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Loudoun County School Board, Student Services Committee Meeting, Thursday, April 20, 2023

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[00:00:19] - Dr. Jones, are you good? Good to start. Good evening and welcome to the Student Services Committee. I'm Harris Medley, the chair of this committee and joined by Ms. Sheridan this evening.

[00:00:35] I call to order. The next item on agenda is public comments. Do we have any public comments? No public comments. I guess we'll move to item number three, approval for meeting minutes. Do I have a motion? - I move that we approve the March 16th, 2023 meeting minutes.

[00:00:54] - I'll second that. - Any further questions? - No. - If all in agreement, please raise your hand and say aye. - Aye. - The motion passes with Ms. Ogadig Bay absent. The next item we'll move on to is our action items.

[00:01:11] We'll first start with policy 8440 and this is for action item tonight. So Dr. Jones, are you gonna take it or we'll pass it to Mr. Ferry? - Thank you, yes, Mr. Ferry's here for this.

[00:01:27] - Thank you. So it did go out for public comment. We did look at the feedback. We did make some alterations to the policy as requested previously. One of the items that we did capture is we did change from he to student athlete.

[00:01:47] Sorry, I'm on line 10. I didn't know if you need me to read the entire policy, but I know we went through it earlier. So on line 10, you'll see a couple of changes. One change as cited by public input and

committee input was there was no mention of practice.

[00:02:05] It just mentioned play. So we struck the word play. We included the word participation instead of play. And then also along in line 10, you'll see where we struck the word play again to return to competition or practice until, and that's on line 11, you saw we struck the word heed and included the student athlete.

[00:02:34] And those were recommendations that, again, kind of came from the committee and advisory board feedback. At this time, if you have any questions. We did also share the regulation in your packet as well. And the information that we share with parents that have to identify the signs and symptoms, that was one of the questions you all had.

[00:02:56] How do we identify that? We do go over that information with our coaches and our student-athletes and parents. and the parents are required to take a course and acknowledge that they've completed the National Federation Sudden Cardiac course.

[00:03:11] This is exactly the same course that we require athletic administrators, our athletic trainers, and coaches to do as well. Thank you, Mr. Ferry. Board members, any questions? So, fellow committee members, I have one comment I saw, I think was posted in the public comments, I guess.

[00:03:34] And I think, and Mr. Ferry, I think it refers to line number eight, and it says a student athlete who is experiencing, I think the recommendation or at least suggestion, is that observed to be experiencing? I don't know if that makes any sense. I mean, again, from your point of view, from staff point of view, is it experiencing or is it observed to be experiencing the symptoms?

[00:03:57] I don't know. I just want to add some feedback from my committee members or from Mr. Ferry. I'm sorry. Any thoughts on that? So we took the language from the model policy. can see where experiencing is something we'd be observing because they'd be in the middle of practice I don't have any feeling one way or the other but obviously we we observe practices we certify our coaches to be able to identify signs and symptoms so if we see somebody experiencing that's when we're

[00:04:34] gonna remove them from from practice and I think by not saying observing you're also expecting the student athlete to report anything they're experiencing and to speak up to so it's not just an observation by coaches we also want the students to tell to report that they're having some sort of experience so I think it's okay because you're as you said they're observing the whole time it's it's almost pretty it's a conclusion that that's what's happening anyway so I'm fine either way but I don't think it's necessary I didn't have any hard

[00:05:11] reservation but I just want to make sure that we kind of at least entertain the discussion on it. So Ms. Ogadegbe, we are in policy 8440 for action right now. So I don't have any further questions. I don't know if you have any thoughts or comments on that. So do we have a motion to send this to a committee? So moved. Second? Second. Okay, moved by Ms. Ogadegbe and seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Any further questions, comments? No. All those in favor,

[00:05:44] raise your hand and say aye. Aye. This passes 3-0 to send this to the full board. Thank you. We'll move to the next item on agenda.

[00:06:15] Policy, it's also for an action item, is policy, yes, thank you, 8640, Disclosure of Public PIA Information, Dr. Jones or Mrs. Smith.

[00:06:33] So before you join Mrs. Smith, I think we got a lot of feedback from SEAC and MSAC, so anyway, if you were able to review any of the feedback and we can discuss that. Thank you. Yes, we're here to discuss policy 8640 disclosure of student personally identifiable information. Yes, we did receive in sec and CAC feedback. They were actually incorporated into the Information item. They just didn't make it in the board docs for that meeting. But I believe they are part of your packet and they are and that feedback is already included in the policy changes that we discussed in March so I can go through the policy and the changes if you'd like as a review.

[00:07:14] Excellent. Well, thank you for the opportunity to present on policy 8640. The policy was reviewed and approved by the board in September of 2022. However, there were recommended changes stemming from the special grand jury report, which is why it's back in front of the board again so quickly.

