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Loudoun County School Board, Communications & Outreach Committee Meeting, Monday, May 1, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 35m (video)

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- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] as well as board member Mr. Mahadevi. And we'll go ahead and move to item number two right now, which is a public comment. We do not have any public comment for this evening. So we can roll right on to item number three, which is the approval of draft minutes for the March 6, 2023 meeting.

[00:00:16] Do I have a motion for that? So moved. Okay. All those in favor of approving the draft or the minutes from the March 6, 2023 Communications and Outreach Committee, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye.

[00:00:33] That motion will pass unanimously with all board members present. We'll go ahead and move on to 3.02, which is the approval of draft minutes for the April 10th, 2023 meeting.

[00:00:50] Do I have a motion for that? So moved. Second. I will second that motion. All those in favor of approving the draft minutes for the April 10th, 2023 meeting, please raise your hand and say aye.

[00:01:07] Aye. Aye. Those opposed and those abstaining. That motion will pass 2-0-1 with Mr. Mejedevi abstaining. Madam Chair, for clarification, I am going to change my vote as I was not present for the March 6th, so I will abstain from the first vote, so that would be a 2-0-1 vote as well.

[00:01:28] Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Morse. So item 3.01, the minutes from the March 6, 2023 meeting will be 2-0-1 with Mr. Morse choosing to abstain from that vote. With that, we'll go ahead and

move on to item number four now this evening.

[00:01:48] 4.01 is school board information, and I will go ahead and turn that over to you, Ms. Salgren. Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a brief presentation for you all. Of course, this presentation is aligned with our strategic plan, all four goals to empower students, support our exemplary staff, and attract exemplary staff, provide for an enriched division, and an engaged community.

[00:02:16] All right. so our agenda consists of school board information campaign updates and continuous improvement tonight we thought we'd bring you some updates the school board is doing such important division-wide work these days and we wanted to make sure that we adjusted the website post-covid to not only share the good news that we've been sharing very regularly through all our news stories but to highlight the news for the public that the superintendent's initiatives and the school board is working on so on the left you can see that the acting superintendent update those are the messages that he sends out to families and staff every or excuse

[00:02:54] me to families every other week and then the top message is a most recent staff message about the compensation where we adopted the temporary FY24 pay scales so we wanted to make sure that news was front and center and you can see on the right hand side that message posted for review with easy access to the salary scales that the school board approved so we're finding a permanent home for this news front and center on the website so it's easy for staff and the public to access next slide with the restroom safety and privacy pilot program that has

[00:03:30] been presented before the school board we have anchored that information on a page called school board and division news and there's the update and again an FAQ about what has been presented to the school board and what has been discussed so far and all of this is accessible from the oh what's this uh-oh human error all right so can we do we skip a slide yep so all of this is accessible from the home page with the

[00:04:07] headline school and division news that's very easy to find uh-oh there we go so we thought it was important to anchor and celebrate all the progress that the division is making we'll be discussing this week we'll be discussing academic rigor and you're getting a preview of a look at an infographic that's being prepared and approved so we'll also put that academic rigor discussion and information into that same school board and division news

[00:04:38] anchored link and virtual distance learning as you know was a topic of input and voted on so we've here reproduced the message that went to all of the families and again this is an a way that if we need to post information that the school board has taken in action will have an anchored place to do it.

[00:05:09] All right, so that concludes our school board information. We just wanted you all to know we really took to heart the desire to move beyond that balance of rebuilding the good news stories and really find a meaningful anchor and way to share with the public the school board work beyond click-through and board docs.

[00:05:30] So that's what we're aiming to do is make it a little more accessible. Thank you, Ms. Saugren. Board members, are there any questions before we move on to the next agenda item? Ms. Saugren, I do have one quick question for you. I have heard over the years, and as a parent myself, have experienced some of the difficulty with navigating board docs.

[00:05:53] It can be cumbersome. Have you received any feedback, or have we received as a division any feedback yet through whether or not the public has found that this is a more accessible way for them to receive this information? Or is this still too early on in the game?

[00:06:10] It just went live Friday night, so we'll monitor that traffic. I will tell you overall, as we have made changes that were data-informed to the website and revamped the way pages look, the way they're accessed, and we've made a little more headway on making sure that the user experience is easy to navigate, our website traffic has overall increased.

[00:06:33] So I think people are finding it a more useful tool. For a while, it decreased, which we thought was good because people were getting there in fewer clicks now that we've cleaned up a lot of the website. And it's obviously a work in progress, and it's become more visual. People are spending slightly more time on the pages because of the visuals and the embedded links, and they're visiting more often.

