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Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting, Monday, May 1, 2023

Date Monday, May 1, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 39m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/823199485?rel=0>
 - BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>
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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-22. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] Good afternoon. I call to order this May 1st, 2023 meeting of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee of the Loudoun County School Board. We're going to start with item two on our agenda, public comment. I see from our sign-up that we have three speakers signed up to speak today.

[00:00:19] And based on the number of speakers and our agenda, I'll be allocating two minutes per speaker to speak tonight. So our first speaker is Kelly Bird, to be followed by Christina Ramirez. Good evening. We're here.

[00:00:36] All right. So Sandy can't be here tonight, so I'm sharing remarks on her behalf. Many LEA members reached out to the LEA office when we started hearing about potential changes to the elementary master schedule for next school year. Some of the major concerns shared were many elementary school students do not have the attention span to fully attend and participate for 50 minutes in special blocks.

[00:01:00] With reduced class sessions during the week, content and skill retention can be lost. Preparing for performances will be more challenging with less frequency and rehearsals during the week. And with these changes, it's perceived by some specialists that they are simply providing planning periods, which diminishes their vital role in the well-rounded development of our elementary school students.

[00:01:23] While the Department of Instruction has shared the reasoning behind making those changes, this came as a surprise to both the educators and elementary school classroom teachers and specialists, the ones who were impacted by these changes. I do understand there was a focus group convened to develop the new schedule and the guidelines, and we are meeting with Dr. Ellis' office on Thursday to learn more about the decision-making process and allowed educators to share their concerns with staff.

[00:01:53] That's it. Thank you. Our next speaker is Christina Ramirez, to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf. Press the button.

[00:02:11] There you go. Like you said, I'm Christina Ramirez, here speaking on behalf of educators. Many educators have expressed concerns with the new elementary master schedule. Some of these concerns include our youngest learners.

[00:02:30] Many of our youngest learners do not have the attention span to fully attend for 50-minute walks, and we are concerned about retention of that material. As well, we do have our Loudoun County Public Schools students enrolled in our pre-K programs, and we were wondering if they were considered and included in this master scheduling and the scheduling blocks presented, our pre-K students.

[00:03:00] With the reduced class sessions during the week, it's harder for, like I said, the younger students to retain this information, and the reason I keep saying that is because I work with the younger students, so I have a little bit of background knowledge there.

[00:03:24] I also understand that there was a focus group convened to develop the new schedule and the guidelines. And I was just wondering, the teachers were wondering, were there any educators participating in the focus group? We don't know who was in the focus group. And we were just wondering if how many teachers were included in that. And that's all the remarks I have. Thank

[00:03:52] you. Thank you. And our final speaker tonight is Andrea Weiskopf. Well, I'm impressed with their attention span mine isn't the squirrel mine's not that long one I came tonight because I am still curious as to why middle school teachers have six classes and high school teachers have five so I wanted to see if there's an

[00:04:25] answer also looking at the various book sensitivities and picking you're supposed to pay attention to moral and ethical sensibilities I have a student who can't read a monster calls because it's about monsters.

[00:04:41] Spoiler alert, it's not. But also, what is this preservation of freedom, civic responsibility, and individual worth, personal integrity, honor, and service? Have you read literature? You're kicking out civic responsibility.

[00:04:59] You're kicking out the Odyssey. You're kicking out Bakery. You're kicking out King Lear. Thank you, Black Lives Matter. thank you and that was our final speaker signed up so that will conclude public comment for this evening so we'll move to item three on the agenda approval of the minutes is there a motion i move that the curriculum and instruction committee approved the draft minutes for the april 10 2023

[00:05:34] meeting is there a second seconded by miss okadek bay any discussion seeing none all those in favor of the motion to approve the minutes please raise your hand and say aye aye that motion will pass unanimously. We'll now move to our action item, which is policy 5065 kindergarten. Before someone

makes a motion, Dr. Ellis, anything to add or any updates to this policy since we considered it as an information item? Yes, I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Lehman to share a couple of updates, and then I'll also point out that the feedback that we received is also attached in board docs.

[00:06:13] The only change to what you saw at last month's meeting are some grammatical changes to align with other policies. So anywhere in the policy where it said he slash she, that's been changed to they, to align with changes in other policies. Other than that, nothing else has been changed in this policy. And if you'd like me to speak to the comments, I can do that as well.

[00:06:35] You go for it? Okay. So in the public comments, there was a question about are we proposing removing class limits and TAs for kindergarten? That's not addressed in this policy. That's part policy 5080 which we'll be talking about later and there are no proposals to change any of that the second one is talking about gifted students and exceptions to the age requirements the age requirements are part of state code but what happens once a child is enrolled in school if they are being considered for gifted services or for acceleration our gifted office provides

[00:07:09] screening services of any child interested in gifted or acceleration so that's the answer to that question let's see here policy the line equity committee will put let's see what that say which policy will now dictate class sizes class size is still policy 50 80 that speaks to the fourth comment the fifth comment talking about what it's referring to policy line 14 and 15 and 16 is talking about enrollment age and enrollment dates that's what it's referring to and it's asking how does this apply to disabled mentally handicapped, et cetera, students.

[00:07:48] The enrollment dates are the same for all students. Any student, whether disabled or non-disabled, can delay the start of kindergarten for one year. But the year that a child turns six, they have to be enrolled in school. That's what code dictates.

[00:08:03] And then the MSAC are in a different document. And they're asking specifically about one portion of the code that speaks to the ability enroll students before they are five by September 30th and if you see in the top part of that code the last time I asked Mrs. Spurlock our registrar about this this is for school divisions that operate a preschool public preschool program or a transitional first grade program we don't operate either of those so for that reason the thing that we talked about last time which is once you're five by September 30th and you enroll in kindergarten we do screen

[00:08:41] students for acceleration to first grade if they've completed a private program so that's how we deal with that rather than having it be transitional within the school division since we do not have a public preschool program or a transitional first grade and that was all of the questions on that policy committee members any questions regarding this policy miss Reeser I just want to thank you for going through the comments and the input that we had from the public I remember at one of the Loudon Education Alliance of Families meeting that I attended some of the participants were asking you know all

[00:09:19] this work that we're doing how will it be addressed and I wanted to thank them all the folks who wrote in with the input and thank you for going through it one at a time any additional questions I had one I had a constituent reach out with a question on on line 24 when we talk about student placement if a student was in a private preschool or private program accredited through the virginia council of private education so i had a question on why that's the only one and we don't consider cognia accreditation or or any others

[00:09:56] very timely question this year i've been speaking with representatives from cognia as well it's because that is how state code is written and in the past prior to January of this year Cognia was the Virginia Council of Private Educators approved accrediting organization they had a partnership Cognia according to Cognia representative dissolved that partnership Cognia accredits about 80 percent of the schools in our state the VCPE has gone with a different accrediting organization which in credit accredits a far smaller number of schools in our

[00:10:35] state so schools that would have been accredited say in September perhaps no longer accredited according to the VCPE in January so I actually went to council with that question to see if there is any way that we could work around that and choose our own accrediting organization and council's recommendation or guidance was no the way code is written is until they change the code there's nothing that we can do to work around that other than and the guidance that I've given all of the elementary schools is any student who comes from a private pre-k program should be screened for eligibility private kindergarten program should be screened for eligibility for first grade whether accredited or not which is what we were doing before but we've re-articulated

[00:11:14] and clarified that and when you say council do you mean division council yes division council thank you okay miss Rieser I just have a follow-up question so is that something you would like us to include in the legislative program to have the legislature look at changing the code section or is your fix around it sufficient i think it's worth discussing at the legislative level okay so i would just request if dr ellis you you send us an email we'll make sure that miss dawson includes that thank you thank you sure any additional questions i move that the curriculum and instruction committee forward

[00:11:54] policy 5065 kindergarten to the full school board for consideration and approval seconded by miss is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously. We'll now begin our information items starting with 501 policy 5045 criteria and selection of supplemental instruction materials. Dr. Ellis.

