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Loudoun County School Board, Specialized Programs & Centers Committee Meeting, Thursday, October 26, 2023

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[00:00:00] Good afternoon. It is Thursday, October 26, 2023. I'm calling to order the Specialized Programs and Centers Committee. Sheridan and Morse are present, so we have a quorum, so we're going to go ahead and get started. I've been informed that item number two, there is no one signed up for public comment.

[00:00:17] So we'll move right to number 301, approval of the draft minutes for the September 19, 2023 meeting. Would you like to make a motion? So moved. All right. Move to approve those minutes. I will second. Any changes? all right all in favor aye that'll carry two zero uh one with mr. Beatty absent for the vote we'll move to our information items 401 business and financial services Middleburg Community Charter Schools external audit results and recommendation tonight we bring this information item to you to

[00:00:54] present the results of the annual external audit conducted by Robinson Farmer Cox and Associates This is for the Middleburg Annual Audit, which was year-ending June 30, 2023, and the recommendation to remove Middleburg from probation for taking the corrective measures per the Corrective Action Plan dated January 10th.

[00:01:14] You will see two documents, the governance letter and the management memo, as the attachment. The governance letter has significant audit findings, and the management memo states recommendations for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiencies.

[00:01:33] These documents were provided during the annual external audit by Robinson-Farmer Cox, and which identified two opportunities for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiencies. This is much better than previous years.

[00:01:49] Last year, they had nine deficiencies compared to this year of two. if they continue to attend the quarterly meeting this shows significant improvement over previous years and a lower financial risk based on the audit report staff recommends that the Loudoun County staff board school board remove middle work from probation based on the school taking corrective action to mitigate the financial concerns that were brought to the board thank you we appreciate the follow-up and the feedback and certainly thank you to Middleburg for making those correct those correct it taking those corrective

[00:02:27] actions mr. Morris did you have any comments or questions no I'm pleased to see the progress I think that they certainly come a long way and quite happy with the progress to date and I anticipate they will continue to mr. Robinson if you'd like to get to this we'd love to hear your your side is sure yeah thank you so much yeah we are still ongoing with our continued internal program ensuring that we're still staying on task so even with the two areas that were noted we are already making those changes it's been a it's been just a changeover from the external funds or the additional funds that are

[00:03:04] not you know as far as I see insured and we're actually changing those right now as needed so we should have no more issues moving forward and also bringing in another individual that is qualified to kind of support that that mindset in the school as well so thank you for your support as well as the quarterly meetings and those kind of things we're definitely excited about the future for our school so I'm gonna put you on the spot mr. Robinson at our last meeting we asked about the principal's meetings and whether or not our charter school

[00:03:40] principals were attending and it seemed that your attendance was lacking so I'm going to also suggest I see miss layman back there I don't know if that's something that we can put as a part of removing Middleburg from probation but I would strongly not just recommend I would like to put it as a part of the recommendation to remove them from probation that you are also you're you're the primary source for making sure the financials are done correctly so I think it would be really important for you to take advantage of those principal meetings and attend them and be part of any training that is also offered yes

[00:04:18] well to miss uh layman um last week or so and so uh i made sure that moving forward i'll be at every single unless i'm sick or whatnot but um yeah so that is definitely on my calendar moving forward great i'm glad to hear that that's already been established did you have anything else mr morse no and i think that's uh appropriate for for us to make that a condition of uh the revocation is that okay that they they have an attendee at the meeting not just the principal's meeting but also that any of the training I'm not I don't remember specifically if your bookkeeper is attending those trainings as well and is that a requirement or is that just something that was recommended that is

[00:04:57] a requirement it is a requirement yes okay we've been attending all those meetings I believe okay great I just wanted to make sure and so when we make the motion to remove next week or next month when we make that when it comes back for action I would like that to include the requirement for the principal do 10 principals meetings as a part of the revocation that are with you mr. Morse yes I'm trying to figure out the timeline if we push this to action item at our next meeting which is at the end of November that means the first board meeting in December will be an information and we will not vote on

[00:05:31] it so I would I move to suspend the rules I will second that okay all in favor of the motion to suspend the rules say aye aye aye thank you madam chair and then I would move to approve the removal of Middleburg Community Charter School from the we don't really have a we don't have a motion but let's let's work on one here before you make that motion to staff have any concerns with us moving ahead now and not having that wait for action next month if your recommendation

[00:06:10] was to remove them no concerns okay so the wording I'm looking at is I move to remove MCCA from probation under the condition of the we're moving we're moving to recommend the school board because it was school board action to

[00:06:32] put them on probation okay make sure what were the other meetings called the financial meetings the quarterly and quarterly fast forms so I believe it

[00:07:08] will read I move that the committee recommended the school board to remove MCCA from probation under the conditions of continued attendance by MCCA to the principal meeting and the quarterly fast forum. I will second that. Any further discussion? Is that clear for staff just to make sure that we're okay with that.

