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Loudoun County School Board, Loudoun Education Alliance of Families (LEAF) Committee Meeting, Monday, May 15, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 23m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/827044881?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.

[00:03:11] All right. Good afternoon. Welcome, LEAF members, to the May 15th, 2023 meeting of the Loudoun Education Alliance of Families. The meeting will now come to order. As we begin our agenda this evening, as usual, seats are by planning districts and clusters.

[00:03:28] Please make sure that you have signed in. There are two options. There's a computer at the end of your table, or you can use the QR code to access with your phone. Anyone attending who is not a school board approved member or alternate should sit in the public viewing area. We will now move on to public comment. Leaf meetings are open to the public. Loudoun County residents are welcome to attend the meeting, but they must refrain from interrupting the meetings agenda. Per our charter and bylaws, public comments should address an agenda item. Members of the public who wish to address items on the agenda.

[00:04:04] May do so at this time, man. We went a whole year, guys, see none. We will move on to agenda item three, approval of the meeting, approval of minutes. The meeting minutes for the March 20th meeting are in board docs for review, and you have a few copies at your table, providing another opportunity for a review.

[00:04:28] I will entertain a motion to accept the minutes from the March 20th, 2023 meeting as submitted. I motion. All right, we have a motion by? Doug Morford. All right.

[00:04:44] is there a second all right we have a second bye okay okay there was a question last time about someone who was on both here in a way and here and absent and that was because they were both the primary person for their school and they were also listed as the alternate so they were here for

[00:05:22] the primary person and not here for their alternate because I guess you can't be two people at the same time so all right so um with no changes requested um the minutes um i'm sorry um all in favor of accepting the minutes as they are stated say aye all those opposed all right with no changes requested the minutes stand approved as submitted um okay we're now going to move on to informational

[00:05:53] items before we get to our guest speaker I wanted to give Erica a few minutes to just talk about the the board and a couple of things that she wanted to address thank you so much so I unfortunately I have the appeals hearing for special permission appeals is starting at six o'clock in a room down the hall so I can't stay for your whole meeting today I got assigned to May and

[00:06:27] these are people want to have appeals heard so I don't unfortunately I'm not going to be able to stay for the whole meeting today I I wanted to just share in the couple of times that I've come I've had a couple different conversations with folks who are feeling like there needs to be a better way to get feedback to come back to you so specifically around policy feedback that you've spent the time to go through policies provide very detailed feedback at times as a group or individually but not feeling like you are hearing what happened with

[00:07:04] that and so as your liaison I'm on five committees I could be bringing feedback from the five committees but really you want them from all of the committees and it's not something where I have distilled information from all the committees on that feedback so it's something I'm going to be bringing to the board to have a discussion about to figure out what's the best and most efficient way we can bring that information back so that you have clarity on we provided this feedback and then where did it go I think that you can if you're reading through the policy and you're you know going line by line

[00:07:42] you can figure out oh did they take my feedback or not but that's very tedious and takes a lot of your time as well so I wanted to let you know that that was something that I've heard very clearly that would be helpful and certainly respectful of the time that you put into providing that feedback so I just wanted to share that the other thing I'm just curious and I know this is a new committee so you have been spending a lot of this year kind of getting yourselves organized and you have bylaws and some structure and so forth but as you move forward and then for those of you who are continuing to serve or for new people

[00:08:18] coming in just think about you know what it is that would be helpful for you for me to bring on a monthly basis to this group technically I'm not formally on the agenda but I am here listening which is really helpful but if there are other things that folks would like the school board member who's the liaison here to bring to the to your meetings I'd love to hear more information about that so um I think the only other thing the biggest thing going on right now is the

[00:08:51] superintendent search and so um I think it's probably one of the most impactful things to that we are working on right now it's exciting to see a very well qualified pool and I'm looking forward to in a

couple of weeks I think we had said end of May beginning of June should be the official announcements once the search activities have concluded but I

[00:09:23] don't know what else hey I was wondering last time we met they had talked about the bathrooms that I know that became a big hot topic on the news everybody was commenting and I joined in some of the conversations I said come here there's plenty of time to talk and we got no one here when we have things like this I understand we have the school board meetings but are there I don't know press releases y'all can put out to say hey come join these meetings you know if y'all have something to say let us hear it and then we can talk about it action

[00:10:03] it so that's my question so I think the topics are fluid so it's hard to know in advance exactly what people want to be talking about I know them the month that I wasn't here I was out of town I think when mr. Mahedevi came in my stead but it wasn't known like this would be the topic I think that it just organically evolved all meetings are published and public and if people want to come this is certainly a venue of others.

[00:10:38] I think this is a little more. This is definitely more interactive than a school board meeting where you have public comment and there isn't really a space for two way dialogue. So this is an opportunity for that. I don't but there aren't press releases for every single committee.

[00:10:55] Similarly with committee meetings they actually become I think a little bit more of a place for dialogue. I know that for example with the student behavior and accountability committee often we'll have staff or school based administrators who attend and we'll ask you know how does this play out in the school.

[00:11:14] We had some questions for example a couple weeks ago about protective orders and how they handle those and trying to get some clarity in policy around how protective orders are transferred with students and the different types of records for the students and asking you know as an administrator what makes sense what's what's going to be clear to you and your colleagues from a policy perspective so long answer to say I don't though I don't think that there would be press releases every time there was a meeting but certainly it is an opportunity for

[00:11:48] people to come and participate absolutely yep the only thing I will note is that they're only permitted to comment on the items on the agenda so it does prevent kind of a more fluid as Erica mentioned kind of evolving conversation if what they want to talk about is not on the agenda then they can't talk about that it's just the agenda items given that we're a committee

[00:12:22] that were it was appointed so that's just something to note okay so now we're gonna move on to some informational items at this time I would like to welcome back Ms. Tedra L. Richardson, director of special education, specialized instruction in the Department of Student Services. She's going to share a general overview and information about