[00:12:22] Thank you. I am going to turn this over to Dr. Cramp. And before I do, I'll just point out that we have four policies um in this series if you will we have one presentation it's in board docs under each item just in case someone goes to a particular item they'll find the same presentation so just like we did when this came before you a couple months ago we will pause at after each policy and leave it to you mr sorotkin for when you're ready to move to the next one okay good

[00:12:59] evening glad to be back with you tonight to share the feedback that we received off of these policies so i would start with just sharing with you the various stakeholder groups that we received feedback from i would want to point out that the loudon association of school librarians is not usually a stakeholder group we get or solicit feedback from specifically but we received three submissions from them and so we wanted to acknowledge that on this slide but you can see we received feedback from our equity committee, LEAF, MSAC, SEAC, some parents, and staff members.

[00:13:37] The next two slides summarize for you some general feedback that we received through the submissions. They aren't necessarily feedback that result in changes or specific edits being requested, but just things that we heard repeatedly throughout the feedback that was submitted. So so we wanted to make sure to acknowledge those tonight and talk about those for a few minutes.

[00:14:02] I would also share with you that we received various technical edits, add a comma here, add the word and there, and you will see those on the edited policies, but we did not necessarily drill those out

on the slides. So one set of feedback that we received was a request to further define the term sexually explicit.

[00:14:22] we did have conversation around this but did believe that it was clearly defined in policy 5055 that has been approved by the school board we continue to reference that policy where appropriate throughout the policies we will be talking about this evening and that we will continue training staff and our challenge review committees to ensure they understand truly what is included when we say sexually explicit and what is not some feedback indicated a desire for more specificity or details or defining a variety of terms throughout the policies we did incorporate

[00:14:58] a few of those changes and you will see that when we bring up the draft policy and the changes we made but just wanted to reiterate to everyone that policy by nature is broader and additional specificity if needed will be included in subsequent regulations where appropriate we We did receive some, quite a bit of feedback around the concern for the potential of book banning in Loudoun County Public Schools and the policy not being specific enough to prevent this.

[00:15:31] So we do want to reiterate that anyone has a right to challenge a resource for any of the four reasons identified within our policy. And that the process we have established is there to ensure a fair and unbiased review.

[00:15:48] But I would add that staff does acknowledge the concern of potential book banning, which is why we really lean into the policy for the specific process as it is outlined. Another concern that we heard a few times was a concern around that quiet banning may occur.

[00:16:07] Quiet banning is a phenomenon where books are not outright banned but are discouraged by administrators or others in the school setting. So we wanted to acknowledge that and just reiterate that any issues or concerns around this could be reported to our ombudsman or through Let's Talk and that everyone, administrators included, has to follow policies and our policy does clearly outline procedures and processes if there are concerns about a resource.

[00:16:35] And then we had a few comments where some folks felt like some of the things outlined in policy were too cumbersome on staff. The draft policies that we have for you this evening do reflect our current practice.

[00:16:51] And having it documented in policy doesn't add additional steps for staff. It just formalizes what is already part of our practice. I can give you two examples of that. There was specific mention around the librarians needing to do inventory every two years. We do that now.

[00:17:07] So, again, a common practice that we have formalized in policy. And then for teachers to have to consider the various factors that we listed in policy when choosing supplemental materials, we ask teachers to consider those things now when they're making professional judgments about what supplemental materials to include in their classroom.

[00:17:26] So we'll start this evening with policy 5045, and as Dr. Ellis said, we'll go through each policy one by one, and we have outlined the slides in a similar fashion for each policy that we will look at tonight. we wanted to reflect for you the total submissions that we received and when we say submissions that doesn't necessarily mean the total pieces of feedback just means the amount of submissions that we received from the various groups so we received three different submissions from our equity committee and each of those submissions included multiple pieces of feedback but you can

[00:17:57] see here for 5045 that we did have submissions from equity leaf msac apparent and seac and where in the policies that we had submissions from the Loudoun Association of School Librarians we reflect that in the staff column because they are staff members they happen to be the Loudoun Association of School Librarians but you will see that we didn't have submissions from them for 5045 but as we go on throughout the evening on the charts they are included in staff submissions

[00:18:28] so the way we chose to present all this feedback to you was try to summarize the things that we heard and some things we heard multiple times and so those are represented on here as well and we wanted to provide you as I said with a summary of the feedback and then any impact to the policy or decisions that we made as a result of the feedback that was received so in 5045 we did have some concerns that it seemed we removed some content from our original 5045 and in further looking at their feedback. This didn't result in any change on the draft policies. It was more a misunderstanding

[00:19:08] that we had moved some things from the original 5045 either into 5046 or 5047. So the things that were seemingly removed were actually just added into a different policy. And there was a request to define national values because the term is not specific enough. We did update the policy. We chose to remove the term national values but kept the other existing terms of freedoms, civic responsibility, and individual worth.

[00:19:36] We felt like in further discussion around national values that there are very different definitions of what that means, and that would be difficult for us to try to standardize. We did receive several comments questioning why parents were involved in the selection of instructional materials as they aren't content experts or certified educators.

[00:19:56] So we had folks wondering why they would be making those decisions. And so we acknowledge that parents may not have the expertise and knowledge to make those decisions but at the same time we certainly value parent feedback and input and so one thing we will specifically seek some feedback from you this evening on is around this and whether we should retain parents in the policy as part of that decision making committee for instructional materials or not. There was a suggestion to format within the policy the school and division sections so that they both included a definition of supplemental materials and the

[00:20:31] things that would fall in those categories. So we did update that. So section C school level now looks like section B division level within the policy. We there was some feedback indicating confusion over the difference between instructional materials and curriculum. And there was a concern that some of the criteria around instructional materials could be used not to teach certain topics. So there wasn't a change to the policy per se, but we just wanted to reiterate that curriculum is defined by Virginia state standards, and it is the expectation that curriculum is

[00:21:07] followed, whether it is provided by state, local, or other entity like AP, dual enrollment, IB, and so on. And this policy addresses supplemental instructional materials that support teaching the curriculum. We received feedback that Loudoun County is required to provide accessible print materials to students under ADA, IDEA, section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. And there was also a suggestion to add that materials will be evidence-based as appropriate for the intended purpose. So we did update the policy to include that accessibility language, but we did not change

[00:21:46] and add evidence-based because not all materials include evidence-based strategies that teachers may be bringing into the classroom. There was a suggestion to add reference to FLE materials

from policy 5048 into 5045 and that they follow the same criteria when selecting supplemental materials. So we did update the policy to reflect that. And the parent and student representative on the equity committee both expressed support for the draft policy. So we wanted to share that with you. But obviously that resulted in no change. So at this time we can take a look at 5045 and the

[00:22:24] feedback that we've provided and welcome any questions or comments from you all. Board members any questions or feedback regarding the changes to 5045? And just from my perspective, since you wanted committee input on the question, I mean, parents may not necessarily be experts in the field, but there have absolutely been times where parents have brought up. I remember one textbook adoption in 2019 or 2020 when parents during the public review period brought concerns about some

[00:23:02] passages in the text that were then reviewed, and we ended up changing the textbook adoption recommendation as a result of it. So just because someone's not an expert in the field doesn't necessarily mean that they don't have valuable input to provide. And it's, I think, having more eyes on something as opposed to less is usually a good thing. Additional questions or discussion or feedback? Okay, I think we're ready for 50-46. Okay, in 50-46, you can see that we received

[00:23:37] three submissions from Equity, LEAF, and then staff, which included our library association, and then MSAC and parents with two submissions, and SEAC with one. Policy 5046 feedback included a desire expressed for equitable representation in library book displays. We wanted to ensure students see themselves in book covers. We didn't recommend a change in policy for this, but did want to reiterate that this is already an encouraged and common practice with our librarians. A request to consider assigning book ratings similar

[00:24:17] to movie ratings to all of our books. We did not change anything in policy around this, but want to state that books, unlike movies, are not rated by an external entity in that way. A rating system is not currently utilized by publishers of books, but instead books are assigned age and reading levels as well as areas of interest. A suggestion to identify the accrediting body that we had listed in A1A, so we did update the policy and change this section to identify the Association of School Librarians as the accrediting agency,

