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Loudoun County School Board, 2nd Tuesday School Board Meeting, Tuesday, August 8, 2023

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[00:00:38] good afternoon and welcome back i call to order this tuesday august 8th 2023 second tuesday school board meeting of the louden county school board we'll begin with item 102 on our agenda which is remote participation i have been notified that denise corbo would like to remotely participate in tonight's meeting miss corbo could you please state your location whether this is a medical or personal matter and if anyone is present with you at your location um thank you i'm not my daughter's I'm alone. According to policy 2420 and ADA law, I'm asking for remote participation as

[00:01:16] recommended accommodation from LCPS HRTD due to an ADA disability and medical condition. At this time, I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's remote participation be granted for a health or medical matter. So moved. Is there a second? That motion will fail for lack of a second. Ms. Corbo, would you like to request remote participation using a personal exemption tonight? Yes. I'm sorry, did you say yes? Yes. Okay. I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's

[00:01:52] request to participate remotely for a personal matter be granted. So moved. Second. Moved by Mr. Morse, seconded by Ms. Okedegbe. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Those opposed? Nay. That motion will pass seven one you're abstaining miss uh miss rezer okay that motion will pass six one one one with

[00:02:26] saratkin opposed uh rezer abstaining and corvo absent for the vote that motion will pass we'll now move on to item three on our agenda which is the approval of the consent agenda is there a motion mr madby yes chair i move that the laun county school board approved the agenda the consent agenda posted in the board docs. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Any discussion?

[00:02:58] Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion to approve the consent agenda, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously. Thank you, Mr. Mejedevi. I inadvertently skipped disclosure, so we'll go back to item two, which is disclosure starting with Ms. Sheridan. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits in any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member I am

[00:03:36] eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Mr. Morse. Thank you. As a member of the London County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with item on tonight's agendas regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and

[00:04:14] benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, my spouse is an LCPS employee, and either my spouse or I may take advantage of employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests are affected, of which my spouse and I are included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mahedvi. Thank you, Chair. As a member of the Lawrence County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to

[00:04:50] the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any of the discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, I'm enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees, while in excess of statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I'm included. I can and will participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

[00:05:18] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Ms. Corbo. Thank you. As a member of the Latin County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. Specifically, my son is an LCPS teacher who does not reside

[00:05:57] with me and is not dependent on me. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included. I can and

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

[00:06:34] Specifically, I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

[00:06:52] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. So that will conclude item two. We've already covered item three. Just as a note to the public, we originally had a work session with a FERPA training for the board scheduled for this meeting.

[00:07:10] But unfortunately, the trainer who was supposed to lead that training was unable to travel here due to illness. So we are going to have to postpone that until a later time. So that will take us to item four on the agenda, which is our closed meeting. Is there a motion, Mr. Mehedivi?

[00:07:26] Yes, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board, reset this public meeting, and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following. Discussion of the performance of a specific public employee as authorized by Section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding a specific legal matter related to that public employee as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:07:58] Consultation with legal counsel regarding actual litigation involving an alleged public nuisance and requiring the provisions of legal advice by such counsel where such consultation in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body pursuant to Section 2.2-3711A7 of the Code of Virginia, discussion of plans addressing a specific cybersecurity threat by staff concerning actions taken to respond to such matters, discussions of information subjects to the exclusion of the subdivision 14B of Section 2.2-370B3705.2, where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize

[00:08:36] the security of an information technology system as authorized by section 2.2-3711A19 of the Code of Virginia and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the public body pertaining to Loudoun County Circuit Court Matter CL22-2964 and requiring the provisions of legal advice by such counsel as authorized by section 2.2-3711A7 and section 2.2-3711A8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:09:06] Thank you. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Okadeke. Any discussion? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. On May 30th, 2023, Judge James P. Fisher cited four records for Loudoun County Board closed meetings that appear to violate FOIA. October 27th, 2021, January 1st, 2022, February 9th, 2023, and February 14th, 2023. Therefore, I recommend that the school board, it is my opinion that the school board

[00:09:39] should seek legal counsel other than Mr. Falcone. Thank you. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Those opposed? That motion will pass 8-1 with Polifko opposed. We're now in closed session and we'll be back on the at time certain 6:30 p.m. for our evening session.

[02:05:07] One, two, test. One, one, two, test.

[02:05:28] One, one, one, test.

[02:28:29] Closed session. Is there a motion? Mr. Mehedive. Yes, Chair. I move that the closed meeting be adjourned. the Loudoun County School Board reconvene in this public meeting and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting. I also move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting: Resolution No. 3-23/24, whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act,

[02:29:09] whereas Section 2.237.12 of Code of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law. Now, therefore, be it resolved that Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Loudoun County School Board.

[02:29:40] Sir, a second. Seconded by Ms. Ogadegbe. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in the favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously. We're now on item 404, motion required by closed meeting.

[02:29:59] Ms. Sheridan. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the Loudoun County School Board reimburse the employee referenced in matter number 1080823 in the sum of \$35,110.68 cents for legal fees incurred by the employee. Second. Second. Seconded by Mr. Morris. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hands and say aye.

[02:30:26] Aye. Those opposed? That motion will pass 8-1 with Polifco opposed. We are now going to pick up our evening session with item seven on the agenda, which is the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. Our pledge leaders tonight are Griffin Vogel and Charlie Green, who are rising sixth graders at Simpson Middle School. As fifth graders at Evergreen Mill, they discovered a love for creating pet rocks. Each year at Evergreen Mill, the students have the opportunity to complete a

[02:31:01] passion project where they can make a meaningful contribution to their community or the world in a tangible way. Charlie and Griffin decided to use the platform of their pet rock project to raise money to support students battling childhood illnesses and cancer. After researching, they decided to partner with St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Griffin and Charlie managed the entire project from marketing to creating the rocks to sales during the school day. They sold 423 rocks and presented St. Jude's Children's Hospital with a check for over \$1,200. That's amazing.

[02:31:39] Congratulations. Immediately following the pledge, we're going to have our national anthem, which is going to be sung tonight by the South Loudoun Youth Chorale, S-L-Y-C, or SLIC for short, which is a non-profit youth organization whose mission is to empower young musicians to become leaders in their music programs, to connect our community through inspiring performances, and to engage children of all backgrounds through initiatives which embolden them to become

[02:32:13] independent musicians and exceptional citizens. SLIC works closely with LCPS Secondary choral music programs offering a variety of education workshops and clinics designed to work in partnership with area schools to help raise awareness and increase enrollment in all music classrooms. Before you tonight are the Slick Summer Camp counselors. All singers are alumni of LCPS schools and many are pursuing degrees in music education and are excited to pay it forward with the next generation of driven LCPS students. At this time I'll ask everyone to please rise for

[02:32:48] Pledge of Allegiance and remains standing for the national anthem. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God,

[02:33:10] indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[02:34:43] That was wonderful. Thank you all so much for being here tonight for those performances. We're now going to move to item eight on our agenda, which is our student and staff recognitions, and we'll be starting with 801 Exemplar Performance Award Recipients, Highest Achievement to Briarwoods, Emmerich, and Waterford Elementary Schools.

[02:35:05] Dr. Smith. Thank you, Chair Sirotkin. I'm going to invite Ms. Rae Mitchell, our Chief Schools Officer, up to present the awards, and I'd like to invite Chair Sirotkin, invite Chair Mejedevi down to the front so we can congratulate the recipients.

[02:35:47] Good evening, school board members. It gives me great pleasure to recognize three of our LCPS principals this evening for receiving the Exemplar Performance Award. Joining us are Sheila Azalte, Principal of Briarwoods High School, Don Haddock, Principal of Emmerich Elementary, and Andrew Hieronymus, Principal of Waterford Elementary.

[02:36:09] The announcement of the Exemplar Performance Awards provides the Virginia Board of Education the opportunity to recognize schools, school divisions, or school boards for excellence in either high achievement, continuous improvement, or innovative practices.

[02:36:27] These three schools have been selected to receive the 2022-23 Virginia Board of Education's Highest Achievement Award. To receive this recognition, a school must be accredited and meet the following criteria. The school meets state benchmark in reading, math, and science, 75% for reading, and 70% for math and science, based on the current year pass rate on state assessments, not including growth or English learner progress.

[02:36:58] All student groups within the school meet state benchmarks in reading and math, 75% for reading, and 70% for math, based on the current year pass rate on state assessments, not including growth or English Learner progress.

[02:37:14] And for schools with two student groups, there is no more than five percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school. Or for schools with three or more student groups, there is no more than 10 percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school.

[02:37:34] A report with award recipients was presented to the Virginia Board of Education at the June 15, 2023 business meeting and has been displayed on the Virginia Department of Education website. On behalf of LCPS and the Department of School Leadership, I am elated to recognize school staff, students, and the community for providing high expectations that have resulted in outstanding

[02:38:00] additional educational outcomes for all students.

[02:39:18] And we will continue our student and staff recognitions with our one LCPS spotlight on the summer 2023 science program featuring Propel

[02:39:58] and Level Up. Good evening to the school board. My name is Darielle Timothy. I am the supervisor of science for LCPS schools and I want to also introduce the other fellow guests that we have with us this evening. I'm Tamara Morgan, coordinator for Propel and Level Up. We also have with us Miss Amy Turner who is a teacher at Forest Grove Elementary. We have Aria Rubenstein who's a student at Leesburg Elementary. We have Liliana Sorto, who's also a student at Sterling Middle School, and then Michaela Wakefield, who's a student at Seneca Ridge Middle School. Next slide,

[02:40:37] please. So we first wanted to just take a point to talk about how the program does support our one LCPS strategic plan. So more specifically, we are aligning the program goals with our goal one, but specifically looking at Aligned Actions 1.1, providing rigorous and cultural responsive instruction, but more specifically Action 1.2, develop targeted supports to prepare students to access specialized programming.

[02:41:11] So those are how we are living through the strategic plan through the Propel Level Up Summer Programming, and as well as you can see the core values that align with the program, rigorous teaching and learning, equity and opportunity and individualized success. Slide, please. So we have many partners that have helped support the development of the program. It did really, the inception began with the Jack Kent Cook Good Neighbor Grant back in 2017, which really kicked off the beginning of

[02:41:45] our program. And we are very fortunate to say that that support has greatly expanded to the partners that you see there on the screen so we definitely would like to say one thank you to the school board for supporting the programming but in addition to your support we've received lots of support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Northrop Grumman, our Loudoun Education Foundation and we still continue to get great deal of support from the Jack Kent Cook Foundation. Slide please so Propel Level Up addresses equity through enrichment for high achieving underrepresented

[02:42:25] students in the areas of STEM. We focus highly on high-level reasoning skills and providing those opportunities for students. Another one of our focus is also high achievement and demonstrating the five C's from our profile of a graduate. We assist students with planning and preparing for academically rigorous coursework beyond middle school, more specifically application to our honors programs, the academies of Loudoun, so on and so forth. We also focus heavily on providing opportunities for parents to share as educational partners as well. Next slide

[02:42:58] please. In the last year we had about 472 students participate in Propel and Level Up. Before you you'll see the breakdown from fourth through eighth grade. Propel is our elementary program for fourth and fifth graders. Level Up is our middle school program for sixth through eighth graders. In our STEM camp we had about 127 students participate in our Propel camps and about 64 of those students also participate in our level up program next slide please before you you see some of the courses that were offered for propel and level up camp

[02:43:34] I'd like to draw attention to the level up camp these courses have been taught by teachers specifically from the academies of Loudoun who have given our students an experience to serve as

students at the academies of Loudoun next slide here's just a little overview of our one-week camp at the academies of Loudoun, you will also see that there are some high school students there.

[02:44:00] We have the great opportunity of partnering with students from the Computer Science Honor Society at the Academies of Loudoun, where they serve as camp counselors also throughout the summer. Next slide, please. Our Propel Camp is a three-week camp.

[02:44:15] At three different schools, students have the opportunity to excel in two of the courses that were listed before you. Next slide, please. In our next person, we have Ms. Amy Turner, who will speak from the experience as a teacher.

[02:44:32] Good evening. As she said, my name is Amy Turner. I'm a teacher at Forest Grove, and I've been a part of Propel since actually the very beginning. And the mission has remained unchanged to provide rigorous educational opportunities for our students who are underrepresented.

[02:44:52] I feel that the program goes above and beyond those expectations. I've seen our students step outside of their comfort zone. and attempt big challenges with high expectations and succeed. I have seen them take ownership from learning to another level and become independent, collaborative thinkers and problem solvers.

[02:45:16] The students are in real-time learning environments, and they are figuring out socially the aspect on how to work with each other and learning key skills such as prioritizing, deadlines, project management 101.

[02:45:32] I have seen the students come back and forth from summer camps while I was at summer school and there's always excitement and wonder in their eyes. Some students even told me that they were thinking way outside the box, Mrs. Turner, and I was using all of my five C's and I was helping others when they could be the expert on some sort of task and it brought such pride and ownership in all of them to the work that was being done.

[02:45:57] I think the best part about being in Propel is the confidence that the program builds in our students. Some students find Propel to be a place to be themselves, some find their best selves, and some tap into something that they find even more.

[02:46:15] At Propel, I find that we are building leaders and thinkers right before our own very eyes. Thank you, Ms. Turner. Aria, if you will come forward from the experience of a student.

[02:46:34] Hello, Loudoun County School Board. My name is Aria Rubenstein, and I am an incoming 5th grader at Leesburg Elementary School. I had the privilege of participating in Propel during the last school year. I felt challenged in Propel, something I wasn't finding in my regular classwork.

[02:46:52] I was learning new and exciting things. Through Propel, I discovered a love of robotics and coding. We built and designed robots for the VEX competition last spring, where we faced challenges and worked with a partner to code the robots to pick up and move pucks across the course. I'm proud of what we accomplished and value the friendships I made.

[02:47:10] It was easy to make friends at Propel because there we all have the same interests in science and robotics. I'm excited to be a mentor for the upcoming year and teach fourth graders about what I learned throughout the program. During the summer, I got to participate in a week-long Propel camp where I made pianos out of cardboard and foil and got to code them.

[02:47:27] My favorite activity during the week was building robots and coding them to function on Mars and run a course by using color-sensing technology. Including STEM in elementary school is so important, especially for girls my age. I've always had a love of science, and this program reinforced that. Propel opened so many possibilities for me.

[02:47:45] I got to experience engineering hands-on in this program. an opportunity I wouldn't have had in my regular class. It will make me think about what I want to do as an adult, and I know for sure that that will involve engineering. Thank you for your time.

[02:48:04] - Liliana Sorto. - Hello, my name is Liliana Sorto. Hello, my name is Liliana Sorto. I am a rising seventh grader at Sterling Middle School.

[02:48:21] My experience with Propel and Level Up has been transformative. The program has provided me with invaluable skills and knowledge that have propelled my personal and educational growth to new heights. Through a combination of rigorous coursework, hands-on projects, and mentorship from teachers, I've gained a deep understanding of the subject and developed strong problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.

[02:48:42] The opportunity to engage with cutting-edge technology and work alongside skilled mentors has not only enhanced my technical skills, but has also broadened my horizons. The Propel and Level Up Summer Camps provided a platform for me to explore my passion for STEM and robotics and collaborate with like-minded individuals.

[02:49:01] Through the VEX Robot competitions, I was able to apply my knowledge in a competitive environment and push myself to new limits. Thank you for your time. Michaela Wakefield. Hello, I am Michaela Wakefield, and I go to Seneca Ridge Middle School.

[02:49:21] Level Up helps me learn new things like how to code and how to build robots. During the VEX competition, I learned how to code the robots to get the disk and to push them under the bridge. Level Up is not your regular class for me.

[02:49:38] It's a way for me to learn how to push my experiences in my other classes to new heights. Level Up helps me learn how to use science and math in new ways. Level Up is a class I look forward to.

[02:49:57] I love going there and learning new things about science and math. And I always love working as a group when they teach me new things. Thank you. Next slide, please.

[02:50:16] Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity and for hearing our students and our teachers from Propel and Level Up share in their experiences in the program. Thank you all so much for being here today and for the update on the summer Level Up and Propel programs.

[02:50:38] We didn't get too much into the data tonight, but being on the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for the past few years, it's just always amazing to see the outcome data for students who participate in these programs. But tonight it was nice to be able to put some faces to the data and hear firsthand from some of our students who participated in the program.

[02:51:00] So I want to especially thank the three of you very much for being here tonight and for telling us your stories. Board members, any questions for either the students or for the team here tonight? Mr. Morse. Just a quick comment. In addition to STEM, I think you three demonstrated excellent communication skills because you came up here in front of this huge crowd.

[02:51:23] So congratulations, and I hope you're enjoying this, and I hope that this will lead to STEM careers for all three of you. Thank you. Okay. Thank you all again so much. Very much appreciate the update. Oh, sorry. Oh, we're going to do a picture?

[02:51:40] Oh, I'm sorry. Ms. Corbo, go ahead. Thank you. I just want to also commend everyone who is involved in this program. I was blessed to watch this program on the onset and being able to just see how it has evolved and how we have touched so many children and just really expanded their knowledge and exposure to technology.

[02:52:05] I'm just really proud of everyone who has been part of this program and has also seen the growth like I have. So thank you. Thank you all again so much. And we'll now move to item 803, a message from our incoming superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence, and I will turn it over to Dr. Smith for introductions.

[02:52:36] Chair Sorokin, Vice Chair Mejedevi, board members, staff, students, and our LCPS community. I'm thrilled and honored to be able to introduce you tonight to our new superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence. A passionate, visionary leader in public education for nearly three decades, Dr. Aaron Spence is committed to ensuring all students have access to the rigorous coursework, innovative learning opportunities, and resources they need to prepare them for success.

[02:53:01] He's been credited with creating and fostering a work culture where differences are celebrated and employee voice is valued. Dr. Spence will begin his tenure as superintendent of Loudoun County Public Schools starting September 1st, where he will be responsible for the instructional leadership and administrative operation of 98 schools and centers that serve 83,000 students.

[02:53:20] Prior to this role, he served as superintendent of Virginia Beach City Public Schools, where he was named State Superintendent of the Year in 2018. He's been a superintendent in North Carolina and held various roles in central office and as a school principal in Texas and Virginia. Dr. Spence began his career in 1994 as a French and journalism teacher.

[02:53:40] I was very fortunate to work with Dr. Spence in Virginia Beach for six years, and I can personally attest to his student-centered focus and his relentless drive to improve outcomes and opportunities for every single one of our students. Please join me in giving a warm LCPS welcome to our new superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence.

[02:54:01] Thank you, and good evening, board members. Good evening, Chairman Sorokin, Vice Chairman Hedeby, to all of our school board members, to our administrators, our teachers, our staff, our parents, and of course, to all the incredible students here in Loudoun County Public Schools.

[02:54:21] Mr. Morris, I appreciated your comments because I was a little intimidated having to follow those students who came up here tonight, but I can tell you that I stand before you today with such an incredible sense of excitement and gratitude to be joining this team as your new superintendent.

[02:54:38] It's an honor and it is a privilege to lead this incredible school division. This is a school division known for its commitment to excellence and dedication to the success of every student. And I have to tell you from the moment I started thinking about this opportunity, I have been absolutely captivated by the passion and the unwavering commitment to children that I see here in Loudoun County.

[02:55:02] And I'm here tonight to celebrate with you the greatness of Loudoun County Public Schools and to share my unwavering belief in the potential that lies within our classrooms. Also here tonight to reflect with you on the path we'll embark upon together as we build an even brighter future for our students.

[02:55:20] I want to especially acknowledge the incredible work that's already happening here within our schools. Loudoun County is home to exceptional world-class educators who go above and beyond every day to inspire our students.

[02:55:37] It's incumbent upon us, I think, to honor their achievements, to learn from their experiences, and to amplify their voices. And I would say this, their tireless efforts deserve our admiration and our respect as a community, and we must recognize this good work and build upon those successes.

[02:55:55] And I will say, too, however, that as we celebrate those successes, we must also acknowledge there is always room for improvement. Every truly great organization knows that it can be better tomorrow than it is today. We must have the courage together to identify areas where we can grow, evolve, and adapt to the changing needs of our students, our families, and our staff.

[02:56:20] If we acknowledge those challenges and embrace them head on, together we'll pave the way for even greater achievement. We have an incredible opportunity in the work that we do here to shape the lives of our young people, to empower our teachers, to create a lasting impact on this community.

[02:56:38] I need you to know I believe in the power of education to transform lives, and I am committed to ensuring that every single child in Loudoun County has access to an exemplary education that will prepare them for success in an ever-changing world.