[00:06:53] Thank you. One more question, and really this could be a new discussion topic for the committee here since we're all sitting here this evening and we're on the topic of communication. Have we ever as a division looked into making it easier for constituents to be able to view the voting record of members of the board, meaning rather than having to dig through all of the meeting minutes to find where the votes are, have we ever looked at potentially building out a platform that would make it a much more fluid process and faster process for people to find that information?

[00:07:27] That is a really great question. I do know that the actual board votes are posted separately in the board docs item once the clerk goes through and makes sure all the accurate amendments and proposed amendments and anything that needs to be cleaned up in the course of business when she makes that whole board docs page accurate.

[00:07:53] And the votes are accessible as a separate item. They're right there. But beyond that, we have not, and I'm happy to take a look at how that might work. Yes, Mr. Morse. It's an interesting perspective.

[00:08:12] So, you know, we had thought about this several years ago. The concern I have with the summary post, I think, is what you're looking for, is frequently you lose a lot of the detail of amendments and what was proposed and who proposed it and how it was voted down.

[00:08:29] Depending on the level of the summary, right, you could capture that as well. I think it would be a lot of work to try to separate that out and capture it once in the minutes and then have someone have to pull it all out and separate that by vote. I just don't know how we get there in an efficient manner.

[00:08:48] Do you have a thought on, you know, is there a format or something that would make it user-friendly because we want people to have the information but also not be, you know, laborious for staff to put together? Yeah, thank you, Mr. Morris.

[00:09:04] I think, I understand your concerns, certainly. I would not ever recommend that we do away with the breakdown of the votes. I think it's very important that people, I agree with you, I think it's important that people see how that happened. I just think it would be really neat if we had a way for people to, if there was like a way that people could just search a specific topic that was voted on for the evening and the action items to see, to click on it immediately to see how did the board vote on policy 8040, for example, okay?

[00:09:36] because when people have to take all of that time to dig through file upon file, I mean, they're just not going to do it because it's economy of effort. It just takes too long. There are very few people that will probably dig through all that information. So it would be nice if there was a way for it to be more easily accessible to the public.

[00:09:53] Any further questions or comments, Mr. Morse? I found that going into the minutes, they also have it aligned by action item, info item to the video as well, which I find very useful. So I do like that part about it because that really, even capturing in the words what's going on is not the same as having that video available. So I think those details are important. But the one thing that I have noticed missing is some of the, there's more information that we need to have available to the public, not in the good

[00:10:29] news story side but in the lcps side of what's going on it doesn't i mean it's not all gold right i mean we have concerns and i think for instance i can tell you that i cannot find the announcement that i made as chairman concerning the uh the release of the grand jury report and the comment that i made which i have since come to fully regret uh that we had no we were pleased that there were no nobody identified in the grand jury report which as we now

[00:11:03] know was not true but that message I can't find that online so I think we need to be careful about cleaning out the files and getting rid of all of a lot of information that's not necessarily the most flattering information for LCPS but is the actual actual documentation so that's just my thought you know I would like to see that somewhere in there when when we go through all the announcements that should be in there with the rest of the announcements. Thank you. Ms. Polifko. Yes I just wanted to say thank you for that Mr. Morse because

[00:11:37] I do agree with you and I would second that. Yes Ms. Auburn. Thank you yes so the statements I think with the exception of that briefer statement are are posted on the school board page but we can take a look for that one. I didn't realize that was an oversight and then you've hit the nail on the head with the need to share progress about initiatives and business that's going on.

[00:12:01] So that is one reason that on the homepage now we've anchored the school and division news. So we'll have a place to consistently share sort of updates that are not just an award, not just an award, an award or a recognition, things like that, good news. And then right before we started talking about that, Ms. Polifco, you asked, oh, the school board summary and vote.

[00:12:22] I'm sorry, I took your initial question to mean the numbers because we had just talked about two zero one as in you know nine zero the vote itself i will let you know that in 2020 at the direction of a board member and since then we have always posted a school board summary the day after the meeting that is is curated and handwritten from from what actually happened so it's a very digestible conversational not official minutes it says clearly it's not official minutes but it does recap the board actions from the previous evening and it's posted on Wednesday every Wednesday follow a board meeting

[00:12:59] and social and shared on the website as a news story and available on the front page so we do post that summary of information so people can tell at a glance you know was this voted up or down what what action was taken we don't attempt to make it an official minutes and say it was a seven to one to one vote or recap anything like that in addition that summary does gets shared two days after the board meeting with the staff in their newsletter every time.