[00:24:52] and included their recommendation that each library have at least 10 to 20 materials per student. The student from the equity committee appreciates the range of content and diversity included in our LCPS library collections. We did want to note that. There was a general question in reference to prohibited materials, those materials that had been challenged and are currently removed and those not being allowed in our library or in our classroom libraries. And the question was, can you bring a removed

[00:25:28] material back? We did not change anything in policy 5046 because policy 5047 section D addresses this and states that with the exception of the superintendent no challenge can be made prior to the four years post decision and that the decision remains in place until a different decision is made and policy 5047 also outlines the ability to re-challenge at the end of that four-year period we were missing some consistent language throughout with media center and library materials we were using those kind of interchangeably so we

[00:26:06] updated it to change media center to library materials throughout for consistency. We again had the feedback about being required to provide accessible print materials to students under the ADA, IDA, and section 504 and 508, and again a suggestion that materials be evidence-based as appropriate for

the intended purpose. Again we updated policy 5046 to include the accessibility but did not change anything to reflect evidence based. Again, not all materials that would be in the

[00:26:40] school or classroom library would qualify for that. There was a concern that prohibiting materials that contained visual depictions of sexual conduct as defined in 5055 is not clear enough, and it leaves room for interpretation or implied acts or feelings. We had a lot of conversation around this, but we did not make any changes to policy. We went back and continued to read and reread policy 5055 and sexual conduct is clearly defined in 5055 as actual or explicitly simulated

[00:27:15] acts of sexual conduct not interpreted or implied acts of sexual conduct so visual depictions of actual or explicitly simulated acts are what would be prohibited there is a concern expressed that prohibited materials within this policy again the ones just referenced go beyond the model policy and current law, and someone suggested that those move to regulation. We did not make a change to policy. Section D2, prohibiting visual depictions as defined in policy 5055 as actual or explicitly

[00:27:53] simulated acts, we kept that in, and we included that in response to board and community feedback when policy 5055 was being considered back in the fall. And then there was a request to clarify if and when materials that have been removed can be reinstated, and we updated the policy on D3 that includes materials will be prohibited until access is expanded pursuant to policy 5047. Again, they remain prohibited until a change is made through the process identified

[00:28:25] in 5047. So at this time, we can look through the policy, and we'll take any questions or feedback around 5046. One moment. And just to clarify, the definition of sexual conduct that's in 50-55 is itself identical to the definition that's in the BDUE model policy on which it was based. Just wanted to make sure that was accurate. That's what I thought I remembered from last year, but just wanted to make sure. Board members, any discussion or questions

[00:29:04] regarding 50-46? I think we're ready for 50-47. Okay. So for policy 50-47, challenged instructional and library materials we received 10 total submissions two from equity msac and staff again also representing the library association three from parents and one from leaf the first

[00:29:39] feedback we received was a request to expand the window of appeal from 15 business days to 90 days we did not make a change to policy 15 business days was in the original policy there have been been no issues with this timeline thus far and we felt that three weeks or 15 business days was an ample amount of time to file an appeal to a decision. There was a concern that the superintendent could act on their own and that could lead to an abuse of power. We did not change policy as a result of this. I just reiterate the superintendent is the instructional leader for

[00:30:15] the division, does have decision-making authority under the direction of the school board. There was a request for the ability to challenge materials annually as opposed to every four years if they were challenged and not removed. We did not make a change in this particular area either. We maintained the four-year time frame from the original policy. There was a request to define adult students, so you'll see we added 18 years or older after the reference to adult students.

[00:30:49] There was a concern that there will be review requests meant to target books with specific characters or themes we did not make a change to policy and again anyone has the right to challenge for any of the four reasons identified to either recategorize as sexually explicit or not to remove to restrict or expand access and the policy does establish a review committee and a formal process to ensure fairness

and an unbiased review so no change the the recommendation that the division-level committee consists of at least one teacher certified in the content area where the challenge arose and both the school-based staff and

[00:31:29] parents should be from the same level as the challenge. We had each of those groups in the original policy but we did update the policy to reflect from the level at which the challenge arose as requested. There was a expression of lack of specificity around the selection criteria for the committees that will review materials. So I will say again, we updated the policy as reflected on the previous row in terms of the level at which the challenge is coming from. But the committee makeup is outlined in the policy, but additional selection criteria for review committee members would be outlined

[00:32:07] in a subsequent regulation. There was a request to publicize both members of the review committee and the decision-making committee. We are recommending no change. There is a concern that if members or processes are made public, we will no longer have enough participants and or honest opinions. Publicizing would make it difficult to act independently of public pressure and political viewpoints, and the review process should remain independent. Results and rationale will be posted after the decision on the LCPS website. In section D1, we did have in the previous

[00:32:46] draft that the superintendent could only supersede with the restriction of a resource, and we did update that to say that the superintendent could recategorize as sexually explicit or not, remove, restrict, or expand access. There was a suggested change to allow books to be immediately reinstated at the end of the four-year window. We did not make a change to policy. The policy allows for a challenge to recategorize as sexually explicit or not, remove, restrict, or expand access after

[00:33:20] four years have elapsed from the original decision there was a request for more public information about challenges we did add that the division will publish items being challenged on the lcps website so if we receive a challenge and we enter into that process we will add onto our website where we currently list past decisions around challenge materials any current materials or resources that that are under challenge.

[00:33:49] And that concludes the feedback on 5047. We welcome your questions and comments. - Community members, any questions or feedback regarding the changes to this policy? Ms. Okedekbe?

[00:34:05] - I think just the one question I have is the, you mentioned the details about the participants being in regulation rather than policy, and I think this is a question I keep asking every time I come to a regulation policy question, which would be why not in policy, why keep that in regulation?

[00:34:31] So policy by nature is more broad and does require, as you know, board approval for changes and revisions. Regulations require the superintendent's approval and are often more operational sides of things, and so we felt like the selection criteria, the criteria for the committee members was more operational, and that's why we determined it would go in regulation.

[00:34:52] And again, as a committee makeup was either working or we needed to make adjustments, we could do that quickly within the regulation process. I just had a question about the suggestion to move the appeal deadline from 15 days to 90 days.

[00:35:10] So as I recall, there's a bunch of document. If you submit a challenge request, then you have to fill out a whole form saying why you're challenging and the rationale and that you've read the book and a whole bunch of other stuff. But is there any additional material required when you appeal?

[00:35:27] Or just you send a letter saying, hey, I want to appeal. That's all I remember, but I just wanted to make sure. Yes, that's it. Okay, so there's nothing else that would have to be prepared or anything that would take a lot of time to do? No. Okay, thank you. Just notice. Thanks. Any additional questions or discussion?

[00:35:44] I think we can move on to 5048. Policy 5048, family life education, six total submissions. We received two each from Equity and MSAC, one from LEAF, and one from staff.

[00:36:04] So within our family life feedback, we had a request to define community standards. That is a term used in the policy and is a term used in Virginia Code around family life education. Curriculum is based on FLE state standards, as we know.

[00:36:22] And as I said, this term is utilized in state code, but it's not explicitly defined by the state. So there are many days we call the state for further explanation on language or guidance that they provide. And so we've done that in the past around community standards. And in continued consult with them, you know, they continue to let us know that this language helps provide divisions some flexibility for greater or less in-depth in terms of the content around the standards based on their community and the things that are happening in their community.

[00:36:54] And I would add here, as I will throughout several times, that parents have the right to review and opt their children out of any or all of family life. One example where we have applied community standards is actually in the very next set of feedback.

[00:37:09] So we received comments that felt the LGBTQIA plus content should not be included in FLE, while others, including the student from the equity committee, felt that LGBTQIA plus content should be included, and not doing so neglects a whole community of students.

[00:37:29] And so within our LCPS family life curriculum, as part of this use of the term community standards, we've chosen to focus on relationship lessons that are gender neutral and are centered around how to have a healthy relationship with others.

