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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, November 1, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 3h 4m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/880367140?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.

[00:03:11] Good evening, everyone. If you could please make it to your seats. We'll get started. We've got a lot of stuff to get through today. Thank you all so much for coming this evening. I know it's hard the day after Halloween. I'm sure everyone else is a bit tired and maybe has a stomach ache from eating too much candy. Or maybe that's just me.

[00:03:35] This is the QR code to sign in. Please take a moment and sign in and let us know that you were able to make it. There are also sign-in sheets in the back for our PTA and PTO reps and SEAC members. There is also a sheet in the back for public comment if you would like to make a public comment in a little bit. All right and I am going to let our office of special ed get started with our connecting exercise.

[00:04:09] Good evening everyone. If you could arrange yourselves just a little bit where you have four or five people in your group so if you're sitting near a table that doesn't have very many people if you would just get together for this activity it will make it a lot more fun all right and while you're moving I will kind of explain how we're going to connect as a community tonight um I played this game recently at an event I was hand I was um attending and it is good fun

[00:04:38] all right we're getting there okay so in your table groups there is a hot pink piece of paper numbered one through five on your table and what we want you to do is find five things that everyone at your table has in common five things that everyone in your table has in common there are no parameters around that so you can you can decide what that is and in about five minutes we're going to get back together and someone from your group is going to share out

[00:05:15] those five things okay five things that you have in common at your table everyone at the table has

[00:05:24] these things in common need to find five of them makia because you're okay guys show me how many

[00:10:09] you have in common so far is everybody at five five in five minutes it worked okay awesome what we're going to do is i'm going to turn off this timer because you actually have 23 seconds left um but we'll um go around and your spokesperson can tell us what you five people have in common

[00:10:28] we'll start at this back table our top five uh number one uh we are all very tired so so that's uh we all have uh children or grandkids in the schools i think we said uh number three we're connected to special education in some way i'm connected because i'm running for the school board

[00:11:07] and I'm very interested, so we all live in Loudoun County, and we all like the beach. Yeah, Margaret, you choose. Thank you. You get to choose. Okay, we are all parents. We all like pizza. We all like to travel. We all enjoy reading, some of us actual books, some of us

[00:11:43] through audiobooks, and we are all sports fans, different sports, but all sports fans. All right. We all have at least two children. We are all here tonight. We all have brown hair.

[00:12:02] We all wear glasses or contacts, and we have all been to Disney.

[00:12:22] Okay, number one. We all are moms. We all live on the East Coast. We did not travel here from another coach for this meeting. In case that wasn't obvious. French fries are a fave of this group. We would choose them over other things very easily. Blue is everyone's favorite color

[00:12:45] at this table. Isn't that crazy? And beach over mountains. So ours are that we all speak English.

[00:13:04] We all have children. We all love coffee and that even has an exclamation and a heart next to it. we really love coffee. We've all experienced exotic international travel, our description at least, and we all have a college education. Okay, so for our group over here, we all have children,

[00:13:39] we all drive cars, we all like beach slash vacations, so beach vacations, we all love chocolate, and we all dream of winning the lottery. I think that's all the tables, and the other night when I was at my event, the leader of that event said something that really stuck out with me.

[00:14:03] We all come here for different reasons. We all have different things that are on our minds or on our hearts every single day, but we have more in common than we have differences. And I think that is the point of finding our common ground as a community. So thank you for your time for this little activity before we get started. And now I think, Tedra, this is your portion. We're going

[00:14:35] to talk about the All in Virginia plan. Good evening everyone. Thank you for being here this evening. I get the distinct pleasure of going over our All in Virginia plan. At the end of our slides I will try

to go quickly so you have some time as tabletop groups to really process and give us some feedback on your overall impressions of the plan. Any thoughts or I wonders or support that

[00:15:11] you have for the three models that we're discussing as a school division. And then you will also get the opportunity to ask additional questions, share information, thoughts, and ideas. And then of course, couldn't let an opportunity pass, there's also a section on the survey for you to sign up to be a tutor for one of our schools to support our students.

[00:15:33] Okay? So we'll dive into our All In Virginia Plan. All right. So the Governor's All In Virginia Plan has three areas of focus. attendance. The state has launched a chronic absenteeism task force and LCPS began addressing this issue locally in earnest at the end of the last school year as we saw our chronic absenteeism rate increasing. So when the benchmarking for attendance changed prior to last year we were

[00:16:07] around 11 percent. We spiked up to 18.8 percent by the end of last year. We looked at our current information just this morning with division principals, and we're back down to 11 percent. So the interventions that we have put in place are definitely working. Literacy is the first L.

[00:16:28] So the state is focusing on accelerating the expansion of Virginia Literacy Act through eighth grade. We also have a plan that we have shared at a pretty regular cadence with our school Board regarding our early literacy, and earlier this month, throughout the course of the month of October, we had our eight selections out in the lobby. You will, as parents, be able to go to your elementary school to see the literacy options that we're looking at as a division before we adopt it as a school system. The last L is for learning, so the area of focus is on the intensive

[00:17:07] statewide tutoring initiative to support school systems in accelerating student learning to pre-pandemic levels. The governor signed a bill and it came with one-time funding. So it's one-time funding that school divisions across the Commonwealth have the opportunity to access for 2324 2425 2526 okay and so here on this slide you can see the allocation that was awarded to loudon county public schools we're sitting at about 13.6 million dollars um let's see the v

[00:17:47] the um the virginia department of education has provided these funds and they have provided sort of a draft plan that we must fill out to match each of the sections so we have to give a description of the interventions or additional resources that we'd like to use to support attendance. That's 10%. So you'll see about 1.3 will go to support that cause. And then we have literacy. We must fill out that plan and we are targeting an intensive focus for middle school literacy. That's about 20% of the funding or 2.7 around 2.8 million.

[00:18:25] And then the majority of the funding goes towards the tutoring plan, which is 9.5 million. All right, so the criteria that the Virginia Department of Education established for the All in Virginia plan really created a third tier.

[00:18:44] So for those of us that have been in education and for those of you that have students in grades three, third and up, you certainly know that you are either, you pass or you fail or you're advanced past, right? And so to set the criteria for the all-in Virginia plan, the Virginia Department of Education created a new category of low-proficient.

[00:19:09] And so essentially those are students that have passed the SOLs. And so the state is calling the low-proficient range as achieving a score of 400 to 447. So that's a passing range because passing is 400, but

the state has defined this new category.

[00:19:31] Here's an overview of where we sit in LCPS with 31% of our students who passed an SOL reading test as considered low proficient. So 31% of our students in grades three through eight, because that's the targeted grade range, fell within, they had scores of 400 to 447.

[00:19:53] You'll see 26% of our students in LCPS who passed mathematics are considered low proficient. Again, on that math SOL, they passed with a passing score between 400 and 447. How many students are we talking about?

[00:20:12] So you can see the bottom line. If you look over this bottom right-hand corner there, 19,673 students. You'll see we're capturing data from current grade levels. You'll see that we've broken it down by reading and math.

[00:20:30] We've broken out the categories of not proficient, low proficient, and giving you the percentage of grade level for each of the areas that we will be targeting. Certainly, this does exclude our current third grade students whose VGA scores, their Virginia growth assessment scores, have not yet been made available to us.

[00:20:55] So what are we doing to prepare for high dosage tutoring? So we have convened an LCPS staff-based work group. It is comprised of central office staff, elementary principals, and middle school principals.

[00:21:13] That team has done a lot of work in a short amount of time. We have also presented all of the information and brainstorming to all principals across LCPS to get their feedback and to get input on what the pulse is at their particular schools in their communities we have drafted plans of implementation so the work group came up with the factors the greatest factors that are impacting us here in LCPS and what we know about our community and the current needs of our

[00:21:48] students we have had breakout sessions we have another principals meeting on November 14th we will put this before principals again to get some more feedback and get their input and really figure out the direction in which they would like to go for their school and their community.

[00:22:07] We are currently continuing to look at all of our data points, and we're certainly looking at our existing multi-tiered system of support intervention plans. And we are, as a central office staff, providing open office hours to principals for them to either drop by in person or virtually to process this a bit further with all of us.

