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Loudoun County School Board, 2nd Tuesday School Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Date Tuesday, September 12, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 5h 52m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/863985719?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-20. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:02] - Good afternoon. I call to order this Tuesday, September 12th, 2023 meeting of the Loudoun County School Board. We'll begin with item 102 on our agenda, which is remote participation. I've been notified that Denise Corvo would like to remotely participate in tonight's meeting.

[00:00:18] Ms. Corvo, please state your location, whether anyone is present with you at your location and whether this is a medical or personal matter. - Thank you. I am home, I'm alone. According to policy 2420 and ADA law, I'm asking for remote participation as recommended as an accommodation from LCPS HRTD due to a medical disability and ongoing medical condition.

[00:00:47] At this time, I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's request to participate remotely for a medical reason be granted. So moved. Is there a second? That motion will fail for lack of a second.

[00:01:04] Ms. Corbo, would you like to request remote participation for a personal matter? No, thank you. Okay, thank you. With that, we will move to item two on our agenda, approval of the consent agenda. Is there a motion, Mr. Mahedvi?

[00:01:21] Yes, sir. I move that the Loudoun County School Board approve the items posted in the consent agenda. Is there a second? Seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we'll proceed to a vote. Board members, you'll see voting buttons at your place, but just ignore those for now.

[00:01:39] We're going to just stick with our traditional voice vote until we do a training on how to use them later on in our work session. So all those in favor of approving the consent agenda for today, please raise your hands and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Reeser, Corbo, and Okedegbe absent for the vote.

[00:02:00] We'll now move on to our work session, starting with item 301 for an advisory committee update from LEAF, the Loudon Education Alliance of Families.

[00:02:23] Good evening, Chair Sorotkin, school board members, Dr. Spence in the community. My name is Sherry Colby, chair of the Loudon Education Alliance of Families, known as LEAF.

[00:02:42] I represent Sicklin Creek Elementary in the central Loudon district, and I'm pleased to share the LEAF Alliance update with you this evening. For this update, we will review LEAF's current status as it has just entered its second year, starting with an overview, 2022, 2023, 2024 updates, and concluding with anticipated next steps.

[00:03:05] Next slide, please. LEAF empowers and informs parent leaders of children within LCPS with representatives from the schools throughout our division. The goals of LEAF's two-way communication approach is for parents and educators to work together to review challenges, explore options, and provide feedback to those who make decisions in the best interest of LCPS youth.

[00:03:31] Per the LEAF charter bylaws, LEAF Alliance members help to advise the school board and serve as liaisons to their communities. Next slide, please. LEAF members are asked to provide constructive insight on and summarize to their respective school the topics discussed in meetings to facilitate two-way communication.

[00:03:55] A lot was learned during LEAF's inaugural year. The highlights and learning opportunities all informed our next steps in long-term planning and how we looked forward to this school year. LEAF representation during its inaugural year included 83 of 98 schools.

[00:04:12] However, 26 of those members missed three or more meetings. Per the bylaws, the number of absences by those representatives rendered their school's participation inactive. Therefore, 57 schools were truly in attendance for the year. All of the 2022-2023's eight meetings were LEAF-led agendas.

[00:04:32] Topics were member-driven, suggested verbally through discussion or online feedback. The topics were then prioritized by the former chair and staff and shared throughout the year. The image on this slide provides all topics shared with the Alliance. In addition, LEAF members were asked to provide feedback on 69 policies during the policy review process.

[00:04:55] Next slide, please. LEAF held its annual organizational meeting on August 21st this year, which included voting on the new alliance leadership. The agenda focused on organizing for the year, which included voting on the alliance leadership.

[00:05:12] Our new leadership includes me as the chair and Erica Daly, vice chair of planning, representing Dulles North. Ginny Beers, Vice Chair of Membership, representing Dulles South. And Lydia Taylor, Vice Chair of Communications, representing Eastern Loudoun.

[00:05:29] Staff will continue to fulfill secretarial functions for this year. LEAF leadership has obtained LEAF-specific emails that will be used for all LEAF business. The membership drive for this year began last spring is still ongoing. As of today, the board has approved alliance members for 39 schools.

[00:05:48] And additional 22 school representatives were on the agenda for board approval this evening. My officers and I will reach out to schools to support recruitment for more LEAF members with the goal of 100% representation. Last month, we reported to LEAF that our group's information will be found on the website rather than in board docs, aligning our practices with the other advisory groups.

[00:06:14] Meeting materials and all LEAF information can be found at www.lcps.org backslash LEAF. We will continue the established communication cadence that supports reminders and feedback opportunities, including meeting reminders, three to five business days prior to the meeting, posting the agenda two business days before the meeting, and providing a meeting summary five to seven days after the meeting.

[00:06:41] Lastly, as all advisory groups align, the Alliance voted on a bylaw amendment to Article 7 quorum. Leave members voted to amend the definition of a quorum to be greater than or equal to 25% of the voting members.

[00:06:59] The language has been changed in the bylaws, and both the online handbook and website has been updated. The handbook will be shared with Alliance members. Next slide, please. Looking ahead, our next meeting is Monday, September 18th at 5.30 p.m.

[00:07:18] Like all meetings, we are very intentional about the agenda, which includes a learning experience, interaction, engagement strategy, and multiple feedback opportunities for members. Agendas will include additional time for discussion and feedback.

[00:07:35] We are thrilled to be having Dr. Spence join us on the 18th. Next slide, please. As the chair, I'm excited to be a part of LEAF's continued development and contributions as we continue as an established parent voice.

[00:07:52] Thank you for the opportunity to share our LEAF update. I am happy to discuss any additional questions you may have. Ms. Colby, thank you for the update. Thank you for stepping up and congratulations on your election as LEAF chair and look forward to working with you to continue to improve our school system over the next year.

[00:08:11] Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you. Board members, do you have any questions? Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. A question concerning the recruitment of members. Do you get a sense from the principals that you're engaged with and the schools that you're engaged with that they are actively pursuing representation for LEAF?

[00:08:33] Yes, that's a good question. We're getting an uptick in involvement because I think with the beginning of the school year, we're finally having those very first PTA meetings. I know my children are at Sickland Creek, and our first PTA meeting was tonight. And with that, we're seeing more engagement involvement.

[00:08:51] So we do anticipate increasing our membership. Any additional questions? Thank you again for the update. All right. Thank you. Appreciate your time. All right.

[00:09:06] We'll now move to item 302 from the Department of Business and Financial Services. School Board Calendar for the Development of the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Operating Budget. Good afternoon.

[00:09:24] So I'm here to present the annual calendar for the development of the FY25 budget. In board docs is the detailed schedule. I'll share the highlights of the calendar that we have presented. What's not

listed on there, but I will mention, is that at the next meeting, in addition to the school board, we're expecting adoption of this calendar, would also be a presentation of the FY25 fiscal forecast.

[00:09:51] So that's where we do the very high-level forecast for the upcoming school year, or for the next school year, I should say. So you will also see that on the 26th. After that, we have a work session calendared for November 28th.

[00:10:08] And this is where we would meet with the school board similar to what we did last year to obtain priorities from the school board and get feedback regarding the FY25 budget. Last year, as I mentioned, this was actually held in October.

[00:10:24] We have specifically targeted the November 28th date so that we could also invite the candidates who are successfully elected to office. So we would have the sitting school board as well as we would extend an invitation to the new school board members so that they can participate.

[00:10:43] We would then begin the process on January 16th when the superintendent will present his estimate of needs for FY25. And then it's followed by four work sessions, which matches or mirrors what we've done in previous years.

[00:10:59] So on Thursday the 18th, you will hear presentations regarding the staffing standards, compensation, central office, other funds, as well as from the Department of Human Resources and Talent Development, Digital Innovation, and Business and Financial Services.

[00:11:14] The following Thursday on the 25th would be presentations from the Departments of Teaching and Learning and Student Services. On Tuesday the 30th of January would be the Department of School Leadership presentation. And then on Thursday, February 1st, would be the final presentation from the Department of Support Services.

[00:11:35] And it would be during this work session that we would also present information regarding steps to adopt the budget, which is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, February 6th. So as we've done in previous years, we get the final date that the county needs to have our budget information, and we work backwards from there.

[00:11:56] So we have squeezed as much time as we can as we do each year into this calendar, and that is what we have proposed. As always, the calendar is subject to change. You know, workload or the school board member schedules may require us to make some adjustments.

[00:12:15] And as in previous year, any changes or additions are typically initiated through the school board chair. So I welcome any feedback on the proposed calendar. And in addition to that, that we anticipate bringing this to consent approval at the next meeting on the 26th.

[00:12:34] Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. For board members, I do want to add some additional information here. So the school board voted earlier this year to add an item to the joint committee agenda to discuss the budget adoption calendar for future years to see if there were any opportunities to shift our school board budget adoption to the right, given that we adopt months before most of the other school districts in the area.

[00:13:06] One of the joint committee meetings for the year had to be canceled, and so rather than try and reschedule that discussion, staff on the county side proposed that the leadership of the two boards meet. So several weeks ago, Mr. Mehenvey and I, as well as Dr. Smith, met with Chair Randall and Mr.

Hemstreet on the county side to discuss what some options for this might be, and we identified that if we wanted to do this, there would be two possibilities of varying, difficult complexity.

[00:13:42] The first is for the county to adjust the tax collection date. Right now, I'm going from memory, but I believe their tax collection date is in June, whereas other localities, some of their tax collection dates aren't until July or later.

[00:13:58] So if the county was to change their tax collection date, then we could all start the process later because they would have a later deadline for that. That is, from speaking with Chair Randall and Mr. Hemstreet, I think that's exceedingly unlikely to happen for FY25, but they were open to at least starting the conversation so that if the future boards wanted to revisit that, we had at least started the discussion and they could take it up.

[00:14:27] The other possibility is more on the school board side, and that is what Mr. Hemstreet said is that he normally waits until the school board adopts their budget and uses that as the basis of what he's going to put in the school board budget plug-in into the county budget.

[00:14:45] And he said if instead we wanted him to use the superintendent's estimate of needs and use that as a baseline, then that would allow us to finalize our adopted budget, I think it was four to six weeks later, than we do now.

[00:15:03] The peril being is that if we increase the budget beyond what was in the superintendent's estimate of needs, there likely wouldn't be any possibility that that would be funded on the county side. So it is a possibility, and I said that I would bring it up for board discussion so that we could discuss whether we wanted to pursue that or not.

[00:15:26] So I'm going to ask for when this comes back as an action item on the 26th, I'm going to ask that an alternative schedule be created that would use that second assumption that the county administrator would use the superintendent's estimate of needs and shift our budget adoption to the right as much as we can based off of that.

[00:15:48] I'm not necessarily advocating for that, but I just want to present it as an option so that it's been fleshed out and the board can have that discussion and consider that possibility if they want to. So I just wanted to brief the board on those discussions and let everyone know that I'm going to bring that back as a possibility for next meeting.

[00:16:09] So I'll open it up for board member discussion. Mr. Morse. Just for clarification, I think Ms. Willoughby's asked to place this on consent. So we're going to pull it off consent, place it on action, and have two motions, potential motions. Yes. Thank you. As well as if other board members have other amendments or motions that they'd like to consider, it could be done for this as well.

[00:16:27] Any additional questions or discussion? Okay. Seeing none, we'll place this on action for the next board meeting. And that will take us to 303 from the Department of Digital Innovation, an introduction and training on our electronic voting board.

[00:16:57] Good evening, board members. I'm here tonight to hopefully do a quick demonstration and training on our new electronic voting system called TownVote. You can see it displayed on the monitor up to the right behind the dais.

[00:17:14] So each of you should have one of these blue remotes in front of you with your name on it. This is the spare, so each one of you should have that. So the voting system will be displayed up there, and the goal is to record votes electronically and to have a process to record those votes.

[00:17:31] So a process will be established where the chair will open the vote, the clerk will click to open the vote, and then you'll be able to enter your vote. It'll record it electronically, and we'll walk through a couple of those tonight. And then once the vote is closed, it'll be displayed on the screen.

[00:17:48] So the votes on your remotes here, you have three buttons. One says yes to vote yes, one says no to vote no, and one says abstain to vote abstain. Now, if you vote yes, you'll see a number one appear in the little digital display. If you vote no, you'll see a two.

[00:18:05] And if you vote abstain, you'll see a three. Once you've pressed your vote, you'll notice your color change on the voting tally board. And once they've all been collected, the vote will close. And it'll go from a vote has been entered into a color-coordinated green for yes, red for no, yellow for abstain. One important note, it'll record the last vote button you hit.

[00:18:24] So if you accidentally press the wrong button, just press another one. and it's whatever is the last button that's been pressed will be the vote that gets recorded into the system. So each of you should have a quick little one-pager guide as well that kind of walks you through how to do the voting system, and then I guess we can walk through a couple votes of opening a vote, collecting that, closing the vote, and then seeing it display on the tally board.

[00:18:46] Okay, thank you, Mr. Smith. One question, do we have to point this in any particular direction? No, it'll work anywhere in the dais, anywhere in the room, really, so as long as you have it in front of you and you press the button, as soon as the vote is opened, you will see the colors will change. So we will, you'll see those flow through as you hit the buttons. Okay. Thank you. And two, okay, so two notes. First, our policy currently requires a voice vote. So it's going to be a little awkward until we fix the relevant policy where we're going to go through this. And then I'll also ask for members

[00:19:23] to state their vote before finalizing, just so that we make sure we're compliant with policy in the interim. Uh, and then the second note is that for, uh, if a board member is remotely participating there, I'll have to manually ask them what their vote is. And then the clerk will record their vote before we finalize. Uh, so we'll prep, we'll do a couple of examples. The first, just a straightforward vote. And then the second one, uh, with the, the, uh, assuming, well, I'll ask Mr. Mejedevi to pretend that he's remotely participating and, uh, so that we can make sure we have the process for his vote as well.

[00:19:59] Ms. Reeser, do you have a question? Yes, thank you. Would it be possible to put the screen that's behind me on that screen so everyone can see it? Yes, we can rearrange the routing for now. We would just have it up there, but it can be displayed on anywhere we need to display it in the room.

[00:20:14] And just one other question. That was really quick. Thank you to whoever did that magic. I assume that we can't see each other's votes as they're being put in or changed. It's only once it's closed, right? That's correct.

[00:20:30] It'll go from gray to light blue once the vote has been entered. And then once the clerk closes the vote, then the yes, no, abstains will be displayed. Thank you. Any other questions before we test this out? Okay. So just for the record, these are not real votes.

[00:20:50] The board is not voting on anything, and no votes will be reflected in the minutes. This is purely for training purposes. So we'll pretend that a motion has been made and seconded. Clerk, please open the voting board. Board members, please enter your vote. One quick note.

[00:21:11] The devices do go to sleep after an hour. So if you may need to press the button twice. So if you want to vote yes, just press the green button twice, and it'll record that vote. Okay. Then all in favor, say aye. All in favor, say aye. All opposed, say nay.

[00:21:27] Any abstentions? Okay. Clerk, please close and display the vote. So that, I can't tell who voted. The names will be there. They've just temporarily left for the demo. But they will be there for the recorded vote.

[00:21:44] Like for, you're saying like for real votes later this evening, the names will be there? Correct. They will show the display of the real vote. The names will be displayed when the real votes are taken. Okay. Gotcha. All right. So we'll do another one with Mr. Mejedevi. Just we'll have the clerk manually input your vote for this one.

[00:22:01] So a motion has been made and seconded again. Clerk, could you please open the voting board? Board members, please enter your vote. And Mr. Mejedevi, please state your vote. Mr. Mejedevi votes yay.

[00:22:27] Oh, it's just, so you won't be able to put in his vote? I thought that, no? Okay. The remote would need to be with the clerk for the remote participant.

[00:22:42] So if Mr. Mejedevi already pressed the button, then that record has already been voted. Okay, so whichever board members aren't here, we could give their remote controls to Ms. Byrne, and then she'd be able to do it that way? Correct. Okay, I understand now. Clerk, oh, all in favor, please say aye.

[00:23:00] All those opposed, say nay. Any abstentions? Clerk, please close and display the vote. And that vote will pass 5-1-3, with Morse opposed, Ogadeg Bay, Sorotkin, and Sheridan abstaining from the vote.

[00:23:18] I assume yellow is abstained. It's the only thing that makes sense. That's correct. Okay. All right. Board members, any questions about the process? It's relatively straightforward, but any questions about the process? Okay. Thank you, Dr. Smith.

[00:23:35] I'm glad. I know this was in a box collecting dust for the last few years, so I'm glad we were able to get it installed and get it working. All right, that will conclude our work session, and we'll move to item four, our closed meeting.

[00:23:53] Is there a motion, Mr. Mahedvi? Yes, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board, recesses public meeting, and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to section 2.2.3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following.

