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Loudoun County School Board, Loudoun Education Alliance of Families (LEAF), Monday, August 21, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 22m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/856777463?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] your table. So if you all have a minute to review those, I'm looking for a motion to approve the May 15th, 2023 minutes as submitted whenever you're ready. Second.

[00:00:36] Sorry, who made a motion? Okay. And a second. Thank you. Any discussion about the minutes as submitted? All in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, say aye. Any opposed nay? All right. The minutes are approved. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. We'll move on to information items. So this is our organizational meeting, which means we have an election of officers. The first order of business will be to elect the officers. In the handbook on page 19, you'll find a summary of the duties for each

[00:01:11] open office. We also provided these in emails with links to the website. So that's page 19 in your handbook. Is that right, Christina? Did the pages shift? It is. Our pages didn't shift in fancy printing. So please, we'll give it just a few minutes to review the roles and responsibilities is there, and then I'll call everybody back to order as a group so we can begin our election

[00:01:37] process.

[00:02:25] Okay, any questions? Everybody had a moment to review? I know this was provided in advance. Maybe before we do this, we'll get Ms. Ogedegbe to get all settled. Do you want to say hello? Since you just walked in, or you want a minute, we can do it either way. Hi, good evening.

[00:02:46] My name is Erica Ogedegbe, and I am not totally organized because I literally just got here from the airport. Wasn't sure I was going to make it, but thank you, Uber, for getting me here. Welcome to the new school year, and for those who are returning, welcome back. For those who are new, thank you for being here. I guess tonight you're electing your new leads for the group, and I look forward to continuing to work with you over the course of the fall.

[00:03:18] I know at the end of the spring semester, there were some conversations we had around trying to figure out how to get more feedback back to folks when you've given feedback on policy and so forth. And so at the end of the year, there were some things that were shared through the school board meeting, literally just got off the airplane. But I expect next month to have some more specifics to be able to share with folks about how to formalize that and get more feedback

[00:03:52] to you when you're giving the feedback. So thank you. Thank you, Ms. Okotekbe. We'll give you a minute now. All right. So we're going to move on and begin with our officer election. We'll begin with the first office chair of the LEAF committee. We ask that any candidates who wish to nominate themselves be prepared to speak to your interest in qualifications. We'll take nominations from the floor, each person would receive two minutes to make any remarks. Are there any nominations?

[00:04:24] Are there any members interested in serving as chair?

[00:04:46] Would it help me if I described a little bit about what we expect from the chair other than an on-paper description? Does that help? So last year in our organizational year, our inaugural year, our chair, I usually had a phone call with the chair about once a month to make sure that the agendas were set, that if there's any business that she also wanted to bring.

[00:05:08] I know the chair met with the officers a few times. We tend to do most of the information gathering in the meetings as a collective body to get everybody's feedback. So I don't think it involved a lot of extracurricular work as some commitments like maybe PTA does.

[00:05:26] So you do come to each meeting and then the chair as an additional responsibility would be charged with addressing the school board And a September report. And since we will be out of our inaugural organizational meeting, right, our first meeting of the year, we would talk a little bit about upcoming agenda and how many people are nominated, things like that.

[00:05:49] So that's what I can tell you. Yes, yes. So do I hear any nominations or members interested in serving as chair?

[00:06:05] She was interested, but she had some circumstances that prevented her from making the commitment again this year.

[00:06:25] Can we move to a different position and see how things shake out?

[00:06:46] So you want to move down to the next position? All right. I don't think Robert's Rules prevents anything there. All right, so let's see here. If I skip the chair and don't announce the chair, the next person would be the vice chair of planning.

[00:07:05] The vice chair of planning would be nominated from the floor, and the description is in your paperwork. And if you would wish to nominate yourselves for the vice chair of planning, please be prepared to speak to your interest and qualifications and we can take nominations.

[00:07:27] Would you like any information around the vice chair of planning? Is the description sufficient on the piece of paper? So last year, in the first year, LEAF was organized, as the members who were here then know.

[00:07:44] We did extensive research with the membership to figure out what it was y'all were interested in talking about, weighing in on. and we took that feedback and we made lists and we made themes and we've played it back to the group a few times and so when we're talking about planning future meetings or planning subject matter staff can be a good resource to let you know what's coming up for the school board and other issues and we also have an extensive list of past interests from this group as a body where people said you know I'd really like more interest about more information about x or y so we do have a

[00:08:19] starting point for planning future agendas that are based on this group's feedback. Joan, in all honesty, how much time do you think that each of the positions are spending outside of the meetings working on their roles?