[00:22:29] We are also working with Human Resources and Talent Development to figure out a stipend for school-based tutoring coordinators. We know that some of our school sites have a larger population in which they will need to serve for tutoring services, so it's going to be an additional heavy lift to coordinate tutors.

[00:22:51] We're also planning to hire part-time and hourly site-based tutors, which is why we're recruiting at the end of the survey that you're about to take. And we are currently waiting to receive the digital content from VGOE. They have, through the procurement process for the entire state, secured Ignite reading and Zern for math.

[00:23:14] So we are waiting to get our access that will be free access. So certainly with any sort of tutoring plan that we come up with for your students' particular school, All students that are identified for

tutoring will have access to these two platforms in addition to whatever else we build in to the tutoring plan.

[00:23:35] We will also, as a division, continue to use our local funds for digital interventions. We already have a wide variety of platforms that students can access either in school or at home.

[00:23:51] We also have funding to support remediation of skills. That's funding that we have on a regular basis. And we already have some sites that are supporting grade-level tutoring anyway. So what might it look like?

[00:24:09] So this was really the task of the work group. And if you guys, if parents have dug into this, you know, and you can access information on the VGOE website. They have a couple of web pages that are dedicated to this plan. You will see the initial guidebook that came out was pretty overwhelming, pretty prescriptive, pretty intensive.

[00:24:32] And as we moved farther away from, I think it was September 7th when the governor announced this plan, things have really softened and become, you know what, schools across the state have interventions in place.

[00:24:47] Let's allow school divisions to take a look at what's already working and then provide some funding to support some enhancements to interventions to reach more students. So the first plan that most of our schools are leaning towards, so we haven't made full commitments, but they're leaning in that direction, is during school hours.

[00:25:11] Why? Food services is accounted for. Transportation is accounted for. Students are already present. Staff are already present. So this might look like, right, making sure that we can secure the additional tutors, making sure that we can secure additional spaces for tutors to work with students.

[00:25:35] The guidebook recommends groups no larger than 10 students at a time. Depending on what the students' needs are, whether it's a single subject, like only reading or only math, we're looking at like 18 weeks of tutoring services.

[00:25:53] If students require reading and math, we're looking at 36 weeks of tutoring services. What are some of the challenges that we have to navigate? and we want your feedback as parents making sure that we're not pulling students from core instruction for those of you that are sharing this space right now it's even more important that we're thinking about how not to impact the delivery of specially designed instruction for students with disabilities encroaching on teacher planning how we can't build any more

[00:26:29] time into the school day so how do we maximize that time to provide that targeted support to students but also allowing and supporting teachers with the planning for the school day and the required planning for the tutoring intervention the second option that's being considered is either before and or after school options so what are the benefits we know we're not going to impact core instruction, right? Because it's either going to happen before the school day

[00:27:04] or afterwards. It could benefit some working families. And so with this particular option, we could also be looking at access to virtual tutoring. If it's something where a student can jump on a virtual platform before they come to school, then they've already gotten ahead for their school day and they wouldn't have to worry about after school. Again, what are the challenges for before and after school?

There's an impact to transportation. There's an impact to food services. There's an impact to family schedules. There's also an impact to compensating teachers

[00:27:43] and finding tutors again. All right. And the third option, which will happen no matter what, is summer and extended school year services. So, of course, we're looking at extending the learning. so whatever we start with tutoring now during the school year, it will extend through the summer for all the students that are identified.

[00:28:05] It won't be taken away from core instruction and for students with disabilities who are identified for extended school year services, teams will need to consider tutoring on top of or in addition to extended school year services.

[00:28:22] What are those challenges? As always, transportation, food services, family time, and commitments for travel and camps and so on and so forth. So we definitely want you guys to weigh in. If there's an option that we haven't considered, there's also a box on the survey for you guys to add any additional thoughts, questions, comments, or ideas, all right?

[00:28:48] So where will we find tutors, all right? So we know that we already have a group of high school students across most of our high schools that provide tutoring. So that's one resource that we already have available.

[00:29:05] We have a strong teacher cadet program. We are also looking at third-party vendors to support us with tutors. And so what does that mean? It's sort of like a headhunting agency that will find us folks that meet the requirements for tutoring.

[00:29:21] We're certainly looking at people that have had experience working with students. We definitely would like folks with at least a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree. We are targeting and reaching out to retired teachers and retired administrators to support this opportunity.

[00:29:41] We're reaching out to you as parents if you would be interested in supporting tutoring. We are looking at part-time hourly. We are looking at adding additional site-based substitutes to some of our schools to support the tutoring opportunity.

[00:30:02] We're looking at site-assigned tutors, making sure that we're providing people flexibility. We know that some folks might not be able to commit to five days per week, but working with tutors to provide them the flexibility so that we can get as many folks supporting this opportunity for our students as possible.

[00:30:19] All right, so at your tabletop, there should be eight laptops set up, and it should already be open to a Google form. And so certainly if you have a special education supervisor sitting at your table, they might be a little bit more comfortable typing in some of the discussion for you, since they do a lot of typing throughout the day anyway, sitting in meetings, right?

[00:30:43] But we definitely want you to be thoughtful as a tabletop to contemplate the information that we've gone over. What does this need to look like, feel like, sound like? And so if you could do us a favor and think beyond your personal child, think about all of the students that we have to serve.

[00:31:04] Think about all of the families that you know that might be impacted. Think about all of the things that impact us as families on a daily basis and how we can make this most meaningful for our

students. We know that by extending their day or even changing something during their day is going to cause an additional layer of adjustment for our students.

[00:31:30] We need to be thoughtful about that. This tutoring plan is for all students, so not just students with disabilities, but all students, okay? So we need to have that lens, and so think about your community, Think about folks in the grocery store and at your church and at your playgroup.

[00:31:49] So think about everybody that this plan is going to touch. Go through those areas. Talk about it as a tabletop. Document it. Give us your thoughtful feedback. Just so you know, the form is set up so it's going to automatically populate to a spreadsheet.

[00:32:06] And we'll be able to sort that information and provide this information back to our work group. and we'll be able to share it with building principals when we meet again on the 14th, okay? I'm excited to say you guys are the first advisory that gets to provide feedback on this plan.

[00:32:26] Yeah, that's right. That's right. SEAC is prioritized for sure. So give us feedback on the proposed models. Help us define what's a high-quality tutor. We know that the Virginia Department of Education is going to have a link on their website where folks can sign up to be a tutor and then they're supposed to be launching some courses that will provide folks some foundational information on being a tutor.

[00:32:53] We know here in LCPS, and I certainly hope that all of our divisions across the Commonwealth, are going to sort of do a customized in-house training for tutors. We also know that we need to gather the curriculum resources outside of any digital platform that we might have access to through the Department of Education or in addition to the resources that we already have, please think about the best way to reach out to families.

[00:33:22] Please be thoughtful about everything that every family is absolutely juggling and give us feedback on phone calls, emails, parent view, Schoology, like what is the best way to get this information out. We want to make sure that we're also giving progress updates as we move through our tutoring plan.

[00:33:42] That is an aspect of this plan. We must monitor what we are providing to make sure that we're getting the right response from the intervention, correct? And then SEAC, we would definitely like to uniquely partner with you all because we know your passion.

[00:33:59] You guys show up on a monthly basis and share your passion with us for our students. So please be thoughtful in any fashion or format that you might be able or you know someone that would be able to support tutoring at one of our schools. So again we're looking at elementary and middle only for right now for all students in grades three through eight that have participated in the SOL. Before you ask, certainly our students that participate in the alternate assessment will also be given the tutoring opportunity, okay?

[00:34:32] It's all. Alright, so your laptops should be pulled up to that form. Yes, Yo, absolutely. If you want questions before we start the survey, happy to answer questions. Sure.

[00:34:51] Shanaz. I kind of have two questions that come to mind. One of the things I'm looking at is how are we going to address those students who didn't pass the SOL? Are they going to be involved in the tutoring process?

[00:35:09] Yes. Yes. So our primary focus, so if I take you back to that slide of how many students. 19,673 students is more students than what we were given money, okay?

[00:35:25] So let's be very honest about that. Not quite sure the formula that was used, but certainly I'm sure the state looked at the number of students that we had within those testing grades and calculated how the money was divvied out across the localities.