[02:56:54] But I also want to be clear about this. No superintendent can do this alone. The journey ahead requires us to all come together to embrace the power of collaboration to foster a culture of trust and respect.

[02:57:10] We must continue together to build the strong relationships that are necessary with one another, with our families, with our students, and with the wider community for us to thrive as a school division. As we move forward, know that I am fully committed to listening to your voices, to engaging in meaningful conversations and making sure that all of our stakeholders feel like they belong at the table. By working together hand in hand, I know we can foster an environment where every individual in our LCPS family feels known, heard, valued, and supported. I have to tell you that I envision

[02:57:49] a school division where every student has access to the resources they need to thrive regardless of background or circumstance. A division where equity and inclusion and a deep sense of belonging are not things that we argue about but simply a part of the lived experience for all of us in Loudoun County. Together I promise you we can bridge the gaps that may divide us, we can break down the barriers that hold us back, and we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. So I'm calling upon every one of you tonight, not just our board

[02:58:28] members but those here in the room tonight and all of those across our incredible community to join me in this collective endeavor. Let's dream big. Let's think innovatively. Let's embrace the power of collaboration. Let's inspire, let's empower, and let's uplift one another.

[02:58:45] Together, we can create a transformative educational experience that will shape the lives of our students and positively impact our community for generations to come. As I shared earlier, I am filled with excitement for the journey that lies ahead.

[02:59:03] I feel incredibly privileged to become a part of this community and I'm honored to serve as your next superintendent. Together, along with my family, I believe that we can work together to ensure that Loudoun County Public Schools is a beacon of excellence, a model of collaboration and innovation, a source of inspiration for districts far and wide, and most especially a place where each and every child finds their place and their purpose and can thrive. Thanks so much for having

[02:59:35] me here tonight. I look forward to starting with you in just a few short weeks. Dr. Spence, thank you for being here with us tonight. We're very much looking forward to officially starting next month and working with you to make our school district even better in the months and years to come. Thank you again for being here. So we'll now move to item nine on our agenda, which is our student school board representative comments. First, we have Caroline Spengler from John Champ

[03:00:14] High School, where she is an incoming senior. She plays on the CHAMP field hockey and lacrosse teams, and she is involved in SCA, the Key Club, Best Buddies, and is the president of the Human Trafficking Awareness Club, and many others. She enjoys reading, working out, and hanging out with friends, and Caroline is excited to see what CHAMP has to offer this year. Good evening, Chairman Sorokin, Superintendent Dr. Smith, and members of the school board. My name is Caroline Spengler, and I'm the student body president, as well as the student representative from John Champ High School.

[03:00:49] To begin, I would like to thank the board for inviting me to come today and for giving me the opportunity to speak proudly about my school. I would also like to give a special thank you to my SEA sponsors, Mr. Kimball and Ms. Carter, as well as my principal, Mr. Tyson, and my fellow SEA members for supporting me tonight. Different students and staff members are asked about their favorite aspects of John Champ every year, and every year I am completely astonished by the bold, unique answers that pour in.

[03:01:13] Responses vary from an inclusive environment, pep rallies to athletics, from broad course selection to fantastic staff. Yet out of every opportunity that CHAMP has to offer, there was one reoccurring response that struck out to me. Diversity. Not only is diversity such a vital component of CHAMP, but through every activity that CHAMP holds, they are able to embrace the differences in all of the students.

[03:01:34] John CHAMP provides as an environment where every single person is welcome. I am constantly amazed by how diverse our student body is concerning race, gender, religion, sexuality, and more. At CHAMP, our Knights are able to learn from one another, broaden their perspectives, and develop individual passions and values.

[03:01:51] It is within our school, clubs, organizations, and activities that students find a safe place to do so. During the 2022 to 2023 school year, CHAMP held a multitude of activities that brought together students. One in particular that stuck out to me was the Renaissance Fair. This was Champ's version of a field day, however, we wanted to make it more specialized for Champ.

[03:02:10] Knights are our mascot, so we connected the aspect of a field day while incorporating components of a Renaissance Fair. The Renaissance Fair was more than just a field day for many students.

After the height and stress of AP testing, the Renaissance Fair provided a reward and relief for the overwhelming testing and school year.

[03:02:26] Our SEA class went above and beyond spending time, putting in effort, and uniting as one to make an enjoyable, unforgettable experience for every student. Students and SCA were able to incorporate the community into the school event by finding sponsors from vendors in the community. These sponsors donated money, supplies, gifts, etc. to help bring the Ren Fair to life.

[03:02:46] But what stuck out to me even more was the club fair. Every club across Champ had the opportunity to host a booth where they were not only able to fundraise and spread awareness about their clubs, but they were able to host an activity to allow students an outlook into the members and what it stands for.

[03:03:01] This includes clubs such as Best Buddies, BSU, MSA, various sports teams, and many more. These activities were able to bring and introduce students to just a few of the many opportunities that CHAMP provides. The Renaissance Fair has become a yearly tradition for the school. This year, our class united forces with nearby Lightridge High School's SCA class to create an innovative event for students both at CHAMP and Lightridge.

[03:03:24] This is the first year that CHAMP and its neighboring school, Lightridge, will battle in each sport. To kick off, we will have a spirit week, a fundraiser at Brewster's, a field hockey game, a volleyball game, and all three football teams will play a game versus each other. This week will be called Battle of Braddock because that is the road that separates Champ and Lightridge.

[03:03:42] The new crosstown rival will be healthy competition within the community. We look forward to working with Lightridge and other nearby schools to work towards further celebrating diversity, not only within Champ, but within the greater Aldi community as a whole. Champ has also been working on smaller scale activities and ideas to promote spirit, community involvement, and inclusion.

[03:04:00] We will be hosting a student-led orientation for all the new students in what we call Camp Champ. New students will be able to tour the school, meet their fellow classmates, and ask any questions they may have to already enrolled students. During Camp Champ, SCA members will be encouraging positive interactions by giving out Night Bucks.

[03:04:19] Night Bucks will be a sticker or token given to students that show kindness, participation, hard work, ask questions, and participate in activities. Students can exchange their Night Bucks for rewards or prizes. In doing so, the hope is to get more kids involved and promote school spirit. When reflecting on my last three years at CHAMP, I have found it is so much more than an ordinary high school for it is a home with a diverse family full of support and drive.

[03:04:40] It is amazing how inclusive, supportive, and unique each student has proven to be every single day. John CHAMP has been and continues to be a place where students find themselves, discover their values, and explore their passions. I am proud to consider myself a Knight, and I look forward to the 2023 to 2024 school year.

[03:04:57] Thank you. Thank you. And second, we have Anne Cherian from Freedom High School, where she is a senior and the current student council president.

[03:05:15] Anne has been involved with the student council since her freshman year. Additionally, Anne is also a three-year member of the Virginia Student Council Association's advisory committee, where she has worked with student leaders from around the state to plan the annual VSCA state convention.

[03:05:31] In addition to leading the student body of Freedom High School, Anne holds leadership positions in the UNICEF club, women in STEM club, and Bible study. Anne was recently recognized as the 11th grade math student of the year for her excellence in mathematics. Outside of school, Anne is always cultivating her passion for music. She has been playing the piano for 10 years, participating annually in the NVMTA Spring Festival, National Guild Auditions, and teaching private lessons. Anne is also very involved with her church choir. She loves to serve at her church,

[03:06:08] regularly helping with the Sunday school children and holding leadership positions in her youth group. This year, Anne hopes to continue to strengthen the student community at Freedom and is honored to represent Freedom High School on the Levin County School Board. Good evening, everyone. My name is Anne Cherian, and I am the student council president and school board representative from Freedom High School. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak front of you tonight. I would also like to thank my principal, Ms. Neelam Chaudry, and my student council advisor, Ms. Grace DeLeo, for their guidance and assistance as I prepared for tonight

[03:06:43] and their continued dedication to the student body at Freedom. As the largest high school in Loudoun County and entering its 18th year of operation, Freedom consists of a diverse group of students and faculty with a great number of achievements and an even greater community. At Freedom, the student body and staff truly live by our school motto, where there is unity, there is freedom. Our Student Council Association, one of six LCPS high schools represented in the Virginia Student Council Association, is always working towards further fulfilling this motto at freedom. During the 2022 to 2023 school year, SCA started a birthday board project to ensure that every student was celebrated during their special month.

[03:07:23] Students loved it and would often look for their names or their friends' names as soon as the board was up. Besides birthday boards, our SCA planned and executed many events to excite and bring together the Freedom community. By the end of the school year, the students at Freedom had earned a combined total of 17,440 spirit points from dressing up, winning games, and participating in activities. To say school spirit is an important part of our community would be an understatement. Another extremely important part of the community at Freedom is our diversity, and at Freedom we seek to celebrate and acknowledge that diversity whenever we can. In May, we celebrated Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with a

[03:08:03] lunch group discussion hosted by SCA, the South Asian Student Association, and the Asian American Student Association, where we invited students to share their concerns, thoughts, and opinions regarding life for Asian American students. And this was just one of several discussions that highlighted various groups within the school community. In April, Freedom also hosted an international night to celebrate the diversity within our student body with many beautiful performances and a fashion show from students. Our extracurriculars at Freedom are a key part of student life. With over 90 clubs, 43% of our students participating in sports and receiving blue ribbon recognition, Freedom High School is a place where students are not only scholars,

[03:08:43] but musicians, athletes, artists, and more. Our DECA chapter brought 26 students to ICDC, with two students making the top 10 for their test scores and another student becoming a finalist for their category. Additionally, our FBLA did a phenomenal job last year with one of our students placing second in business law at the international FBLA competition out of 13,000 students.

[03:09:07] As for athletics, during the spring season, girls and boys varsity tennis placed second in states, baseball made it to state semifinals, and multiple student athletes received all state, all region, all district, and all MET honors. Our fine arts department is just as accomplished with all four music classes earning straight superior ratings at assessment, making Freedom High School a blue ribbon school for the last several years.

[03:09:29] Finally, Freedom Theater put on an amazing production of Matilda the Musical in the spring, earning multiple Cappy nominations and two Cappy awards. Freedom High School is truly an amazing community with exceptional students and staff who never fail to create an environment of inclusivity, kindness, and support.

[03:09:47] I'm proud to be a Freedom Eagle, and as I enter my senior year, I cannot wait for all of the opportunities and memories that are ready for me. Thank you once again for this chance to speak about the incredible environment that is Freedom High School, and I look forward to speaking again in the coming weeks. Thank you. Thank you. We'll now move to item 10 on our agenda, which is the acting superintendent's report. Dr. Smith.

[03:10:18] All right. Good evening, board members. Tonight, I'm happy to present an update to the school board that represents some of the exceptional work that has taken place in LCPS since June. We'll start this evening's presentation with some good news from around the division with a special highlight of new principals and administrators. First, Natalie Allen has been selected as our new Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer. Ms. Allen comes to LCPS from Virginia Beach City Public Schools, where she served as the Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer for the past six years. During this time, she has transformed the department from one focus largely on media management and one-way communications to an award-winning organization

[03:10:58] focused on branding, marketing, storytelling, two-way communications, crisis response and management, and deepen relationship with the community through the development of family and student voice groups and meaningful partnerships. Her leadership has ensured that communications are proactive and the engagement is authentic, informative, and collaborative.

[03:11:17] We're excited to welcome Natalie to Loudoun County, and she's scheduled to begin with LCPS in mid-September. Dr. Leticia Ellis-Williams has been appointed as the Director of Office of Equity. Dr. Ellis Williams comes to LCPS from the Bethlehem Central School District in New York, where she served as the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer.

[03:11:37] Previously, she served as an assistant principal in Arlington Public Schools in Arlington, Virginia, and Paul Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. Dr. Ellis Williams began her career as an elementary teacher in Bridgehampton, New York. She received her bachelor's degree in American Studies from the State University of New York at Oswego, her master's degree in elementary education from Long Island University at Southampton, and her doctorate in education, leadership, and technology from Dowling College in Brookhaven, New York.

[03:12:04] Welcome to LCPS, Dr. Ellis Williams. Dr. Paige Carter has been promoted from Assistant Director of Special Education to the position of Director of Special Education. Dr. Carter has more than 32 years of experience in the field of education with a focus on special education.

[03:12:22] Dr. Carter came to LCPS in 2022 from Caroline County Schools, where she served as the Director of Special Education. Over the course of her career, Dr. Carter has served as a middle school special education teacher, an early childhood special education teacher, an infant educator for parent education, and an autism specialist and coordinator. She has also served as an assistant director for the student support services in Spotsylvania County. Dr. Carter has a bachelor's degree in special education from East Central University in Oklahoma, a master's degree in early childhood special education from VCU, and a doctorate degree in special education also from VCU.

[03:12:58] Congratulations to Dr. Carter. Lee Boyd has been named the principal of the new Henrietta Lacks Elementary School, which is scheduled to open for the 2024-2025 school year. Most recently, Ms. Boyd was an assistant principal at Pinebrook Elementary. Ms. Boyd began her teaching career as a second-grade teacher in Accomack County Public Schools, moving to LCPS in 2010, where she was a third-grade teacher at Meadowland Elementary. Ms. Boyd has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from the University of Findlay in Ohio and a master's degree in educational leadership from George Mason University. Michael Byrd has been named the principal of Rolling Ridge Elementary

[03:13:38] school. Most recently, Mr. Bird was the principal of East Silver Spring Elementary School in Montgomery County, Maryland. Mr. Bird began his career as an elementary school teacher in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania in 2005. Mr. Bird has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and a master's degree in educational leadership from Hood College in Maryland. Dr. Tripp Dinacola has been named the principal of J.L. Simpson Middle School. Most recently, Dr. Dinacola has served as the LCPS, the supervisor of school administration. Previously, he was the assistant principal and activities director of Riverside

[03:14:14] High School. Dr. DiNicola began his education career as a French, Spanish, and Japanese teacher in Berkeley County, West Virginia. Dr. DiNicola has a bachelor's degree in French and secondary education from Shippensburg University, a master's degree in educational leadership and supervision from West Virginia University, and a doctorate in organizational leadership studies from Shenandoah University. Fitzroy Frew has been named the principal of Sterling Middle School. Most recently, Mr. Frew was the assistant principal of Riverside High School. Mr. Frew began his teaching career as an English teacher at West Springfield High School in Fairfax County in 1999. He then transitioned

[03:14:52] to LCPS in 2007, where he served as a language arts teacher at Stonehill Middle. Mr. Frew was also served as a dean at Seneca Ridge, Harper Park, and J. Michael Lunsford Middle Schools. He has a bachelor's degree in English literature and secondary education from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York, and a master's in educational leadership in George Mason University.

[03:15:16] Amanda Hudson will become the next principal of Lunsford Middle School. Ms. Hudson has served as the director of student services for John R. Lewis High School and Fairfax County Public Schools since 2019. Prior to that, she was an assistant principal of two schools and held other leadership and teaching positions at both the middle and high school levels.

[03:15:33] Ms. Hudson holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a master's in educational leadership from George Mason University. Congratulations, Ms.

Hudson. Ben Sedola, the chair of the Rockridge High School's Career and Technical Education Department, has been named the Virginia Association of Marketing Educators 2023 Teacher of the Year.

[03:15:58] The VAME Teacher of the Year recognizes education professionals for their dedication to marketing education, as well as their commitment to the community, school, and students. Mr. Sedola joined Rockridge's faculty in 2017, where he teaches sports and entertaining marketing, Marketing One, and Cybersecurity and Marketing.

[03:16:16] Mr. Sedola also serves as a DECA advisor and oversees the school store. Mr. Sedola was honored at the Vane Professional Development Institute in July in Richmond. Congratulations on receiving this exceptional honor. More than 600 LCPS administrators gathered at Briar Woods High School last week for a two-day leadership conference.

[03:16:36] Administrative leadership team were called ALT. School Board Chair Ian Sorokin opened the event, and keynote speakers shared thought-provoking messages. The core of ALT was learning tips and strategies to help our administrators to succeed. And these lessons were provided by our very own team members based on their best practices they have used or established.

[03:16:55] It was truly an amazing example of learning and teaching. The event was capped by a motivational message from Dr. Aaron Spence, who shared his philosophy for educational leadership. Many thanks to our ALT coordinators, it was another spectacular event. As I shared back in June, the Mobile Health Clinic has been visiting schools in the Sterling this summer, providing LCPS students with access to basic health care and required school enrollment physicals.

[03:17:21] As of July 25th, the clinic had held 12 sessions at six schools with 76 students receiving medical support. Mobile clinic staff, which includes an LCPS nurse practitioner, registrar, and translation staff, INOVA nurses, and nursing students from George Washington University School of Nursing, report that the mobile clinic has been very popular, with available spots filling up within the first half hour of clinic operations for the day.

[03:17:46] On average, the clinic cedes 6 to 10 students, depending on whether the clinic is operating for 3 or 4 hours. Each clinic visit requires roughly 30 minutes to complete the physical and provide additional medical guidance. In addition to providing physicals, mobile clinic staff connect families with a medical home and provide guidance on where families can receive required immunizations and tuberculosis screenings.

[03:18:09] Clinic staff has also provided referrals for dental services. The LCPS mobile clinic, which is supported by the LCPS Office of Student Services, is made possible thanks to a Virginia Department of Education Community Schools grant and support from LCPS partners such as Inova and George Washington University School of Nursing.

[03:18:27] The mobile health clinic will continue to visit schools in Sterling through August 22nd. LCPS has received the 2023 EverFi Empowered Seal. The EverFi Empowered Seal is a designation awarded to public school districts that have demonstrated exemplary commitment to comprehensive education strategies on topics such as financial literacy, health, and careers.

[03:18:49] This designation indicates that LCPS ranks top 10% of school districts in the nation and Canada for commitment to the whole child education. And now for a couple operational updates. As we begin to

wind down our hiring season, prepare to start the 2023-2024 school year, nearly 97% of all positions, including licensed secondary positions and licensed elementary positions, have been filled.

[03:19:16] As is our standard practice, we'll continue to hire for open positions up to and through the start of the school year. Similarly to our region's four counterparts, we are experiencing higher vacancy counts than in previous years. And I'll review on the next slide, we've developed a multi-pronged approach to ensure classrooms have appropriate staffing to start the school year.

[03:19:34] Some of the strategies being implemented include those highlighted on this slide and include automating processes for increased efficiency and providing clear accountability tracking. This helps us to identify trends in usage throughout the division and break it out seasonally by school and other metrics.

[03:19:51] Another strategy to support hard-to-fill vacancies is to increase the long-term sub-pay rate and promote LCPS as a compensation leader in the region. More information on the staff-recommended increase will be presented in the budget action being brought forward later this evening. LCPS staff and community will have the chance to meet our new superintendent at community listening sessions beginning in September.

[03:20:13] Dr. Aaron Spence, our new superintendent, will visit each high school cluster for a one-hour dialogue with the community, followed by a 30-minute meet and greet. During these sessions, Dr. Spence will share his background, priorities, and seek the community's input on the division's strengths and opportunities. The sessions expand the LCPS commitment to be visible in the community and strengthen partnerships as a division and within school communities.

[03:20:36] Learn more about the details of the listening sessions, including dates, times, and locations on the LCPS website as shown here. For the third year in a row, LCPS is offering funds to assist teachers with classroom setup and supply purchases.

[03:20:53] First-year teachers are eligible for a classroom supply allotment of \$250, and returning teachers will receive an allotment of \$100. It's important to note that these funds are in addition to the school-based funds that are provided to support programs and teachers. To access these funds, teachers need to coordinate purchases with their school's financial technician or principal who provide them assistance in placing orders or using the purchase card for payment.

[03:21:17] We encourage teachers to begin using these funds as soon as the first day of their 23-24 school year contract. New for the 23-24 school year, LCPS will pilot its first middle school intramural sports program. Four middle schools will participate in Harbor Park, River Bend, Seneca Ridge, and Smarts Mill.

[03:21:35] A variety of co-ed sports will be offered including flag football, volleyball, basketball, and soccer. The middle school intramural sports programs open to girls and boys and the season begins September 11th with flag football. Students should reach out to your school's principal for more information. To prepare for the opening of school on August 24th, on August 14th at 8 a.m., LCPS parents and guardians are invited to sign the parent view to complete the online verification process as a part of the LCPS's first day of school information initiative.

[03:22:07] This online verification provides parents and guardians with the information they need to start school and allows them to perform the required updates anytime between August 14th and September 22nd. All families are required to review and update student information for the start of the school year.