[00:08:40] If I had to guess, I would say that the chair probably spent half an hour to an hour a month because we had a few phone calls, we talked through an agenda, but it was not an extensive time commitment um now i don't know how much time she also spent talking with membership gathering feedback you know i don't but but interacting with staff to actually get a meeting ready was pretty minimal um and then um we do have a past officer here right um maybe jeanette could speak

[00:09:12] to information gathering i'm willing to hold a position and so i think because everyone seems kind of reticent if anyone else is willing if maybe we could just talk about what our skills are and where we might best fit.

[00:09:50] I mean, I could do any of these. I'd rather not be chair, but someone has to do it. So shall we open the floor up? I know you all had a few minutes to read the job descriptions ahead. Let's do five more minutes of that and collaborate among yourselves about the skills and the crossovers and the geographic regions and interests that might make sense to form those four officers. You want five more minutes to discuss and get to know each other?

[00:10:17] Yes, ma'am.

[00:13:53] Yeah, that's good background, and I will say that all of those topics were generated from this group, and many were brought here, and there are still others that we didn't get to address last year. So that is the officers can get together and talk about those and go through those lists and get more feedback from the group.

[00:14:09] Absolutely. Absolutely.

[00:14:24] Got it.

[00:15:33] And Christina has done a good job of reserving the second half of this meeting for just the discussion that you were talking about in that time to collaborate. So I'd like to encourage us to maybe elect an officer. Shall we move back?

[00:15:52] I don't believe he's a nominated member at this time.

[00:17:29] Is anyone else here interested in a role, a specific role? Or, yeah, what do you think would be a good fit? I'm sorry, did I hear a nomination from the floor?

[00:17:56] Sherry, would you like to address the group?

[00:18:11] Okay, can you hear me? All right. So a little bit about my professional background. I started as an elementary school teacher. I was a literacy specialist, a literacy coach.

[00:18:27] I supervise student teachers at the university level. I stayed at home with my children for a while, so I was a stay-at-home mom. I am back in full-time employment, and I work for an educational research firm as a content director.

[00:18:45] And I am highly invested in public education, always been an advocate for public education and equitable access to public education. I'm not sure what I'm getting myself into if I chair this committee because I am very busy, but I know all of you in this room are passionate about it, and it makes my heart happy to know so many people are involved in their children's education.

[00:19:07] So if we have a nice collaborative group that's willing to sort of pitch in and take this on, I would be happy to be your chair. Are there any other nominations from the floor for chair? Second.

[00:19:24] Any further nominations? Seeing none, the nomination period is closed. All in favor of electing Sherry Cobley, please raise your hand.

[00:19:54] All right. Thank you. Thank you. You can lower your hands. So I congratulate Sherry Cobley as the new chair. Come on up, Sherry.

[00:20:25] Thank you for electing me as the chair of Loudoun Education Alliance of Families. As a parent advisory group to the Loudoun County School Board, it is our goal to provide valuable parental perspective to the school board and help communicate the school board's questions, recommendations, or decisions to our communities.

[00:20:43] I look forward to supporting this committee over the course of the school year. We will now begin by taking nominations for the office of the vice chair of planning. Now this is where everybody says, let's join this group. I'd like to nominate myself or put myself in the ring for vice chair.

[00:21:03] What's your name? Erica Daly. Erica Daly. Erica with a K. Are there any other nominations?

[00:21:31] Seeing no other nominations, the nominations are closed. Do we want to do this one? All right. You have two minutes to address the group and speak to your interest and qualifications.

[00:21:49] Again, my name is Erica Daly. I am a mom of two, a fifth grader at Hillside Elementary here in the Broad Run District, and also a seventh grader at Eagle Ridge. I think that I am representing both of those schools to LEAF, which is exciting.

[00:22:07] Professionally, my background, I have a background in business management and non-profit management. Before I became a mom, I was a professional fundraiser. One of the things I raised money for was gifted education at a university, basically nerd camp for the summer.

[00:22:25] Right now, I'm a Girl Scout leader. I'm involved with the PTA, obviously. I'm a trustee for my district to the Loudoun Library System and just kind of involved in the community. Thank you.