[00:37:47] And again, parents have the right to preview and opt out of any or all of family life as they so choose. another example of community standards that I would share with you is human trafficking you know we that is certainly a significant issue in our area so we go pretty in depth in terms of human trafficking but there are other divisions and areas across the state where that is less of a concern and while they talk about it because it's part of the standard they don't go as in-depth as we do and it's also a place where it gives us the flexibility to consult and work with laws to talk about the things that are happening in our community and different resources or things we might need to address with our students so that is how we apply

[00:38:27] community standards within code as we're determining how much detail or at a higher level we may want to provide some of the family life standards we had a request to clearly state that families have the opt-out option we did not make any change this is already addressed in the draft policy in section B, too. We did have a request to shorten the curriculum review timeline. We did not change this. We kept a seven-year formal review window that is also based on state code, and that is

[00:39:03] a common review window for all areas, core contents included. But we do annually review materials by the FLE program for technical updates, graphics, formatting, sequencing, other things we might need to add in, and so on. And there was some feedback indicating a desire for more specificity in

the policy around the curriculum, like what we teach specifically, and how supplemental and main materials for FLE are selected. So we did not make a change to policy. Curriculum is identified and

[00:39:37] outlined through state standards, not policy. We did, as I previously mentioned, update policy 5045 to specifically state that it also applies to the selection of supplemental materials for FLE. And for primary materials for FLE, they would follow the same process as our textbook adoption policy.

[00:39:59] So they all fall under the same guise. That is the feedback we received on 5048, and we welcome your questions and comments. Committee members, any questions or feedback regarding policy 5048? Seeing none, I think you can go on to the timeline.

[00:40:19] This is a familiar slide for you, and we just continue to move it forward as we meet. So in April, as you know, we took feedback and worked on revisions to come forth to you this evening.

[00:40:35] This evening, these draft policies are information items. We will continue to make revisions if needed, but not too many shared from you all tonight. In June, we will bring it back to CNI for action at the early June meeting with the plan to bring it to the school board, the full school board for information at the second June meeting. We're certainly open for public feedback and whatnot after that meeting, so we will accept that. We will make revisions as needed and hopefully bring it back to the school board for an action item in August prior to the start of the school year. And the next slide just

[00:41:13] outlines that in a little bit more concise format for you. And that concludes our presentation on Policies 50, 45, 46, 47, and 48. Okay. Board members, any general questions or questions about timeline or feedback?

[00:41:33] Any objections to bringing this back to CNI as an action item next meeting? Okay. We'll bring all four back as action next time. Thank you very much. Thank you. And I just wanted to mention, I know what a lift this was for staff over the last couple of months in drafting these policies, gathering public feedback, considering them, and editing.

[00:41:53] And I appreciate all the work that you and your teams did in putting all of this together. We appreciate hearing that. As I've shared with you before, we've met, I don't know, twice a week for about two hours each time. So we're going to miss each other on those meetings. But I thank my team for all of their input and feedback and work around these as well.

[00:42:13] And we'll have time to prepare. But once this gets up to the full board, the presentations that you guys have put together on the background, the rationale, the timeline, the feedback that's been considered, It's been very useful for the committee members, and I'm speaking on their behalf, but I think that's why we haven't had a whole lot of feedback is because you guys have done such a good job of anticipating questions and presenting information.

[00:42:38] So I think we'll want to follow a similar format when we present to the full board because I know there's a great deal of community interest and board member interest in trying to get this right as we go through. So, with that, we'll go to 505, policy, 5080, class sizes.

[00:42:59] Dr. Ellis. Thank you. I am going to turn this over to Ms. Lehman. As you recall, we had some last-minute suggestions from staff and Division Council, so we're bringing this back as an information item with those edits incorporated.

[00:43:15] Thank you very much, Dr. Ellis. If you all recall, last month when we looked at this, Division Council had added a lot of code language in and we were kind of trying to determine should we go forward with code or go forward with what we do locally which exceeds the requirements of code so what we what you see before you is kind of a hybrid of both after incorporating your feedback and circling back with division counsel so the first paragraph remains unchanged which is simply the explanation of the purpose of the policy the kindergarten section I believe mr. Sorotkin had suggested last time we noticed that it had a lot of language in it that we had

[00:43:53] been that we added when we were moving from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten so we've removed that language we have retained the information about the assignment of assistance in all kindergarten classrooms by the way the state ratio for kindergarten is 24 to 1 we have an assistant in every kindergarten classroom with a class size maximum of 25 so we far exceed that state code requirement in paragraphs 2 and 3 we've simply updated to include what we do for grades 1 to 3 and grades 4 and 3 five with our class maximums when we add assistance etc it was council's recommendation to include a sentence at the end of each section to indicate that

[00:44:32] code does have language around ratios rather than class size maximums so we did include that that is still included and that was strongly we were strongly encouraged to retain that part that mention of the division wide ratios to keep it at the forefront of our thinking as we do class sizes under the middle school and the high school sections we will see that sixth grade seventh and eighth grade they were all combined into one statement prior they've now just been separated to be to clearly indicate that sixth grade has a different class size maximum than seventh and eighth do in the areas of physical education and

[00:45:10] music CTE is something that we had already called out individually there were no comments on that last time state code is referenced there as well and then we also had a section we had missed the section that we noticed in state code about English classes in grades 6 through 12 which there is a requirement in state code that English classes have a ratio of 24 to 1 we had not previously included that so we added that in in both sections a high school section exactly mirrors the middle school section and then as you

[00:45:47] require may recall from last time there was a request we had that any exceptions to class size maximums be approved by the level director and the request was made to add also approval by the chief of schools as well as notification of the board so we have added that language in section D it was previously added under each individual section it's been removed and moved down to under section D to apply to all three levels and additionally division council felt it was important to include what you see in numbers one and two which is what is required by state code should we exceed a class size maximum we

[00:46:23] have to notify parents of students in that class take any questions committee members questions miss Reiser thank you mr. chair so we talked about this I think previously when we were discussing this item dr. Ellis you and I talked about trying to reduce the number of students that middle school teachers have as as a responsibility and I think during the first budget season we were

[00:46:57] able to change middle school class size a little bit as was the reason then same reason I'm bringing it up now there is an additional section of classes that middle school teachers teach and therefore it gives them a considerable amount more number of students even though the class size is smaller so

could you speak to why that system exists and also, or Ms. Lehman, and also whether there are any plans to make further changes beyond just us reducing class size through the budget process.

[00:47:37] So I'll let Ms. Lehman start and I'll jump in. That would be great. I talked to both the middle and high school directors about that very question. I brought that to their attention and they said although the, it appears that the class size can be larger, what the total number of students for middle school is the same so they teach more sections but it's the same number of total students that they're limited to having by state code so what they end up with is more sections but smaller number of students in each section so they're not it's not a greater number of students because it's not the same across each section well sure and the class size so if that if the math is going to be correct it would have to be a much smaller class size than the maximum

[00:48:16] so that can't be guaranteed right that's true and that's why if you'll recall i i think it was two years ago in the budget process we added stipends for middle school teachers who exceed the 150 student maximum teacher load similar to how if that occurs at high school usually a separate section is created and a teacher would receive a jefferson contract or an additional period So just like Ms. Lehman said, it really, the history that I was able to dig up, because

[00:48:51] this happened many years ago, before I was here, was the change for middle school to teach six of eight and high school to teach five of eight was intentionally to make sure that those middle school classes were small in class size. That was the history that I was given.

[00:49:08] We could certainly consider changing that in the future, and it would have significant budget implications either way we change it. No, I think that's a great reason to do it. I guess the only other question it leaves in my mind, and maybe you could speak to this, is in terms of time, so number of students is important because that has to do with preparation or the amount of time it takes to grade, but the actual amount of time you spend teaching takes away from time to do other things.

[00:49:37] Could you speak to how many hours each level is actually teaching and has for planning or other activities? Sure. second question goes to what we're talking about later tonight um middle school if they're teaching six of eight sections that means each section is 90 minutes so they have a 90 minute planning every every day and at high school if they're teaching five of eight sections that means they have three 90 minute plannings every two days okay and they would have one 90 minute planning period

[00:50:11] more correct okay i will add though that at the high school level they um students have a study hall and teachers are assigned a study hall so there are duty periods both at the middle and the high school level so it's not always clear at it I think you'll find that high school teachers do not have 3d planning periods they typically have one each day and then a duty period okay so if I understood correctly I was having a little hard time hearing sorry so because of the

[00:50:44] duty periods the amount of planning time winds up being equal no I don't think I don't think that's true either. I do think there is more planning time at the high school level. But I don't think it's fair to say that high school teachers have three planning periods because one of those is taken up by a duty or a study hall or other responsibilities.