[00:07:31] DDI also receive updated feedback from MSAC and SEAC, as we discussed, and that feedback, and thanks to that feedback, the policy has been updated for clarity and for consistency. So an overview of the changes, I'm going through sections. Section A, item 2, improves the definition of personally identifiable information for clarification.

[00:07:52] Section A, item 4, added a clear definition of directory information. Section A, item 5, clarifies using state code language on who is considered a school official and adds language ensuring reasonable access methods with appropriate restrictions.

[00:08:10] Section A, item 12C, clarifies that LCPS may provide information to parents when necessary, even if the student is 18 years of age in accordance with state code. Section C, item 12, clarifies language that LCPS must comply to the extent of the law when records are disclosed without consent.

[00:08:44] Section C, item 2K, language, this is language from the Division Council in response to the special grand jury, specifically emphasizing that LCPS staff should otherwise endeavor to provide as much relevant information to the community about security incidents occurring in LCPS schools or during LCPS school-sponsored activities in order to foster transparent communication. Section C, item 3, specifies that when practicable, the custodian of the records, LCPS, will send written notification to parents of the student or the eligible student on bond disclosure.

[00:09:06] Section D clarifies when LCPS will record access to records and what will be recorded. Section 4 specifies when this information does not need to be recorded as well. Section G, 4, clarifies that LCPS gets consent from parents to release information.

[00:09:25] I just want to clarify that, again, LCPS does not store student social security numbers in any fashion or form in any system. Section H3 captures the current process for promptly sending student data to schools when students transfer.

[00:09:42] Electronic records transfers happen the same day. In physical records, student cumulative folders are transferred within two business days into internal schools. Section I, item 2C, comes from language added by Division Council in response to the special grand jury report regarding the process for student transfers and handoff of records for safety concerns.

[00:10:04] That is a quick overview of the policy, similar to the overview that was provided in March, and we're happy to take any questions. Thank you, Ms. Smith. Board members, any questions, comments? Ms. Okadekbe. Thank you, committee chair.

[00:10:20] So when we this came before the committee last month, I had a couple of questions that I wanted to raise again. The first one is about the title of the policy there. While much of the information that's discussed here is PII. There is other information such as educational records that are included in the policy about what can be disclosed and when and so I would propose that the title of the policy be reflective of the scope of the type of data and information that's

[00:10:57] covered by the policy so it could be personal personally identifiable information and other and educational records or I don't know what would be a more appropriate comprehensive title so I would ask if you have suggestions for that we don't have a specific suggestion we can look into that. I so what we took division council was where we locked into this title and could we change it and they said absolutely it could be changed and they just requested it be as specific as possible um so if that's something you would like for us to make recommendations on we can absolutely do that i'm not sure if i took

[00:11:36] that direction clearly out of the last meeting so sorry about that that's okay i mean maybe i'll raise this to the other committee members what their thoughts are on a on an alternate title it gets a little bit long but we could say disclosure of student personally identifiable information and other educational records as a comprehensive title.

[00:12:03] - Any thoughts to the board members? I'm fine with that, I think that helps Ms. Ogaugbe to be a little more specific about it, that since it's not just PII, but other educational records, I'll be happy to support that. Any objections to that?

[00:12:19] No, I think we, so Mr. Smith, I think we have at least a consensus that, to change the name, it's other educational records. just to append, and other educational records. My second question, in the first paragraph where we talk about FERPA, I think it would be helpful to specify that FERPA is a federal regulation.

[00:12:50] Perhaps on line 12, after it says a copy of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA, in parentheses, within the parentheses, you could have comma, a federal regulation.

[00:13:09] We did, that was a second action item we took out of the last. We did run that by division council and they did provide some recommended language. And what they provided to us was the division is obligated to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA, and its regulations as well as state laws governing the confidentiality of student educational records.

[00:13:33] Did that sentence be injected after the FERPA statement? - So I see that line there but it doesn't specify that it is a federal regulation. I just think that that's an important nuance that would be helpful to include.

[00:13:54] - Can you share the line number, Ms. Okadegme? - So one option would be on line 12. So at the starting on line 11, the sentence begins, a copy of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act parentheses FERPA comma a federal regulation and parentheses it's the first reference to FERPA in the policy so mission so I realize it wouldn't be the first reference to it but perhaps we could just put on line 13 in front of family educational rights we it could say the division shall comply

[00:14:32] with the federal family educational rights just insert the word federal I like that yep this is - Does Council have any objection to that? - No, that works. My recommendation was going to be on line 13 is that the division is obligated to comply with FERPA, comma, as applicable federal law, comma, as well as state law governing, dot, dot, dot, so.

[00:14:59] - I have no objection to either. I just was thrown out an idea. - Mr. West, you were making the change in line number 12, 13, or somewhere else? - Line 13. - So can you repeat the line again, please?

