia Sanchez.

[04:05:48] Sanchez began creating the murals in 2021 and was supported by current and former Rolling Ridge students. Students from Parkview, Broad Run, and Potomac Falls spent countless hours priming and painting with each student, also collaborating with great ideas and unique artistic skills.

[04:06:08] Congrats to the Eagle Ridge Chess Team, who were named the 2023 Virginia State K-8 champions. The competition occurred at the end of March in Norfolk, with the team taking home some significant trophies. Leesburg Elementary hosted Reading Under the Stars, celebrating a night of literacy.

[04:06:27] The evening featured reading sessions led by Leesburg Elementary, where teams had to build a robot and program it to compete against other teams in 90-second matches.

[04:06:57] Four Stonehill teams are advancing to the World VEX Robotics Competition Championship in April in Dallas. Team Patilles won the title of state champions. Incidentally, this is the fourth year in a row that a Stonehill team has won the state championship. Team Corvex won as tournament finalists, and teams Electric Emperors and Spoonerbots both finished the tournament as semifinalists.

[04:07:21] All the teams are coached and mentored by Stone Hills robotics teacher William Kaler. Congratulations to these teams and good luck in Dallas. Jordan Miller, a 2018 graduate of Loudoun Valley High, was cheered on by his former elementary and middle school students as his basketball team, the University of Miami Hurricanes advanced to the Final Four on Saturday, April 1st.

[04:07:41] Although the fifth-ranked Hurricanes lost to the fourth-ranked Connecticut Huskies, Jordan remains a star at his LCPS schools. And now for a few operational updates. At the last school board meeting, I shared a report that our students are engaging in sports and activities in record numbers.

[04:07:59] Tonight, I want to bring you a special update about our unified sports participants.

[04:08:17] Playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. These unified sports teams include sports like basketball, track, soccer, and more. We're thrilled that these student athletes come together and play in each other's high school programs as well as play games against neighboring divisions we highlighted their story in this video which I'll play for you this video was released on March 23rd on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and in one day or only received a record number of 1774 video views and by comparison the average number of video views for a one-day post is about 500 so we'll take a moment and see

[04:08:51] We share this video go the whole way all right I'm gonna bend it down for you okay all right

[04:09:25] here I'm gonna bend it down for you okay don't shoot yet not yet not yet in Virginia Prince William Fairfax Loudoun any school that was wanting to come had a chance and not have games

[04:10:00] in the main gym the auction we have people from our program coming out to cheer we have people making posters so we're hoping that people from other schools will turn out to cheer on too but I think the biggest thing is just to see the game play and everybody getting that experience on the court what I really think kids learn from being a part of unified sports is the opportunity to get to know other kids that they might not have ever experienced before and just to find out that everyone's pretty much the same no matter you know what sports are into what kind of disabilities, what kind of abilities they have.

[04:10:39] But everyone's the same, and they get to know that in unified sports. Yeah, they're actually unique, too. You know, each person is different and unique, but in the same thing, they're still going for a complete goal of, like, you know, playing a basketball game and actually shooting a basketball, you know, into the basketball hoop.

[04:10:57] For a unified team, we have student-athletes.

[04:11:20] Never leave a practice or a game or any event we're doing without smiling. It really changes my whole day by concept. Instead of having Special Olympics teams with only Special Olympic athletes, someone had the great idea of bringing in their peers and putting them on the same team and also seeing their parents happy about that, too.

[04:11:46] They haven't been to a gym and watched their kids play with a crowd. They haven't been to a practice and be proud of their kid. So come join if you're 9th, 10th, or 11th grade. Come join Unified Sports. You love it. What a great event and opportunity for our students and our community.

[04:12:10] So thanks for the opportunity to share that video. Go the whole way. All right. Chronic absenteeism. Next topic. Chronic absenteeism continues to be an area of concern since we've returned from the pandemic. For the past two years, the State Board of Education has adopted special provisions to exclude or suspend the use of chronic absenteeism in the accreditation calculations.

[04:12:30] Last month, the information of accreditation status for 23-24. As you can see on this slide, this is an issue that impacts schools and divisions across the Commonwealth as most regions are experiencing high levels of absenteeism. During the state board meeting, several board of education members expressed concern with suspending the use of chronic absenteeism data for the 23-24 accreditation status. The board of ed is scheduled to vote on this proposal during the business section of the April 20th meeting. Going a little bit deeper into

[04:13:09] this around chronic absenteeism, I want to share a few more details and what we're doing here in LCPS. Chronic absenteeism is one of the nine indicators in the Virginia school accreditation model and chronically absent students are defined as those who are absent 10% or more of their enrolled school days. So that essentially means 18 or more days in 180 school year. So we can go to the next slide there. Thank you. Prior to the revision of the chronic absenteeism accreditation

[04:13:44] levels. In 21-22, LCPS had five schools identified as level two and one school identified as level three. And this previous model was based on a three-year attendance average, which is similar to how we calculate. The chronic absenteeism accreditation model does not allow for a three-year average and is solely based on data from the previous year. And by this, we did at level two and one as level three in 21-22. This graph also shows the number of schools at each level for this

[04:14:20] school year as determined by the revised models guidance, which again is based on data from the previous year. Currently for this school year, LCPS would have 67 schools at level two and nine at level three. And to further explain what the levels indicate, schools in level two require a division level plan and schools in level three require a corrective action plan overseen by the Virginia Department of Education. LCPS is prepared to support any school identified at levels two and and we are already working with many in all of our schools that we've identified that may be at risk and we want to share that each of them are prepared to support students and equipped to address this issue.

[04:14:59] And last on chronic absenteeism, I want to share that we've established a work group this winter to provide a summary of the support being provided to students who are chronically absent and really identify the short and long-term strategies that we're using to address increasing needs of our chronically absent students.

[04:15:16] Some current strategies in place include regular monitoring of absenteeism data and providing extra support to families that are challenged and that provides free academic coaching and tutoring support. Another short-term strategy is includes a review of policy and regulation 8140 around student attendance requirements and procedures and summer check-ins for students who would benefit from staying connected to school. Examine the role of attendance officers and take a look at the results from the

[04:15:52] non-traditional school program work group. Staff from the Department of Student Services will present more information on chronic absenteeism at the student services committee on April 20th and the school board later in April and early May finally we've also made progress on revising the policies that help address student safety communications and technology among the many policies being revised this school year these seven were identified died late last year for updates by the school board as a part of the recommendations from the special grand jury the board agreed on a moderately expedited process for these policies which led with an

[04:16:29] extended public feedback period these items are now in the final stages of the committee review or coming back to the school board for more information and then action thank you and that concludes my report thank you for the report mr. research did you have a question regarding the report I do since we had an operational update I just wondered if I could dr. Smith you mentioned bringing back some reports on chronic app and absenteeism so I thought might be a good time to ask you when you bring that to the committee or back to the school board could we get some information on i don't know how easy it would be to compile but a lot of

[04:17:07] students especially in my district and i would imagine in in the entire school district travel for extended periods of time and i remember having it was more pre the pandemic parents coming to me because they had situations where they're taking very long trips often to to asia to either or Europe like one example was Germany and it was longer than the number of days that a child can miss school without being disenrolled and they were at a school where it was there was a large population I'm not sure that it was

[04:17:46] overpopulated but there was a chance that they wouldn't be able to go back to their own school once they returned and I'm just wondering how much that is an issue in the division and whether those numbers are considered as part of the chronic absenteeism numbers. And also, I was interested in knowing the revised standards that you're talking about. That's not been adopted yet. That's what's being,

was there any rationale given for why we're going from three to one year? So thanks for the comments and questions. I don't

[04:18:22] know that I know the rationale for the change. I know the Virginia Department of Education did recommend the suspension of that rating again for the upcoming year, but it did not seem that most board members were on board with that, but I don't know the exact rationale for that. I will share that, to your point, it is, when we talk about students that are chronically absent, it is excused and unexcused. It's all absences. So even if we excuse a child to go to another country to see family, if a student is out for an extended absence for whatever reason, regardless if it's

[04:18:57] excused or unexcused, it still counts under that total to be chronically absent. So we'll look at that data i don't think we have that because we don't have a specific code for when students leave the country or go visit family we don't get that specific it's usually just excused or unexcused we do have to if someone if a student is absent for 15 days or more i believe we are required to withdraw them and then we have to re-enroll them so we may have some of that but we'll definitely take a look at that i know dr jones and her team are taking a look at that and bring it to student services but we'll happen to bring back any information we have on that well i i think if

[04:19:33] it's excused or unexcused it may become irrelevant um and is it both excused and unexcused in the revised and the previous versions it is yes ma'am i believe so this may be it may be appropriate for our legislative program for for next year because i'm not sure that it's actually pulling and showing the data I mean accreditations about whether a school division is failing and I'm worried that it's going to especially if the one year is adopted in a time where we're trying to give

[04:20:06] extra mental health support to students and we've heard a lot about how that is still a result of the pandemic that it's going to actually give the information that we're looking for thank you yes ma'am and I do think it's different in each community as we talk to principals as we we've talked with our folks in our schools about it is different some of the reasons for absences in different communities and I would also say that you know we agree that's something that we need to take a look at because the data that we're seeing is just because a child is absent they're not failing they are still achieving they're still showing their mastering standards and so

[04:20:43] we haven't seen that correlation in terms of the impact on their learning as much and so we would agree with that but we'll be happy to share more when we bring it back okay so we're going to start on item 12 our action items starting with 1201 from the specialized programs and centers committee recommendation regarding Middleburg community charter schools board members the chairman of the MCCS board of directors mr. German area has request given the seriousness of the potential recommendation he requested an opportunity to address the board before

[04:21:19] we start on the action items night so at this point I'm going to invite mr. Germinario to approach and to address the board. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[04:21:35] My name is Vito Germinario. I live in Blumont. I'm the CEO of our six companies. We are headquartered in Sterling, Virginia. As Mr. Sorotkin said, I serve as the chairman of the board of the Middleburg Community Charter School.

[04:21:52] I am fully committed to Loudoun County. MCCS is an integral part of our local community. We have a full complement of 143 scholars with more than 140 potential scholars on our waiting list. We

provide a remarkable education to a diverse group of children.

[04:22:12] We have a dedicated, hardworking principal, as well as an exemplary faculty and staff. The MCCS board is fully committed to the success of this school. Principal, faculty, staff, and board are laser-focused on providing a very high-quality education for our scholars.

[04:22:34] As chairman, I take full responsibility for the accounting inefficiencies and for rectifying them. We understand that we have an obligation to meet and exceed the expectations of our scholars, parents, and our community.

[04:22:54] We must ensure that we are meeting and exceeding administrative best practices while staying compliant with our charter and the requirements of the school board. We have worked diligently since November to correct the accounting reporting issues.

[04:23:14] We have had administratively. We signed the corrective action plan on 17 January 2023 and began implementing immediately. We made the necessary changes to our processes and procedures.

[04:23:30] We have addressed and rectified each of the listed deficiencies. We went back to note and correct the issues brought forth in the audit. We have since completed loading all of the required relative to the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022.

[04:23:54] With the action plan seriously and have made the changes and rectified the deficiencies, our principal, and will continue to do so.

[04:24:11] We continue to comply with best practices and general accounting principles. moving oversight, and audit firm. They will assist us in maintaining compliance with financial management and best practices while ensuring conformance with government and municipal organizations' requirements and state code.

[04:24:41] We welcome them and their expertise to our team. In addition, we have engaged Baker Tilly to begin a search for chief of staff, excuse me, chief of staff, assistant principal, accounting manager, to add and assist our internal team.

[04:25:02] We continue to work toward full compliance. In closing, we respectfully request you stay in a probationary action until the next audit through the counting position.

[04:25:21] Thank you in advance for considering our request.

[04:25:35] Thank you, Mr. Germanario. Board members, are there any questions for Mr. Germanario before we know that staff was requested to bring some additional information tonight, I believe.