[00:51:06] Okay, so if they have basically one and a half planning periods a day versus the one that middle school has. And if they have a duty that would be 45 minutes, then no, it would be less. Also a 90-minute block. daily or every other day every other day on an a day or a b day so that would be 45 minutes over

each day so i think then it would be 90 minutes per middle school and like i think you are saying it's equal if yeah so you're saying three 90 minute blocks over two days yes right and we're

[00:51:44] saying 90 minutes of duty over two days so that's the same as two 90 minute blocks over two days which is one I'm following you now yes okay no no it's okay I just wanted to make sure it was so I think I follow now thank you Ms. Okedekbe so following on these questions but I think I heard you say that middle school teachers also have duties that I can't say for certain that all middle school teachers have duties I would have to do a little research on

[00:52:21] that and check in with mr. Martinez so I I would imagine though that so I think that's an important thing to understand and then also just that teaching the classes is a very different exercise than the you know the volume is going to bring you in terms of needing to grade assignments and assessments and everything so I would be interested in more feedback on this what you know what

[00:52:59] are what's the load and impact on other duties that can impact how much planning time the middle school teachers have available. And then to your point that we could look at that in the future, but it would have a significant budget impact. If we can get an update on what that budget impact would be, hypothetically, that would be helpful. Thank you. Okay, I have two questions. First, the maximum class size in grades four and five being 30. I know that used to be

[00:53:38] higher i think it used it used to be 31 or 32 32 so is that changing now or had that changed some we have already been following that practice for the last three years but it hadn't been reflected in policy until now okay policy exceeded policy allowed us to go over but we have not okay so this is a chain it's a change to policy correct where okay okay uh and then we had a when this last time we had a discussion about including in addition to the maximum class sizes also So including our general education staffing standards at different levels just for comparison and to have those in policy as well.

[00:54:17] So was that, I don't think I see that reflected in policy, but I wanted to see whether that had been discussed in staff or if there had been a decision not to add those in. I did not discuss that in staff. I completely forgot about that part. So we could certainly include that.

[00:54:34] There's going to be a third piece, code ratios, what we currently do, and then what the staffing is. basically the code ratios what our maximum is and then what our what our goal or averages according to staffing standards essentially dr. Ellis I would just say that I did have a conversation with miss Willoughby about this because the staffing standards are come out of her office she was concerned that the staffing standards are looked at every single year and are revised as a part of the budget process and approved by the board as a part of the budget process so

[00:55:09] we were hesitant to put it in policy for that reason. First of all, it's two places to make sure you have it changed and accurately reflected each year. And it really is an integral part of the budget process. So that would be my two cents. My concern is if the only place to figure out what our average staffing or what our average target staffing standards and class sizes are, You have to know to go to the appendix of the budget book to do that.

[00:55:44] So I don't know that it necessarily needs to be in policy, but I think it has to be someplace better than where we have it right now. So I'm open to suggestions on how to do that, whether it's part of the dashboards that are on the LCPS website or somewhere else. But it's got to be somewhere other than where it is right now.

[00:56:00] And so if my only way of doing that is to put it in policy, I'll do that. If you've got some alternative that staff wants to propose, I'm open to that as well. Just wondering what staff would think about making a reference to them in the policy without actually including what the number is, because it does change frequently as a result of what we do annually.

[00:56:28] I think that's a great suggestion. We could add a reference to it for sure. I'll also add there are far more staffing standards, as you all know, than just the general education teachers that are reflected in this policy. So, yeah, we can definitely do that. additional discussion okay so we'll move to our final information item for tonight 506 elementary master schedule for school year 2023-24 okay good evening again happy to be back

[00:57:03] to talk about elementary master schedules for next school year i just would like to acknowledge i have some folks here as you may have questions and things if there are things i cannot answer obviously miss layman is here you know who she is um miss moritz she is our library supervisor Miss Graham is our social science and global studies supervisor.

[00:57:25] Amy Wheeler, health and PE supervisor. And then in the audience, I have Michael Pearson, fine arts supervisor, and some of his staff as well here, Julie representing art also. So if we have some questions that I may not be able to answer, we have some folks with us.

[00:57:43] So thank you for allowing me some time this evening to share with you some updates to elementary master schedules for next school year. You may be wondering why are we addressing some of these challenges now and who says we have these challenges. So, you know, I think you all know I'm new to Loudoun County since August, but coming in, I will tell you as a new executive principal at the elementary level, these are some of the things that were first brought to me by principals as concerns. What are we going to do to address this? We need help. We need support in making it all

[00:58:20] work in the master schedule. And in conversations with Ms. Lehman, the director, and other elementary EPs who have been principals here in Loudoun County in the last several years, all agreed that we have a lot of challenges around the elementary master schedule. It's really challenging at the elementary schedule. It's not just nice, neat blocks of time that fit within an A-B schedule there are a lot of competing priorities and things that have to be balanced and so not only are principals and level office sharing these concerns we've heard from teachers prior to this school year classroom teachers and specials teachers

[00:58:58] both having challenges within the existing schedules specialists and our supervisors so some of the challenges that we currently have within the master schedule at the elementary level one is a lack of balance time across the four cores you know when we returned from covid to in-person instruction there was a real focus on language arts and math and understandably so and while there continues to be a focus on literacy and language arts and math we also need to return and have a balance of science and social studies with our students as well we have four cores that we are supposed to teach our students we have four

[00:59:36] sets of standards four sets of accountability around that and we owe it to our children to teach them all four cores within the school day currently intervention at the elementary level intervention for reading and or math for students who need additional support is happening in many of our schools within core minutes so they are pulling time from core instruction to provide intervention or schools that only have one block of time to do that so if you have students that need reading and math intervention can't get

it in the day because there's one block of time to really provide that intervention and if they are getting it it's more

[01:00:12] core minutes that they're missing in one of those two subjects so that's not the way to intervene to remove children who need support from current core first instruction to provide intervention you really do need to do both so we needed to find time to do that there is a lack of daily common planning time across the grade levels across the schools for our classroom teachers some schools are able currently to have 45 minutes an hour every day for their classroom teachers and in other places they get 30 minutes a week as a team of teachers to be able to be together again just because of the many challenges that come in at a school level that they have to balance

[01:00:51] collaborative time for our teachers together is crucial in terms of effective instructional planning so we wanted to work to provide that we are currently offering our specials in different different amounts of time and different frequencies. So some are once a week, some are twice a week, some are three times a week, some are 30 minutes, some are longer than that. And so when you try to balance that within the elementary school day, it's quite a challenge. And then to be totally transparent, every year various offices put out guidance. The literacy office puts out

[01:01:26] guidance, the math office, the counseling office, the PE supervisor put out guidance to schools and principals around this is basically what should be happening the main things that we should be doing within time and how much time you should be spending on stuff and that guidance came out in isolation and there was not a lot of collaboration across those entities to talk through that guidance and so principals receive that and lay it all out and if you tried to follow everything on there it's impossible within the school day so schools have been left to try to figure out what to cut, where to bend, how to shift to make it work in my school, which results in lots of

[01:02:05] different things happening across our elementary schools. So we had some goals when we entered into these conversations. One is to support schools, students, and teachers, and we have to find a balance of all of that, right, because there are teacher needs, student needs, and school needs when we think about schedules. We wanted to ensure a more equitable and consistent approach across the core contents, specials, and our schools. We did want to provide daily common time for our grade level teachers to support collaborative learning teams. We wanted a consistent amount of time

[01:02:38] across specials blocks, and that does also reduce some travel time for itinerants. And I want to stay on that bullet for just a minute and address that, you know, I want to make certain everybody understands that every competing priority is a priority and every competing priority is important and that we valued in these conversations and currently specials teachers as much as we value classroom teachers they each bring things to our children that are important that are meaningful that are relevant and a specials teacher's purpose is not to provide planning to the classroom