[00:15:14] - Yes, I would pick up where it currently states the division shall, we'd modify that, or the recommendation is to modify that to the division is obligated to comply with FERPA as applicable federal law, comma, as well as state law governing the confidentiality of student education records.

[00:15:37] - Objections to the language? I think we're good with that language, if you wanna make that. Any further questions, comments? No? So can I get a motion? I think if the committee is ready, we can send it to the full board.

[00:15:53] - So moved. - Okay, so we'll move this policy to the full board with this, I'm sorry, yeah, fair enough. All those in favor, I was gonna make a question. Actually, any questions, I'm gonna make a comment.

[00:16:09] So what I was gonna say is that, so we'll make this policy to the board with those amendments and that's why I just made a comment that to the title and to the line number 13. So all those in favor, say aye. - Aye. - Okay, this policy goes to the full board with all three members voting for it.

[00:16:34] - We'll move to Dr. Jones, we'll move to item number, as an information item, chronic absenteeism. Ms. Evans or Dr. Jones? - Thank you, Chair Mejedevi. And we'll just ask for some assistance to where Ms. Evans can present.

[00:16:56] We do have the presentations in your packet. And this presentation is not an action item. It's just to keep the board informed the accreditation the use of chronic absenteeism as one of the accreditation indicators for the state and the line aligned with the federal indicators and we wanted to share what the where we are now with our tiered support to address chronic absenteeism and in Loudoun and the challenge that school divisions

[00:17:32] across the Commonwealth are faced with with regard to school accreditation with chronic absenteeism and also to share that we're not failing students students while they may have be chronically absent which will explain more about the definition on that that we still have students who are achieving and doing well but also have missed 10% or more of their of their days while they've been enrolled for this school year so with that I will turn it over to Miss Evans for this presentation along with mr. Madison our supervisor for student

[00:18:10] assistance services good evening waiting for my tech support but as dr. Jones said we want to just provide you a definition of what chronic absenteeism is it is any student who misses 10% or more of the school year and that includes excused absences and unexcused absences as well as out-of-school suspensions and what's excluded from that students who are enrolled less than 50% of the school year those that are on homebound those that are in in-school suspension and

[00:18:48] those who have alternative discipline placements why does it matter so if you have students who are are chronically absent in kindergarten and in preschool they're much more likely by the third grade to not read meet their reading levels. If those students, if students when they get to students who can't read at grade level by the end of their third grade are four times more likely to then proficient readers to

[00:19:26] drop out of high school. So you can see the trajectory. If they're not setting the tone with attending school regularly, they fall behind and then that makes them much more likely to drop out when we get to high school levels. There was a study that was done in Utah that found an incident of chronic absenteeism in even a single year between 8th and 12th grade was associated with a seven-fold increase in the likelihood of dropping out. So we are, as a nation, really struggling with a crisis when it comes to chronic absenteeism. Prior to the pandemic, we had 8 million students who were chronically absent, missing 10% or more of the school year. That

[00:20:06] number has more than doubled, and the adverse social, emotional, and academic impact of missing too much school is highest among students and families most affected by educational inequities which we'll talk about later left unaddressed chronic absenteeism will dramatically increase the number of students struggling and not only reading but writing as well as math and the dropout rates will increase so we have existing attendance and truancy practices but at the same time they mostly focus on the unexcused absences and truancy and truancy is not the issue here of most of these are excused absences so we wanted to do an

[00:20:45] analysis of this data and we'll share a little bit about our findings shortly this aligns with our goal of one 1.1 e which is to lower that 13% at this time we are not lowering that 13% in fact that 13% compared to other districts which you'll see later, is much better than our neighboring divisions.

[00:21:13] We recently had the Virginia Association for School Superintendents meet about this. There was a recommended provision for chronic absenteeism being linked to accreditation. And unfortunately, six of the nine members did not want to sway on the provision.

[00:21:32] Previously, the chronic absenteeism level was based on a three-year average. um right now they're ranking it based on the one year one previous year so they acknowledge that they that we have families who are concerned about returning to school we've had virtual options available during the pandemic but they recognized they wanted that they wanted the community to know that this is escalating so there was this back and forth dialogue today there was supposed to be a vote and that's what we are waiting for to see if they are going to accept their provision but we

[00:22:10] have not heard the news so initially lcps reported to the beginning of this year we've been tracking it that 13 schools had 25 or more which would put them at a level three of those students being chronically absent i'll explain what that level three means our updated estimate is nine schools which is nine out of our 96 campuses which would put us at a rate of 9.4 percent of our schools And I'm going to turn it over to Darren Madison, who's going to get into the accreditation.