[00:13:12] special education, a request that was made by our members. Ms. Richardson. Good evening. How are you? It's awesome. Thank you. And it's so great to be here with you this evening. Again, I am Tedra Richardson, Director of Special Education for Specialized in Instruction, and it is always an honor to be invited to talk about the one aspect of education that is near and dear to my heart, which is specialized in instruction and special education. All right, so we'll start with an overview of the Department of Student

Services. So the first part of our department is the Office of Diagnostic and Prevention Services. This is an overview in case you guys have never looked at

[00:13:51] the website that you haven't dug in to see how we're currently structured, but we have educational diagnostician services, eligibility services for special education. That's where our multi-tiered system of support, our MTSS services lie. Preschool Child Find Center is out of that office, as well as section 504 services and threat assessment. Next, you walk on down the hallway, so I'm giving you a tour of the fourth floor, right? So you walk on down the hallway and that brings you to the Office of Special Education, which our main focus is specialized in instruction,

[00:14:28] procedural support. We focus on inclusive practices and inclusive opportunities for our students across the school division. Related services such as speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Transition services, so those are for our students with disabilities that are 14 years of age and older. Extended school year services, which we're gearing up for the biggest extended option that we have, which is planning for the summer, but it's not restricted to just summer services.

[00:15:00] We can, IEP teams are tasked with looking at any extended breaks that we may have throughout the school year for students with disabilities. Our office also serves as the liaison to our Special Education Advisory Committee, or our SEAC.

[00:15:16] And, of course, we have Parent Resource Services, which just moved out of this building from the fourth floor over to the New Douglas building. Then we walk you across the hallway to our student mental health services and that encompasses all of our school counseling services, school psychological services, school social work services, crisis intervention and our unified mental health teams. And then we complete the rectangle and we're back to the office of student services which is child protective services documentation anytime those reports are made, special permission, which Mrs. Ogadugby is going to have to be leaving

[00:15:55] us so she can go through those appeals, the student registration process, student health services, so all of our skilled nursing services across the division, outreach services, homebound instruction, and McKinney-Vento. Let's dig into a little bit about the structure for the Office of special education. So our structure is, and it's a unique structure. We're probably only one of four school divisions across the Commonwealth that have this structure. We have two directors of special education. One is specialized in instruction, and the other is procedural support.

[00:16:33] Each of those positions has an assistant director that also supports specialized instruction and procedural support. And then we have a team of supervisors that are divided by clusters. So they're all assigned to a cluster of schools.

[00:16:49] Our clusters are divvied out by our 17 high schools, okay? And we also have specialized instructional facilitators across reading, math, behavior, and assistive technology, as well as autism, intellectual disabilities, and early childhood special education.

[00:17:10] We also have coordinators and specialists that are also sort of divided out across those areas. When we talk about services, the heart of what we do is developing and focusing on specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.

[00:17:27] So our Department of Prevention and Diagnostic Services really identifies the brain-based challenges for our students. And then our office has the beautiful task of being able to sit down with

educational teams that include parents to make sure that we are identifying targeted areas in which we can focus to really develop and structure a plan that focuses on closing the gaps that were identified from the brain-based challenges through the eligibility process. Our procedural support

[00:18:02] focuses on our compliance to state regulations and federal laws. Our inclusive practices, we are always mindful about the continuum of special education, not just for one main placement, but where are our students functioning all throughout the day along that continuum of services that we are mandated to offer as a local education agency.

[00:18:28] Our related services, again, I had mentioned those and they're listed there. Our transition services are required by law for students that are eligible under the IDEA, ages 14 years through 21 inclusive. And then our extended school year services, our advisory committee for SEAC, and then our parent resource services.

[00:18:52] What is special education? Well, it's direct specialized instruction and services and a set of structures and supports meant to really meet the needs of the whole child once they've gone through the eligibility process and have been found to have a brain-based challenge.

[00:19:10] It's highly individualized and specialized to meet that individual student's needs, all while making sure that we're cognizant and aware and up to date on what's going on in general education because that's really the driving factor. That is always the foundation for what is going on for students with disabilities is what is going on in general education.

[00:19:33] Whether it's content, whether it's behavior, whether it's extracurricular opportunities, that is always the baseline for which we are trying to work and to close the gaps and provide our students with a set of skills so that they're able to access those opportunities, so that they're able to participate appropriately and effectively and meaningfully, and ultimately that they show benefit from those experiences.

[00:19:58] So certainly we're not limited to just our content areas. We look at lunch. We look at recess. We look at electives, transportation, and extracurricular opportunities. All services are captured and documented by your student's individualized educational planning team, their IEP team.

[00:20:19] The spirit of the law is meant to be like brainstorming and problem-solving and collaborative. Services are to be considered without regard for fiscal impact, which makes it a free, and the team, the consensus of the team, is who determines what is appropriate, public education.

[00:20:46] All services and supports, again, go back to what is the provision, what is the standard that's happening in general education, and then how do we apply that, knowing that we have a body of information that identifies brain-based challenges. Our disability categories, under the IDEA, which is the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, we serve students with intellectual disabilities, hard of hearing, deaf, speech language impairment is its own stand-alone disability category, and it can also be a related service.

[00:21:22] Visually impaired, emotional disability, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, specific learning disabilities, multiple disabilities, death blind, traumatic brain injury, autism, developmentally delayed, and student with a disability, which means you must qualify for one of the aforementioned discrete disability categories.

[00:21:54] but what is identified on your student's paperwork is student with a disability. Who are we serving in LCPS? So it's important to know that on an annual basis, by law, we are required to do an annual child count that is turned into the Virginia Department of Education that is then turned into the federal government, and that is our December 1st child count.

[00:22:19] That is our capture date on an annual basis. That count only pulls in students with active IEPs. Our child count as of December 1st, 2022, was 9,445 students.

[00:22:36] And you can see, as of today, that was this morning, so it's probably changed today. By this afternoon, we are currently serving 9,912 students with disabilities. I see lots of head nodding and some picture-taking of this slide.