[00:07:33] All right. All in favor please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Aye. That motion will carry 2-0-1 with Mr. Beatty absent for the vote. Thank you. Thank you for taking all those corrective actions we appreciate that and it's nice to be able to wrap that up before the end of the term it makes both of us I'll speak for mr. Morrison makes both feel better thank you all right we'll now move to item 402 HRDT presentation on staffing special programs thank you for sharing before I turn it over to mr. Phillips and mr. Neal I just want to take a moment to acknowledge that the work of special programs and the development of special

[00:08:11] programs is in the work of teaching and learning or or school leadership we rely on significant support from our partners across the division and HR being one of those helping our efforts making sure we're staffed with these programs and thinking about the needs of our teachers so part of the special programs committee is giving other departments some time to talk a little bit about their perspective on special programs so mr. Phillips is here tonight and he will be taking the lead on this presentation so thanks mr. Slevin we

[00:08:47] really appreciate being here to talk to you of the HRTD perspectives and some considerations related to recruitment and staffing for the special programs as we continue to create these tonight we're going to present a high-level overview of our recruiting and staffing for 2022-23 and using the DLI the dual language immersion program as our key exemplar our exemplar talk about the lessons learned based upon this recruiting season as we continue to add

[00:09:19] teachers to our special programs across the division. Perfect.

[00:09:38] So this is a very high-level snapshot of some of the some not all of the things that the recruitment team has done last year for all licensed staff positions across LCPS with a high-level view of our efforts. Talking about college and our own hosted job fairs letters of intent we're we saw those go up again this year which we're very excited about and we're continuing to strengthen and um reinforce our grow our own programs with our teacher cadets our first cadre of teacher cadets are is going to be coming back this year

[00:10:17] for the 24-25 school year and then our partnership with jmu moving uh paraprofessionals and other support staff into licensed teaching roles across the division so once again that's not all the things we did but just a high level on the staffing side because we coordinate closely with our staffing team on the recruitment team we hired roughly next slide please mr sloven we hired uh the numbers still being crunched from our recruit recruiting season which ended september 30th of

[00:10:54] this past year but we hired over 750 licensed staff members and our fill rate at the end of that recruitment on the last uh hrtd erp report was at 97.79 compared to last year the pec report which is on the vdoe website for the 22-23 school year which is a snapshot on september 30th was 98.8 percent so just a little bit off although we still have although we have a high fill rate we are seeing challenges with staffing our traditional positions as you can see from this list these were

[00:11:30] the five top categories of that 927 23 job report we had 160 licensed vacancies and these five top categories were 75 percent of those 160 licensed vacancies so as we start to look for more specialized teachers in these special programs that becomes a challenge in trying to find the matching candidate for the jobs that we have based upon the certification needs and that's

[00:12:01] kind of what we're going to talk about tonight next slide please so um there are many phases of the recruitment process and the first one is advertising or making candidates aware of our positions so using again the dual language experience we had our budget finalized in april and that was when our dli position was posted because we knew it was budget contingent for this particular school year in addition to that the advertisement for this position

[00:12:36] the eligibility criteria in the job description for the language component and proficiency was very strict and provided limited acts or limited um a bill of limited ability for our candidates to promote their proficiency or prove their proficiency in spanish so some of the things that we recommend when we're doing special programs for the future um talking about utilizing um anticipated vacancy postings as we know special programs and they're going to be a strong commitment from the school board utilizing anticipated vacancies to start getting candidates

[00:13:14] in the applicant pool as well as taking some of our letters of intent and making them their own line item in our recruitment sheet to target those special programs, so being able to get out on the road a little bit earlier to target those candidates who could potentially fill the roles for us.

[00:13:34] In addition, when we're creating the postings, we hope to get a little bit more flexible language that captures the minimum requirements so that the pool or the candidates can be as inclusive as possible for all the candidates. So that's going on to advertising.