[00:35:42] So our priority focus right now is the students that did not correct. And then that's priority, but then we also want to look at what we can layer in for students that fell in that low proficient range.

[00:35:58] I can't reiterate enough, that low proficient range, those students passed. They passed. And while maybe it's not over a 447, we're still celebrating the fact that they passed, right? And so certainly don't want to send the message of, you passed, but it wasn't good enough.

[00:36:18] That's not okay. We're not doing that. Our priority is those that did not pass the SOL in both areas, reading and math. And then I guess my second question would be, are we going to collect data after the three years, or after one year, if you don't see any improvement in the SOL scores, what happens?

[00:36:44] Sure. We have decided that we're going to be gathering this data on a quarterly basis, very similarly to how we do the school year. Yes. Yeah, of course. Yes. They're going to bring the microphone. Is there money being set aside to pay for manipulatives that can be used in all of these tutoring sessions?

[00:37:10] Yes. So out of the \$9.5 million, we know that we can buy curriculum and materials and manipulatives for students to access. We already have a great deal of those things already in our schools. On top of the all-in funds, we also still have access to local funding and remediation funds.

[00:37:32] So yes. Wondering, do we know why the scores are so low? Is it all because of COVID? Do you have specific reasons why? We want to make sure we don't repeat these mistakes if they are mistakes.

[00:37:48] Sure. The purpose of the plan specifically was to bring student performance back to pre-pandemic levels. So while LCPS did not have a role in creating this plan, I do believe that the vision and purpose from the state is looking at the continued impact of COVID on the learning of our students across the Commonwealth.

[00:38:14] So I'm guessing this has to do with students that may have scored either non-proficient or low proficiency in both categories, but those numbers don't add up. So if we're going to focus on those that were not proficient, what is that total?

[00:38:35] Because if you take those totals that run across the bottom, that's about 14,000, but Clearly, there's some duplication there, so what are the numbers? I guess in totality, what are the numbers of not proficient and low proficient?

[00:38:52] In just reading and just math? No, no, combined, I guess. Combined? Okay, happy to get that information, and I can send it to Liz. Happy to do that, because we do have that, yes. But this does, and I'm sorry, Mr. Ketchum, that I did not indicate that.

[00:39:07] This does indicate duplication of students. It does. I understand I'm asking you for a whole other slide, but at least tonight maybe you could give us a subjective kind of ballpark.

[00:39:25] What is the proportionality of students with disabilities compared to, this is the number for the whole system, are students with disabilities overrepresented, underrepresented, or relatively proportionally represented? I think I could probably get that for you before the end of the meeting because I think I have it.

[00:39:43] And if I can't find it, I will get it to Liz. along with the unduplicated count of students. Yes, Shanaaz. - My other question would be, are we looking at testing environment?

[00:40:02] So in each of these grades, how were the tests taken in those areas where we scored less, so in those grade levels, how were the tests taken? I mean, I remember when my children were in elementary school, there was a lot of preparation for our SOLs, like kind of like a final exam.

[00:40:22] So how are we doing that during the school year? So those kind of, you know, did we kind of maybe lose that with COVID, trying to catch up with things? How are we working in the classroom as well? That's a great point. Can you please make sure you enter that on the survey?

[00:40:37] We have not had a targeted conversation about testing environment. We have not had the conversation about what did it look like, feel like, sound like, right? before the pandemic versus after that's a really good aspect for us to look at absolutely liz so my question is for our students who do require the specially designed instruction would they still be working with some of these high school tutors high school student tutors or

[00:41:13] you know volunteer or you know community members who might not have a background in special education to be able to provide specially designed instruction that our students could actually access. Sure. So that is something that we've been talking about.

[00:41:31] So on the surface, this plan does not contemplate general ed, special ed. It really was just looking at who performed on the SOL and who didn't, right? And so through the lens of tutoring, also does not contemplate the skill level of the person.

[00:41:48] It references tutors as high quality. We certainly know that there will have to be significant collaboration and planning for students with disabilities. The tutoring services are meant to supplement, so they don't have to feel the same as specially designed instruction, though we must be cognizant and mindful to implement accommodations.

[00:42:11] And so that's the piece where we've been focusing. Certainly, we are hopeful as a division that we get our teachers and our teaching assistants Because, just so you know, we have quite a few teaching assistants across the school division that hold degrees and are eligible to teach and choose to serve as assistants, and we're grateful for that.

[00:42:35] So we are hopeful that we get that high-quality piece, and in high-quality we are, at least I'm talking about, licensed folks that are being able to do this. That's why most of our schools are leaning towards the during-school time, because even if it is an outside tutor, you would be under the supervision of a licensed teacher during that time.

[00:43:01] That's why sites are trying to consider coordinators at the building level. Those would be teachers that would be tasked with coordinating the tutors that are assigned to that specific school, going over the lesson plans and the tutoring plans for reading and for math making sure that the students are grouped appropriately by skill focus so we are going to have to dig deep to look at the skills that were missed in reading and the skills that were missed in math to make sure that we're aligning the tutoring so that we're maximizing that time

[00:43:36] we are looking at 30 minute chunks during the school day before and after would more than likely be 60 minutes long and certainly we're open to feedback for what you all feel summer and extended

school year should feel like and look like for our students so specially designed instruction there will be a partnership tutoring is not meant to be specially designed in instruction but we will have to provide accommodations um so my my child is in those statistics and for this what's the

[00:44:15] level of transparency you're going to have because, again, my concern is I don't want you taking my child out of their already packed schedule because of their IEP, especially to put them with someone who is not handled or equipped to handle someone with the specific disabilities that my child has. And I also don't want to extend their day if the person who's going to be delivering the instruction is not qualified to cheat someone with my child

[00:44:50] specific learning disabilities. So what kind of clear and transparent communication are we going to have with the parents to allow them to make an informed decision about whether this would be something, I mean I think we would all theoretically like to do this, but if you give me a high school student beforehand or during school, I'm out. Right? Right. Right. Understood. So to answer that question, full transparency. We definitely have an obligation to make sure that each and

[00:45:25] every parent knows the qualifications of the persons, because it could be more than one that has been secured to work with your children. And you do have the right certainly to opt out. This is not a required experience for our students. It is one that we have the opportunity to offer.

[00:45:43] So we are going to offer it. We do know that the majority of parents will take us up on it. But you're not wrong for your concerns. I wish I could sit here and tell you, oh, yes, we're going to be able to get fully licensed teachers to be all of our tutors. I'm not here to say that.

[00:45:59] I'm here to say that we're going to try to incentivize our teachers. I'm here to say that we are going to be very thoughtful about not impacting core instruction. We cannot and will not disrupt the delivery of special education and related services for tutoring.

[00:46:18] We will not. What is going to be the level and the skill? What is the training package that we're going to put together look like? That's still in the works. We know that we're looking at the month of December for training.

[00:46:34] We know we're actively working to see, okay, just how many people are interested in being tutors? How many people can the third-party agencies get us as tutors? What are their backgrounds? How can we get them onboarded, get them acclimated?

[00:46:51] We're also talking about possibly introducing students to brand new people. That takes time to build relationships. And children don't learn from people that they don't know and people that they don't like. So we have to take the time to build those relationships. So we have to be thoughtful.

[00:47:07] And our communication to parents has to be every step of the way, which is why this is the first parent group to say, okay, tell us where you see the challenges so we can try to figure it out. No, I think that I have one follow-up, too. I think that was a great answer, right?

[00:47:23] And then for the other, for the summer program, have we thought about, because, again, my child was identified as being eligible for that summer program. and after going to the beginning, the first five minutes of one of those summer programs, I pulled him out and we declined, right?

[00:47:42] Because the range of needs of the students in the classroom and the range of subjects that were there, when, again, for my specific child, we have a learning disability, right? Dyslexia is what we're talking

about.

[00:47:58] And that's our, so for our summer program, are we looking at more than just the, hey, come sit there for four hours? Are we looking at, hey, come for an hour? Yes. Right? Like something more targeted. Yes. Okay. Those are definitely the conversations that we've been having about summer. Dr. Carter's group as a part of that work group led that conversation for summer and ESY.