[01:03:18] teacher. A special teacher's purpose is to teach their specialty area, you know, and create excitement in kids, expose kids to that, and we all support that and believe that. But you also cannot separate that at the elementary level, classroom teacher planning is tied to specials, and it's just something you can't separate. It's not their purpose, but they are connected. And we also wanted to collaborate with all offices so that we could determine the best way to move forward to try to address all the current challenges that exist. So what process did we take? There have been many,

[01:03:55] many, many collaborative conversations within and across various offices over the past three months. These offices include our content offices, school counseling, the elementary level office, gifted and talented, and student services. So everybody understood from their own lens all of the challenges that were currently in place at the elementary level and were committed to working together while trying to solve those challenges, but also ensure their area's needs were met, right? I mean, that's the goal. Additionally, we did hold a focus group that

[01:04:31] had multiple specials teachers representing art, music, PE, and library, as well as elementary administrators and received positive feedback. Certainly, there were questions to answer, things to consider, of course things we will need to work through in the transition, but the group overall did understand the big picture, the balancing of priorities, and viewed this as a positive change to find balance, equity, and consistency. I should also mention up there that we did take a survey, both Mr. Pearson and myself, through some different means around Region 4 in

[01:05:10] state of Virginia and the specials rotation which we are proposing or moving forward with within our schedules for next year is a very common amount of time and frequency during the week for not only region four but across the state of Virginia that one time a week for a music or an art one time every six days for a music or an art anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes is a very common amount of time for a specials rotation so our path forward at this time we have identified

[01:05:44] also minimum core minutes k through five again that focus on all four cores at all grade levels moving forward we have identified instructional priorities that are common among the four core areas and things that we are prioritizing within instruction within each core area specials we will be moving forward with a 50-minute specials block on a five-day rotation students will have art and music once a week they will have either library counseling and search once a week and then they will have pe twice a week we have updated the guidance that we provide to those areas and those teachers and that has been sent to schools and grade level teachers will

[01:06:22] have 50 minutes of common planning daily we shared this when we met with principals and in all of our conversations you have to plan for the bulk right there are outliers in our very very very small schools and there are outliers in some of our very large schools and we will work with them to you know work through the nuances that come with that but we have planned for the the majority of our schools so again the majority of our teachers should have 50 minutes of common planning daily. When you think about the elementary day it's sort of like building the division calendar and everybody wants to swap this day for that day and nobody quite understands how things have to

[01:07:01] add up in the end the same is really true when we think about our elementary instructional day so that's the first place you start is how many minutes do we have what are all the things that we need to get done in the day and how do we make that work right so we have 405 minutes you certainly can take off the top 30 minutes for lunch 30 and 40 minutes for recess respectively as the grades list there a 50 minute specials block 20 minutes for morning meeting and our very important social emotional learning that we do with our students am arrival and dismissal i will

[01:07:36] tell you we did not allocate and prior to our focus group time for arriving and packing up at the end of the day because schools just spill that in right that just happens it's just part of the day and they said no you need to at least give us five minutes we know it probably takes a little more than that right especially younger kids at the beginning of the year but please do it so we don't have to decide where it

comes from right so we said okay we'll pull that 10 minutes out of the overall that we were working with and we came back and we made some revisions based on that so we have allocated for that we have included outside of english language arts instruction core minutes a 30-minute reading intervention block so all students who are

[01:08:16] required and need reading intervention support have a time that does not interfere with their core english language arts block to receive that service students who do not need support will continue working on English language arts activities that they are able to maybe do on their own or with less support that is what happens currently during intervention time we did not build in transitions you don't see that up there it's not because we don't know transitions happen of course they happen but transitions throughout the day transitions from grade level to grade level and transitions across schools are not the same it's not always we need three minutes to go from this thing to the next thing that varies from teacher to teacher and

[01:08:54] building to building so schools build in transitions now they don't reflect those on their master schedule now they just leave class when they need to get to PE on time or stop math when they need to get to lunch on time and they just do that within their regular schedule so we were not going to you know tackle that but we certainly recognize transitions happen so what are we left with in terms of core minutes so at grades one through five you're left with 235 minutes and at great and at kindergarten you're left with 225 minutes. I do want to note here that while you

[01:09:28] do not see a separate intervention block for math outside of core minutes what we did was lengthen the math instructional core minute block that we are providing k through five to include time to offer math intervention intervention within the math workshop structure. It happens in the math block but it's not in place of math tier one core instruction everybody gets that and then in the workshop structure where our students are rotating around if they need an intervention time they get that and if not they work on those independent less supported activities again much like they do

[01:10:05] in reading so we were able to build in time for intervention for both contents which is really important number one that it's not pulling from core minutes and number two that kids who need both are able to get both because we do have students that fall into that category. So in terms of specials, as I said, we will have a 50-minute specials block on that five-day rotation. As I mentioned before, two times a week for PE, once a week for music and art, and then library counseling and search is every other week. Counseling is included in the rotation K through five. Search is included in the rotation at K and one. Search and fusion are still happening at all the other

[01:10:43] grade levels they'll just continue to schedule those as they they do at each of their individual schools and I also want to mention we did have some feedback and some of our conversations around library and in some schools this schedule results in library switching to every other week instead of every week that's not every school every school doesn't have a library every week right now some do and so for them this is a shift to every other week library but I want to explicitly say that that's just the time students come to library for a formal lesson okay the library is open the library is accessible kids can check

[01:11:21] out books and the librarians support classroom instruction with research projects book clubs and many other things that they do and where students would have access to the library and the librarian so I didn't want to point that out this slide shows you the comparison of our current special schedule and the schedule for 23-24 and the difference in minutes for each area. There's a few things I would like to

highlight on this particular slide. Music does lose 10 minutes overall during the week. However, there is some time saved with two less transitions in and out

[01:11:57] of class as well as an opportunity to go deeper into each lesson. I also would like to share that we currently have some schools that are able to support longer specials blocks similar to those that are presented here, and those schools provide very positive feedback about the depth and content within those lessons, as well as the engagement of students in those longer blocks. You know, our classroom teachers have 90 to 120 minute instructional blocks at different points in the day, and that happens K through five. And so we certainly recognize that students need to change

[01:12:33] activities within that time. So you think about core instruction, teachers are changing activities every, you know, 10 to 20 minutes. Students are moving, shifting to something different. The teacher's shifting her lesson, his or her lesson, whatever, you know, it happens to be. And that's part of the type of planning it takes to ensure you have engagement from students all the way from K through fifth grade. And so planning with that type of structure in mind is some ways that our specials, some of our specials teachers will have to make some shifts, right? I might have been able to do one main lesson for 30 minutes but now I'm going to need to think about kind of three

[01:13:12] mini chunks within my lesson and how am I going to plan for that and we are currently working on professional learning for teachers that we'll be providing in the fall around that just how do you start to think about 50 minutes in terms of chunks when you're used to planning one thing for 30 minutes special teachers within this rotation also have on average 50 minutes of planning a day and I'm going to explain that but I want to start by reiterating the value we have for specials teachers and recognizing they too need planning. That was integral to part of our conversations as we were

[01:13:45] going through. The reason I say on average is next year just like currently some days specials teachers have 30 minutes and some days specials teachers might have an hour and a half. It all depends on the way in which they're assigned at the school, the schools where they need to travel, the frequency of their specials in the week how many teachers are in each grade level all of that impacts a specials teacher and their planning schedule so while it's neater for a classroom teacher to have 50 minutes every day it's not that neat on the special side of things but our

[01:14:21] the intention is for them at the end of the week to be able to look back on the week and go I had on average 50 minutes a day Monday had 30 minutes the next day I had an hour and a half the next day I had an hour then I was back to 30 minutes and then I had an hour but if I divide that by five it probably doesn't add up right but if I divided that by five on average I would have 50 minutes of planning a week which is I mean a day sorry sorry 50 minutes a day 50 minutes a day uh for sure um and we have had some conversations with principals because some of our feedback has been if principals choose to put specials on the hour right so let's 9 to 9 50 is a special 10 to

[01:14:58] 1050 is a special that will that 10 minutes in between be the specials teachers planning time and the answer is no and we were very clear about that with principals but no you need to build your schedule in such a way that there are chunks reasonable chunks for planning time for those teachers and we did share with elementary principals a variety of ways you can schedule specials it doesn't need to be on the hour all day long so we're working through some of those things with our elementary principals. I also want to mention PE in this slide. We recognize that PE gains minutes overall with this shift, but we did have some feedback around the general