[00:13:49] I'm going to turn it over to Karen for recruitment. next slide please good evening so i am just gonna again a little high level overview of our dual language immersion experience with recruitment efforts and and share a few possible future considerations so once we were able to post the vacancy for our dual language immersion teachers we tried multiple sources for candidates in an effort to find an individual with unique credentials of course during a national teacher shortage as you can see some of

[00:14:27] the items outlined above we posted the vacancy on various association job boards including the American Council on the teaching of foreign languages and the Association of two-way dual language education we also posted the position in our paid for LinkedIn job slots which create further advertisement and did essentially cold calling with candidates sourcing through LinkedIn doing bullion

searches to find individuals with the skills and credentials required we actually were able to engage with a candidate from North Carolina that is

[00:15:07] incredibly interested to continue to be engaged with us even for future opportunities which is which is exciting we also engaged with participate learning which is a company that sponsors visas and also can provide DLI instructors so we engage with them for this current school year we also email blasted individuals that had applied to any elementary position in our applicant tracking system so as we move forward in considering other special programs we

[00:15:43] are looking to increase our partnerships with sourcing companies including those that provide visa sponsorship as as indicated with participate learning we also are looking to increase our grow your own pathways our jmu grow your own effort as one example we look to encourage internal transfers and advertising to those individuals that have credentials that may not have previously thought about the position we are interested in potentially creating professional

[00:16:19] development experiences for current staff to meet the eligibility requirement so opportunities for a spanish academy for our current employees and then seeking opportunities to expand our recruitment net with considerations for other locations such as puerto rico as hrtd has done in the past thanks karen um throughout the uh the next part talks about the budget and and having that focus or that commitment for our budgeting to make sure that or try to make sure as best

[00:16:58] as possible because we never know what reconciliation can bring for budgets making sure that we have a strong commitment so that we can get out in front of these positions as we create these special programs at the february budget adoption again trying to target or gauge the priorities of the school board for these special programs as much as we can so that we can again continue to be out on the road and advertise as much as we can that knowing that they will be low on the cut list if possible we know that's not always possible but that's something to consider for

[00:17:37] future iterations as we're creating these special programs next slide please so wrapping up as we kind of lessons learned from the DLI experience we know we have the hampsi program we have IB which is expanding in some of our schools for year two we know this year for the ninth grade the hampsi certifications are pretty general for science but as the kids get into higher levels of academia in those schools what are the certifications that are going to be needed for those science

[00:18:14] teachers and trying to again trying to fill those roles as much in advance as possible will be a huge asset to us in HR again when considering to even start a special program looking at the pipeline of teachers assessing what the future of our teacher pipeline and our recruitment needs that would be very helpful the account of the impact of future budgets for the growth of special programs for us in HRTD. Again, expanding that recruiting net. Some of the companies that we were talking to for the DLI program, you know, come on over to Spain, interview teachers. Okay,

[00:18:52] that's a pretty big, that's a pretty big, large amount of money to go over to recruit for our teachers. But knowing that, that could be a possibility. And then finally, one other area that I oversee are substitutes. So if you have a very specialized teacher in a classroom and that teacher has to be out for whatever reason, there's going to be a large impact on the substitute that can fill the role of that teacher. So making sure that we take that in consideration when we're building our special programs. If someone's out for maternity leave or FMLA or something like that,

[00:19:29] how can we maintain the fidelity of that program and work with our partner with our substitute office to get the best substitute that we possibly can. I think we did a pretty good job of that at Sanders Corner, and we have a gentleman starting, did you start today? I think the gentleman from GeoVision started today. I just came back from a conference in Chicago, but we'll get that. But I know working with the substitute, we've extended some of our overlap days with that substitute so that you can get that gentleman up to speed to start for the second quarter that's it there's

[00:20:09] any questions please let us know thank you so much for being here I don't think I'll just be honest and say I don't think we always consider the difficulty and the expectation we put on HR to fill all of these programs that we're so excited about all the time I'm not even sure we we consider that we might not be able to fill some of them when we're excited about the IB program and the dual immersion all of all the different things that we come up with and the great ideas so I'm really glad to that you brought that perspective to us because I think it's important and I hope future board members are paying attention as as we continue to grow all of these really great new programs so thank you for all the work you're doing and for enlightening us other board members have

[00:20:48] any comments mr. Morris thank you madam chair so sitting in on HR TV I get bits and pieces of this already but I do think that miss Sheridan brings up the point that the school board has to be aware of the of the big issues and in your case there are two there's a high vacancy problem when we look at special education we took guidance counselors English and things like that and then there's also unique positions which you described earlier so are there thoughts or ideas first of all I'd like to know did we have significant vacancies in the

[00:21:27] DLI it sounds like we have been struggling are we still struggling do we have each position filled at this point are we still missing some yes we are Yeah, it was filled with a lot of hard work, collaboration among teaching and learning, the legal department, to secure a fully licensed candidate for Sanders Corner for the position.