[00:48:20] And so, yes, we are looking at those more targeted, customized options. I have to be honest with you because I don't know what else to be. The largest hurdle, the largest hurdle for any of these options is the people, the teachers.

[00:48:37] Because I know it's called a tutoring plan. And yes, we do have tutors that support our students with the instruction that has happened during this school day. This is a heavier, much broader lift for a school division. And your concerns are valid, which is why we want to hear from you and how we can navigate this.

[00:48:58] It's always the people. summer services are always impacted by teachers. Teachers are exhausted after 180 days. They're tired. They are. They have families. They want to take vacations. They want some downtime. They want a chance to do some fun stuff. It's not that they don't love the kids, because they do, but they need a break too. And so how do we create something that is sustainable? How do we create something that is different from just the typical summer school experience? How do we create something in addition to extended school year for students with disabilities that doesn't

[00:49:35] cause our students additional stress or fatigue, and we see a spike in behaviors, right, because we're overwhelming them with school. Again, this is not required. It's an experience that is available that we must offer.

[00:49:50] We're choosing to offer it as a division. And we have to honor if parents say, "Nope, you know, I don't want my students to participate in this, I then definitely think we still need to be thoughtful about, okay, but what can we do that does work for you and your family?"

[00:50:07] Thank you. You're welcome. Another question? I personally believe that providing tutoring to students is a great idea, and for students who are in the general education.

[00:50:31] But offering tutoring to a child in special education is totally a different story, because Because a child with disability, we have to be aware of his cognitive and linguistic skills. And those skills are occurring in a sequential manner.

[00:50:50] We cannot just introduce a skill before a skill is already mastered. And that's only a special education teacher or a therapist or somebody with knowledge in special education can decide when we move from one skill to the other.

[00:51:07] So if you bring a child with special education and he meets with another teacher that's not qualified, that can mess up with that sequential order that a therapist or a special education teacher is working on.

[00:51:24] So I believe we have to be very careful how we teach children with special education. Thank you. Thank you. So just one very quick comment, Tedra, because I hear both a lot of very deep thought has gone into this.

[00:51:45] And a lot of burden that's kind of unspoken right now that I can just hear. And so I want to say that that is coming through loud and clear. I would only say because, and I know you guys have thought about these things, but the during school tutoring thing worries me a great deal because primarily because all the work I've done in gifted education over the years as well, there's always been this debate over push-in versus pull-out services and the effect that it has on the gifted identified students in terms of keeping up with their core curriculum.

[00:52:18] Now, in that area, of course, the assumption is those kids can keep up with their core curriculum even during pull-out services. Here, looking at the gen ed population, looking at special ed, et cetera, that may present a much greater challenge. And my concern is we're basically shifting around the problem with the in-school tutoring where we were going to spend that time tutoring them to catch up, but now they're falling behind with the stuff that they're missing at the same time.

[00:52:42] And it's going to just kind of kick the can down the road little bit with the problem so I really worry that the in-school tutoring approach is going to provide challenges that we won't see the effect of until maybe next year or the year after that. Thank you. My question kind of follows on the previous comment. If you are looking at pulling our students out of classes

[00:53:17] that are not core classes, and they have an IEP that also says that they get extra services and accommodations, where are you going to find the time during the school day to get them this 30 minutes or 60 minutes of tutoring? That's a great question. We'll have to work within the schedule. Certainly, you know that any student with a disability that has an individualized educational plan, that's the priority. We have an obligation to provide a free appropriate public education. So while tutoring is an opportunity and an experience, that's not a priority for

[00:53:57] students with disabilities. Their specially designed instruction is their priority. So starting there, coming together as a team to talk about how is this going to work. We don't want kids to miss specials. We don't want them up too early before school. We don't want them after school. We're going to have to find a balance. So I'm not here to say I have the answers to that. I'm here to say that we'll have to come together. We'll have to look at the student's schedule. We'll have to look at the school day. We'll have to look at the opportunities.

[00:54:27] Maybe we scale back. Maybe we say, you know what, we only want it twice a week. We only want it once a week. We have flexibility. Just because the guidebook says five days per week, we certainly know that we have to meet the needs of each individual student and each individual family within their school community has any thought been given to those of us who already engaged tutors to help our children through because my son is dip was not it not right now but was tutored

[00:55:00] by a special education teacher from another school and you know she was fantastic has there been given any thought to actually funding that like a stipend or something that would help us you know cover that there have we have to do it on our own conversation about that yes there has been um again the challenge is how do we get that information so again we need your feedback on how what's the best way to get that information from families so that that can be a consideration for that particular family and if that's a plan that's already working then why would we want to

[00:55:38] disrupt it so i was just going to add you guys because as a mom but also as a part of the team that has been working on this plan, and thank you, Tom, for recognizing, I want to not refocus us, but I want to give a few reminders, because I want you guys to know for sure that all of us in this room, that

we're a part of that team, every single consideration for students with disabilities when it comes to this plan, we filled up the room with those considerations.

[00:56:11] But what I want you to remember is this is not, it's all in Virginia, but it's not all or nothing. Even if a school chooses one thing, they have the ability to choose something different for students that need something different. So does the school have the ability to do after school, before school, and during school? Yes. So this isn't one of those, if we pick this, we can't have that. If we consider this for these students, we can't consider this for these other students.

[00:56:42] So in your thinking, all of the things that you've said that are your concerns, those are the things that we want you to answer here today because then that way schools will know hey I can't just pick this one thing because this percentage of my students who fall into this actually need to be considered in this way that's why we're bringing it here because we want to consider all of these other things so that school principals understand when they make the final decisions that they have incorporated all of the stakeholders who are going to be impacted. So yes, if you already have

[00:57:19] specialized instruction happening, we don't want to derail that. So guess what? We might opt out of that because we think we have a good thing going. You have a tutor at home, we might opt out of that or there might be an option to cover that. So I want you guys to know that most of this we have discussed at Nauseam with the people that will hear us because we are the advocates at the table in those meetings but some of the things we might not have come up with so that's why when we want you to exhaust everything that is in your brain into this form so that if there is something

[00:57:55] that we've missed we can capture it and then advocate when we go back to those tables for you guys if that makes sense and we want you to have the opportunity to do that and if you think of things when you leave here we want you to still fill those things in so that we can continue adding to that list because this is a very thoughtful process so we just want to make sure that you know that we are representing this group every time we sit at those tables we are there voicing

[00:58:21] your concerns for students with disabilities all righty i was just taking notes on the things i had to follow up on thank you for that nakia so now is your opportunity at your tabletop certainly if you feel that you need to join another table to fill out this form please do that the more minds coming together to process this, the better off we are.

[00:58:55] I thank you in advance for your thoughtfulness. I really appreciate your questions. They cause us challenge and something else to think about, to be thoughtful of, to plan for. I'm going to give you about 10 minutes to work on this as a tabletop. The laptops are going to stay at the table, so certainly if there's something else that you think of, you can still add information.

[00:59:17] Thank you.

[01:17:15] Everyone, if you could please just take the next 30 seconds to wrap up. I know it's not enough time, but we're going to be able to make the link available. We'll send it out and make sure that the presentation posted has a working link that people can access, and we'll also send it out to SEAC members and PTO reps.

[01:17:45] And if anyone needs to run and use the restroom or anything, take 30 seconds, two minutes, two minutes.

[01:19:10] there is the QR code. I'll start with our introductions. My name is Liz Crotty. I am the SEAC chair. We have our vice chair of planning, Jennifer DiDonato, who is currently out in the audience, but she'll pop over in a minute. Carla Sola is our vice chair of membership. She could not be with us this evening. Shanaz Khan is in the back of the room, but sits right there, and she is our vice chair of communications. Katie Rosenbrook

[01:19:41] is over here. She is our SEAC secretary. Sharon Trofe is our SEAC past chair. And then our LCPS staff liaison is Dr. Paige Carter over here to my left. And Ms. Tiffany Polifko is our school board liaison. We're here to my right. And Erica Ogadegby is our school board liaison alternate. I'm just really quickly going to go through the role of SEAC and regulations because we have a lot to do tonight we are mandated by the regulations of Virginia to provide advise

[01:20:18] the local school division of needs and participate in developing policies and priorities we submit periodic reports and recommendations which we will be doing this evening and we also review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to the submission to the local school board we will be doing that this evening as well um we are going to oh we have no public comment this evening so we will just move ahead um and now we will start with our new business which we have policy reviews and for anyone who is here at our last business meeting

[01:20:55] we don't have anything close to that tonight we've got three policies that we have recommendations for four that we are just going to go over quickly so we will i will let craig and melissa take it from here thank you liz um okay yes it should be much better this time uh do i just four instead of 20. yeah okay so here is the qr code if you want to use your phones to get um copies of these policies to review as we're going through okay so the first policy is policy 6330 which uh

[01:21:32] unfortunately we didn't put what that was so we recall what 6330 was uh all right distribution of information materials and posting within schools on school grounds or during school sponsored events that's policy 6330 and we had as a policy subcommittee no recommendations for that one but we as we always do we want to open it up to the membership and the floor here if anyone has any comments on policy 6330 okay if none we'll move to a vote go ahead i'll let you

[01:22:06] do we have a motion that we have no recommendations for this policy i make a motion go ahead Do I have a second?