[00:24:15] consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation involving an alleged public nuisance and requiring the provisions of legal advice by such counsel where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as authorized by section 2.23711A7 of the Code of Virginia and discussion and consideration of the assignment and appointment of specific public employee regarding the office of Division Council under Section 2.2.3711 of the Code of Virginia, and consultation with

[00:24:48] legal counsel pertaining to an actual litigation in the In-Ray Jewel Labs, Inc., Marketing Sales Practices and Production Liability Litigation, MDL No. 2913, NDCAL, class action matter and requiring the provisions of legal advice by such counsel where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as authorized by Section 2.2-3711A7 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:25:21] Sir, a second. Seconded by Ms. Reeser. Is there any discussion? Okay, a motion has been made by Mr. Mehedivi and seconded by Ms. Reeser. Clerk, please open the voting board. And board members, please record your vote.

[00:25:40] All in favor, please say aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Clerk, please close and display the vote. that motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Ms. Corbo absent for the vote and we

[00:26:04] are now in closed session and we'll be back at time certain 6 30 for our evening session.

[02:29:31] Convenience public meeting and the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting. I move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting. Resolution 05 23 slash 24 whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and whereas Section 2.2.37.12.D of the Court of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law, not therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies

[02:30:09] 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 this certification applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening to the closed meeting we heard discussed or considered by the Lowron County School Board.

[02:30:28] - Second. - Seconded by Ms. Sheridan. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, clerk, will you please open the voting board? And board members, please record your vote at this time.

[02:30:52] Board members, please, all in favor, please say aye. - Aye. opposed? Any abstentions? Clerk, please close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously. Board members present with Ms. Corvo absent for the vote. That will take us to item 404, motion required by closed meeting. Mr. Mahedvy. Yes, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board authorized legal counsel to take all necessary steps to join in the multi-district

[02:31:30] litigation pending against social media companies in the Northern District of California, including the filing of a complaint in that litigation according to the terms and conditions discussed in the closed meeting. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Morse. Is there any discussion?

[02:31:49] Seeing none, clerk, would you please open the voting board? And board members, please record your vote. All in favor, please say aye.

[02:32:06] Those opposed, please say nay. Nay. Any abstentions? Clerk, will you please close and display the vote? That motion will pass 5-3-1 with Polifco, Sorotkin, and Beatty opposed and Ms. Corbo absent for the vote.

[02:32:29] So we'll now get started with our evening session and we'll start with item 7, the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. The Pledge of Allegiance tonight will be led by the Virginia High School League 2022-23 Spring State Champions from Independence High School, Riverside High School, Toscarora High School, and Woodgrove High School.

[02:32:51] And the teams will also be recognized later this evening. After the Pledge of Allegiance, we will then have the National Anthem, which will be performed tonight by the Parkview High School Marching Band under the direction of Claude Legrand.

[02:33:06] The Marching Patriots are a 10-year honor band, receiving superior ratings in both marching and concert assessments, and are currently made up of 61 members. They have performed for such events as the Loudoun United Soccer Game and the Washington Wizards Halftime Show.

[02:33:23] This year, they will be returning to perform for the Washington Wizards, as well as hosting the Hampton University Marching Force this Friday at 6 p.m. at Parkview High School. At this time, I will ask everyone to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and remain standing for the National Anthem immediately after.

[02:36:22] What an awesome way to kick off another great school year. And we'll give them a minute or two to be able to leave the room.

[02:36:41] Okay, we'll now move to item 801, recognition of the LCPS and Inova Concussion Program Partnership.

[02:37:01] I'll turn it over to Mr. Ferry. Mr. Chair, Dr. Spence, and members of the school board. I'd like to thank and recognize ANOVA for partnering with LCPS to provide every high school student-athlete with a baseline concussion test for the 2023-2024 school year.

[02:37:21] All 14,000 of our student-athletes will be given a free near cognitive baseline test prior to activities with the goal of improving concussion management for the student-athletes of LCPS. The testing will be provided at no cost to families and is the first of its kind program in the northern Virginia area.

[02:37:41] This partnership will allow a NOVO concussion program to work directly with LCPS to enhance concussion care at every point of the injury by improving knowledge, recognition, preseason care, and post-injury care for our student-athletes.

[02:37:58] Baseline concussion testing involves the administration of preseason cognitive tests on a computer that assesses a student-athlete's cognitive function. If a student-athlete sustains a concussion, this is a snapshot of the cognitive performance can be compared to that person's post-injury cognitive test scores rather than normative data to better determine improvement and or deterioration during the recovery period.

[02:38:31] Having this information allows our athletic trainers to provide individualized concussion care plans for the recovery as no concussion is the same for each athlete. We appreciate Inova's willingness to provide this cutting-edge service at no cost to our community and for their commitment to the safety and well-being of our student-athletes.

[02:38:52] I'd like to welcome Dr. Melissa Womble, Director of Inova's Sports Medicine Concussion, and Jennifer Bay's Inova Concussion Specialist, to be recognized and say a few words. Thank you. Good evening, everyone.

[02:39:18] The Inova Concussion Program is honored to be partnering with Loudoun County Public Schools to improve concussion care for more than 14,000 student-athletes and their families. With this partnership, ANOVA will be providing financial support to help every high school athlete in the LCPS system, including for the first time ever non-contact athletes in sports such as cross-country, who are also susceptible to concussions to obtain baseline concussion testing prior to their respective seasons.

[02:39:45] It has been a dream of mine since starting with ANOVA in 2016 to partner with local school systems to improve the recognition, management, and care of concussions across northern Virginia. Since 2016, the ANOVA concussion program has been at the forefront of research locally and nationally.

[02:40:03] We currently have one of the largest clinical patient research registries in the country. Current research projects are investigating the efficacy of targeted treatments, the use of mobile technology in concussion recovery, and the long-term effects of concussions on youth athletes. The baseline concussion testing program we have now developed with LCPS is the foundation for good clinical care.

[02:40:23] The data from these preseason assessments will go a long way in helping our multidisciplinary specialty-trained team provide individualized and targeted management and treatment for student-athletes that may sustain a concussion. We frequently observe and have published that student-athletes with a concussion that go undetected continue to play with concussion, delay clinical care, and our prescribed antiquated management recommendations, such as rest, experience worse recovery outcomes.

[02:40:50] Many of these risk factors for prolonged recovery can be mitigated by education, which we plan to provide to LCPS student-athletes, parents, and guardians, coaches, athletic trainers, teachers, and administrators this school year. This partnership will serve all stakeholders involved in the clinical care, support, and recovery of student-athletes with concussion, and we very much look forward to working directly with LCPS to improve care at every point of the injury.

[02:41:17] Thank you. So I think we're going to do a picture down in front of the dais with the board.

[02:42:59] Ms. Okudekbe, would you like to make a comment? Yes, so I wanted to thank you for the partnership with, I have to put this down a little bit, but as a parent of student athletes who've sustained concussions during college, mostly some in high school but having this baseline assessment is so impactful and just hearing the sheer number we're talking about 14,000 athletes and often with a concussion it's hard to know you know what the severity of it is and having that baseline is really important for

[02:43:37] the health of all of our students and our children really so as a board member and a parent again And specifically with student athletes, I am really appreciative of this partnership that you're doing. And also just hearing about the work that you've done and how you know through research how important this is.

[02:43:58] So thank you for that. Okay. We'll now move to item 802, continuing on recognitions with our VHSL state champions for our spring team champions during the 2022-23 school year.

[02:44:16] and I will turn it over to Mr. Perry. - Good evening, Mr. Chair, Dr. Spence, and members of the school board, I would like to thank you for your time tonight as LCPS recognizes and congratulates all the high school teams for their outstanding achievement in capturing a team championship during the 2023 VH Cell Spring season.

[02:44:40] Their hard work, dedication, and exceptional performance have earned them this prestigious title, and LCPS and the school board are proud to celebrate their success. The commitment and teamwork displayed by these student athletes serves as an inspiration to all members of our school communities.

[02:44:58] We commend them for their exceptional sportsmanship and for representing our school division with honor and excellence. The following teams will be asked to come up and take a picture with our school board. First, Independence High School,

[02:45:12] the VHSL class five girls state championship.

[02:46:22] Next, Riverside High School VHL Class 5 Boys Lacrosse State Champions. This is their fifth time winning the state title.

[02:48:26] Our next team state championship winner is from Tuscaloosa High School. They captured the VHL Class 4 Girls Soccer State Championship.

[02:49:49] Our next state champion reigns also from Tuscaloosa High School. the VHL Class 4 Girls Track and Field State Championship was captured again by Tuscarora High School.

[02:50:58] And our last team champion, hailing from Woodgrove High School, the VHL Class 5 Softball State Champion for the sixth time since the school opened in fall of 2010.

[02:51:19] Unfortunately, we weren't able to have any athletes attend at this time. Let's give them an applause again. congratulations once again to our state champions.

[02:51:47] Okay and at this time we'll move to our final student and staff recognition our one LCPS spotlight on Catoctin Elementary School focusing on early literacy and UFLI foundations in action.

[02:52:21] Good evening Chair Sorokin and distinguished board members. Dr. Spence welcome we are very happy to have you here tonight. My name is Janet Platenberg I am the principal at Catoctin Elementary School. We are so pleased to be here tonight to share with you our implementation of UFLY and highlight the students' achievements.

[02:52:44] If we could have the next slide, please. Good evening. I'm Jackie Spencer. I'm the assistant principal at Catoctin Elementary. And tonight we are so excited to share with you our early literacy journey, highlights from our Spring Pals data, how we at Catoctin implemented UFLY in our classrooms, And then to wrap it up, we get to show you how our students and staff engaged with UFLY every day.

[02:53:09] Next slide, please. UFLY aligns directly with the Loudoun strategic plan and goals of empowering students by implementing evidence-based literacy instruction.

[02:53:24] We began our journey actually two years ago, and you are going to meet two of the incredible teachers that lit the fire under our staff at Catoctin. We officially last year implemented it K-2 for phonics instruction.

[02:53:40] Our school-based instructional facilitator, Jennifer Hartman, spearheaded the implementation at Catoctin, and she gets to share with you the students' successes on the next slide. Before I begin, I would like to thank the Early Literacy Reading and Writing Department and the Intervention Specialists for visiting our school, seeing our work in action, and recognizing the impact made in our classrooms.

[02:54:06] Thank you for supporting us in fully implementing UFLY countywide. Our science of reading journey began in the summer of 2021. Teachers were seeing the major gaps in our students' skills. Also at

this time, a great deal of research was being released about the science of reading.

[02:54:23] Two of our first grade teachers spent many hours over the summer collaborating along with a special education teacher to figure out how to best meet the needs of our students. They knew what we were doing wasn't working. They began researching and doing professional development on their own time.

[02:54:40] They used this information to create a plan to implement in 2021-22 school year. Just in this first year, the data shows that the number of first grade students identified by PALS as falling below the benchmark dropped by 14%.

[02:54:58] The impact was amazing. Our K-2 teachers were astounded by these results and the impact seen in our first grade classrooms. In the summer of 2022, UFLY published a research-based, explicit, and systematic phonics program called Foundations.

[02:55:16] These two teachers, along with others, purchased the manual and began working hard over the summer to prepare for the upcoming year. The scope and sequence and components of this program were just what we needed. It put what our school had been working on into action.

[02:55:32] Other classroom teachers wanted in on this work and were eager to implement this in their own classrooms. I shared this desire with our school administration, and with their support, we purchased the UFLY manuals and K-2 fully embraced and implemented UFLY.

[02:55:49] It was a learning process, but our K-2 teachers began collaborating and sharing ideas. They visited and observed each other's classrooms and discussed what they were seeing. The number of identified students began dropping, and in the spring of 2023, we saw a 15% decrease from the fall of 2021, with only 15% of our students being identified.

[02:56:12] Next slide, please. In the spring of 2023, 90% of our K-2 students met the benchmark for the PALS spelling subtest. 92 percent of our kindergartners met the letter recognition benchmark and 93 percent meant the benchmark for letter sounds. Our students had not only were not only learning the skills but they were applying the skills. On top of that 21 percent of our first grade students met the high benchmark for the PALS assessment which means the state has determined that that their scores demonstrate

[02:56:50] they are no longer at risk. Research tells us that young children's alphabetic knowledge has been shown to be the best predictor of their later reading and spelling abilities. We were seeing this firsthand. The most exciting part is the impact that is being seen as we begin this year.

[02:57:08] We are excited to continue this work alongside the early literacy department in Loudoun County Public Schools. I would like to introduce to you the two exemplary teachers who led this charge and worked endless hours to make sure our students' needs were being met and showed our staff the impact that could be made.

[02:57:27] I would like to introduce Rita Welsh and Rosemary Malayo. So we found that explicit and systematic phonics instruction is what is necessary to get the results we were seeing.

[02:57:46] It's explicit in that nothing is left to chance. Each necessary phonics skill is taught with clear, concise language from the teacher. It's systematic because the skills build on each other and grow in complexity students practice previously learned skills repeatedly in subsequent lessons to provide

interleaved or spiraled practice because of you fly we are seeing that students can read and spell more sophisticated words than we have seen in the past students practice hearing all the sounds and words and are explicitly taught the spelling patterns associated with those sounds to read and spell words correctly an example of this is actually shown up there on that

[02:58:24] first picture of the kindergartner spelling vast that would that wouldn't have been possible with what we had formerly formerly during you fly lessons students get step-by-step practice with vowels spelling and reading with words in both isolation and in context so we are practicing reading passages and writing sentences also during that instruction thanks to the support of our administration at Catoclin first grade started implementing daily phonics instruction beginning in the fall of 2021. Since UFLY Foundations was not available at that time,

[02:58:59] we were using different resources. The results were great, as you saw, but the effort on our part as teachers was very cumbersome. We had to make every resource for every single lesson. It was extremely time-consuming. UFLY Foundations, on the other hand, is committed to making phonics instruction accessible to all students. In that effort, they provide all the materials necessary for their lessons and make implementation as easy as possible for teachers. We found UFLY to be a much more user-friendly and easier to implement program than anything we had tried previously,

[02:59:34] and the results have been quite impressive. And now here's Rita to give you a little bit more of an overview of the format. Good evening. Each core UFLY lesson includes eight steps and is taught over two days. Students develop reading proficiency and competence through drill and practice with basic skills, including phonemic awareness, systematic instruction of new skills and concepts, extensive opportunities to practice, and guided application in connected text. In the video segment we are about to watch, I am teaching the blending drill component of the UFLY lesson.

[03:00:13] The blending drill can help students build automaticity to blend sounds together to form words. The blending drill changes one grapheme, or letter, at a time in a series of carefully chosen words. In this lesson, students were practicing reading words with the initial grapheme being changed. We will be changing the T in tune to D to make the new word dune.

[03:00:38] I am using the virtual blending board provided as a free resource by uFly. The students also recognize that the silent E at the end of tune is bossing the vowel to say its name. We have fun with that with the long u sound if we could watch the video and then she's quiet right okay first

[03:01:05] word first word look at it first just look at it first all right ready set oh what do we notice is at the end before we start blending what is at the end yeah eliana yeah so what is happening to that vowel yeah it's it's saying it's me big girl okay you guys ready ready set blend tune yeah there are two ways you can say that ooh and you and yeah we wanted that

[03:01:44] ooh sound all right next one what happens if i change my beginning sound look at it carefully Ready, set, blend Nice, next word UFLY Foundations is designed to be used for core whole class instruction in the primary grades with resources for small group supplemental support It can also be used for small group instruction or intervention As a classroom teacher, it has been incredibly exciting to see the significant impact

[03:02:21] on student learning after implementing phonics-based literacy instruction. The skills students are learning provide a better opportunity for all students to learn how to read and write. Thank you. I'm

going to pass it back to Mrs. Plattberg. On our last slide, we wanted to show you a video of our students and their enthusiasm for reading.

[03:02:49] When words get tricky, I know what to do because I practice. My favorite part was writing the words. Reading in my superpower. Now I can send out all the words that I can read. Thank you for making me a strong reader. We are so proud of the hard work of our staff and students, and we thank the Early Literacy and Elementary Reading Department.

[03:03:16] Thank you so much for letting us share our journey with you tonight. I don't know if anybody has any questions that they want to ask of the teachers. Thank you so much, Ms. Plattenberg and team, for the overview and really insight about how the changes in early literacy curriculum have impacted students positively over the last few years.

[03:03:37] I have one question, and then I'll open it up to board members. I'd just like to know if you could give a little more detail about what the learning and transition process was like for teachers in taking the more structured approach towards teaching phonics. Well, it was actually very challenging, if you can imagine trying to completely convert the, take the curriculum from what we had been practicing with Teachers College and Lucy Calkins to a completely different type of teaching and a different way of teaching.

[03:04:13] And really, we had to change our mindset on how we wanted to make this approach. And there's so much research out there that really supports the transition to science of reading and phonics-based instruction that it was really not a difficult—it wasn't a difficult decision.

[03:04:37] And luckily, admin Mrs. Plattenberg was so incredibly supportive. And we knew it was a little bit risky, but we felt very strongly about what we saw was happening with all of the research. And we had both worked in the classrooms during hybrid year.

[03:04:58] And the limited amount of instruction we saw had a tremendously negative impact on our students and specifically our EL students. And we knew there had to be something better and something that would work, that would be more impactful in their learning process.