[00:22:46] Thank you, Ms. Evans, and good evening. Just before we get into our data, I'd like to just review our accreditation model, our current accreditation model. So, level one schools are schools that are 0% to 15% chronic absenteeism rate, or they were a 10% improvement for a prior year of being a level two school.

[00:23:09] A level two school has a 16% to 24% chronic absenteeism rate or a 10% improvement for the prior year being a level three school. And a level three school is 25% or more chronic absenteeism rate.

[00:23:24] Or they were a level two performing school for more than four years in a row. So looking at that accreditation model, how it applies to us. So right now, our division is projected to have a significant increase in level two.

[00:23:42] in three chronic absenteeism schools. If you look at the summary data from last year, from 21-22, at level two, we had 20 schools. Level three, we have one school. And this data was collected as of February 28th, so approximately towards the end of the second quarter.

[00:24:01] At currently, right now, we're at level two, we're projected to have 67 schools at level two, and at level three, nine schools. When we look at our division comparison, And this is a comparison, we took other divisions looking at similar demographics to Loudoun County.

[00:24:22] You see that with the exception of Arlington, we are outperforming in terms of attendance rates and other divisions. Like we indicated last year, our chronic absenteeism rate was at 13%. And as Ms. Evan indicated earlier about the equities that are impacted, some certain subgroups are impacted.

[00:24:43] So looking at those underserved those historically subgroups that have had achievement gaps. This is our data here from last year, looking at particularly our EL students at 20% chronic absenteeism rate, Hispanic 17%, McKinney-Vento 36% and our SPED students at 19%.

[00:25:05] So particularly McKinney-Vento and our EL students are experiencing, all these students are experiencing chronic absenteeism and the disproportionate rates, but McKinney-Vento EL particularly. So when we look at the research from the U.S. Department of Education, Virginia Department of Education, along with the Attendance Works, which is a national group that focuses on improving attendance nationwide, this is why, this is the research indicating why students are chronically absent.

[00:25:39] So the myth that students that excuse absences are not problematic, widely held by parents or persons. The barriers that these families and students are experiencing, barriers such as homelessness, lack of access to health or mental care, and chronic illnesses.

[00:26:04] The aversions, so students that may be experiencing academic issues and because of that they have, they're disengaged from going to school. Mental health issues, especially with school avoidance, like anxiety, in addition to students not feeling safe.

[00:26:20] Also, just the student that is disengaged for these factors, just lack of meaningful relationships in the school, just not having that connection. And I'll turn it back over to Ms. Evans. So to try to get ahead of this and get a handle on what we're looking at, LCPS established a chronic absenteeism work group that started this year.

[00:26:46] We pulled together stakeholders from different levels, central office, to try to get a handle on what we thought the issues would be. So the indicators that you see on the screen is what we thought we would see with a correlation of chronic absenteeism. Students who maybe traveled or were out of school for 15 days, then were unenrolled, but then came back.

[00:27:09] We also thought we would see a correlation with discipline referrals. We also believed we'd see students who are chronically absent also have mental health school-based services in place. And in addition to that, we thought we'd see students with health conditions.

[00:27:26] We predicted that our high schools would need the most support. And we do have nine schools, two are high schools, and seven are elementary schools. So our initial analysis was focused on high school data. And the results were telling, and not in the way that I thought they would be.

[00:27:48] So 92% of the chronically absent high school students were enrolled in the division for at least 160 days only 5% of all of those students were unenrolled and re-enrolled we thought that would be much

higher and 4% oh 5% of all chronically absent students and then 4% of just the high school students 55% of the chronically absent high school students were absent less than or equal to 15% of the school year and over half of the chronically absent high school students had zero D's or F's so these are

[00:28:24] this changed our focus this and the shift of what we need to look at is these students are your typical students who are missing chunks of the school year and academically they're doing okay but the other piece I will add to that is we might also not see that correlation with mental health if they're not in the building. We can't provide the service to them if they're not in the building. So we looked at our student conference log to see if they were in group, if they received individual, if they had suicide screenings, if they had threat assessments, and we weren't seeing a

[00:29:02] pattern. But that also is hard to capture if they're not there. So we might be looking at the mental health as part of it too. So the RASI team is now conducting an analysis of the elementary to see if see any correlation as well as the middle school and here the the results when it comes to health conditions mental health conferences office and disciplinary referrals so only 69 percent of 69 percent of those students did not have a health condition only eight percent of those students

[00:29:39] had one or more mental health conferences which tells me they're not in the building to receive those 10 percent only had one or more office referrals the sped and el groups are disproportionately represented among the chronically absent high school students and then there's also as you saw on the previous slide significant disproportionality for students experiencing homelessness so to just to take a look at what are we what are we currently um putting in place our interventions

[00:30:14] our current interventions and future strategies to address chronic absenteeism so in every school we we have attendance teams. Attendance teams are made up of administrators, unified mental health team members, administrative attendance staff that are constantly monitoring the data.