[00:22:41] Great. Thank you. May I have a second motion to nominate Erica? Okay. All those in favor? She counts the nom.

[00:23:01] All right. Motion carried. Do we have to do the vice chair? Okay. So congratulations, Erica. Congratulations, Erica. Oh.

[00:23:19] Now we'll take nominations for the Office of the Vice Chair of Membership. Are there any other nominations?

[00:23:37] So we will close the nominations. And Jenny, you have two minutes to talk to us about your qualifications and interests. Hi, everybody. Second year on LEAF.

[00:23:52] My oldest will be a sixth grader at Willard. My youngest is a first grader at Buffalo Trail. I'm the family liaison at Buffalo Trail. We are a military family. My husband took command about three weeks ago, and we are no longer moving. Yay. We will retire in three, four, or seven years, so I will be here for the long haul.

[00:24:12] I was PTA president for two and a half years and was honored with the Virginia State PTA Volunteer of the Year. And yeah, I think that's it. I have a second, second the nomination.

[00:24:35] All those in favor? All right. Motion carried. Our newly elected vice chair membership is Jenny Pierce. All right.

[00:24:50] Now we'll take nominations for the Office of the Vice Chair of Communications.

[00:25:03] Yes. What is communications? Would you like to hear a little bit more about it?

[00:25:22] So the Vice Chair of Communications would help with, I'll start at the beginning. Staff does a lot of the emailing reminders that there's a meeting, schedules the room. So it doesn't involve that kind of logistical work. But it might be helpful to remind folks that there is a meeting coming and that the group has talked about subjects or if there was a need to gather feedback outside of a meeting cycle or maintain lists of members, the membership is gathering folks, an email list.

[00:25:56] so the communications duties have been pretty minimal so far because staff does a lot of the logistics for communications but I think there's room to grow as the membership grows and everybody

[00:26:07] needs to stay in touch. Long answer.

[00:27:18] Can you give us your full name? Lydia Taylor? Okay, Lydia Taylor. All right, we already seconded it. All right, all those in favor?

[00:27:48] Our newly elected vice chair of communication is Lydia Taylor. Thank you. I have to read this and this. All right. Thanks to our newest officers who have been elected to serve in the 2023-2024 school year. I appreciate your willingness to serve. At this time, while the new chairs connect for a moment with staff, we would like for you to take a few minutes to say hello to your table if you haven't already, as well as

[00:28:27] review the bylaws in your handbook on page 11. All right, team, let's go.

[00:34:27] I would like to bring the LEAF meeting back to order. Our last action for this agenda item is about bylaws and quorum. To recap, the status of quorum was discussed in May's meeting. The current LEAF bylaws, Article 7 of quorum states that greater than or equal to 50% of the voting members shall constitute a quorum. Each member, lest the chair and the liaison, shall be counted for quorum and shall have a vote. I will now make a motion to amend the definition of a quorum to be greater

[00:35:04] than or equal to 25 percent. Is there a second? Second by Janine Pierce. I will pass this item over to Joan to provide additional information. All right so I know many of you were not here and this is a largely new group so we wanted to just give you a little background now that the motion and second had been made. As a reminder quorum refers to the minimum number of members that must be present for official business to be carried out. When LEAF's original bylaws were written quorum

[00:35:39] quorum for its first year was 50 percent of board approved members. Staff met in the spring and in consultation with the chief of staff and in coordination with other advisories and legal counsel determined the following. In order to facilitate meetings for these larger groups, advisory groups may hear information items when they are gathered when no quorum is present, but they can only take action on an item when a quorum is present. This change in practice will allow LEAF to suspend Robert's rules when quorum is not achieved and be able to continue to hear information items when we've all gathered for a meeting. Last year, just for your information,

[00:36:14] we met quorum at all but one meeting. So that was really good news because at the time it was 50% of membership present to hold a meeting. Canceling the meeting after its start time is not optimal, not preferable, and caused understandable hardship to the membership. We don't want to do that. That is not what we're here for. So thus, staff is recommending that for the LEAF advisory, quorum will be adjusted to greater than or equal to 25% of voting members. This language will adjust the current quorum as stated in the bylaws of greater than equal to 50%. In May, members were notified that LEAF members would vote to amend the definition of quorum to be greater than or equal

[00:36:54] to 25% of the voting members at this organizational meeting August 21st. So that's the background on the item, and at this point I'll turn it back to the chair. Thank you, Joan. Is there discussion?