[03:05:18] And so when we started doing the research with the help of Kristen Beltz, who is also a special ed teacher at Catoctin, we really started digging into, okay, what will make this transition for us from one program to the other that are completely different ideas?

[03:05:36] And so, as Rosemary pointed out, it was a lot of work. It was a tremendous amount of work that we had to put together coming up with each lesson. But as we were doing it, we felt very passionate about it because we were seeing the changes that were happening just for this one year, this one time that we were trying this.

[03:05:58] And we actually started trying this a little bit during our hybrid year. And it was more towards the end of the year when we saw something, we need to do something different. And so that's what empowered us to say, okay, what can we do? And so we took the summer and really dug into it.

[03:06:16] So it was to take that leap into something new. It was really challenging, but it was also so rewarding to see that, yeah, this really works. And now that to see the data is backing up our thoughts and how we thought this should be implemented, it feels very rewarding.

[03:06:41] I think for me, it was, I've taught first grade. I've taught other grades for a long time. I've taught for a very long time. First grade for a long time as well. And reading is such a fundamental piece of first grade. And when we transitioned and we'd been working in units of study, I felt like we had those kids that learned to read, don't know exactly what we did, but some kind of magic happened.

[03:07:06] And I didn't know how to force that magic for kids who were struggling. And once we found science of reading resources, phonics resources, and started implementing those, that is how that magic happens across the board.

[03:07:23] those other readers learn anyway. They will learn through whatever we put in front of them. But this made it equitable and accessible to all. And as far as implementing UFLY specifically, it's so easy. So University of Florida Literacy Institute, they have slides for every single lesson.

[03:07:41] They have the blending board. They have a decodable passage we can print out. They have games to play. There's a very active UFLY Facebook community where the creators of the program are on there answering questions. so it's been easy. Once we got to UFLY, it was easy. Absolutely. Thank you so much. Board members, do you have any additional questions for the team? Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Knowing that Virginia is now going through an early literacy program, do you see alignment with your UFLY program and the way Virginia is pursuing, or do you see any challenges in that?

[03:08:16] We definitely do with the Virginia Literacy Act going into effect in 2024. This aligns exactly with it. It's explicit. It's systematic. It reaches all students. And we worked hard and we are kind of tackling things ahead of time. We printed out that literacy act. We're looking at it. We're starting now. We started two years ago, but we're really starting this year, making sure that everything that we're doing in the classroom when it comes to reading and writing is on par

[03:08:50] with what the state is looking for. Ms. Polipko and then Ms. Okadeke. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank you for your initiative on this and to commend you for taking that step forward and doing what is actually going to have the greatest impact on our kids ability to read I have personal experience with you fly and it is an incredible program and every single word you said tonight is true and so it's not only just that systematic instruction teaching these children the phonological awareness phonemic awareness skills that they need you're taking the guesswork out of your

[03:09:28] instruction you're getting the reinforcement by watching your you know watching the students grow and learn and you're seeing you're seeing the impact of that process come out in the data and and that's the whole package so I think I speak for a lot of people when I say more of this this is absolutely what we need for our for our students and I am so grateful that you have taken the step forward to do this kudos to all of you thank you for what you're doing for our children all of that and also so just thank you again for bringing this forward for sharing your

[03:10:03] journey i think for me it's also really encouraging to hear teachers say that it was easy to implement and knowing that you had done the research learned what you needed to learn to begin bringing these practices into your classrooms and to your kids to to expand the magic happening and i loved that thank you for that description but it's encouraging to know that ufly does make it easier because i know that that's been one of the concerns that we've been hearing from teachers about starting something new and the time frame to implement and all those things so hearing your experience is

[03:10:38] really encouraging and i know there are a lot of teachers who listen to the board meeting so hopefully they're getting some encouragement from your experience as well so thank you any additional questions? Mr. Mahedvi. Chair, I echo the same sentiments. I think thank you for the teachers and thank you for the administration for supporting that. I think that it's sort of a good sort of team experience when teachers are asking for it and they get supported by the administration.

[03:11:06] So again, kudos for that. So my question is again, you know, as you see the improvements in the early literacy, have you seen more improvements in other areas for the students too? Because I know it's Reading is a big part of that. What other improvements have you seen as a result of improvement in the early literacy?

[03:11:25] So I can say because we didn't really address the writing portion, we really were focused on the reading. But the writing, that's where we first, when we did the PALS at the end of the year that we started our whole journey, We were shocked by the spelling scores of our students because not only does it focus on the decoding of words, but also the encoding.

[03:11:52] Because when you can hear the sounds, then you can write the letters that match those sounds and write words. So it's been amazing in that regard. I agree. Everything Rita just said. And then on top of that, we used to do writer's workshop.

[03:12:09] And that was hard with the actual units of study. There was a lot of prep ahead of time. There was a lot of meetings with other teachers thinking we're doing something wrong because our kids are not able to do what is being asked.

[03:12:29] And what we realized is it's because they can put ideas down. They can't spell any of the words. They don't know how to punctuate anything. And what we're realizing now is now that they know how to spell words, their writing makes sense. We just had kindergartners that came to us in first grade.

[03:12:46] They were in kindergarten with UFLY last year. In first grade, just a few days in, spelling a word like plant with that N-T. I'm not saying all of the kids in the class got it, but most of them are getting that. That is impressive. Before UFLY, we would have had P-L-A-T.

[03:13:04] Well, P-A-T, even, actually. so when they can write we see them being able to then focus on getting their ideas out because they're not spending all their time trying to spell words as you saw in the video too the kids are highly engaged in the lessons we keep the pace going and they want to learn they want to learn those sounds they want to learn all those secrets I had one kiddo who was an extremely great reader last year he was above grade level but he loved learning the rules and going back to teach mom dad grandma grandpa and as an adult I didn't know these rules so it's just exciting to learn

[03:13:43] them and then piece them together and then watch even the kids who are exceeding benchmarks take it further any additional questions thank you again so much for being here tonight telling us about the great things going on at Catoctin Elementary we will now move to item nine which is our student school board representative comments and tonight we are welcoming back

[03:14:17] Caroline Spengler from John Champ High School and Ann Cherian from Freedom High School and we will start with Ms. Spengler. Good evening Chairman Sorokkin, Superintendent Spence, 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. Thank you for inviting me once again and for

giving me another opportunity to speak proudly about my school. I would also like to thank my SCA sponsors, my principal Mr. Tyson, and my fellow members for coming out to support me once more.

[03:14:48] As I sat down to write my speech for tonight, I reflected on the ideas that I spoke about last month, diversity and inclusion within the CHAMP community. Our community at CHAMP comes from a plethora of different backgrounds and unique identities that make it special. Yet we all thrive under the same motto, magic, making a greater individual commitment.

[03:15:05] At CHAMP, it's a group effort and every single person's contributions matter. So we encourage all CHAMP Knights to do their part in making our school and community a better place for all. During the 2022 to 2023 school year, we tackled the issue of participation in school events, spirit, etc.

[03:15:20] Filling student sections at football games and getting students to dress up for spirit days was a struggle. However, this year we've already successfully completed a full spirit week. We competed with our neighboring school, Light Ridge, in spirit week dress-out, fundraising, various sports events, culminating in the varsity football game.

[03:15:36] We're proud to say that we came out victorious. As I walked the halls at school, I felt a strong sense of pride and community as our school united as one force. I saw countless new and familiar faces showing up completely decked out in spirit, showing up to the football game, showing up to our fundraisers, etc.

[03:15:52] Our school and stands were crowded with knights who bled navy, silver, and white. The energy that radiated from our students as we cheered on and supported one another was truly gratifying. I am thrilled to see where the rest of the year will take us. According to the U.S. World and News rankings, Champ is in the top 5% of schools across the country.

[03:16:11] While there are many reasons why Champ has made it to the top 5%, I truly believe that none of it would be possible without the wonderful staff and admin who are constantly working to better the school. That's one of the qualities that I admire most about CHAMP, the strong relationships and bonds that teachers and students can create with one another.

[03:16:28] Each bond that is formed between the staff and students is individual to them. The teachers and staff at CHAMP are more than just that, for they are mentors and advisors that we can constantly count on. The constant work and effort they put into the school truly reflects and does not go unrecognized. We always say we are one Champ family, and as cliché as it may seem to some, I truly feel like our school and community is one family. There are so many ways I could explain to you all what it feels like to be a Knight, but I think the perfect way to describe it is we are family. We have each other's backs, hold each other accountable for our mistakes, rise up, do better, and always make our greater individual commitments. The bonds that I have formed at John Champ will

[03:17:06] stay with me for a lifetime, and I will forever use the lessons I've learned at school in my future. I am positive the same goes for every student at CHAMP. Finally, I would just like to thank the school board as well as everyone else in the room for making all of this possible. Thank you for all that you do for the children of Loudoun County as well as for your time.

[03:17:23] And Ms. Cherian. Good evening, everyone. My name is Ann Cherian, and I am the student council president and school board representative for Freedom High School.

[03:17:40] I'm honored to be back again, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak today. First, I would like to thank my student council advisor, Ms. Grace DeLeo, for helping me prepare for tonight but also for her continual support and dedication to our student body. I would also like to thank my principal Ms. Neelam Chaudhry for her leadership and meaningful contributions to the environment at Freedom. At the last school board meeting I was given the opportunity to share information about Freedom High School and today I am so glad I get to speak about Freedom even more.

[03:18:09] While we've only been in school for a few short weeks our students and staff came back better than ever ready to learn, ready to help out, and ready to be true Freedom Eagles. On the first day students were welcomed back by the marching band cheerleaders our freedom ambassadors team a red carpet and balloon bouquets getting everyone excited and ready to start off another great year together after having just one class our SCA put together a school-wide game spirit day and whole school pep rally for the second day of school to continue our school spirit it was all a great success with students participating in our game and earning prizes almost all of our students wearing their best black gear for our blackout spirit day and an

[03:18:48] amazing back-to-school pep rally at the end of the day to reintroduce our student body, or introduce in the case of our freshmen, to the amazing and unified environment that comes with our school spirit. And continuing with our school spirit, as of yesterday when we released our theme to the student body, Freedom High School has officially entered homecoming season. On October 7th, RSCA is hosting the Golden Globes FHS HOKO edition for our homecoming dance. Our overall theme is based on movie genres such as westerns, musicals, fantasy, and action. As the largest high school in the county we also have the largest participation at our dance with over 1,000 students attending each year. And

[03:19:25] while we are extremely excited about our dance we also cannot wait for all of the amazing activities we have planned for that week including a homecoming spirit week, rock painting and hallway decorating competitions, a pep rally, homecoming court, football game, and after several years of hiatus we are thrilled to announce the return of the Freedom High School homecoming parade.

[03:19:45] It's definitely going to be a busy week at Freedom but it's a week that we all look forward to and love. But besides all of the fun and excitement that Freedom offers, our school works hard to ensure the academic success of every student who enters our doors. Our Academic Support Center will be open for business every block of the day starting the last week of this month, providing students with the opportunity to work with peer tutors to help with homework or test preparation. In addition, our Honor Society tutors stay after school twice a week and even come in on Saturdays to help and our leadership academy is a place for students to work with mentors for semester to figure out post high school plans and to provide you with a prime

[03:20:24] example of the academic success of freedom eagles i have to mention the class of 2023 we had three students attend ivy league schools and one student attend a seven sister school the highest gpa for their class was a 4.84 and together the freedom class of 2023 was offered over 15 million dollars in scholarships. Seeing these stats, I can only imagine what the class of 2024 will achieve.

[03:20:49] In less than a month, Freedom High School has done, is doing, and will continue to do amazing things. From the moment that I walked in from my last first day of school, I felt the kindness, spirit, and inclusivity that Freedom always offers to anyone who walks through our doors. Our student body and staff continue to live by our motto, where there is unity, there is freedom.

[03:21:09] As a senior working on college applications and trying to get through my last year of high school, I can look back and confidently say that this incredible community at Freedom has impacted me in so many ways. My freshman self would have never believed that I'd become the president, speak at school board meetings, or even participate in anything remotely related to school spirit.

[03:21:28] But as soon as I joined SCA, along with so many other clubs and organizations, met amazing teachers who nurtured my leadership skills and interacted with a community of diverse and incredible students, I saw myself slowly becoming the person I am today. Someone who uncovered a passion for leadership, who has been introduced to so many wonderful people, and who loves dressing up for Spirit Days and cheering at pep rallies.

[03:21:50] So I'm grateful to Freedom for the last few years, and I can't wait to experience my last year as a Freedom Eagle. Thank you once again for this chance to speak about Freedom High School, and I'm honored to have gotten the opportunity to serve as a school board representative. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:22:12] That will bring us to item 10, the superintendent's report. And for our first report from our new superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence. Dr. Spence, I feel like I've been introducing you in phases over the last few meetings.

[03:22:28] But since this is your first school board meeting up here on the dais with us, I wanted to one last time welcome you to Loudoun County Public Schools. I know the first few weeks that you've been here have been busy and you've visited a lot of schools and done a lot to try and keep the ground running.

[03:22:44] So I look forward to hearing what you've been up to and your entry plan and everything else that's in your report here tonight. So I'll turn it over to you, Dr. Spence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, board members. And thank you also to all of our students, our parents, our staff, and our community members.

[03:23:00] You know, Mr. Chairman, as you said, my first two weeks as superintendent here in LCPS have been really, in my estimation, just absolutely phenomenal. I have thoroughly enjoyed my school visits. I've enjoyed meeting with school leadership. I have enjoyed meeting with our community members, our parents, and so many students over the last few days.

[03:23:21] And as you'll see during my report this evening, I plan to continue to do that, to meet with all stakeholders through community listening sessions, visit our schools, host individual and small group meetings, and so on, because establishing strong relationships and trust remain the foundations upon which I lead and approach this work.

[03:23:40] So this evening, my intention is to share my six-month entry plan with the school board. Please note the PDF of this entry plan is attached in the board docs as well. And throughout my first six months, I will be frequently reporting out on the progress on this plan. But without further ado, let's just dig right into what's in the plan.

[03:24:00] The plan starts, importantly for me, with my personal values. The values that are shown on this slide are woven throughout the entry plan and guide how I will work to implement the actions that are set forth in the plan. And so first, let me say that our work together will ensure that we are creating a sense of belonging.

[03:24:18] I believe as educators that we must foster the inherent uniqueness of our students and our staff and create a sense of belonging where all feel valued, heard, included, and can express their authentic selves. So it's important to me that we nurture the unique sets of talents, beliefs, and values of our individuals.

[03:24:36] And I will do that by working to build trust through listening. Listening through two-way communication, as we all know, builds mutual understanding and trust and it helps us forge a shared purpose towards 1LCPS so we can be the very best school division we can be for our students and for our community.

[03:24:54] I'll also be focusing on creating a culture of collaboration and high expectations. It's important to me that all children receive a world-class education filled with opportunities where children can achieve their dreams and their hopes. and together those values inform a vision which is shaping my objectives for this plan which are here on this slide. So this entry plan clearly defines how I believe we will begin to move forward which is together. As we identified transition objectives it was very important to me to use feedback which had already been provided by members of our LCPS community as they were talking about

[03:25:31] what they were hoping to see in their next superintendent. So a review of that survey data received from our parents our students and our staff and community members we've revealed some themes amongst those themes open communication prioritizing equity and access for all students ensuring student safety and well-being and an emphasis on employee retention all made it to the top of the list and you will see those themes woven into the entry plan and specifically this plan is framed by six transition objectives which capture those themes you can see those on the screen, but they are to establish a culture of trust and transparency, ensured unified governance

[03:26:09] by strengthening the relationship between the superintendent and school board, prioritizing school safety and student wellness, supporting a culture of innovation and academic excellence, providing an intentional focus on equitable programming, and increasing organizational effectiveness and efficiency. So progress on this entry plan will be described in three distinct phases over my first six months as superintendent we're calling those phases engage in power and enrich phase one of the entry plan will consist primarily of engaging with the community to learn to listen and establish relationships as i've said many times relationships are the

[03:26:48] heart of our work and they must be the bedrock of everything we do the connections with students teachers staff parents and communities those are created by communication by listening and by learning together, and they lay a foundation for trust. Phase two of my plan is about partnering with our key stakeholders to continue the great work that we're doing and to build upon the culture of high expectations and excellence for all here in LCPS. The community, together with parents, students, teachers, staff, and administrators, supports our schools, and we all know we cannot achieve a world-class education for our students without that collaborative relationship. Phase

[03:27:26] Phase three of the plan focuses on the next steps that we will take together to identify opportunities for growth and implement data-based recommendations in the areas of instruction, learning environment, and staff development and retention as we seek to continue to enrich our division.

[03:27:44] To build upon the great work that's already happening in this entry plan, you're going to see clear connections between the 1LCPS strategic plan and my transition objectives. In fact, each of those

objectives is embedded in the areas of focus on the screen here, which are organized by 1LCPS goals. For our purposes this evening, I'll briefly review these focus areas, but the full plan will be found on the website after tonight.

[03:28:07] And in addition, I do plan to communicate consistently about progress on the plan and what we're learning. I'll be providing periodic updates for the Loudoun County community and for our school board at future meetings, and findings will ultimately be included on the website and in a post-entry plan update to the board.