[03:22:24] We do ask parents and guardians to be patient with us on August 14th as the website will initially experience high volume, but we remind everyone that the online verification process is open through Friday, September 22nd. Once parents and guardians complete the process, they'll be able to view student schedules and bus information in ParentVue.

[03:22:41] Parents and guardians are also reminded that transportation is updated on a daily basis in our system, and they should check ParentVue the evening before school starts for the most updated information. We also have a first day of school FAQ that can be found on the website displayed on the screen here. New for this school year, parents will be able to opt in to receive reports about their students' internet usage on their LCPS Chromebook.

[03:23:04] Parents will need to opt in via ParentVue, and within a week or two, we'll start receiving weekly summary emails each weekend for each student with a high-level overview of the student's internet use on their LCPS Chromebook. The emails will also contain a link that will allow parents to sign up for additional access and details around the functionality in the Lightspeed Parent Portal.

[03:23:26] The portal will provide in-depth information on student web browsing, along with additional functionality, including the ability to pause Internet usage while off the LCPS network. LCPS launched School Links at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, providing middle and high school students with access to this new college and career planning platform.

[03:23:48] Over the summer, more than 5,000 students logged on to learn about the Find Your Path quiz, which helps students discover and explore their interests and goals. This month, middle and high school parents will also gain access to the platform. Parents will have the opportunity to join their students in their post-secondary planning and explorations.

[03:24:06] On August 17th, parents and guardians are invited to attend a workshop to learn more about the platform and its college application manager at Independence High School from 6 to 8 p.m. Once school begins, middle and high school students will receive additional information and exploration opportunities. In October, elementary students and parents will gain access to the platform.

[03:24:25] For more information, please visit the site here on this slide. And finally, I'd like to take a moment to remind the public and community that LCPS conducts policy review and updates on a rolling basis throughout the year. The LCPS policy review process includes community feedback before policies receive a final committee review.

[03:24:45] The goal of the process is to ensure compliance with the Virginia Code, which requires each policy to review at least every five years and revise as needed, tracking to ensure that updates are efficient and timely, and the engagement of staff and stakeholders. Policy reviews usually begin with a policy template review from the Virginia School Boards Association, followed by a staff review, school board committee review, and stakeholder review and feedback. Finally, the full school board reviews the proposed policies and votes.

[03:25:13] Regarding the revised 2023 model policies, I've asked that the Student Services Committee begin the review process to see what changes may need to be made to LCPS policies, while also ensuring that we are in compliance with applicable state and federal laws. This report marks my last as acting superintendent to the board as Dr. Spence will begin as our new superintendent on September 1st. It's

been an honor and privilege to serve as LCPS's acting superintendent and work alongside of you over the past nine months. Thank you for your trust and support moving forward.

[03:25:44] I look forward to continue to work and serve this great community and great school division. That concludes my report. Thank you for the report, Dr. Smith, and thank you for everything you've done in this special role over the last nine months as acting superintendent. At this time we'll move to item 11 on the agenda, which is public comment. Thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment process. The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important

[03:26:19] components of a successful school system. Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Based on the number of speakers tonight, which is 27, and the agenda this evening, all speakers have been allotted two minutes each for public comment. Please be advised that speakers who missed their time slot will not be called at a later time. All audience members shall maintain the civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times.

[03:26:45] Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting, obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa, interrupting speakers, attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair, and approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other meeting attendees. Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, profanity, or other like breaches of respect, nor may speakers

[03:27:24] target, criticize, or attack individual students during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official. Additionally, complaints regarding division employees should be directed to the school principal or an appropriate school division official. Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board. Per LCPS policy, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period. Violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the

[03:27:58] remainder of the meeting. Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in on the decision of the chair public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda, limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons, or the public comment period ending for the evening. Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the board room prior to the start of the meeting. Please provide 12 copies of materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board

[03:28:37] meetings is also available through LCPS TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43. The live stream of the meeting may also be viewed on the LCPS website. Tonight we'll be beginning with our in-person speakers. Our first speaker is Brenda Bengston to be followed by Sandy Solomon.

[03:29:05] Welcome back. Thanks for SEL and DEI support. A local PAC warns that Virginia conducts social experiments referring to the 2021 model policies for treatment of transgender students, which did not explicitly allow schools to keep information about a student's gender identity secret.

[03:29:28] Why change to deny protections if all children in Virginia deserve to be treated with dignity and respect? Students say it's tough enough to be a trans kid. Try to get through school in a hostile environment.

[03:29:46] And it's hard to keep focused on what you're supposed to be doing or whether you're going to be treated like a second-class citizen because your teacher doesn't think trans people deserve respect. Social experiments are about non-consent and disinformation.

[03:30:04] One example, Milgram's obedience tests. Participants believed that they were giving electrical shocks. Even when a victim protested or complained of a heart condition, 65% of participants continued to deliver painful, possibly fatal shocks per orders.

[03:30:24] Please support the freedom to read and teach hard yet true American history, but do not create a social experiment at bathrooms or locker rooms with genital police. Education is under attack by those who wish to defund public schools, ban books, and teach lies, like LGBTQ people are a threat, or slavery was beneficial for slaves.

[03:30:51] Rational Loudoners, Virginians, will fight against culture wars and social experiment propaganda. Thank you. Sandy Sullivan, to be followed by Jennifer Boudreaux.

[03:31:09] Good evening and welcome back. I am Sandy Sullivan, an elementary school teacher who currently serves the members of the Loudon Education Association as their president. We all know what a struggle, to say the least, this year's budget has been. As you finalize salaries tonight, I urge you to be keenly aware of what the proposed increases will truly provide your devoted employees.

[03:31:31] Your employees continue to devote their time well beyond their workday and the contracted days, and many struggle to live in Loudoun as well as support themselves and or their families without an additional job or jobs. Your employees will be heading back to their classrooms and in their work sites preparing for their students and their school year soon.

[03:31:49] Many hours, whether it should occur or not, have been or will be spent preparing for the new year, even before the contracted first day for returning teachers and staff. Once the contract begins, it is engulfed with classroom setup, unless that's already been done beforehand, professional development, meetings, planning for students, and trainings.

[03:32:11] Have you seen the list of online training employees must complete? This year, the list of trainings which must be completed continues to be overwhelming. Again, we urge you to examine the number of trainings. The time and devotion to our students is a heavy lift before students arrive. And once students return to the classroom, teachers' responsibilities grow.

[03:32:30] Thank you. Jennifer Boudre, to be followed by Candace Tuck. Hello, my name is Jennifer Boudre, and I'm a resident of Loudoun County, and I'm here to request that the board reject the model policies on ensuring privacy, dignity, and respect for all students and parents in Virginia public schools, as written, because they do harm.

[03:32:53] I'm the parent of three adults, one of whom is bi, and the bonus mom to a trans man who graduated from LCPS. I worked as a school librarian for more than 15 years, including four as the director of library programs for all of DC public schools, and three at a private high school here in Loudoun County.

[03:33:10] I now work as a parent educator and coach, helping parents to understand, connect with, celebrate their queer children. Additionally, I facilitate a parent support group for the Ryan Bartell Foundation, and I serve as the education director for Equality Loudoun. I share these details because I need you to understand that I am speaking to you with unique experience and authority on this issue.

[03:33:31] I have witnessed the harm caused by teachers who consistently dead name students, and that harm extends not just to the trans student who is the target of those affronts, but also to the students who witness such blatant disrespect for that student's identity. I have supported trans students in coming out to their parents, and I have worked with parents to shift from a place of fear and confusion to become enthusiastic allies for their trans kids.

[03:33:53] I have celebrated with families when their trans kids are fully accepted and affirmed by their community. My extensive training and experience empower me to say with confidence that the model policy as written will cause harm to students under your purview.

[03:34:10] I want to highlight the Trevor Project's 2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People and point to two findings in that report as they relate to the model policy. One, fewer than 40% of LGBTQ young people found their homes to be LGBTQ affirming.

[03:34:30] Roughly half of transgender and non-binary young people found their school to be gender affirming, and those who did reported lower rates of attempting suicide. The single most powerful support you can give a child is to affirm who they are and who they tell you who they are. Please reject the policy as written.

[03:34:48] Candace Tuck, to be followed by Janan Merker. Well, good evening, school board. I wanted to say welcome back, and as always, thank you all for your dedication to public service and being here.

[03:35:09] Whether we agree or not, this is a hard job, and we're grateful that you do it. This past school year has been one that is exemplified by growth, a return to normal, and for transgender students, an opportunity to finally feel safe in their classroom. But the new model policies from the Department of Education have threatened to harm them all over again.

[03:35:28] The fact remains that in Virginia, the Virginia Values Act was passed, signed, and bans discrimination based on gender identity in public accommodations. That includes our schools. It stands as the law of our commonwealth.

[03:35:44] The policies are not legal. They do harm to our children. This is not a debate. This is established fact. It is a consensus from our medical, scientific, and educational communities that such policies will hurt children.

[03:36:01] I would ask all of those here tonight who are supporting trans and non-binary students to please stand because we are represented by allies. We are represented by parents. We are represented by advocates who have spent their lives preventing child abuse, hunger, discrimination, mental health, and suicide.

[03:36:21] They have worked for years over to help these students, and it is not time to reverse course on that. We will not be back. We will not encourage our community to participate in the political fray again. We went through this once.

[03:36:37] It is your job as our school board, as our elected officials, to do what we put you here to do. And that is protect and care for our students and their well-being. There is a middle path. It is not black and white. It does not have to be political extremism.

[03:36:54] Equality Loudoun stands ready to partner with the school system to find that middle path that will keep students safe and family secure. Thank you. Thank you. Janan Merker to be followed by Stephen Hoyle. Did you know that only 10 percent of Virginia localities adopted Governor Northam's inclusion and respect-based model policies to protect transgender students despite the fact that they were backed by legislation from the General

[03:37:30] Assembly? Loudoun should be proud of being among the counties that chose to protect some of our most vulnerable kids. On the other hand, Governor Youngkin's model policies, which amount to a push for state-sponsored bullying, have no legislation behind them. They are merely a suggestion from a right-wing executive with an agenda, and this board is in no way compelled to adopt them.

[03:37:57] I would also strongly encourage Loudoun School Board members and administrators to spend as much time as possible talking with students about the current inclusive policies before making any decisions about Youngkin's model policies. I happen to be the parent of cis teens and I can tell you that most cis kids are completely unbothered by policy 8040. They want to make their trans peers feel safe and included. What our kids are concerned about when it comes to school bathroom is actually illegal. Vaping. But nobody cares about that. That's the kind of issue our school

[03:38:37] system should focus on instead of catering to hate groups and their manufactured culture wars. Listen to Loudoun students, protect policy 80-40, and say no to Yunkin's hate. Thank you. Stephen Hoyle to be followed by Rebecca Kiesling. Hi, I'm Steve. Pronouns are he, him. I'm the father of a trans teen. There is so much misinformation out there. I implore you to educate yourselves about trans kids. I brought nine copies of a book entitled Trans Kids and Teens that

[03:39:14] I left in the back here. Please pick up a copy and read it. Trans students deserve the same respect and access to resources all other students. That means the right bathrooms, the right sports teams. Sex segregating trans students is discrimination. It's a violation of Title IX, which has been held by the Supreme Court to apply to gender identity, and it's a violation of the Virginia Human Rights Act.

[03:39:34] Neither the governor nor school boards have the authority to circumvent these existing laws. NCAA, USA Track and Field, and their International Olympic Committee all allow trans athletes to compete. Public high school should be no different. Trans girls are not dominating high school sports to the detriment of cis girls.

[03:39:50] Policies like this are a bad solution to a made up problem and they harm all kids. Requiring parental support and documentation for students to use chosen names and pronouns is an unnecessary burden and sometimes an impossible barrier. Not all trans students have supportive parents.

[03:40:05] Names and pronouns belong to the students, not their parents. Even if the barrier is overcome, the policy still allows for purposeful misgendering under the farce of constitutional protection. Purposefully misgendering students is not protected speech, it's bullying and it's hate speech. Personal religious views do not and should not allow discrimination against trans students.

[03:40:24] These policies were drafted with no input from the trans community, no input from advocacy groups, no input from mental health professionals who understand the trans experience and work with

trans students every day. They're not the desire of gender parents or students. They go hand in hand with anti-trans legislation sweeping the country, their coordinated effort by private anti-trans hate groups to eradicate transness from our society.

[03:40:45] Trans kids are singled out and stigmatized every single day because of who they are. Don't be a part of that. Do the right thing, stand up for trans students, help them, protect them. Please join Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, and the other counties who have already rejected these bad policies. You can literally save lives.

[03:41:01] please read the book and educate yourselves. Thank you. Thank you. Rebecca Kiesling, to be followed by Catherine Cody. My name is Rebecca Kiesling, and I'm the Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness for Northern Virginia. I'm here to talk about some of the devastating mental health impacts we are seeing around the country by school districts that are and have put in some of these policies that you're talking about here with the model policies, and I implore you as the Loudoun County School Board to fight for all students and understand

[03:41:40] what policies like these ones are doing. Your new superintendent used the words that he wants to have students thrive and be in an inclusive school district. It's up to you to do the same. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently released a report that said that our LGBTQ youth are in a nationwide mental health crisis, most acute for transgender youth whose mental health and well-being is put at risk by policies that seek to restrict their access to appropriate health care and inclusion in schools. One in five LGBTQI youth attempted suicide last

[03:42:15] year. Transgender youth are two and a half times more likely to suffer symptoms of depression and anxiety, considers suicide, attempt suicide, and 81% of LGBTQI youth wanted mental health care but couldn't find it, wouldn't go for it, wouldn't ask to find anyone for help. At NAMI, we talk about having someone to talk to, someone to respond and a place to go. What these policies do is remove that place to go, remove that person to talk to. In school systems, that's what we have

[03:42:52] currently in Virginia. These model policies strip that away and allow for forcibly outing by the schools by the administration invalidating and minimizing trans students identity that's what this allows you have you have the opportunity to say no to that and allow students that continued place so that is your choice and we need you to protect these students and protect their safety thank you katherine cody to be followed by ann donahue hello i am here tonight to call on the

[03:43:29] school board and loudon county administrators to reject the new model policy regarding gender expansive students. While this policy claims to protect the privacy and dignity of our students, nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, it will reverse protections for one of our most vulnerable populations, prevent students from being able to confide in their school counselors, increasing the risk of suicide in a group that already is at heightened risk, contradict Virginia Supreme Court rulings on bathroom and facility usage, as well as several laws, leaving us

[03:44:03] vulnerable to lawsuits. Forcibly out transgender and non-binary students, putting those in unaccepting homes at risk of abuse, violence, and homelessness. Although only 10 percent of the U.S. population identifies as LGBTQ, 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ+. It will also allow teachers and staff to deadname and misgender students regardless of their parents' wishes. While this fear-fueled policy claims to support parents' rights, none of the authors seem to consider parents like me,

[03:44:38] those who fully love, affirm, and support their transgender children. Because of the protections provided by Policy 8040 and through the support of his teachers, friends, and family, I have seen my son grow into a strong, happy, healthy, and confident straight-A student who graduates this year. Loudon has already been used and abused by politicians looking to score points by attacking our most vulnerable members it's time for us now to take a stand like many other school districts have already done and show that we will not be ruled by hate and fear please reject these policies

[03:45:12] thank you thank you and donahue to be followed by alexis ettinger good evening mr chair mr vice chair and board members i am a loudon county resident and proud parent of two lcps elementary school students and i very much appreciate the public service that you all do for our community as one of the previous speakers said it's a very difficult and thankless job and I thank you all for doing it and I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you tonight I second the comments that

[03:45:50] have been made by Equality Loudoun and other speakers in support of the our brothers and sisters in the trans community but I'd like to speak to you about something else here in Loudoun County we should be very proud that we have excellent schools as you know Loudoun County public schools are ranked fifth best in the state of Virginia and we have a number of schools that are ranked in the top 30 nationally. Our test scores on average are 9 to 10 points higher than the rest of the statewide average. This level of excellence in our schools is thanks to our hardworking and professional teachers and staff and educators. But unfortunately, they are not

[03:46:29] always appreciated to the extent that they should be. In addition to having excellent schools, we are also the richest county in the United States. But our average teacher salaries are about \$7,000 dollars below the national average. Virginia ranks, or we rank the 25th nationally in the amount that we pay our teachers. If we expect excellence from our schools and we expect excellence from our students, we need to compensate, value, and respect our teachers accordingly. So as you are finalizing your budget tonight, I would ask you to keep that in mind and compensate our teachers the way that

[03:47:07] you want them to teach our children, which is excellently, and support collective bargaining. Thank you. Thank you. Alexis Edinger to be followed by Declan Green. Hello.

[03:47:26] My name is Alexis Edinger, and I was born and raised right here in Loudoun County. I went through Loudoun County Public Schools, starting with Emmerich Elementary School, onto Blue Ridge Middle School, onto Loudoun Valley High School, and I am now a rising senior at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia.

[03:47:43] I am an active member on my campus in a variety of activism avenues, including being the events chair for our gay-straight alliance on campus. I am here to urge you to reject the model policies that have been provided for you and to second everyone who came before me who mentions the increased risk of suicide and mental health decline among our students.

[03:48:14] I personally have seen the effect of transphobia and homophobia upon our students and how that negatively impacts them for the rest of their lives. We in Loudoun County should be focused on providing a fruitful future for all of our students and opening their minds to a diverse array of views and perspectives.

[03:48:41] And this model policy would close the door for that. Thank you. Thank you. Declan Green to be followed by Abby Platt. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the school board.

[03:49:06] Tonight, I stand in front of you, a former Loudoun County student, a husband, a father, a son, and a friend who also, excuse me, happens to be a transgender man. At 28 years old, I came out as transgender after spending 13 very long years identifying as a lesbian.

[03:49:23] Looking back on my childhood, there were very clear signs that I was transgender. But growing up in the 90s and into the 2000s, the word or what it meant did not exist. If it had, I can tell you with the utmost confidence, I would have started my transition much sooner. Thus, avoiding the pain and the suffering I felt for all of those years.

[03:49:41] The signs were as clear as the writing on the wall. From playing with action figures as a young child, how I dressed as a teen. From binding my chest as a young adult in the hopes of people thinking I was a boy. The list goes on and on. This is not the case for all transgenders.

[03:49:58] Many transgender children now have the words to describe their feelings. They become empowered to stand up and say who they are and who they want to be. The very thing as parents we encourage our children to do. There is no exception to this simply because the child says they are transgender instead of an astronaut.

[03:50:15] If this policy goes into effect, you as administrators are telling these children that something is wrong with them. That they are in fact wrong in how they feel about themselves and destroy their ability to feel secure within themselves. You open the floodgates for their peers to single them out by forcing them into bathrooms and locker rooms that do not correspond to their gender.

[03:50:31] You will alienate them from activities that may be the only safe space they have because home doesn't accept them. You will take away their control over themselves and hand it over to parents or guardians who may not support them. A transgender student cannot thrive if they are being dead named, singled out, when being made to use the bathroom or locker room, prohibited from playing sports or activities simply because of sex they were assigned at birth.

[03:50:52] I'm now 34. I've been on T for six and a half years. I have a son, a wife, a father, and a stepmother that love me unconditionally. Please give these children the same opportunity that I have. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:51:08] Abby Platt, to be followed by John Chiment. We all come to these meetings to comment on things that are important to us, and yet some members of this school board want to restrict people sitting on the dais from being able to speak.

[03:51:27] Why shouldn't an elected official who's representing the voice of their constituents have the right to speak? This is precisely what they were elected to do, what you were elected to do. Why not instead put a time limit on the length of discussion rather than on topics similar to what the Board of Supervisors does?

[03:51:44] The proposal being considered today is adding roadblocks to much needed transparency. In the last meeting, Ms. Reeser said this change was not addressing a problem, so why do it? Speaking of limiting the voice of our elected officials, that brings me to collective bargaining. Allowing the LEA to unionize our schools would in essence shut everyone out of the process.

[03:52:04] This board has the ability to meet the needs of our teachers without the additional millions of dollars of expense. But should you decide to limit your voice, the board's voice, and instead put LCPS on

the hook for \$3.2 million every year and to pay the LEA's president's salary, that person needs to be in this building full-time to meet with the 13 collective bargaining staff that will also be in-house.

[03:52:33] Finally, a quick breeze at the new superintendent's contract reveals that his official start date is December 1st. He gets 14 extra vacation days to start and can get paid for his unused vacation and sick time. That's an additional \$50,000 if he doesn't use it.