[04:25:58] At least I saw that in board docs. that was listed so uh miss willoughby do you have any additional information to present tonight before we move to action yes my understanding is that it was requested that i present the information that i presented at the spc committee um so i will i will do just that um so late last fall after the annual external audit was concerned i was brought forward we brought concerns to the committee and began discussions again with the middle board community charter school the nature

[04:26:34] of the concerns was not just specific to that annual audit for fy 22 but the fact that they were reoccurring in nature and they had dated back to fy 18 and so what was happening is that for for this last audit it was the fifth year in a row that we had seen the same type of deficiencies being noted in the audit

without corrections being made as a result um From the FY 21 audit from the fourth audit the school board had sent a letter to the charter school and the charter school did submit a written plan a remediation and

[04:27:09] and so that the the request for to have a plan and Creating a policy for them was completed this last year for FY 22 Because again of the issues that were being brought forward by the external auditor The next step was proposed which was a corrective action plan and on January 10th the school board approved the corrective action plan that included a number of Actions two of which were that we would have two unannounced on-site financial audits

[04:27:45] And so on February 8th, we conducted the first of those two unannounced audits in board docs there is a copy of the actual audit report that the business of financial services internal audit team conducted I want to highlight that the scope of the audit was to focus on the deficiencies that the external annual audit had identified of which there were seven and those seven are listed in the report however in the course of you know sampling and performing an audit if

[04:28:22] anything would be discovered then of course they would want we would want to to know about that so this wasn't a mission to go out and try to find a gotcha moment it was really just another level of reviewing to see if actions were being taken in response to the external audit rather than waiting a whole another year to see if there had been corrective action in addition to the scope the scope would be for the entire fiscal year meaning we would go back to july 1 of 2022 through current with the idea again being to support the external audit process

[04:29:01] as well as the charter school to review their controls and their practices i believe that the corrective action plan was not a reset of a baseline that we start over with january 2023 and what i mean by baseline of like a clean bill you know a clean slate it wasn't a clean slate in our opinion that we were starting building on the last five years of audit concerns and

[04:29:32] and in essence this sixth this audit on february 8th was the sixth our level of risk severity table that we use in reviewing all of our other 98 schools so we have level one through level three with level three being the most serious in terms of risk so briefly i'll go over the seven areas

[04:30:09] so the first one was material misstatements requiring adjusting journal entries and so in the report if there's a check mark that means that they satisfies and if not there's just the bullet it's that there was still an ongoing concern along with an action item for each deficiency and then the audit severity so for the material misstatements we were we were pleased to see that mcs was recording payments made by lcps however however they do have until june 30th to record

[04:30:46] that and so while we have noted this as a level three it's content and you'll see several instances from the sample that the internal audit team pulled regarding bookkeeper you know the process should be that the bookkeeper requests approval so that we have you know checks and balances

[04:31:22] The principal signing off for approving the payment and what had happened was that in this one example the bookkeeper made a payment Which was actually to themselves Before it was approved by the principal so I think obviously that highlights some of the concerns We would have along with the other examples that was listed in the report Then we have the action items that we would recommend So for example that they should have you know co-signing a checks there should be an approval process and so forth this a is listed as a level 3 in terms of audit severity because again this is

[04:31:58] really about the internal controls and wanting to make sure that they are tight the third item is incomplete cash receipts documentation been implemented by MCCS however we were still there were still identifying in one situation where item was failure to obtain proper approval of bank reconciliations so

[04:32:38] while we were finding that the principal was signing off on the patients it was very concerning though that for one of the reconciliations the sign-off approval had occurred before the actual reconciliation could have been performed because the dates of the bank statement were after the dating of the signature from the principal so that is a level three severity because again this is really about internal controls the fifth item is deposits in excess of federally insured limits so this is one of the items that has been completely cleared

[04:33:15] and is no longer a concern at this point in time, in that they did open up savings accounts to make sure that they had their funds covered by the FDIC, so no concerns there. The sixth item was inaccurate posting of expenditures, and again this was where we defined an instance

[04:33:33] where expenditure was posted against the revenue account, this would not be in accordance.

[04:33:58] Grateful for the collaboration and working with the principal and the financial technician in performing the audit. So in summary, out of the seven items that have been identified by the external auditor, two of them were completely cleared.

[04:34:14] One of them is a level one, one is a level two, and three are a level three. So almost half remain a level three risk. And then from my perspective in terms of internal controls and risk avoidance, two of the items which would be number two and number four, so the cash disbursements, lacking proper documentation approvals and the issues with the bank reconciliations were both level 3 and are the ones that concern me the most because that really is about internal controls and so as I said during the committee meeting and as I

[04:34:51] said during the last school board meeting I am not suggesting at all that there is fraud occurring at Middleburg Charter School sure the risk so in conclusion it really boils down to just the so for example the bank rec would be like my number one concern has been identified by the external auditor every

[04:35:28] year and lack of controls that I'm especially concerned about and again that we weren't viewing this as starting fresh with January it really was just a continuation of the concerns that have been brought forward since fiscal 18 so with that I think that concludes I think everything that I shared at the

[04:35:57] Committee meeting and so I'd be happy to take any additional questions any questions for miss Willoughby miss Sheridan I just like to reiterate some of the points you made so that everyone is clear and I think your mic isn't quite picking you up as Loudly maybe if you switch we could hear you a little bit better And thank you for it. We had a long dialogue in committee regarding this

[04:36:42] These items being met is that correct? I'm not sure maybe we need to ask

[04:36:56] Miss Sheridan that that's correct the probation is something that's contemplated by step that the school board can take when it that is short of revocation of the charter that is designed in the event of a Deficiency or violation or breach of the agreement. Thank you. Mr. Falconi and Just reiterating that this

is five consecutive years of findings by through the audit process but six audits because there was the unannounced audit in February and

[04:37:30] And really wanted to reiterate the fact that the correction active plan that we put into place on January 10th, that you assumed that would go back to July 1, which is still in the fiscal year, and that the findings would be corrected because you were going to go back and look specifically at those findings. Is that correct?

[04:37:52] yes and more so because all we were doing was reinforcing what the external audit had identified it was those same seven deficiencies and so just as an example one scenario could be had we not done this audit you know this sixth audit on the on February 8th and actually did nothing between you know the external audits and let's assume that there wasn't any additional changes made at the charter school the external auditor would come in at the end of this

[04:38:27] fiscal year so you know in July August you know to do the annual audit they will look at the whole entire fiscal year July 1 to June 30th and could very well have pulled the exact same samples that we pulled so really I would have as I mentioned during the last school board meet I would have expected that you start with the last external audit and you want to make sure that you have identified those deficiencies so any anything that we are receiving from our schools or even just our internal division wide audit any comments any

[04:39:03] concerns any deficiencies that's the that's step one we want to start the the new school year making sure that we're not making those same mistakes and that and one of the things I think I had mentioned even during the committee meeting I think it'd be a different story if it's not so much that it's every single year it's the fact that it's the same issues every single year I think it'd be different and I could I think we would be able to work with them a little bit more in terms of if it was an issue with cash receipts one year and they resolved it and fixed it and then maybe there's something else another year result resolved it and fixed it because that's kind of what we see even

[04:39:41] with our own our own schools but it's the fact that it's the same issues for the amount of time that has passed that is the most of the most concern so I've just have one last comment question if you carried away in on this is that we talked in committee about the fact that it was a sampling of the books and that the external audit could come in and pick totally different things as well and there really actually could be more findings in an audit at the end of the year and that while the unannounced audit targeted the items that were

[04:40:17] already identified that there really could be more and is that a correct possibility absolutely correct and I will share one example that my team brought to my attention recently one of the items that wasn't pulled for sample was the payment that the charter schools makes the LCPS as part of the contract arrangement because we're the actual receipt of you know we invoice them and then we receive the payment two times this year they have overpaid us as well and so

[04:40:54] that's just knowledge that we know because we're at the actual you know we're receiving the payment but it reinforces one of the findings that our audit team also found in that there was an overpayment to another vendor so again it is the we're doing a sample and then what does that sample show in in terms of what could potentially be happening across the board.

[04:41:21] - Thank you. - Additional questions, Mr. Morris. - Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking back at the SPC last year, as the SPC Chair, I was very concerned with the finances and with the errors that were popping up within the MCCS audit.

[04:41:43] And as the Chair, I thought it was important enough that we apply two audits so that we could, one, zero in on what remained, and number two, have a final audit that would allow us to move cleanly into a year-end audit with an external audit firm.

[04:42:02] So I purposely put those two audits in there to give MCCS the opportunity to navigate through the first one and to make sure we had it right as we got to the second one. Section four of the corrective plan doesn't say anything about going back to July 1st.

[04:42:21] Now, granted, as a finance major, everything to me is fiscal year, so I would naturally go back. But when you issue a corrective plan on January 17th and then you audit them February 8th, I don't know that MCCS was given adequate time to go back through the entire year of audit and go through all and correct all of the issues that were outstanding.

[04:42:49] I do see a problem there. I see a continued problem there. But if we're going to propose to them that we're going to give them two audits, then I think we should take advantage of the first audit to reposition ourselves. And as we just heard from their CEO, the corrective actions they're taking, they're substantial.

[04:43:08] And they're very different from what we've heard over the last three and four years. I don't think we've ever had the CEO come in and address the board and identify outside audit resources and outside financial resources that are being added to their program at their cost.

[04:43:26] so i i just found it difficult that the expectation within three weeks that they were going to have all their books cleaned up and this is again this is an ongoing issue i completely understand that but what we did with that corrective action plan was we told them we're going to come in and we're going to reevaluate you but we did it three weeks after we issued the audit letter and we still have one more audit to go so i think that what we should be doing is allowing their action items that they're in progress to continue and use the second audit that they are paying for to be the trigger for probation.

[04:44:05] I think that's very lenient, but I think it's appropriate because I think what we're trying to do is to, we're trying to make sure that they are fiscally responsible, but we're also trying to make sure that they are successful because they're a successful school. And this is, this is an aberration from the rest of the program.

[04:44:23] And I don't want this necessarily reflecting that the entire program is on probation. If they were to fail a second audit, absolutely, I would completely agree with that. But I won't support it coming off an audit after three weeks of notification.

[04:44:39] Thank you. Ms. Plifka. Thank you. I would also like to point out that item number six on the corrective action plan states failure to take corrective action steps. And I think possibly piggybacking a bit off of what Mr. Morse just said, what we're dealing with here is a corrective action plan that includes maybe some vague language or some language that's not very easily objectively measurable.

[04:45:04] And so I think that's partially why we're in this situation right now. And the reason I say that is because my question would be, has there been a failure on their part to take any corrective action steps to

this date? I'm asking, has there been, I mean, could you say that there has been a failure on their part to take any corrective action right now based on the audit and again we are just the purpose of the two unannounced audits was to bridge the span of time so that the school board had information

[04:45:38] to see corrective action that's why I from my opinion I don't believe that it was an expectation that they were starting with a clean slate starting January because again even if hypothetically Even if we had only looked January 10th going forward and the external auditor comes in and he pulls samples going back to July 1, that external auditor is not going to care that, oh, well, the second half of the year is okay, but the first half, I mean, he may take that into consideration, but it's just a pure sample.

[04:46:14] And again, I see us as being that additional support of trying to help by doing this additional audit, but that they should have reacted as soon as they got the external audit report and even before then, because the auditor, they're on site, he's sharing what he's finding.

[04:46:34] So they're already aware of what's going to be disclosed in the audit report before it's even published, because that's part of the actual audit procedure. And I would also I would just want to add I think I would say that and I'm trying to think the phrase you used object Objective I'll just I'll skip it. There was something you said I was going to make a comment towards But basically along the lines that one of the reasons why I like numbers is one plus one is always two is That I feel like that this is not subjective that this is an objective report and it is based on data

[04:47:10] And it's based on policies. It's we're measuring against the policies that they Adopted or created last year for you know their financial policies as well as Gap principles. Thank you. I'm not referring to the numbers. I'm referring to the Circumstances under which MCCC had to comply with this corrective action plan meaning that if they were taking Corrective action steps towards fixing the issues that there would be no reason for the school board to take further action in terms of placing them on probation

[04:47:47] So that's what I'm referring to is the language under number six in that corrective action plan that says the school board may take further steps that include placing MCCC on probation, suspending payments owed to MCCC until such deficiencies are cured, and or revoking the charter. The reason I'm stating this is because, to date, they have taken corrective action on two of those seven deficiencies.

[04:48:09] So for us as a school board to place them on probation at this point, when we haven't gone through the second round of the surprise audits, doesn't make sense to me as a board member. That's what I'm referring to. I wasn't referring to the research on your end that you did to uncover the deficiencies.