[03:28:26] So as we look at first area of focus, We know that students are the center of our work, and with that, examining instructional assessment and student opportunity practices and pathways will be my first focus area. Meeting with students and other stakeholders to understand their perspectives will help develop action steps and strategies to meet the needs of each and every one of the students we serve.

[03:28:49] Phase one includes meeting with various stakeholders to learn about students' lived experience in our schools and in our division with an emphasis on academic success, understanding how our curriculum meets their learning needs, and understanding how we're supporting student behavioral and mental health needs.

[03:29:06] Phase two of Empowering Our Students focuses on analyzing academic achievement, student reporting group achievement, college and career readiness data, attendance rate, graduation rate, and suspension rate data, and more. I do intend to initiate a special education audit to benchmark our work against best practices and review prior recommendations against new recommendations to see our progress, and I do intend to monitor the work of the Mental Health Task Force, review school improvement processes, and assess current division literacy and math initiatives.

[03:29:40] Phase three will include understanding the degree to which instructional practices are clearly articulated and consistently implemented in our classrooms, reviewing our curriculum documents to ensure that's the case, examining and implementing any recommendations from a special education audit, sharing opportunities for growth in our school improvement process, and ensuring mental health processes and resources are streamlined across the division.

[03:30:04] Area of focus two is exemplary staff. We all understand that without exemplary staff, we cannot and will not have an outstanding school system. Therefore, in this second focus area, I will be examining our existing hiring and retention practices, meet with school-based staff hold listening sessions across the county to learn more about their needs and conduct an analysis of initiatives and professional learning plans which are intended to support staff growth and staff morale. As you can see on this slide it's important to me to learn about LCPS from the staff perspective again through listening engaging in dialogue and reviewing key artifacts

[03:30:41] and information. I'm not going to read all of the detail on this slide but I'll note that we will conduct a review of compensation onboarding procedures and staff development processes as They are essential in ensuring we have not only high-performing teams, but also the most high-qualified staff in every classroom, building, and office in LCPS.

[03:30:59] And, of course, phase three will be working towards implementing database recommendations and any needed revisions. Third area of focus is enriched division. And for this area of focus, it's important

we acknowledge and support that the foundation of student growth and learning is an inclusive, caring, and rigorous learning environment.

[03:31:19] Students must be cared for. They must be challenged. They must be surrounded by adults who love them to bring their best effort every day. A clear and consistent division culture, effective division-wide communication practices, and modernized facilities all support schools where student learning thrives.

[03:31:36] Part of my entry plan is to establish a great relationship not only with our students, parents, staff, and greater community, but also with you, our board. And part of my learning includes assessing the degree to which existing structures serve to strengthen our work together to support our students and staff.

[03:31:52] This part of the plan also includes analyzing the budget and the CIP process to ensure I'm well positioned to collaborate with the board and to collaborate with our county officials. And it's very important to me that our processes are designed to support students' educational needs and their success.

[03:32:08] The fourth area of focus is engaged community. True educational excellence and opportunities for all students is only achieved as we build and strengthen meaningful relationships with families and with our community. Holding listening sessions across the county, meeting with key communicators throughout LCPS, and assessing current family engagement structures and strategies will provide me with an opportunity to learn more about LCPS at a deeper level while also strengthening those relationships.

[03:32:37] Additionally, I will prioritize school safety and wellness and creating a sense of belonging for all. As you can see, each area of focus thus far consists of deep engagement with either staff, students, parents, community members, and partners. And this area of focus is, of course, no different.

[03:32:53] In this phase two, I plan to assess our current family engagement practices. Ensuring all of our families feel welcome, included, and supported is important to me. More importantly, it's incredibly important to the success of our students, and I will initiate a communications audit to better understand how we are serving their needs.

[03:33:13] I also intend to establish a blue ribbon panel on school safety so that I, working with our community partners, can assess our safety processes and protocols here in LCPS. While I think we do a tremendous job, we want to know if there's more work to do.

[03:33:29] And the final phase will consist of acting upon information learned in Phase 1 and 2. More information on the specifics of those actions will be shared, as I noted, with the board and the community once the audit and the panels convene. So everything I've seen and learned already tells me I have come to an incredible place.

[03:33:48] The work that LCPS has done educating and graduating students is some of the best in the state. This community is made up of outstanding students, deeply caring parents, dedicated businesses, and nonprofit partners, and some of the most knowledgeable and hardworking staff I've met.

[03:34:04] As a career educator, I've come to a community where our goals are aligned. We want our students to be cared for, to feel safe, to be surrounded again by adults who love them, and to receive the best education, a world-class education, so they can achieve their dreams and their hopes for a bright future.

[03:34:25] I want to assure you that this six-month plan overview is only the start of our way forward together, and I very much look forward to working with you on this. So before I continue with the superintendent's report, I am happy, Mr. Chairman, to pause here and take questions if you feel that's appropriate.

[03:34:43] Sure. Board members, do you have any questions regarding the entry plan? Go forth and conquer. Excellent. It's probably fairly rare we get you speechless. All right, on to the superintendent's report then.

[03:35:01] So we'll begin with good news and achievements from around the division. As you know, at each board meeting, we celebrate our students and our staff achievements and the good news. And so I just want to talk briefly again about my first week. I thoroughly enjoyed, as I said, that first week here in LCPS. On my first day, I stopped by Seneca Ridge Middle School, where I learned about their world language programs, their science and STEM programs, and I met their employee of the week, who was a teacher who started her career with LCPS and has been here for more than 20 years.

[03:35:28] I also visited Rolling Ridge and Sterling Elementary. I visited Parkview High School on that first day. Later in the week, I had the chance to visit Broadbrown High School, Leesburg Elementary, and Loudoun County High School, and I made a stop at the historic Douglas Education Campus to learn more about the programs there. Spending time with our students reminds me and serves to remind us all that these learners are the purpose of our work together. So know that I do plan to visit all 98 of our schools before the year is out, and I plan to continue to meet other people as well. I stopped by, for example, the first principals advisory meeting. I met with our SEAC, I met with our equity committee, and our gifted

[03:36:07] advisory committee, and I met with a number of community leaders at the Loudoun Education Foundation's Board of Trustees meeting. This morning we had the opportunity to go to Simpson Middle School and to celebrate the grand opening of the Think Big Space. And so those are the kinds of opportunities that we need to have together to celebrate the good news here in Loudoun County.

[03:36:27] And as I mentioned in my entry plan, my goal last week in this are simple, get to know our students, get to know our community, get to know our staff, get to know our schools, something I continue to look forward to. So let's now talk about other good news around the division. First of all, let me mention that Jeff Roundsley, current principal of Willard Middle School, has been appointed to the position of director of teaching and learning K-12. Mr. Roundsley is a graduate of Loudoun County Public Schools, having attended Sully Elementary, Sterling Middle, and Parkview High School. He holds a bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in secondary social

[03:37:02] studies education from the University of Virginia, as well as a master's degree in educational leadership from George Mason University. He taught social studies at Parkview High School and has served as the school improvement and achievement coordinator at the district level. Mr. Roundsley opened John Champ High School as assistant principal in 2012 before being appointed to the position of principal of Willard Intermediate School in 2018. During his time there, he successfully led the transition of the school to an LCPS middle school. And we want to welcome Jeff to teaching and learning so congratulations to him. Next construction progress continues on Henrietta

[03:37:41] Lacks Elementary School and Watson Mountain Middle School. Both projects are well underway as you can see in some of these pictures and on track to open next fall 2024. Exterior finishes as well as building systems such as mechanical electrical and plumbing are being installed as the school

environment begins to be established for our future students and staff. Lee Boyd has been selected to be the principal of Henrietta Lacks Elementary and Lenny Compton has been selected to serve as the principal of Watson Mountain Middle. Next, Fibers of Hope. Fibers of Hope, a Farmwell Station middle school learning project that is advised by family and consumer science teacher

[03:38:19] Amy Ng and includes 50 of her students recently earned a \$10,000 community service award from the Lead for Change Challenge. The award split between Farmwell Station and the Loudoun Homeless shelter. Last school year, the Fibers of Hope team prepared a day's worth of meals for that shelter.

[03:38:37] The team also raised awareness about homelessness and the needs of the Loudon Homeless shelter by conducting a paper products drive. On February 22nd, students there delivered the meals and the paper products to that shelter, and the meals fed 70 people and helped stock the shelter's freezer. The funds that Farmwell Station earned from the service award will ensure that the Fibers of Hope project will continue to grow. Congratulations to Megan Tucker, the Dean of Curriculum, STEAM teacher, and instructional facilitator for technology at Hillsborough Charter Academy for being named the A. Scott Crossfield Aerospace Educator of the Year by the National Aviation

[03:39:16] Hall of Fame. Ms. Tucker is the 36th recipient of this honor, which is presented to teachers for outstanding accomplishments in aerospace education. Her STEAM classes place an emphasis on aerospace technology and engineering she's also created a steam club called girls in gear and collaborated with national organizations to implement special programs miss tucker will be presented with the award at the president's reception as a part of the national aviation hall of fame's 59th enshrinement events on september the 21st victor cortez a physical

[03:39:51] education teacher at sugarland elementary school and lead coach of the girls rule the court tennis program received national recognition from the United States Tennis Association Mid-Atlantic Region Foundation as the 2023 Tennis in the Classroom winner. The award pays tribute to those who exemplify the guiding principles of community, character, and well-being and recognizes his efforts to introduce thousands of student-athletes to the game. Mr. Cortez was recognized for his achievements during the CITI Open, the City Open tennis tournament in Washington, D.C. During the event, girls through the court participants met and provided a ceremonial escort for professional

[03:40:31] tennis players. Chad Nicolardi, an environmental health and safety specialist, was recently honored by the state fire marshal's office in recognition of his academic achievement in the National Fire Protection Association course. He took this course as part of the partnership between LCPS and the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's office to better assist with life safety inspections. So congratulations to Chad. Peter Johnson, a career and technical education teacher at Rockridge High School who also serves as the Technical Theater Director for Rockridge Performing Arts, has been named Inspirational Theater Educator of the Year by the Educational Theater Association. This award,

[03:41:09] which celebrates the role of theater educators in shaping the future of performing arts, will be officially presented to Mr. Johnson at the upcoming National Theater Education Conference, and we congratulate Mr. Johnson. New for 2023-2024 school year, LCPS is piloting its first middle school intramural sports program. Four middle schools will participate, Harper Park, River Bend, Seneca Ridge, and Smarts Mill. Intramural sports are an extension of the school day and reinforce leadership qualities,

teamwork, respect, integrity, and accomplishment within fun competitions. This program is open to girls and boys at all skill levels, and the sports included

[03:41:48] in this pilot are flag football, volleyball, basketball, and soccer. When I visited Seneca Ridge Middle School just this week, the principal shared that their program had already held their first football game literally kicking off the program at our middle schools. Riverside High School alum Chris Stevenson, who is a senior at the U.S. Naval Academy, and Briarwoods High School alum Taylor Vanderbiesen, who serves as Navy's assistant volleyball coach, returned to Loudoun with the Navy volleyball squad. Both of them shared how LCPS had prepared them for the future.

[03:42:22] This feature, which was shared on social media, is part of the Office of Communications We Are One Competing Together series, which highlights sportsmanship and shows that even though these athletes have graduated, they still represent LCPS values. Well, that's a lot of good news, but let me move on to our operational updates. Begin with an update on the evolution of the fiscal year 24 budget. On September the 6th, the General Assembly took action to approve the revised budget bill for the fiscal year 24. We anticipate a larger budget discussion with the board once the governor has signed the bill and the budget has been formally adopted but of

[03:43:01] significance for lcps are the following items there is money in this budget for one-time flexible grant funding to support the all-in va state plan all stands for attendance to address chronic absenteeism literacy to support the virginia literacy act and learning to address learning loss through tutoring initiatives we've received initial information that the governor's recommending flex funding of 70% towards learning and tutoring, 20% towards literacy, and 10% towards attendance. The budget also includes funding for 2% pay increases on top of the 5%

[03:43:38] already in the state's budget. We do want to note LCPS's fiscal year 24 budget provided pay increases averaging 5.8%. And finally, the budget includes funding for additional support positions by increasing the support cap to 24 per 1,000 students up from 21.

[03:43:56] We are awaiting official numbers from VDOE, and as we receive more information, we do intend to continue the discussion with the board. Starting last spring, the Office of Student Mental Health Services established a task force of LCPS departments and school leaders to address the complex issue of chronic absenteeism.

[03:44:16] With support from the Office of Communications, the Office of Mental Health Services is connecting with principals to provide them with resources such as the social media posts which are shown here as well as other messaging tools to remind parents and students that school attendance is essential. The two offices also work together to create the attendance resources web page which provides information and tips for parents about school attendance. The Department of Digital Innovation and the Office of Research Assessment and School Improvement are supporting with technological approaches to help bring focused awareness on student attendance and in addition the office of student

[03:44:52] health mental student mental health services is revising policy 8140 student attendance requirements and procedures and the associated regulations this policy and regulation will be presented to the board in the coming months on thursday september the 7th the virginia department of education released the school quality profiles and achievement data for school divisions across the commonwealth this data included among other items sol test results percentage of students taking AP tests and on-time graduation rates.

[03:45:24] While staff is currently busy analyzing that data, there are some highlights on the screen for LCPS. While their VDOE data may continue to be updated throughout the month of September, these initial VDOE numbers are good for LCPS.

[03:45:41] As I mentioned, staff is analyzing the data and preparing to share the action steps we'll take to address this over the coming school year. As a part of the data release, it is worth mentioning that VDOE also released new reporting terms for student achievement instead of a simple proficient or fail scale assessment results are now in three categories high proficient slash advanced low proficient and fail in alignment with our strategic plan updates noted here and previously shared with the board staff does plan to share the most up-to-date videoe and lcps student achievement

[03:46:15] data in detail at the october 10th school board meeting on september 6th the department of teaching and learning in partnership with support services and the parkview high school administrative team held a community meeting at Parkview to discuss the upcoming project to replace that high school staff reviewed the planning process for the project at Parkview as well as potential special programs being considered for the school the architectural firm GWWO was on hand to introduce the project team and listen to comments from the community so the theme of the meeting was listening to the voice of our community and the discussion began with asking what is special about Parkview

[03:46:53] High School and what instructional programs should be considered community members attending were engaged and shared their vision for the new school. And then finally as I talked about earlier I look forward to meeting with our LCPS community and we will be doing that at an upcoming series of community listening sessions. Starting later this month I'll be visiting each school cluster for an opportunity to dialogue with our staff and then with the community with the goal of listening and learning about each of our school communities. Each staff and community session will be followed by a 30-minute meet and greet. The first session is on September 20th that will be held at Broadwood

[03:47:29] high school that session will dedicated for staff dialogue begins at five and the community session begins at seven i do hope those listening tonight plan to attend one of these sessions and i look forward to hearing about your experiences with lcps for more information please see the website that is listed up there on the slide mr chairman that concludes the operational update thank you so much thank you dr spence we will now move to item 11 on our agenda which is public comment Oh, there's a question. Ms. Reaser. Mr.

[03:48:05] Chairman, would it be okay if I had a follow-up question on something that was presented tonight? Yes, go ahead. Thank you. Thanks very much for the update, Dr. Spence. I just have a quick question about the 2% potential pay raise that came out of the state budget. Does that have to be matched with local appropriations?

[03:48:22] There is a local requirement. We are looking at possible scenarios for what that would look like and having a little bit of initial conversation with county staff. We do intend once that's finalized to come back to the board with some recommendations. Okay and then my second question was regarding the the funding specifically with regard to attendance. Will that be coming back to the board like the plan for how to use the one-time funding to increase attendance? It will And we're trying to figure out exactly how that money is going to come to us.

[03:48:56] And then as it does, we'll come back to the board and talk about plans, not just for attendance, but also for high dosage tutoring, which is one of the requirements for that flexible spending. And so we

will definitely come back and have a further conversation with the board about how all of that will happen.

[03:49:14] Thank you very much. Okay, we'll now move to item 11, 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 community members and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system.

[03:49:36] Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Based on the number of speakers tonight, which is 19, and the overall agenda, all speakers have been allotted two minutes each for public comment. Please be advised that speakers who miss 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.

[03:49:58] 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.

[03:50:31] Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, profanity, or other-like breaches of respect, nor may speakers 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.

[03:50:54] 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 remainder of the meeting.

[03:51:13] 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.

[03:51:34] Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom 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 meetings is available through LCPS-TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43.

[03:51:56] The live stream of the meeting may also be viewed on the LCPS-TV website. So we will begin with our in-person speakers tonight. Our first speaker is Brenda Bengston, to be followed by Sandy Solomon. Kudos to Dr. Smith, and a warm welcome to Dr. Spence.

[03:52:24] Thanks for showcasing students, highlighting the positive efforts of LCPS and the security. Loudoun watched a concerted effort to paint our schools negatively for two years, with politics, buzzwords, theatrics, and violent threats to candidates, electeds, and their children.