[00:30:34] They're usually meeting weekly or biweekly, monitoring students and providing strategies, interventions for students on all tier levels. And through that best practice, the MTSS model. We are constantly providing training for our school attendance teams through structure trainings, but also through our School of G Attendance 101.

[00:30:58] In addition to, we're creating just the consistent of analyzing data in regard to mental health and services is something that's ongoing. And in addition, also we have a, there's a program that we're promoting is Engage Virginia.

[00:31:19] So Engage Virginia is a program that was, that is a program that the Virginia Department of Education in collaboration with attendance works, designed to help specifically students that were impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic.

[00:31:36] So students that were disengaged, students that got behind due to virtual learning, parents or families that registered for Engage Virginia will be assigned an academic life coach And also received free tutoring services. So all this is free of cost Our attendance intervention specialists will be our long-term strategy. We are looking at the role of the attendance officer We aren't addressing truancy through the juvenile justice system anymore It's very rare that we can file a petition successfully to address that nor does that work

[00:32:17] Same thing goes for with parents. It doesn't work when we file on parents who haven't brought their kids to school So we end up spinning our wheels. So what we're looking at is, do we need to hire a

different person to address attendance? We have some of our attendance officers who have master's degrees and some who do not, who were known as truancy officers.

[00:32:39] So can we shift the model to an attendance intervention specialist over the years, which would require a master's, which would be a mental health person, who could be kind of a specialist within a region who could support the schools with this issue. The other things that we're looking at more short term is continuing the work group and pulling on, leaning on principals who are doing great things to engage their community.

[00:33:02] I really think the parent education piece is essential so that parents know there is an impact if your kid misses school and it's excused. It's impacting the accreditation of the school and how do we become partners with them. We're looking to collaborate more with the CCO office.

[00:33:19] In addition, we're going to look at our regulation a little bit more closely to see if there's anything that needs to be more firm. Policy now says absences are excused and unexcused based on the following criteria, but it also gives principals some discretion, and principals from what we've heard don't want any discretion.

[00:33:39] They want to be able to say, here's the policy, here's the reg. So we're going to do a review with our principals to make those changes. In addition, one of the other long-term strategies is that we also have a work group focused on the non-traditional schools.

[00:34:02] We have Robey. We have the North Star School. We aren't able to meet all the needs of our students with those two alternative locations. There are students who have significant mental health issues, who have been in hospitals, and to go back into a population of 1,800 after you've been in a hospital setting is, to me, a setup for failure.

[00:34:23] need a transition to get back to that place where you're comfortable navigating that we also have students who are working students who work in the western part of the county and Roby is not accessible to them so there's lots of variables that we're taking into consideration and we have a stakeholder group looking at what those needs are what's interesting I know we're close to time but when we surveyed the administrators and social workers across the district the division elementary school focused on more they said they have a lot of behavioral challenges and discipline challenges whereas middle

[00:34:59] school was mental health and discipline and then high school was mental health substance use and discipline but what that tells me about our elementary school students from a trauma-informed approach is they don't know how to say what's going on for them so they're acting out in ways that we haven't seen kids at the elementary school act out so we're trying to figure out where do we start what level what program so that work is underway any questions thank you miss Evans it's it's definitely concerning and I'm sure this is something concerning for you and the staff and the division to look at that

[00:35:38] especially the numbers being switched from 21 22 to 22 or 23 it seems quite alarming and that that's best so with that I guess I'd open up for questions for board members questions one other addition to that is we will be providing this presentation to the full board to further explain dig into the vote in the conversation from the the Board of Education today and providing that information on Tuesday to the full board thank you for the presentation and and

[00:36:15] everything you're doing to address the chronic absenteeism I just had a comment I'll be curious to see when you look at the elementary numbers, because I know you focus on high school, if there's a correlation amongst families and if we're seeing it across the family or if it's really at one level or another.

[00:36:32] It'll just be interesting if you can note that, if that is happening as well. Anecdotally, we do see that pattern. So we often will have a high school student and then their younger sibling starts to show the same pattern. So it's the parent piece and how to get them to understand this impact on them, not only with their academics, but social-emotionally.

[00:36:54] What's this going to look like down the road for them? And really addressing, I think it was the first or second slide, where when it happens in preschool and kindergarten and affecting their reading, that it's really a domino effect all the way through, and making that up is really impactful to the students.

[00:37:13] So I think it's great that you're addressing it. Thank you. Ms. Ogadegebe? Thank you. Thank you so much for this presentation and all the information that you provided. One of the questions, and maybe this is something that you could incorporate into the presentation when you come to the board on Tuesday, would be, I don't have page numbers, but on the page that indicated the rates at the other jurisdictions and then the information about the rates for students who have traditionally been underserved or experienced achievement gaps.