[03:52:51] Plus holidays, he gets a raise of at least 7% six months after starting. That's a \$25,000 raise. He gets an LCPS paid phone, phone plan, plus \$1,200 for communications. He also gets \$525 for Wi-Fi.

[03:53:09] And wait, there's more. He gets security detail for him and his family. Please be aware that the choices that you make and the votes that you make today are the ones that our children and we will have to live with as you consider your budget. Keep that in mind. Thank you. John Chimant to be followed by Miles McLean.

[03:53:27] Good evening. My name is John Chimant. I'm a resident of Purcellville. I'm also a disabled combat veteran and a recipient of a Purple Heart from a very bad day overseas.

[03:53:49] We did not fight to enable small-minded individuals in their desire to impose their beliefs on LGBTQIA+ students in our home and in our culture. We served in spite of policies like don't ask, don't tell, rather in their defense.

[03:54:10] And it is offensive to my friend's memory that we even consider moving back in that direction. In the hallway outside this room, there is a sign that says we rise by lifting up others.

[03:54:29] The proposed policies do not do that, but rather force our students back down into boxes and closets that they know they don't belong in. Please reject the model policies. Please continue to offer support to LCPS, LGPT, QIA students throughout the schools.

[03:54:47] Thank you very much. Thank you. Miles McLean to be followed by Emile Tessier. Hello. My name is Miles McLean, and I'm a transgender 2022 graduate of Loudoun County Public Schools.

[03:55:06] When the VDOE released the new policies they intend to implement for trans students, I was horrified. When your trans students are being targeted by full-grown adults that for some reason find it appropriate to attack children on the basis of their identity, I implore you to ask yourselves whether the social comfort of one group overpowers the physical safety of another.

[03:55:25] I also implore you to ask yourselves why the limitation and eradication of my community is prioritized over students' mental health, teacher attrition, sexual assault, and etc. All issues our community faces every day, yet I am considered a bigger threat because I want to be called he instead of she.

[03:55:44] The United States rates third in the world for trans people who are violently killed. And make no mistake, trans people are not harmed because of fights that we start or decisions we make. We are harmed because of institutions, governments, and powerful individuals that make choices that put us in danger and normalize transphobia.

[03:56:02] By isolating a community, you normalize the idea that there is something wrong with them, further driving the violence and harassment towards the trans community that we see today, that I have experienced myself. Trans suicide rates are 10 times the national average.

[03:56:18] But trans people who reported having their pronouns respected by all or most people have had an attempted suicide rate of half of those who didn't. Respecting the names and pronouns of trans students isn't just basic decency. It's statistically proven to be life-saving.

[03:56:34] Protecting your students means protecting the most vulnerable. And in Loudoun County right now, there is no community more vulnerable than the trans community. But tolerance and survival aren't enough. We want and we deserve to live with joy, and everything helps to create a better future for our trans youth. My trans friends are terrified. I am terrified.

[03:56:52] And I ask you to stand up for trans youth and fight this as hard as you can, please. Thank you. Thank you. Emil Tessier, to be followed by Matt Tobias. Good evening, and thank you.

[03:57:09] The rationale used throughout the 2023 model policy is extremely hypocritical. Let me point out one glaring example from page five and then repeated on page six. Quote, these 2023 model policies adhere to the First Amendment.

[03:57:26] The First Amendment forbids government actors to require individuals to adhere to or adopt any particular ideological beliefs. Additionally, the First Amendment guarantees religious freedom and prohibits compelling others to affirm ideas that may be contrary to their personal religious beliefs.

[03:57:44] This current Republican administration cites the religious freedom section of the First Amendment to say that teachers cannot be forced to use a student's pronoun of choice. But this same Republican administration is on record saying that they will impose their religious beliefs by forcing women to give birth when those women do not have the same religious views as the governor.

[03:58:09] According to Governor Youngkin and his lackeys, it's no to pronouns, but yes to forced birth. The hypocrisy is mind-boggling. Kim crossed his article in the Washington Post, Homeless rates for LGBT teens are alarming.

[03:58:30] A few excerpts. The study's other findings are equally bleak. 46% of homeless LGBT youths ran away because of family rejection of their sexual orientation or gender identity. 43% were forced out by parents, 32% faced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

[03:58:50] The children identified in the study in the article, in this Washington Post article, are the very ones the 2023 model policy is designed to hurt. Please, LCPS, do everything possible to protect these vulnerable children.

[03:59:06] Thank you. Thank you. Matt Tobias, to be followed by Kerry Kidwell. Good evening, everyone. My name is Matt and I'm a former student. I graduated almost 10 years ago from Loudoun County High School. I am talking in regards to the model policies and I'm really grateful for how many people came out to discuss this, especially people super close to the issue, people who are trans or

[03:59:43] family members or friends of those who are trans. From 2021 to 2022, I volunteered with the Trevor project. I was trained extensively to know how to respond to LGBTQ youth who are in crisis, who are experiencing suicidal ideation, dealing with depression, anxiety, stress, and things of that nature. I helped over 100 youth, and many of them, the majority of the ones I helped, identified as trans or non-binary. And I can assure you from all of those discussions

[04:00:21] that they were hurting from all the policies, the rhetoric, everything that is anti-trans. I heard directly from them. Research is important and it is powerful. But sometimes the only thing that will get

people to do something is to hear the actual stories from people, to hear from lived experience from, thankfully, some of the people who came today who shared exactly what they faced.

[04:00:46] I myself am a member of the LGBTQ community. And while I'm not trans, I can definitely empathize with and only imagine what my trans siblings are facing. Please, please stand up for trans kids.

[04:01:03] If you don't, they will be in danger. Just remember, we all want to be treated with respect. Let's really believe that and exemplify that and not let that just be a term that goes and dies in a wastebasket somewhere.

[04:01:20] Thank you. Thank you. Carrie Kidwell, to be followed by Jennifer Parsons. In 2021, an evidence-based, scientifically-supported policy was created by Northam's Virginia Department of Education with input from experts and community stakeholders for the best interests of the transgender and non-binary students.

[04:01:45] That is now our current policy, 8040. The current 2023 policy created by Youngkins VDOE is cruel, harmful, and is not evidence-based. Some will say this policy is to support parent rights, but that is not true. Some say it supports religious freedom and expression, but that is not true either.

[04:02:03] In this new 2023 policy, affirming parents are able to put name and pronoun changes in writing in the student's official record. However, teachers are still able to override those parental rights if they don't support this. There are teachers whose personal or religious beliefs dictate love and kindness to all and realize that using an affirming name is an evidence-based mental health support for LGBTQ plus youth, one that results in self-harm and suicidality reduction.

[04:02:30] And yet this policy states that these staff members cannot use the child's chosen name and affirming pronouns without parental permission. So it isn't really about rights for the parents or across-the-board religious freedom. This is specifically put in place to give certain parents and teachers rights based on a conservative ideology that many people do not follow.

[04:02:47] This is discrimination with a pretty bow on top and calling it the First Amendment. The bottom line is that there are politicians and groups spending a great deal of energy and time manufacturing a moral crisis. This is a very small population who are on the receiving end of discrimination and bullying and they are being vilified and dehumanized.

[04:03:06] This policy is based on misinformation, ignorance, and hate. It would bring an increase in bullying, mental health concerns, and state-sanctioned discrimination. Loudoun is better than this. And we know that public school is for everyone. Students come first.

[04:03:23] Students have rights, too. And we must stand for all students to feel safe and welcome at school. no exceptions thank you dr smith thank you for your time serving thank you jennifer parsons to be followed by penny satches bros first off thank you for being here and thank you for hearing us tonight as we start this school year a pressing issue demands our action the need for protection for lgbtqia plus children within our school systems against the proposed model policies

[04:03:58] adopted by the state of virginia every student deserves a safe environment to learn and grow regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Sadly, these policies will lead to queer students often facing discrimination, harassment, and isolation, hindering their ability to fully engage in their education.

[04:04:18] To truly protect the rights of queer students, especially our transgender students, we must address the issue of bullying and harassment head-on. Sometimes that includes bullying and harassment from our own government. As the school board, it is your job, and your only job, to protect all children.

[04:04:34] And sometimes that means taking the harder path, the path that requires more work and more strife. Like we said, you have one of the hardest jobs around. When the bar is set at providing basic human decency for all students, especially students who belong to a marginalized community, then all you must do is not adopt policies like these that will threaten a singular group of students.

[04:05:00] Take this year to focus on our students, not in using them as political pawns. Let's get back to doing what is right. And what is right is to protect, love, and educate our queer students just like everyone else. Thank you. Thank you. Penny Satchez-Braz to be followed by Jack Shelton.

[04:05:20] Good evening, and thank you for letting me speak. I'm going to go on a different topic. Last week, I visited the Finance Committee. One thing I noticed, and it's still on this same issue of inclusion, and I appreciate some of the efforts you have already taken by eliminating athletic fees for those children who want to play sports.

[04:05:45] But as a volunteer mom, when we have sports activities, you have groups of children showing up and some don't have the \$7 to go in. If you look at Loudoun County, over 25% of the kids are on free and reduced meals. And I understand there are programs where these children can attend sports events free, but they have to identify themselves and go ask for a special entrance.

[04:06:10] I'm not 100% familiar with that. However, I come from the South, where sports events, Friday nights, are community events. Everyone comes out, supports the schools. If you go to any high school on a Friday night here, it's not even 50% full.

[04:06:27] Half of the kids sit outside the fence to watch their friends because they can't afford to go in. So all I'm asking is for you and your finance committee to look at the opportunity financially if it's able to let the kids come in on their student IDs like they will do when they go to college, like is done in other parts of the country, so they can be part of the school, they can develop that school spirit.

[04:06:52] We heard the word community, we heard giving everyone every access, but let them just go in as a group and be part of what's happening in their school, and I think that's something that's missing. There's not a whole lot of, you know, we heard two students that have this school spirit.

[04:07:10] Those aren't two of the schools that have a very high rate of free and reduced meals, so just look at it across the board. I don't know what the financial impact will be, but I'm just asking you all to consider it and have a good evening. Thank you. Thank you. Jack Shelton to be followed by Brian Davison.

[04:07:31] Brian Davison to be followed by Suzanne Satterfield. Good evening.

[04:07:51] I came here to talk about academic growth scores, but I wanted to respond to some of the comments over here first. According to a study of the Correctional Service of Canada, they looked at female to male transgender inmates.

[04:08:09] And of the group, they found that 44% of the convicts were sex offenders compared to 21% of normal males. They found that a large percentage of them had actually committed, 85% were convicted of violent crimes that caused death or serious harm to their victims compared to other rates.

[04:08:35] And a large number had been convicted of homicide. And we saw a non-binary student here commit a rape in the school. So all this nonsense about there's no violence is just full of it. Second, I wanted to come here to talk about the honors program that y'all tried to ram through the curriculum and instructional committee where parents don't even know whether their kids have a real honors program where you separate by ability or not.

[04:09:03] So even though you can ask to go to a different middle school, the parents may be forced, their kids may be forced into a blended honors program, but their kids are asked to teach the other kids. And we see it in the growth scores. So in reading this past year, the average middle school had below a 50th percentile.

[04:09:25] So I know Superintendent Spence talks about what a great school is, a school system allow them is, but we can't even keep up with the national average. Let's look at the growth percentiles for black students because we talked about equity. So in 2021, they had 41% growth scores.

[04:09:43] way below average, 47.3% and then 46.9% this last year. The biggest civil rights issue is giving every student a right to learn, and you can't even do that. You should resign. Thank you. Suzanne Satterfield to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf.

[04:10:02] Citizens have the power to govern the management of our schools, including spending, staffing levels, working conditions, curriculum choices, and administrative priorities through our decisions at the voting booth. The 2024 budget for LCPS is nearly \$2.5 billion.

[04:10:22] This figure should be alarming to all Loudoun County taxpayers considering the fact that the lion's share of the growth in the LCPS budget over the past decade has been focused upon administration and not schools. Case in point, our new superintendent has been given one of the highest salaries in the nation at \$375,000.

[04:10:40] This is an \$80,000 increase over our last superintendent. Governor Yunkin's reasonable model policy has taken prudent steps to return our schools to being safe and inclusive environment for all students. All parents need to know that they can trust our schools to have an open dialogue with them as this is the best interest for their children.

[04:11:00] That means no secrets at schools. The power is to determine compensation levels, working conditions, school year length, holidays curricula, hours, and all other aspects of the running of LCPS belongs to the voters. We exercise this power through our representatives on the school board.

[04:11:16] But the representatives do not have the right to give away our private business like the LEA. Everyone knows that unions only drive up costs while lowering value. Taxpayers making it harder to manage staff and operations schools and creating toxic work environments. LCPS became one of the best school systems in the country without being unionized.

[04:11:35] We want our schools to be safe for students and staff, students treated as individuals and able to reach their full academic potential. And we want authority as parents and taxpayers to be acknowledged and retained. Children are not born in the wrong body. No one can change their sex. My personal friend, Chloe Cole, along with many others, including Laura, Sinead, Richie, Lois, have been permanently damaged from gender-affirming practices.

[04:12:02] You can learn more through No Way Back and Lost in Transnation by Dr. Miriam Grossman. Thank you. Thank you. Andrea Weiskopf, to be followed by Erica Weiskopf. They claimed it had nothing to do with LGBTQ authors or characters.

[04:12:32] You knew it was a lie, but you submitted it into Policy 5055 anyway. But Policy 5055 was never the end goal. It never ends with books. Now, instead of banning books, they are banning people.

[04:12:52] It is said that first-class citizens don't need to ask for rights. they are inalienable. If you enshrine Youngkin's new model policies, you will make our transgender students sub-citizens.

[04:13:13] It is a moral imperative that we fight unjust policies. It is a moral imperative that we fight for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students.

[04:13:30] Black Lives Matter. - Thank you. Erika Weiskopf is our final in-person speaker. Hi there. I am a Loudoun voter, daughter of a Loudoun teacher, and friend to brave members of the transgender community.

[04:13:49] I'm speaking today because I am disturbed by the model policy set forth by Governor Youngkin related to the treatment of transgender students. The policies state that transgender students should be treated with respect and dignity, but this is completely at odds with their content, which would deny transgender students basic human decency.

[04:14:06] The policy disturbs me because I do not think the state should have the authority to determine the sex or gender of children. The state should not have the authority to out transgender students to non-supportive families. The policies are discriminatory. Transgender children should not be a tool in the culture war of the right. The school board was elected to keep children in Loudoun public schools educated, safe, and respected. The first, most obvious step of this is allowing transgender students to be referred to by their chosen names and to use bathrooms without the interference by the state. It is beyond obvious that these policies are a violation of the barrier between church and state. There is no other reason a government would enact a policy

[04:14:43] to specifically discriminate against a type of student deemed sinful by its base. I know the school board knows this. These policies punish transgender students for being transgender. They are discriminatory. Please do the right thing and protest these policies. You have the ability to do so. Your constituents do not wish to be residents in a theocracy. Thank you very much for your service. Thank you. We'll now start on our virtual speakers. And the first virtual speaker is

[04:15:12] Leigh Guarinello. Hello.

[04:15:32] Thank you for letting me present. My name is Leigh Guarinello. My pronouns are she, her, and I've lived in Loudoun County for 20 years. My husband has lived here his entire life. It has been heartbreaking and embarrassing that our family around the country has seen our county residents on the news spewing hate and cruelty towards LGBTQ plus children instead of seeing the amazing beauty and diversity of our county. In our family, there is one rule, be kind.

[04:16:06] The model policies are unkind and hurtful and would doom children to shame, mental health challenges, and suicide. Please be kind and decline to adopt these hurtful model policies. Thank you so much.

[04:16:23] Thank you. Torin Catlett. Thank you. I am a queer, non-binary, former student of LCPS. I attended elementary, middle, and high school in Loudoun County. I am speaking in opposition of the 2023 model policies.

[04:16:42] I am truly saddened to have to stand here and argue that our trans children deserve to be treated as equal. They deserve to use the bathroom. They deserve to play sports. And they deserve to feel accepted by their community. The year 2022 has brought more than 500 anti-trans bills, and this was detrimental to our community.

[04:17:03] Almost 50% of trans youth have seriously considered suicide, and this is directly related to propositions and rhetoric like that in the 2023 model policies. Access to gender-affirming care reduces suicide risk by 73%.

[04:17:19] Gender-affirming care includes going by a different name in school without risking unsafe disclosure. As elected officials of a public school system, It is not your job to police children's bodies. I repeat, it is not your job to police children's bodies.

[04:17:40] Protecting trans youth invests in their future and thus invests in the community. To the queer students of LCPS, we will continue to fight for your right to exist. And no matter how hard they try, we will not be erased. Thank you. Thank you.

[04:17:57] Lyron Mendelsohn. Hi, I'm a former LCPS student. I think these policies are ridiculous. demanding transgender students to reveal their identity to parents and peers is a violation of their rights. Just think about the emotional turmoil they're forced to endure just to navigate their day-to-day. It's beyond neglect. It's a calculated act of cruelty that perpetuates discrimination and isolation. These policies are a disgrace, and it's enraging that they're still

[04:18:33] in place. It's time for action and not empty promises. Thank you. Thank you. And our final virtual speaker tonight is Lauren Henry. I'm a lifelong community member of Long County and a survivor of sexual assault and of child abuse.

[04:18:52] I signed up for public comment today to express my strong opposition to the new model policies regarding privacy, dignity, and respect for students and parents put out by the BDOE and Governor Youngkin for the upcoming school year. These guidelines heavily follow standards for public schools in the name of parents' rights that are developed and being pushed by extremist groups such as Moms for Liberty. First, let me be clear that I do not support or condone any form of terrorism or hate, and it is important to distinguish between legitimate concerns in the community and the actions of extremist individuals and groups. The SPLC, a respected civil rights research organization, recently released their yearly review classifying Moms

[04:19:31] for Liberty as a terrorist hate group. A statement from SPLC's deputy director of research says of the group, they really are seeking to undermine public education holistically and to divide communities, and has compared their tactics to pro-segregation groups. That being said, I firmly believe that the proposed guidelines put forth by the VDOE and the governor modeled after ideals pushed by groups like this are not in the best interest of our students or our community. These guidelines are extremely harmful and promote a narrow and exclusionary worldview.

[04:19:58] Imposing a singular set of values on all students undermines the principles of tolerance, respect, and critical thinking that are essential for a well-rounded education. Furthermore, if these

guidelines are implemented, we risk perpetuating ignorance and denying students the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the world that they live in. Education should empower students to think critically, engage in meaningful discussions, and develop empathy for others.

[04:20:20] Our school should be a safe place for all students. Reject the proposed guidelines for the upcoming school year. Say no to extremism in Loudoun County. Protect trans youth. Thank you. Thank you. That was the final speaker, so that will conclude public comment for this evening. At this time, we're going to take a short recess.

[04:20:36] Board members, please be back in your seats at 835. And the board is now in recess.

[04:34:45] And we will resume with our first action item, 1201, from the Department of Business and Financial Services, FY24, salary scales and budget reconciliation. I know staff has a brief presentation for this one, so I will turn it over to Ms. Willoughby.

[04:35:01] Thank you. Yes, I have a very brief update. So, as you may recall, we've been working on the FY24 budget for a very long time. And I'm happy to bring forward hopefully the final action related to the FY24 budget this evening.

[04:35:19] So back in May and June, the school board approved reconciling the budget based on updated available information. That included approving a temporary FY24 salary scale that awarded step increases to eligible employees. And that also placed further scale adjustments on hold pending finalization of the state budget.

[04:35:39] I had indicated back then that August 8th would be the soonest we thought possible to bring forward any additional salary scale changes. My team has closely monitored activity, or lack thereof, at the state level, and we feel confident with moving forward with the final salary scale adjustments, along with additional budget reconciliation changes that end up having a neutral impact to the bottom line.

[04:36:04] So you see the action taken on the 25th and 27th, and then this evening the action before the school board is to release the scale adjustments that have been placed on hold and adopt the revised FY24 salary scales. Those scales are uploaded into board docs, and that the pay increases would be included in the August 25th paycheck retroactive to July 1 for the new year.

[04:36:30] Next slide, please. First, though, I want to take a quick trip down memory lane. That has brought us to staff's recommendation this evening. So you see a variety of headlines regarding the state budget process that began back in February.

[04:36:48] The school board adopted its budget on February 2nd. And then you can see where there's just been a lot of uncertainty through the months after February. It started off with thinking that there would just be a pause and that there would be action in June.