[03:52:46] A coordinated state of hate ensued for LGBTQ and other marginalized students. Outsiders showed up to disrupt a school board meeting in a coup. People held rallies to erase our students. Out-of-state hired hands pretended to be Loudoners.

[03:53:06] Recall efforts failed in the courts. Book banners sought to keep other people's children from their freedom to read. A candidate read high school-level material in front of elementary students. The governor's tattle on a teacher line backfired.

[03:53:23] He refuses to share those public comments and now targets our students as unworthy and seeks to out them. Parents Matter never met all parents. To allies of LGBTQ friends or teaching an accurate history to reflect diversity, we get it.

[03:53:44] So it's unclear why we would cancel counseling. Designate hate groups are here, and 890 incidences of hate speech and racial epithets were reported last year. Hate speech is not free speech.

[03:54:01] To the post, what are blacks superior at? I honor 50 years of hip-hop and the wisdom of Tupac. Real eyes, real eyes, real lies. Thank you. Sandy Sullivan to be followed by Kelly Farris.

[03:54:21] Good evening. I'm Sandy Sullivan, an elementary school teacher who currently serves the members of the Loudon Education Association as their president. Dr. Spence, welcome to your first day behind the dais at the school board.

[03:54:39] LA looks forward to meeting with you later this week and working with you in the years to come. School board members, policy 70-30 staff time schedules is an information item tonight. This policy does, in its current form and its potential future form, deeply impact your employees.

[03:54:55] So let's briefly examine it in the lens that should be used in order to work toward being the employer of choice LCPS says it strives to be, in order to prevent LCPS from developing or revising policies in ways that ultimately are not educator-friendly, and in order to ensure LCPS does not move forward in a way that will ultimately harm its ability to retain current employees.

[03:55:19] I do sincerely acknowledge that the proposed language in this current redline version of the policy has shown improvement from its iteration at the May 25 HRTD committee meeting. The largest concern LEA still has is the present language being considered still extends work beyond the contract date.

[03:55:39] More discussion about what occasionally means is needed. How many times per month would duties extend beyond the work date? If those duties become regular and ordinary, that changes the spirit of the contract requiring unpaid work. If seven and a half hour days grow to eight hours, let's say, the conditions of employment have changed.

[03:56:00] Stop times and parameters must be adopted. Please be reminded of what you already know. Your educators are devoted to working with their students and fellow educators. But as additional work continues to be added as an expectation and nothing is taken away, LCPS, we can do better.

[03:56:20] Thank you. Kelly Ferris to be followed by Megan Jenkins. Megan Jenkins to be followed by Cheryl Underchain.

[03:56:40] Hello, Mr. Spence. Welcome to Lowen County and our notorious, infamous school board. This school board has been a worldwide sensation and number one in the news cycle for the past four years because they have been using our children as pawns to insert a woke, radical, political agenda. Will you be

different, Mr. Spence? I wish I could say that you have big shoes to fill, but there are no shoes and you are standing barefoot. Our former Super Nintendo's Scott Ziegler was fired after he covered up two sexual assaults in order to pass a transgender gender policy. Before the policy passed, parents were shouting from the rooftops that a policy like

[03:57:19] this would open the door to predators and we were right. But unfortunately, we were ignored. In fact, parents being ignored and mistreated has been a theme for the past four years. Parents are the primary educators of our children and it is the role of the parent to teach morality, not the government. The majority of parents in this district do not want policy 8040, pornographic books or SEL Marxism. The listening sessions in the community are disingenuous. The time for listening is over. It's time for action. Please put concerned parents who are also taxpayers at

[03:57:55] the head of the table where we belong. As a first step and as a gesture of goodwill, Mr. Spence, I request that you show all of us public speakers on video when we come up here to speak. It has been two years since we have been shown on video. Also, I'm a member of the group Moms for Liberty Loudoun County. We advocate for our God-given parental rights and push back against government overreach. Our chapter is 400 members strong, and we will continue to keep a close eye on what children are being taught in schools. And I have a little bit of time left, and I want to say there's no such thing as hate speech. There's freedom of speech, and just because we don't agree with

[03:58:34] leftist ideology does not mean you get to have your views, and we do not get to have ours. We love everybody thank you thank you Cheryl Underchain to be followed by Abby Platt welcome Aaron Spence I'm Cheryl Underchain and I've had children in LCPS for the past 16 years my youngest are seniors this year and if I'm being honest I'm a little bit relieved for when June rolls around so I don't have to deal with the circus we've experienced over the last three

[03:59:11] and a half years as you embark on your journey with the Loudoun community I'd like to offer you a few things to consider. You mentioned in your presentation about the latest DOE SOL test scores. Statewide, they're abysmal. Are ours a little higher? Yes. But our standards are some of the lowest in the nation. Acknowledging the problem is the first step in making things right. And as you know, Virginia kept schools closed longer than almost every other state. Learning loss is not a right-wing conspiracy theory. And I urge you to please address and tackle this head on. It's really

[03:59:47] pathetic that it's been two years and this issue has yet to be prioritized by the school board. Parents are not the enemy. Advocating for your children is called good parenting. So I urge you to step out of your echo chamber and engage with parents who have differing opinions. Also get back to the basics in the curriculum and stop adding more admin jobs and get the funding down to the classroom level where it will make a difference for teachers as well as students. And please make a proclamation and commitment not to implement any crazy COVID mandates. We see masks already

[04:00:22] coming back elsewhere, and that worries me. They did more harm than good. Lastly, it would go a long way to build confidence in the community if you and this board would release the independent report. It's going to come out anyway at some point. Also, you mentioned in your presentation your willingness to meet with what you called non-traditional groups. I chair the Loudoun chapter of Moms for Liberty, and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

[04:00:49] I'll get in touch with Ms. Polifco, who's my board rep, and see if she can help me coordinate that. Thank you. Thank you. Abby Platt, to be followed by Beth Hess. I want to speak to the measure that

Ms. Polifco included on the agenda this evening with regard to social and emotional learning and the ability to opt out.

[04:01:16] Time at school should be dedicated to teaching our children to read, write, and do arithmetic. I have attempted to opt out of the social-emotional learning, but of course received multiple calls from my children's school counselors explaining that even though I marked a box, I cannot effectively, in practical terms, opt my children out of any of that instruction.

[04:01:40] Should I choose to keep that box marked with my high schooler, she will not be able to talk to the school counselor about course selection or college preparation. It is obvious to me that this is a way to compel participation. While I can opt my children out of specific large events, perhaps discussing high-level topics like drug awareness, SEL is woven into the curriculum and into morning minutes.

[04:02:06] I find it particularly troubling as a parent to be given an opt-out box that ultimately means nothing. My littlest guy is dyslexic and needs specific help with reading. I would really prefer that those first 40 minutes of the day be dedicated to a reading foundation, something that will impact his ability to learn in all other topics and subjects and will enable him to progress academically long-term.

[04:02:37] Anything that has to do with emotional counseling should be an opt-in, as it is in many other states, and leave mental health to qualified professionals. Next, I want to briefly mention how much I appreciate Sandy Sullivan's reminder to take care of our teachers, who we love and appreciate.

[04:02:53] I'll remind this board that you have the ability, the power, you hold the reins of the purse. You can meet their needs without adding hefty administrative costs that will come back every single year. Thank you. Thank you.

[04:03:10] Beth Hess to be followed by Daniel Brubaker. Good evening. The Equity Committee had a meeting on September 7th and invited Jennifer Boudre from the far-left political organization Equality Loudoun.

[04:03:27] That was to give her opinion on Governor Youngkin's model policies. Brenda Sheridan, the Equity Committee Chair, at one point asked Ms. Boudre to describe the partnership between LCPS and Equality Loudoun. Boudre was quick to catch this and immediately said there is no formal partnership.

[04:03:46] Given the dishonesty that is a core competency of the school board, we can only wonder what the truth really is. Equality Loudoun is a Democrat lobbying organization currently campaigning against Governor Youngkin's model policies on privacy, dignity, and respect, and has no business advising the school board.

[04:04:04] Boudre claimed, without a shred of evidence or explanation, that Youngkin's policies will not keep kids safe. She also states that the model policies may be illegal. This too is absurd as on pages 6 through 9 of the document the state supports its conclusions Referencing laws such as the first amendment the 14th amendment title 9 of 1972 FERPA and various code of Virginia paragraphs a key component of young kids model policies is to protect female students in their private spaces Such as bathrooms and locker rooms and that boys cannot compete in girls sports. This is common sense

[04:04:43] It's where we used to be as a nation in a more rational time, until radical leftists got elected to school boards and started creating chaos to satisfy their political agenda. Equality Loudoun does not care about the rights of all students.

[04:04:58] Allowing boys in girls' locker rooms or in girls' sporting events disrespects every single female student in this county. We have an election coming up, and it's vital that every single Democrat running be defeated so that Youngkin's policies will be implemented.

[04:05:14] Otherwise, LCPS will violate law and ignore the model policies, and the board will continue to have more legal troubles. Thank you. Daniel Brubaker, to be followed by Katie Wheeler. Welcome, Dr. Spence.

[04:05:43] One of the amazing and beautiful things about our country and our founding is what is recognized in the Pledge of Allegiance and in the national anthem, Liberty and Justice for All, Land of the Free.

[04:06:02] We recognize in our Bill of Rights, actually in our Declaration of Independence, that certain rights are given by God and therefore not revocable by anybody. We've put those into our laws. We came, we've brought them further into reality.

[04:06:17] We had some pre-existing conditions at the time of our founding. Unfortunately, one of them, involuntary servitude, took 89 years and a little bit more after the Declaration of Independence to be taken away and to come into line, into consistency with what we said we believed.

[04:06:32] One of the things that I just want to talk about today is just, I read for the second time today, the new model policy again. And I noticed something when I was at the back-to-school nights several weeks ago that I just wanted to address with all of you.

[04:06:50] One theme that I see mentioned that I caught when the equity statement was read at the back-to-school nights was this issue of the First Amendment. And it seems to be recognized in the new statement of purpose of the model policies.

[04:07:08] The department is mindful of constitutional protections that prohibit governmental entities from requiring individuals to adhere to or adopt a particular ideological belief. And that is correct. We do not establish religion in this country. And there are things, as I read the equity statement in that, in that, that are metaphysical assertions that are, I believe, amount to the establishment of religion. I wrote an article on this, danielbrubaker.com, called LCPS Announces Establishment of Religion and Persecution of Dissenters. Anybody who can want to see more about that.

[04:07:43] But thank you very much. Thank you. Katie Wheeler, to be followed by David Garver. The importance of honoring Constitution Day. On September 17, 1787, after the delegates had had spent five months crafting the Constitution, Ben Franklin was asked, what do we have, a republic or a monarchy?

[04:08:13] A republic, if you can keep it, he said. Today, there is no mention of Constitution Day on the main LCPS website or calendar. A few individual schools mention it. So I inquired and received a timely reply from my school board rep, Jeff Morris, with confirmation from Neal Slevin and Daniel Smith that there were plans in place to observe Constitution Day next week as required by federal law and BDOE guidelines.

[04:08:44] I look forward to hearing about the events that principals and teachers have planned. We should all strive to be more involved in educating and promoting this love of country to the next generation. Part of that duty is informing these young people of what a unique privilege it is to be an American citizen.

[04:09:03] Parents could offer to read a patriotic book or hand out a fun activity in the classroom and discuss these ideals at home. Some ideas can be found at [constitutionfacts.com](https://www.constitutionfacts.com). Let us not forget this warning from President Reagan, who said freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.

[04:09:23] We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or we will spend our sunset years telling our children what it was like in the U.S. when we were free. I also want to take my remaining time to just thank Jeff Morris for his 11 years of service as my school board rep and just let you know that you'll be missed.

[04:09:47] Thank you. Thank you. David Garber to be followed by Jeremy Wright. God has imposed an obligation for parents to raise their children.

[04:10:07] Parents are responsible for their children's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. But what happens if I don't believe in God? The Russian novelist Dostoevsky said, If there is no God, all things are possible. Years ago, God was banished from the schools.

[04:10:25] And the all things possible are not good things. Do I really need to go through a litany of the last couple of years? Lying cover-up. So where are we now? Without parental consent, the school board has assumed an obligation to raise your children under their control.

[04:10:44] Just look at Agenda Item 13.07 tonight. parents, you have the right to opt your child out of all counseling services, according to the Virginia Code. But the LCPS website lists several areas they say are under their total control.

[04:11:02] That's simply not true. But this is, I do believe in God the Father and have put my faith in Jesus his Son. As I read truth in the Bible, the obligation for parents to raise their own children comes from God, not the school. Thank you. Jeremy Wright to be followed by Susan Cox. Susan Cox to be followed by Elizabeth Boyko. Hello. I want to encourage you to promote

[04:11:39] transparency, accountability, achievement, merit, and content of character over skin color. Build trust. Listen to the parents, teachers, students, and community members. It has been said over and over releasing the report of the sexual assault independent investigation would be a great start at restoring trust, and yet the report has not been released. Keeping this hidden from the public is part of problem. Those who voted to keep the sexual assaults hidden from the public has let the community down. This cover-up is anti-safety, anti-student, anti-woman.

[04:12:14] The excuses of privacy given are not sound as students names can be easily redacted. I urge you to restore trust by encouraging the reports released. If not, there will forever be an even more of a stain on the LCPS. I implore you to start fresh. Thank you for your willingness to serve, but make sure that you truly serve the community, parents, and students, not a political agenda. Any government that attempts to use and upsets father's pain over his daughter's sexual assault and

[04:12:50] victimization for a narrative of supremacy and domestic terrorism needs to look in the mirror. Where is the empathy for the families of sexual assault? The safety and education of the students should be the priority. Literacy is the equalizer, not fancy worded expensive programs and positions that end up causing division and wasting resources. Bring everyone together as our governor does with his bipartisan work that was just passed on education that has a focus on all attendance, literacy, and learning.

[04:13:29] ALL. Keep these values in mind. They will truly benefit all of Loudoun County. Thank you. And if you can't say it on the airwaves, you shouldn't be saying it for books, for education. Please yield the mic to the next speaker. Thank you.

[04:13:47] Elizabeth Boyko, to be followed by Adnan Jumani. The median salary of LCPS employees is \$50,367.

[04:14:04] Dr. Spence's base salary is \$375,000, which is approximately \$80,000 higher than the criminally indicted Dr. Ziegler. plus an additional \$20,000 annual bonus, medical, dental, vision, prescription premiums, as well as a \$5,300 annual whole life insurance premium, an annual communications allowance of \$1,200, \$1,000 a month in transportation expenses, 24 paid vacation days plus 14 sick days, reimbursement for his entire move to Loudoun County, plus an extra \$7,500 thrown

[04:14:41] in, I guess, to spend on a rainy day. \$4,000 per month for six months for housing, plus the Virginia retirement system. And don't forget his paid consulting gigs. This compensation package is obscene, and it is a slap in the face to taxpayers, particularly when enrollment continues to drop, and to LCPS employees who do the real hard work of working directly with students. To quote a very wise man, public education is a modern-day version of a caste system, not born into it, where bureaucrats and administrators make six figures and teachers

[04:15:17] buy their own supplemental supplies. We must stop writing blank checks to education for the administrators to enrich themselves. When appropriating money, we must put stipulations on how much money can be used for administrative salaries. Millions and millions of dollars are wasted in public education to give fat cat salaries to a select few. It's time we as taxpayers say no more. Thank you. Adnan Jumani to be followed by Suzanne Satterfield. Suzanne Satterfield to be

[04:15:51] followed by Jessica Smith. How nice it could have been to start the new school year thanking you for listening to the parents and constituents about the need to hire a superintendent that focuses on student safety, academic success, hiring highly qualified teachers while retaining others, and reducing bloat in the admin building and other frivolous spending.

[04:16:23] Instead, you double down on hiring a superintendent that has a track record of expanding high-paying administration jobs that have nothing to do with help with student outcomes and all to do with equity and sexualizing education. You give him a salary that is \$80,000 above the last with all the bells and whistles, which is unmatched to large corporate CEOs and has zero, zero.