[01:22:29] Moved and seconded. The motion is that we adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendations in this policy that we have no recommendations. Is there any further discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Opposed? Nay? Any abstentions? Oh, do we have virtual?

[01:22:47] Okay, no virtual. Motion carries unanimously. Thank you. Okay, next policy. It's policy 5125 titled Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit. And the intent of this policy is to offer flexibility to students in the design of their secondary course schedule and is intended for students who have factors that impact their ability to earn the standard credit within the traditional 140 clock hours, but who seek to learn and demonstrate competency of the full content of the course's standards of learning via alternative means.

[01:23:20] And so the first concern that our policy subcommittee raised was that line 23 of this policy only references home-based instruction but should also reference homebound instruction both homebound

and home-based instruction are covered in policy 5360 which is referenced there so our recommendation is to add homebound and right after the words home-based instruction is there any discussion on this one this is not a substantive change i promise i won't do this again uh but i just wanted to point out you

[01:23:57] probably should even strengthen that recommendation because that that's just a flat-out error in the draft because policy 5360 is titled homebound and home-based instruction we're not just sort of recommended recommending that we add that language they just made a mistake in the draft it's wrong okay any other discussion do we have a motion motion to adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendations on policy 5125 with the mentioned recommendation moved and seconded the motion is

[01:24:37] to adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendation on policy 5125 is there any further discussion Hearing none, all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Opposed nay. And are there any abstentions? Motion carries unanimously. Okay, next we have policy 6360, emergency and weather-related operations. This policy establishes conditions under which schools will close, have delayed opening, or early dismissal to protect the safety and welfare of LCPS students and staff.

[01:25:09] So concern number one, if students with disabilities are moved to an alternative school site, IEP and or section 504 teams should meet to ensure a smooth transition for that student. Because again, these are situations that could be emergent situations like there was a bomb threat or a bomb actually went off and children are immediately being moved to a safer location.

[01:25:32] but it also includes let's say in the bomb example the building is destroyed so the students are going to have to be reassigned to a different facility so keeping that in mind that's kind of where some of our concerns were coming from so recommendation number one is to add a new paragraph c at line 27 that goes like this in the event that students are assigned to an alternative school site The case manager or 504 coordinator will, as soon as practicable, again these could be emergency situations, identify the students for whom an IEP or Section 504 team meeting needs to be called.

[01:26:10] The meeting will consider revisions to the IEP or 504 plan and or the addition of a transition plan to address the move to this new school site. As a lot of you are very well aware, some of our students with disabilities, transition is super, super hard.

[01:26:28] And we just need to be sure that we're keeping that in mind and addressing the needs of those students in these moves. In addition, for every moved student, the case manager or 504 coordinator will notify parents of their right to request a meeting of the IEP or Section 5014.

[01:26:44] Second concern on the same policy, students in a self-contained program classroom need to be moved to a site that includes a comparable program with, and this is important, comparable equipment and supplies to meet each student's individual needs.

[01:27:03] For example, changing tables may not be available at every site that these students may need and may not be moved to, to meet each student's individual needs until the IEP team can meet and determine appropriate placement. So the recommendation we've put forward is to add a new paragraph D to this policy that states, when relocating a student with an IEP, consideration will be given to the new school site's ability to implement the IEP, including the availability of specialized programs, equipment, and supplies.

[01:27:40] Concern number three, distance learning was addressed in this policy, and so our concern was that for some students, distance learning may not be an appropriate mode of instruction. For some of our kids during COVID, they flourished. Some of our kids, it was a complete and total disaster, all right? We need to be thinking about this individually and not making broad sweeping statements so our recommendation is to be a little more proactive to add at the end of line 61 when developing IEPs and or 504 plans teams will proactively determine whether distance learning

[01:28:16] is accessible and appropriate for individual students with disabilities this will help nip in the bud you know when there is some kind of emergency situation and you've got 150 students that we're trying to figure this out we don't have to go through that debate or discussion That would have already been marked or noted on the student's IUP.

[01:28:35] All right, and concern number four, we don't have a recommendation for it. We just want to voice the concern that LCPS should have written contingency plans for each self-contained program to address how and where severely disabled students in that specific self-contained classroom will be evacuated in any emergency situation to include how they will be transported.

[01:29:02] These are very complicated issues, and we cannot be making that decision, you know, after an active shooting incident or a bomb has gone off or some other horrible thing has happened, right? We need to be, that plan needs to be in place long before those situations come about. Okay.

[01:29:20] So I know this one was kind of a lot. Is there a discussion? Really? Okay. I think it's fantastic because actually I would just say that my son during, my son's in college now, But during the course of his public education, he went through in school a fire, an earthquake, a tornado, an active shooter, and a flood.

[01:29:45] This is critically important. Some of these are truly, you know, weird emergencies, but we can't be figuring it out after the fact. But the other one is we did have a kind of a working hypothesis that, you know, there is kind of a movement to try to use distance learning instead of snow days, especially if we start getting to longer absences.

[01:30:07] And so if we had like an LCPSY directive, okay, you know, we've had five days of snow day. We're just going to go to distance learning next week. That's going to affect our students with disabilities very differently than it would the non-disabled students. So we might as well get ahead of that and start thinking about it.

[01:30:28] So is there any further discussion? And do we have a motion? Motion to adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendation on policy 6360. Moved and seconded, the motion is to adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendations on policy 6360.

[01:30:45] is there any further discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. Oppose nay. Are there any abstentions? Motion carries unanimously. The next policy is policy 8630, which is inspection and review of education records. Loudoun County School Board endorses the rights of parents and students to be made aware of the records kept by the school system on their student, to have the right to inspect and review those records, to have those records explained to them, to be able to challenge the content of those records, and to have those

[01:31:23] records protected against disclosure. This policy establishes the procedures for inspection and review of education records. Education records shall be maintained in compliance with all federal and

state law. So concern number one that we had on this. First of all, the citation to Virginia's Special Education Regulation 8VAC 20-81-10 at lines 38 through 40 is incomplete.

[01:31:52] Incomplete in that it misses another provision of the regulations that's relevant. While that citation does include the definition of what an education record is, 8VAC 20-81-170G11B addresses emails as part of a child's educational record and that provision says quote each local educational agency shall ensure that electronic communications via emails or facsimiles do we even do that anymore do we have faxes anymore but if we do they're included regarding any matter

[01:32:31] this is important any matter associated with the child including matters related to IEP meetings disciplinary actions or service delivery be part of the child's educational record all right now and let me be clear because I didn't think I said this earlier that regulation is part of the special education regulations okay so that applies to kids who have been found eligible under the IDEA right emails on any matter associated with a child who's protected under IDEA should be maintained

[01:33:05] by the school division and are considered part of the education record. So recommendation number one is to substitute the sentence at lines 38 through four and let me be sorry I should have said so the way the policy is being drafted there is a clear effort to exclude emails from the definition or provisions or protections as an educational record. That's the clear intent of the way the policy was drafted. So our first recommendation is to substitute the sentence at

[01:33:37] lines 38 through 40 with, quote, with the exception of emails regarding any matter associated with the child as provided for in the Virginia regulations governing special education programs for children with disabilities and then cite to that regulation. All right, so there's a carve out that has to be there because by law that's what the regulation says for kids who've been found eligible under IDEA.