[04:48:28] I'm referring to the corrective action plan that was given to them and the language in that plan potentially being somewhat subjective because what is a failure to take corrective action steps? Is it that you didn't complete four of the seven steps by February 4th?

[04:48:46] Is it that you didn't complete three of the seven steps? So that language is not clearly outlined. So in my view, they are beginning to take corrective action. They have completed two of those seven deficiencies and we've only now completed one audit.

[04:49:02] So I fully agree with Mr. Morse. If on June 30th we find that these deficiencies have not been cleaned up, I would support probation. Right now I do not support it because it doesn't make sense given that we've given them two opportunities to clean up the mistakes.

[04:49:19] Thank you. I just want to follow up on a couple of the points that Mr. Morse made along those lines of questioning because I'm looking at the audit report and a lot of the bullet points don't have the dates of the errors, but a couple of them do.

[04:49:39] So I'm looking at one for number two, the second bullet point under number two that says the invoice for the bookkeeper was paid before the expense was approved by the principal. Invoice was generated October 1st.

[04:49:55] Online bill payment was processed October 5th. principle did not approve the expense until October 11th. So we started discussing this in committee, it looks like in November. So what would you have, like, is it possible to correct, like, what happened happened? Like, that's, is it, what would you have wanted to see them do with something like this that occurred before we even started talking about the corrective action plan?

[04:50:22] Is it possible to correct that error, or is this always going to be an issue because that's what happened at the time so the scenario I described during the committee meeting was what I would have expected and what I would expect of our own schools and accounting teams again once the external audit is complete if starting with that to identify what you know what what corrective measures you know what are some recommendations for improvement and then but because that audit is not complete until I think August is when they come out so you're not really getting the report until September so obviously even for LCPS our district

[04:51:01] books and in our other 98 schools there will already have been activity occurring July August September the expectation would be if let's say if we were deemed on not having proper documentation would have expected to go back and make sure that for those three months up to date that we have went back and made sure that do we have the proper documentation do we have the proper sign off if not we need to attach the documentation we need to make that package complete so that when the auditor does show up at the end of the fiscal year if they happen to pull that sample it's going to meet the

[04:51:38] expectations of the auditor if it's something that is it's maybe impossible to you know maybe recreate the past then you're making a note that you are aware that this is maybe missing something we're not able to find the receipt you You know, and the principal has made a note and dated and like a memo is attached to that item.

[04:51:59] So, again, if the external auditor picks that item as a random sample, then there's that action of an awareness of, okay, we know this isn't meeting the standard, but we have acknowledged here's the memo, you know, that there's some supporting information.

[04:52:17] Right now, again, had we not gone out there at all in February, on February 8th, and I recognize the shortness of time. But again, we're trying to get enough time to go out there, do the two audits, have time for the team to put together the report, have time to bring it to committee and to the school board all before the end of June.

[04:52:39] So it is a short period of time, absolutely. But I also don't think it would have been fair, even had we limited going forward, January 10th to February 8th. I mean, that's barely a month to really pull a sample. And, you know, if you ever took statistics, it's about your sample size as well.

[04:52:59] So, you know, to get a good representative sample. Do you believe it was clear, made clear to the charter school that they needed to go back and retroactively correct these to the correct entries to the

beginning of the fiscal year?

[04:53:15] I can't speak for what the charter school understood or expected. I'm not asking what the charter school understood. I'm asking if you or LCPS staff made it clear that the audit would include from the start of the fiscal year.

[04:53:32] I don't, did we explicitly say that? I'm not sure. I think it was understood because, again, that's what the audit period is for and that we were, again, supporting the external audit that had just been completed. Okay.

[04:53:48] Ms. Sheridan. Thank you. Mr. Sorokin kind of touched on some of the things I wanted to go back and ask you about. At the December 14th SPC meeting I remember wanting to address this and put the school on probation at that time and my colleagues on the committee at the time did not agree and that's where we made the recommendation to put them on a corrective action plan so I think you addressed my first question is when the audit actually happens which is the end of the fiscal year and so that like you said when they're actually physically in the building they are pulling samples and addressing it with staff

[04:54:26] while it's happening but then also the report comes out in August is that accurate I they will when they're done completing their their audit then they hold a meeting with the principal and the finance tech I'm assuming I'm not sure the actual process but what they call it the management meeting where they go over okay this is what we find because then management has an opportunity to present like a rebuttal or if they had you know any you know know information that they wanted for the for the auditor to take into consideration after that's

[04:55:01] complete then the auditor prepares their final report and for us that typically comes out in i think september okay so they're aware of the findings and concerns right during the process as it's happening thank you for explaining that and then because i wanted to make sure that january the january 10th letter was not the first notice that mccs received regarding their books and And that they were, would have been made aware in August while it was first happening and then the official notification in September.

[04:55:35] And then to address what Mr. Sorak and just asked you, but in a different way, during previous audits and trainings that they've been invited to and required to come to now for this, I'm assuming timelines and all of these things are addressed in the trainings and expectations of going back and correcting things.

[04:55:56] And given the fact that five consecutive years in a row that they've had some of the same issues over and over again, that they would know that the expectation is to go back and make those notes and to provide a memo or show corrective action within their books so that if it was pulled by the external auditor, it would be there.

[04:56:17] So I don't think it's above the, it shouldn't be above our expectations that once they learned of the findings in August and then officially in September that they should have been taking action right then. It shouldn't have been a matter of the SPC committee recommending that they get put on a corrective action plan.

[04:56:37] That should have been the expectation that they learned five years in a row. So if this were the first time, I would say, yeah, it wasn't a long enough time, but this has happened five consecutive years in a

row. And I think we're responsible for holding them accountable at this time.

[04:56:53] So are you ready for me to make a motion, Mr. Chair? So there is not a motion in board docs. So if I'm not including everything that needs to be in there, I would hope that staff would let me know. But I'm going to say that I move that the Loudoun County School Board place the Middleburg Community Charter School on probation for failing to take corrective measures per the corrective action plan dated January 10th, 2023.

[04:57:21] And as a, does it need anything else? Because I just pulled that out of the body of board docs. I didn't know if it needed a time frame or anything. Did I cover everything, Mr. Falcone?

[04:57:47] So if probation is exercised by the school board, a written notice of the deficiencies, violations, or breaches have to be provided to the charter school along with an opportunity of 30 calendar days to submit a written remedial plan to the school board on how the charter school will cure the deficiency, violation, or breach, if not time sensitive.

[04:58:12] - So what do I need to add to my motion? - I'm not sure, can you read it again, please? - I didn't really read it. - Oh, okay, fair. - That's okay, I can do it again. I move that the Loudoun County School Board place the Middleburg Community Charter School on probation for failing to take corrective measures for the corrective action plan dated January 10th, 2023.

[04:58:43] - I think that's sufficient. I think that there are obligations that are required by that, but I think that the motion is sufficient. - Thank you. - Is there a second? - I'll second the motion for discussion.

[04:58:58] I do have a question for Mr. Falcone. Is it necessary to time limit it? Do you place the charter school on probation for a specific period of time, or is it open-ended? It doesn't require a time limit, or our charter agreement doesn't require a time limit.

[04:59:19] I think you could certainly impose one as a condition of the probation to have a corrective plan in place by a certain time period, but there's nothing in the charter agreement that mandates that.

[04:59:36] Okay, thank you. - Ms. Chardon, would you like to speak to your motion? - I think we've made all the points and I thank Ms. Willoughby for readdressing all of the points that she did in committee as well. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. - Sir, further discussion?

[04:59:53] - I'm going to very reluctantly support this tonight. I think I've been a huge supporter of our charter schools over the last few years. Both of my children attended one of our public charter schools in Loudoun.

[05:00:11] having sat on the SPC committee for the, for three of the last four years, this has just been an ongoing issue that just has not gotten corrected. We've tried warnings, we've tried training, we've tried the corrective action plan, and I've just, I've run out of other tools.

[05:00:32] So it's my sincere hope that these issues are corrected and that we're able to lift the probation as soon as we can verify that. But I feel like we do have to take this seriously given the serial nature of the audit deficiencies to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

[05:00:53] I do sincerely appreciate Mr. Germinario being here tonight. I think he laid out a good plan that I hope the charter school takes seriously and to correct the issues. But until I see evidence of that, then I think we have to proceed with procedurally what's really the only tool left available to us at this point.

[05:01:15] So I will support the motion. Additional discussion, Ms. Reeser. - So Ms. Willoughby, how does coming off of probation look? - Again, I think I would need to defer to Mr. Falcone regarding that.

[05:01:38] - Ms. Reeser, with the question, what does coming out of probation look like? - Yes, I mean, what would be the mechanism? How will this come back to us? Do they have to ask for it? Or will we reach out to them? That kind of thing. - So after the board chooses to put the charter school on probation, they have to have an opportunity of 30 calendar days to submit a written remedial plan to the board on how they intend to cure the deficiencies, violations, and breaches.

[05:02:10] And then the board's approval is required for the remedial plan prior to its implementation. And so that would be the next step at this point. - Is there a minimum amount of time that they have to be on probation?

[05:02:28] Does another audit have to happen? Or are those things expected to be addressed in the remedial plan? - So there's no required amount of time that they have to be on probation. It would necessarily be, I think, be part of the remediation plan.

[05:02:48] - Additional discussion? Seeing none, we'll place, oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Beatty. - Question, Mr. Falcone, would that remediation plan need to come back to the SPC or come back to the full board? or I guess the 30 day response that they have to provide.

[05:03:06] - The school board, the full school board would need to approve the remedial plan prior to its implementation. - Yeah, I think I'd like to make a substitute motion that we refer this back to committee. Again, based on the discussions from my colleagues, I think they're working towards it and I think that they're making strides and I think we can fix this.

[05:03:31] They are on notice, if you will. So my motion is to refer this back to committee. - There's a motion to refer back to committee, is there a second? - Second. - Seconded by Mr. Morris. Mr. Beatty, would you like to speak to your motion? - No, I just appreciate the discussion. It's a complicated issue, but I think that the school definitely knows that they have to get their act together.

[05:03:50] And I think having, going back to the oversight role, putting this back to the committee that's responsible for the oversight is going to help them as they go through this. And then I think it gives us more flexibility as instead of having to come back here in 30 days and approve a plan that they submit, I think we can fix this all on committee.

[05:04:10] - Further discussion? - Seeing none, we'll place the motion to refer to a vote. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. - Aye. - Those opposed, please raise your hand and say nay.

[05:04:27] - Nay. That motion is going to be tied 4-4-1 with Reeser, Sheridan, Sorotkin, and Okadek Bay opposed, and Mr. Mehedaby absent for the vote.

[05:04:46] Mr. Falcone, does that mean we leave it here for tonight? - That's correct, it would have to be moved to the next board meeting because there was a tie and a member was absent. - Okay, so according to, just for clarification, according to LCPS policy, which is also based on state law, whenever there is a tie vote with at least one board member absent, it gets brought back to, at the next board meeting for a re-vote, where the re-vote is final, even if a board member is absent at the revote as well.

[05:05:22] So this will be added to the agenda for the fourth Tuesday April meeting and we will pick this back up at that time. Board members at this time, we're gonna take a short break. We will be in recess until

9:15.

[05:05:39] Please be back on the dais at that time.

[05:16:07] Okay, the board is coming out of recess and we will pick up with action item 1202 from the Technology Steering Committee, review of policy 8650, student technology acceptable/responsible use.

[05:16:24] Mr. Beatty. - Thank you, Chair. Let me pull this up real quick, I'm sorry.

[05:16:44] Thank you. I move that the Loudoun County School Board approves revised policy 8650, student technology acceptable and responsible use.

[05:17:00] - Second. - Seconded by Mr. Morris. Mr. Beatty, would you like to speak to your motion? - Yes, so this went through the committee. We had a great discussion about it. There was public feedback, especially on the regards of defining pornography that we've clarified. One of the comments that came out of the grand jury report was the fact that we should move to an allow list and a block list, where basically we only allowed certain websites.

[05:17:25] We had a great discussion about this in committee, I think I mentioned last time. It's effectively impossible, just because of the breadth of the websites we use. And I would just say that means that sometimes bad websites are gonna get through. So we had one incident that came to us recently, and I just, I wanna read this email that we received because I think it kind of clarifies the process LCPS does.