[00:13:25] So it's sort of a quick view of what happened, and it's continuing to this day. Thank you. Thank you for bringing that to our attention as well. With that, we'll go ahead and move on to the next item, which is 4.02 campaign updates.

[00:13:43] Ms. Algren? Yes, thank you. And before we do, I remembered I had one more slide. At our last meeting, you all had asked about, is the FOIA process easy to navigate for the public? So we are taking steps to assess.

[00:13:59] The website for FOIA was updated both content-wise and code-wise July 1st of last year, so within the last year. And the FAQs, rights and responsibilities, information is all easily accessible on the FOIA pages.

[00:14:15] But to your point, we understand that people don't do this every day. So how can we even make it easier? We've done an audit and identified one particular website we really like is the Virginia Department of Corrections. It has an excellent and in-depth user-friendly website. So we've looked around at some neighboring government entities to see who we could learn from.

[00:14:36] So that audit is in process, and we would make any improvements by July 1 for the next school year. However, we wanted to show you how folks navigate the process this time. So if we hit play on this video, you'll see you're on the home page. And let's see how we would do that. So from the home page, you would go to the communications office or to the newsroom.

[00:14:59] And right in the middle, you see that information eye. The very first left nav is FOIA information. When you click on that, it's the top right there, FOIA. And then it brings you to this page that is a full explanation.

[00:15:15] How to fill out a request is not a, it's right there. It's not a click away. And then if you want to do that, you have an easily accessed FAQ on the left, which is very digestible. It was just updated last year. And you can see those frequently asked questions in the system.

[00:15:33] And you can read those without filling out a FOIA. You can read them before you do. So it's pretty user-friendly now once you get there. But it's not as explicit or simple as it might be. And we'll look to make those improvements. Thank you, Ms. Saugren.

[00:15:53] Board members, are there any questions regarding FOIA at this time? Okay. Thank you for bringing us up to date on that. And I thank my team for doing that handy moving video for me to narrate. Thank you. All right. So for campaign updates, we thought we'd bring you some of the work.

[00:16:11] And we've mentioned before how we like to report on not activity but impact. So not production, not what we've done, but what impact it has made in our communication stream. So you can see that Mental Health Awareness Month has just started for May.

[00:16:30] And here's what we have planned for Mental Health Awareness Month. We'll be having a social media video series of four videos. We provide solid support to the Office of Student Mental Health Services and to their events and programs, highlighting both student and staff mental health.

[00:16:46] We'll be sharing videos on social media platforms, as you see that first item at the top. And these videos will be explicit about the mental health staff that you can find in LCPS schools to support you. There'll be videos that we've created highlighting counselors, social workers, psychologists, and student assistant specialists and the roles these professionals play in supporting student mental health.

[00:17:11] We'll also plan to highlight the peer program, the LCPS peer program, which is a specialized high school class designed to develop mentoring skills. In the past few weeks, we've supported school counselors by creating a poster and a handout to better explain counselors' roles.

[00:17:27] We've also highlighted two schools that recently achieved a special designation that recognizes the evidence-based work of the counselors in those schools. We've made several website updates. We've also added updated student mental health services webpages to highlight community partners.

[00:17:44] We've pushed out an update to all school websites, that means all 100 school websites, 98 plus, that shows viewers a way to quickly and easily find the contact information for their own school's mental health team. We also provide marketing support for the Office of Student Mental Health, the workshops that they hold, which are an outreach solution included in the superintendent's task force on mental health.

[00:18:08] So all that is activity to come, not the results yet. we've also created a dedicated mental health resources toolkit for principals, so as they wish to make their own morning announcements, social media posts, newsletter, share newsletter information, all that is pre-prepared for them. It's just a click away, and they can have those resources at their fingertips. So that's coming up. Our next one, we're very excited to bring this to you. This is very close to our heart. The special education support that

[00:18:43] we've offered lately. Our January 26th Facebook post featured a video of students from J. Michael Lunsford designing assistive technology for their peers. That's the video on the left that we'll show you shortly. This video drove some of the highest video traffic of all time and with 382 positive interactions and 7,500, 7,500 video views, exceeding our average social media post response by more than 282 percent so when we talk about posting a video that's the activity but the

[00:19:20] results are the community engagement and in this case up 282 percent with that content so people are seeing and sharing and liking that news and learning about the good work that our heroes do in these classrooms and as these counselors every day this particular video post received 96 likes on Instagram against that, again, that's the engagement metric, and drove some of our highest volume on that social channel. So right now, we'll show you the video, which was also shown as a teaching example to the adaptive PE teachers across the division. So it becomes an internal

[00:19:55] asset as well as an external asset. So we'll play the video. The special ed team said that she wanted a project for her students to design accessible equipment for their peers. The students came in and they observed our classes, they participated in our classes, and they designed their projects off of those conversations and those experiences.