[04:16:51] Not one of you takes into account that it's taxpayers' hard-earned money that you were throwing out the door. You say give the man a chance. Without skipping a beat, I bet Mr. Spence recommended his fellow Virginia Beach Public School sweetheart and social justice warrior, Natalie Allen, for the newly created \$200,000 Chief of Communications and Community Engagement, putting her over Joan Sahlgren and growing the department to 13 people

[04:17:22] with a 2.7 million dollar budget. This has nothing to do to help student outcomes and we already know how your communication is. Now that Falcone is on his way out and though he won't be missed one has to ask which one of Spence's social justice Virginia Beach attorneys will head to take his place and at what price. Mr. Spence stated in his speech at the last meeting that he doesn't have intentions of looking in the rearview mirror when referencing Mr. Ziegler's missteps. It's too bad because if he had, he would have known that the safety of our students is a big concern and he

[04:17:58] left that completely out. Children are not born in the wrong body. No one can change their sex. Girls should not have to share their spaces with boys. Thank you. Jessica Smith to be followed by Scott Smith. Good evening. Let's start with some good news. My husband, Scott Smith, received an absolute pardon by our governor based on facts, not politics. To remind you, it's the parents who

[04:18:32] make health decisions for their children. Mental health is health, and under Virginia Code, it is the parents, not the schools, who make the decision to opt out or to opt in students' mental health services. Polifco, I support your action item and expect the board to comply with the law. We have a bullying epidemic. What I have seen is no consistency and a lot of lies by LCPS and how each school handles bullying and threats of violence. Your schools are indeed silos, as the

[04:19:09] SGJ report stated. One school even had the audacity to tell the victim who was being threatened by a witness in the LCPS's Title IX investigation that there was nothing the school could do about it. Even though reading through the transcripts, the investigators told those participating that, quote, you should be free from any retaliation, end quote. You fail on all levels when it comes to bullying. Speaking of bullying, Falcone's last day is Friday. SGJ reports stated throughout this investigation we felt that Loudoun County School Board's counsel was obstructionist during witness

[04:19:45] testimony. Loudoun County School Board counsel consistently and repeatedly interrupted answers of his own witnesses when he felt certain information was about to be revealed. This Thursday at one o'clock there is a hearing scheduled to see if the independent report will be released. I will be there. Will you? Thank you. Scott Smith to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf.

[04:20:18] Andrea Weiskopf is our final in-person speaker tonight. Not even 1% of Virginia students are transgender, yet those 4,000 children are being targeted by the governor of the 12th largest state.

[04:20:45] The governor's model policies flagrantly defy the Virginia Human Rights Act. The governor's model policies actively seek to destroy the identity of transgender students. The governor's model policies are grounded in fear, intolerance, overinflated egos, small minds, and oppression.

[04:21:11] Transgender students in Virginia are an oppressed class. Parents are not an oppressed class. If a parent believes that the earth is flat, but the public school system refuses to accommodate their belief, that parent is not an oppressed class.

[04:21:31] If a parent believes that they are the center of the universe, the local public school system must continue to teach that the earth moves around the sun. That parent is not an oppressed class. This school system should not accommodate medieval mindsets, whether those beliefs concern the solar system or the oppression of transgender students through unjust laws and policies.

[04:22:03] Youngkin's model policies are unjust. Unjust laws and policies must be actively resisted. This board and this superintendent must lead an active resistance to protect our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students.

[04:22:29] Black Lives Matter. Thank you. We will now change over to our virtual speakers, and our one virtual speaker for tonight is Mittal Gandhi. Mittal Gandhi, I'm a parent of two boys in fourth and seventh grade.

[04:22:48] I do my part in our wonderful community by serving as a member of LEAF, a former PTO president, a basketball coach, and most importantly, like many of you, a father. Today, I rise to talk about

trust and transparency, which was in the superintendent's report with a bunch of gratitude.

[04:23:06] First, let me start with gratitude. Thank you to our school board members for hiring a superintendent of such a caliber to lead our district forward. Hiring a superintendent is the single most important function of the board, and so I appreciate you looking and finding someone of Dr. Spence's caliber. And thank you to our superintendent as our community welcomes you to our wonderful county. I've been to Virginia Beach.

[04:23:25] It's nice, loud, and is better. We very much appreciate you moving here and from what I understand, putting your kids into the LCPS schools. Mr. Spence, let me talk about trust. I do not want to spend countless hours fighting the administration so my son can take advanced math courses or to get map data, which should be publicly available. I do not. One of the speakers actually talked about the governor's tip line not working. That speaker was wrong. The governor's tip line did work here in Loudoun because the prior administration falsely blamed VDOE for not offering these advanced math courses. And when I called into the tip line, that helped the

[04:24:01] administration work on my kids' behalf to fight for these advanced courses. You have made more changes than prior administrations even before you stepped into your role officially. I take our legal counsel as a prime example as someone who saw either the writing on the wall or perhaps knew it was time for change in this county as he stepped down and found another job. Not everyone has seen that writing. I sometimes feel we are running a jobs program for senior leadership.

[04:24:25] We are not. And I am not talking about Dr. Smith. He deserves a much bigger role in your administration. I humbly ask you, Dr. Smith, in order for you to do your job more effectively, that you do not take an entire academic year to make necessary change in your leadership, staff, and structure to fulfill the goals you spoke of. Thank you so much for your service to this county, and we're looking forward to a great academic year. Thank you, and that will conclude public comment for this evening. At this time, we will, the board will take a short recess.

[04:34:25] Board members, please be back ready to go at 8. 35. The board is now in recess. Okay. All right, board members, please return to your seats. We're going to get started. The board is coming out of recess, and we will pick back up with our lonely action item tonight, 1201, from the Department of Student Services, Attendance Awareness Month Proclamation.

[04:34:52] Mr. Mahedvi. Thank you, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board adopts the proclamation recognizing September 2023 as the Attendance Awareness Month. I'll read the proclamation. Whereas good attendance is essential to student achievement in graduation, and we are committed to dedicating our resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates with a focus starting as early as pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

[04:35:20] Whereas, chronic absence, missing 10% or more of school for any reason, including excused or unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month, is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates. Whereas, compulsory attendance requirements are set forth, the Code of Virginia Section 22.1-254, and we are committed to proactively engage students, provide support, and track attendance during the school year.

[04:35:47] Whereas improving attendance and reducing chronic absence takes commitment, collaboration, and tailored approaches to particular challenges and strengths in each community.

Whereas chronic absence predicts lower third grade reading proficiency, course failure, and eventual dropout.

[04:36:05] It weakens our communities and our local economy. Whereas attendance gaps among groups of students often turn into opportunity gaps that undermine student success. Chronic absence particularly exasperates the difference in achievement that separates students in low-income communities from their peers since students from low-income communities are both more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing school, whereas absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling schools since it's hard to measure improvements if students are not present in class or during virtual learning to benefit from instruction,

[04:36:43] whereas schools and community partners can reach out more frequently to absent students to determine what barriers they face to attending schools and what would help them attend more regularly, whereas health care providers can share the importance of school attendance with families and can offer proactive preventive care to reduce absences, whereas chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, families, and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from assessing learning.

[04:37:16] Now, therefore, be it resolved that as Lowry County School Board, we proclaim our school division will stand with the nation in recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month. We hereby commit to reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children equitable opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

[04:37:33] Is there a second? Seconded by Ms. Reeser. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, clerk, please open the voting board at this time, and board members, please enter your vote.

[04:38:02] Ms. Palifka, your vote. Okay. Okay. Thank you. All those in favor, please say aye. All those opposed, say nay. Any abstentions? Clerk, would you please close and display the vote?

[04:38:22] That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Ms. Corbo absent for the vote. We will now move to our information items, starting with 1301 from the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, deletion of Policy 5-1 philosophy.

[04:38:46] So Policy 5-1 was an outdated policy that was long overdue for its five-year review, one of the last that's still on the old something-dash-something naming structure. All the content that had been in this policy is addressed in policy 1020 strategic framework, which the board has previously adopted.

[04:39:12] So staff recommended deletion of policy 5-1, and the curriculum and instruction committee is unanimously recommending its deletion. But I am happy, along with staff, to answer any questions that the board may have regarding the recommended deletion of this policy.

[04:39:30] Board members, any questions? Is there interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting? It looks like there is unanimous consensus, so we'll place this on consent for our next board meeting. That will take us to 1302, also from the C&I committee. And this is the same story as the previous item, where staff, as well as the C&I committee, are recommending deletion of policy 5-17, access to programs, courses, and activities, as the information that

[04:40:09] is included in that policy is now addressed by policy 8035, Title IX, sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment. So I'm standing by in case any board members have any questions regarding the

recommended deletion of this policy. Is there interest in placing this on the consent agenda for our next board meeting. Okay, looks like we do, so we'll place this on the consent agenda for

[04:40:43] next meeting as well. And then 1303 is the final policy revision coming out of the CNI committee as an information item today, and this is revisions to policy 5080 class sizes. There were a number of changes made to this policy. The first is that this policy, I believe one of the issues is that it's still referenced half-day kindergarten in places with regards to class size, and as we no

[04:41:19] longer have any half-day kindergarten and have not in many years now, we deleted those references or those sections of the policy. There were also, I'm going to ask Dr. Ellis to weigh in here, I know there were also some changes to where to reflect changes in code and also changes in the way that schools were operating with regards to maximum class sizes so I'll ask Dr. Ellis to weigh in that's correct thank you Mr. Sorotkin so we did clean up language took out some redundancies removed references to half day and full day kindergarten we now just call it kindergarten

[04:41:56] and we also updated references to code. There are no significant changes other than that. It was really just a cleanup. We also added section D exceptions that also reference code and what occurs when there needs to be exceptions to class sizes.

[04:42:20] - Thank you, Dr. Ellis. I will add one more thing and it's right in the, we made some changes to the first paragraph of the policy. Because this policy only deals with maximum allowed class sizes, but not the targeted average class sizes that we adopt annually through the operating budget, the committee felt it was important to include some information about where that can be found.

[04:42:46] So at the end of the first paragraph, we included a URL link to the budget page on the LCPS website, so that if someone is reading this policy and they need to know where to go to find what our actual targets are or what our staffing standards are set at with regards to class sizes, they at least have a starting point rather than just looking through and seeing the maximums when our class sizes are almost always lower than that maximum.

[04:43:14] So that's the only other change that I would point out. Board members, any questions or discussion regarding the changes to this policy? Mr. Mehedivi, and then Mr. Morse. Thank you, Chair. So I just have a question.

[04:43:30] Taking an example, line number 29, I'm looking at the red line version of copy. So it says 30 students shall be maximum class size for grades one to three. And, again, I think you spoke to that in the budget, the class sizes, I guess, based on the operational budgets, they're varies and different.

[04:43:51] I'm just curious if, again, I know it's not one-to-one, but just overall, I think we have worked to reduce class sizes. I don't know if there will be merit just to have an understanding maybe what the class sizes are today based on the budget versus what we are putting as a policy as a maximum of it.

[04:44:14] Because I think we definitely have lower than 30, for example, and that's what I'm trying to get to. We do. thank you Mr. Mahedvi and actually I appreciate you asking that question I've already been communicating with Mr. Sorotkin about a presentation at the CNI committee about class sizes school capacity and staffing standards so we hope to in in a meeting coming very soon in the next couple months be able to outline all of that for you in a side-by-side comparison we'll start at the CNI committee, and of course, we are happy to bring it to the full board as well, if that's the board's

[04:44:51] preference. Mr. Morris. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The same lines, line 29 and 30, talks about the addition grades one through three, for any class that exceeds 25 students, a full-time teacher's age shall be assigned to class. Now, when we talk about class, are we talking about class level, or are we talking about classroom? Because my understanding was that it was an increase of a single FTE that would be spread across the different classrooms of that grade level is that

[04:45:27] your understanding or are we providing a full FTE to every classroom over 25 students the latter a full FTE for every every time a classroom is over 25 thank you and that's that's the way it reads so I appreciate that but obviously I misunderstood well I there were actually there were two different initiatives. One was, one is related to large class sizes. So anytime a class has over a large, the 25 students in grades one through three, that every class, that class gets a TA. There was also a separate effort to include more TAs across the board at a certain level that

[04:46:06] we put into effect to combat learning loss after COVID. And so that's where it was, we had in the first grade classrooms, like one TA per every two classrooms or every three classrooms. So it was two different initiatives that were put into place at different times. So that went away with the budget cycle last year. So we no longer have that, but obviously we still have the classroom, excess classroom size. We still have the ones that are put in place when we have a large class. That's unchanged. Thank you. Any additional questions regarding these changes?

[04:46:41] Seeing none. Interest in placing these policy changes on consent for our next board meeting. Mr. Reeser, it looks unanimous, so we'll place this on consent for our fourth Tuesday board meeting in September.

[04:47:00] That will take us to 1304 from the Finance and Operations Committee. Request to name the broad-run high school softball field, the Ed Steele softball field, in accordance with school board policy 6510. Mr. Morse. Thank you. I'll turn it over to Mr. Lewis.

[04:47:18] Thank you, Mr. Morse. We are here tonight to and happy to present to you, to the board, the opportunity to name the softball field at Broad Run High School after Ed Steele, our softball coach, for many, many years. It had quite an impressive history and record 509 victories total over time, four state championships, three consecutively, and also coached wrestling for quite a while.

[04:47:48] So we are presenting that tonight with the support of Ms. Belifco, with also the school staff, and Boosters Club, the athletic faculty, teacher, parent, student organization. So everyone's in support of that, and we're happy to take any questions you may have.

[04:48:05] Board members, any questions regarding this softball field naming request? Ms. Reeser. I'm just curious who initiated the request. We received an email from principal, Mr. Davis-Bage.

[04:48:23] Thank you. Any additional questions or discussion? Okay. By custom, we place naming requests on the action item agenda for the next board meeting in case we have family members or other interested community members who might be interested in attending for the vote.

[04:48:42] So we'll place this for action during our next meeting. We'll now move to 1305 from the HRTD committee, policy 7030, staff time schedules. Ms. Okedekbe. Thank you, Chair. so this policy first came before the committee actually on may 25th and there has been at each of the meetings that we've discussed it it was up as an information item on may 25th again on june 22nd and for action and committee on august 31st and each of these um conversations was i think

[04:49:21] pretty extensive we wanted to make sure that the language that we were using in describing staff schedules. And as a reminder, just from the top of the policy, that this policy for staff time schedules, that time schedules for employees are established in accordance with FLSA or the Fair Labor Standards Act and the provisions of the policy. And the policy is meant to provide guidance related to schedules by salary scale, overtime procedures, remote work requirements,

[04:49:59] and record-keeping requirements. One of the things when we were first discussing the policy is that there weren't really boundaries around when staff would be asked to potentially work hours beyond the regular schedule. And through discussion, we had come up with the word occasionally. And so you'll see in a couple of different sections of the policy the word occasionally to indicate that occasionally supervisors may assign duties or schedule

[04:50:38] meetings that are beyond the normal workday. And I recognize that this is, I think we all had the same intent year in using the word occasional it is infrequent or irregular and not regular we had some conversations and about how to put boundaries around that to make sure that

[04:51:08] there are clear expectations of not exceeding what is occasional and to that end we in the meeting on August 31st where we voted as committee to bring this forward as an information item for the full school board we did ask Ms. Boland to also address HRTD's plans for how this policy language change would be communicated and rolled out so I will ask Ms. Boland to speak to that and then I just have a few other comments before the end of this item thank you thank you miss

[04:51:46] So following the HRTD committee meeting on August 31st, HRTD staff was able to collaborate with the Department of School Leadership to work out draft guidance for principals regarding this policy once action was taken and or if, when it goes into effect.

[04:52:11] And so I do have draft guidance, which defines occasionally as meaning infrequent and not routinely scheduled for purposes of this policy. It also provides examples for principals in regards to when they may assign that occasional or infrequent work outside of the scheduled contract to include such meetings or opportunities.

[04:52:42] That are not usually more than once per month and are not to be expected every month with the exception of a staff meeting The goal would be for this Guidance to go out to following board action when this policy came as an action item And to be administered to school-based staff so they knew the expectation of the principal Thank you so much, Ms. Boland.

[04:53:11] And that was the other piece that we talked about this, that it was important to have guidance not only for the principals, but for staff to understand how those expectations were set in the event that they had a concern about the staff schedule. All of that being said, I would request that this come back for action and not be on consent.

[04:53:31] I would like board members to be able to review this in detail and bring back any questions that they may have in advance or in conjunction with the vote next meeting. Thank you. Thank you, board members. Any questions regarding the proposed changes to this policy?

[04:53:51] Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Serving on the HRTD committee, we have put a lot of time into this, and I appreciate Ms. Boland identifying content that's going to be provided to the principals. One of the concerns is that we wanted to make sure all of our staff had access to that information too and that

that was provided in a subsequent newsletter once at the beginning of each year to help them understand what the principal and what staff means by occasionally.

[04:54:18] So it is important that the principals have that knowledge and share that at staff meetings and things, but I would also like it easily available to all of the employees so that they can understand what is the intent as well so that they don't need to look for that.

[04:54:35] Thank you. Any additional questions or discussion? Ms. Polipko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd also like to request that we provide some sort of information to school staff related to what their recourse is, should there be a situation within their school where the administration is in breach of that policy or could potentially be in breach of that policy.

[04:55:03] So I think it's important that we're not making this just a one-way street so that it's being presented to them as here's what occasionally means. But I think they also need to hear what they can do to empower themselves if they find themselves in a situation where that policy is not being upheld.

[04:55:19] So I would request that that information also be given to school staff. Any additional comments? Seeing none, we'll place this on action for our next board meeting. We'll now move to 1306 from the Department of Support Services, Preliminary 2023-2024 Enrollment Report.

[04:55:48] Mr. Lewis. Thank you, Mr. Sorokin. So tonight we bring to you, which is our customary report on day 10 of our enrollment for the year. And as you can see, September 8th was day 10. And so this report reflects that snapshot in time on September 8th.