[05:17:50] We're aware of this and we're trying to make it better. So this is from Mr. Smith and he says, I was notified via email this morning that an inappropriate game and site was accessible on LCPS Chromebooks. I immediately reviewed and confirmed that it should be blocked. And within five minutes of notification, the team implemented a manual block and confirmed.

[05:18:06] Immediately following the manual block, our team contacted our content filter vendor to review and recategorize the site. The vendor applied to our recategorization request within 30 minutes and changed the site category to violence and extremism. This change ensured the content filter application would block the site for all K through 12 customers, including LCPS.

[05:18:26] The team requested a call with the vendor to gather additional information related to this issue. During the vendor call, our team shared how impactful this improper categorization has been for us, both from a student-centric perspective and an organizational perspective. The vendor confirmed the content filter should have blocked the access to this site based on the site content and URL and that LCPS had all appropriate configurations in place.

[05:18:46] The vendor stated they are currently reviewing their automated web crawler application that automatically categorizes sites and will make changes to improve accuracy based on this issue. So I think that just kind of points to the problem that we can try and we can have these agreements in place and I think the changes we make are good, clarifications are good, but there's always gonna be the issue that things can get through.

[05:19:08] So as we go through and we think about this, it might make sense to really, to consider strongly how we're using computers in the classrooms, how we're giving out Chromebooks, especially to younger children. And so just, I invite each board member to kind of think about this as we go through the process of improving our processes throughout the year.

[05:19:29] So I hope you'll support the changes to this policy. I think they're good and they're gonna make it better throughout the county. But again, it's not going to be the panacea that we might think it would be. So there's always things that can get better, always things that we'll get through that we do our best to work with.

[05:19:46] - Thank you, further discussion? - Ms. Okedekbe. - Thank you, Chair. I wanted to thank you for reading that letter because I think it's a good example of how things evolve. And I think about cybersecurity threats, right?

[05:20:04] There are constantly evolving things that we need to be aware of and monitor for. And I felt like this was a good example. The response was swift and then actually there was a permanent fix available from the vendor, you know, within a very short period of time.

[05:20:23] So I appreciate the updates to the policy, but just also wanted to acknowledge and thank you for sharing that response that had occurred earlier today. Thank you. - Additional discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of adopting the revisions to the policy, please raise your hand and say aye.

[05:20:42] - Aye. - That motion will pass unanimously The board member is present with Mr. Mejedevi absent for the vote. We'll now move to 1203, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month Proclamation for April 2023.

[05:20:59] Ms. Ogadagbe. Thank you, Chair. I would like to make a motion that the Loudoun County School Board adopts the proclamation recognizing April 2023 as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Can you read the proclamation, please?

[05:21:18] Okay. Thank you. Last time I started to and then I didn't, so I didn't know if there was also discussion. Whereas April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and calls attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and its effects impact our entire community.

[05:21:38] And whereas everyday children, youth, and adult survivors in communities across Loudoun County and the Commonwealth experience the trauma of sexual violence, and whereas the crimes sexual violence occur far too frequently go unreported and underreported far too often and leave long-lasting impacts and whereas during national sexual assault awareness and prevention month we recommit ourselves to removing the stigma and shame surrounding sexual violence expanding support for survivors of sexual violence and strengthening our response and whereas sexual violence

[05:22:17] affects individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, and circumstances, and whereas as a community, we share the responsibility for raising awareness about sexual violence, protecting each other from sexual violence, supporting victims when it does occur, and bringing perpetrators to justice, and whereas the Loudoun County schools, public schools community can come together to increase awareness about sexual violence decrease its frequency hold offenders accountable support victims and heal lives and whereas the

[05:22:56] loudon county public schools students and staff are committed to raising awareness about healthy relationships body safety and sexual assault taking ownership in prevention work and creating a culture where violence is unacceptable and whereas loudon county public schools and laws domestic violence and sexual assault services work together to name the current challenges to addressing violence identifying strategies to address risk factors and implement solutions to stop violence before it happens now therefore be it resolved that the loudon county school board

[05:23:35] does hereby proclaim the month of April 2023 as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. We, the undersigned, proclaim that now is the time to take action as leaders in our community to create safety for children, youth, faculty, staff, and families in Loudoun County Public Schools.

[05:23:54] We must work together to inform members of our community about sexual violence prevention, support survivors, and speak out against harmful attitudes and actions. We join advocates and communities across the commonwealth and the country in playing an active role to prevent sexual violence.

[05:24:13] Proclaimed this day of April 2023. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Sharon. Ms. Ogadegbe, would you like to speak to your motion? Thank you, Chair. So, first I wanted to acknowledge we have with us this evening several members from the Laws, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Assault Services, including Colleen McDaniel, Esmeralda Ortiz, Abby Davenport, and Jordan Morris.

[05:24:46] We also have Sam Clark, who was recently with Laws but is moving on to another role at SCAN. So, I wanted to thank you all. within LCPS I know that Ms. Jennifer Evans who's the LCPS director of student mental health services is an active and ongoing partnership with our friends at laws and they work collaboratively to put together this proclamation I had reached out to laws in the fall just in response to thinking about trying to do something more proactively to address prevention

[05:25:26] Because a lot of the actions, naturally, we have to do in response to what's happened. But ultimately, the best thing that we can do is prevent violence from occurring to begin with. And so we can start, we have to start somewhere.

[05:25:43] And acknowledging the harm and the hurt and the need to address this as a community, I think following in that spirit, Ms. McDaniels had contacted me and asked if we could support a proclamation, which is something that the county has done.

[05:26:03] And so I was glad to do that. And I'm hoping that others will join me in supporting this proclamation. Thank you. - Further discussion, Ms. Polifko.

[05:26:19] - Thank you. I think it's really important for us all to sit up here and remember that proclamations are just that. They're proclamations, okay? And it's talking the talk, but we also have to walk the walk. And this community over the past two years has not been very trusting of this current iteration of the school board.

[05:26:40] And I will proclaim and have proclaimed time and time again that I am for transparency. I am for making the public aware of the missteps that this school system has taken in the past two years.

[05:26:55] And we cannot do that if we don't have transparency. We cannot also gain and regain the trust of this community if we do not have transparency. So I am glad that we are taking the steps to proclaim our stance behind the importance of sexual assault awareness and taking steps to be proactive in preventing these horrific acts from occurring.

[05:27:21] But at the same time, again, it's talking the talk. So we have to walk the walk. I'm prepared to do that, and I hope that the rest of the board members sitting up here are also prepared to do that as well. Thank you. Additional discussion?

[05:27:40] I just want to take a moment to thank our partners for being here tonight and for bearing with us through a long evening. We appreciate it. Seeing no further discussion, all those in favor of adopting

the proclamation, which will make April 2023 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month in Loudoun County Public Schools, Please raise your hand and say aye.

[05:28:04] Aye. That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Mr. Mehed to be absent for the vote. We'll now get started on our information items starting with 1301 from the Department of Business and Financial Services, a FY24 budget update.

[05:28:25] Ms. Willoughby. Thank you. So the slide deck is loaded in board docs.

[05:28:41] I just wanted to provide some information regarding the budget, what we're seeing happen or not happen at the state level, as well as recent actions taken by the board of supervisors next slide please and one more so we're talking about the school operating fund and just to recap of where we're at and how we got here this is just the timeline of the budget so just kind of highlighting the dates you know we started the budget process with the school board on January 3rd on January 27th right before the school board adopted on the 24 on February 2nd is when bdoe notified us of the error that we are

[05:29:20] grappling with on February 9th which is after the school board adopts its budget is when we received information about various house and senate budget committee budget amendments on the 15th of February is when the county administrator proposed its budget after that date on February 25th is when the general assembly at the state passed the skinny budget which gives us more information and I had presented that information to the school board and then on April 4th so I think

[05:29:56] that was last week the board of supervisors adopted the FY 24 budget that left a funding gap of 3.2 million based on the currently adopted school board budget and 16.1 million when the state funding shortfall is included and that is what is resulting from that skinny budget during During the March 15th Board of Supervisors work session, though, the supervisors discussed the possibility of utilizing current year-end balances to address LCPS estate revenue shortfall, or at least part of it.

[05:30:29] And then during the April 4th meeting, when they adopted their budget, the county staff shared their plan to return to the Board of Supervisors in May with a recommendation to appropriate current year fund balances to address the \$13.1 million shortfall.

[05:30:45] They only went up to \$13 million. They did not take into account the 3.2 million that was also left as a gap. And based on what was written in their agenda item, it was county staff's opinion that the 3.2 million was not a material amount.

[05:31:03] Next slide, please. So, again, what the county adopted was a transfer to LCPS of \$72.1 million. The school board's adopted county transfer request, I'm sorry, is \$75.3 million.

[05:31:22] So, the county is funding 72.1, so that's where we come up with that current funding gap of 3.2 million. When we factor in the state skinny budget revenue reduction of 13 million, that's where we're arriving at the \$16.1 million gap at this time.

[05:31:40] Next slide. So, building on this timeline, we added the date April 12th is when the General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene, and then we've got our big question mark because there's just a lot of uncertainty ahead. So, there's just a lot of uncertainty ahead. Information so far, though, is that a budget is not expected to be finalized until June.

[05:32:00] What we're hearing is that legislators want to see how the income tax receipts come in that are expected in late April and May, and that they are also sensitive to some elections that are occurring in

early June. For those reasons, final action on the state budget is not expected until later in June.

[05:32:16] If that occurs, it will make determining a final impact amount for county appropriation more difficult um since they are expected to bring a recommendation in may but we will continue to work with county staff based on the best information that we have available this slide um i've presented before but this just again emphasizes that there are various house and senate budget amendments that we continue to watch and they have varying impacts to to lcps regarding expenditures as well as revenues on the

[05:32:52] the next slide I have a scenario so these are possible scenarios and it could be a mix and match of what we saw in the previous slide but what we have here is that and the first we have the current adopted biennium so we have the 13 million on the first row resulting from that skinny budget so the baseline reset from the state we've got then adding in the 3.2 million dollar revenue or funding shortfall from the county so that brings us to the 16.2 million dollar reduction if we were to do a scenario and i highlight and emphasize scenario that if all the

[05:33:30] senate amendments were to be approved then we would look at a net impact of only having a reduction of 3.8 and if we were looking at the house amendments we would be looking at a reduction of 23.6 and we don't expect either one of these because of course it's going to be a negotiation between between them or it could also be nothing at all they could be actually done with the state education budget which then means we're looking at the first column of the 16.2 um you know you can't we just can't predict what's going to happen at the state level and we can just only hope that

[05:34:06] they address or finalize the budget before june 30th well sooner than june 30th actually next So what do we do? How do we move forward? So staff's budget reconciliation guiding direction is to maintain the focus on the students and our ongoing programs. And so if that is the guiding direction in terms of coming up with a plan to how to reconcile and how to move forward with the FY24 budget, we've identified three areas.

[05:34:26] And it's what we've said all along that compensation would be the area where we have the most dollars and that we could easily talk target unfortunately to balance the budget um and then i've just listed what we have in the budget we've got step increases we've got our salary scale adjustments and then we've got um increases related to our sick and personal leave that had costs associated with those initiatives the second

[05:35:02] bucket is one-time purchases eligible for year-end funding right now we have a to be determined we're still reviewing the budget although i don't anticipate that there would be very much to pull out excuse me because again in bringing forward a budget to the school board we had already pulled things out and the school board did already take action on about two million dollars of items to fund out of this year's fund balance and then we've got other and again we continue the budget team to scrub through the budget work with departments to see you know as we continue to

[05:35:38] move through the months if there's just other opportunities other savings better information that perhaps we could target. In terms of numbers, the second quarter financial forecast that was presented a couple months ago, at that time we projected about an \$8 million fund balance.

[05:35:58] Right now the school board has committed 3.3 as being earmarked to return to the county for reappropriation to LCPS for the collective bargaining resources. So when we take that out, that only leaves

about \$4.7 million. So even if we had \$6 million of items in the FY24 budget of one-time purchases to move over, under this scenario, we only have \$4.7 million available.

[05:36:24] And that's based on the second quarter forecast. We are currently finalizing the third quarter financial forecast. The third quarter ended March 31st. And as we continue to finalize that, I will share, though, that the numbers continue to run tight between substitute costs, inflation costs.

[05:36:44] We're just really seeing the impact on the budget this year. One other piece of information I wanted to share, because I know whenever LCPS participated in the county board of supervisors budget work session, there was discussion, it was brought up multiple times about last year and a belief from the county perspective that it's not going to be a problem for LCPS to identify one-time purchases because last year we spent \$19 million a year in funds.