[01:34:03] However, that leads us to concern number two. This policy might not, if drafted with the recommendation we made, might not, it's not a might, it won't, equally protect all students with disabilities, such as those who qualify only for a Section 504 plan or those who haven't yet been found eligible under IDEA but are currently being assessed by an intervention team or in the evaluation process.

[01:34:33] as an educational record explicitly protects sensitive personally identifiable information that's really the bottom line here and so we should as a school division consistently extend this protection to students with disabilities who are not already identified as eligible under IDEA so there are no ambiguities there's no confusion or changes in the protections depending on their classification as a student with a disability this also provides additional transparency for parents through these processes. So our thought was further expanding this policy to include all students not even

[01:35:12] just students with disabilities but all students would be easier for school staff to implement and more fair to all students and families rather than treating students with disabilities differently. This would bring the policy into alignment with LCPS's strategic plan action 4.3 which is trust building dialogue and data by creating more transparency which in turn would build trust between parents and staff so based on those thoughts and comments and concerns recommendation two would actually supersede our original

[01:35:47] recommendation one which is just to remove lines 38 through 48 and specify that emails regarding any matter associated with the student are part of the educational record I think it's important to keep in mind just in general in the way the law works is that federal law, state law, regulations affecting students with disabilities create a floor of rights. But there's absolutely no reason that a school division

can't create greater rights for their students. And that's essentially what we're asking, is to take the right that's already been created for children found eligible under the IDEA

[01:36:25] and expand it to all students. Exactly. We keep hearing from the school board, Our strategic plan is to be open and transparent and build trust. Why is there this little notch out in this policy where they're trying to prevent the protections of FERPA from applying to emails?

[01:36:49] Why don't we just not do that? So is there any discussion about this? I know this could be a very potentially hot topic. Yes, sir. I would urge everybody, in addition to what we vote on here this evening, because I believe this is open for public comment on the school board website through Friday, to go and make this same recommendation on an individual basis as well.

[01:37:14] That is the second recommendation in particular. Strike that. In deference to my fellow colleague here on privacy and matters related to records, any subpoena or FOIA request, et cetera, those categories, those are going to include emails.

[01:37:32] The idea of trying to eliminate those through policy, it's a worthless attempt to exclude something that is absolutely part of normal business practice today. We could talk about legal holds and e-discovery and all those kind of things if anybody really wants to be bored to tears.

[01:37:49] But to exclude that, I think, exactly goes right at your point, which is it starts to remove a layer of transparency. In our normal communication, that is how we document things today in the modern world. Absolutely, I would encourage everybody, in addition to what we vote here tonight, to go on to the school board public website and on an individual basis make that same recommendation.

[01:38:12] Remove lines 38 through 48 completely. Any further discussion? Other comments? I just have to get on record in saying that I 1,000% support this. The idea that email is how we communicate.

[01:38:28] That's how your teachers are letting you know what happens during the day. When they have to report an incident, they're doing it via an email, right? You discuss education, you discuss disciplinary issues, it's all done over emails. Emails need to be covered, should not be excluded from this, and this isn't just for our special education students, it's for all of our students.

[01:38:53] One of the other things that came up in the subcommittee's discussion is it's actually easier to administer if we just have one rule consistently for everybody. When we start having this separate compliance rule that has to be followed a certain way for SPED students and a certain non, and then remember the eligibility, there's a moment one day it's not covered by the exception, the next day it is covered by the exception.

[01:39:15] This could get literally very complicated to implement and be compliant with. Or we could just do the right thing and it's easy. Agreed. From a technological way, the way you do this is you do it across the board. That's the only way that you can actually implement this and be compliant with it, is to deal with the same for everybody else.

[01:39:34] So I agree. Any further discussion? Hearing none, is there a motion to adopt the recommendations of the policy subcommittee? Motion to vigorously and stridently adopt the recommendations of the policy subcommittee on policy 8630.

[01:39:51] I second it. I second. Moved and seconded. The motion is to adopt the recommendations of the policy subcommittee. Is there any further discussion? hearing none all those in favor please raise your

hand and say aye aye opposed nay and are there any abstentions motion carries unanimously okay thank you I told you we were going to do it faster all right thank you guys so much oh actually um don't go anywhere because we're moving into budget

[01:40:30] recommendations yeah no problem um so we met as a policy um and compliance subcommittee to discuss some of the staffing enhancements that were part of the slide deck for our last meeting that we didn't quite get to because we had so many policies to discuss. But we wanted to, as we're going into budget season, take a proactive stance in sharing what CX concerns and recommendations are. So I will let Melissa and Craig do this again. I'll sit down. Sorry, we're back. Okay.

[01:41:10] - And real quick, there's a QR code on the slide, so if anyone has questions who's watching virtually, feel free to submit your questions or comments via this QR code, and we will be monitoring them and addressing them.

[01:41:27] - Okay, do you want me to go ahead? - So in previous years, SEAC has looked at the superintendent's proposed budget after it's been made public, usually kind of about a week into January, And then we rush to provide feedback, but the school board adopts it generally, like the last week in January.

[01:41:51] And, you know, it's a mad rush. But the other thing is, we thought it might be just more collaborative to try to offer some feedback before the superintendent's budget is put forth, and kind of have a little bit earlier input into the process, because once there's a big proposal on the table and it's already been briefed to the school board, it's kind of far along.

[01:42:13] So the hope here is to start thinking about proactively What do we want to see or not see in the budget request? So what we see here is the Department of Student Services, the 24-25 school year staffing enhancements that have been proposed.

[01:42:33] And I apologize, I meant to ask. CC teacher stands for, thank you. Okay, sorry, my apologies. The CrossCAT teacher staffing at the elementary level for special education, that there would be enhancements to specialized programs for autism and ECSE, Coaching for our LCPS multi-tiered system of supports to enhance educational diagnostician staffing.

[01:42:57] These are the trained individuals doing the assessments for our kiddos. Mental health resources for students, staff, and families. Registration services to provide improved service to our families. And procedural facilitators to assist in effectiveness of special education and Section 504 compliance.

[01:43:19] So these are some of our concerns that the policy subcommittee raised based on those recommendations. So our first concern was kind of in general. We're very concerned that current recruitment efforts for special education teachers and related service providers don't seem to be filling the vacancies.

[01:43:39] Our second overarching concern is retention of special education and related service providers. Our third overarching concern, that there is continued growth of administrative staff, which seems to be removing teachers from the classroom to fill these new administrative positions.

[01:44:00] Student outcomes have not improved with this increase in administrative staff. So we really want to take a hard look at that. And concern number four, having multiple departments that serve

students with disabilities makes it challenging for parents to navigate and we feel like it also misaligns incentives for ensuring best practices and compliance for our students with disabilities and then our fifth overarching concern is that transition services is an area that has consistently been flagged as needing an improvement by LCPS parents for years in SEAC annual survey results so based on

[01:44:39] these overarching concerns we have a few budget recommendations Recommendation number one, SEAC does not support increasing procedural support positions. These are administrative staff positions. We are recommending that we eliminate the procedural support positions altogether and replace them with a new model that is focused on compliance and that this staff would be under the director of special education.

[01:45:09] Our second recommendation is to remove the eligibility coordinators, which we see as an additional layer of administrators and then restructure so that section 504 determinations and management of 504 plans falls directly under the department of special education um i think my slides are in here with more detail right okay we're going to explain these in more detail in a minute and recommendation number three is to develop and implement a standardized build out for independent living labs oh which are strategically located around the county to allow access for all students with disabilities who require them

[01:45:46] and recommendation four is that CX supports the office of special education's \$80,000 budget request to provide transportation for project search okay so I did have some other slides that it kind of explained this in a little more detail but I'll try to do that briefly from memory okay good oh uh but on uh really recommendation one and two are very similar again as we mentioned in our concerns we're concerned that over the last few years there's been a real ballooning

[01:46:22] of our administrative staff that are assisting um the teachers and the relates or the people boots on the ground who are actually um working with our students one-on-one directly um and so And what we're not seeing is a corresponding improvement in outcomes by increasing or ballooning this administrative staff.

