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Loudoun County School Board, Communications & Outreach Committee Meeting, Monday, October 2, 2023

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

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/870682865?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 2026-10-21. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:51] Good evening. It is 5 o'clock, and I'm calling to order this October 2, 2023 meeting of the Communications and Outreach Committee. I'm Tiffany Polivko, and I am joined this evening by Mr. Mahadevi. The next order of business on our agenda for the evening is item 2.01, public comment, and I believe we are free from public comment this evening. It doesn't look like we have anybody signed up.

[00:01:15] So we'll go ahead and move on to item number 3.01, which is the approval of the draft minutes from the September 11th, 2023 meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? Okay. Sorry, I'm nervous.

[00:01:38] I move that this committee approve the draft minutes for the September 11th, 2023 meeting. I will second. And if there is any further discussion, all right, without further discussion, all those in favor of approving the draft minutes from the September 11th, 2023 meeting, please raise your hand and say aye.

[00:01:58] Aye. That motion will pass unanimously with Mr. Morse absent for the vote. We'll go ahead then and move on to our action items for this evening. Our action item on the agenda is 4.01, revising public comment.

[00:02:15] And I will just briefly speak to that. At the last meeting in September, I spoke to the committee members about my concerns and the constituent outreach to have public comment members of the community that are coming to deliver public comment at the board meetings have the camera faced back on them and their faces rather than the faces of the school board.

[00:02:40] My desire to have that happen is primarily because currently these individuals are being deprived of the dignity and respect of having the camera focus on their faces while they are addressing the board. So my proposal is to reinstate the board's original practice of recording the public's faces as they are delivering public comment.

[00:02:58] my recommendation and my motion is that the committee members agree to move this item to the full board for consideration at the next school board meeting is there a second that motion will fail with lack of second with that we will go ahead and move on to item four oh sorry item 5.01 our information items this evening we will start with hrted stats and i will go ahead and turn it over to Ms. Natalie Allen. Thank you. Yes, thank you for having me. I know that you all asked last

[00:03:35] meeting about some stats related to HRTD and marketing, and I'm going to turn it over to Erin to give you that update. Thank you. So I wanted to bring your attention to the screen here. This is based on data from last year's HRTD, LinkedIn, and Facebook, Instagram, test and learn that we did go over in the previous meeting in our year-end metrics.

[00:04:01] The results show that the community is positively engaging with our ads and exceeding benchmark standards. So because of this, we did meet with HRTD earlier this summer to begin planning for the 2023-24 school year. So we are on their calendars to be part of their recruitment series starting in November.

[00:04:21] And we're going to do paid advertising social media campaigns, beginning with their career switcher interest night in November, and then continue on with what you see above all the way through June with monthly campaigns.

[00:04:43] And with that, I will give it over to Dan for FOIA. Sorry. I was on at the last committee meeting, but I understand there were some questions in regards to FOIAs that come in and under what categories that they're filed.

[00:05:06] When a requester files a FOIA through the GovQA system, they can choose one of five topics. My suspicion is that those topics, they are put in by GovQA, are purposely broad so as not to confuse the requester. It can be a bus incident, a school incident, a budget question, a human resources question, or other.

[00:05:24] But I think what the committee is probably asking for is a little bit deeper dive into what things people are actually requesting. And so here what we have are FOIAs by the activities request. When I receive a FOIA, I assign an activity to the office that would fulfill that FOIA, would supply the information and that activity is given to one of the offices throughout the division so here you can see a breakdown of the offices that receive those requests by far the number one is digital innovation or ddi and that is because the most common foyer requests are for electronic communications primarily emails sometimes teams messages

[00:06:03] cell phone records things like that but by far the largest request is for emails secondly it falls falls under the superintendent's office and that's because under the superintendent's office lies the legal

office, the legal division, as well as safety and security.

[00:06:19] One of the largest FOIA requests we receive is for surveillance video from schools, from school incidents. And so that falls under safety and security. Also, this is for the 22-23 fiscal year, or from 22 to 23.

[00:06:38] And so also the BK report or requests for the BK reporters was a pretty significant number as well. And then third you can see is business and finance, and that's primarily requests for budgetary information. Quite often one of the things that we see FOIA requests for are for bids, documents, contracts, and things like that.

[00:06:59] So as you can see there, that's the breakdown by activity. It'll probably give you a little bit better idea of the things that people are requesting. I also understand there was some conversation last time about making more information publicly available in order to decrease the number of FOIAs, and it's actually something that we're currently looking at.

[00:07:14] The GovQA system has an opportunity, has a function to where if one person, or many people, but if one person files a FOIA request for something, let's use an example of a budgetary item, then when I satisfy that FOIA request, I can make that public so that other people can see it.

[00:07:36] So instead of having to consistently re-fulfill that FOIA request, it becomes publicly available. Now, we're looking at doing that, but there's a number of things that come into that. How do we make it publicly available? We're going to have to put some procedures and policies in place because not everything would be publicly available.