[05:37:14] So what we did, I had the team go back and break out how did we spend the \$19 million of the appropriated unspent funds from last year. So when we look at those, that \$19 million, it breaks up conveniently into thirds.

[05:37:30] One third of the items, or about \$6 million, was to fund items that were originally in the FY23 budget. So we had about \$6 million worth of items that we pulled out of the FY23 budget to fund out of FY22 year in funds during reconciliation.

[05:37:47] Another third of, or another \$6 million roughly, went towards new items. So these are items that weren't in the FY22 budget, nor were they in the FY23 budget, but in a desire to use the funds that were appropriate to LCPS, The staff brought forward recommendations and the school board supported funding other needs such as building out of rental space and needed school improvements such as roadway signage, storm windows, gym bleacher replacements as a few examples.

[05:38:22] The final remaining one-third or the other \$6 million went towards providing matching funds for the state initiative of providing one-time bonuses. So, again, I just share this to highlight that we never expected to have \$19 million, and I especially don't expect that this year because, again, we already scrubbed through that in staff's attempts and the school board's attempt to present a very lean budget to the county.

[05:38:49] Next slide. So knowing that we've got some challenges with dates, this is the recommended plan forward. So April 12th, again, is when the General Assembly is expected to – or will reconvene.

[05:39:08] But, again, if we work under the assumption that we don't expect action to occur until June, we don't want to just, you know, sit and wait. We need a plan. And so this is similar. So for some of the school board members, this is similar to a plan that we did previously when we had a lot of uncertainty with revenues.

[05:39:27] And this is really about trying to communicate and provide information to employees so that they know what to expect. So the recommended plan would be to secure the FY24 step increases. And how we do that is that we would bring back the current FY23 salary scales at the April 25th school board meeting for the school board to adopt for FY24.

[05:39:51] Because right now, what is currently adopted are the salary scales that were included in the budget book that the school board adopted, which includes the scale adjustments. So if we go back to the current scale, then we have a scale in place that we can provide step increases July 1.

[05:40:14] The scale adjustments we would place on hold until the state budget is finalized and also to include seeing what happens at the county level since there is indications that they may provide additional funding towards us.

[05:40:30] But we place those scale adjustments on hold to buy us time to see what happens at the state and county level as well as just to continue to scrub through the budget and see what other opportunities we may have. The value of the scale adjustments was \$43.7 million.

[05:40:48] And so obviously that's probably going to be more than enough. I'm, you know, even what I would hope would be a worst case scenario with all the house amendments, if we're looking to have to cut 23.6 as a possible scenario, obviously 43.7 is a large enough bucket to handle that.

[05:41:08] So I don't want to over promise what we can or can't do, but I believe this would be a very safe way to allow us to proceed with a budget allow us to proceed with planning for for contracts for the upcoming year it allows HR to with as they recruit they know what scale that they're working off of and again that we also are able to share this information with employees then June 27th is the last school meeting in June and so again hopefully everything would be

[05:41:47] finalized and if so then that is when we would bring forward further recommended actions to the school board to finalize the FY24 budget so hypothetically let's say they're done they take no further action and we're having to cut 16.2 then we would bring back is 16.2 all going to come out of the salary scale adjustments or do we have some other options that we would bring back a reconciliation plan to adopt recognizing that the numbers do indicate that we would not have to

[05:42:22] use the entire amount that's allotted for the scale adjustments to balance the budget then the plan would be to bring back in august again just like we did before bring back in august updated salary skills for fy24 of what we can afford regarding scale adjustments for the school board to adopt And then we would apply those adjustments retroactively to July 1.

[05:42:49] And again, this is the process that we have done before. So on the next slide, in our attempt to try to be very crystal clear because recognizing, you know, salaries are very important to employees, we're really trying to indicate what can employees expect.

[05:43:07] So the communication would be that if the school board endorses this plan and we take the action as recommended at the next school board meeting, that on July 1, eligible employees will receive a step increase based on the current FY23 salary scale.

[05:43:24] And then to be determined is once the state finalizes its budget and if no further reductions are necessary to finalize LCPS's FY24 budget, market adjustments will be applied to the current salary scale for school board approval.

[05:43:40] And then again, based on the timing, especially since it seems like it may likely be August, any further pay increases would likely not be paid out until after July, but would be retroactively calculated to July 1.

[05:43:55] And then also, again, as has been done in the past, any update to the approved salary scale would include communication from HRTD, and then instructions would be provided to employees on how they can view their new salary information within Oracle Self-Service as there would not be another issuing of letters or documents, but that it would be available within Oracle Self-Service.

[05:44:21] so that is the update and that is the plan just add once in you know as with anything as soon as we get any information from the state and or the county I'll be providing an update at the very next school board meeting I'm happy to take any questions let me just ask one clarifying question before I open it up in the slides on slide 9 it says you and you anticipate the second phase of school board action being June 27th at the latest but in your oral remarks you mentioned

[05:44:58] August so is that just depending on when the state actually finalizes their budget and how much time we have or exactly yes thank you um it was just yesterday that we got the update that it seemed like that they would not be finalizing the budget until June so this slide is a little outdated so there really are two options so thank you for for the question June 27th would be one scenario and August would be another scenario. Okay, thank you. Board members, questions? Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to refresh us, prior to us

[05:45:36] going through any adjustments here, what was the average percentage that we were, our employees were seeing, both step and cost of living? The average for the district, I believe, was 5.8%. 5.8, and that, out of that, the 16 million, if we were to have to absorb all of that in the compensation, what percentage would that be lowered by? I don't have that information on me. If we adopt the philosophy that we treat all the scales similarly, I would need to pull the information. I don't want to misquote. I used to

[05:46:14] have at my fingertips what 1% costs, but I can pull that information. I have that already. That'd be helpful. Also, last question. A lot of the COVID procurement that we did was one year or two year cycle. If we were to look at that as, you know, our one-time purchase is eligible because all we're doing is extending a COVID program, such as the SPL or the TAs for first grade.

[05:46:42] Would those be considered one-time purchases? Could we put those under the one-time purchase umbrella? The TAs would not, because it's actually a reoccurring expense that we have to pay as we go.

[05:46:59] So the idea behind using year-end funds is we make the entire payment before June 30th. So, that's why with collective bargaining in particular, we weren't able to use our year-end funds directly for those resources because they were payroll-related.

[05:47:20] That's why we had to return it to the county and then have them reappropriate it to us for FY24 so that we had that money in the budget. Because we couldn't just carry it over and then start paying. Thank you. Additional questions? Seeing none, so the intention is to bring this back for action on April 25th, April 25th, April 25th.

[05:47:44] Okay, thank you. All right, so we'll go to 1302 from the HRTD Committee, Policy 7530, Duty to Report Child or Student Abuse and Neglect. Ms. Okedegbe. Thank you, Chair.

[05:48:00] This policy had first come forward as an information item back in November and was made available for public comment and feedback on the LCPS website. The policy was an action item in the end of January at the HRTD committee and then subsequently was brought forward for information and action with the school board in February.

[05:48:30] At the end of February, we did vote to have that go back to HRTD committee for discussion specifically around clarifying that mental abuse should also be incorporated into the policy. And so those changes were made.

[05:48:48] Just taking a look at, let me open up the correct one. In the red line policy, there is an update to reflect on line 18.

[05:49:15] It includes now both physical and mental injury. And there is subsequently in the referenced code, the last one that was added, which was the online 198-22-VAC-40-70530 is actually the code that describes in quite a lot of detail the types of abuse and neglect.

[05:49:48] So, with that, is there anything from staff that you'd like to add? Thank you. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So, just as you stated, this was brought back to HRTD committee for us to take a look at how we could include the mental injury aspect of the requirement in a clear enough way to be able to hold individuals accountable for what we were asking them.

[05:50:22] And so we did do three things. We added a more substantial definition which, as Ms. Ogadegbe stated, is in the red line version is under reporting requirements.

[05:50:37] It is the opening paragraph in lines 15 through 19. was a new paragraph that was added to simplify what was out of code and identify or include the mental injury aspect.

[05:50:53] In addition to that, on the red line version, on line 101, a number three was added to essentially state that allegations of an employee inflicting mental abuse or neglect as defined in the Virginia administrative code on a student or making a threat of mental abuse or neglect to a student and so that number three was added out of code to help document that that request also

[05:51:27] and then of course the reference was updated any additional questions or discussion regarding the policy changes seeing none interest on placing this on consent for the next board meeting okay I seek consent, so we will place this, consensus, so we'll place this on consent during the next board meeting.

[05:51:55] That will bring us to 1303 from the newly renamed Student Behavior and Accountability Committee, Policy 8250 in the School Disciplinary Measures. Ms. Okedekbe. Thank you, Chair. This policy had also come before the board, and there was some discussion that led it going back to committee where we had some additional discussion about a section of the policy that was

[05:52:23] addressing work assignments and I need to get the right version so what you'll see as a result of those discussions specifically around work assignments is section E which has been renamed school-based community service and not only was the some of the language was updated about the intent of the service

[05:52:59] but most importantly I think as well as starting on line 81 is that no student shall be assigned a school-based community service activity without approval by the parent guardian in the original version of the language it stated that the no student would be required to perform a work assignment which if the assignment was objected to, and so it's been changed such that the parent or guardian actually has to approve

[05:53:34] the school-based community service project. Any additional comments from staff on this one? - No, I think you captured the committee discussion.

[05:53:52] - Board members, questions regarding these policy changes? - I just have one regarding the new section or the revised section about school-based community service about that last sentence that was added.

[05:54:10] No student shall be assigned a school-based community service activity without approval by the parent or guardian. So if the parent or guardian does not approve, would, I'm just trying to understand what the practice would be.

[05:54:25] Would there be an alternative activity suggested or I guess what would happen at that point? Because, I mean, usually it's done, I assume it's primarily done for disciplinary reasons. So if the parent is not approving the discipline that's being recommended by the school, what would be done in that case as an alternative?

[05:54:46] Other appropriate disciplinary measures, depending on the offense. And I will add that the parent and administrator are already having a conversation about this.

[05:55:02] and so the parent would already be notified, but the committee wanted to make sure that parent approval was explicit in the policy. So it's really just specifying practice. And then they had a discussion about what types that the service would match the discipline, but to answer your specific question, another type of discipline appropriate for the infraction would be given.

[05:55:37] Thank you. Additional discussion? Mr. Morse. Just curious, I'm looking at the red line, line 95 through 97, public participation prior to amendments. Before adopting any amendment to this policy, the school board shall provide for public participation and comment.

[05:55:54] We do that for every single policy, so I don't quite understand why we would capture that in the policy. Mr. Morse, which liner? You said line 95 of the red line, but it looks like a different section entirely.

[05:56:11] I'm ahead of the game. I'll bring that up in a moment. - Thanks. - Is there any additional discussion? Interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting?

[05:56:28] Ms. Reeser, looks like we have consensus for that. We'll place that on consent for the August 25th board meeting. April, what did I say? Oh, not August, April, okay.

[05:56:44] Thank you, Ms. Ogudipe. So we'll now move to 1304 from the Student Services Committee, revision of policy 5040, school counseling services, elementary, middle, and high school. And as Mr. Mejedevi was not able to be here tonight, I'll ask Dr. Jones to give an overview.

[05:57:06] Thank you, Mr. Sorokin. Policy 5040 is an existing policy that has been reviewed and updated as a part of our five-year policy review cycle. The policy was posted for advisory board review and community feedback during the months of December and January and presented to the Student Services Committee in February 15, 2023, as an information item.

[05:57:31] And on March 16, as an action item, the committee voted unanimously to move the policy to the full board as an information item. It was present as an information item at the last meeting, but it's been because of time from the last meeting it's here this evening.

[05:57:48] The current policy consists of one paragraph, so our updates currently align with the Virginia Administrative Code as well as the Code of Virginia, much of the information that has been lifted from the existing policy regulation into the policy to comply with the Virginia Code as well as align with the Virginia School Boards Association's model policies.

[05:58:15] The substantive updates include lines 16 through 65, where we've included clarifying definitions related to the academic guidance, career guidance, personal social counseling, and

employment counseling and placement services as defined in the Code of Virginia and the Virginia School Boards Association policy.