[01:46:41] Thank you. So let me just read what the group put together instead of me trying to summarize for my very old brain. Okay, so concern number one. There are high numbers of vacancies within special education and related service positions to include but not be limited to speech-language pathologists.

[01:47:01] Schools are being told they must send their special education teachers to other schools to cover shortages. Each vacant position represents many students whose needs are not being met. SEAC has received reports that current recruiting procedures are not meeting LCPS's needs and are not attracting the best candidates for our positions. SEAC has received reports that without the ability for principal to offer a candidate a conditional position at the interview, of course subject to then a thorough background check, we are losing qualified candidates to neighboring school systems. By having to wait for paperwork to be processed

[01:47:41] prior to offering a candidate even a temporary or contingent position, principals are finding they are losing not just their top pick, but their top three to five picks and are left with their fifth, sixth, or seventh choice for the position. Our children should not be having teachers who are a fifth sixth or seventh choice simply because of paperwork issues in a competitive market for special education teachers and related service providers we need to nimbly respond to qualified candidates and ensure that they know lcps wants to hire them efforts should be made to

[01:48:19] streamline and improve recruiting processes we need to improve recruiting relationships with well-regarded universities it's our understanding there's just a limited number of universities with education programs that we're interacting with why makes no sense expand relationships with teacher cadets and students who take the early childhood class in lcps schools what incentives can we provide these students to come back right after they finish their college education we should be offering placement for the children of teachers who live out of state

[01:48:53] like west virginia for example or neighboring localities in the school or the community of schools where the teacher is working. And we need to consider using either an internal or an external recruiter with a specialty and special education recruiting. Concern number two, let me scroll down.

[01:49:18] Let me pause and see if there's any questions. Sure. That's a great idea. That's the longest I think I had to read. Because there's so much, why don't we just pause? Are there any questions or is there any discussion on this one? I mean, we've heard about the staffing shortage. I mean, this is a national problem. But we're also hearing reports that, frankly, HRTD isn't giving you the support, at least from what we're hearing. But the other one is, I mean, I guess the bottom line is the results. So it's what can we do? Is it we need a contract recruiter? Is it that we need a specialized person in HRTD? That's kind of, I mean, Paige, that's kind of for you to solve,

[01:49:57] too. But we're definitely on the same page that we've got to solve this problem. And so whatever it takes, and if there's something that needs to be put in the budget to help you, let's do it. And I do want to comment, if that's okay. I will tell you in the time that I've been here, and tomorrow will be my one-year anniversary since I came as assistant director, the one thing that I've seen is an increase in collaboration with budget and finance and HRTD in our office.

[01:50:23] So I do see improvement in that regard and a desire for increased collaboration. I think Dr. Spence is bringing an even bigger emphasis on that, which is really good. And I will have a report a little bit later on on where we are with vacancies right now and some creative things that we're doing to fill some of those.

[01:50:43] So I will have further comments on that. But I did want to say that I really do see an improvement in that relationship. And I know we don't want additional administrators, which a recruiting specialist would be, but I would certainly be in support of a special educator who is recruiting special ed teachers.

[01:51:04] Yeah, we had that conversation because here we are saying too many administrators. But in this case, I mean, it's a force multiplier. The bottom line is we need teachers.

[01:51:30] On the previous slide, there was a recommendation to eliminate procedural support positions. Which positions are you referring to on that recommendation? Would you mind terribly if we defer that and go concern by concern? Say again? If you wouldn't mind, she kind of gave an overview.

[01:51:49] Okay. We're going concern by concern as we dive in a little deeper. We're going to address that? Well, maybe. And then if it's not addressed, please re-raise the question. Okay. Thank you. And you had a second question. Was it the same topic? It was relating to eligibility coordinators.

[01:52:06] We'll get there. Yes. Okay. But now concern number two, retention of special ed and related service providers is a significant problem. So a little more background on that. Our special education teachers, assistants, and related service providers are dedicated, talented staff who do some of the most

difficult jobs in public education for the benefit of our most vulnerable students. SEAC and the school board have received many reports that they're overworked, for example, unreasonably high caseloads that disregard the intensity of the student need for the students on their caseloads, overburdened with additional duties

[01:52:44] such as meetings and paperwork, underappreciated, and staff are burning out. SEAC has received many reports and retention data shows that many staff are leaving for other roles in LCPS, neighboring school systems, or leaving the profession entirely.

[01:53:00] Edwin, did you have a comment? I did. I had a comment on concern number one. So one of the things I really liked that you talked about was incentivizing the cadet program, right, to return back, right?

[01:53:21] Things like if we could look at stipends that would retroactively pay for some of their relief, some of their college debt, right, when they're going out. These are people who are from this area, right? We know student loans are crippling for that age group of people.

[01:53:37] We know that while LCPS offers competitive salaries, that teachers do not get paid what they, the commiserate with the service they provide, and a lot of times not enough to have housing here in Loudoun County. And the great thing about some of these students when they come back, they may be able to take advantage of living with parents and living in a rent-free situation which means that that that salary would be a good thing so I love the idea of incentivizing those who we started with we identified we helped to groom to offering them some really tangible incentives to come back

[01:54:16] so thank you. Thank you. Okay and I'm going to move on to the recommendations and give a little more background on those now. So recommendation number one was in response to concerns three and for, this is your issue, that SEAC does not support increasing procedural support positions, and that SEAC is recommending getting rid of procedural support entirely and developing a new model focused on compliance.

[01:54:42] SEAC does not support increasing procedural support positions or continuing the existing positions. Objective and subjective measures indicate that the current procedural support model has resulted in significantly more compliance problems than we had before it. Recent organizational changes further separate procedural support from special ed staff, which will tend to make these failures worse.

[01:55:06] Separating the procedural support function from the director of special education has led to an organizational misalignment of authority and accountability and to key decision makers lacking information about problems in special education. A new model is needed with new staff and incentives.

[01:55:23] The focus should be on proactive compliance, solving systemic and individual problems, and resolving problems before they lead to complaints and costly litigation for all parties. These must be accountable core job responsibilities of all special education staff and not the responsibility of a separate department in the administration.

[01:55:45] Special education deans, who we are in support of, should have in-depth knowledge about the the students in their schools, special education law, and the incentive to create harmonious, productive relationships with families. These positions should be leveraged rather than relying on additional administrative positions. Yeah, I'm sorry. All right. And recommendation two, again, which is, yeah, well, I was just going to say these are similar, but go ahead.

[01:56:20] Sharon, I may need your help on this one. A little bit of history. Way back when, when Mary Kearney was our director of special education. Mary did this stuff, and her administrative assistant did kind of routine IE requests, but all the dispute resolution, okay, there was one staff person.

[01:56:46] And my understanding is it actually came as a concern from the community that we wanted a compliance person to help us with compliance. But somehow along the way, what we got was this procedural support system and the incentives and the alignments, The incentives, it just got misaligned.

[01:57:07] But when we look at just the objective and the subjective data, back then, I've been told by folks at the VDOE, folks at Federal Department of Education, LCPS was a school system that they didn't really have to worry about, that we didn't have a lot of problems that couldn't get resolved by taking it to the right people and they would fix the problem.

[01:57:27] I sure don't hear that about LCPS today. When you go to the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights' website and you go look at findings of non-compliance, discrimination, retaliation. I think we're the number one in Virginia school system, the number one finding of discrimination and retaliation, and it's all disability.

[01:57:48] And we look at these state complaints we're losing, we're looking at the litigation. It sure doesn't seem like the current model is preventing compliance problems or resolving them quickly, efficiently, good for the kids, cost-effective for the taxpayer.

[01:58:07] But the other one is that it also doesn't appear that the model is addressing problems when they're little so that they don't become big, systemic, the school boards and the papers kinds of problems. So the high level is we tried to solve this problem a certain way.

[01:58:25] We gave it a few years. We even added staff and changed where it is in the org chart to see if that would help. And the objective and the subjective data says the model we have right now is not meeting our needs. So fundamentally what we're really saying is let's not add more expensive administrative positions to a model that the data is not saying is working for us.

[01:58:47] But we do think that there's a conversation that needs to be had, including admin, the school board, the community. What's a model for success here? But one of the other things that we noted was, back when it was Mary Kearney doing all these things, the director of special education knew what was going on.