[04:56:05] It will, as you can see, that it provides you with a total number of 81,797 students. And then there's a breakout of the different levels. We're not providing any analytics tonight with this. As you know, that we'll provide you with the official re-employment report, which is due for September 29th.

[04:56:24] And we'll provide that at the October 10th school board meeting where we provide a little more in-depth analysis of what we're showing. So this is for tonight, just to show the day 10 report as is customary. Board members, any questions regarding the preliminary report?

[04:56:48] Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair. Mr. Lewis, I think you said that you'll be presenting in October. I mean, it's good to share the actual, but I guess what I would like to see, maybe it'll be presenting in October, would be what we were planned versus what the actuals are, presuming that you'll be sharing that, like what we projected and what the actuals are.

[04:57:13] Yes, sir. That will be part of our report. And I will say that the numbers you see today reflect 98.5% of the projections for September 30 of this year that we projected back in the fall. So those numbers will come back.

[04:57:28] And as I mentioned, we'll provide the analytics with that to show where the differences are. Another thing to mention here, if you look back at the school-by-school, you'll see that all of the kindergartners that are assigned to Hovater are shown at Pinebrook. So they're showing up in the school that they're located in.

[04:57:45] And then also the dual enrollment or dual language and IB programs are shown at their assigned schools. So they're either at Heritage, Robert Tomek, and Sanders in Loudoun Valley. So those students are showing up at the schools that they're attending when you see the numbers by school.

[04:58:09] Any additional questions regarding the preliminary report? Seeing none, we'll move to item 1307, which was requested by Ms. Polifko regarding regulation 5040 and Virginia code.

[04:58:27] Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to thank the fellow board members that provided me with their endorsement to bring this information to the full school board this evening on the agenda. And I bring this to the board because I'd like to enter into a discussion about some concerns that I have related to Section B of the Code of Virginia, which is 8VAC20-620-10, which states that no student shall be required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parent objects.

[04:59:01] And also Section 3B of our Regulation 5040, which states that minor students, parents, guardians, or adult students have the option to withdraw from all or any portion of the school counseling program by directing their opt-out request in writing to the school principal.

[04:59:21] So my initial concern is that we have inconsistencies with our counseling regulation and the Virginia Code. Now, we can look at the Regulation 50-40 and the Virginia Code, and we say that it matches.

[04:59:36] I think where my concern lies is that we do not have correspondence necessarily with the information that we are providing parents when they have that option to opt out of certain portions of the counseling program. So while we do have the obligation as a school system to deliver academic and career guidance, if a parent expressly states their wish to opt their child or children out of any counseling program, it should be honored.

[05:00:05] I think that we need to clean up our website and any correspondence that's sent home to parents. It's referenced in my attachment on the agenda for the information item this evening. We are not in a position as a school system to be able to tell parents what they can and cannot opt out of.

[05:00:23] So when referencing the form that is sent home to parents or that parents can access on ParentVUE, the school counseling participation opt-out, the opt-out includes only personal social classroom lessons for all students taught by school counselors.

[05:00:41] Examples, bullying prevention, friendship skills, kindness, and peer conflict resolution. Underneath, the form states, please note that the counseling opt-out does not exclude students from morning meetings in elementary school or advisory lessons in middle and high school taught by classroom teachers, social-emotional learning lessons, in parentheses, second step, K-8, prevention lessons and or presentations delivered by school social workers, school psychologists, and student assistant specialists,

[05:01:15] Short-duration personal or social counseling, which may be needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment, which, by the way, is referenced in that Code of Virginia, so we are in compliance with that. Academic counseling participation and career counseling participation.

[05:01:34] So we have a list of referenced items here under this information that's going out to parents blanketly, stating that the opt-out does not exclude students from those items. The concern I have is that we're creating confusion for parents across the division by including things under this list of items that we're saying are not excluded that are actually contradicting Virginia Code.

[05:02:01] While we can say that social-emotional learning does not fall under the umbrella of mental health, I would like you to imagine this. If a mechanic performs a medical intervention on an individual,

would we say that that intervention is not medical simply because the mechanic was performing it?

[05:02:20] No, it's medical. If someone who's not qualified to perform surgery on another individual, is that not a medical procedure? Yes, it certainly is a medical procedure, but it's being conducted by someone who may not have the qualifications to carry out that procedure.

[05:02:37] My concern here is that we do have parents in our school system who do not wish to have their children instructed in the second step, social, emotional, mental, I will call them mental health lessons because they do encompass mental health. Social emotional competencies and mental health are interlocked.

[05:02:56] You really don't have one without the other. In addition to that, social emotional learning without being assessed for its effectiveness means nothing. whether i like social emotional learning or not if we as a school division are not assessing whether or not the product that we've purchased and are implementing in the classroom every day is actually doing what we believe it's supposed to do meaning if we're not testing for validity then we are wasting money and that's not what we should be doing with taxpayer dollars one of the screeners or assessments that's used in social emotional learning it's called the ssis

[05:03:35] CoLab, we may not be using that here in Loudoun County. My point in explaining this assessment is that it is used and it is recommended to be used by teachers, parents, and students for children grades pre-K through grade 12 to assess for social emotional skills and the mental health of children and adolescents. So social emotional learning is interwoven with mental health. It absolutely does fall under the umbrella of mental health. Assessment items align with the collaborative for academic social and emotional learning, which is CASEL, the framework for social

[05:04:12] emotional learning competency. It should also be noted that under the protection of people rights amendment, we are not able to provide surveys like that as a school system to students. If parents are demanding that we opt their child out of it, or if the parent says, I do not want my child to receive that screen, or I do not want my child to receive that assessment, we are not able to do that with their express wish or desire for us to not do so. We may not be providing the screener to students in Loudoun County. My point is that a parent is the one where the buck stops. And if a

[05:04:51] parent is saying, I do not want this instruction for my child, I do not want my first grade or my second grade child to be present in the classroom each morning or each afternoon for 20 minutes during a social-emotional learning lesson, and they are expressing that desire in written communication to the administration at their child's school, then we should be honoring that request to opt that child out, if that is the desire of the parent.

[05:05:20] I also want to point out the fact that we were not required as a school division to adopt the guidance standards that the VDOE was compelled to develop back in 2020. In 2020, the General Assembly required the BDOE to develop guidance standards for SEL, but Virginia school divisions are not required to adopt them.

[05:05:44] Local school boards could choose to adopt all or portions of the Virginia SEL guidance standards as part of their own policies and or use them as guidance as they implement SEL programming based on the needs of their community. But if a school division is not required to adopt these standards, this school division cannot require parents' children to sit through this instruction.

[05:06:10] Fundamentally, if we are not allowing parents to opt out of this instruction, we are in violation of Virginia Code. So we can agree or disagree on the fact that social-emotional learning is counseling.

[05:06:27] We can say that it's not counseling, or we can say that it's not mental health when it's being taught by a teacher. but is it mental health if it's being taught by a counselor is it mental health if it's being taught by a librarian is it mental health we can play the word game all day long that's not helping our children it's not helping students it's not helping families who may desire to have their children opted out of that there is a very small percentage of parents in this school system that don't want

[05:06:59] their children to receive these lessons and so this is not a difficult issue to accommodate I'd like to also point us to our commitment to equity here. We embrace and value the unique identities, backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and needs of each student and employee.

[05:07:21] Celebrating our diversity is important and helps define us as a school division. It may be that a diverse group of families in the school system desires to have their children excluded from SEL lessons. Are we living up to our commitment to equity if we deny them their right to do that?

[05:07:38] Does every student need SEL? No. Professionals don't prescribe a blanket treatment plan for mental health to individuals seeking help. What about the families who are saying, I don't want or need this for my child? Where is the support for them? Why are we fighting so hard against them when this is a part of our equity statement and our mission to uphold equity? We could be spending 20 minutes each day in those children's classroom environments, specifically for our youngest

[05:08:17] learners, giving them 20 minutes of UFLY. I think those kids would benefit a lot more from gaining fluency and phonemic awareness and phonological awareness to better develop their literacy skills, because that is the great equalizer in education, and that's what we're here to do.

[05:08:37] I am not against any family who wants this instruction for their children. What I am asking for, is for our board to consider those families that may want to opt their children out and to follow the law when it comes to a parent's ability to opt their student out of any instruction that falls under the umbrella of counseling.

[05:09:09] And I cannot be the only one sitting up here who thinks that we need to follow the law when it comes to instruction that comes under the umbrella of counseling and mental health. Thank you. Is there any further discussion?

[05:09:29] Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Chair. I'd like to thank Ms. Polico for bringing this up, and I would just ask our division council at the moment if there's any thoughts on what was brought up and our need to provide an opt-out for families for these part of our curriculum.

[05:09:49] Excuse me. Thank you, Mr. Beatty. In terms of the regulation 50-40 and our policy that is consistent, as Ms. Polifco indicated with ABAC 20-6-20-10, I'm unaware of any federal or state law allowing a parent to opt out of this, of SEL in particular, in the same way as personal counseling under that Virginia Administrative Code.

[05:10:18] There's other specific opt-out provisions in the PPRA that Ms. Polifco mentioned. There's anti-bullying and suicide prevention opt-outs. We are compliant with the law. What I will say is that in terms of the counseling program that's set forth in 50-40, there's multiple facets as to why SEL instruction does not fall under that, which I'll defer to staff to explain more eloquently.

[05:10:55] But in terms of policy, I'm also unaware of any LCPS or school board policy that specifically addresses SEL instruction. But in terms of 50/40, that specifically, with respect to the counseling services, and does provide for the personal and social counseling opt-out that is compliant with 8VAC 20-62010.

[05:11:23] So I don't see any incongruence here, but, you know, to the extent SEL instruction is addressed by policy or otherwise, LCPS school board hasn't addressed that. Thank you. So for something like the, you said that you could opt out of suicide prevention counseling, is that something that the state has either mandated that we provide that counseling or has said that a parent can opt out of something because it falls under counseling?

[05:11:54] So where are the determinations that allow for those particular things that we can opt out? And then just sort of the general, well, I think I understand is that social-emotional learning is being considered just the regular classroom instruction that you cannot get rid of or you cannot not take part of.

[05:12:14] So, like, where would that distinction be drawn and where could the school board fix that in policy to be more accessible for some of our parents? I think that is an operational decision.

[05:12:33] I'll defer to Ms. Richardson and her team. Thank you. Currently, as Mr. Allen has expressed, LCPS does not have a policy that specifically addresses the opt-out of SEL to provide some additional clarity.

[05:12:55] Our regulation is congruent with Virginia Code with the specific opt-outs under school counseling. Social and emotional learning falls under the content area of multi-tiered system of supports.

[05:13:11] It's a tier one intervention and resource that's available to all of our students. It addresses soft skills such as growth mindset, goal setting, peer relationships, managing conflict, those things that naturally occur as we interact with other human beings within social settings.

[05:13:32] School counseling provides more specific and targeted areas of focus, and that's why the Virginia Code does address specific opt-outs. Mr. Beatty, with your question about suicide prevention, it is a specific opt-out for those programs that are outside of school counseling.

[05:13:53] Specifically in LCPS, there's an opt-out for participation in signs of suicide. I hope that addresses and answers your question. Yes, that was very helpful, and then I appreciate the context you're providing. So as you were describing what social-emotional learning would be, as I hear that, that does sound a lot like some form of counseling.

[05:14:16] So perhaps this is an opportunity for the legislature to clarify that. But as you explain it, I see that as some kind of counseling. You say it's the ability for developing the skills to interact with people, And I, you know, I'd see that that's coaching, that's mentoring, that's some kind of opportunity for someone to teach the students and how to deal with other people.

[05:14:41] And I don't see, I mean, it seems like we're parsing small differences there. So I view that as counseling, and I can see where Ms. Polifco also would view that. And I think that's something we can continue to work on trying to clarify.

[05:14:58] Is there any further discussion? Ms. Polifco. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, under the parent participation or the school counseling participation opt-out, the third bullet that states prevention lessons and or presentations delivered by school social workers, school psychologists, and student assistant specialists, it states that those lessons are not able to be or they are excluded from the opt-out.

[05:15:29] how can we make this more clear for our families so that they are not confused when they look at this form and think that it is not possible for them to opt out of those prevention lessons. I think that is one of my concerns here as well. Social emotional learning aside, we also have a problem with the fact that it looks as though parents are not able to opt out of that and it's confusing them. And that language just, to me, it needs to be cleaned up. We could delete. I mean, I don't understand why that's even there.

[05:16:01] I don't know if it's there to provide clarity, to provide clarity that those lessons are separate and apart from counseling, but it doesn't state that. And I think that's part of the problem that I see here too. And when I say incongruencies with, I think the incongruencies that I'm concerned about are not so much what we have written in the regulation and what is stated in Virginia code, It's how we are executing that regulation as a school system and the way that we're communicating it to families because it's not clear and that language just needs to be cleaned up.

[05:16:39] - Thank you, Mrs. Polifco. The items that are delineated as being excluded from the opt-out are part of the health standards of learning and as a school division, we give all parents prior notice of when these presentations are coming forth so then they have the opportunity to either opt in or opt out.

[05:17:03] That's why they're delineated separate from the opt out from school counseling. Thank you, Ms. Richardson. Is there any way that we can make that clearer in this participation opt out? I think that if we can somehow, if we could just state that so that parents know, so that they do understand that their right to opt their children out of certain prevention lessons is not being withheld from them in some way.

[05:17:32] I think that is and that's an easy thing to fix right then and there. Certainly at the recommendation of the board, staff is willing to look into that and provide additional clarity for parents with that statement.

[05:17:50] Thank you, and so I will, thank you, Ms. Richardson. I will wrap this information item up because I know we have other things on our agenda this evening, but I would request and I will certainly seek out the endorsement of other board members so that we can bring this back for action and go ahead and take care of this problem ASAP.

[05:18:11] Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, we'll move to item 1308 from the Department of Student Services, Bullying Prevention Month Proclamation.

[05:18:27] Ms. Richardson. Thank you. October is National Bullying Prevention Month, a time to focus and raise awareness on bullying. During this month, many groups across the country will release new resources, campaigns, and efforts aimed at bringing awareness to the issue of bullying. All school administrators, unified mental health team members, teachers, students, and parents play a critical role in creating a climate where bullying is not tolerated.

[05:19:01] It has been proven when adults and children stand together, bullying ends. The Loudoun County school board is issuing a proclamation to affirm and recognize october as bullying prevention month the recommendation of administration is that the school board adopts the proclamation recognizing october 2023 as bullying prevention month all members have a copy of the red line and the clean version of the proclamation board members are there any questions or discussion regarding the Bullying Prevention Month Proclamation.

[05:19:39] Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair. I guess I'll just support, obviously we'll be going through action and supporting this, but I think I do want to go back to, I think you mentioned about recognizing,

you know, again, the proclamation for anti-bullying.

[05:19:58] And I was just going through, again, going back to looking at our SEL for the middle school, and one of the sections is recognizing bullying and harassment. So I don't know how you disassociate. At one point of our school system, we talk about there should be no bullying in the school system.

[05:20:18] That means we've got to talk about what bullying is and how do you recognize what bullying is. How do you deal with the bullies? How do you address that? If we don't teach the students in awareness and recognizing that, then I think we're doing a big disservice to our students.

[05:20:37] So I just want to kind of bring back to the proclamation about one of the sections from the SEL for middle school. So just wanted to kind of support the proclamation, but supporting what we are also teaching our students to as part of the program as well.

[05:20:54] Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do support both the school system doing its job, and I also support the Virginia Code and the Virginia Code under counseling, which states that parents have the right to opt their children out of any program, personal or social counseling service that LCPS school counselors provide, which includes bullying prevention.

[05:21:26] This is the job of the parents to do. And so social-emotional learning also explains to those who are interested in learning about the effectiveness of it that students who have well-developed social-emotional skills tend to perform better in schools.

[05:21:44] And social-emotional learning is evidence-based. But what they don't tell you is that the students who have those well-developed social-emotional skills, they're not getting them in the school system. They already have them because they're coming from well-adjusted homes, and there's no evidence that shows that students are actually developing those specific skills in the school system.

[05:22:08] So we have a law in place for a reason, and that has been there for quite some time now. I do not oppose the school system doing its job, but I see it on both sides. So I support parents, and I support the school system. Above all, in the case of bullying prevention, it is a parent's right to opt their child out of that instruction if they so desire, and I leave it up to parents.

[05:22:32] It is their work as the primary educators of their children to develop their kids into well-adjusted citizens. Thank you. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, we'll place this proclamation on action for our next board meeting, and that'll take us to 1309, also from the Department of Student Services, Disability, History, and Awareness Month proclamation.

[05:23:00] Ms. Richardson. Thank you. Virginia's General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution 321 in 2009, designating October as Disability History and Awareness Month in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[05:23:16] Additionally, the Commonwealth of Virginia also recognizes dyslexia awareness during the month of October. Currently, Loudoun County Public Schools is serving more than 9,500 students with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act.

[05:23:35] In October, there will be a variety of activities promoted within our schools to recognize students with disabilities and dyslexia and promote their success. Many of these activities will be posted to the Office of Special Education website.