[00:21:54] So that person started today, and we'll have an overlap with this long-term sub that was in the classroom up until the end of next week. Okay, so that's consideration, you know, we could talk about specific bonuses for unique positions or for those that are high vacancy positions.

[00:22:12] And then all the other questions I'll save for our HRTD meeting, which follows this one, so thank you. Mr. Baby. Thank you, Chair. So I'm also thinking of the nursing program we just closed, and that was also an issue with finding staffing for that.

[00:22:30] Do you think that something like the HAMSI program that's coming up could be in the same situation, because that's a very specialized field that you have to find candidates for to fill. I know it's a couple years out, but what are our thoughts on having issues finding people to teach those classes?

[00:22:46] So I think in general, I'll start and then I'll let Mr. Phillips follow. In general, part of this presentation is meant to be a lessons learned. I think there are some strategies that we incorporate. For example, one of the things mentioned was that we posted the dual language immersion teacher late in the hiring process in April.

[00:23:04] And so that lack of runway hurt probably the recruiting effort. So small tweaks, posting the jobs earlier will likely help us. But we're also aware now we don't want that experience again. And so the planning team for health and medical science is being really thoughtful about certification needs.

[00:23:24] They're looking at existing staff. They're thinking about possibly recruiting staff, working with the HRTD team, and even projecting out over years, because we're going to start with the ninth grade cohort, go to 10, 11, 12.

[00:23:39] So we know certain years we're going to need a certain type of teacher. So even like hiring decisions early on can be made that can hopefully make things easier when we get to that point where we need that specialized teacher. So would you add anything? Very well said, but we do know that sciences, particularly high-level sciences, are very challenging to find teachers and get robust candidate pools.

[00:24:05] And hopefully, again, with our grow our own efforts, some of our teacher cadets coming back hopefully could be potential candidates for us for that as well. Further? All right. Thank you again for the presentation and the enlightenment.

[00:24:21] I think it's very helpful. Thank you. All right. We'll move to item 403, expansion of starting towards excellence in preschool, our step program. Oh, wait, wait. This is also enlightening that tech support is very important as well.

[00:24:45] Right, Mr. Sleman? Thank you, Ms. Sheridan. So at this point, I'm going to turn it over to our Director of English Learner Programs, Mr. Rosario. We are also joined by members of the Step and Head Start team, and you'll also notice members of our CTE team down at the end of the table.

[00:25:06] This presentation is connected across all of these offices, as you'll find during the discussion. Good afternoon. We are so grateful to actually be back to talk to you once again about our Starting Towards Excellence in Preschool program and discussing the possibility of transitioning the program to full day, along with opportunities for growth with our current partnerships.

[00:25:31] I'm really proud to lead the work, really, of our STEP program, and it is under the direction of Ms. Alexis Duffin, who will present most of the presentation with you today. But I do want to introduce our supportive colleagues. We are joined by Lori Padgett, who is our Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor, Arnaz Toteval. She is our specialist of career and technical education, as well as, last but not least, Renee Dawson, who is our director of community connections and programs. I'll go ahead and pass this along to Alexis, who's going to start our conversation, and it's going to be

[00:26:11] followed by our colleagues who will inform you of our partnerships. Hello, it's so nice to be back again talking about preschool. So we are going to be talking about the starting towards excellence and preschool program we're going to talk about what it looks like where we would like to go moving forward and then this time we have colleagues who also kind of talk about the partnerships that we have and how we see that growing in the future so some of this is a little bit of a review but it's important to know what our program looks like so our step program is funded through the virginia

[00:26:45] preschool initiative so it is state funded the families that apply for our program must qualify into the program. So these are the four criteria that we are given from the state. So income up to 200% of the federal poverty level, that means \$60,000 adjusted gross income for a family of four in order to qualify for a STEP program. If the family is considered homeless, they can also qualify. If the parents or guardians did not graduate from high school, they can also, the child can qualify for the program. And any child who is eligible for special education services also qualifies for our STEP preschool program.

[00:27:23] Currently, we have the capacity to serve 320 at-risk four-year-old students, and we offer a half-day model. So we offer three hours in the morning, three hours in the afternoon. So our teachers are in

the classroom all day, and they rotate those students. So they see 32 students a day.