[00:22:55] It is important to note that this is the natural ebb and flow of what we experience every school year. So if you think about how our school year is really laid out, we have our graduating seniors that are going to exit out, so we're going to lose a pretty meaningful chunk of students.

[00:23:13] Then we have our early childhood special education students that are going to be rising to kindergarten, And that's about 345 of them that are slated for kindergarten right now. And then if you look at the first quarter and then the second quarter.

[00:23:29] So the first quarter, we're really working to reestablish the baseline for all of our students, right? And then second quarter, we're digging into new content. And then that's when we begin to see some of those challenges emerge. We have winter break.

[00:23:45] We're still doing our intervention. So you think about that MTSS that sits in our Prevention and Diagnostics office. You're layering those Tier 1 and those Tier 2 and those Tier 3 supports on, and it is about at the third quarter where you get your highest referral rate because you have this robust body of information and data, which is telling you this is what we've presented, this is how we've intervened, this is how we've progress monitored, and we're still not seeing the response that we expect.

[00:24:16] It's important to note that as a division, we have a referral percentage of about 80% students are found eligible once they are referred. For this current school year, we've had a total referral rate of 1,729 students.

[00:24:38] So let's talk about our specialized programs. How do we meet the needs of the students that go through the process? We have as school-based teams, as parents are sitting there, you're working with the teams and you're coming up with what are the strategies, what are the goals, what are the accommodations, and how do we work to meet those needs across our school system.

[00:24:59] The majority of our student needs can be met within their home schools, but there is a piece of our population which we refer to as a lower incidence within our population of students with disabilities that really do require specialized programs. So as a division, we offer behavior support programs.

[00:25:17] We offer programs for students with intellectual disabilities, programs for students with multiple disabilities, programs for students that are deaf and hard of hearing, programs for students with autism spectrum disorders, programs for students with needs in early childhood special education, and then programs for students with disabilities focused on post-secondary transition outcomes.

[00:25:42] God bless you. So that would be our CAST program, okay? And so, certainly, the focus, even though all of these programs and all of these programs were based at all of our comprehensive schools,

the focus is always on going back to impact of disability and where on the continuum should students flow in and out of those supports and what does it look like, feel like, sound like.

[00:26:06] And that's what the team is always tasked with, trying to really look at the body of information that we have to paint the best picture. And we have to continue to work together. We have to come back together frequently to check in. What are you hearing at home?

[00:26:22] This is what we're seeing at school. And it's a living, breathing document. And it's a beautiful process when we all decide to work at it together so that we can continue to move our students forward and see progress. Here's our continuum of services.

[00:26:38] So any time an IEP team is coming together and looking at, OK, what is my student's impact of disability? what is the why behind the brain-based deficits that have been identified through the eligibility process. We come together, certainly everybody's starting a conversation at public school.

[00:26:57] And then as we move through the continuum, here are the options that are legally available. So public separate school. Currently in LCPS, we do not have public separate school models. There are some school divisions across the Commonwealth that do through regional programming. Private separate schools. You may have heard conversations about private day schools.

[00:27:22] Then we have residential facilities as an option. Home-based instruction, which is an IEP team determination, which is different from medical homebound because medical homebound is prescribed to your student by a doctor and is monitored every six to eight weeks depending on how the doctor's orders have been written. There's also Virginia Code that sort of restricts a student's access to the educational setting should they be written on full medical homebound. Then of course we do serve some students through hospital settings and then we do have the

[00:28:00] correctional facility as an option along the continuum. Federal and state requirements. So we are what is considered an LEA, a local education agency. We receive state, local, and federal funding to meet the needs of our students we are not a private entity so therefore we are obligated under federal law which is the IDEA to make sure that we offer special education and related services as well as all child find activities we are tasked with every time we sit down for all 9912 to consider what what is appropriate for a free

[00:28:39] appropriate public education and it goes back to appropriate and that's why it's That's a balance and that's why it's collaborative and that's why it's a team because what you desire as a parent as appropriate is very different from what we sometimes consider to be educationally appropriate or educationally relevant based on impact of disability.

[00:29:03] That's why it's so important for us to collect the data, to provide the data, to share it with you, to walk through it with you so that you can feel it since you're not with your kiddos on a daily basis. You're entrusting them to us. All LEAs must maintain policies and procedures. That's not the fun part, just so you know. The LEAs must also make sure that we are compliant with all state and federal requirements for special education. So not only do we have the IDEA as federal law, but we have the regulations governing programs for students with disabilities in Virginia, which has about 163 safeguards

[00:29:42] above what IDEA requires federally in our state. All identified students with a disability must have an individualized educational plan unless their parents refuse such an option. It is a legally binding document.

[00:29:59] We cannot make any changes without parental consent. And everything that we discuss as an individualized educational planning team must be agreed to, and we must have your written consent before we can implement that document. And then in Virginia, it is required that we have written consent. It can't just be a verbal conversation. It can't be an email follow-up. It has to be your actual signature for implementation.

[00:30:25] Why is that important? That is one of the safeguards that our state has above what the IDEA requires. We do have some states that can make adjustments to IEPs without signed parental consent. So as parents, that's really important for you to have knowledge of. Resources needed for students with disabilities. It truly does take a village. So let's go over the roles of some of the folks that are working with our students day in and day out. Our general education teachers are tasked with providing differentiated instruction. They are serving what we consider to be tier one,

[00:31:03] but certainly within that tier one, that 80% of our student population, you have your tier two students with needs and your tier three students with needs that are integrated in. And so instruction naturally must be differentiated. Ownership of all students. Ownership of all students. Shared accountability. It's not I'm the general educator, you're the special educator, you do this and I do that. It is we. It is what we must do for all of our students together. Collaboration. And of course

[00:31:41] we certainly rely on our general educators for content knowledge. The role of special educators, again, we differentiate instruction. We are your strategist. We are the ones that know the impact of disability. We understand the why behind the brain-based challenges that have been identified through the eligibility process, and we partner and collaborate with general educators to differentiate the instructions through research and evidence-based strategies. Strategy intervention,

[00:32:14] accommodations and modifications, direct specialized in instruction for students with disabilities. Certainly, we have to be tasked with having content knowledge, and certainly the process is meant to be collaborative.