[00:37:16] So what are examples from last year of actions that were taken by LEAF? So what are those things that we can't do? Because it felt like everything was really just informational anyway. Yeah, most things are information items at this committee.

[00:37:34] Voting on your officers would be a voting opportunity. So there were minimal opportunities. But the biggest change I see for LEAF is that if you don't have quorum, according to Robert's rules, you can't meet about anything at all. So at the advice of legal and chief of staff, we have decided that you can go ahead and hear information items for those who are present by suspending Robert's rules. And we don't have to have quorum just to simply meet because we all came together and we're a member or two short. So on the rare occasion when there would be something to vote on, you know, we'd have to keep quorum in mind. But we wanted to be able

[00:38:10] to continue a meeting, even if we just were shy a little bit of half the membership. Now it'll be 25% that'll alleviate that concern. Is it 25% of all of the schools of Loudoun County, even though some schools will not, will not have a representative, or is it 25% of the schools that have a representative? That is a great question. So the way the bylaws are written, it's 25% of the approved members. So right now we have 39 approved members. So we're not, 39 would never be half of

[00:38:47] 98 schools right so tonight's quorum would be 50 percent of 39 until we pass this vote if you pass it and then it would be 25 percent of that 39 now right and I anticipate that we'll be closer last year the total membership was well into the 80s 87 out of 98 we were pretty we got full participation pretty much last year for the very first year so that'll be a real priority in this next month now that schools are back to

get all the members you know nominated and up and running great question defining voting members do the alternates count as a voting member or does each

[00:39:26] school have one vote since they're also approved so whoever is in attendance at the meeting so if you're the primary member and you're here you vote if the alternate comes with you it would still be one vote if the alternates here instead of you of course they would vote does that make sense but that doesn't count the total number of right we're not counting uh if every school had a member and an alternate it wouldn't be that many members for quorum does that answer the question so quick question on what's written up there under the proposed language it talks about shall be counted for quorum and shall have a vote um is that vote language correct since we won't have a vote unless

[00:40:03] we're at 50 quorum for roberts rules for a vote so if i understand your question correctly the 30 out of the 39 members who have signed up we have 23 here no my question is about the proposed language the proposed language as i understand it would give us the ability to meet and exchange information it will not give us the ability to vote under robert's rules we still need the 50 no you would need 25 for the quorum to vote they're changing yeah it's changing from 50

[00:40:36] to 25 i thought you just for everything yeah trying to make life easy i heard something different a second ago so sorry yes kim can you hear can everybody hear that yeah that's the way

[00:41:07] the bylaws are written. I have a question. Is it possible to adjust it so that it's 25 percent for a quorum to receive information and remains 50 percent for a vote? It is possible to do whatever you all like. I would tell you that it is the all of the advisories are moving to this model. We had people with different groups with different quorums, different rules, some canceled meetings, some didn't, some heard information, some didn't, some couldn't vote, some could.

[00:41:41] So we're trying to make sure that all of our advisories are on equal footing. And so this is what staff is recommending that everybody move to. It just seems to make more sense what she's saying.

[00:42:00] It seems more fair. So that sounds a lot better, the 25% to hear and understand and the 50% to vote. I would say if the other advisory panels are going to this model where we vote at 25%, we can meet at 25% and vote at 25%, then we should, for consistency's sake, probably be at the same place.

[00:42:26] The other thing is from a pragmatic perspective, I think we should be at 25%. A comment was made earlier about, well, a lot of it's just information sharing. Well, that's part of what we want to get away from is information sharing. Part of what we need to be doing is actually taking a position and moving that position to the school board. And so if we are in question of having the ability to vote because we don't meet a 50 percent, now we're getting into math equations at every meeting to understand if we can or can't vote.

[00:42:54] We really need to be getting our opinion as parents up to the board, not worrying about whether or not we hit 50 percent. So for consistency's sake, across the advisory panels, I'd say we do that, but just even for pragmatic purposes so we can actually get our voices heard at the school board.

[00:43:09] Instead of finding out three months after the school board voted on something, we need to go to 25%. I'm fine with the 25%. I think that's what we have to do because of the people that attend.

[00:43:26] But my concern is that the people that are representing two schools, every school should have a vote. And if that person is representing two schools, no? Well, my question would be why didn't the – Oh,

okay.