[00:27:41] We have 10 classrooms that are located in six schools, and we offer the students breakfast in the morning, and then for our afternoon students, they are offered lunch. I wanted to just take a minute to highlight that federal poverty level, because that's something that we talk about with STEP, and I often breeze over it like everybody understands the language that I'm speaking.

[00:28:02] So when we talk about the federal poverty level, that's federal. So it's anywhere in the United States. The federal poverty level is \$30,000 for a family of four. That is the adjusted gross income. So for STEP, we are allowed to go up to 200%, so that's where we get our \$60,000 for a family of four.

[00:28:19] But I think it's very important to note that approximately a third of our STEP program serves Head Start eligible students. All right, so we're going to move into why we are here to talk about full day. So I just stated in our current structure that we offer a half-day program, and we would like to move to full day, and we have some justification.

[00:28:41] So I wanted to reach out and just share a little bit of some state-level data. So LCPS is one of only three localities in the state of Virginia to offer only a half-day program. So per the VDOE, LCPS has 793 students that are eligible to be served.

[00:28:59] So based on their survey data, they come to me and they say, these are the number of slots that you have available. And then we say, okay, this is how many we think we can fill. So the state says 793, and we currently serve 320 students in a half-day slot. So we're actually asking for 160 of those slots, and we're chopping them in half, and we're doing so we're able to serve 320 students.

[00:29:20] I think can we go back to that one real quick an important thing you know we kind of track that that number and why why are we serving that number and we don't have a wait list to grow our program currently and I truly believe it is the half-day program that we offer we have 39 students that are on our head start wait list that chose to stay on our head start wait list versus being served in our half-day step program and I know that's only one small piece of data it's hard to collect the data from the families that didn't apply because it's only a half-day program but that's something that is really powerful so we know that families would choose to sit on a wait list for a different

[00:29:59] program that offers full day than to be served by our step program that is half day can I interrupt you for a second yeah just to add to what you just said if I'm remembering correctly it's because the interference of the the day and the workday and being able to get our students to and from the program even if there's bus service is is really where you're pulling that you're not just yeah and you know there's and there's stories too from families you know having a mom sit me down and say she felt like she had to choose between working to support her family and education for her child and that felt very unfair to have to make that choice because she couldn't do both right I just wanted

[00:30:36] first time here yeah people who are hearing that for the first time right I remember that from the last time you spoke with us very powerful thank you so here's a map so visuals I think are always very helpful. So this is from the BDOE and they have color-coded it. So the dark green is where only half-day is offered. If you see that lighter green that means they offer a structure of both half-day and full-day and everybody else without a color offers only full-day BPI. And let's zoom that in. Alright so here's region 4. So this just shows in our region those that are offering half-day

[00:31:14] programs. So I talk about the Head Start gold standard because Head Start started the transition to full day several years ago and they've actually written it into the preamble for their Head Start program performance standards and I think this is important because we look at Head Start as the model for preschool programs when you're serving at-risk families. So being the model we pulled this from the preamble that really talks about expanding to full day. I mean it doubles the amount of time that the child is exposed to high quality instruction and services and it's better meeting the parent needs. So that goes back to that parent story. So we're not just supporting

[00:31:51] the student and giving them that high-quality education, but we're also helping the family because the child is at school for a longer period of time, allowing them to secure work. Another important piece are the VPI time requirements.

[00:32:07] So with the Virginia Preschool Initiative, we are given guidelines that we must follow, and it states that half-day programs shall operate for a minimum of three hours of classroom instructional time per day, excluding breaks for lunch. So we know that, and we still feed our children because we know that they are at risk, and is something that we can provide for them. Now our teachers are amazing and they can do amazing things and can keep that instruction going while the children are eating, increasing that vocabulary and having those conversations. And with a half-day program, we are not able to meet that

[00:32:41] guideline. And it was found as a finding in 2019. So moving to a full day would allow us to stay within the time requirement and offer the students breakfast and lunch. So a child could attend, receive breakfast and lunch and the full time required for their instruction.

[00:33:00] So we have a VPI steering committee that really helps guide the program, make decisions, and they have been very instrumental in the development of where we go next with full day. So the last steering committee we had, we had a work session on August 3rd, where we sat down and we've talked about all of these pieces of full day and where we want to go next, and the steering committee came with some recommendations.

[00:33:24] So we're presenting two, hoping for one, but presenting two. So the steering committee has requested the addition of 10 step classrooms in FY25. That would give us the capacity to continue to serve 320 students, and all 320 of those slots would be full day.