[05:58:39] Additional language was also added at the request of the Student Services Committee to outline the difference between personal social counseling and social-emotional learning in Lines 36 through 40. Specifically, personal and social counseling does not include the social-emotional learning lessons that are provided by teachers and other instructional staff.

[05:59:03] Lines 67 through 93 outline the annual parent and guardian notifications, student participation, and confidentiality of student records. And all of this language was lifted from the Code of Virginia requirements.

[05:59:21] I believe Mr. Morse had just raised a question regarding lines 95 through 97, and that was included. It is indeed what we do with all of our policies, and it was a recommendation from counsel, so it was included.

[05:59:42] Mr. Falcone. And thank you, Mr. Sorotkin. And the reason why it was included here is because that is from the Virginia Administrative Code that that requirement be included. Good enough for me. Any discussion regarding the policy?

[06:00:04] Ms. Okadekebe. Thank you. Just a question. I mean, there are, for this particular one, it would be required, but my understanding is if there are minor clarifying text for a change in policy, it doesn't necessarily go out for public comment.

[06:00:22] Not this one, but I'm just asking, right? There have been, like, administrative updates that don't go through. Technical and conforming changes. Right. Okay, thank you. So would that be a difference for this policy, that even technical and conforming, based on that language, even technical and conforming changes would require?

[06:00:41] That's right. I think that the Virginia Administrative Code says any amendment thereto, so I think even a technical or conforming change would apply. Additional discussion? Seeing none. Interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting? We will place this on consent for the April 25th board meeting. That'll take us to 1305 from the Student Services Committee. Revision of policy 8610, student records, and I believe Mr. Smith is going to take this

[06:01:18] policy. Thank you very much. Policy 8610 student records is due for its review as part of the five-year review policy five-year policy review cycle. Staff presented policy 8610 to the student services committee in December 15th as an information item and then again on February 15th 2023 as an information item. Policy was posted for community feedback from December 15th to December 30th. On March 16th the policy was brought to the student services committee for an action item at which point it was voted 302 to direct to the school board walking through the

[06:01:52] policy sections 1a1 through a4 have been updated with clarifying changes recommended by division council section a6 was added as it codifies the process for student record ownership and notification for staff and students which were pre-existing practices in the district but just codifies it. The changes in sections D1, D2, E, and F are additions to the policy from state code.

[06:02:21] Board members, any questions or discussion regarding these policy changes? Ms. Okadekebe. Thank you. A question for staff. Was this, and I'm sorry, I don't recall specifically, but was this the policy

where we had some conversation about the title of the policy?

[06:02:41] I don't believe so. This policy is specific to student records. And I'm trying to remember back if there was a discussion about student records versus regular records, but this is specific for student records.

[06:03:04] Yeah, I think because it, yeah, never mind. Additional discussion? Seeing none, interested in placing this on consent for our next board meeting. Mr. Bade.

[06:03:22] Thank you. Okay, we have consensus. We'll place this on consent for our next board meeting. That will take us to 1306 from the Department of Student Services, the 2023-24 annual plan for special education and application for federal funds.

[06:03:41] Dr. Jones. Thank you, Mr. Sorotkin. I have with me this evening Mrs. Tedra Richardson, who is the Director for Special Education, who will be providing a brief presentation explaining the application for federal funding.

[06:04:09] As you may recall, on an annual basis, we come to the board with a review of the application for federal funds, which pays for a portion of the special education services provided. as required by the state and federal law. This application is included in board docs and was developed in collaboration with the Department for Business and Financial Services.

[06:04:35] And after tonight's presentation, we ask that this come back to the board as an action item for your approval at your next board meeting. Ms. Richardson. Thank you. Good evening. Next slide. So our annual plan application for federal funding is based off of our December 1st, 2022 child count. At that time, we were serving 9,445 students eligible under the IDEA. As a capture date as of today, we are currently

[06:05:09] serving 9,835 students eligible under the IDEA, with 881 students actively in the eligibility process. Next slide. The organization of the plan is usual and customary. The plan template is provided to the local education agencies across the Commonwealth from the Virginia Department of Education. It is inclusive of all of the required certifications. Loudoun County does house the Loudoun County Juvenile Detention Center and we do serve as the fiscal agent managing approximately

[06:05:48] \$625,000 for that facility. We have narrative implementation for previous years, our proportionate share calculation for students that are parentally placed by their parents, either in homeschooling or private schools, our maintenance of effort, and then our application for funds for the upcoming year for schooled age and preschool students eligible under the IDEA. Again, Dr. Jones has mentioned, but a special thank you to Business and Financial Services for their assistance with the calculation of our maintenance of effort for the 23-24 school year we're

[06:06:24] looking at a calculation approximately around 261 million dollars in combination of local and state funds to meet the needs of students with disabilities eligible in LCPS next slide our timeline for the annual plan the Office of Special Education was able to provide a graphic overview as well as printed copies of this PowerPoint presentation and our annual plan draft application to SEAC on March 1st, 2023. Feedback from SEAC was received yesterday on April 10th,

[06:07:01] 2023. They had the following feedback and areas of focus that they would like us to consider through the grant application process. A focus on compliance with special education regulations and

IDEA. The proportionate share calculation services being expanded to reflect the whole continuum of special education and related services maintenance of effort with regards to staffing for special education teachers and related services providers and we would also certainly like to thank SEAC for their continued

[06:07:37] positive collaboration tonight we are we are presenting this as an as an informational item before you as the board and we will return on April 25th as an action item final submission to the Virginia Department of Education with the signature of the superintendent is required on May 12 2023 next slide as dr. Jones mentioned the federal funding is just a very small portion so our maintenance of effort is around 261 million dollars as a division and we're looking at about 13 million coming in for school-aged funding

[06:08:16] approximately 190,000 coming in for preschool funding funding is requested based on the child count, and it is based on level funding that is received. The VGOE typically funds about 20% of our allocation on July 1st of every year, and then we get the remaining 80% on October 1st.

[06:08:38] We have not received any information from VGOE on our preliminary funding as of yet. Next slide. The grant currently supports 130 special education teachers, five teacher assistants, two coordinators, two supervisors, one audiologist, one program assistant, one specialist, one, I'm sorry, ten behavior specialists, and one financial analyst.

[06:09:07] Our preschool funding currently supports two early childhood special education teachers. All other activities, supports, and services are required to meet the needs of students with disabilities in LCPS are locally funded.

[06:09:23] activities such as personal as purchased professional services for specialized in instruction in reading, math and behavior, materials and supplies for special education teachers and related services providers. Next slide.

[06:09:40] Our proportionate share calculation is a regulatory requirement that all local education agencies have to identify and serve students with disabilities that are parentally placed in homeschooling programs or private schools within our locality.

[06:10:00] LCPS currently utilizes our proportionate share set-aside calculation to provide direct services for transition planning for students ages 14 to 21 inclusive and speech and language services as outlined in student individualized service plans.

[06:10:19] The division also provides consultation services to private school staff and families regarding instructional strategies and appropriate interventions for students found eligible for special education and related services as outlined by their individualized service plans. We currently do not have any preschoolers that are parentally placed that were captured in our child count, and we do have the obligation to provide about \$81,000 in funding to school-age students that are eligible and being served through individualized

[06:10:54] service plans. Next slide. In summary, the annual plan and funding applications are prepared in accordance with the Virginia Department of Education guidelines. They represent the compliance with federal IDEA law and the Virginia regulations for programs governing students with disabilities. After review of the plan by SEAC and approval of the superintendent, the plan again is due to the Virginia Department of Education on May 12, 2023.

[06:11:26] Thank you. Board members, questions for the team regarding the special education annual plan application. Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. Richardson, I have to tell you something.

[06:11:44] I've been out in the community a little bit in the last two weeks, and I've had four different people tell me what a great job you are doing, two parents and two teachers. So I don't know what you're doing out there, but you've got a huge following. And I really appreciate getting that feedback from the community as well, because, you know, when we can model the process and teachers have confidence in the process that they're following, it makes a world of difference.

[06:12:12] And the families are aware of that, too. So I think whatever whatever it is that we're doing, keep keep doing. It's it's tremendous. I do have one question concerning the presentation. We talk about level funding. Why is it that we don't apply for an increase due to inflation and increase in student enrollment in special needs programs?

[06:12:33] That's a very complicated question, Mr. Morse, but thank you for that. So on an annual basis, the annual application is the process that the state has created to meet their requirement to the federal government. We don't know how they're going to apply a percentage increase to our child count based on funding.

[06:12:57] So each disability category generates a certain amount of money, and that is found, again, through business and financial services in what's called Schedules A and B. It gives us a breakdown. We certainly could ask for a projection of more funding based on the increase that we've experienced in our child count, but there's no guarantee that the Virginia Department of Education would accept our annual plan application with such an increase.

[06:13:25] So they don't solicit actual numbers of students being serviced? No, they only use our December 1st child count data, which is 9,445 students, and they receive that information broken down by disability category. Now, was that an increase over the previous year's numbers?

[06:13:42] Yes, it was. Okay, so when they look at that, we... We should get a slightly higher amount of funding. Yes, we should. Okay, very good. Thank you. You're welcome. Additional questions. Ms. Polipko. Thank you.

[06:13:58] Ms. Richardson, I want to second what Mr. Morse just said, because I, too, have heard many compliments about the work that you're doing over the last few months. And so I want to thank you, and I want to commend you, because it is an extremely difficult job, what you're doing. But you are the light.

[06:14:15] And I really appreciate everything that you're doing right now to support our special education students and our staff. But I did want to follow up and just mention that it was quite eye-opening for me to look at that presentation and see how little that grant really covers.

[06:14:31] So that's why it is so incumbent upon us as a school board to ensure that we are allocating funds in this budget to support, just like Mr. Morse was saying, we have students that are not even accounted for in this grant so that we are that we are that are up and coming that we will be serving so um thank you for that presentation and and i hope that we can take the steps that are necessary to ensure proper funding for our students and staff

[06:15:02] thank you additional discussion seeing none interest in placing this uh the annual plan application on consent during our next board meeting looks like thumbs up all around so we'll place us on

consent thank you thank you for all the work you're doing with that we'll go to 1307 from the Department of Support Services annual the school board

[06:15:36] policy 6210 student transportation annual review of walk zones mr. Lewis thank you mr. Sorotkin members of the board tonight we bring you our annual report on the walk zone evaluation for the fall of 23 and I'll start by saying we did as we are all trying to do is improve and increase our communication with the community and parents and so we we upped our pre notice of the

[06:16:13] communities and advertised this with the parents for on three different occasions in February and March to make sure that everyone had the word out that we were going to be talking about this at the Finance Committee so this is a repeat of the Finance Committee presentation we did before if you go to the next slide you can see we've started and I'll go through these quickly just a overview of the policy 6210 that talks about establishing the distances for walk zones elementary school is one mile middle school and high schools are both 1.25 the next slide we talk about the exceptions rule which is where we may go

[06:16:48] down the end of a call to sacrifice open and extend that distance by 0.1 for elementary and point two for the secondary and I will say that tonight's presentation includes no exception rule area so that's just there for information but we have not applied that to any of the changes this year the next slide just also talks about the policy and the requirement that we notify parents prior to June 1 for any changes there in the walk zone so we will do that after tonight's presentation to make sure that everyone has notice of any changes that may be occurring with their child for the walk zone in the next year the next slide is just provided information because it

[06:17:28] always seems to come up so we wanted to be forward-thinking and provide the information for the board we have in terms of crossing guards we have currently 56 crossing guards 48 elementary and 16 at middle schools and those again are provided by the sheriff's department with their crossing guard program and by by their practice and we provide no crossing guards at any of our high schools so the next slide is an overview of the changes we're making and you see the bottom line there is a total increase of 106 students that will be walking and that's of course based on this year's enrollment for the

[06:18:06] students that we have I won't go through each one of them but you'll see there that Harper Park Tolbert are both affected by the same change they have 29 and 39 respectively and then smarts mill has a total of 31 the rest are very minimal changes over the year the next slide we review the just the calendar and we presented this at the Finance Committee on March 21st and then we were scheduled to present it to this board on March 28th but we got deferred

[06:18:41] last time because of time for today's meeting and then we'll provide notice to all the parents no later than June 1 I am happy to go through the next slides begin the maps for each of the areas and you can see here we'll start with the Cedar Lane we've identified an area north of the school that is that affects only four students and that's something that we talked actually mr. heavy and I had a conversation about last year so we went out and agreed and changed that area the next slide reviews Emmerich Elementary School you see a small area

[06:19:18] there on the in all the areas of the red markings are the overall walk zone boundary in the yellow area are areas that we are adding to the walk zone this particular area is in a commercial zone so there are no students in there but we've just included that to clean up the boundaries of the the walk zone the next slide is for Harper Park and you'll see this you'll have a similar map for Tolbert you can see those schools you probably aware those two schools are on the same campus the yellow area has been added

due to an increase a new area has been included because they've been added new sidewalks to serve the area and

[06:19:58] provide a walking trail for that so those areas have been added both to Harper Park and Tolbert the next slide goes to Hillsborough you'll see there that Hillsborough also has had some infrastructure improvements and they provided a new sidewalk so we've included that area it's now served by that sidewalk next slide is Leesburg Elementary and this is just correcting actually an error we had last year you see the yellow area there last year we had included the homes on the other side of the street and just missed that side of the street so we went included that so we've cleaned that up as well again

[06:20:36] that's another one of the areas that has zero students affected by it the next slide talks about Loudoun Valley High School in this map you see three green areas there so the streets three schools on this map Loudoun Valley is in the upper right hand corner in the area down actually next to Blue Ridge Middle School that's shaded yellow is the area we're adding to that and that's because we just identified a walk path that we were not aware of before and so we were able to include that within the distance and added that to the walk zone next slide is smart smell middle school kind of a similar situation where we've

[06:21:13] identified a path that we just had not identified in the past and we're able to get those students within that walk zone as well the next slide is Sully Elementary School and you'll see that very in the bottom right hand corner You'll see we've added some areas that we found some infrastructure.