[00:43:44] Then never mind. I missed that part. All right. All in favor of adjusting quorum to be greater than or equal to 25% of the voting members, please raise your hands. while staff tallies the votes.

[00:44:06] Those opposed, please raise your hands while the staff tallies votes. After tallying the A's and nays, the adjusting quorum has received the majority of the votes.

[00:44:27] Motion carried by a vote of 22 to 3, 22 to 4. Staff will work with the chair to revise the bylaws as well as the handbook and website. Now on to information items.

[00:44:47] I would like to ask Joan to return for the policy review process. This is the housekeeping items we promised you for the first meeting of the year. I'll try to make it brief.

[00:45:09] Next slide. All right. So one of the business items that this group is concerned with is helping with the policy review process. This happens a couple of ways. The school board reviews all policies every five years, tracking to ensure that they're updated efficiently, timely manner.

[00:45:30] The engagement process involves staff, stakeholders. Next slide. First, the staff reviews any policies that come through. Sometimes we do that because VDOE has policies.

[00:45:46] Sometimes we do that because there's a new policy that has come out. Like 50 years ago, we wouldn't have had a social media policy, right, need for one. Then there's committee and stakeholder review and feedback, and then the school board review and action. What it looks like is really the next slide.

[00:46:04] we may draft a policy that we think is needed, or VSBA may provide a template for something that may be needed from a change or an update or from the VDOE. Legal will approve, excuse me, review what has been drafted, and then cabinet will review it. That's the leadership in the school.

[00:46:26] then that policy will move to a primary committee review so for instance a policy involving using Chromebooks would go through the technology committee so it moves through the logical committee at the board level sometimes the board asks it to go to another committee a secondary review if there's a lot involved and then the policy in this draft form after legal review moves to the community for feedback so that feedback process is about 10 business days

[00:47:01] it goes on the website it comes here you all will receive an email that says hey these policies are up for review will you weigh in there's a form that you can use to do that you can gather some community feedback you can put your own feedback into the form but every advisory committee has that opportunity to review these policies when the public is also reviewing it then once that period closes all that feedback is taken back to that primary committee that was assigned the policy they take a look literally at all of the feedback incorporate what they can explore what they need to to find out more about that feedback there are some reasons that we can't incorporate

[00:47:41] feedback like if it's in conflict with legal advice can't can't put that feedback in and then once that committee is satisfied with the version of the policy it moves to the full school board again as an information item where the school board says ask questions discusses the policy at a meeting and then moves the policy forward to action so that process can take about two months three months six months a year depending on uh the the pace uh that the language at which the

[00:48:14] language uh evolves so this committee is actively involved in policy review in the orange box called community feedback. There have been times when, as Jeanette knows, we've brought issues forward here for you all to hear and have the facts and take back to your community to discuss and kind of, you know, ask questions and gather feedback. So that's an overview of the policy review process.

[00:48:40] And you all will get an email tomorrow that has your very first opportunity to review two policies that I just got word of today that are starting into the public review. So you'll find those policies on the front page of the website, and you all will have a dedicated link to submit that feedback. This is an example of, I have a policy review feedback slide that says Special Education Advisory Committee. Did I skip one?

[00:49:04] Ah, there we go. So these are your other advisory committees. We've just aligned our quorum to match them. So the Special Education Advisory Committee, Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee, Equity Committee, and of course LEAF. So the other advisory committees will be doing the same thing you are. And this PowerPoint is available online, so you don't have to take a picture. If it stresses you out, we get it online already. Any questions on the policy review process? I know that's a brief overview. Yes, ma'am.

[00:50:32] It makes absolute sense, and it's exactly what we're struggling with, right? We're hearing people say, you know, how do we do that? So I will say that once a draft policy is being discussed in committee, we usually have a pretty good idea of what questions are being asked and what's being discussed and sometimes we take that opportunity to go ahead and and schedule a presentation for this group right knowing that that committee is discussing that particular policy or you know I'm trying to think of a good example but any policy that might affect students right community

[00:51:07] right not just a housekeeping policy right so we're struggling with that you can see the policy process at a minimum would take about eight weeks given the way that committees meet and then the board meets and then we've got this window built in so how do we get that information to you all more quickly and allow you time to gather feedback have those conversations we realize that some of them will always be out of cycle right we just won't have a meeting that frequently so we'll we'll depend on you to to gather feedback from your school and parent fellow parents and things but we're we're looking at that process how can we optimize it so so the feedback process is a