[00:33:45] Option two would be the addition of five step classrooms in FY25. That would also give us the capacity to serve 320 students, but this way we would have 160 half day slots and 160 full day slots. So we would kind of go half and half with additional five classrooms in FY26 in order to complete the full day transition. So with that comes some budget requests. So if we went with option one we would be we would need teachers and teaching assistants because in our classroom we must have both for our ratio. We are also looking at a step coordinator

[00:34:23] so doubling the program because we currently have 10 classrooms has a little bit more oversight with the teachers, the teaching staff, in many different locations across the county. We're also anticipating a high increase in applications coming in through our preschool office, knowing that one of our program could potentially be full day.

[00:34:45] So we're asking for a preschool enrollment manager to really provide the oversight of the application and enrollment process. We have a single point of entry system, so when a family applies,

they're applying for both Head Start and Step, and based on the family need and their qualifications, that That's how it is determined which program they are able to attend.

[00:35:04] So this other person would help us really making sure that we're in compliance because we have the federal guidelines from Head Start and we have our state guidelines for VPI. Option two, just a little bit of a change. Five teachers and five TAs for those five classrooms, but still asking for those two additional positions to support the program.

[00:35:27] I think it's important to note that when you change the slots that you're asking for, it changes the VPI funding. So we currently have an amount, that top amount, is what you're eligible to receive for 320 half-day slots.

[00:35:43] So it's essentially 160 full-day slots. If we went with option one, that would be the grant funding we would receive. And if we went to option two, the grant funding below, the \$1,078,680. So it just kind of, I just, the importance of this was just to note that the grant funding changes.

[00:36:03] So essentially, you double the amount you receive from the state when you go from a half-day slot to a full-day slot. All right, so we want to talk about program space and opportunities with expansion. And I'm going to start by, so this is where we want to bring in our colleagues and talk about the great things that we're able to do with our partnerships with STEP and different opportunities that we see that could potentially grow with the expansion of STEP moving from half-day to full-day.

[00:36:31] So I'm going to start by passing it over to Lori Padgett, and she's going to talk about our inclusion program. Good evening everyone. I appreciate the opportunity to be here next to Alexis. We've been working a long time for our kiddos to have the inclusion opportunities and we have them.

[00:36:51] Currently we support three half day inclusive classrooms. So like Alexis mentioned before it's the AM and the PM. Those classrooms are staffed with a early childhood special education teacher and teaching assistant and then the VPI the step teacher and teaching assistant and and I could go on for hours about the importance of inclusion but I know that you know you guys don't want me to do that so I'll I won't but an inclusive classroom in a general education setting is where the students with and without learning disabilities come together and they

[00:37:28] follow the same curriculum and they're learning the same things and we're supporting the different learning abilities that our children with the IEPs have it's it's great for both our kids with disabilities and without disabilities at such a young age our children without disabilities are learning their social emotional skill skills and they're learning acceptance and they're learning empathy and all the life skills that will follow them as they continue through their their lives in their education the opportunity to

[00:38:03] grow the cruise inclusion program as additional classrooms are added with full-day step is is a must like I said we have three and I wish we had 33 in You know, the goal is to operate at least eight full-day inclusion programs, so we would increase by five, and that would meet the required 10% target inclusion rate.

[00:38:27] And then we would maximize the classroom availability with shared program space. So what that means is currently, other than those three programs, we have early childhood special ed, ECSE classrooms, and we have step classrooms, and they're separate.

[00:38:42] we have this inclusion model we combine that so it also it does save the space and we know our schools are packed to the gills with trying to find space for for everybody so that that is definitely a benefit of that inclusion program on top of the obvious benefits of inclusion all right so the next partnership I want to talk about is CTE so career and technical education and

[00:39:19] And something that some might not know is that we actually, our preschool, so Head Start and Step, we do locate, we are located inside of some of the high schools. So this is a fantastic partnership that I really wanted to talk about to say why this works and why we're here.

[00:39:36] So being able to partner with career and technical education through the early childhood education classes helps both the high schoolers and it helps our preschoolers. So we are always so grateful when we have the space in a high school because we get to partner with the high school students and we also get to show them what preschool classes look like if that's something that they're interested in and growing them within the county.

[00:39:57] When this happens, we are able to provide training for high school students in high-quality preschool classrooms. We're using our state-approved, developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum. We offer a consistent schedule, five days a week to accommodate those ECE class times and the high school student participation.

[00:40:15] This allows the high school students to meet their criteria that they need for their state standards. And when we partner the STEP and Head Start office, we are responsible for the program oversight of the preschool standards that are set forth by Virginia Quality Birth to Five.