[00:32:30] What can you expect of teachers and behavioral assistants? They support all instructional settings. They're always under the supervision of their assigned teacher. They support with accommodations and implementation of those accommodations across the educational setting, and they also play a role in data collection. Related services personnel, so your speech-language pathologist, they work on expressive and receptive and pragmatic language, which of course those skills directly tie into reading, writing, and spelling. Social interactions,

[00:33:05] they play a very meaningful part in us supporting and educating the whole child. Occupational therapists work on fine motor and sensory skills. They help students to regulate and manage within the classroom setting. Yes, they can work on handwriting. Yes, they can work on typing. But they also work on visual motor integration, which most of us do without even thinking about it. Our physical therapists work on gross motor. So what do students need to be able to physically access and manage the educational setting safely? Okay. Our

[00:33:44] Our adapted physical education teachers provide the accommodations and modifications to students with disabilities, whether it could be sensory, could be behavior, could be cognitive. That requires them to participate in the physical education setting in a smaller group at a different pace with skills and concepts broken down and specialized for them to be able to access.

[00:34:10] Vision services. We offer orientation and mobility. We also teach some of our students braille. We provide our general educators and special educators with a myriad of access to devices, whether it's to enlarge text, whether it's to have text to talk so that our students with visual impairments can hear.

[00:34:34] Our hearing services, we have a team of advanced interpreters. We have a team of deaf and hard of hearing teachers. re-support the maintenance of cochlear implants, and we also partner with the Virginia Department of Education on any equipment that may be needed.

[00:34:55] Specialized music, again, is based on your impact of disability. Is it too much of a sensory overload to be in your full-size music class, and do we need to offer you a specialized opportunity? And then certainly we have a whole team across the division that works on assistive technology and specialized equipment to meet the needs of students.

[00:35:14] Again, it's for access, first and foremost. And access leads to participation, and participation leads to benefit. Parents, we rely on you for collaboration and support, for problem-solving, for helping us think, for helping us to navigate, for helping us to learn your children the way that you know them to be.

[00:35:37] And then certainly our community agencies and stakeholders, we partner with them for collaboration and support throughout the educational process. State accountability, all students with disabilities, unless their parents opt them out of participating in standardized assessments or any of our diagnostic assessments that we do across LCPS, must participate in SOLs.

[00:36:01] The other option to SOLs for students with cognitive impairments is our Virginia Alternate Assessment Program. students would be accessing the Virginia essentialized standards of learning. And so students with disabilities are still eligible for the same diploma options as all other students across the Commonwealth with the exception of the applied studies diploma that is only applicable to students with disabilities. But the standard with credit accommodations

[00:36:33] and the advanced diploma are also available. Funding and fiscal management. Again, I reference we get local, state, and federal funds. The largest part of our operating budget for any school division is always local funding. Second is state, and third is federal. Upon its creation back in 1975, the federal government said that they were going to fund 40 percent of the needs in special education, and that has not happened to date. So we do every year have to present what is called an

[00:37:10] annual plan application. That is our documentation as a local education agency to say that we are meeting all of the quality assurances in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, that we're compliant under the IDEA, that we're compliant under state regulations. Here is what we are asking for to meet the needs of our students with disabilities in LCPS. We turn that application into the state after it has been vetted by SEAC and our school board. They actually have to vote on it and sign off. That application is submitted. And then we get 20% of our federal funds July 1st.

[00:37:45] We get the remaining 80% of our federal funds October 1st. Maintenance of effort is a beautiful thing. So the law, when it was created, very quickly said, okay, we can't let local school divisions or any local entity that is receiving federal money decrease their effort in meeting the needs of persons or students with disabilities. So our maintenance of effort in LCPS is running upwards of about \$262 million to meet the needs of students with disabilities across the school

[00:38:23] division. And so essentially what this law says, if in 2022 we spent \$5, in 2023 we can't spend four. It has to be more than the five that we spent the year prior. And we work collaboratively with

business and financial services to make sure that we get our calculations correct.

[00:38:47] That brings us to the fun part, which is probably why you're all here and want to hear about the staffing allocation going into FY24, fiscal year 24, so 23-24. We shared part of this presentation to our school board last Tuesday.

[00:39:04] And so here are just some highlights. So here's our staffing standard. You will see for cross-categorical, so that's what we consider to be high-incidence disabilities, students that are typically being able, their impact of disability is such that they can be served and supported in the general education setting.

[00:39:24] That staffing ratio is 1 to 10 across the division. It is a division-wide average, not a school-by-school average. For programs, they range from one teacher to six to 12 students, depending on the nature of the program.

[00:39:40] So if you recall the specialized programs, we have intensive programs, which has a lower student-to-teacher ratio. Those programs for IP autism and IP emotional disabilities is six students. Our self-contained programming is one to eight students.

[00:39:58] and our early childhood special education resource model is 1 to 12 students. Our parent resource services is staffed with two staff members, and the academies at Loudoun gets one special education teacher per grade level. Be mindful that the academies is serving students from all 17 high schools, and they're rotating in and out, so they're meeting the needs of thousands of students on a daily basis.

[00:40:25] So here's an overview of our FY23 and then our projected FY24 allocation for high incidence, cross-categorical only. FY23 budget, we were budgeted 1,008 SPED teachers, and that was based off of a projection of us by June 30, 2023, that we'd be serving 10,033 students.

[00:40:55] You remember the count of 9,912, we're almost there, and the school year's not done yet, right? There are 16 special ed teachers that were temporarily allocated through COVID relief funds, so that was an additional 16 on top of the 1,008 that the staffing standard generated.