[00:07:53] For example, if you filed a FOIA for your student records, we wouldn't make that publicly available. That's only allowed to you. So we're going to have to work with legal and with DDI and how we're going to be able to do that, come up with some new policies and practices and how to do that but it's something that we're definitely looking at thank you board members are there any questions or comments yes mr. Mahadevi thank you chair I mean this is good but I think that the question I think we were looking to answer was the type of information not which department the requests were going to so the and again

[00:08:30] I guess I would still like to have a data which talks about I think to the point that you alluded like test data or incident data or curriculum or like you mentioned contracts I think those are the ones that I'm more interested department-wise I really don't I mean it's nice to for the department administration to know where the requests are going but from board at least from my point of view I want to know like the type of requests coming in so going back to the point about making data publicly available would be the test

[00:09:04] data. So if somebody's requesting map data for third grade reading score, that should be made available publicly once the FOIA is done. So I was alluding to those, those type of questions. Do we not have like a FOIA reading room where we can post like the most requested FOIA documents?

[00:09:23] There's no FOIA reading room as such currently on the Gov. Not yet, but that is the function that we're talking about where we can make it when someone goes to file a FOIA, they can actually see what has already been fulfilled and see if that information they're requesting has already been fulfilled and available, then they wouldn't need to file a new one.

[00:09:40] So that is the function that we are looking at doing. The granular level that you're looking at doesn't exist in GovQA. It's something we could certainly look at doing, but that's something we would

have to create from scratch. So there's no way that you tag it to say this is a data request or filter it by any, you can't group them by any of those criterias right now?

[00:10:05] Only by those categories I mentioned earlier, which is bus incident, school incident, budget, or human resources. Those are the only ones that exist right now. And we can certainly look at adding to that and getting into more detail. It's possible. It's just something that doesn't exist yet.

[00:10:22] Four members, any other questions or comments? Yes, Mr. Morse. Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with Mr. Mejedevi concerning the ability to have a reading room. I think that's a great way to approach this. And with a reading room, instead of recording the number of requests, now we record the number of people that are actually downloading the data.

[00:10:42] So we would have the same information, but it would be a lot better, you know, clear indication of exactly what people are looking for. But I do think that that's a good idea. I do have one comment related, somewhat related to what Mr. Mejedevi just mentioned about the testing data.

[00:11:00] So specifically, you know, for MAP, for example, you know, people do want to see where, you know, where our students are falling there. How are, what are we doing to legally be able to provide that information while keeping that personally identifiable information confidential?

[00:11:17] Are we, like, how are we proceeding with that? Because I know there's some frustration from people in the community around being able to obtain those scores. Yeah, testing data is one of those things that has to be looked at in a case-by-case basis because there are a number of exemptions under FOIA to it.

[00:11:34] You know, my primary responsibility is to follow the law, and some of these things just can't be released. That's the lens of which I look at it through. So there are a number of exemptions in regards to test data. Even removing the student identifiable information does not automatically make that data now publicly available.

[00:11:53] So every request that comes in has to be looked at, you know, on its merit. And if I may, I'll add just a brief note to that. Much of our testing data is available at our dashboard site on the website.

[00:12:08] And I know they were looking, and I believe Dr. Tyler reported to the board on the progress of posting the MAP data there. I haven't checked it to see if it's immediately available. Let's see.

[00:12:24] Under assessments. So the AP scores are there, or the AP results, and SAT, but not MAP so far. I know they were working on that, and I can ask about the status of that project for sure.

[00:12:41] Thank you. I would definitely appreciate getting some updates on that, about what we can expect. Thank you. For members, are there any other questions or comments related to item 5.02? Okay, thank you. With that, we will go ahead and move on to 5.03, which is housekeeping items.

[00:13:00] And I'm turning that one over to Joan as well. Just a few follow-up items from the great meeting we had last month. I know, Ms. Polifko, you had asked about the Unified Theater program, and Erin had not been at that meeting, but I went back to the office and followed up with her, and she already had a creative brief and made contact with that program, and they're actually meeting to record that video on October 12th, right?

[00:13:23] So that was in the works, fortunately, already. And you may remember the other videos in that series are Assistive Technology, Unified Sports, Unified Sound. And you said you were working on maybe

one more as a part of that series? Yes, we also are doing a small project with the second graders at Francis Hazel Reed.

[00:13:45] They're working on Braille writing and 3D printing at AWS. So it'll be a short little video in that series. Excited about that, so just wanted to follow up there. And then another question came up in the last meeting about Peach Jar.

[00:14:01] And I think we reported that the open rate that Peach Jar reports is 40%, which is not a bad open rate for any sort of email. It's a good industry standard. But we did look into a little bit more of the numbers and wanted to bring them back to the committee.

[00:14:17] Peach Jar counts the number of email addresses that a flyer is sent to. So you can imagine we have 120,000 plus emails. So if you sent 10 flyers a week to 90,000 emails, just slightly over one per student, that would be 900,000 deliveries.

[00:14:38] So between June 22 and June 23, June 22 to June 23, 1,174 unique flyers were sent through Peach Jar. But if you do the math over that 12-month period, that's about 70 million flyer deliveries.