[06:21:35] We're not quite sure why that was excluded in the past, but so we've just cleaned that up and included that area. Again, there's one student in that area. And then the last slide for a map is the Tolbert slide that we looked at earlier that is very similar and exact same areas that's been served by the sidewalk and been able to add those students to the Tolbert.

[06:21:55] So I realize that was quick, but it was late at night, and I thought I would try to go through that as quickly as possible, But I'm happy to take any questions you may have board members questions miss. Okay, thank you chair Going back to the changes specifically for Tolbert and Harper Park looking at the map It looks like the yellow area is actually new construction. So There were some townhouses put in kind of at that corner of Battlefield Parkway Is that what I'm seeing there? It's those are that's new construction that's gone up over the last year, right?

[06:22:29] That's that's correct. And they provided the sidewalks. We were able to include those in there So yes, ma'am, and then first smart's mill It looks like that's field stone apartments Maybe you went by really quickly and I'm trying to catch up and my mouse isn't cooperating on my laptop here, but So these are on Southview place. I'm not sure what types of residents they are but that's the area and as the staff reviewed those they were identified a

[06:22:59] Path that we were able to do that. We had not identified in the past and were able to include those. Okay. Yeah I mean those residences have been there for a long time. So I'm just curious what path was Not previously identified. Yes, it's kind of hard to see there But you can see the little red red - line within that map is what's showing that is the path They've identified and I'm happy to if you'd like to do that we can we can certainly You know get on a call and look at a bigger map or even drive out there and look at that to share with that

[06:23:38] - Okay, thank you. - Additional questions? - I had one. So, well, not strictly about this, but in the last updates to policy 6210 that were made in October, there are also supposed to be annual reports on the

number of bus routes exceeding one hour in length and the number of bus routes exceeding the recommended student capacity restrictions.

[06:24:09] So I just wanted to see, I realize it's only been six months since that change were put in place. But I wanted to see if those annual reports had been made yet, or if it would be on the same cadence as the annual walks on reviews going forward.

[06:24:25] - So our understanding of that was when, as we established the routes for next year, then we would do that at that point. And so that would be closer to the August timeframe as we would be able to do that. We obviously know that that's where our guidance is to make sure we get there.

[06:24:41] So our plan would be to have no surprises with that, but we wouldn't be able to do that until we make the new routes for the next year. - That's what I figured the answer was. I just wanted to double check. - Yes. - Thank you. Additional questions? Thank you for the update.

[06:24:58] So with that, we'll move to item 1308, requested by Ms. Corbo, regarding virtual Loudoun Elementary. Ms. Corbo. - Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[06:25:13] Around November, early in the budget process, virtual learning at the elementary level was brought to the board's attention. The central office staff shared their recommendation to close the program. They cited their decision was based on low enrollment, stakeholder engagement, and that the belief that in-person learning is best for elementary students.

[06:25:37] And then on January 10th, to the surprise of virtual elementary learning parents, the superintendent's budget report did not include funding, the funding to continue the VDE program. So virtual elementary parents, as we know, they became outraged, disappointed, and as they reported, they were not aware of the program, that the program was going to be closing, and they started sending emails to the board and also speaking at meetings in support of the program.

[06:26:11] After speaking with a multitude of parents, I quickly realized our parents were never included in the stakeholder engagement process. And they were completely left out of the conversation regarding a thorough evaluation, a needs assessment for the program and for the students.

[06:26:29] As I met with parents and educators, it became very clear to me that there was no, that there's no other virtual learning option that is anything like Loudon's. That was something that I asked multiple times early on. Is there an alternative? Is there something else for these students? The answer was yes, but what I realized, it's really no. There's nothing like what we provide.

[06:26:53] So Loudon's program has not only had academic success, it's also the only program that provides the opportunity of a synchronous all-day learning experience that includes specials such as art, PE, and music.

[06:27:11] The online program offers children that social interaction, friendship building, interactive learning with teams, small groups, all of those things that help support academics and emotional, social-emotional learning. What we have done here in Loudoun is we've created a pretty incredible program with proven, like I said, academic success, and it's synchronous.

[06:27:36] It's the closest possible that you can do to replicate a regular school environment. And I believe, given the opportunity, Loudoun should, can and should, capitalize on virtual elementary, perhaps

partnering with surrounding divisions, expanding opportunities to serve some of our most vulnerable kids.

[06:27:56] Because as we heard with public comment today, we truly are serving the filling a need, the filling a void, and servicing some of our most vulnerable children. In an email exchange while advocating for families and seeking funding solutions to allow the program to continue, on March 7th, Acting Superintendent Dr. Smith stated, in terms of the continuation of the virtual elementary program, I believe that it would be inappropriate for me to explore the possibility of the continuation of this program given the recent board action.

[06:28:34] Because the board had already agreed based on information that we didn't have until after parents started speaking out that we agreed that discontinuing the program was the right thing to do.

[06:28:51] And, again, that was before parents started speaking out. So the board action was taken prior to the board learning about how valuable this asset we have that we created. And we decided that prior to the public outcry from parents and educators and students all advocating for this super successful program.

[06:29:13] And so knowing that we have budget constraints that we heard about today, I also know that there are ways that we could possibly look at virtual elementary. And we can direct the superintendent to evaluate the program and seek ways to make the program financially possible by possibly combining classes, using staff who are underutilized, and possibly even incorporating the homebound into our virtual elementary program.

[06:29:44] So there are ways, and I know that we received an email, and I don't know if the rest of the board has received emails as well, about ways to bring the cost down. And there are even questions about the cost.

[06:29:59] I know that this year the cost went up tremendously, and I'm not sure why or where those numbers come from. So, my recommendation is that the Loudoun County School Board would direct the superintendent to seek alternative funding options to support the continuation of virtual elementary.

[06:30:18] So, further discussion? Ms. Polipko. Thank you. Ms. Corbo, thank you for your presentation this evening. I will freely admit that I am one of the board members that initially thought that we probably shouldn't fund Virtual Loudoun simply because it was my opinion as well that children are best educated in person.

[06:30:45] And what I was not taking into consideration and what I didn't learn until later on is that these children actually are being provided, as you said, with a synchronous all-day learning class situation in which they cannot access anywhere else.

[06:31:02] they would not be accessing if they were to be receiving homebound instruction and simply for the ability for them to be able to socialize with their peers is enough for me to second guess why we would be removing elementary and this is only elementary virtual because our our high school middle school and high school is is remaining in place so I guess I can't fathom why we wouldn't be able to take a step back and look into this a bit further and truly determine as a board to be able to direct Dr. Smith to look into this

[06:31:39] if there is a way that we could provide this ongoing needed service for the students that are accessing it with the budget that we have in place. I find it hard to believe that we couldn't at least investigate this. To me, for us to make this decision without having that information in front of us really just doesn't make sense.

[06:32:00] If we're here for students and we're placing students at the center of the work that we do, then we owe it to them to at least do some further investigation to find out if it's something that we can continue in the budget. Thank you. Further discussion? Mr. Morse.

[06:32:17] I appreciate Ms. Polifco's comments. I'm a little confused, I guess, by the numbers, because what I heard tonight was it's \$3.5 million, \$3.4 million, serving 88 students, which is about \$40,000 per student.

[06:32:33] Is there a mismatch? Is that \$3.5 million for the K-12? or is that for only the elementary school? It is the 3.5 million K-12 or only the elementary school. Is there a mismatch there? And if not, why would we need to have \$3.5 million in staff costs when there's no transportation, there's no food service, counseling is done online and I would think that that would be much more efficient as well.

[06:33:00] So just a little confused as to how the funding works out to support that. So if staff could help me with that. - Mr. Morris, I believe the, in terms of the figure, it's 2.6 million for the elementary virtual program.

[06:33:17] I don't have those broken down costs and I don't know if other staff had that. We don't, I don't know that we brought that tonight. You know, I can share, you know, just if I may chair for just a second in terms of the, you know, and where the reason why staff was moving in this direction is that it's my understanding that we stood up the program with COVID funds and it was always intended to be a temporary program.

[06:33:40] It was supposed to be a one-year program for students transitioning out of the pandemic. And after year one, the board took action again with COVID funds to have an additional year and this year in FY23, you know, we came to the board in October, October 25th, the budget work session to have a discussion about budget priorities for this budget.

[06:34:00] And the feedback we received from the board at that time was that elementary distance learning was not a priority. And so that is the reason why we didn't build it in the superintendent's estimate of needs. Also, I'll share the low enrollment of the program and the intent for it to remain a temporary program, along with the budget outlook, is another reason why it was not included.

[06:34:23] We have sent emails to all of the families. We've started to have one-on-one conversations with families about transitioning, recognizing that some students have never been in a brick-and-mortar building, and so we've offered tours. We've started to make that transition already. With many of our families, we've asked them to reach out.

[06:34:41] We've heard from, I'll say I've heard from two families that we've spoken with, as well as the principal, Laura Hicks, has spoken with two families about that transition process that had some concerns. And so we have been moving forward based on the direction we felt like we had, and that's the reason it wasn't built in to the estimate of needs.

[06:35:02] I'll also share, as we look at it, we have a kindergarten class with three students. We have a fourth grade class with eight students. So that low enrollment really does impact staffing across the board and what we're able to do. And if we were to go back and look at that, we'd have to cut something out of our current budget to find funds to support that.

[06:35:24] It does look like that the 2.5 million is for 24 positions right now for virtual Loudoun Elementary and the O&M costs are about 32,000. So majority of that, there's 24 positions that are included as a part of the elementary program.

[06:35:40] So, just a little bit of background on that. - So, 24 positions, six age groups. So, we're talking about four instructors per age group.

[06:35:56] If the class size is 20, I wouldn't understand why we would need that level of support. I agree, I mean, three in four students is not acceptable. That's not a model that's sustainable. So, but if we're talking about that number of employees, 24 employees, if we put the class sizes at 20, which is a very reasonable class size for virtual delivery, I would think that the cost would be significantly under what we're currently estimating.

[06:36:28] I'm going to ask Dr. Ellis to chime in on that in terms of the staffing. Sure, thank you. So I'll just add to what Dr. Smith said that those 24 FTEs include classroom teachers, specials teachers, so music, art, PE, school counselor, specialists, special education teachers, and teacher assistants.

[06:36:53] And part of that, I think that is what makes the program, as Ms. Corbo said, unique and different from programs like Virtual Virginia. So families who do require virtual options, virtual education do have options like Virtual Virginia, and it's not the same as our program.