[00:41:16] And then we had an additional 3.5 teachers that were generated for virtual distance elementary and virtual distance Loudoun. For FY24, you guys know that the COVID relief funds have gone away, so that immediately causes us to experience a difference. The staffing standard was also re-leveled, and I do encourage you guys to go back to the board presentation from last Tuesday. It was re-leveled this year because for the past three to five years as a division, we had been over-projecting our growth

[00:41:50] in special education. And so for the past three to five years, of course, the COVID years were in there. So we've seen a decline. Nobody anticipated the uptick of 4.9% that we've had since December 1st. But here we are. So for going into 23, 24, you can see the difference from 1,008 teachers to 1,004. And then we still have the three and a half teachers that are allocated to virtual distance learning. Here's an overview of our teaching assistant ratios. It's a different

[00:42:25] calculation. So for teachers, it's one to 10 students for cross-categorical, but for teaching assistants, it's one to 14. So that includes the impact that our students that are only eligible for speech-language pathology could possibly have on a caseload or in a classroom setting. So that staffing standard is one to 14. Again, it's a division-wide average. For programs, you're looking at anywhere from one to three

TAs for six to ten students, and then our IP programs are staffed with four behavioral assistants. The Academies of Loudoun, again, gets one TA per

[00:43:03] grade level. Our allocation for teaching assistants this year is 1,018, again, based off of the projection of 10,033 students with eight TAs being allocated through COVID relief funds.

[00:43:21] For FY24, you can see that we've generated a little bit higher at 1,039 TAs. Based off the calculation, the initial projection of 9,665. I may have failed to say that. I'm sorry. Our projection for June 30th, 2024 decreased from the 1033 this year to 9665. So just a change in the projection would automatically generate a change in the staffing allocation, but there's more.

[00:43:59] This was also presented last Tuesday. We have looked over our end-of-year projections. We've looked at the growth, so the Office of Special Education has partnered very closely with business and financial services to really look at okay let's go back and look at our trends let's take out the COVID years because they're an anomaly and let's go back and look at how we typically grow so again we're reaching our highest point we're about to dip off after graduation we're going to slowly begin to tick back up but it is a slow and gradual uptick over the summer and over

[00:44:35] the fall. And then we're going to see another very high spike from January till about May with students being found eligible. So we have been re-leveled. We're working through the re-leveling process and our new projection. This is important when you're looking at these numbers that are in the 7,000s. That's not our whole child count. So the 10,033 is every student eligible with a disability, every single one. Our current allocation is 7,321 students eligible for

[00:45:13] cross-cat services this year. And then for FY24, out of the 9,665 students that are anticipated to be eligible overall, 7,010 of those students are expected to require cross-cat services. Now let's look at this slide. So FY23 budget, 73-19, it's been revised slightly, 7,174,

[00:45:48] but we've experienced an increase, a projected increase, for end of next year that will be serving 7,280 students eligible for cross-cat services out of the 9,665 that we project.

[00:46:06] So the scenario that we presented, and please note the red stop sign there, that we are sitting, and we typically do as a division, go through the school year with vacancies across special education. As of April, we were sitting at about 34.3 teaching vacancies.

[00:46:25] So that's preschool, elementary, middle, high. So the scenario, if revised FY24 end of year, we anticipate that we would have 270 additional students eligible for cross-categorical services.

[00:46:41] That would generate 27 more teachers and 6.4 more TAs. Some of the strategies that we will work since that projection exceeds our budget allocation, Some of the strategies that we have that are available for us that we've been working on since last Tuesday is accessing our 13 contingency positions that are built in for the entire Department of Student Services, not just the Office of Special Education.

[00:47:14] repurposing any of our hold harmless positions. So we did have quite a few positions that were supported with the COVID relief funds that have gone into the FY24 budget as hold harmless. And so what does that mean? Automatically keep your position to start the year. Should you hit the lottery and resign or should you retire? We then have to go back, run the numbers again to make sure that we stay within our LCPS division-wide averages for cross-categorical services, for TAs,

[00:47:50] for OTs, for PTs, and for SLPs, okay? And then working with other departments, especially that of the Department of Instruction, on any contingency positions that they're able to provide us. And so any of our hold harmless positions should we have a physical therapist to retire, and we run the numbers and we stay within our ratio of 1 to 30 across the school division, we would then say, okay, at this time we're not going to hire.

[00:48:18] That vacancy moves over to contingency that takes us from 13 to 14. So what is so special about special education? It is student-centered for the acquisition of priority skills needed across the curriculum.

[00:48:41] Educational services and supports that are creative, individualized, and accommodate learning. Exhaustive efforts by all stakeholders to support the dynamic, unique, changing needs of amazing students and families.

[00:49:11] Teachers, staff, and parents always collaborating in a positive and ongoing nature to meet the needs of our phenomenal students. That's what special education is.

[00:49:31] For more information, you can always reach out and contact the Department of Student Services. There's the direct contact for the Office of Special Education. If you are a parent of a student that's in need of Child Find Services or if you have a family friend or a family member who's in need of Child Find Services, there's that contact information and then there's the new updated number for our Parent Resource Services who again have moved to the New Douglas Building.

[00:50:02] And with that, that's our time together. I open it up for questions. Thank you. I know it's a lot of information to process, but I do welcome questions. Yes, ma'am.

[00:50:17] How is your team helping the families of SPED students that are being displaced because of enrollment at schools? We have a situation down in Dallas South that one school SPED program is being removed.

[00:50:36] Yes. So I'm very much aware of that situation. So we are, as a school division, we're in the process of building a new elementary school that's going to be in the Dulles South area. But until that is done, we have had to shift some kindergarten programs from one school to another school location.

[00:50:57] And we have been asked to reassign some of our specialized programs. So two of our specialized programs serving students with autism spectrum disorders and two of our specialized programs serving students with intellectual disabilities. So the approach is the same every year.