[00:51:45] little easier on all of us to get to get more feedback right to get it synced up a little bit and so you've hit on a really big challenge that we're tackling this year i thank you for that and i don't have the answer yet but we're very sensitive to it and i appreciate that i have a question um are can we generate policy this committee like it's this starts with staff draft submission but i'm like who conceives of the policy is it just school board members or can the committee or i would have to ask about that um i don't know i'll find out do we have a

[00:52:24] collection of hope please we might have a smart answer to that previous question i mean i would say if you have if you have specific concerns or an idea you can certainly raise that with a school board member or the full board the contact school board has the option to or contact your direct representative, or you can send something to the full board.

[00:52:47] If you know what area it's in, you could certainly address that to the chair of a specific committee if there's something that you're concerned about. So there isn't necessarily an avenue for you to

write a full policy and have that go through, but if you have an idea that you want to bring forward, you can absolutely reach out.

[00:53:07] I just said there isn't necessarily a formal process through which a full-fledged policy gets brought through an advisory board. It would because the, yes, it would go through a school board member and then the respective committee that that policy is related to.

[00:53:26] And if you had a specific idea, if you want to talk to me afterwards, I'm happy to chat. Okay. And in the interest of time, do we have any more pressing policy questions? or I could answer them if they're housekeeping items afterwards and we could move forward. I want to make sure you all get the time before 7 to collaborate.

[00:53:45] Any other questions? Yes, ma'am. Oh, sorry. My only suggestion is I would have my principal in his weekly emails put a line item in there to say that there's policy for review, and then it took it to a link of a website that I created, and then I had them up there.

[00:54:03] That's the only way I knew how to do it. Because really, it's out there for public information for everybody. We're just trying to encourage them to look at it. If somebody was really into board docs, they would see that it was posted anyway.

[00:54:19] But we're just like the avenue to promote it more, I guess. That was my question of what are our member, our LEAF members doing to get this out to our individual communities? Is it a link on the webpage? Is it Facebook?

[00:54:34] Is it, you know, the brief from the principal each week? Because we all read it different ways. So it would just be interesting to see what this team, this group has come together and what has been successful, if we could do that. I appreciate that. And in your handbook, there are lots of good ideas on marketing your ideas to your own communities and some best practices.

[00:54:53] So if people are brand new and wondering how to get started, we do have some helpful hints for you in there. Oh, one more? Yeah. I just want to be the squeaky wheel and just reiterate, but the goal is to eventually that it comes here before so that we can provide input and feedback before.

[00:55:16] So it always comes here to leave in the form of an email during the 10-day comment period. You all get at the very beginning, the day we post it on the website, to start that feedback process. What we're struggling with is we hear you, that that 10-day process may not be long enough or it may not sync up with a meeting or a natural moment to kind of meet with your PTA or with your fellow parents or, again, in this room.

[00:55:42] So we know that that's a struggle and we're taking a look at it. But for now, this is the process that is in place, and we're continuing to take that feedback. Okay, there might be two different issues here. I'm a returning member, so I was here last year. And I don't think there was a single presentation that we received that was not already decided.

[00:56:03] In other words, we received information on the bathroom changes after everything was decided. We received information on the transportation changes after they were implemented so that we could provide information but not feedback.

[00:56:20] So I think just on those two particular issues, those weren't actually items that were up for votes by the board last year. So specifically the bathroom was part of the capital improvements budget.

[00:56:36] Specifically, that particular piece was much earlier in the process. Excuse me, I didn't bring me agendas from last year. Is there one that we did receive that was prior to it was?

[00:56:55] No, no, no, please. Every presentation we received last year was post, meaning it had been voted on by the board, and we want to have influence as parents prior to so that the board understands what we think.

[00:57:18] So that gets it, and Erica, we had, hi again. We had a conversation last year about lining up at the very beginning of the process, once it starts with the staff draft submission, that's when we need to be in this stuff. To your point, Joan, this can be two-month process, it could be six-month process, it could be a nine-month process, depending on how politically charged it is, right?