[00:40:31] And this is a statewide system that is helping to unify and measure all publicly funded preschool programs. So this is something that has been, it's kind of new to our world, and we are navigating that, and we are able to understand how that impacts our preschool classrooms and how we can use that to our benefit.

[00:40:49] So how can we use the information from Virginia Quality Birth to Five to make our preschool programs even stronger? So having oversight of that and then allowing those high school students in the ECE department really partner with us is a great combination of us providing a solid preschool program for students and then having the high school students a part of that so they can see what that looks like and kind of helping grow them into that profession, which might help over with HRTD when they're looking for teachers, right?

[00:41:16] So, right, right. It's just amazing, amazing. So I just wanted to highlight how much we're so proud of this partnership and we also see this as an area that we could grow by moving into full day step and I'm going to pass it over to Arnaz and she's going to talk about what that looks like.

[00:41:35] Oh, to Renee and then Renee. I'm just going to talk very quickly, and then I will turn it over to Arnaz. One of the things that we are excited to do is to talk about this partnership. And as you can see, we do have STEP and Head Start in some of our schools, but not all.

[00:41:54] So Arnaz is going to share with you what we'd like to do in terms of expanding this and replacing some of our existing partnerships that we have within the school with STEP or Head Start. So, Arnaz. Thank you, Ms. Dawson.

[00:42:09] Good evening, everyone. The Office of Career Technical Education CTE is working with school-based stakeholders to review the current school-led learning lab structures and how we might be able to expand the partnership with STEP. As mentioned, the goal of tonight's presentation is to share options for increasing STEP classrooms at available high school sites.

[00:42:32] So to go over, the Office of CTE has created a stakeholder engagement plan, as mentioned. allow me to share what this engagement plan includes. EL and CTE staff visited three sites. One site contained a STEP preschool. Two sites had school-led learning labs. CTE is in the process of contacting high school principals to share the update regarding early childhood education and the associated work-based learning experiences with STEP, Head Start, and school-led learning

[00:43:06] CTE also gathered teacher-leader feedback on October 24th during the combined department chair and SALT meeting. CTE is working to create a one-pager that outlines frequently asked questions to share with stakeholders, and this information will be shared via Schoology update with teachers and also in principal update with building principals.

[00:43:33] CTE will visit schools to support in person and collaborative meetings CTE will create a Google form to capture thoughts and feedback CTE will also host feedback and listening sessions where school-based stakeholders can drop in during a designated time and a date and time slot to ask questions or share their thoughts and these dates are November 2nd November 3rd November 8th and December 11th. Our hope is that through the various stakeholder feedback opportunities and sessions coupled with the site visits to view various

[00:44:10] successful models of early childhood education, STEP, and school-led learning labs, our team will have sufficient data to make an informed decision for expanding STEP per the full-day proposal and the reimagining opportunities of our school-led learning labs. And now I would like to turn it back to Miss Alexa Duffin to conclude our presentation. Thank you. It's so exciting to be able to hear. I like this time that we have a team. We have a dream team. So we're here. We're talking about preschool. We're talking about the impact that we have on the students and the families in Loudoun County. And

[00:44:45] it's just so exciting to see all that. So I wanted to end here. I recently was looking through the mission and the vision and the core values of LCPS. And I read, and it was completely separate from this. And I read it. Like, this is what we're doing. This is why we're here. This is what we do.

[00:45:03] So one of our core values is equity and opportunity. All students and staff should have access to resources, programs, and support to enable a successful future. And that just spoke to me in the importance and the impact of what we're doing here today to not only offer an opportunity for our preschool students, but also for their families.

[00:45:21] That's all I have, so thank you. - So thank you all, and not to just put the focus on Alexis, but your enthusiasm about what the program and bringing in your colleagues put the team the dream team together we'll keep that going it's really great and as you already know this about me I'm a big supporter of head start and our step program and having spent a lot of time in the meetings early on in in my term really think that this is great and I love the fact we go all the way back that we can keep the 320 at full time for a mere 1.7 million dollars which

[00:45:59] seems like a really great investment I wish I could be here to support it all the way through but I think it's really great and I think you've you've done a great job outlining how to make it happen and and

putting it all together to show that it is a collaboration through LCPS and it doesn't just benefit the preschoolers it benefits our high schoolers and helps with our HRTD I think it's a really great package mr. Morse thank you madam chair deja vu all over again I think we've already said we want more we want this program and i think we all support it uh yesterday actually tuesday we had a um one of our legislative