[00:51:15] So I, while I am new to LCPS, I just rounded out my ninth month here in LCPS. This is my 26th year as a special educator and my 16th year as a director of SPED. So the process for planning for the upcoming school year is always the same.

[00:51:30] It is always looking at what are our student needs. Where are those needs? Whether it's across programs, whether it's across regions, whether it's across pockets within our clusters. So what are our students' needs are number one. Number two, if we're adding new programs, which we did this year, how can we then look at all students that are served across programs and reallocate them so that they're closer to home or even back in their homeschools?

[00:52:02] So if for families of students that were impacted in those four programs, we have worked with the current school to say you may go ahead and begin to have conversations with families. Then our office

will follow up with a letter, and then we'll follow up with individual phone calls, and then we'll be working with the new schools that will be hosting those programs next year to have open houses.

[00:52:26] So families and students can come in over the summer, get familiar with the school setting, meet the school administration and some of the school staff. You're welcome. I'll come over here. Sorry, sorry.

[00:52:42] I'm so sorry. No, it's all right. Well, first of all, thank you so much. very informative thank you um i did take a quick photo of the continuum of services yes and i was so interested to see that correctional facility was on there in hospital do you know um like do we have kids in all of those environments number one and just out of curiosity um and and what i think what you do is just fantastic honestly uh we have a we have a kid with down syndrome who's our neighbor and we love him and above and beyond doing it because it's the law. I, you know, I

[00:53:22] enjoy seeing him get on the school bus and, you know, it's just, it's just fantastic. But I am curious, do you know like what the largest number of money we spend on one kid is in, in our entire system? So is there like one school or I'm just, and that's out of just curiosity. Sure. So I could definitely I'm happy to follow up with my contacts for this group we do as a school division every school division has to do what the state calls a schedule A and B report which is a breakdown of your local state and federal money

[00:53:59] across the disability categories so certainly would be able to give you that breakdown across disability categories would not be able to speak to individualized students because that would single them out possibly but we're We're also very fortunate that we're a well-resourced school division and community, that we have just about everything available to everyone.

[00:54:22] To go back to your question, do we sometimes serve students in the correctional facility? Yes. We have some students that make bad decisions that end them up there, but under federal law we're still required to provide them a free appropriate public education based on their impact of disability.

[00:54:37] Feels, looks, sounds very different than what it does in the base school because they can't have any access to technology, nor can they have sharpened pencils. So we have to be super creative, but we do have teaching staff that is assigned. So we are the fiscal agent for the regional, the juvenile detention center that sits in Loudoun. So that actually falls under a state operated program, but we hold the money for that facility. So they do have three teachers,

[00:55:14] a program assistant, and an administrator. We also have a teacher that's assigned to the adult correctional facility because you can still be 18, be a student with a disability, and still be eligible to access your special education and related services. As far as hospitals, I'm happy to say we do not have any of our students in a hospital setting right now medical homebound that ebbs and flows it just depends it could be for something simple as a broken arm or something

[00:55:44] much more serious but yeah that's that update you're welcome that are this you can choose who gets the next question that's too much pressure for me hi thank you it was a lovely presentation

[00:56:23] As a parent of a special ed student, I appreciate your knowledge and contribution. A question for the leaders of this group. We have just shared a lot of wonderful information with the 40 or so folks in this room. I guess I question what the purpose is.

[00:56:43] We could have read this ahead of time or done. I would have gladly watched a video of this presentation to come prepared in order to answer questions, solve problems, or be a sounding board. your department. Sure. I guess that's part of the question. The other one is what do you want the folks in this room to do with the information that we heard tonight? I can start that. Well, I guess before we do that, Ms. Richardson, you don't have to stand up here while we answer this, so thank you so much. Well, I can tell you what I'd like for you to do. I would like for you to

[00:57:22] support every single student and every single family. I'd like for you to be a partner. I'd like for you to be collaborative. I'd like for you to encourage all parents to work with our schools and understand that we're people and that in this relationship, just like with any relationship that you're going to have, we're going to make mistakes, but we're in it together. And so we have to continue to work through it together. So please go out with a heart of collaboration, a heart of

[00:57:57] positivity and willingness, and the extension of grace. That's what I ask. I don't know what leadership is going to say, but I think they're going to say something very similar to that. You guys have been fantastic. Thank you so much. I will stay around for additional questions.

[00:58:17] All right. Well, grace-filled conversations is what I try to aim for always, so I think that's wonderful um I think to answer your question there's two parts one for all of these advisory committees of which leaf is one of them there are informational presentations that are made and the thought is is that then you will go back to your school and disseminate portions of the information that you received all of the information that you received depending

[00:58:56] upon the topic so for instance for this i think the thought is at the next pta pto meeting if that's been your general cadence of that's how you've been delivering information to parents you would say we had a meeting with the special education department they spoke about services and budgets for next year if you're interested the materials are x if you have specific questions about special education you could come see me or the SEAC representative or whatever so I so I think

[00:59:33] that's the thought behind the informational meetings in conjunction with this specifically was requested by you all as a topic that you wanted to learn more about so I think or what what I think is that um part of the responsibility on being on this committee is then you distill information to the local level um to your local school um as far as then your your first point

[01:00:08] which is you would have read this watched a video came prepared to to talk um I don't know if all members of this committee are willing to do those things beforehand that that may be a conversation to have if there are things can be read and watched before meetings I think that and this is a I think this is something that has

[01:00:44] continued to come up which is like how are we to have lively conversations on on topics given our the cadence of our meetings um and i don't know if we have fully solved that yet um i i do think that we attempted to be more forthcoming with what the agenda topics were going to be for last month's meeting the meeting before that you know um so this is a learning opportunity

[01:01:17] for us still but I don't think we have fully figured out a way to get both informational topics that people want to address that may not be like the topic de jure of the month and then also discuss the topics of the month in one monthly meeting that requires notice and and some other kind of legal things so I

think the short answer is go back to your community schools tell them that there was this presentation, you can tell them where they can get more information. You can

[01:01:56] provide a copy of the presentation. And then if there are questions that you have about this particular topic, then you can reach out to Joan and we can see if we can get a list. But I know that that is maybe not what you specifically would like. And I think that, yes, go ahead.