[04:37:05] And then the closer we got to June, it seemed to be, it's going to get pushed even further. And at this point, we really do believe that there likely will not be any additional action at the state level. So this delayed action and continued lack of finalization with the state budget, you know, it did create numerous challenges in adopting the FY24 budget.

[04:37:28] And as I've stated before, the recommendations were always made based on the best information available at that time, despite the ever-changing political climate. Our risk analysis has always been focused on ensuring LCPS would also not be caught in a final pinch.

[04:37:47] So as I stated earlier, we are based on the information that we're seeing at the state level with the most recent comments that we are tracking from state legislators is that they really don't expect any additional action on the budget, that they have begun talking about next year's budget.

[04:38:05] So even though they are sitting, the state is sitting on a significant surplus fund balance, the expectation is that those funds would be targeted for the creation of next year's budget. Next slide.

[04:38:21] Also, just a recap of the guiding direction that we have been following during these uncertain times. As always, we have been focused on safeguarding the employee pay increases with the goal of providing the 5% minimum pay increase to full-time employees moving a step.

[04:38:41] When building a budget, it's also best to be low or conservative on the revenue projections and higher on expenditure projections. The budget is an estimate, and the spending, though, is based on real cash coming through the door. So if revenues are projected too high with actual cash coming in less, and that's paired with high spending, then we could run into an issue where we don't have enough cash to cover costs.

[04:39:04] So that was our approach also as we were adopting the budget. So the FY24 budget was adopted to match the revenue in the state skinny budget. The revenues were decreased based on the BDOE calc tool error and also technical updates that totaled a decrease of \$13 million.

[04:39:24] On the expense side of the budget, we did not make any changes, and we mirrored the governor's proposed budget when adopting the FY24 LCPS budget. Most significantly, the governor's budget included an initiative for bonuses.

[04:39:41] Even though the skinny budget did not include this, there were Senate and House amendments still floating out there that could increase the budget through another bonus program or even larger pay increases. Therefore, the budget item supporting the governor's budget bonus initiative was not recommended for reduction due to these other possible initiatives.

[04:39:59] And then I had also just dropped in the slide that had been included in presentations in February, March, and May that highlighted the various state budget amendments that we were watching during this time frame. So the budget neutral reconciliation changes that we are requesting are outlined on this slide.

[04:40:25] So you can see that we have the current adopted budget of the \$1,668,345,179 and that it matches the bottom line. Essentially, we are reallocating the monies that were included in the budget to support the governor's proposed budget initiative on bonuses and reallocating those dollars to the substitute account as well as for positions, for additional positions.

[04:40:54] And so some additional information with the subs. So the subs have historically been very difficult to project, and there have been many years when the budget was exceeded, including most recently FY23.

[04:41:11] for FY23, we exceeded the substitute budget by \$6.3 million. The quarterly financial updates I provided during FY23 indicated that we continue to see sub-projections exceed the budget. We have identified some reasons for the increase, such as underestimating the popularity of the new family leave program, initial projections, expected participation that has been exceeded by about 55 percent so we've

we really have seen the popularity of that program we've also seen the impact of premium sub pay initiatives and then the continued and expanded use of site-based subs

[04:41:50] you heard earlier in the superintendents operational update some of the steps we are taking to ensure our sub program is efficient and that we're getting the most from our subs despite the operational improvements and efficiencies we are still concerned the fy24 budget will be insufficient to cover anticipated costs for the upcoming school year that's why we are reallocating 3.6 billion from the bonus line excuse me to the sub account as recommended listed here is also the action to increase the long-term sub rate from 154 dollars a day to 200 dollars a day

[04:42:28] that would bring lcps as the leader in the region for the long-term sub rate the estimated cost related to this would be approximately 1.6 million dollars however some of this would be covered by the existing sub budget but assuming a worst case scenario there are also 28 elementary teacher positions that are vacant and with no intention to be filled at all this school year so those funds would be allocated to or reallocated to the sub budget as well we also have a small portion though

[04:43:06] of some of those teacher dollars that's going towards teacher assistance, and I'll provide further detail on the TAs on an upcoming slide. Related to the positions, so we have 18.2 positions, and as it states on the slide up there, that after the budget was initially adopted by the school board in February, we have new information that resulted in additional staffing standard positions. So staff is recommending using this reconciliation opportunity to add those positions that otherwise would have required contingency.

[04:43:40] This ensures schools have maximum flexibility addressing needs as they arise in the upcoming school year. A real quick breakdown of the 18.2 positions. Ten are related to Title I. So again, after February, we had information shared that updated the eligibility and status of Title I or Title I eligible schools.

[04:44:01] So ten additional FTEs are to support Title I schools per our staffing standard. the new student support advisor position which is one per high school we did not include the north star school in that initiative and so we're adding an FTE there for the school counselors the FY24 budget included an enhancement to the elementary school counselor staffing standard in which the calculation for FTE at all in elementary schools would round up to the next whole number just as a high level summary we had a rounding error in our formula that shorted

[04:44:39] the counselors by five so this is a technical change to make that correction and then finally the boundary adjustments the school board adopted the the elementary school boundaries on february 14th and so based on the updated boundary adjustments there's a net increase of 2.2 positions so again we're just taking this opportunity to award those positions because our contingency has already been has taken a pretty strong hit along with some additional

[04:45:18] information I'll provide here shortly next slide so the great headline and the great news you know With today's action, should the school board approve it, is that we are releasing the cost of living adjustment and the strategic scale adjustment that had been placed on hold.

[04:45:37] So what the school board adopted, we are basically going to enact that should the school board approve it. The final outcome of this action would be that all eligible full-time employees moving a step

would receive a 5% minimum pay increase when you take into account the step increase that was awarded on July 1 and that we would also achieve a 5.8% district-wide average.

[04:46:05] So you can just see here on the slide the step increase that was already paid out on July 14th, and then we've got the strategic scale adjustment, and then we've got the cost of living adjustment, what those adjustments are. There's a difference for the universal scale, COLA versus auxiliary scale, because again, the goal was to ensure that we had a 5% minimum for all employees moving a step, and so just the way the scales are structured in terms of their steps and the values. A 3.2% COLA is what

[04:46:41] was required for the universal scale. Next slide. One final note related to the upcoming school year is an update on an exception to position control as it relates to elementary staffing.

[04:47:03] So LCPS does allocate elementary teachers to ensure smaller class sizes that do not require the assignment of a teacher assistant so the staffing standard currently is one teacher per 22 students for grades one through five and then a ta is assigned when classes exceed 25 for grades one through three and when classes exceed 29 for grades four through five a teacher assistant is assigned however under no circumstance can a class size exceed 30. So circling back to the first

[04:47:39] statement the philosophy in applying the staffing center had been to ensure smaller class sizes that didn't trigger the assignment of a teacher assistant and so with the budget for FY24 we had projected and budgeted that there would be five classrooms across the all our all our elementary schools that would trigger needing a teacher assistant all five of those have been

[04:48:09] field. However, due to the teacher vacancies and what Dr. Smith shared earlier, I'm trying to find the note, I think it was 80 something, 84, here it is, 84 teachers that we don't have at the elementary level. That really means that there are 84 elementary classrooms that are going to have to be absorbed in with other classes. So that is occurring, and as a result, some schools may

[04:48:44] experience larger class sizes and some schools may require will also experience larger class sizes that require a teacher assistant because they're going to go over that threshold of 25 or 29 that triggers the assignment of a teacher assistant so in elementary education they have identified the need for 20 more teacher assistants than what we have budgeted because again we only have five in the budget how we plan on staffing those is we're going to assign 10 from contingency and then

[04:49:21] this is where the the update because this is something that's new and doing flexible you know being flexible with our staffing is a one-time exception allowing the swap of five vacant teacher positions for 10 teacher assistant positions so roughly the value behind what one teacher costs we can pay for two teacher assistants so that's how we come up with the five to ten ratio again as i indicated earlier they've already identified 28 positions as as we identify as being turned

[04:49:59] back into budget meaning they do not expect to you know fill them at all they are done recruiting for those positions and so that's where five of those vacant positions are going to come from to do this budget neutral swap so this slide here is more for just information it's to just provide an update you know for the school board regarding the fact that we will have larger class sizes this upcoming school year we have had lots of discussions regarding what we see happening this year and thinking about next year already so even though we haven't started school this year we're already

[04:50:39] talking about staffing and strategies for next school year because if you recall the slide that was in the superintendent's operational update the trend line for the vacancies was was not a very good trend

line so if we follow that trend line it we could fully expect to be in a worse position next year and so this is just one strategy for this year to address the shortage of teachers at the elementary level but even though i don't have a slide on it i just want to circle

[04:51:12] back to again the great news about releasing the the salary increases you know we didn't want to just keep waiting and waiting like I said we felt very confident to go ahead and proceed with that and then also just want to do one quick public appreciation announcement related to the county because they did step up and you know they did allocate the additional 13 million to LCPS whenever the shortfall from the state was identified and it's because it really is because of that appropriation that is allowing us to go ahead and make this recommendation this evening and with that i am happy to answer any questions before i open it up to questions i just want to make sure

[04:51:52] i'm i'm crystal clear you said we're what's being proposed tonight is basically the same salary scales as in february is it exactly the same salary scales as schedule february or are there any differences it is exactly the same so if you looked at what was included in the superintendent's estimate of needs, it's the exact same scales. Okay. Thank you. That's what I thought. I just wanted to make sure so there was no confusion. Board members, any questions regarding the presentation before I make a motion? Mr. Morse. I could not be happier at that 5%

[04:52:27] floor for our employees. I am only one issue, and that is when we talk about those at the top of the scale, we talk about a 1%, one-time payment, but we also talk about an adjustment. Can you tell me what the adjustment was for those on the top step. So you may notice the wording is very specific as we talk about the 5% minimum with the language stating 5% for full-time eligible

[04:53:03] employees moving a step because we do have the situation that for employees, I'm trying to find my notes here, for employees on the universal salary scale and employees on the auxiliary scale that are on the top step that they, not all of them, but they would not, not all of them would receive a 5% minimum. And so back in January, when I presented the salaries and benefits presentation, I shared information related to this. So I'll just highlight again. So at the

[04:53:39] universal, on the universal scale, there are 381 employees. And so instead of a 1% one-time payment, which is what we historically have done for top of scale. It would require a one-time that for FY24, instead of it being 1%, it would be 1.1, I'm sorry, 2%, a one-time 2% payment for FY24. That is, that along with the COLA adjustment to the scale would ensure a 5% minimum. For the

[04:54:12] auxiliary scale, there are 55 employees. Their one-time payment would need to be 1.1%, so just a fraction more, to achieve a 5% minimum. The cost related to both of those changes, as I presented back in January, is 1.1 million dollars. Can you say that now? 1.1 million dollars. 1.1 million, But they were, so they were 0.1%, so they were all?

[04:54:41] They were at 4.9. Okay. And I would ask one more additional comment, and this is more general. When the superintendent provides a superintendent report, can we have that immediately uploaded to board docs so that we're able to go back and reference that?

[04:54:59] Because right now it's not loaded yet, so that would be helpful. Thank you. Absolutely. Any additional questions regarding the presentation? Ms. Polipco and then Ms. Corbo. Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is related to the vacancies that we discussed earlier or that you discussed earlier, Ms.

[04:55:20] Willoughby, with teachers and the need for the teacher assistance looking that at this point we're going to need 20 assistants. Have those positions been filled or are we looking to fill those positions at this time? We are looking to fill those positions at this time.

[04:55:36] Okay, thank you. So if I'm correct in what you stated earlier, classes that exceed 25 students at grades one through three would then need an assistant? And classes that exceed 29 students at grades four through five would need an assistant.

[04:55:51] Was I hearing that information correct? Yes. Okay, thank you. So I think my concern in this situation is we have a few weeks before school starts, and what is our plan if we do not fill those positions within that timeline?

[04:56:08] I believe the discussion has been is that it's easier to fill a teacher assistant than it is a teacher, but I would perhaps defer to Ms. Boland for any additional information. - That is correct, Ms. Willoughby and Ms. Polifco. It is much easier to fill a teacher assistant position than it is a licensed teacher.

[04:56:32] Anytime we have an applicant pool for a TA position, we have a number of applicants and for teachers we are competing. If there are five applicants, those five applicants have probably applied to multiple different teaching positions both in Loudoun County and potentially outside of the county.

[04:56:54] Thank you. And I just want to reiterate that my question is, what is our backup plan if we are not able to achieve that goal? Is the plan to implement substitute teachers in those positions? What would we do if we were not able to fill all those positions in the necessary timeline for school to start?

[04:57:13] So let me just make sure I understand the necessary teacher positions or the necessary TA positions. TA. So if we were not able to fill the necessary TA positions, then we would look for substitutes, yes. Okay, thank you.

[04:57:29] So my final concern here with regard to the proposed plan this evening is the fact that we are looking to now pay substitute teachers the most, I think it was in the surrounding counties. So Loudoun County would be leading the way in daily pay for substitute teachers at \$200 a day.

[04:57:47] Is that correct or not? For the long-term sub, yes. Okay, and can you give me some information about how much Fairfax County, Arlington County, and Prince William County long-term subs are paid per day? I can't remember each one specifically, but I know that what our benchmark was to get to number one, it was either 196 or 197.

[04:58:15] And so we had discussions that, okay, so just going like 198, it's only a couple dollars more to hit 200. And we thought that there could also be, just like with pricing, getting, you know, hitting 200, you're out of that 100 range would perhaps help us to draw long-term subs by, because that is one of the mitigating factors with, on the teacher shortage, teacher shortage side, not just with even the TAs of knowing that, you know, we're going to need long-term subs as well.

[04:58:47] And so this, you know, by increasing that rate, we're hoping that will help us make sure that we have our classes covered. Okay. Dr. Smith, do you want to weigh in? Yeah, just wanted to add a couple things and kind of summarize here. We have been monitoring all along and talking with principals and looking at the number of candidates we're getting for teachers. We are concerned around the number of vacancies for elementary. And so looking at that, it is a multi-pronged approach. We want to make sure

that we maintain the staffing standard that you've approved. And so one of those ways to do that when we can't find the quality teachers is to look at these teachers' assistants.

[04:59:25] I talked to the principal the other day that said they had over 100 applicants for a TA position, and it's very high quality in terms of that. And so that combined with what we're proposing around the long-term sub-pay is two of our key strategies. We're also looking at in terms of teachers, if we have teacher vacancies to utilize central office staff as we need to to make sure that we do have our classrooms filled for the first day of school.

[04:59:50] And so, you know, the long-term sub-pay, just to clarify, this is, I mean, when you're in long-term, you're doing the lesson planning, you're doing the grading, you're doing everything in terms of long-term sub-pay. And we do think that'll be really helpful. We were at the, we are at the very bottom of everyone in the surrounding areas in terms of long-term subs.

[05:00:08] So that multi-pronged approach, we think that will help us so that we can maintain the staffing standard and we can make sure that we have quality people in each one of our classrooms to start the school year. Ms. Korba. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it fair to say that we are experiencing the teacher shortage?

[05:00:32] Yes. I've seen other states go through this same situation where they have not been able to find teachers to fill classroom positions. And one of the strategies that they have used is to reassign support positions.

[05:00:52] so educators that are in support positions that are not working directly with children, and they have reassigned them to classrooms. Is that something that we're considering? So as I shared just a minute ago, that's one of the things that we are considering if needed.

[05:01:10] We feel like we have other strategies in place we'd like to employ first because the jobs that those folks do are critical to supporting our teachers, to supporting our classrooms, to supporting our school division. But we are committed to making sure that our classrooms have quality folks in it and we're prepared to start the school year.

[05:01:27] So that is something we're considering if needed. Have you looked at other states and how they have actually gone through this and done this and how the impact has really not changed student outcomes and academic outcomes once they've made those changes?

[05:01:45] I'm just wondering if we've done any research. I know that we have frequent conversations with partners in the region, partners in the state, and folks in other school divisions across the country around teacher shortage.

[05:02:01] What are some strategies we're imploring in terms of that? I'll defer to Ms. Willoughby to see if there's anything specific she'd like to add. I'm sorry, Ms. Boland, sorry. Thank you, Dr. Smith. Ms. Corbo, we do talk frequently with our counterparts both in Virginia and outside of Virginia.

[05:02:23] Our recruitment teams spend a lot of time on the road, especially speaking to other recruiting teams in regards to the struggles and how they're working through them. And even outside of the initiatives we've brought before you tonight and the strategies, we are looking into how we work with partner organizations to do visa sponsorships and think outside the box.

[05:02:53] And so we are having those conversations and talking through what's working for other divisions, both in the state of Virginia and outside of the state of Virginia. Right. So so that means that they they should already have a lot of that information because, you know, we're we're coming upon what what other school districts across the nation have already faced.

[05:03:16] And and I think it's critical as you know, this year and and as we move forward that that we do have licensed teachers in our elementary schools, which is those are the grade levels that set the foundation for all learning. And it's so critical that we do everything we can possibly do to ensure that we have licensed teachers in every single classroom this year and as we move forward.

[05:03:41] So so I would hope that that we would take it very seriously and do the research where where I know school districts have have seen that moving some of those support staff back into the classrooms has actually made positive gains instead of negative gains as some might have it's expected.

[05:04:03] thank you miss okadugbe thank you chair i just wanted to get clarification is this swap um in the staffing from the five teacher positions to the 10 teacher assistants is that recommended just for this academic year or is that recommended as a permanent change to the staffing plan so this change is specific for this fiscal year however we are looking at what additional flexibility we can incorporate into the staffing standards so i wouldn't be surprised if once we start next year's

[05:04:41] budget process of seeing perhaps some additional language in the staffing standards presented as i guess an enhancement at this time i will move that the louden county school board adopts the revised fy 24 salary scales and the recommended changes as set forth by the acting superintendent to amend the FY24 operating budget.

[05:05:08] Is there a second? Seconded by Mr. Mejedevi. Just to very briefly speak to my motion, I will just say that I am glad the school board has been able to make good on the significant salary increases for staff that we approved earlier this year, demonstrating our commitment to our exemplary staff and remaining an employer of choice for our educators.

[05:05:29] Like Ms. Willoughby, I also want to take a moment to thank the Loudoun Board of Supervisors for demonstrating a commitment to public education by providing additional funding to LCPS this year to close the shortfall caused by the state. Is there any additional discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hands and say aye. Aye. Those opposed? That motion will pass 8-1 with Polifco opposed, and barring any additional weirdness from the state,

[05:06:05] that will conclude the fy 24 operating budget we'll now move to 1202 from the superintendent's office and the audit committee the approval of the office of the auditor general fy 24 annual audit plan mr madby thank you chair i'll make the motion first and then we can open up for the discussion on it i move to the lowland county school board approved the office of auditor general's fy 24 annual audit plan. Sir, second. Seconded by Ms. Okadegbe. Mr. Mahedby, would you like to speak to

[05:06:45] your motion? Yes, Chair. So, I'm excited that finally, I think it's been, to bring this as an action item tonight, this has been sort of an effort for the last, I think, couple years. First, I think, from the very concept of bringing the Auditor General's office to LCPS, you know, the first to set up an office to make sure that we can audit policies, processes, and many aspects of things that we do in LCPS, and something that's sort of a dotted line

[05:07:19] or direct line to the school board to have an independent sort of view into that. And second, so that was the first thing. And secondly, I think in working with the OAG's office in sort of coming up with, in the last year, coming up with this universe that you see posted in the board docs, and I'll speak to the six items that's currently are, that we're hoping that the board can take action on and direct the OAG's office to working towards that.

[05:07:52] Having said that, I'm thankful to the committee members, I think Mr. Beatty and Ms. Ogadekebe, in working through the committee in coming up with this sort of audit plan right now, along with the Auditor General's office with Mr. Woods taking the lead on that.

[05:08:12] So Mr. Woods, I don't know if you would like to come here and join us. I think we will certainly have questions as we go through some of the items here. So there's six items currently that we brought up as information item from the last time. The six of them, they kind of belong into, first of them, the number one that we have is I think we've been listening to the community in terms of when it comes to special ed, how LCPS is performing in terms of hours and staffing.

[05:08:43] And so I think that was the first item. I think we as a committee believe that it was really important that we have an independent audit of that. A couple of them are sort of recommendations coming out of grand jury. A couple items are from information technology, and then there's one security item in there.

[05:09:01] So those are six items that are currently, that we're hoping that this is, at least this is not the end of it, but start of the audit process that the office can start working on these six items over the course of this next year.