[00:46:37] positions was for a universal pre-k which i don't necessarily support at this time but i made the point that i completely support our at-risk children getting early education and these programs are exactly what those children need um i would view option one as our default request that we should be moving forward with and then option two is if something goes south we're going to push for option two or whoever's in our position will be pushing for that the one thing that i heard that concerned me a little bit was you mentioned a failure to meet vpi requirements

[00:47:14] a notification in 2019 i think that's the first i've heard of that i think knowing that we could have pushed through these changes that would have made us compliant two or three years ago because if the school board knew that we were deficient in these requirements I think we would have taken earlier action that only supports the program more so when the discussion is held again for the third time and some of us will be here and some won't I think it's it's extremely important to make that comment and to make that very clear that in order to achieve the VPI requirements we

[00:47:54] need to move forward with this I think that would be tremendous and when you're paying for 50% of student costs and the state is paying the other 50% I think that it is it isn't it's a requirement it's not an option it really is I think that we need to move forward with this program and we needed more than 10 schools or 10 classrooms sure the the 1.7 million dollars does that include the cost of retrofit the spaces and stuff to find the space for all the classrooms that we're going to use I know that was a question talking about deja vu that

[00:48:31] Last time this came up, sort of where are the classrooms? Because, you know, we already have existing classrooms and we would have to find more space. So what's the progress on finding that? And I think the question was about the 1.7, right?

[00:48:48] Kind of, but does that include the space? Like, where is that considered? No, that does not include the space. No. So I think that's kind of also why we're here. We're talking about our partnerships that we currently have and our creative solutions that could potentially be a part of this. So like Lori said with our inclusion program, there are opportunities to grow the STEP program by utilizing ECSE classroom space because we are essentially taking those students and they're becoming STEP students, and we are working together in order to make that happen.

[00:49:16] So we have opportunities within ECSE, and we're also hoping to have some opportunities within high school space as well. So moving into operations and maintenance, adding there are line items in our budget that we have thought of that are preschool-specific items. so if we did go into let's say we have a new school that we're in that used to be kindergarten classroom well there will be some items that are preschool specific so we've thought that through also in our budget requests thank you so what do you need from us we appreciate the presentation but what what can we as a committee do to what can we do to help so I'll let I'll let the team answer but

[00:49:53] one of the things I learned early on in this conversation working with Alexis and her team is this conversation came before the board last spring and one of comments was well if we knew this earlier in the budget process we would have more of an opportunity to do something so part of this presentation

is simply to get it into the public knowledge of this is some an issue that we're grappling with that will likely be addressed when we bring it will hopefully be addressed in some form or fashion in the budget for FY25 would you

[00:50:26] add anything to that no that's exactly right so we were told you know last time we made a cost-neutral and we came up with a different phased approach we were told to you know we wish we would have asked so this is us asking and it was go big or go home so that's where option one came in so let's let's go full day so I think we're bringing it to you as early as possible so we can hopefully get the ball rolling because with that comes a lot of change that we're hopefully well hoping to get ahead and also it's very applicable the HRTD is here and Karen we've been emailing like hey we would love to come to those recruitment fairs we recognize that this would be a situation where we would want to get ahead so we want to be ahead of the game in order to recruit and find

[00:51:05] those teachers so for opening 10 additional classrooms we're looking for 10 additional teachers with that pre-k endorsement so and we know that those teachers are out there we think that we need to advertise our program so people know that we have a solid preschool program in Loudoun County and we need teachers we need to talk to the man upstairs and not up there up there so I will move to suspend the rules for the purpose of forwarding a recommendation to the superintendent second any all in favor of the motion to suspend the rules please raise your hand and say aye I move that the committee recommend to

[00:51:43] the full board that the I would include the superintendent in that as he prepares his budget well but we need to have the board make the recommendation to the superintendent to prepare his budget we can't recommend to the so I recommend the the full school board I don't want to say commit I want to say direct the superintendent to incorporate option one as briefed tonight into the proposed FY25 operating budget second is there any further discussion seeing none all in favor of the

[00:52:22] motion please raise your hand and say aye aye aye that'll carry three zero so that means we need an information item at the next floor meeting nicely done you got mr. morses has been the rules nicely done this is like this is the dream team right now you've got you know anything else you you want us to spend because anything tonight this is it and we want to be going to Spain that was the other part of this we were volunteering over here as you were saying I would be happy to do that for you we'll have a little extra time come January so all right so we'll move to item 5 new business anybody have

[00:53:00] anything all right seeing none we are adjourned thank you all very much have a great time the rest of the evening and we'll see you next month



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