[00:57:41] Or how much research needs to be done, or you name the reason. And that's why we need to be in much earlier. And if it's with the 10-day cycle where we get the emails and we can go in for submission, that's fine. That's information I can get out to the parents, the PTA through school channels and communication. Fine. But the impact of LEAF should be much deeper and broader and have more influence in this entire process, which means we need to be in the minute that staff draft submission is in there. That's when we need to be talking about things in here so that we can begin to think and get communication back to the other parents and say what's really

[00:58:20] important. Because some of these policies that we get the emails on, I'm not going to say they're not important to everybody some people they might be some of them have less importance to the broader scope of people others are going to be magnets and unless we know earlier there's no way to prioritize where that effort gets put so I don't want to necessarily get ahead of this but I know Mr. Slevin had addressed this during I think it was the last board meeting in June around some of the changes that they were looking to make this year one of which was actually getting together

[00:58:57] a comprehensive list of policies that are scheduled to be up for review for this cycle. I haven't had a chance to connect with him yet to see where that's at, but I agree that's, we need to know earlier what the full list is so that there's an opportunity to be more proactive about it.

[00:59:16] I also sat down with the chair and vice chair for SEAC a couple of weeks ago, and they had some similar concerns about trying to figure out how do they get in earlier on the review process and I think this is maybe a longer conversation I know that there's um but this is good so I will just say on the one hand an earlier discussion and input would be very valuable and on the other hand if it's before the committee the board committee meets then you don't have an opportunity

[00:59:56] to respond to what the board committee thought about it and then the question is are you in on discussions before and after and then how does that work logistically and with timing with a monthly meeting that's fair yeah and and I and I told them and and I will tell you I'm going to go back and have some conversations and just see you know what does staff think about this too and I heard Joan say this is a challenge and staff has been thinking about this but I've found as a

[01:00:34] committee chair it's been really helpful to get the feedback from advisory boards and from individuals we've met we had a first pass at things we provide some feedback the feedback that we provide is incorporated into the version of the policy that's posted and then we come back And we review that in detail, all of the feedback that comes back.

[01:01:02] And unless it's, you know, contrary to Virginia code, we try to incorporate as much as we can because that's the point of feedback, right, to get all of those different perspectives. But I think there, I don't know what the perfect answer is, but I can see that earlier feedback would be helpful.

[01:01:23] But then, again, then you're missing the opportunity to provide feedback from, you know, to the committee that's reviewing and making the recommendations to bring it to the full board. So I don't know what the perfect answer is here. I don't know if you have thoughts on that.

[01:01:39] Perfect is the enemy of the practical. Yes, exactly, right. So let's just get it out there. We can figure out what the right timing is as we go. But what we do know is what we did last year, not only not perfect, it was not practical, it wasn't effective at all. So we need to do something.

[01:01:58] And so I think I, again, need to follow up. But what I heard at the end of the cycle in the spring was that there was a desire to bring forward the full list. So I'm going to be following up on that. And then also a way to figure out how to incorporate at a kind of a summary level.

[01:02:22] So it's not going to say, you know, Sue submitted this comment and this is the feedback to Sue's comment. But at a summary level, to be able to show this is the type of feedback we received and incorporated into the policy that's moving forward for a vote.

[01:02:41] Okay, thank you, Erica. Thank you, everybody. We're trying to go as fast as we can to make the improvements we know we need to make. So I appreciate that.

[01:02:56] Our last housekeeping item, we're going to bring up Dan Adams. Dan is our public information officer. Dan is also our FOIA officer. So for those of you who are new to this group, you may want to take note of what he says.

[01:03:13] When we conduct school business, it is subject to FOIA. So he's going to give us a really quick five-minute synopsis of what to look out for and how to be aware. That was subtle. I want to confirm, too. I think I heard this correctly.

[01:03:29] Everybody here is getting an LCPS email. No. only the officers. Okay. All right. Welcome. As Joan said, I'm Dan Adams. One of my responsibilities is the FOIA officer for the school division. By Virginia code, every public body has to have an identified and trained FOIA officer. And I am so fortunate. Thank you. That's me.

[01:03:53] Next slide, Kim. We'll go through this kind of a little bit quicker. Most of you probably have an idea of what FOIA is. FOIA, the Freedom of Information Act, encompasses public bodies, elected officials, it covers things like open meetings and, you know, what the difference between an open meeting and a closed meeting.

[01:04:09] The part that we're going to talk about is in regards to our communications or our records. FOIA covers essentially records that the public body keeps or has access to that is able to be produced to the general public. Now, FOIA, the national law, basically says every state public body has to have some type of version.