[05:09:23] So with that, I guess if there's any further questions I can answer or Mr. Woods up here, he can help answer any questions to the current audit plan or six item that is part of the plan right now. Thank you. And I will open it up to discussion on the motion and the FY24 audit plan.

[05:09:48] Ms. Pilevko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. My only question is related to the specific timeline that we're going to be auditing these items or that we're going to be presenting these items. For review, I see the number of hours or the number of estimated hours listed, but I don't see any dates.

[05:10:08] And I wasn't sure if there's a specific timeline in which those items will be presented. Yeah. So each item on here is in sequential order in how we'll audit them. The first audit, we will get started with sending out the acknowledgement letter next week.

[05:10:25] As far as timeline, I have developed a timeline, but because it wasn't sent through the proper channels, it was after we did the plan, I didn't want to confuse and go back through the process of meeting with the committee since we didn't have a committee meeting.

[05:10:41] But if I had to look at the six audits, I do hope to be done with the first audit sometime in November, Second one sometime in December, and then it will go from there. So if you look at the third audit, that will probably be started in December, but really ramped up in January.

[05:11:02] The final audit, which is number six, will probably be an audit that carries us into the next fiscal year. So there will be work for us to do in June and the beginning of July before the next audit plan is approved. And so I do look at these audits and look at them and say, okay, we're going to start with number one and go from there.

[05:11:24] But if I had to guess, I'd say the first one, November, is the timeline you're looking at of completion, the second one, December, and then we'll go from there. Any additional questions or discussion? Ms. Reeser.

[05:11:42] Thank you. I'd first like to start by thanking the audit committee for doing this work. And I'm wondering if there was any discussion of auditing any of our transportation policies. I think both with the process by which the school start times were changed for elementary school, the feedback that we've had from families regarding that and the trouble that we've had staffing school bus drivers over the years and the continuing issue that we foresee in that region or in that area, I should say.

[05:12:19] I wonder if that was discussed at all, and if it was not discussed and it's something that the committee or the board would want at some point to include in this plan, what is the process for amending the plan and reprioritizing?

[05:12:39] And I guess I should just follow on by saying that I fully support and think that it's crucial that special education staffing needs and requirements be number one. And just to thank the committee and to weigh in with my full support of the way that this has been prioritized as a starting point.

[05:13:03] Mr. Mahedvi, would you like to respond? Thank you, Chair. So I think, Ms. Reeser, I'll take a back step, but thank you for your comments. I think overall, the committee, when the list was brought by Mr. Woods, I think we had 15 items in the list.

[05:13:20] I think we went through the process of determining some of the stuff, whether it's more of a review that the department could do, perhaps, versus an audit. But as far as I agree with you, I think my discussion with Dr. Smith was that they are looking, and Dr. Smith, I don't know if you want to speak to that, They are actively looking into that bus timing and see if they need to make some adjustments because I think I was arguing, if not, to make changes this year, but I think they need some time and energy to review that for the subsequent year.

[05:13:58] But I think we as a committee did not look into that particular aspect because I got some feedback that is currently already being assessed and looked at the leadership level. So I don't know, Mr. Dr. Smith, if you want to touch on that a little bit. Yeah, thanks for the question and thanks for bringing that up, Ms. Reeser.

[05:14:17] So we have been, I know we've been hearing comments around our school start times and the change that took place and we have been looking at data. Mr. Lewis and his team, which he can share in just a moment around some of the specifics that are looking at our start times, looking at data from our students, looking at student achievement data, looking at TARDY data, looking at a number of different things to evaluate for any recommendations for changes for obviously not for now because we're starting the school year in a couple weeks but what we can do and improvements we might be able to make for the upcoming year so I know him and his team are in the process of looking that and I'll defer to

[05:14:51] Mr. Lewis and any specifics you might like to provide. Sure thank you Dr. Smith so we are actively engaged in developing routes for this year and looking at different opportunities for improving the individual runs for each of the schools we are looking at the as dr. Smith said the performance data we've already run routes and they're checking routes now for on time ratios we'll be keeping track of that as the year goes on for how the buses are doing for their arrival times but also we'll have people out counting cars and looking at parent drop-off and see how

[05:15:29] that's being affected we do know that a post COVID issue that we have is a lot more people are dropping their students off and we're having more and more traffic jams in the in the parking lots which is causing some issues so we're looking at all those things and we'll be actively engaged in that and as mr.

[05:15:45] Maheby said be able to come back to the board and give some some performance data both on on-time delivery and all the achievement things as he as dr. Smith said to be able to make an informed decision as to whether we make adjustments to that current schedule mr. chairman may I continue okay so I think there's two different issues here. You know, there is the possibility of looking at these transportation issues just as an item that comes through committee or goes to the board.

[05:16:14] And then there's the audit process, which I think is more useful for ensuring that policies, procedures, and standard operating procedures are being followed. And I'm wondering aloud whether both of those things should be happening. We have some procedures. For example, how many kids are sitting to a seat? Are runs actually under the time that we said they should be? Are bus stops being hit when they're supposed, like, are the buses getting there on time? Are the kids getting

[05:16:48] home timely? Are there a mix of special ed students with regular education students, whether that's allowable or not? So I think there's room for both things to be happening, And I'm wondering if that's something that the audit committee would consider taking up and looking at aside from the data that's going to come back to us.

[05:17:16] And I'd be happy to speak about it more offline if that would be helpful. Mr. Mahatmy. Thank you, Chair. So, Mr. Reason, I think two different things you were asking about. And so I think the latter point, of course, I think we can definitely look at an audit committee and make sure that, you know, again, review in the committee and see if there's an opportunity to do that.

[05:17:41] Having said that, I think the six items are there, but I think we all agree that these are also living items. And so even though we started as a board, these are six items, but I think we see a priority coming up, we can definitely make adjustments to it. So absolutely, I'll take the feedback to the committee.

[05:17:59] Mr. Chair, may I continue? I would ask when you consider this in committee in terms of audit criteria, or parameters that the committee considers looking at the attendance as it is tied to weather in schools where they're at students and walk zones especially at Title I schools. It's my understanding that when we have weather that chronic absenteeism is directly affected and

[05:18:33] has been so since the walk zones were expanded and I think that if that's not something that belongs in the audit committee then I would ask staff to help us bring that through the appropriate committee to look at that data that's something that was shared with me by principals starting back in 2019 and given that chronic absenteeism is tied to our accreditation I think we need to look at whether our transportation policy is actually serving to bring our poorest kids and the kids who may be having the most academic impact from missing school to school

[05:19:12] because they don't have a means by which they can get to school in bad weather if we're not providing that busing. Thank you. Mr. Mahatmy. Thank you. This is going to be probably last. Mr. Reiser, I think we've been addressing or at least having a discussion in student services on chronic absenteeism.

[05:19:30] I'm not sure. I know Ms. Evans is not here. I know Ms. Richardson is here. But I think we didn't talk about, maybe we did talk about weather or not. But that's something we can definitely look into in terms of how that affects and the walk zone too. And that's been in discussion for the last three, four years.

[05:19:48] See what the impact that we can perhaps look into from an absenteeism perspective. But thanks for bringing both of them. But we could definitely talk offline as we go through the both committees. So thank you. Any additional discussion? Mr. Woods.

[05:20:07] Yes, just to address your question, Ms. Reeser, when we develop the plan, we start with the audit universe. And how we develop the universe is I will send out a risk survey. I'll send it to senior staff. I'll send it to principals. And I'll send it to board members. And when I see concerns that are more than one or something that is a high impact, I'll include it in the universe.

[05:20:32] And if during the risk survey phase, if you think transportation is one of those areas that needs to be looked at, I think that's a good time for you to voice those concerns as well as with your committee members, board members.

[05:20:48] I appreciate that. And I would say as far as safety goes, in addition to what I just expressed about children walking to school in bad weather or choosing not to, I have had feedback from principals over the years about the safety of needing to have staff helping children to cross roads that the sheriff's office will not supply crossing guards for, for the safety of the crossing guards.

[05:21:17] But since we expanded those walk zones, our kids are having to cross those same intersections that the sheriffs won't stand in, and our staff are having to help them cross it. And I have witnessed it myself. It's not just reported. So I think there's a safety issue there as well.

[05:21:36] And as Mr. Mahedepadiz mentioned, the plan is a living document. Anytime we meet in committee, there is an opportunity for us to update the plan and then bring it back to the board. I appreciate that, and I hope that the committee will work on doing that and putting it in the appropriate place.

[05:21:54] Thank you. Mr. Morse. Mr. Chair, I call the question. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Beatty. This is not a debatable motion, and it requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

[05:22:10] All those in favor of calling the question, please raise your hands and say aye. Aye. Those opposed? Ryu in favor. Okay. That motion will pass 8-1, with Corbo opposed. Answer the question. Oh, was it, I see it late.

[05:22:29] Ms. Corbo was in favor as well. So that motion will pass unanimously. So the question has been called and we will proceed with a vote on approving the OAG's FY24 annual audit plan. Will all those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye.

[05:22:45] That motion will pass unanimously. We'll now move to 1203 from the Legislative and Policy Committee, Revision of Policy 2430, School Board Agenda. Ms. Reeser. Thank you.

[05:23:02] I move that the Loudoun County School Board approve the revisions of policy 2430 school board agenda as amended by the LMP committee. Is there a second? I will second. Ms. Rieser, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, thank you. This policy came to the committee at the request of school board chair Sorokin.

[05:23:24] He requested revised language to paragraph A of policy 2430. The policy was worked on in committee posted four community advisory committee feedback from June 7th to June 21st with the attached document in board docs, including the feedback that we received. The committee voted

unanimously to recommend the revised policy to the school board, which is also attached. This came as an information item at our last meeting in June, and I will turn it over to Mr. Slevin first to see if

[05:24:03] he has anything he wants to add and then if Chair Sorokin since it was your requested item if you'd like to speak any more to it. Thank you. Mr. Slemon. Thank you Ms. Reaser. That was a succinct summary of the process for the policy and I don't have anything to add but I'm happy to answer any questions. Okay so my well let me start here. So policy 1035 states that for information requested by school board members that would take considerable work or time to generate information requested

[05:24:41] by a board member. At least three members of the board have to endorse this request, and that's defined as considerable research that requires more than 60 minutes to generate. So the proposed change to the agenda process really would bring agenda items in line with that same standard to ensure that staff is not expending a great deal of worker time at the behest of individual board members when those items have little to no support from other board members the same way that we do in policy 1035. Additionally, the goal as it's stated in the proposed changes to the policy is

[05:25:20] to encourage board members to use our standing committee structure for the first hearing of items whenever possible and for board members to work collaboratively with their colleagues through the committee process, particularly for items which have little to no support from other board members, for items which have already been decided by the board earlier in the term, or for when board members may not have reached out to the appropriate committee chair to discuss the item with them. It's not unusual for governing bodies to require a minimum level of

[05:25:54] co-sponsorship or support in order for items to bypass the normal committee process and be placed directly on the full board's agenda. This is very similar to the approach that Prince William County Public Schools uses. And then I think Ms. Reaser covered how we got here as far as the number of times this was reviewed in committee and passing out of committee and got here during the norm by normal order. Is there any additional discussion? Mr. Morse. Mr. Chairman, I propose an amendment.

[05:26:30] I move to amend line, this is in the red line version, I move to amend line 10 to read board member to the chair with the endorsement of one additional board member. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Beatty.

[05:26:45] Mr. Morse, would you like to speak to your amendment? Yes. We talk about the ability to speak freely up here and how important that is. It's so important that we don't even limit our discussion. So I think what we're doing is we're trying to box board members in based on preconceived notions on a topic that's being brought.

[05:27:08] I would point out to board members that if two members did approve something and the board was not in favor of that, they could immediately table indefinitely anything that was brought before the board. I think there's a capability for the board to shut off discussion when it wants to.

[05:27:26] I think limiting it on the input side is the wrong direction to take. And I would point out that a member of the public has an easier row to hoe to get something put on our agenda than a school board member. Because all they have to do is write the chair, and the chair, by him or herself, could agree.

[05:27:46] So I don't think that's quite equitable. I think we need to move to something more reasonable. And I've always been a proponent of trying to minimize the hurdles that board members face as they try to address topics that may be important to their community. And I think that just having one additional

board member should be sufficient to place it on the agenda, at which point the board can act to take it off if they desire.

[05:28:10] Thank you for any additional discussion on the amendment. Ms. Corbin. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Morris. I agree that that limiting board members is not equitable.

[05:28:32] And as elected school board members, it's our job and our responsibility to represent the children and families in this county. And every one of us is responsible for a district, aside from myself, who is responsible for the entire county.

[05:28:50] The policy that is being brought forward tonight, whether it's three or one board member, it restricts the board members from their elected duties and prevents board members from bringing forward items for public discussion and in a timely manner.

[05:29:10] It would essentially restrict the board members from their elected duties, requiring three or even one board member to support an informational agenda item would open the door and potentially allow board members to strategically silence other board members by providing information items to be added to the school board agenda.

[05:29:29] This action would give board members the authority to remove representation, and that would also take away from the people that we serve and the issues that they're concerned about the vsba's code of conduct for school board members states i will strive to be an advocate for students and to improve public education with a policy restricting a board member's actions and the ability to bring forward these information items for public discussion i believe is in direct

[05:30:07] conflict with the board members duties and it's for these reasons that i cannot and will support this policy. Thank you. Is there any additional discussion on Mr. Morse's amendment? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Morse, I have to disagree with you in terms of your amendment to require an additional board member for one board member to be able to put an information item on the agenda, and that is because for exactly what Ms. Corbo just said. We are here as elected

[05:30:42] officials of the public body. And it's our job to use our voices to represent those people. This policy is being revised with no hard evidence as to why we need to put it under revision. Prior to this revision, board members under this policy were able to put any information item on the agenda that they brought to the chairman's attention. So who don't you want to hear from?

[05:31:10] That's what this is. It's who don't you want to hear from. We're not here to play mean girl games. We are here to represent the public body. That is our job. And so I do not support the amendment to require one board member in addition to the board member who already wants to put an information item on the agenda. Thank you.

[05:31:36] Is there any additional discussion? Ms. Ogadugby. Thank you, Chair. I don't know if this is in response to the proposed amendment, but it also is about the base motion, so if you can offer me the latitude. I have thought a lot about this. I do appreciate Mr. Morse's recommendation for an adjustment. I'm supportive of that. Prior to the summer recess, there was some lengthy discussion

[05:32:12] about this proposed change, and some expressed the opinion that this change would effectively disenfranchise voters by limiting the action of elected school board members. The work of the board is at its best and most effective, deeply collaborative work. Our committee structure allows for focused

discussion supported by staff feedback, and even more importantly, an opportunity for community involvement and feedback through our established policy feedback process.

[05:32:39] As a committee chair, I found this feedback and input to be invaluable and immensely helpful. I know that that's redundant, and I've worked to incorporate that feedback in the policies we've revised over the past year. As board members, we continue to have the opportunity to raise topics through committees or through the standing agenda items for new business, so I will support this.

[05:33:01] Thank you. Any additional discussion on the amendment? Mr. Mahedvy and then Mr. Morse. Thank you, Chair. So, I would say, I mean, my comment is not specific to the amendment of Mr. Morse, but I think since we're having the broader dialogue, I think I'd like to speak on that.

[05:33:27] So, I don't, I mean, again, it's, I went through a lot, I think, as Ms. Ogadeppe mentioned about this particular policy, how this would be managed, how it would affect what we've seen in the past and how we can see things going forward as well. I think one thing that we haven't talked about is that we as a board have a new business item already. So any board member can bring up an item during new business to address, to bring up any issues, any new ideas, or they believe that they like to bring it, irrespective of the agenda. I

[05:34:02] think that opportunity exists for all board members. At the same time, I think, you know, I don't want to lecture on this topic, but I think we all exist as nine of us to help manage the entire school division. We're here to bring up issues as, you know, we have one on the agenda right now, bring up opportunities, many things that we believe that we have been elected to solve a problem.

[05:34:28] However, at the same time, the challenge what we've seen in the last four years is this is not a place for activism. So I think what this policy, at least the way I understand, what it can help do is you can bring if you feel like you want to be an activist you can still bring an item as a new business item but if you really are true to solving a problem with lcp's having an agreement with other board members just helps make sure that the idea that you're bringing is has some merit to bringing up to the full and as part of the full board agenda just by having items to negate things or

[05:35:03] items just just because you know one particular issue that you're really passionate about bringing you can bring them as a new business item or get agreement with a couple of board members. I have worked across everyone here, whether it's been, I mean, not to use this, there's no parties here, but I work across with everybody here on the board if they feel like there is an agenda or there's a second that needs to be made, and many have obliged similar back to me as well.

[05:35:30] So I'm very thankful to them, including my pickleball. I'm very passionate about pickleball. You know, I just want to bring that up. I mean, so people have supported me even though they have not agreed on what I was bringing forward to it, but I think they understood that there was something that we all need to have debate on that.

[05:35:46] So I know I kind of went on a little bit of sort of a lecture part of it, but I think if you think as this is not about restricting, it's about good governance, and if you think about that from a good governance perspective, I think this policy supports that without actually taking away any sort of right for any board member to bring any agenda item to that.

[05:36:07] Thank you. Mr. Morris. Just quickly, if board members are inclined to reflect on a lesser number, such as a single individual being allowed to, I would propose that they would probably rather

support this amendment than go into the final vote with a three endorsement requirement. So I would ask those that are more inclined to reduce the number of reviews to support the amendment, and then we can talk about that afterwards. Thank you. Any additional discussion

[05:36:46] on the amendment? Seeing none, all those in favor of the amendment, which would change two to one on line 10 of the red line, so it would say with the endorsement of one additional school board member, please raise your hand and say aye. Those opposed, that motion will fail four or five with Sheridan, Reeser, Mejedevi, Sorotkin, and Polifko opposed.

[05:37:18] So we are back to the base motion, which is the committee red line for policy 2430. Is there any additional discussion? Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[05:37:35] I agree with what Mr. Mejedevi said about the ability for someone to bring up something in new business. I think that's why I've been supporting this policy as it's gone through committee. As someone who's asked for items to be put on the agenda, I think those items would have done better if I had reached out to other board members beforehand and sort of tried to build a consensus and try to get their thoughts on it so that there'd be more preparation going into it.

[05:38:01] So I think, as my colleague said, it's about good governance, it's about building camaraderie, and it's about the board working together to come up with a solution for something. But, you know, as I look at tonight's agenda, I see item 15, board members' comments, five minutes each. That's an opportunity to speak your piece about a particular item.

[05:38:20] And then 16, again, new business, and that's just following Robert's Rules of Order, which is what's in our policy, where you can bring up something, and we've done that multiple times, where we've brought an item up. We've sent it back to committee, depending on what's up. I think we've suspended the rules a couple times.

[05:38:36] So there are avenues for people to represent their constituents, there are avenues for ideas to come forward that don't potentially have the rest of the board member's support, and I don't think that changes to this policy are going to affect that.

[05:38:53] I think that this is still an opportunity for discussion and collaboration, and I just think it's a way to make sure that we as a board are workshopping and working together. And I remember thinking about early on in my term here, sort of the idea of door knocking with other board members about ideas.

[05:39:14] And I certainly have not been the best at that. But I think that's something that we'd all benefit from, from bringing on an idea that we've got comes forward, actually working with other board members to get it to go. And I think that one of the best examples was our reading audit that Ms. Corbo brought up.

[05:39:30] And because it was a lot of work, she had to get other board members. I believe she had another board member. And she came to me and said, would you support this? And I agreed with her that it was important. And I think it has spurred so much wonderful work and sort of finding the problems in our reading program such that we were able to, I think, be a leader when it comes to changing how we're going to teach reading for our students.

[05:39:55] So I think that's the ideal that we should work for. And I think this policy change goes towards that. I did appreciate Mr. Morse's amendment to make it a little bit easier. But I still think that the idea that for an information item to come forward, there should be kind of almost a pre-second, if you will.

[05:40:13] So that's why I've supported this policy through the L&P committee, and I plan to support it tonight. Additional discussion? Mr. Morse? I will not be supporting it, although Mr. Beatty's comments are spot on.

[05:40:30] I do appreciate his comments on the ability to take this via other venues. But the one thing you cannot do is you cannot take to vote something that's brought up on the personal comments or if it's not put on the information agenda.

[05:40:48] You cannot ever force it to a vote. And I think there are times when a vote would be critical to understand exactly how the board feels. I think the burden is too high. That's why I proposed the amendment that I did, so I will not be supporting this.