[00:37:50] some of those student groups could be overlapping. And then I think it would also be informative to list more groups of students to highlight if there's any disparities in chronic absenteeism.

[00:38:09] So I don't see that from that information. Oh, and the other question was at the end of the presentation, you were talking about how principals don't want the discretion. so I'm just curious why and what that was about because I don't have the context to understand that.

[00:38:31] So we have principals who, and there isn't as much consistency as we want. I'm going to be transparent with that. So some principals will excuse a trip and then the same at that middle school cluster, let's say that's the elementary school, they want to take their middle school student on that same trip, but it's unexcused.

[00:38:51] So there's a differentiation, and some excuse two absences or three absences for illness without asking for a doctor's note. Some ask immediately for a doctor's note. So we want to just clean up the process so it's consistent across the district.

[00:39:10] And travel is a concern for many of our principals and what that looks like. Another piece is if there are short-term emergencies, what do we do? The student's getting two weeks of excused absences for medical emergencies, and maybe they're in a hospital, and the family's worried that they're going to get unenrolled, and that would add more stress on their plate.

[00:39:36] So what can we do? But that's two straight weeks. That's ten absences, and that adds up very quickly. So those are some of the concerns expressed from principals. Okay, thank you so much. Ms. Evans, I guess I'll go back to, I think, one of the things Ms. Ogadegebe mentioned.

[00:39:55] I think it would be nice to have the board also see, and I would like to see also the breakdown by elementary, middle, and high school. I think that would be really helpful to see what that looks like.

And since I think the definition of it includes both excuse and unexcused, I would be, I think it would be beneficial to see how much of it's excused versus unexcused.

[00:40:17] And I think that also broken down by the elementary, middle, and high school to see where is the – I'm sure you already have the data and you must have analyzed it to see what's the chronic issue of the chronic abstinence, I guess, if I were to put that. I think that would be really helpful to see that.

[00:40:33] I know I could just speak for a little bit about elementary. It's probably not scientific. But I think during the COVID times, and I think there's a – I've seen many family friends and their kids, especially in elementary, they're taking long trips overseas.

[00:40:52] And initially, I thought it was one-off, but it seems to be pretty widely because during the COVID times, I think there was support mechanism because the kids could take virtual classes if they were virtually and they could do that. But I think that the pattern hasn't changed.

[00:41:09] So I met a couple of family friends, and they were taking a trip for three weeks to go overseas. And I'm like, their kid's the same as my age, my kids too. I'm like, I can't imagine my kid being out for three weeks. So I think how much of that is excused and unexcused, it'll be curious to see.

[00:41:28] And again, going back to what Ms. Sheridan also mentioned about working with the families, because I think it comes back to do the understanding. And I don't know what the, again, there's definitely learning loss. I think we know that. But what else can we talk about to make sure we mitigate that, I think.

[00:41:45] So from a presentation for the full board, I think adding some more data points would be helpful. Slide numbers would be also helpful. And then on the slide where you have the analysis, it says 21, 22, analysis of chronically absent students.

[00:42:07] You know, I think there's a lot of data in these two slides between the there there are two slides that talk to it I mean, I think it would be nice to see how we can Summarize them a little more, you know in a much more concisely I should say because it's a good data points here But it's you know, what are we trying to what's the message we're trying to send here for the full board?

[00:42:32] I think that'll be Really helpful as well. And then lastly, I think my sort of comments I think you talked about from a high school perspective, but again, you know, it'll be interesting So what are we doing today in going back to what Ms. Sheridan mentioned also that for the elementary students and families, what are we doing?

[00:42:50] If the majority of the issues are, I think as you mentioned, I'm going back, forgive me, the numbers for the elementary versus the high school, you have a very high number in elementary. So what's our immediate course of action to address the issues with elementary schools?

[00:43:10] So I don't know. I just want to make sure I have the slide correct that you want. Is it this one that you want broken down more? No, thank you. Sorry. Keep going. I think it's this one. This one. No, no, one after that.

[00:43:25] Sorry. One more after this. Oh, the percentage is the analysis at the end. Okay. Yes. Okay, I understand. And then we'll also have that information for elementary and middle. Yep. And then unexcused and unexcused, yeah. Yes. And then by level.

[00:43:41] For excused versus unexcused and by level. And then on one of the slides you have division comparison. I'm just curious. I think you have mostly all subgroups, but I think you don't have white

groups. Is there a reason? They are traditionally not underserved, and they don't experience the achievement gaps that the other subgroups do.

[00:44:06] Well, I could argue Asians don't fall in the category in that same spectrum. I mean, we were talking about it, so that's, you know, I mean, their scores are, you know, as a group, they do it pretty good, I guess, in that sense, so I'm curious. Would it help just to add it?