[00:20:23] Our AT project is a sensory keyboard that has different sensory stickers and objects that associate the letters with simple objects that help students remember them. So it's essentially two pieces of wood that are cut to come together and meet in the middle.

[00:20:44] is like a counter or like a scorekeeper for this hoop where students would throw a ball in and it would return itself. We wanted to like break the barrier that students are different because they're not they're all students these are their peers. I just wanted to bring everybody together. So that particular video is the short version and there is a longer version that tells that whole story so we're very pleased that those kind of videos and that storytelling gets out the stories of our heroes in the classroom both the learners and the teachers out into the world.

[00:21:21] The next video we'll show you is our unified sports video. This video was promoted organically on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for one day only and received a record number of 1774 video views in that time and created 300 engagements.

[00:21:37] An average video view for a one day organic post for us is around 500. So that was about three and a half times as many views as we could expect. going to show you the shorter version of the video which generated the full version received 425 views that is another sort of data point that we examine in communications as an almost an in-house marketing agency right we're looking at those longer videos the shorter videos who engages with them who likes them who shares them and what kind of content should we produce to make sure that we maximize those opportunities for the community to engage

[00:22:12] with the content. So we'll show you this unified sports team video. For a unified team we have student athletes that are in the special ed department and then we have regular ed students that are they're considered partners. I think that first practice just seeing the kids you know the the athletes throwing their stuff down and running out to the court being so excited to be there. I never leave a practice or a game or any event we're doing without smiling. I

[00:22:52] believe we showed you the long-form version of that video in the last school board meeting so again outstanding results from this content and we are working on another in the series shooting for the end of May or June featuring the United Sound class at Stonebridge High School so unified class so those are that successful series is continuing and again when we have an idea to support the content in the classroom the proclamations of the school board the mental health awareness month something that ties that content

[00:23:29] it gives us the opportunity to tie into what the world's talking about to make sure we can be part of that conversation as a world-class organization but also it allows us to plan content that we think will be successful and if it's successful we can make more and it becomes evergreen content we don't have to invest in it again we own it right we've made it we can use it next year if doesn't work we don't make any more we try something different so it is a test and learn opportunity and communications but it's it's a science and an art combined is what I like to say we'll just give you some brief updates on other

[00:24:04] successful campaigns so far Erin do you want to speak to this one are you prepared to speak to this one thank you so we've been working with HRTD to help them with their recruiting this spring and we've put some paid money on some of our content for LinkedIn Facebook and Instagram so we just thought we would share that with you all this first one is we ran a LinkedIn paid campaign which was one of our first ones really kind of a test and learn to see how well our

[00:24:43] how well it would do on LinkedIn and this was targeting sorry sorry targeting our different teachers and licensed staff on LinkedIn so we put some money behind it and we actually saw great results. We got 88 web clicks back to our career website directly and we saw a 0.8% click-through rate where your average click-through rate on LinkedIn is a 0.6%. So we were really pleased with those results. And then another thing we did was we

[00:25:19] kind of, we wanted to see how recruiting ads would work on Facebook and Instagram. So we took a bit of a different approach we ran a different type of video and we ran it towards more of the college age recruiting on instagram stories and there you can see those really performed well with 442 web clicks to our careers page directly and it reached over 7 000 people and then oh and then also you'll see on the

corner is a another ad that we really did another test and learn we always post about events that are coming up so we try to post at least as many

[00:25:59] events that we can like the listening sessions are posted on our Facebook page as events and we worked with I think it was student services on an upcoming annual career and apprenticeship fair which was April 12th and they were seeing low attendance so we decided to put a little bit of money and boost the event on our Facebook page and as soon as we did that we we generated 48 visits to the website in one day and we saw attendance go up to 312 students with students from TJ and Bishop O'Connell responding so it was a great test and

[00:26:38] learn for us and then on this slide I just wanted to show you the LinkedIn video that we ran that was part of that recruiting campaign work for Loudoun County Public Schools largely because of all of the professional development opportunities I heard about. I chose to work for Loudoun County Schools as they were one of the unique school systems of Virginia that offered American Sign Language ASL as a world language offering for the students in their high

[00:27:16] schools. I chose to work for Loudoun County Public Schools because I grew up in the county and I had nothing but positive experiences here growing up. I I chose to work for Loudoun County Public Schools because I am an alum of Loudoun County Public School. So I went to elementary, middle, and high school.