[06:37:14] I cannot sit here and tell you that it's the same. It is not fully synchronous. they do not have specials classes it does not mirror a normal school day like our virtual program does but that's also why we have 24 FTEs dedicated to it. Okay thank you. Additional comments? Seeing none we'll move to 1309 also from requested by Ms. Corbo regarding speech

[06:37:52] language pathologists. Ms. Corbo. So Mr. Chair will the virtual elementary be placed on um an action item for next next meeting to direct the superintendent to further investigate yes if you've given that it was an information item today if you'd like to request that that be brought back as an information item during the next meeting that will place out on the agenda very good thank you um so so the next item is um speech and language pathologists so with educators sharing their concerns during um public comment sending emails regarding their ability to provide speech

[06:38:29] and language services to children. I realize the speech and language pathologists were not informed about the reduction in staff or even that they even had a meeting because they still came to public comment today. So I asked the superintendent for additional information. I did not receive a response last week so therefore I requested this as an information item on the agenda for this evening's meeting. I eventually did receive a response from Neil Sloven where he confirmed that he was not aware of any meeting with the speech and language pathologist team to discuss

[06:39:08] the changes that led to truly the public outcry, comments, concerns from educators, and also the LEA. So we did receive, like I said, an update. And Dr. Smith, did you want to share that update or do you want me to read that I'm happy to share an update if if you'd like yep that'd be great so um so I will

share in terms of the speech language pathologist you know that has been part of our as we looked at our budget and we've gone back to our pre-covid staffing standards and as

[06:39:47] we've looked at that one of the other things that we've shared in terms of our budget is that we've made a concerted effort to make sure that that no one loses their job as a part of this and And so to get to our staffing standard, our staffing standard for speech and language pathologists is 55 to one.

[06:40:05] I believe the state standard is 65 to one, so the LCPS is richer. Currently, I believe our caseloads are about 50 to one. And so to get back to our staffing standard, we would be reducing the total number of speech language pathologists by 10 FTEs.

[06:40:24] And because these were COVID-funded positions, they were one-time positions that were funded. However, recognizing the difficulty in hiring speech pathologists, the decision was made to only reduce 2.9 vacant positions.

[06:40:39] And I think it's important to note that those 2.9 vacant positions that were reduced have been vacant for over a year. So we're not cutting any positions. We're not increasing caseloads. We are cutting positions that have been vacant for over a year. Now, we did talk about as people retire or leave that we would reduce the remaining positions to attrition.

[06:41:03] However, at the same time, we will continue to look at eligibility and look at our numbers for students that may be in the eligibility process to see if our numbers continue to justify those positions according to the staffing standard that our board has adopted.

[06:41:19] So that's been our process is to use the staffing standard to guide our staffing and our budgeting, and that's what we've done in this case. I'm not sure if there was some miscommunication around some of the speech language pathologists around, because it sounds like some folks were talking about caseloads and some other pieces.

[06:41:38] I do know that we have a supervisor and a specialist that oversees them, and they often do step in to substitute during FMLA leave and some other types of leave to support. But right now, we are looking at only reducing the 2.9 vacant positions that were reduced that had been vacant for over a year.

[06:41:57] So I hope that provides some context to this topic. Thank you. I appreciate that input because I think that any time that we have so many educators coming forward during public comment, so many emails, clearly there's a miscommunication.

[06:42:15] And it's unfortunate that there wasn't an opportunity to meet with them earlier, because, again, tonight they still, you know, many, many educators upset about information that appears to be not correct.

[06:42:34] So thank you for that input. I appreciate it. And thanks. Ms. Polifko. Thank you. I think the second piece to this puzzle here is that, and one of the chief concerns among these speech pathologists, is that students just aren't getting serviced.

[06:42:57] So their individual needs are not being met, and we can say that we have vacant positions that haven't been filled, and that may be the case, but we also have situations in which children are not being properly identified to receive those services.

[06:43:15] And if we're making those determinations simply because we don't have the staff, well, that's in violation of IDEA and free appropriate public education as well. And I have encountered many situations in which children at the preschool age level who do need those speech services are not getting them.

[06:43:34] So not only are we in a situation where we are potentially not funding the positions that are needed, but we're also in a situation where the children that need those services are not getting them.

[06:43:50] And we have to question, is that because they don't need them or is it because we don't have the positions? So it's really a two part problem. And I believe that every single person that came out to speak tonight and all those that did not, they're worried about the kids that they serve. They're worried about whether or not those kids are having their needs met. And I think that's something that we have to consider as a board. We cannot sit here and simply look at the positions.

[06:44:21] we also need to ask the question of whether or not these children are being properly identified to receive those related services. And I can tell you, as a BCBA, I work very closely with speech pathologists on a daily basis, as well as other related service providers, because these children, in many cases, do not only need one type of service.

[06:44:41] They need multiple related services to have all their needs met. Thank you. Additional discussion? Mr. Morse. Just out of curiosity, from HRTD, when was the last time we did a study on the staffing levels for speech language pathologists?

[06:45:00] Is that something we evaluated recently? Staffing levels, you mean how they're paid? They're low, they're workload. They have 55 as the current 55 students. So you're talking about staffing standards? Yes. So that is a combination between the department that oversees the position and budget.

[06:45:23] That is not, staffing standards are not something that HRTD reviews or analyzes. Okay, so that would go to Dr. Jones. When was the last time we evaluated the workload, the standard for, the staffing standard for SLP?

[06:45:39] I'll have to ask Ms. Willoughby if she can help me out here. I know that we have evaluated. Okay, tag Ms. Willoughby. I know we have evaluated a number of the special education staffing standards during my five-year tenure in this particular role.

[06:45:54] I also know that there are lots of things that our special educators and our SLPs juggle with their responsibilities. We are at the state, based on the regulations, it's 1 to 68 children, and our current staffing standard is 1 to 55.

[06:46:14] Mrs. Willoughby, do you recall that we recently updated that one? Every year. So every year, as part of the budget process, we meet with the departments and we review the staffing standards. see if any tweaks need to be made recognizing that you know changes can occur especially when staffing standards are first drafted so you go back when we first roll them out we were really at that time especially paying attention and wanting to make sure that we got the standard hopefully as right as possible and then once a standard is more settled and I would say I think this one is

[06:46:52] probably when that's a little more settled then we really just rely on the department to bring forward any concerns regarding staffing but again just reiterating what you're hearing that our standard is above what the state has yeah i'm just curious because student services could vary in length so if if the student services are getting longer if their needs are growing individual student needs then the number of students that they're covering is going to be fewer and yet we're we had people here today that said they had over 60 or 60 students so i mean if that's our staffing standard, then we need to stick with what our staffing standard is. And that would

[06:47:30] mean that we don't have enough current positions. So we would have to adjust that. And that exacerbates the problem that Ms. Polifco was talking about. So is, I heard earlier that we are averaging 51 students. Is that correct? Part of the, if there are average is about one to 50 or one to 51. My understanding as our specialist and our supervisor and our specialized instructional facilitators

[06:48:03] are working closely with our SLP teams to also substitute when we have staff that are out. This year, among all the other challenges, we've had a number of our SLPs out on various types of leave. And when that occurs, as mentioned in public comment, we still have to provide those service we are required and there is a strong desire to continue to provide those services to our children there are times that those become compensatory services and there are times that we have a substitute to provide those SLP

[06:48:40] services as well as administrative supportive staff to provide those SLP services because they are certified in that area we also have worked with contracted agencies, but the contracted agencies are virtual and our children need the services in person. Thank you. Additional discussion? I went back to when the school board was first

[06:49:13] notified about the issue with the COVID funding and the reductions in the vacancies for these positions from the January student services budget presentation. And so the last bullet on that slide says, you know, a net reduction of 8.3 vacant positions will occur due to staffing standard growth and hold harmless provisions. So that 8.3 is across all the positions that were listed on that slide. So that's, you know, supervisor, special education, teacher, special education, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and speech therapist.

[06:49:51] So I just want to make sure the 2.9 vacant positions for the speech therapist that you mentioned tonight, is that their share of the 8.3 total vacant positions? I just want to understand if what's happening now is something different than we were briefed about in January, or that's just their share of the 8.3 total vacant positions that are being cut from the budget because of the COVID funds going away.

[06:50:16] I believe that's right, but I'm going to ask Ms. Willey to confirm. Is that right? Yes, that's correct. Okay, so this is the plan we were briefed about back in January? Yes, sir. And fundamentally, this is coming to a head because enrollment is lower than it was pre-COVID, and so now that the COVID supplemental funds are going away, we're returning to our staffing standards, which are exactly as they were before COVID, reflecting a smaller number of students than we had.

[06:50:52] Is that accurate? Or I just wanna make sure I'm not missing something about what's going on. - Yes, I think we are returning to those staffing standards and where we had additional staff that we were able to use COVID funds.

[06:51:07] I think we got used to having some of those staff and some of those positions that were really one-time funds. And so we are returning back to those staffing standards. And so it is a little bit more difficult to say, We've got to return back to that caseload and that workload that we had pre-COVID.

[06:51:22] Okay, thanks. And I just want to, I mean, this has had a history going back three or four years where just as far as the staffing position, the staffing standards for these positions in general, where I think it was right when I came on the board in February of 2020, I made a motion to enhance the staffing standards for the speech therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists.

[06:51:48] I believe that failed on a 5-4 vote at the time. Then COVID happened after COVID. Last year in FY23, most of the hold harmless for the enrollment drops went away, but we retained it based on the

superintendent's recommendation, largely in the areas of special education and the support positions because still seeing learning loss and needing to support those populations.

[06:52:17] So now it happened a year ago for the general teaching positions and population, and it's happening now for the special education teaching positions. But I do feel like there's been a little bit of whiplash as far as the kind of the staff recommendations for what staffing level is required.

[06:52:37] And I think that maybe merits taking a look at going into next year's budget to see whether we want to make any adjustments to that. What I will say about that is I just want to make sure that's comprehensive and doesn't just include the speech language pathologists, but includes also the physical therapists, occupational therapists, all of the other related positions, not just the one group that's come and spoken to us about this because they're not the only ones who would be tied up in something like this.

[06:53:05] Any additional discussion? Ms. Okadeke. Thank you, Chair. Just going back to the topic of the staffing standard for these positions in general, I'm not a speech-language pathologist, but we heard very impassioned stories and statements from the teachers who are in these roles who talked about their workload, not just with the students, but everything else that's required to support students needing these services in terms of

[06:53:43] of meetings and assessments and all of the other pieces to their work. And I'm wondering if there's, is it possible in the annual review that there's a disconnect between kind of the departmental view and what's happening with teachers that could be looked at in more detail, just to make sure, again, that we, that our basis for understanding and our standards are really reflective of what it takes to support our students effectively.

[06:54:23] - Additional discussion? - Seeing none, we will move on to item 1310 from the Department of Student Services, Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation. Dr. Jones.

[06:54:39] - Thank you, Mr. Sorokin. This information item is the Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation to raise awareness about the mental health disorders in youth in an effort to remove barriers the treatment and counseling so that our children can thrive at school and in life we recognize that schools naturally serve as a primary access point for the provision of our comprehensive services and we're very appreciative of the supports provided through our unified mental health team members we ask that the latin the school board adopt the proclamation recognizing may 2023 as

[06:55:15] mental health awareness month and this proclamation will return as a item for action for next month or for our next meeting thank you thank you board members any questions or discussion regarding this proclamation seeing none will place that on action for our April 25th meeting that will bring us to item 14 I move that the Loudoun County School Board recess this public meeting and reconvene its closed meeting pursuant to section 2.2 - 3712 of the code of Virginia for the purposes of completing discussion on those items set forth in agenda item

[06:55:52] 4.01 above. Seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Any discussion? Seeing none. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Mr. Mejedevi and Ms. Reeser absent for the vote.

[06:56:08] We're now in closed session. I do not anticipate any motions coming out of

[07:19:31] closed session. All right. The board is coming out of closed session. I move that the closed meeting be adjourned, that the Loudoun County School Board reconvene its public meeting and that the minutes of this public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting. I further move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting. Resolution 31-22-23, whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and whereas section 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by

[07:20:09] the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law now therefore be resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification applies and only public such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered by the Loudoun County School Board Is there a second?

[07:20:40] Seconded by Ms. Okadegbe, is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Mehedeve and Reeser absent for the vote.

[07:20:56] Given the lateness of the hour without objection, we'll pass over item 15, board member comments and committee reports, which will bring us to item 16, new business. Is there any new business tonight? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Good night, everyone.



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