[00:44:22] I mean, not to remove underscore, but just break it down by demographics? We can break it down further by demographics. And I don't know if you have thoughts, but I wonder if the Asian has to do with travel, different populations that do travel, right?

[00:44:37] So they're missing school, but they might be performing well academically. And I do want to add the vacation travel is not something we capture. So we have three codes for attendance. Well, we have lots of codes for attendance, but it's excused. Unexcused truancy, which means the parents don't know that they're not in school.

[00:44:56] And then there's unexcused locally defined, which is the principle based on whatever the parents share says it's not excused, but that doesn't separate into vacation or other reasons. So that's something we're looking at too, is do we need to capture vacation days as unexcused so that we can tell the story a little bit more clearly?

[00:45:18] So today vacation remarked as excused because that's how the parents are requesting it? - No, so some days might be excused, and if it's a longer trip, it should not be excused. Our policy and regulations specifically says take vacation during breaks.

[00:45:37] So one day might be excused, and the rest would be unexcused, locally defined. - So I think, you know, you mentioned working with CCO, and I think this, I think, I'm sure we all agree that we need to do really good about educating the parents about what all this means, and they should, you know, not go for long breaks.

[00:45:59] And like you said, vacation during the school time, take it during the break. The one last question for this particular presentation, I think you had this sort of quadrant of why are students chronically absent? Where is that data coming from?

[00:46:15] So it's a quadrant, it talks about myth, aversion, barriers, and disengagement? - Yes, that data comes from the Virginia Department of Education and the collaboration with Attendance Works. It's that one, that's correct. So I think, do you attribute to that?

[00:46:34] Maybe somewhere to attribute that would be helpful, like where is this coming from? So I think then you can speak about what the context is, and I think that would be also helpful. But yeah, I'm looking forward. I think it's good the full board to see this and to learn about it and hopefully have some more questions from that.

[00:46:51] Any further questions from Michael? No? I think thank you for sharing this. With that, I guess we'll move to the next information item. Schoolings. It's not schoolings. Is that right? Schooling's college and career platform.

[00:47:09] Yes, sir. Ms. Evans and Ms. Ross. So we're very excited, again, continuing with continuous improvement as it aligns to our LLCPS strategic plan for excellence 2027. We are in the process of

transitioning our career and college platform that we've been using at the secondary level to a newer version, a new solution, and expanding that to include our elementary schools.

[00:47:42] As you may know, currently we have all students. We work toward a college and academic career plan, a portfolio, as well as career exploration for students, preparing them for college, and if they choose a different pathway.

[00:47:59] And this is one of the tools that our school counseling offices and our career centers will be able to use to support our students. So we wanted to give you a preview of what is coming for next year and the readiness that is happening now between the Department of Instruction, the Department of Student Services, our friends in digital innovation, and our plans to communicate this with our parent community as well as provide trainings as we move into the next school year.

[00:48:31] So with that, I'm pleased to have my colleagues here to provide an update. All right, good evening, and thank you for allowing me time today to discuss our new partnership that we have with School Counseling Services, the Office of Student Mental Health Services, that we have recently begun, and it's very exciting.

[00:48:54] We are very excited to announce that LCPS will be launching a new college and career platform named School Links. Our integration of a dynamic college and career platform directly supports the 1LCPS 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence, the vision of ensuring every student will reach their full potential and achieve their dreams.

[00:49:16] SchoolLinks will allow students to engage in college and career planning, beginning in kindergarten, and supporting them throughout their entire secondary school years. School Links integration directly aligns to Goal 1, Action 1.2, in providing multiple accessible pathways to success through engaging in self-exploration tools and to help plan for academic, graduation, and college and career plans.

[00:49:42] School Links integration also directly aligns to Goal 4, Action 4.1, by providing updated resources and information sharing to improve transparency and communication. Every family will have access to School Links, and they will have an account whether their student is in kindergarten or 12th grade.

[00:50:03] So we are very excited to go along on this journey with our families and our students and to build foundational trust and awareness in college and career planning. So what is School Links?

[00:50:19] It is a comprehensive and modern platform designed to engage students in college and career planning. This is also known as CCR, beginning in kindergarten and extending through graduation, and actually after graduation as well. LCPS will be sunsetting our legacy platform named Naviance, which currently focuses on secondary students only.

[00:50:41] SchoolLinks will not only support our youngest students, but our alumni post-graduation. SchoolLinks offers significant upgrades for students and family access. So this includes elementary, career, and self-exploration through age-appropriate and differentiated lessons each year from kindergarten to fifth grade.

[00:51:03] Six through 12 college and career exploration lessons and self-assessments and post-secondary planning. K-12 digital activities and portfolio building. Local, state, and national post-secondary

scholarship repository. Graduation and FAFSA support.