[01:02:25] Yeah. The student services question came up with the post-it notes that I had of what services are offered. One of them was like, I feel like it's the person said, I feel like it's more difficult to get services for my child, which is an individual situation, but also something that was not talked about, but I don't know if it's too much for this type of meeting of how you do that we talked about the number of referrals that are happening you know they had over a thousand

[01:03:00] people being referred and that means that the parent is referring their child or the teacher is referring their child or some outsource you know some other person is referring their child to be evaluated for services and so that process of how that happens the referral process I don't know if we would need more information or if you guys want more information of how that goes through to understand it or if it was just an individual person trying to figure out like what's the tipping point of somebody that gets services do you need to have an f in every class if you're a

[01:03:38] high school student or can you still have a's and b's and still get services because you have dyslexia like i don't know what the question i don't know i don't know what the right answer is but it was brought up for that's the whole reason heather if you don't mind just really quickly i think it's a great question and uh it's maybe something we can do next year because i i i also feel that you know we i want to hear from you all you know what i mean and i think uh sometimes it's just one way conversation but i will i just want to mention one quick thing i did go to the listening

[01:04:12] session a couple days ago with dr smith and um our school board member and dr smith told me um that he heard something at a leaf meeting which uh directly related to how principals report up to him and he actually he was i think in the process of making that change but he did make that change so the other way i look at these meetings is an opportunity for you to advocate with the correct people at LCPS i don't think i would have normally been you know with the special education i don't know your title i'm sorry but you know the person director you know and so if

[01:04:49] there is a question or something for your specific school this is the opportunity right i think someone had a question over there about a certain instance um and so but i think it's a great point and something that i hope we can work on next year all right look i'm going to be completely forthcoming and apologize here i have another board meeting that i have to be to at seven o'clock this evening so there is a couple of things that we need to need to address just very quickly um once we've addressed those two things if you all would like to continue to stay and people are able to stay then we can continue to have these discussions but

[01:05:28] unfortunately we at least have to get through this little bolt before i have to talk about summer swim team which is my summer officer role okay so the next item is regarding the status of leaf member and recruitment per the bylaws membership is noted as including the term one year and may be reappointed just as a reminder the leaf term aligns with the school year July 1st through June 30th volunteers who wish to serve again may contact their school to submit their

[01:06:07] names for consideration if a school parent organization does not exist and the principal can provide nominations they'll be placed in a nomination list and presented at the regular school board meeting which I understand at least one set has gone through already the school board may approve all nominees or made its sole discretion reject a nominee um so staff sent communication about LEAF membership recruiting for school staff 2023-2024 to principals and parent organizations regarding nominations this spring hoping to reach parent organizations prior to their last meeting staff is filled with questions

[01:06:47] from principals and nominations as I said are beginning to roll in some have been delayed in order to allow the new PTA or PTO board to get settled and while some of you have shared your transition off of LEAF several names went to and were approved by the board as I said this last meeting there's an additional 10 currently sitting on the desk for the May 23rd school board meeting um if you have submitted a name um those names can be included if we get them by the end

[01:07:22] of this week on Friday if you have any questions you can see Christina in the back at the end of the meeting she's holding out a lovely list um as a reminder if you're interested in supporting Lee for the 2023-2024 school year we suggest you contact your school principal to share your

[01:07:40] interest um are there any questions regarding specifically this cadence um um okay um any other questions um all right so our last item this evening is about bylaws oh I'm sorry yes yes hi

[01:08:29] yes they do meet again in June and no that's a great question thank you um okay so we're going to really quickly talk about bylaws and quorum so I'm going to pass this over to Joan Salgreen to present this information okay really quickly for you all I know we had to cancel the last meeting because there was not quorum we were very sensitive to the fact that we have a large

[01:09:06] group here that came a long way and we don't want that to happen again so we have a couple things in place we talked with legal chief of staff coordinated with other advisories and what we what we are will be able to do is should we have a meeting where we don't have quorum we will be able to continue with our information items for that night and those discussions we just won't be able to take any action which makes sense because you don't have enough people to vote so we have that clarity to be able to suspend the rules and do that in the future yes ma'am can we drop the

[01:09:38] quorum number you've you're pre-empting my next revelation here took my thunder um second we took a look at the bylaws they were you know of course written just last year with the best guess as to what would work so we are recommending that the bylaws be amended right now they read that quorum is greater than or equal to 50 percent of the voting members not counting the chair or the school board member so what we're proposing is that we change those bylaws we amend them to say Quorum will be adjusted to be greater than or equal to 25% of the voting members.

[01:10:18] So that's a quarter. So it's whoever's there to vote from your school. Yes, so the alternate would vote in your stead if you weren't there. So, yeah, so that's the language that we're proposing. You can see it right there behind me. So what we'll do is we'll disseminate that to the membership tomorrow in our recap.

[01:10:34] So everyone will have the information that you have. Of course, you know that this was always already posted on board docs and is readily available to you. So at that first August meeting, and you all

have the dates in front of you on the handout, we've known those fall dates and spring dates for quite a while.

[01:10:50] We have to reserve the big room to make sure we have space to meet. So at that first August meeting, we'll look forward to two-thirds of the membership being here to be able to amend the bylaws to reduce that quorum to 25%, which makes sense. So we were really sensitive to that.