[01:04:29] In Virginia, or what we call VFOIA, Basically, people who can request a FOIA are either residents of the Commonwealth or media outlets that have distribution within the Commonwealth.

[01:04:46] Now, as the FOIA officer, I have a little bit of discretion. Another group that I will quite often provide records to are businesses that do business with the school division, even if they're outside the

Commonwealth. It just seems fair and just seems right. Next.

[01:05:04] This is what our website looks like. If you were to go and file a Freedom of Information Act request on our website, it's easily accessible. We use a system called GovQA where you can go onto the website, fill in your request, what it is that you're looking for.

[01:05:22] Common requests, anything from budget records to emails, all kinds of different things. Records that are kept at the business of the public body for the school division. Next one. So what happens when somebody files a FOIA request?

[01:05:40] I have five business days to respond to that request. The day after I get the request counts as day number one. And if I need to, if it's something that's extensive or requires a lot of research, I can invoke a seven-day extension for that. Examples of things that quite often I get requests for, personnel records.

[01:06:03] These are things that are actually exempt. Personnel records, student records, student identifiable information. One of the things that people quite often don't understand that fits in there are test scores. That's one of the things I know a lot of people want to see, but there are obviously some FOIA exemptions to that.

[01:06:20] Information from closed meetings, vendor proprietary information, attorney-client privilege, attorney-client work product, and things like that. We can charge to recoup the cost of satisfying a FOIA. This is done not as a punishment or to keep people from filing them or anything like that.

[01:06:42] just allows us to be able to recoup those costs because they can be very extensive. Some of the examples I'll get for FOIA requests are I want to see all the emails from this person, you know, to or from any LCPS email account. Well, we have over 12,800 employees, and so that could generate a lot of emails.

[01:07:03] And so sometimes people will ask for things not understanding necessarily the scope, and we'll try, we'll work with them to try to pare it down. But we can, again, we can recoup our costs at what it takes to satisfy those FOIAs. A couple things to keep in mind.

[01:07:19] A FOIA request does not have to be in writing. It doesn't even have to say this is a FOIA request. So emails to other LCPS employees, they know to kind of send those to me. I'd try to tell our staff if a community member asks a very detailed question to treat it as a FOIA.

[01:07:40] And so for you, how this comes into play, particularly the executive board, your emails, your business to and from your LCPS email account would be considered a FOIA-able record. So just keep that in mind.

[01:07:57] Something else that the courts have held to keep in mind is even if you're using your personal account or your social media accounts to conduct business with the committee, that can be considered a FOIA-able record. So keep that in mind.

[01:08:13] Keep very careful of how you're communicating with your fellow board members, especially the executive board or your committee members because there are times, and as Ogedegbe can account to this, sometimes I have to ask personnel or staff members or board members, if a FOIA request comes in, do you have any social media posts or text message or anything that may satisfy this FOIA request?

[01:08:41] So just kind of keep those things in mind. And I'll hang out for a bit. I'm sorry I went through that kind of quick because I know that we have a hard stop at 7. But I'll hang out at the end if anybody has

any other questions. But bottom line, just kind of keep in mind how you're communicating with your fellow committee members and that some of that information can be foiled by members of the community.

[01:09:07] So just keep that in mind. And I'll hang out if anybody has any questions or anything after we're done. All right. For our last information item, we would like to gather information for future meetings.

[01:09:28] Every topic that was discussed during the 2022-2023 school year was per the request of membership. At the beginning of the year, brainstormers were collected as well as in the online feedback form. We would like to gather the group's input on what may be of interest this year for the Alliance.

[01:09:46] So you'll see at your tables, there are poster papers and markers. With one person as the scribe, please rotate around your group, preferably no more than four or five per group, and share topics you would like to discuss. Then staff can gather the information and invite the appropriate staff member to a future meeting.

[01:10:05] This advanced work will also help advance preparations, so the presentations can be posted prior to the meeting for your review. You'll have seven minutes, and please give everyone a chance to speak and share their ideas.

[01:21:18] All right, if we could come back together. Hopefully, you've had enough time to share your ideas and put them on the poster paper. Thank you for participating in that activity. Are there any questions or areas of new business before we end the meeting?

[01:21:37] All right, so for our next meeting, that's set for September 18th here in this room, Dr. Aaron Spence is scheduled to join us at that time as our new superintendent. Thank you all for your participation this evening.

[01:21:56] have safe travels home, and we are adjourned.



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