[00:51:20] ability to store portfolios for each student on a continuing basis from kindergarten to 12th grade so one platform for one student for all students and for all families we also have academic and college and career portfolios that are required in fifth seventh and tenth grades so those will all be found on one platform cte or college and i'm sorry career and technical education and career industry partnership student support will be included as well as college application and

[00:51:57] transcript repository and support college career and military representative scheduling and organizer and lcps student alumni network and case management which has a free lifetime support so while school counseling serves as the host and the project manager of the implementation of school links this dynamic and comprehensive program is supported and aligned with several departments in LCPS to include but not limited to department of digital innovation department of instruction

[00:52:31] CTE community connections among many others and we plan to see an immediate increase in student and family engagement school links will align one platform for all students and families no matter what age so one family could be seeing a portfolio from a third grader and then there's the same family might be getting a senior ready for college all in the same platform. The VA code does require school counselors to have academic career plan portfolios also known as the ACP completed

[00:53:09] elementary school years and an ACP to be completed in middle and high school. Again this will be one platform for all students and families and School Links has endless data reports that are easily accessible for our school counselors and our teachers to utilize to understand tasks that may be outstanding from students also understand what post-secondary trends are taking place in LCPS how many scholarship monies have been awarded and much more and this

[00:53:47] platform will streamline student support for multiple LCPS departments and align common access and goals. So the timeline here is a bit general, but lots of tasks in between those dates that are being done. Our work began in early August 22 with a request to review multiple CCR vendors. After reviewing those vendors in February, a diversified group of over 40 stakeholders

[00:54:21] selected SchoolLinks as the preferred provider. In April of 2023, SchoolLinks implementation began after contract and with contracting was completed in the spring of 2023 data implementation staff trainings and communication plans begin and because of our class of 2024 is very unique we want to make sure that they have the most support in this transition since they will be applying to college in the fall we will be bringing on our current juniors to ensuring that they have

[00:54:56] comprehensive training prior to them leaving for the school year and in the fall of 2023 we'll continue to provide access and train the class of 2024 any new students we may have along with we're going to be hosting family seminars so the student mental health services parent series presentation will be open to all lcps families and during the 23-24 school year all counselors will be trained and we will be supporting every student in k-12 next year so we are very excited

[00:55:35] about that so school counseling services is thrilled to announce this partnership very excited about seeing positive trends and outcomes in the future for our students and i thank you for your time i'd like to open it for any questions if you have them thank you mrs i thank you for sharing this i think it's um i think like every time the parents are engaged and i like the idea of the career perspective getting kids engaged earlier on i think that's the fantastic part like having elementary kids also be part of that.

[00:56:10] So I'm excited. I have a couple of questions, but I'll open it up. My new questions and I'll just jump into, I think you mentioned juniors and it's always fall, but is that happening like training and availability in the summertime or is it in the fall?

[00:56:28] Because fall, I guess some kids are applying early and so how is that gonna affect them? - That's a great question. We are, that is our first priority to ensure our students, our juniors are already gonna be extremely stressed the fall so we want to take as much anxiety about the change of a platform away from that and we are going to in June provide asynchronous training along with training for high school counselors as well as career center assistance to support the juniors as they engage in this platform and because we currently have a legacy platform there will be a transition of us pulling

[00:57:08] data from that platform as well as giving students the option to before that closes on June 30th to pull data that they might be interested in pulling from it as well so all of that will happen before they leave for the summer and then they have open access to the platform through the summer so they can engage in as many opportunities and self-assessments and explorations as they would like. Got it. So before June 30th, they have to do some actions to just pull some data out in preparation for summer and how they can plan to use the system. Okay. So again, CCOS, I'm sure

[00:57:45] will play a major part in getting the message out. One other question in the procurement, I guess one, like who are the other major divisions that are using this system and what the success, I mean, what's been, I'm sure the 44 sort of stakeholder help you make a decision. I'm sure the factor came in I'm just curious to know um you know what was the feedback and you know who else are using this great question there are a few divisions in Virginia not the larger ones um Chicago public

[00:58:16] schools is utilizing school links um Austin Texas is also using I'm I'm thinking it was Austin could have been Dallas some larger school districts um they have transitioned um three dozen districts I believe from Naviance to school links so they are very well um and districts are size as well so they are very well aware of the lift that Lcps has and they are very excited to be working with us

[00:58:53] They have promised us up to 300% increased student engagement next year. So we are very much looking forward to that. Great, thank you. Any further questions, comments? Thank you, Ms. Ross.

[00:59:08] Thank you, Ms. Evans. Okay, I guess we'll walk to the new item. Any new business tonight? No? With no new business, we can adjourn this meeting tonight. Thank you, everybody, for coming. Thank you. Thank you.



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