[00:14:53] That's a lot of flyers. So Peach Jar also gives us access to their email actions, which account for the number of times a viewer clicks on a sign-up button that's connected to a flyer. So of those flyer deliveries, remember that was about 1,100, 1,200, over multiple email addresses and multiple schools, They counted up that 10,000 email actions occurred.

[00:15:20] So out of 70 million flyers delivery, those email actions of about 10,000 clicking through on a button or information on a flyer is very low. But you have to remember that peach jar interactivity of those flyers is not just clicking through on that button.

[00:15:35] They can measure that, but it doesn't measure whether somebody downloaded it, read it, attended an activity because they marked it on their calendar or printed it off and put it on their refrigerator. Like we can't measure those kinds of things, right? But another way that we look, we've been considering Peach Jar is because it requires making a flyer, there's some staff time involved in making those LCPS flyers that go out.

[00:16:02] So those flyers that originate with LCPS, remember flyers are distributed twice a week, and I'm looking for the percentage. I thought it was in here. It's about two to one that those flyers are our staff created versus the community created.

[00:16:21] So it is taking some staff time. So I appreciated the question. I understand that in the beginning, Peach Jar was really onboarded to help simplify our family's experiences. They had to go fishing in the backpack every Tuesday or Wednesday to get all the flyers out and look at them and see what opportunities were there for their students.

[00:16:39] But we are really taking a hard look at this software and service to make sure our families are finding it useful, effective. And we do have a lot more and streamlined communications platforms that we didn't use 10 years ago or 8 years ago when this was onboarded.

[00:16:57] So thank you for the questions, and I just want you to know we're taking a hard look at Peach Jar. And I think as part of that communications audit that I think you all know we're going to start pretty soon, And we're going to look at all of the mechanisms by which we communicate with families to make sure that they're efficient and effective.

[00:17:15] So this will be one of them. And our last housekeeping item is just the rebranding update that you all know about. We'd be remiss if we didn't bring that to this committee. You all were privy to that last week. And there you see some activity with which we supported the rebranding rollout.

[00:17:36] So just wanted to let you know. Most of it is, of course, digital, and all of those platforms, for instance, Let's Talk, worked with vendors to make sure that all the assets were turned over into the new theme. Board members, are there any questions or comments at this point?

[00:17:59] Yes, Mr. Morse. Thank you, Madam Chair. Could you explain the surprise and delight? Did you receive maybe a puzzle or a sticker with the new logo on it so you could take it home? I did. That was your surprise and delight moment.

[00:18:15] I'm delighted then. That's marketing talk for a little something, right? so that was your surprise and delight you weren't expecting it so thank you any other questions i do have one um i just wanted to follow up i know there's been some outreach regarding the cost around this logo and i and i think it would be appropriate at this time to to bring that up to discuss i know that this began the process of the rebranding began back in 2022 obviously i was not a part of the board at that time so miss allen if you're or miss algren if you're able to just provide us with some background and some base level information regarding how that how that

[00:18:54] began how that process began and the costs surrounding that because there are you know people in the community are reaching out staff members are reaching out and wanting to know how much we as a school system put forward to pay for the rebranding of the new logo thank you absolutely I can go over some of the cost pieces and I'll turn it over to Ms. Sahlgren to kind of give a little bit of the history if that works. So LCPS paid \$52,500 to Sage Communications out of the FY21-22 budget. LCPS spent \$28,983.42 out of the FY23-24 budget for merchandise

[00:19:32] to share with all 98 schools and with staff, so 13,000 staff. The initial phase of the new logo rollout was largely the transition of digital or on-demand assets and incurred no additional cost to the school division. And that includes replacing the logos on the division website, social media accounts, and those kinds of things. And then we're making sure that materials scheduled for replacement, such as business cards and vehicle decals, et cetera, will be substituted with the new logo during their natural planned replacement cycle. So we're not buying new things because we have a new logo. Thank you. Oh, sorry, Ms. Salgrim, would you like to?

[00:20:12] Only if it's helpful, the rebranding idea came out of this communications committee in October of 2020, and we began looking into what it would take to do that. In May of 2021, the L&P committee also expressed interest in how you could accomplish a rebranding and how we could replace the logo that had really been the county's logo and in use all these years.

[00:20:38] So out of that direction, we began the process, and then 21-22 came to that point with the agency, and then here we are. I did want to mention, because you're right, we've had some inquiries ourselves, as you can imagine, so we did add it to the FAQs on the website, the cost piece about the logo as well.

[00:21:00] Thank you so much. I'll make a note of that, that it is available there. So if I can just clarify that the \$29,000 from the 23-24 budget, Was that from the budget that was adopted in 2022? So was it for the FY23 budget?

[00:21:21] So it's this year's budget. So 22, no, 23, 24, right. Both items for both years, the budget included the rebranding that the board approved and adopted.

[00:21:37] Got it. There we go. Thank you for that clarification. Any other comments or questions, board members? Okay. Seeing that there are no other questions or comments, we'll go ahead and move on to item number six, which is new business.

[00:21:54] Is there any new business for this evening? No new business. Well, with that, we are adjourned. Thank you so much for joining us this evening.



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