[01:11:07] took quick action to sort of correct that and we hope that that will help meet the needs of the group quick question can you go through the calculation for quorum again I'd asked this last week or last month and I'd forgotten exactly what it was so for instance if we don't if we have schools in the system who do not have a representative is it counted by schools or is it counted by the number of approved members so what we've been doing so far is to counting the approved members but only one from each school if there's an alternate and then having that for the 50%. So we would continue that practice. So the hope would be that next

[01:11:46] year we'll have instead, I think we had about 84 schools, 81 schools represented this year. So we were really close for the first year. So hopefully we'll get out there and have 100% of the schools represented. Thank you. I wanted to ask, some of the schools have not ever had anybody here. So is there going to be a follow-up that after, you know, I don't know, 25% of the meetings if they've not been represented the school should send somebody else because that's

[01:12:19] the this is a valuable forum that that it just can't be a name on a piece of paper but that person never comes no i i agree i think though that that's where if the pta and pto is not receiving information from their leaf representative then they can have an opportunity to appoint someone else and then also I think our bylaws say if you miss more than two meetings you're I think it's two without an excuse then you're you're gone so it

[01:12:58] so it may be a question of we want to make those tighter sure yeah yeah so so I'll just let you know when we sent out the principals asked to renominate or nominate people this year we did provide them with the attendance list so if people had not been in attendance they were aware that that person had never come and might not want to reappoint them so we did make them aware and we do

[01:13:26] track that attendance yeah I think do you have a question but okay yes well maybe that's a conversation you should have for your principal too right right right no no no okay just just a couple more things and I okay we can do your

[01:14:06] question it's really short sorry I apologize just had three minutes yes go I think you just you're supposed to email the Joan and company yeah the bylaws let them yes yes yeah yeah the bylaws just say just let us know right I'm not gonna um okay so just um two things

[01:14:44] to note um as Joan mentioned we already have meetings scheduled um we did work with the schools to make sure that the leaf meeting would not be on the same day as back to school night as we had an issue last year so monday august 21st should be good or you're shaking your head no that's that is your back to school night okay we will we'll re-look at that um to see um i think

[01:15:17] the hope was that we wouldn't have two september meetings but maybe that's um what school are you

[01:15:26] heritage willard okay um we'll we'll take a look at that um so we'll address that nope okay um duly

[01:16:05] noted um um we will work and and and on that note i just i do want to thank all of you guys um i've had the opportunity over my career to be part of many first year boards um advisory and non-profit and it's a really hard thing to do when you start from scratch especially in our instance where we were a little bit like SEAC or a little bit like MSAC and a little bit like equity but not really and still trying to find our cadence and rhythm and how we work on feedback so I just appreciate

[01:16:42] everyone this year going through that process I know that it's not fun I know that it can feel very frustrating at times. I echo the sentiments of many that we didn't have quite as a robust grace-filled conversations as I was hoping that we would this year, and I hope that's something that we can continue to work on going forward. If you do have suggestions as to ways that we can

[01:17:13] both get information out to a good group of people and be attuned to the needs of the community to discuss hot topic issues. And you have a thought, please, please share that because that really has been, I think from my perspective, and I probably don't speak out of turn when I say for the rest of the officers, that has been the hardest thing to try to figure out is how to both be able to plan agendas and also be available for more spontaneous conversations given our

[01:17:49] structure and how we have to report and different things on that nature so but but otherwise I have I've really enjoyed getting to know a lot of you this has been great I think new to Loudoun County parents should do this because now I I actually know where Dulles South is, um, and where various high schools are that I had no idea before. Um, so, um, I, I'm not picking on Dulles South. You just said Dulles South. So I was like, I actually know where that is now. Um, but, um, anyhow, I know that it's, it's difficult and,

[01:18:25] and I can tell you from experience that year two is always better than year one and year three is just amazing so if you kind of are like this was great but gosh we didn't do what I wanted us to do yet I really encourage you all if you're interested to continue on for for another year because it does it does really pick up steam and anyhow so I appreciate it I appreciate my fellow officers and our next meeting is currently set for August 21st 2023 at 5 30 right here in this room

[01:19:02] um we will let you know if that changes thank you all for your participation this evening and we are adjourned hey heather heather could i just ask a quick question could we just do a quick survey of the group of how many people would be interested in doing a pre-read for this before they came or a pre-listen to presentation so that way this time could really be sent as advisory instead of just information awesome okay if we can just get a um uh raising your hands if you would be willing to spend let's say up to 30 minutes before a meeting watching something up

[01:19:39] to an does anybody not willing to spend up to it's totally fine I'm not okay not willing to spend 30 oh oh you were still willing okay all right awesome what about what about up to an hour so 30 minutes looks like it's the sweet spot of information that people would be willing to preview before coming to a meeting. So I think that's great. I know a couple of other people have emailed me saying things like that, and that's something that we can think about. But

[01:20:13] once again, the flip side of that is then if we send you out materials, so we're going to talk about special education, and then this week, you know, something happens with buses that's there then

becomes the great. I mean, we're still not having those discussions, so at least if we had a pre-read for material that we could then have a discussion then I mean I think it would be a better use of our time as a group so I just no I I but I you know yeah okay I'm gonna turn it and then absolutely agree with that and what was my other thing oh so that is what we did when you

[01:20:50] had the transportation presentation we had a slew of questions about you know buses in the dark in the morning late arrive or late arrival like did it impact education were people more late now because they're starting at seven we asked all those questions and he completely tailored that presentation to the 15 questions we had which was fantastic he was like boom boom boom boom boom done but if we do something where we don't necessarily know our questions beforehand then we have to have time for discussion I mean that's not necessarily been built in

[01:21:28] when we've had our information sessions right it's been like okay great thank you like type of a thing so I would love to because you know I kind of joined this I don't even know in the last three meetings or four meetings have topics just like we did before but you tell me the questions now like what are your concerns with security one of those concerns with security there's no security officers at the elementary schools that's we have a whole list of security questions that we wanted to ask that group that was supposed to be today because it's supposed to be last week of the

[01:22:05] questions you guys had for that like we had those questions and my hope would be that the person would come in even though it's informational but they're already answering our questions that we have because we have questions like why isn't there anybody at the school elementary schools now like things like that so I think it's both that makes any sense all right thank you all very much and I hope that a lot of you come back next year



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