[05:41:04] Thank you. Additional discussion? Seeing none. All those in favor of adopting the committee recommended changes to policy 2430 school board agenda, please raise your hand and say aye.

[05:41:21] Aye. Those opposed? That motion will pass 6-3 with Corbo, Morris, and Polifco opposed. We'll now move to 12-04 from Department of Student Services, 2023 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation.

[05:41:44] Mr. Mahedvy. Thank you, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board adopts a proclamation recognizing September 2023 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. I'll read the proclamation. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, September 2023, whereas youth suicide is a major public health concern, whereas across the country and in Virginia, suicide was a second leading cause of death among adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18, whereas in Loudoun County,

[05:42:20] or community has been impacted by teen suicide whereas youth suicide warning signs include talking about or making plans for suicide, expressing hopelessness about the future, displaying severe overwhelming emotional pain or distress, showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior that include significant withdrawal from a changing in social connection situations, changes in sleep, increase or decrease, anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context, or recent increase agitations or irritability, whereas many people who have

[05:42:55] died by suicide never received effective behavioral health services for various reasons, including the difficulty of accessing services by healthcare providers, trained in best practices to reduce suicide risk, the stigma of using behavioral health treatment, and the stigma associated with losing a loved one to suicide, whereas LCPS supports and implements comprehensive suicide prevention and partners with others in the community to raise awareness, provide education and resources, and connect individuals to effective treatments, whereas Blountant County Public Schools uneasingly addresses youth suicide prevention through services

[05:43:33] provided by the unified mental health teams in each elementary, middle, and high school to support our youth and refer students who need behavioral health treatment, the implementation of evidence-based suicide prevention programs such as SOS Science of Suicide Prevention Program so students and staff learn the signs of depression and suicide and respond in a way to keep students safe.

[05:43:57] Efforts to develop resiliency, protective factors, and other social-emotional competencies in our youth through upstream prevention programs such as sources of strength, positive experience in educational relationship, peer, and social-emotional learning.

[05:44:13] 4. Ongoing professional learning for teachers to identify and effectively respond to ATRAS students. 5. Training for school mental health professionals to conduct evidence-based suicide screenings and make appropriate community-based referrals. 6. Partnership with professional organizations, community agencies, and universities such as A Place to Be, Ryan Bartle Foundation, Prevention Alliance of Loudoun, Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia, Loudoun County Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Development Services and George Mason University.

[05:44:47] And number seven, strategies to engage parents as partners in effective prevention through sharing of resources and providing education through mental health and wellness, parent seminars, series and annual conferences. Whereas we believe that one suicide is one to many and that many of these deaths are preventable.

[05:45:06] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board designate September 2023 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Loudoun County and promote greater awareness and effective suicide prevention strategies to address this serious public health problem.

[05:45:23] Sir, a second? Seconded by Ms. Reeser. Mr. Mehevee, would you like to speak further in your motion? I think just, I'll just read the item, some of the things that posted in the board docs, where, just to kind of give a summary. So youth suicide is a global problem and a major public health concern.

[05:45:41] Suicide is, I think, as we talked in the proclamation, suicide is the second leading cause of the death for youth between the age of 10 and 18 and affects all races, all ages, gender, races, cultures, and religion. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month represents a call for action and involvement by our schools and community partners to bring greater awareness to this serious public health problem and shows a commitment to social change.

[05:46:08] So I think there's more to it, but I think I'll pause here with the proclamation. Thank you. Ms. Reiser. I just want to briefly comment to thank the board and staff for having mental health as part of our legislative program.

[05:46:23] We hope to present the program to the full board later this fall, but following up on the acting superintendent's report about the mobile health services being very helpful and that being a temporary grant, I hope that we can discuss the possibility of funding that in LNP as a potential other item to carry and looking at other models of delivering medical and health services, including mental health, to our students. We're meeting them where they're at.

[05:46:57] Additional discussion on the proclamation? Seeing none, all those in favor of the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously. We will now get started on our information items, starting with 1301 from the Student Services Committee, deletion of policy 5-55 disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities. Mr. Mahedmi.

[05:47:32] Thank you, Chair. So I'll begin with, and I'll ask Ms. Richardson to join us as well. So the first one, item 1301, is deletion of policy 555, as you mentioned. This policy 8220, student disciplinary consequences, was revised and updated back in September of 2022.

[05:47:55] But I think for building of the regulation, the policy 555 was never brought up for deletion. So this is an information item simply to let the board delete policy 555.

[05:48:11] Ms. Richards, anything you'd like to add to this? Certainly. Thank you. It's important to know that staff from the Office of School Administration, as well as the Office of Special Education, presented the draft policy 8220 and the associated regulations for feedback in June of 2022, specifically to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

[05:48:37] Public and committee feedback was received and recommendations were reviewed for updates for the policy and regulation. However, Policy 5-55 was not submitted for deletion at that time. Staff will work to finalize Regulation 8220.3 to include disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities that are current practice in accordance with state and federal law.

[05:49:06] Policy 5-55 was presented to the Student Services Committee on May 18, 2023 as an information item and was brought back as an action item on June 28th 2023 unless otherwise directed staff plans to bring this as an action item to the school board meeting on September 12th 2023 thank you so i mean it do i have it right that policy 8220 replaced policy 5-55 but this policy just wasn't deleted at the same time that is correct okay thank you uh board members any

[05:49:43] additional discussion on the deletion of this policy interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting okay we have we will place this on consent for our next board meeting and we'll move to 1302 which i believe is uh very similar mr mehadvi thank you chair um the next one 1302 is the bring the policy that's being brought up is 80 to 8025 and then the policy i

[05:50:12] I think this is a combined where policy 8.5 is being requested for deletion and the new policy 80.25 is being brought forward to the full board for review and approval. So this is the rights of adult students.

[05:50:29] It's going through a cyclical normal review process. It's simply codifying the process we're doing today for our adult students. At the same time, I believe, and I'll have Ms. Richardson sort of speak to that, I think we're also introducing a form where the adult students can fill out now once they're adult.

[05:50:51] So, again, that's one more addition that's being, again, codified in the policy for that. So, again, I'll read through this. The staff presented the revised policy 80-25 to the Student Services Committee as an information item in May 18, 2023, and then was brought back as an action item on June 28, 2023.

[05:51:11] The committee voted to move this to the full board, and here it is for the information item. We did receive feedback. I think it went through a feedback through the normal community and advisory feedback, and I think, so again, this is just being brought back as a information item.

[05:51:28] As far as the red line items, I'll pass to Ms. Richardson to speak to the red line items for the full board. As far as changes being made, the form that's being brought forward, I don't know if it's Mr. Bowers or Ms. Richardson you want to take on in speaking to the changes that we have in the policy.

[05:51:44] And before you do that, I'll just correct what I said earlier. I was thinking that it was just a deletion like the previous item, but this is just so there's no confusion. This is both adopting a new policy and deleting the old policy. So Dr. Richardson. Yes, thank you. You will note that the updated policy, which has gone through its cyclical review, updates the title to rights of adult and eligible students.

[05:52:10] The major change is the addition of a declaration form that must be signed by the student and principal or designee. A copy of the fully executed form shall be retained in the student's education record and copies will be provided to the eligible student and their parents.

[05:52:28] The provisions of the declaration shall remain in force until the student graduates or until the principal is notified in writing that the student wants to withdraw their declaration. During a committee, there was discussion and there was a request for how many adult or eligible students had gone through this process. And to date, in June, we had had 38 students to complete this form as adult or eligible students within our educational settings. Board members, any

[05:53:01] questions or discussion regarding the new policy? I have one, and I realize this language didn't change, but section G, which starts on line 42 of the red line, talks about how when a student with disability turns 18, they're presumed to be a competent adult, but we still send all of the required emails and notifications to that student's parents in addition to in addition to just the student is that something we only do for students with disabilities or is that something we is that

[05:53:41] the same as the way we would treat a student without disabilities as well as far as where those notices go and if they just go to the student or would go to the parents as well sure thank you um at this time students with disabilities have a safeguard on understate regulations, which is called transfer of rights. Parents and soon-to-be-eligible students approaching the age of 18 are notified at the ages of 16 of their transfer of rights. And so dependent upon how parents and students sign off on that form indicates whether parents receive their information

[05:54:19] or the information goes directly to the student. So under regulation, this is a courtesy that is provided to families of students with disabilities at this time. But that's not to say that there's anything that could preclude us from sending information to adult or eligible students.

[05:54:38] Should we make a slight adjustment to the declaration form? At this time, you should see in your packet a copy of the declaration form. If that is a provision that we would like to put in place for all students so that even though students declare that they are eligible as 18 years or older, that they would also like for their parents to receive copies, that is something that we would need to note on the declaration form.

[05:55:04] I would just like to get more information about that. I don't need it right now, but I'd like to get more information about just what happens for a student without disabilities when they turn 18 and who we're sending notices to and what that transfer of rights might look like. Absolutely.

[05:55:20] Any additional discussion or questions regarding this policy? Their interest in placing this on consent for the next board meeting? Ms. Okedegbe. Okay. I'm okay with placing this on consent for now.

[05:55:36] I may change my mind based on, no, I think for this I'm going to be fine, but I want to dig into what we were talking about a little more, but I don't think it will affect this policy at all because this one is just talking about students with disabilities. Okay, so we'll place this on consent for our next meeting.

[05:55:54] And that will take us to 1303, also from the Student Services Committee, revision of policy 8435, missing children. Mr. Mahedmi. Thank you, Chair. So this is policy 8435. Again, this is the normal sort of review, review five-cycle review process to it.

[05:56:14] But at the same time, I believe this is, there is an update from the Virginia Code as well, I think where Ms. Richardson can talk about with the Virginia Code 5231.1 in terms of how we communicate. The law enforcement communicates back to the school divisions and the school division sort of communicates back with the law enforcement in regards to the missing children.

[05:56:39] So I guess I'll pass it on to you, Ms. Richardson, on the red line version of this policy, 8435. Thank you. Thank you. Noticeable changes in section A duty when notified that a child is missing, so pursuant to Virginia code 52-31.1, law enforcement will provide reports of the disappearance of any child living within the school division.

[05:57:07] Upon notification by a law enforcement agency of a child's disappearance, the principal or designee shall indicate by mark in the child's cumulative record that the child has been reported missing. That is a noticeable change. Whenever, if you go down to section C, the duty to report when unable to obtain and enroll student's scholastic record is also noted whenever a student transfers to LCPS from another school division, the scholastic record or a copy of the scholastic record shall be transferred from the student's

[05:57:44] former school division to LCPS. The division superintendent or designee shall notify local law enforcement of any enrolled student whose cumulative record that they've been unable to obtain within 60 days or sooner.

[05:58:06] And this is an ongoing challenge that we're currently in with the ebbs and flows of the start of the school year with receiving records. There were no more noticeable changes unless you have any questions from the red line version. Board members, any questions regarding this policy?

[05:58:31] Seeing none, interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting. Okay, we'll place this on consent for our first September board meeting. We are now on 1304, which was an information item requested by Ms. Corbo regarding our gifted program.

[05:58:53] Ms. Corbo.

[05:59:03] Thank you. This information item started when it was brought to my attention in March by parents and educators who reached out to me with their concerns regarding gifted eligibility program changes and educator workload to provide the service models that reflected those changes.

[05:59:25] So I asked for information from staff and that request was declined. Mr. Sorokin did send me an email and also reminded me of the policy that he referenced tonight, the policy that prevents board members from obtaining information that takes over 60 minutes to gather. So I was told that the information that I requested would go through the CNI committee.

[05:59:59] I did not receive any updates. So I asked once again for the gifted program to be added as an information item on the board's agenda tonight. So I appreciate staff bringing this information forward. And I will also add that I appreciate Mr. Beatty also bringing up earlier this evening that I advocated very strongly and fiercely for literacy and having an audit and a review of our literacy program that has yielded us with valuable information

[06:00:35] And hopefully it is also going to be our pathway to ensuring that all children can read. And I'm bringing this forward for the same reasons. So I look forward to what staff has to share this evening.

[06:00:53] Thank you. - Dr. Ellis. - Thank you, Mr. Sorotkin and Ms. Corbo. So this evening I am joined by Wendy King, our supervisor of gifted education. And I'll start on the next slide with an overview of what we will share and then pass it over to Ms. King for the details.

[06:01:16] So in 2020, in response to the pandemic and the resolution agreement with the Attorney General's Office regarding underrepresentation of certain student groups in the gifted program and the

Academies of Loudoun, The LCPS Gifted Education Office began the process of revising its evaluation and identification protocols for the Futura program and also transitioned at the same time to a school-based program from a centers-based model, so that new program is called Fusion.

[06:01:52] The changes to the gifted eligibility process were data-driven and followed best practices in gifted education. The ultimate goal was to ensure that the process is fair and equitable for all LCPS students and their families. And as stated in that resolution agreement, we must ensure equitable opportunities and access to the programs for all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, residence, language status, or disability.

[06:02:23] Next slide, please. So these changes were not made in isolation, nor were they made quickly. The Gifted Education Office collaborated with experts in the field of gifted education to identify new approaches and protocols.

[06:02:39] The gifted education team also made numerous presentations to communicate the changes, to solicit feedback, and answer questions along the way. Just as a reminder to the board and the public, we spoke about the changes as early as March 2021 in the Special Programs and Centers Committee and again in the SPC Committee in April of 2021 and May of 2021.

[06:03:07] We also brought it forward to the Equity Committee in May of 2021, to the Gifted Advisory Committee in March and May of 2021, MSAC in February of 2022, and then CNI in May of 2022. We also spent time talking with elementary principals and offices within the school division. And so now I will turn it over to Ms. King to

[06:03:35] share the details of what had been presented and the changes that were made. Good evening, everyone. So this definition that you see here is the definition of gifted from the Virginia Department of Education and the state's regulations for gifted education. And as you can see, school divisions are charged with identifying students who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show potential for higher levels of accomplishment. And I want to repeat that,

[06:04:15] show potential for higher levels of accomplishment. These changes that we have made to our gifted evaluation process help us to better develop talent and identify students whose aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. So here you have an overview of the key changes to the gifted evaluation process. We have implemented talent development lessons that provide students with exposure to

[06:04:52] the types of tasks that will be part of the evaluation process, specifically speaking here of the portfolio. We have developed portfolio tasks that emphasize creative thinking and problem solving. Historically, we have noticed that students from all backgrounds can access and show their talents with these types of tasks.

[06:05:16] We now evaluate all third grade students as part of our universal evaluation process rather than relying on referrals for third grade students, and incorporated the use of local norms or school norms when reviewing ability and achievement testing to identify talent in every school.

[06:05:40] So here is a comparison of the gifted evaluation process now and prior to the fall of 2021. As you can see, there are some components that remain but have been revised, and there are some components that are new.

[06:05:58] Let's start with ability testing. to fall 2021, the cognitive abilities test and the Naglieri nonverbal ability tests were used as indicators to determine eligibility. To have supporting scores on these assessments, students needed to score at the 97th percentile or above using national norms. Now the COGAT is used to determine eligibility and supporting scores are determined using local norms. The portfolio is

[06:06:33] still an indicator in our revised process with some changes. Prior to completing the portfolio, third grade students participate in talent development lessons. And rather than scoring the portfolio as supporting or non-supporting, portfolios are scored as typical, what we expect of a typical third grade student, having potential or exemplary. Those scored as having potential or exemplary would be considered supporting. In addition, all third grade

[06:07:11] portfolios are reviewed as part of the universal review process. And of course, families have the option to opt out of this part of the process. And lastly, prior to the fall of 2021, teacher rating scales were used as an indicator. Now we use the MAP assessment as the third indicator.

[06:07:36] Supporting scores are determined using school norms. So as I just mentioned, the gifted evaluation process, still uses multiple measures to determine eligibility for gifted services.

[06:07:54] These indicators include universal ability testing and achievement testing, as well as performance on the portfolio consisting of critical thinking and creative problem-solving performance tasks created in school with a gifted resource teacher.

[06:08:10] The MAP assessment was added as an indicator to provide additional information about students' strengths in particular academic domains. Supporting test scores on the COGAT and MAP assessments, as I said before, are determined using local norms.

[06:08:29] Eligibility decisions are based upon a holistic review of both potential and performance on the established indicators. To be found eligible for fusion, students are expected to have support in a minimum of two areas, two of those three areas that I discussed.

[06:08:47] For example, a student found eligible for Fusion Services might have support in two areas of the COGAT, that would be one area of support, and a supporting portfolio, which would either have been as showing potential or exemplary, or two areas of the COGAT and two supporting map scores.

[06:09:16] So Jonathan Plucker and Scott Peters are the leading experts on local norms in the field of gifted education. To make the transition from using national to school norms, we have looked at their work. Making this change has enabled us to find additional talent among our students from underrepresented groups, in particular among students from economically vulnerable, excuse me, economically vulnerable backgrounds and our English language learners.

[06:09:47] We use school norms to identify the top performing students on COGAT and MAP. We also use local group norms for our English language learners and students from low SES backgrounds. Utilizing local norms holds promise for finding more proportional numbers of high potential students that have been previously recognized.

[06:10:12] Now, during the holistic review process, students' profiles are reviewed by a diverse panel of trained educators from a variety of backgrounds. Committee members include gifted resource teachers, principals, and other school administrators, English language learner, and special education teachers.

[06:10:35] They review student profiles to make recommendations about students who show a need for gifted services. And the changes addressed this evening are being incorporated into our LCPS gifted plan, and the plan has been revised to incorporate both the school-based gifted model and the current gifted evaluation process.

[06:10:58] and currently the revised plan is in the review stage and the revised plan will go to the Gifted Education Advisory Committee and the school board for approval in school year 24. Thank you.

[06:11:28] Thank you. Ms. Corbin. Thank you. So I also appreciate the additional information you have where you show test scores that are broken down by ethnicity and some groups.

[06:11:46] But I do have several questions. So what are the regulations governing eligibility? Are two test scores acceptable? I do recall at one point two test scores were not acceptable. Seeing the NACLI area and the COGAT, or are you talking about two test scores within the COGAT?

[06:12:10] I'm talking about I know that for eligibility, there needs to be three criteria areas. And the guidelines prior were that they could not be two tests as the indicators. And it looks like we're using two tests.

[06:12:27] So I thought if you could explain that. Yes, the one requirement in the gifted regulations is to make sure that you use a nationally normed ability assessment. So we do that. And they require that we use multiple measures to determine eligibility.

[06:12:47] And so we use not two, but three different areas to determine eligibility. Right. My understanding that it could not be two tests, though, and that's what I'm seeing is two tests. We can talk about that later. And I also want to clarify, when you talk about school norms, that means, and correct me if I'm wrong, that that would mean that that a school norm, if a student scores lower, they could be eligible because their school norms would allow them

[06:13:26] to be eligible with a lower test score than a different school that might be a more high achieving school, is that correct? - That's correct. - So, and I, on slide seven, and I believe it's slide seven, when I looked at earlier, but it hasn't been changed.

[06:13:44] I don't see any place where the classroom teacher or the gifted teachers or parents are providing any input. Is that a change also? That gifted teachers can appeal on behalf of a student, so they can provide input there.

[06:14:10] They can also provide input as part of the school-based committee that looks at the students who have been identified and can provide any feedback to our office on that. So yes, they can provide feedback in those areas. So there is no parent input.

[06:14:27] There is no classroom teacher input in our eligibility process. But gifted teachers can advocate. Is that correct? Yes, that's true. Do we know how many gifted students that have been identified have passed their SOL tests?

[06:14:45] Do we have that information? - Could you repeat that question? I did not hear that clearly. - Yeah, how many of our identified gifted students have passed the rest of all tests?

[06:15:01] Do you have that information? - Yeah, that is certainly some data that we can look at. I don't have that with me tonight, but I'm happy to gather that.

[06:15:20] - Okay, thank you. I think that would be interesting for the board to see. And then also, I know that the current legal action has been in the news related to race-based college admissions. And I'm wondering if programs like our EDGE program that includes identification of race as a criteria for services would be a concern.

[06:15:43] And would identifying racial groups when identifying for eligibility, would that be a concern? And would modifying eligibility criteria based on what school a student attends, especially where certain subgroups are dominant, would that be a concern?

[06:16:06] I would like to start with talking about our gifted eligibility process is not race-based. There are two special considerations in our evaluation process. Our English language learners and our students from low SES backgrounds.

[06:16:25] Their local norms are established based on that group only. So those would be considered group norms, but that would not be race-based. And then the second question was the EDGE program. EDGE invites students who show promise from historically underrepresented groups.