[01:15:37] recommendation that physical with physical activity that kids be active three times a week for 20 minutes. You know, as is the case now, some of our students active time comes from PE and some comes from recess and that would continue with this adjustment. We did have some questions around triple PE classes, which is times where three classes may come at the same time to PE, we do have that now. We have that now where we have sometimes just within the schedule with a number of classroom teachers, three classes that come to PE at the same time. I would say if schools are in need of additional equipment to, you know, handle a triple they may not have had in the past, we will

[01:16:12] certainly work with schools on that. And that planning within the 50 minutes, as well as planning effectively for triples classes will be part of the professional learning that our PE supervisor is working on for the fall. The last thing I would mention on this slide is that we do now have school counseling within the rotation. I want to recognize that we know students have needs and we want to continue to meet all those in the same way we do now and we know needs of students happen at various times in the day right and sometimes those needs require a counselor. So what are you going to do if the counselor's teaching i would say much like many of the things i've shared with

[01:16:51] you this evening that happens now when counselors are out on leave or here at a meeting or working at another school or any of those things and that schools have teams in place with members who can respond immediately to student needs and sometimes handle them fully other times work with them long enough until we can get the additional support that the particular student needs at that time so we maintain that that will still be a primary focus. This is just one samples rotation to kind of show you what a week rotation for a student might look like, and you can see that grades one

[01:17:31] through five is the yellow bar and grade K is the blue bar, but it just simply reflects that, you know, art is once a week, you can see PE twice a week, and then music once a week, and then in this particular schedule we reflect library happens on Wednesday okay so this is week one then the next week students come come to school you see that the schedule for art is the same the two PE days are the same and the music day is the same what changes is that for grades one through five this would be their counseling lesson and for grade k half of this 50 minutes

[01:18:08] would be searched and half this 50 minutes would be counseling so you can see that you know just that visual representation so you can see how the special schedule would work out and then it just repeats right so then week three would be week one and week four would be week two and you just repeat that over and over we did have some questions about holidays that fall on Mondays and we have movable Mondays at the elementary level where we try to make up those Mondays we will continue to have movable Mondays but we've had some dialogue about spacing those out throughout the year as long as we get them in and on different days of the week so that we're not

[01:18:45] always pulling from the same special to make up for a Monday and we've also had conversations with school administrators around scheduling assemblies special parties you know pbis rewards all of those things at different times it can't always be Friday at two because the same thing is going to continue to miss in the schedule so we have had and we'll continue to have those dialogues with our staff so i just want to provide you on kind of what we've done and just some of our next steps so in the last week we have shared all of this with principals and staff we have also provided

[01:19:21] time offices and supervisors have provided time for whole group small group and one-on-one conversations we've done some open office hours we've been answering questions clarifying

misunderstandings hearing their feedback you know as we continue to work through this process and we will continue to offer those and we welcome any and all conversation around positively supporting our staff through this change we you know we have as i said received a variety of feedback and much of it positive and i'm going to pause for a minute and let dr ellis share some of the

[01:19:56] feedback that we have received and then i'll close with our next steps thanks dr cramp so So I did just want to take a moment, I had asked Dr. Cramp and Ms. Lehman, who have been receiving all of this feedback, mostly positive, recognizing that you all as board members, part of your job is to receive the complaints and concerns, and so you may not always hear the positive feedback.

[01:20:20] So I wanted to share just a couple of examples of emails that Dr. Cramp and Ms. Lehman have received over the past week since we've shared this information. And also just a big thank you to this collaborative team. did have to compromise this was not an easy conversation to have which i think is one reason why it has taken us so long to actually have the conversation and and i think we're in a really good place moving forward so just a couple of examples one specials teacher said we know that students are often transformed in specials because they are able to express themselves through participation

[01:20:56] creativity and skill building i believe that changing the amount of time we are with students from 30 minutes twice a week to 50 minutes once a week doesn't hinder this experience for them but enhances it. Looking at this from the larger perspective, it is evident that the whole child is being considered in this schedule with the equity in core class minutes, planning, recess, etc. In specials, we will be able to really dive deep into the core of our lessons, go into more detail, cut down on transition time, leaving more time for in-depth discussion and deeper connections with content and with our students.

[01:21:29] i've heard concerns from some of my colleagues about student student content retention excuse me in specials with classes meeting once a week my course meets once a week for 20 minutes and students absolutely retain music from week to week i first hand i know firsthand that it is about how i teach and my approach to the content not about the length of time i have another specials teacher wrote i'm so happy to learn that loudon county is implementing an elementary master schedule that includes two 50-minute blocks for physical education.

[01:22:01] Longer blocks allow for more creative and engaging instructional time. I have seen an amazing student reaction to this format when I taught 45- to 60-minute elementary school lessons for many years in Loudoun County and in other districts. One principal writes, I wanted to take this opportunity to share my excitement about the shift at the elementary level around the new guidance with elementary's master schedule.

[01:22:26] As a 15-plus year administrator with LCPS, I believe this shift will 100% better support schools, students, and our teachers by ensuring a more equitable and consistent approach is followed across both our core instructional subjects and our specials classes.

[01:22:42] In years of developing a master schedule, our focus is always on providing classroom teachers with the necessary common planning to meet their immense student demands while balancing the frequency and duration of our specials. In most instances, blank school, along with other elementary schools, find it nearly impossible to create a schedule that provides equitable planning time within the current parameters.

[01:23:04] As a result, schools would make individual exceptions or adjustments. Either of these scenarios creates inequities across the division and within a school for both staff and students. I'm now confident that these new structures will provide division-wide consistency with common planning and also allow special classes across the division to have the same frequency and instructional time.

[01:23:28] And then one more excerpt from another principal. We receive guidance at the beginning of each school year from each content office and specialist and supervisor. It has always been impossible to implement all the guidance from various offices because it didn't align.

[01:23:43] The guidance had been given from that specific office's perspective, but didn't look at the global perspective of how it could be implemented with all the other expectations given to the schools. As principals, we had to sift through the guidance to make the best decisions for our school. that it was not possible to meet all guidelines in place.

[01:24:01] Principals have voiced our concern each year that this guidance given from different silos is not possible to implement in our schools and have requested the offices work together to give us instructional allotments that are attainable within the school day. Dr. Kramp and Ms. Lehman, you worked very hard to hear our input this year.

[01:24:18] This master schedule expectations are a positive change for us at the school level to have consistent guidelines that aligns with our instructional priorities. And it goes on, but that just gives you an idea. Thank you. Appreciate that. So some of our next steps, as I said, communication has clearly begun, and we are continuing those conversations and opportunities.

[01:24:42] Our executive principals and elementary office will be working with school principals as they are just beginning the process of building their master schedules. They do that every year, but now they'll build it around this guidance. All of the accompanying documents that we reference in here are being shared with principals.

[01:25:00] as we speak some last week and a few more coming shortly special staffing will be shared with schools in may miss layman and our pe and music and art folks have been meeting quite a bit looking at special staffing trying to find the best balance to again try to limit travel limit itinerants as much as possible and meet the needs of all the schools within the new structure so So those will be allocated in May and we are planning for professional learning as mentioned for both core teachers within the core minutes that have been outlined and with special teachers

[01:25:38] and counselors to support them in planning for their instructional blocks. Our core supervisors are putting out guidance for, you know, kind of what you should be doing within each block. What are the must do's and may do's? We put that out for literacy before, but we are now going to put that out for math and social studies and science. Again, prioritizing and being intentional with the time that you do have. There's never enough time, right? But being intentional with the time that they do have and identifying priorities within those. And so I think I will close with just, I appreciate so

[01:26:11] much the collaboration within and across so many offices and schools and teachers across the last several months. And just acknowledge that we know with any change, there will always be feelings on both sides and a lot of folks in the middle and just like now we have schedules that were provided or if I entered a new division and I was a teacher I would be given a schedule and there's parts of that that I

probably really like and parts that I'd like to change and that's the challenge of trying to balance all of the the competing needs but we are confident that what we have

[01:26:45] developed for next school year meets those competing needs in the best way given all of the you know the other constraints and things that we need to work within. I would repeat as I did on my video that we acknowledge there will be bumps in the road but we are confident we can navigate them together. We also acknowledge as Dr. Ellis said there was give and take by all offices and departments and we know there is no perfect master schedule. Never will be. But we were committed to working collaboratively to balance the priorities to provide the most optimal guidance that we could to ensure a more equitable and consistent approach across core contents

[01:27:23] specials and all of our schools we welcome comments and questions committee members comments or questions regarding the the changes i have a couple uh did what if any impact or to the schedule of our pre-k programs would this have i know they're on a completely different schedule but i don't know if this impacts them in some way yes they are on different schedules um pre-k is not included in our staffing standard for music, art, and PE. And so they were not a part of this discussion. Also, some of our preschool classes are in high schools, etc.