[05:23:51] It is the recommendation of administration at this time that the Loudoun County School Board adopts the proclamation, recognizing October 2023 as Disability History and Awareness Month. Copies of

the red line and clean version of the proclamation are attached for all board members.

[05:24:11] Thank you, Ms. Richardson. Board members, any questions or discussion regarding the proposed Disability History and Awareness Month proclamation? Seeing none, we'll place this on action during our next board meeting. That will take us to item 1401, board member comments and committee reports, starting with Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had a great meeting at the Special Education Advisory Committee on September 6th. We had a really nice turnout.

[05:24:47] Dr. Spence was there with us, and it was just a great way to kick off the new school year. We're looking forward to, we have some new leadership this year. Liz Crotty is the new chair on SEAC and I'm really looking forward to working with her as the school board liaison for SEAC. Our next meeting will be on October 4th at 6 p.m. right here in the admin building and we will hear a presentation on specialized reading instruction updates and LCPS and identifying struggling readers. The next communications and outreach committee meeting will be on October 2nd from 5 to 6 p.m. right here in 100b and a listening session Dr. Spence mentioned earlier this evening

[05:25:26] during his remarks that on September 20th at Broad Run High School, and I'm speaking of Broad Run because I'm the representative for the district, from 7 to 8 p.m. will be his listening session and the community session meet and greet will follow that from 8 to 8.30.

[05:25:43] That's all I have. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Ogadugbe. Thank you, Chair. So good evening. I would like to, I feel like our official welcomings might be coming to a close, Dr. Spence, but I would like to officially welcome you again to your first full school board meeting as our new superintendent.

[05:26:05] And for those who may be listening later, you mentioned during your update that you've been very busy in the schools. You were in the schools on your first day meeting staff and students, and throughout that week and this week, families, community members, and partner organizations.

[05:26:25] So I will say that I'm very excited to welcome you here and just really enjoy listening to your updates. So thank you so much for that. Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of meeting over coffee with incoming leadership for both the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committees to get to know each other and discuss how we can work together this year.

[05:26:47] I also enjoyed attending the first Loudoun Education Alliance of Families meeting of the where they took action to vote in new leadership and would like to congratulate chair sherry colby and vice chairs erica daly jenny jenner beers and lydia taylor earlier this evening we heard from the chair with an update on leaf and what is planned for the upcoming year i do want to mention that as of today, we have representation from 59 of our 98 schools. So LEAF is still actively

[05:27:24] seeking representatives from 39 remaining schools. So if your school doesn't have a representative and you're interested, please reach out to your principal. It is not too late to join LEAF and participate in that advisory committee. In terms of upcoming committee meetings, Monday, September 18th, is the next LEAF meeting.

[05:27:49] Dr. Spence will be joining LEAF to introduce himself and have an opportunity to meet with the representatives. Thursday, September 21st, is the next Student Services Committee meeting. Student Behavior and Accountability will meet on Wednesday, September 27th, and then the HRTD Committee meeting will meet again on September 28th, and that brings us to the end of the month.

[05:28:15] Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mahedvi. Thank you, Chair. Just to begin with, student services will be meeting on September 21st. Today, I think Dr. Spence already sort of touched on it. We had an opportunity to visit the Think Big Space.

[05:28:33] It was really not only just the technology, but the students interacting with that, I thought, very profound. And I think as we talked about how do we take that and amplify that and share it with other schools, I'm looking forward to expanding that Think Big Space program across LCPS.

[05:28:55] I also had a quick chance to stop by the SEAC meeting to meet with the new leadership as well and to make sure that we as a school board are there to learn and see how we can be in partnership with the SEAC as well.

[05:29:12] Lastly, I think to want to welcome Dr. Spence officially, I think, you know, we never, so welcome to Loudoun County. I think, you know, I think we've heard a lot of positives about you already in Loudoun County. I'm pretty excited for you to be here, and I think there's tons of opportunity that we can work together for our students, for our staff, and for our community.

[05:29:37] With that, I guess I'll also like to thank Dr. Smith for stepping in and kind of being the anchor for the time where we needed Loudoun County. So I really appreciate your service. I also want to thank Mr. Falcone. I know he's not here today, but I think he has been.

[05:29:55] I also want to thank for his service here to Loudoun County. Again, as an attorney for the board and for the division, and I think he did his best to support that. So, again, I just want to thank for his service as well.

[05:30:12] That's all. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Chair. We have our upcoming technology steering committee, and we're going to go over policy 8650, student responsible use policy.

[05:30:29] This gets updated and reviewed, I believe, every two years. We're going to continue our AI and chat GPT discussion with an update from the staff about what they're seeing. And then we are going to talk about student cell phone use policy.

[05:30:46] I understand the student behavior committee has already talked about this, and we're going to also give it a fair shake, especially considering just the litigation that we just entered into or are planning to enter into.

[05:31:03] So I think this will be a fruitful technology steering committee, and I hope everyone can attend. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Finance and Operations Committee will be meeting again a week from tonight at five o'clock. It's every other week. So if we're not in a school board meeting, we're in a Finance and Operations Committee meeting. Didn't realize that was funny, but that's okay. I did want to also address Dr. Spence. I use the word doctor because he is a

[05:31:38] doctor. Mr. was a former address, but doctor is probably the more appropriate one. So please feel free when you address him to address him as a doctor and welcome him to LCPS. Certainly taking the helm at this busy time is a challenge, but I certainly feel confident that you're up to it and that you'll do great things and lead us in the future to a great division, back to a great division. I also would like to thank Bob Falcone. I know he's not here. Mr. Falcone did receive a lot

[05:32:15] of a lot of pushback on the fact that that at times they felt that he was not being supportive of of the court system and of some of the investigations that were ongoing. But I would point out that the fact

that Bob Falcone was was counsel to LCPS to the school board and in his position as such, I think he did a marvelous job. I think that he was a one-man band and fighting against, at times, some of the top attorneys in the state that were relentless, that

[05:32:53] were coming at LCPS for various issues that we had. But I think of all the people that were working hard to ensure that this division was adequately represented by counsel, he did a terrific job and so I wish him luck where he's heading and I'm sure he will do well wherever he is. Latin Education Foundation has a golf tournament that's coming up the 2nd of October and there's still some sponsorship opportunities available. I would encourage anyone who does any business with

[05:33:30] LCPS or would like to meet some of the staff that participate all in the name of raising funds for the foundation which come directly back into the classroom to support the teachers and the students there is not a better foundation in the state of Virginia not a better or well-run organization that provides so much support back into the classroom so I would strongly encourage anyone who's interested uh in sponsoring uh either a whole or something else with a lot of education foundation golf tournament on October 2nd they can reach out to me or they can reach out to Danielle

[05:34:09] Nadler. I would also like to thank the schools that held all the back-to-school nights the last couple weeks. It's a very crazy time. As always, the teachers are just getting their classrooms assembled, and suddenly the parents are there. And then the next day, the students are there, and it turns into utter chaos. But the teachers were very well prepared this year. Thank you to the schools. I think I attended five back-to-school nights, and I appreciate engaging with the staff and the teachers at the schools and hearing their thoughts and their concerns as we approach

[05:34:43] the new school year. There's a lot going on. There's a lot of great work being done down at the school level. And I hope that everyone gets the opportunity to get back into the schools to see what's going on, because that's the only way you learn what LCPS is all about. That's all I have for this evening. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Sheridan.

[05:35:03] Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would like to offer welcome to Dr. Spence and extend a thank you for sharing your entry plan with the community and the board this evening I think it was a wonderful way to start your first meeting and I know the community will rally behind you to support the efforts that you've laid out as will the board I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr. Falcone for her service to Loudoun County Public Schools Alexandria is lucky to have you um I would also further my thank yous to the Parkview community including students parents teachers staff and

[05:35:42] community members who attended the first information meeting for the new Parkview construction plan I'd also like to extend a special thank you to the staff from DOI and support services for starting this process with the community it's unprecedented as we've never done this before and I appreciate the time and effort to include the entire community in the planning process and look forward to more sessions with the community. September 19th at 6 p.m. is the next meeting of the specialized programs and centers committee meeting and on September 7th

[05:36:21] last week the equity committee did meet. We were given a presentation on social emotional learning and a hot topic this evening. The meeting is available for viewing and I encourage members of the community and board members to view that I think one of the most important pieces of that presentation on social emotional learning is that the curriculum is available for parents and public and

that you can go in and actually see what what topics your children are being taught before you decide whether or not you want your your children to I guess you can't opt out of it

[05:36:57] but to be more informed about what is actually in that curriculum it's pretty enlightening the next meeting of the equity committee is on October 5th at 5 30 and in addition to welcoming Dr. Spence and thanking Dr. Smith which he greatly deserves I would also like to extend a thank you to everyone sitting over there that is on the superintendent's cabinet and leadership in Loudoun County Public Schools. As we went through the last eight months to a year you held everything together. Dr. Smith

[05:37:34] gets a lot of the credit because he was the focal point and deserves it but there is no ship run by one person so I want to just extend thank you to the entire cabinet for keeping everything together and keeping the ship sailing thank you all thank you miss Rieser thank you chair I will just associate myself with all of the welcomes and the thank yous that have already been stated I think everyone's covered it the legislative and policy committee met earlier this month to actually just yesterday to work on our legislative program.

[05:38:12] Our meeting was canceled in August due to weather. So the program will come back to the LNP committee to be finalized in October. Our next meeting is on October 2nd, and then it will come to the full board as an information item and then for action so we can quickly move to be ready for our legislative breakfast, which is the first Thursday in November.

[05:38:34] Also, as a result of the meeting being canceled in August due to weather, the policies that we were working on were pushed back a little bit. We did work on some policies that will go out for community feedback. One of the policies that we did not have a chance to work on is the one related to how the board votes.

[05:38:53] And now that we have the electronic voting system, we have the option of doing away with the roll call vote. And staff has proposed some changes in a red line version of the existing policy just to change how we present the information publicly to be visually and not to have to go through all of the steps that Mr. Sorokin went through tonight.

[05:39:21] So I forwarded those suggestions to all of you. During new business, I will ask if the board is interested in going ahead and taking it up tonight. Otherwise, it would have to go to LNP in October, go out for community feedback, come back to LNP in November, and then it would not make it to the board for action before this board was finished.

[05:39:45] We would spend the rest of our time doing it the way that it was done tonight, which is the purview of the board. I don't have a personal preference one way or the other, but I did want to provide you with the opportunity to make this small edits. If you are supportive of that, then during new business, you would need to support, or if you want to discuss it even, you would have to support the motion to suspend the rules.

[05:40:06] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Reeser. The CNI committee met on this last Monday. We had a great update about some enhancements and changes to gifted in the early grades in K-3 and about enhancements to the gifted identification process and about what services are offered under the DCI model for those children who are identified as gifted in the early grades and are in need of additional support.

[05:40:36] support, and it's really exciting to see that work getting off the ground now that the transition to the fusion program in the older grades is complete. We also heard some information items about potential changes to the curriculum in social science and global studies, as well as career explorations and what potential impact or what impact that will have to the seventh grade CTE curriculum. And I look forward to hearing more about staff's recommendations for those over the coming months and then bringing the staff's recommendations to the board or

[05:41:15] whatever the recommendations may be from committee. This morning, as Mr. Mejedevi and Dr. Spence mentioned, we attended the AWS Think Big Space showcase at Simpson Middle School. It was really astounding to see what our partnership with Amazon Web Services has provided as a space for learning, collaboration, and curiosity at that school.

[05:41:45] And the whole region where they're already bringing students in from Evergreen Mill and I think a couple of other schools as well. And it's just, I'm kind of thankful that there wasn't a space like that at my middle school because I would have hid in there all day and probably not made it to any of my other classes.

[05:42:03] But it's just a wonderful resource for the students and the teachers there to learn more about how to learn computer science and STEAM and how to teach it as well. I want to echo many of my colleagues' well wishes regarding Mr. Falcone, particularly Mr. Morse.

[05:42:24] I thought you spoke about that particularly eloquently. I'll just add that he did exactly what his job as division counsel was, to provide the best legal advice he could to the school board and the school division and to vigorously defend his client. That was his job, and that's exactly what he did.

[05:42:42] And I wish him nothing but the best in Alexandria City Public Schools. I also wanted to provide a thanks to Mr. Smith and DDI, as well as the support services staff that put some much needed enhancements into the boardroom over the summer and early fall.

[05:43:04] with the new voting system that's now in place, the new displays that hopefully make it easier for members of the public who are in here to follow along with what's going on and prevent me from making as many errors and counting votes and counting up to nine, which I'm very grateful for.

[05:43:20] So my appreciation to all the staff that worked on that to get that in place. And that will conclude my comments and committee report. And we'll now move on to item 15, new business. Is there any new business tonight? Ms. Reaser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. In order to discuss policy 2440, I move to suspend the rules.

[05:43:44] Is there a second? I seconded by Ms. Sheridan. This is not a debatable motion, and it requires a two-thirds vote in order to pass. So we'll proceed with a vote. Ms. Clerk, if you could please open the voting board.

[05:44:03] And board members, please enter your vote at this time. All in favor, please say aye. aye all opposed please say nay and any abstentions say abstain I guess uh clerk please close and display the vote that motion will pass 7-1-1 with Mr. Mahedvy opposed and Ms. Corbo absent for the

[05:44:41] vote um Ms. Reaser you could go ahead and enter in a motion at this time I move that the Loudoun County School Board adopt policy 2440 as amended by staff. And I would ask the clerk to please display the policy for board members who have not accessed it and for the public.

[05:45:05] I'm going to go ahead and read it as well, just to enter it into the record since it hasn't been previously uploaded into board docs. So previously section D of the policy stated all voting shall be by voice vote and show of hands with the vote total and the vote abstention or absence of each member publicly announced by the chair. And that is now changed. So it will state all voting shall be public with the vote total and the vote abstention or absence of each member displayed

[05:45:40] publicly or announced by the chair and recorded in the minutes by the clerk. Would you like a second To Ms. Reeser's motion. I thought I recorded that. My apologies if I didn't. I'll record the motion made by Ms. Reeser and seconded by Ms. Sheridan.

[05:45:55] Thank you. Ms. Reeser, would you like to speak to your motion? I think simply the suggestion is to remove the requirement for a voice vote and a show of hands and to instead display the vote publicly on the display or announced by the chair.

[05:46:13] So, really, if it's just a matter of preference, I have no other argument for or against it. Thank you. Board members, any discussion regarding the changes? Mr. Mahedby. Chair.

[05:46:29] So, it removes that all voting should be public, but there's no mention about the devices. And so, we're removing the voice vote and show of hands. But then, I guess this is a, what's the alternative? I mean, all the voting should be public.

[05:46:44] I mean, we've been voting public anyway. The word displayed is also highlighted in blue and underlined, which is an addition to how it will be publicly shown on the display. Sure, I see that, but how do you vote? I mean, if you're not going to vote with your voice or you're not going to vote with your hands, I mean, is there a device we're going to be talking about in the policy somewhere?

[05:47:06] If I can jump in, it's the way that it's proposed to read is basically provided flexibility, where it could be by a voice vote. It could be by electronic voting device like we've done tonight, but it removes the requirement for it necessarily be to be a voice vote with a show of hands so that there's flexibility in how the vote takes place.

[05:47:28] As long as the vote is either displayed publicly or announced by the chair. And Mr. Allen, you okay with that? What was it said? In terms of the proposed wording, Mr. Madovy, I have no problems with that.

[05:47:49] Is there any further discussion? Ms. Reeser. I just wanted to add for Mr. Mahedvi, Mr. Allen actually drafted this. Any further discussion?

[05:48:06] All right. Seeing none, we'll place the motion to a vote. Clerk, if you can please open the voting board. And board members, please enter your vote. And possibly for the last time, all in favor, please say aye.

[05:48:28] All opposed, please say nay. Any abstentions? Clerk, please close and display the vote. That motion will pass 7-0-1-1 with Mr. Mahedvi abstaining and Ms. Corbo absent for the vote.

[05:48:50] Is there any additional new business tonight? I'll defer to the – do you have – do you want board members to place the voting devices in the drawers or where would you like them to be left?

[05:49:07] In the drawers is good. Okay, thank you. Any additional new business? Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know we there had been mentioned earlier this evening by dr. Spence of moving our discussion regarding SOL scores to October 10th However, I would strongly urge the board to conduct that

discussion sooner rather than later. I understand that Miss Corbo had requested that this become an information item at this meeting unfortunately, she was not able to

[05:49:42] Submit her endorsements in time. And so my request would be that we go ahead and add it to the September 26th Information items so that we can get that discussion underway as quickly as possible. I think it is extremely important that we Prioritize this and I think that we can certainly make room for it on the agenda This this should be our number one priority right now my specific concern I will speak for myself as a board member, but my specific concern and I request that we have a lengthy discussion on the SOL scores in reading for students with disabilities.

[05:50:20] My concern is our comparison to ourselves, not our comparison to other divisions across the state. And so I won't take up too much time with that this evening, but I did want to bring that up for new business because I think that it's important for us to be proactive about this and put it on the agenda as soon as possible.

[05:50:39] Thank you. Thank you. Is there any additional discussion on that point or any additional new business? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you.



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