[06:16:48] In other words, groups of students who have been historically underrepresented in gifted programs. So we will have students because students who are black are underrepresented in our gifted program, so they are invited to be part of that program.

[06:17:05] But so our other representative groups as well are English language learners, our Hispanic students, students with disabilities, did I forget anybody else, or our twice exceptional learners, potential twice exceptional learners.

[06:17:22] So this will be my last comment. And then other board members can certainly have an opportunity to speak to this item as well. But after having this new program changes and so on, I would highly recommend that the board consider at the next meeting action item to have a full evaluation or at least to have direct staff to begin the process of a full evaluation of our gifted program,

[06:18:01] the eligibility process, the educator's role and their time commitment, and also the leadership roles in the department, just to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our students and making sure that our program is one of the best.

[06:18:23] Board members, any additional questions or discussion on this topic? Mr. Morse. So I opened up the spreadsheet, which is where I always gravitate to first. And the data there is great, but it's lacking in context because we don't know what the population of each of those schools is.

[06:18:43] So I think if we were to have this information and have the percentages of students that fell into each of the categories, that would give us a better understanding of the representation of each of the groups at each school. So I would ask that we take this data and apply an additional version of it that includes the percentages at the school so that we can better understand.

[06:19:14] Probably easiest to do is to do it at the top level first, right? So take all of the elementary school kids, then look at our student enrollment and our distribution of the population, and then check the numbers and see how we're doing from providing equity across all of our subgroups.

[06:19:34] So that way we could better understand if there are shortcomings. So I'd like to see the roll-up. I think that that would probably be much easier to do. And then I don't know if there's a way to either

integrate that information into this or to add it as a supplement so that we can make more sense of the data.

[06:19:52] Thank you. Mr. Madby. Thank you, Chair. So I wasn't going to chime in, but I think since Mr. Morse touched on my other issue at heart, and I'll just very confess, hasn't been solved in the last four years, is how we present the data.

[06:20:11] So the PDF, I can't even copy the data. I mean, it's nothing to do with what you're presenting, but I think the systemic issue where we present the data, it's nothing to Mr. Morse, it's shared in a PDF format, but I can't really do anything with it other than have somebody copy-paste into Excel spreadsheet, make something out of it.

[06:20:29] I've been a big proponent of supporting Qlik database and the staff within that. Again, I'm still waiting to see how this is exactly the data that can be presented through the Qlik database, where it can be through a dashboard, where things that Mr. Morse talked about can be slice and dice to have it.

[06:20:47] It doesn't have to come back from you. The raw data is uploaded in the Qlik, and Mr. Morse can click through and look at how the data is and what measurement wants to do it. So I just wanted to chime in. I think it was an opportunity, so I'm just going to be down on this click thing. I still haven't seen only two reports that have been on the public side has been just these two reports for the last four or five years, and I haven't seen any new reports out there.

[06:21:11] So I'm just going to echo that, and I'm going to share my little bit of frustration with that. That's all. Thank you. Additional questions? So I have, I think, Ms. King, The last time you spoke before the board was back in, I think it was January or so, when you came to speak with the Gifted Education Advisory Committee.

[06:21:35] And at that time, you mentioned there was a work group being planned for, I think, February 4 to talk about K-2 Gifted and to see if there were any recommendations to make there. So I know we tentatively have this on the agenda for the September CNI meeting, but I just wanted to see if I could get the Reader's Digest version for kind of what came out of that work group and if there were any recommendations that are being considered.

[06:22:07] Yes, I've been meeting with different departments to get recommendations on how we can better serve our younger learners. And so our first line of business was this summer. we put together a math and gifted initiative to develop a curated list of enrichment activities by standard for our second and we started with second and third grade to start with second and third grade learners so that our teachers have activities ready to go especially when they're

[06:22:43] doing their enrichment time during their math block so that's where we started and now we're moving on to language arts to talk about different things that we want to work in supporting that area as well but what we found out the biggest things that we found out of the discussions is not only do you have to have materials ready to help enrich our students but they have to be prepared and ready to go for our teachers because they can't go through big huge lists of resources so

[06:23:20] that's why we are being very careful in how we curate those materials and so that's where we are at this point and I'll be happy to talk about more detail at CNI okay I look forward to digging into that next month okay any additional questions Ms. Corbo thank you Mr. Chairman as with literacy we're really

great at seeing what we're doing and and explaining what we're doing and and we're okay with also providing the data however what's missing here as was was missing

[06:23:57] with literacy is the evaluation of the data what trends are we seeing are we seeing improvements just providing a spreadsheet with data doesn't give us the the picture and and with all of these presentations that have been given, that's the missing piece. We want to know, are these changes making an impact? Are we servicing our children better? Are we identifying more? Are we identifying less? Are there issues with staffing? The program, I know there is additional workload

[06:24:35] um that is expected of our gifted educators there's there's more and more preps for lessons for all grade levels and other programs and how does that compare to other specialists um what about the um the co-planning for dcii um my understanding is it's a big challenge and that doesn't even happen um in most cases and and are we over identifying kids are we over identifying certain populations are we under identifying those are those are all the things

[06:25:09] to me that should be standard protocol in our thinking of how are we evaluating our programs that we're providing and and again this information item and this this this um concern came to me from parents that that are wondering what are the changes what are the criteria changes and also from our educators saying, hey, I'm not sure we're doing all the right things for children.

[06:25:41] And with a new program, and now it's been multiple years that we've had this program in place, and a lot of these programs in place, it's time for an evaluation. It's time for us to truly do a deep dive into, are we providing the best services for all of our students, twice exceptional as well? Any additional questions? Seeing none, we will move to our Final information item, 1305, from the Department of Student Services, Attendance Awareness Month Proclamation.

[06:26:17] Ms. Richardson. Thank you. Loudoun County Public Schools' attendance rate for the 22-23 school year was 93.53%, which demonstrates Loudoun County Public Schools' commitment to ensuring all students have access to engage in learning, whether in-person or virtual.

[06:26:40] LCPS works collaboratively with students and families to identify barriers preventing students from attending school, develop solutions to address these barriers, and cultivate a culture of regular attendance and school connection.

[06:26:57] Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school for any reason, prevents too many children from having the opportunity to learn and succeed. Reducing chronic absenteeism requires careful attention to data and strategic interventions to address attendance concerns as soon as chronic absence patterns emerge.

[06:27:23] Collaboration between school administrators, unified mental health team staff, attendance officers, and community partners is essential in maintaining our commitment to reducing chronic absenteeism.

[06:27:38] excellent attendance is essential to student achievement, graduation, and job readiness. This proclamation is being presented to raise awareness and to highlight Loudoun County Public Schools' collaborative district-wide focus on supporting regular student attendance and our commitment to reducing chronic absenteeism rates. The recommendation is that the Loudoun County school board adopt the proclamation recognizing september 2023 as attendance awareness month

[06:28:11] thank you thank you board members any questions regarding the proposed proclamation we will place this on action for our next board meeting that will take us to item 15 board member comments and committee reports starting with miss polovka thank you mr chair um unfortunately we were unable to meet for the communications and outreach committee last night at 5 p.m. I will work to reschedule that meeting if possible and if not we will go ahead and move that to the September

[06:28:50] meeting which will take place on September 11th at 5 p.m. in this room. Also want to make everyone aware that the special education advisory committee will be meeting on September 6th in this room beginning at 6 p.m. We will be welcoming Dr. Spence and we will have a school year kickoff meet and greet with the office of special education. So I hope to see some of you there and I look forward to that committee meeting. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Okedekbe. Thank you, Chair Serotkin. First, I would like to thank Dr. Smith for his service as our acting superintendent.

[06:29:25] Thank you for stepping up, providing leadership, and continuing to work on enhancing communication with students, families, and staff through the various listening sessions and focus groups you've led over the last, I don't know how many months, nine months. How many months has it been? You stepped up during a very difficult time, and your calm demeanor, clear communication, and partnership has been greatly appreciated. So thank you so much, Dr. Smith. With our return from recess, we have committee meetings starting up again. As a reminder, agendas are posted on board docs a few days in

[06:30:03] advance of the meeting for those who are interested. And then policies under review are also posted on the LCPS website at lcps.org forward slash policy review. Right now there aren't any there. I'll continue to try to highlight those as things become available.

[06:30:21] I will be having a back to school meet and greet on Saturday, August 26th at 3 p.m. at the Rust Library in Leesburg to provide an informal opportunity to connect with community members and just wishing everyone a good start to the new year later this month with school starting and sadly summer coming to a close but thank you. Thank you Mr. Mahadvi. Thank you chair.

[06:30:51] So August 17th we're going to be having our student services meeting and as we saw on the agenda tonight. I think we were pretty busy the last meeting as well, so I imagine I think we'll be busy in the next few months, and I think it's starting with the August meeting itself.

[06:31:10] In the last month or so, I think I got an opportunity to attend the Loudoun or actually to lead one of the sessions with the Loudoun Youth Leadership Program in absence of Mr. Morris. I think it was, I think you've been hiding away this. It's an awesome opportunity to connect with the leaders, student leaders of tomorrow, it included not only LCPS students, but other students within our county, a great opportunity to kind of give them an overview about what the school board is, what the, what are some of the challenges, policies, they had great questions, the best part

[06:31:46] I loved about, you know, I'll ask both the cohorts, I did two sessions, and so the question I would ask, these are high school students, and again, nothing to put them on a spot, but I did ask them, Like, you know, what is the budget of the LCPS? And that just blows them away when we talk about that.

[06:32:05] So anyway, I think the future is pretty bright. I also got a chance to lead the, as a vice chair this year, lead the student school board member overview and session. I think that also went well. We got the students up on the desk after the overview and have them kind of run through it.

[06:32:24] I think they're pretty excited. And I saw that I think the training went well since both the student school board member performed flawlessly tonight. So I guess I'll take a bow for it. No, I guess it's just, you know, they're amazing students and I think we have a great school system for that.

[06:32:47] Lastly, I think, you know, going back to Dr. Smith, I think, you know, if I could keep it light that you were not asked to resign or quit I think was a great sign in the last seven months you have been amazing in leading LCPS there are two aspects of what you did I think you know I think it did really help help the community one is that you had those listening sessions across the county I think given in spite of all the challenges all the rhetoric everything that we've been going through, you stepped up and held those sessions, and I think you engaged the

[06:33:26] community. I want to really commend you for, you know, really stepping forward and leading it versus just kind of being behind on that part. And the second, I think we talk about the budget process. I think this, we as a school board, really appreciated the budget process, but I think, you know, we can give you all the accolades, but I think coming from the board of supervisors means a lot, too.

[06:33:52] I think they truly, I think, again, I'll give you, Mr. Chair, I think, you know, you are part of that process in terms of how you guys presented the budget, not only here, but also to the Board of Supervisors in making sure that things were well responded.

[06:34:09] The response level was amazing. So I think I'll give you, dually, both of you credit for that. So I think, again, I look forward to working with you as a chief of staff of LCPS. And I know you're going to be here, but I really look forward to working with you along with Dr. Spence.

[06:34:25] Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The only announcement I have on the Technology Steering Committee is that, unfortunately, we'll have to cancel this August meeting. So the next meeting will be in September, and we'll get an update on the AI stuff that's happening in our schools.

[06:34:44] Thank you. Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I'd like to welcome my new staff aide, Melinda Mansfield. She is a literacy advocate and a very strong member of the community to voice support for education.

[06:35:01] I'm looking forward to working with her, and I'm looking forward to her meeting all the other staff aides on the current board members' half. So that's going to be a great addition and should at least triple my output. So it's nice to have her on board. I, too, want to thank Dr. Smith. I think we can reflect back on the budget now that it's done as the smoothest budget that I've seen in 12 years.

[06:35:22] It's remarkable. And I also appreciate not only how smooth it went, but also the outcome. I think that, you know, we provided a significant statement to our employees that they are valued and that that pay raise was significant.

[06:35:40] So I thank you for that because your leadership was so vital in us meeting with the Board of Supervisors, working with the Board of Supervisors, and then actually having them contribute back to close the gap when we lost out on the state funding. So thank you for that.

[06:35:57] I would like to know what the final percentage of the Loudoun operating budget was that came to LCPS versus the county. As we know, LCPS approved, the school board approved an agreement that put that split at 60-40, and I would like to see if that did occur in the end.

[06:36:17] It would be interesting to know. I do regret I was unable to attend Leadership Loudoun. It's a great opportunity every year, and I know Harris thoroughly enjoyed it because meeting the leaders from all the different schools and some of the homeschoolers as well is incredible.

[06:36:36] It's so motivating, just as motivating as having a freedom speaker and the champ speaker here tonight. We have incredible students. So look forward to kicking off the new year. Look forward to working with our new superintendent to continue doing the great job that LCPS has done and continue to expand and do better.

[06:36:59] Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Reaser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will start by thanking Mr. Slevin for being our acting chief of staff and being my committee liaison, and welcome Dr. Smith back.

[06:37:16] Mr. Slevin was great, but it's nice to have you. So thank you both for your service. I also will go on to say that our committee meeting was also canceled yesterday due to the weather, so our next meeting is normally the first Monday of the month, But because that falls on Labor Day, it will be on the second Monday, September 11th, at 4 o'clock.

[06:37:38] And we hope to finalize our legislative program or get pretty close to finalizing it next time. In the interim, during the recess, I had the opportunity to have about a half a dozen constituents meet with me and meet with some parent liaisons and also some of our community partners.

[06:37:57] So I appreciated the break. Thanks. Thank you. Ms. Corbo. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, I do not serve as a chair for any of the committees because you removed me from that privilege due to my disability. I just want to say thank you so much to Dr. Daniel Smith for your service. You truly have been able to bring us forward and move us forward and really acknowledge all of the great things that we have been doing in Loudoun County,

[06:38:35] but also at the same time acknowledging, you know, areas of growth and things that do need attention. And to me, that's a sign of a great leader. And I know that you're going to have a wonderful career in your future. And I've said that to you also personally. I do want to provide a warm welcome to Dr. Spence. Great schools begin with great leaders and great leaderships leaders with a vision and I truly look forward to seeing Dr. Spence putting his passion for education and for Latin County Public Schools into action I think we're all looking forward to that and his inspiring speech this evening

[06:39:14] truly gave me hope and and I truly look forward to him joining us so thanks so much thank you so yes the curriculum and instruction committee meeting that was scheduled for yesterday was also canceled due to rainpocalypse 2023. So we are going to try and reschedule that meeting given it was a pretty packed agenda. So I'm hoping that we don't have to roll that over to September. We're working on a couple of dates and I'm hopeful we'll be able to reschedule that for later on in August. It was my pleasure last week to give the welcoming

[06:39:54] remarks at the alt conference for our administrators it's always great to see the just the energy that everyone comes back with in in august after taking some time off and to meet with some of our school leaders and and central office administrators and just talk about some of the plans for the upcoming school year and just just great to see everyone back i will say in the extremely unlikely event that i again have to uh share the stage with the philly fanatic or any other former or current mlb mascot i would like a heads up from that in advance so i can

[06:40:30] dress appropriately uh and i i will also be giving the welcoming remarks at our new educator orientation on friday so um looking forward to that as well and seeing the educators who have made the choice to come in and join us this year and work for LCPS. And that will conclude my remarks. So we are on item 16. Is there any new business tonight? Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair.

[06:41:00] Since we're not 11 o'clock, I thought I'd take an opportunity. So the item that I want to bring forward is policy 8270, student dress code policy. I know it can be addressed in the student Behavioral Committee, which I'm part of with Ms. Ogadegbe, but I wanted to bring it to the full board's attention because this is a policy that we, I mean, went through a normal process through committee and then eventually the board approved back in September of 2021. And subsequently I've

[06:41:33] been getting a lot of feedback in the last year plus and perhaps from mostly from a staff that in terms of the policy that we created did have some, at least the feedback I got, unintended consequences in terms of how students are dressing up in the schools. Ultimately, schools are there for education purposes, and in some of the policy, some of the dress codes that students do come does not create a conducive environment for the education and the educators themselves. So I just

[06:42:11] want to bring it up in a sense that I think it's been almost two two plus years now you know there's an opportunity for us to collect feedback from our staff from the administrators in terms of how this policy is affected not affected so I don't want to just jump in to say let's make a policy change but I'm hoping that at least we as a board can collectively or at least there's a enough consensus to ask the staff to at least collect the data, and then the committee can then review the data and then make decisions on appropriate decisions on whether we do need to make some

[06:42:47] adjustments in the policy and go forward from that. So that's my just intention to bring this as a new business item tonight. So I don't know if there's any thoughts, questions, or anything of that sort. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mahedvi. So it sounds like if I understand your intent, you'd like for some data to be collected from staff and then to refer it to the student behavior committee to take a look at is that i just want to make sure i have your intent correct sure that's exactly right okay thank you uh further discussion on this topic mr baity thank you chair no i think this is a good um thing to revisit i've also heard complaints about the student dress code policy i

[06:43:24] think um there's just an opportunity for it to be tweaked to again provide an environment that's conducive to learning that is necessary for for all of our students further discussion uh mr so i know it's just five five of us left here um so do you think that we have enough agreement to to to direct the staff to looking to to see if they can collect the data on it i think we can do that by can we could do that by consensus if no if no one objects uh i i would support this as

[06:44:00] well? I mean, I have heard very few, if any, complaints personally about the current dress code policy. But given that it is a new policy, but it's been in place for about two years at this point, it seems like it would certainly be appropriate to gather data and then refer to committee for further discussion. So is there any objection to that or further discussion? Ms.

[06:44:22] Ogadugbe? Thank you. I don't have an objection to this. And I know that the intent of this is to gather data to help inform discussion and potential adjustments, but I would just raise my concern that as we approach this topic again, that we keep in mind we have expectations

[06:44:51] for behavior and that we don't misplace concerns about inappropriate behavior on those who are perhaps frankly need to you know keep their hands or eyes to themselves rather than those who are wearing clothing which might be considered to be in quotes inappropriate so I think that there

[06:45:27] were some there were some important things that were addressed where we're not and traditionally right blaming young women and girls for the the outfits that they were wearing and i i think that there were positive things that came from that so i will just i'm not um i'll just put that out there and i know we'll have that discussion later thank you thank you mr uh dr smith yeah just so just want to clarify um in terms of what data you might be looking for in terms of this you know

[06:46:04] we we have some discipline data that we could look at i don't know that we have a specific survey that we have already administered or that we normally collect around this in terms of survey data. So not that we have to discuss it necessarily right now, but we want to get with you to make sure that we understand what data you might be looking for to have this conversation.

[06:46:21] And I think you went exactly where I was about to go, where I was suspecting that the next question I was going to get from staff is, okay, well, what data is the board looking for? So I think what I would propose is perhaps the best way to handle it. I think there's perhaps two ways to handle this. The first would be to bring this back as an information item next meeting so that we can discuss that and come to consensus and then refer it.

[06:46:43] Or if you just wanted to refer it now and kind of shortcut that so that the committee could get started on it and then define what that data is, we could do it that way as well. But up to you for whatever path you want to follow.

[06:47:00] Thank you, Dr. Smith, and thank you, Chair. I think I don't want to get lost in the message about this because I think that always comes back to what data you want. But I think I'm bringing up as a spirit of this sort of what the feedback, at least I've heard, and I think what Mr. Beatty also shared, that, again, there's no hard data.

[06:47:21] And I think to Ms. Ogadeke, I think you bring up a good point. I think that was the intent of the policy was to make sure that we remove that aspect of it to make sure that we are as, you know, as equitable in the dress code as possible.

[06:47:39] But at the same time, I think having been there for two years and I take responsibility being part of that, that I think we do need to collect the data. And again, maybe that's an offline discussion, Mr. that we can work with the staff in determining that. But I think going back to the spirit of the policy we passed, I think if you have an agreement that we need to collect the data before we make any, for me to just bring in any item to change in the policy.

[06:48:04] Because I don't want to just make a, you know, even a policy change and bring it to the board before collecting the data. Because it could be that maybe I heard from a very small minority of folks versus everybody's okay with the policy. So I think that's, but I can work with offline on figuring that out, but.

[06:48:20] Well, you could also, yeah, work to define what you want and then work with staff. And, you know, even if it's going to take a long time to do, If you've got the policy 1035, if you have the agreement of multiple board members, which you clearly do, then there should be no problem in getting staff to do that.

[06:48:37] I take that we have at least a good, at least three plus member agreement to at least work towards that. Yeah, I think so. Any objections to that approach? Okay. I think we're good. Okay. Is there any additional new business tonight? Okay.

[06:48:54] Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you, everyone.



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