[01:28:03] Okay. There was mention of educators and staff as part of focus groups over the last couple months. Could you give a little more detail about how many people were involved in those focus groups, where they came from, how they were selected? Yeah, I don't want to quote you an exact number because I don't want to give you the wrong number but we did have collaborative conversations. We had two scheduled. We thought we would need two times to kind of talk through all the pieces and get the feedback that you know we needed and answer those questions but we ended

[01:28:38] up at the end of our first two and a half hour or so meeting with the group. Again as I said coming to the conclusion that this was positive overall but certainly gathering their questions you know their initial their their feedback and and whatnot we did have multiple teachers I would say I can say I'm just not sure the exact number ended up coming from art music PE library and four I think elementary principals that were there we shared kind of generally some of the things we shared with you tonight here's the existing challenges here's what all we're trying to balance here's our thoughts on moving forward talk to us like what what are the oh no's what are the things

[01:29:16] we're not thinking about what are some things we need to consider and we took all of those those notes and their feedback they asked great questions we provided you know explanation and we had some back and forth about well how might we do that we had a lot of great conversation and then the core team came back and sifted through that feedback and made adjustments you know as needed one of which was those five the accounting for those those 10 minutes in terms of the beginning and end of the day but I can get you a number but I don't want to misquote an exact number but there were multiple from each of those areas that were part

[01:29:51] of our focus group sorry and I'll just also jump in real quick and add that that does not include the many conversations that the content supervisors have had with individual teachers the content supervisor is that is that go-to person for teachers in the central office and so they each of them including Michael's The whole team have had many conversations with teachers to listen to their concerns, help them process, answer questions, et cetera.

[01:30:22] Okay. And then for our two dual language immersion schools that are launching this fall, are they on the same schedule or are they on a modified schedule? How does it work for them? That is a great question. We currently meet weekly with our DLI implementation team.

[01:30:39] I'm on that as is Mrs. Lehman. they had identified minutes of the day and which subjects in English and Spanish when these conversations started several months ago I brought it up in DLI to say this is great but we may need to eventually make some revisions once we finally landed on the core minutes that were going out K through five they have made subsequent adjustments in terms of which things will be in Spanish and which things will be in English again to still be half of each student's day in both languages but we just shifted around some of the minutes so they will follow the same guidance and still provide the appropriate language instruction needed

[01:31:15] for those programs okay miss Rieser thank you mr. chair thank you for the presentation I just have a couple of follow-up questions you you touched a little bit on the 10 minutes not being enough for a minimum chunk of planning time is there going to be any kind of guidance given on what a minimum amount of planning time would be? Yeah, the goal for all teachers, whether a classroom teacher or specialist teacher, is a minimum of 50, average 50 minutes per day of planning time. Sorry, I should ask the question differently. Oh, you mean what would make a planning time? You were going to speak

[01:31:53] What would be the, what would be the minimum amount of planning time? In our conversations last week with principals, we talked about 30 minutes being a minimum chunk of time that you could legitimately considered planning and just to reiterate we will be working with each school as they build their schedule they will be required to submit their schedules to us we will make sure that they're working within the guidance and you know scheduling comes easy to some people and not so easy to others but we will lean on each other to provide support where needed to help some of our principals think a little bit differently and a little bit more creatively about about their time

[01:32:32] within the day. Sure and kind of piggybacking on that with with regard to communication with with both administration and staff what what's that looking like? Are there is it emails? Is it in person? So throughout this process we've talked about the need for consistent communication right around a change like this that impacts all of our schools and several changes you know incorporated within how we're moving forward for next year and part of the feedback we received

[01:33:08] from our focus group was well one person needs to deliver the first message and then you need to let schools and supervisors and whatnot follow up with all the things that are going to come after that they were like that's crucial that everyone hears the same rationale the same big picture that was that was looked at who all came together that's really important and so last week shared division nationwide a video with slides supporting slides to explain much of what I explained to you this evening were a few more slides in that for our teachers and staff a little bit more detail level around some of the minutes and things like that but that was shared through slides with video

[01:33:47] voiceover first and then principals have held many follow-up meetings with their staff they had in-person kinds of conversations after that some whole group to answer general questions obviously as they go to teams and team meetings they're answering questions they have some individual follow-up the day after the video went out miss layman and i hosted a session with principals where we did a q a we spent about an hour and a half with them just talking through some things making sure they understood

some of the things that were in the guidance and then once the video went out to the full staff each of the supervisors have held follow-up question and answer

[01:34:25] sessions that were for their whole group of teachers but in all of those sessions said if you'd like to meet one-on-one, if you'd like to follow up with me, please do so. And they are in the process of having either on teams or face-to-face, in-person follow-up conversations.

[01:34:41] Okay, so teachers have had a chance to do live Q&A. Yes, ma'am, several. And do they know that there were teachers in the focus group? Was that part of the slideshow presentation? They should know that. That was part of the slideshow presentation, and I do believe most of our supervisors reiterated that, you know, as they had time with their staff.

[01:34:59] Okay, and I think the, I'm sorry, did I cut you off? I feel like you might have had something. Okay, sorry. Were there parents in the focus groups? And I can understand why you might say no, because this is the kind of decision you're making would impact what teachers are doing.

[01:35:23] But if there were, it would be interesting to know. And if they weren't, how is it, well, even if there were, how is this being communicated to families? There were not principals in the focus group.

[01:35:38] mean there were principals there were not parents in the focus group we had some dialogue around that and but much like you said because it's more of an operational kind of change and more impact to teachers directly and what's happening within their school day or teaching assignment we did not have parents and annually year to year things change within a school's master schedule this year we had 50 minutes for specials next year we might only be able to work out 45 one school works out 60 this year i had planning twice a week next time i next time next year i might not like there are nuances that happen annually as staffing kind of shifts and change and and all of that and so

[01:36:17] we wouldn't necessarily have a focus group around those principles just make those decisions right and so we viewed these while they were impacting everyone much the same those operational kind of year year to year decisions in terms of communicating it out um full scale you want to take that well i I would just add that it's common practice, has always been common practice and will continue to be common practice that when the child gets their homeroom teacher and their homeroom teacher provides that beginning of the year information, one of the things that's provided is the special schedule and what day to dress for PE and all of those sorts of things.

[01:36:49] So that will continue. That makes sense. And I understand this is the biggest shift is for the people in the classroom. But I do think especially at the younger grades, some of the concerns that we've heard about the longer teaching blocks, I think families are going to have the same concern for their children and attention span and just it is a big shift and there's a lot of room for misunderstanding so I would say for that reason maybe waiting until school starts might be too late I think that that you there's been so much effort and thought put into what's good about this and I think if families understand

[01:37:27] that they'll better be able to support it we're just saying that's a great suggestion we could do the same follow the same procedure that we followed for everyone else into a video that could be posted. Additional questions? Okay. Thank you very much for the overview and for the information about the changes next year. Appreciate it. Thank you.

[01:37:54] All right. That will bring us to item six, new business. Is there any new business tonight? Ms. Reiser. It's actually not new business. Sorry. I want to just thank you again. You obviously put so much

thought into this and I think so many people are looking for consistent experience from school to school for their kids to have the same opportunity and I see how much that theme runs through the plan that you've put together.

[01:38:19] So I hope it's extremely successful, and thank you for putting all the work into it. Is there any additional new business? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you.



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