[00:27:34] So I wanted to come back to my home county. I wanted to teach kids that look like me. So there's a growing population of those type of students in Loudoun County, and I wanted to give back to them. So that's one example.

[00:27:53] And I also want to show you how we work with our content, and it's not the same on every channel, right? So we know LinkedIn, that type of content featuring people and our staff, will perform really well. And then we chose something a little bit different with our Instagram and Facebook ad, which we will show you next.

[00:28:49] You can see how the difference between those two ads would work for the different channels.

[00:29:33] And we did, these are preliminary results, but we did speak with HRTD to really see, it's not an Apple to Apple comparison, but I wanted to see if there were more applications coming in between this time last year and this time now. And we did see an increase in almost 2,000 applications. So obviously it can all be credited to the ad, but it had something to do with it. So we're really proud of that success.

[00:30:03] Thank you so much. I'm sorry, are we not finished with that segment yet? We are. Okay. I just wanted to open up for any questions from our board members if there are any at this time. Nope. Okay. We'll go ahead and move on. Thank you so much for that. We'll go ahead and move on to 4.03 continuous improvements.

[00:30:20] Yes, this is our last update for the evening. I hope that the campaign updates that we provided, the website updates that we're making, you can see how they all dovetail into that strategic plan and support the strategic plan.

[00:30:36] So we're not making content for content's sake. We're making strategically adapted content. And one thing we're working on internally to make sure that we are making the right choices is we're working internally to implement what we're calling a request for communications.

[00:30:52] Up until now, if people wanted to say, hey, send a Blackboard message about my subject, or can you make me a video about my subject, it was a phone call. We would consult with them. But the volume has increased so much because our communicators are embedded with every department working steadily on communications plans of major initiatives.

[00:31:14] We don't want anything to fall through the cracks. So in our listening tour that the communications department did with our schools, one of the questions we asked was, how can we make your life easier? Is sending us an email or shooting us a note or giving us a call easy? Would you appreciate a form that you could click through and so we decided to implement based on that feedback a one-stop shop form so now both a division level employee or a school based person could fill out the form we've strategically placed it in principals updates in principals toolkit on their the way that they get

[00:31:51] their information we've distributed it to the division employees to say hey here's a one-stop shop submit your form you still get the same service communication still calls you back we consult with you we make sure that we're helping you plan your campaign we just want to make sure that nobody gets left out right and this will also allow us to check the data that's being submitted and analyze who are we not hearing from what school we already track and balance what schools we present what news we cover we want to include all schools by the end of each year and some some piece of good news some piece of sharing but if we haven't heard from somebody or we're not hearing as many requests from a certain department is that because they don't know we can help them is it

[00:32:31] because they're doing things an old way that could be improved upon or do they not need any help so we'll be able on the back end to gather some data to make our responses even stronger so we have just implemented this form within the last week as a pilot program for the spring and then we can make adjustments as the new school year starts to make sure it's as efficient and as easy to use as possible. Thank you for that information. Board members, are there any questions or comments at this time? Yes, Mr. Morse. I think it's a great idea to have a consolidated location where they can reach out to you. But when I first saw that, I had no idea what you were trying to

[00:33:10] accomplish. Reading the request for communications and looking at the visual, there was nothing there that was telling me that you want to tell my news or my good story or something. So I'd probably work on the graphic or on the messaging and just say you know a headline would be tell us your news or let us tell the world about you know something that would that would indicate that you are there trying to magnify you know that communication message back to the community just a thought no thank you and obviously we didn't copy the whole form but down below it also asks things like what what are you looking for what would be a win for you what you know what are you a school or a division level personnel

[00:33:49] and asks them also to think through who their audience is so we know that we're asking those questions up front so absolutely but I take that feedback and we'll see how it works and we're happy to make revisions see how it goes yes Mr. Mahedivi thank you chair if I had known this I wouldn't have gone on my Tuesday rant so I guess I spoke all my entire year worth of items on last Tuesday meeting I'm just sharing that if I had known this it's it's not I mean it's being sarcastic if I had known about this I

[00:34:25] wouldn't have said what I said on the Tuesday meeting that's any further discussion on this topic okay thank you we'll move on to item number five any new business this evening board members it

appears as though there is none with that and without objection I will go ahead and adjourn the meeting this evening and we will be board members any objection to adjourning the meeting

[00:34:59] early. And we will meet again in this room on the first Monday in June at 5 p.m. Thank you so much.



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