[01:59:04] Because every one of these complaints, like if a complaint were to come in from a regulator, she would be intimately involved in fixing that problem. And we've heard consistently from the VDOE when Hank Millward gives his presentations on state complaints. He says, where there's smoke, there's fire. Where there's one complaint, there's probably 10 or 100 other families having the same problem.

[01:59:24] They just haven't gotten to that level of filing it. And so back when it was the director of special education doing these things, she could not only try to fix that individual problem, but ask the question, is there a systemic problem we need to be resolving here?

[01:59:40] And we're not seeing the current system being aligned to do that. And we've seen a number of cases where Suzanne Jimenez or Asia Jones would stand up and make comments like this always works a certain way or this never works a certain way. And then parents raise their hand and go, no, that's not what's happening on the ground.

[01:59:57] So there's a lot of information disconnect where the people who are the decision makers and have the authority to fix the problems don't necessarily know. And because we've created a separate organization to handle some of this stuff, it's further separating the information and it's separating the authority and accountability.

[02:00:16] doesn't seem to be working very well. So the big piece is it needs a rethink, but in the meantime, adding expensive staff to something that's not working very well, it's just not something we can support. So I know that's kind of a long answer, but I also wanted to kind of give some context because there's some history here.

[02:00:37] - Thank you, Craig, for saying what you just said. I just wanted to chime in briefly. We, just as a school board member and as the liaison here, we really need to make sure that we are looking at the end user of our system. And the end users are the students.

[02:00:54] So if what we have in place is not benefiting our students, or if we're looking at the data, and I would like to see the objective data. Subjective is fine, but I think objective is even more important for us as a school board to be able to review so that we can make a decision about whether or not we continue to fund, or fund more of something that may or may not be working.

[02:01:18] What is so important in this equation is that we have a very large budget in our school system. And sometimes I think it is so large that we just don't know what to do with all the money that we have.

[02:01:34] And we can simplify the process just as, Craig, you brought up a great point. I mean, it sounds like prior to what we have now, things were working. And we have, clearly we have an issue. And it's not just one issue, it's multiple issues.

[02:01:51] So I will absolutely bring this up, and I think this is critical that the school board look at this. We are the ones who are responsible for adopting the budget. The buck stops with us when we go to make that vote. And we should be making sure that every dollar is going to the end user, and that is the kids.

[02:02:12] That's who we are serving here. So thank you. I want to add something to that. You know, something I keep hearing speaking with regulators, with advocates and attorneys, There's a saying in special education, you can spend the money on the kids or you can spend the money fighting.

[02:02:34] We used to be spending the money on the kids. Now we have very expensive administrators, we spend a lot of money on legal fees, we spend a lot of money on situations in the paper. Maybe if we just took that money and spend it on the kids, many of the problems being fought over could just be solved.

[02:02:52] There was a question from, did you get your answers? Okay. I did want to make sure you were afforded. Thank you. My first question was the procedural support positions that are proposed to be eliminated, which positions are those?

[02:03:14] The director of procedural support was moved to a new separate organization that's a peer separate office.

[02:03:31] And then there's a discussion that the staff has floated that we need to add more staff to that. And so at this point, I think the recommendation would be the entire model has not been successful to cut that all and to develop a new model.

[02:03:50] So before it was just, you had your director of special education. Then it became, you had your director of special education who had two assistants underneath. One was the procedural and then one

was the...

[02:04:06] That's even, that's an even newer, no, before it was just, it was just a support person. Yeah, under Dr. Jimenez, it became two, right? Then, yeah, then it became two different directors with their own assistance.

[02:04:23] And then, so now you've got that procedural, and now we're trying to add even more to our procedural aspect. But we've made that a separate entity, not under special education director. In the meantime, some of the responsibilities of that office are things that are also supposed to be in the job responsibilities of the SPED supervisors and supposed to be in the responsibilities of the SPED deans.

[02:04:50] So in terms of supporting the school staff on the ground, then the question is, why isn't that getting supported at that level? Thank you. That answers question number one. And then question number two, the proposal to remove the eligibility coordinators.

[02:05:11] And if that does happen, who is going to assume those responsibilities of those eligibility coordinators? Excellent question that I think she was about to give you the answer to. Yes, good segue. That's the next portion here. So for our recommendation number two, again, that's in response to concerns three and four again.

[02:05:30] And SEAC recommends removing these eligibility coordinators and restructuring so that section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, those provisions fall under the Department of Special Education. All right, so neighboring school districts do not have different administrators to support eligibility meetings and then IEP meetings.

[02:05:52] This simply adds unnecessary administrative overhead to special education and silos related matters into different reporting structures. Instead, meetings and decisions regarding eligibility under either IDEA, which is IEPs, or Section 504, and then the development of the related Section 504 plan, or IEP, we believe should be conducted by the same team members and be supported by the same administrative staff.

[02:06:21] In most districts, eligibility meetings are typically run by existing school-based staff, such as the school psychologist or the assistant principals. This is another area where our special education deans could be utilized. School-based staff are better positioned to know the needs of the student, are more aligned with the outcome of the process and are more likely to contribute to the iep development and implementation if there is a finding of eligibility administrative staff would be consulted or brought in to these meetings only if needed oh dang that's okay i'm just used

[02:06:58] to a touch screen um c-hack c-hack has consistently advocated for a true continuum of services there There should be consistency for students who may transition between a 504 plan and then later into an IEP, or presumptively back later potentially to a 504 plan during the full length of that student's school career.

[02:07:20] It makes no sense for different administrative staff to handle 504 plans from those handling IEPs. These are all laws that cover students with disabilities, and there was an illustration I thought was going to be in the slides, but it's not, but let me describe it.

[02:07:35] a venn diagram i know math um but venn diagram imagine you know if this box is the world of all students with disabilities there's going to be a very very big circle that covers almost the entire box and

that circle represents 504 and section 504 the americans sorry section 504 the rehabilitation act and the americans with disabilities act okay big circle all right and if you can imagine my round face as a smaller circle inside the Venn diagram my round face represents those students

[02:08:09] who are covered by the IDEA. Okay there's a reason I'm not a teacher but the point is right the point with the Venn diagram and IDEA being a sub part of the wider section 504 ADA circle is that all of our IDEA, IEP students are also covered by Section 504 and the Americans Disabilities Act.

[02:08:33] Okay, the way these laws are structured, they are not siloed. They are not two different separate things. They are completely overlapping. And so that's one of our main concerns with this siloing, what's being done for Section 504 eligibility, or actually, frankly, eligibility at all, and then Section 504 plans are in different reporting structures.

[02:08:55] These are different administrative staff. So, let's see. It makes, so to us, it makes no sense for different administrative staff to handle 504 plans and IEPs. Students who qualify under IDEA also qualify under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

[02:09:13] Teams should be able to seamlessly transition between these to meet the students' unique needs at that specific time. Putting Section 504 and IDEA into separate silos unnecessarily segregates what should be seamless decisions regarding Section 504 and IDEA eligibility.

[02:09:34] For example, if you're sitting in an eligibility meeting and a student is not found eligible under IDEA, we should immediately be going into a determination for eligibility under 504. In addition, because Section 504 and the ADA still apply to students with an IEP, all IEP teams need to be aware of their obligations under Section 504 and the ADA, as well as the IDEA.

[02:09:56] and I thought I said this in here maybe I skipped over it my bad vision here but you know the idea of doing eligibility with one set of administrative staff and separating that from the IEP what's being said and done in these eligibility meetings should be feeding directly into what's happening in the development of our kids IEPs why are we separating these into two different reporting structures so that was those were our cumulative comments any comments on that from the floor so I know that didn't precisely answer the question you asked because it is a to be resolved. But when

[02:10:31] we looked at neighboring school systems, LCPS is unique in having these eligibility coordinators. Neighbors do not do this. And it seems very weird that you have an eligibility meeting that you have to bring this person from admin who really doesn't know the child and then they disappear and then you have an IEP meeting with different people. It seemed like it would be a lot better for everybody if the same people were in the eligibility meeting and the IEP meeting, so we don't have to go back over the same material.

[02:11:04] And the rough thought is the deans would probably be a good first choice, but there's probably some discussion that needs to be happening to resolve that question. But there are several different existing staff who could do that role.

[02:11:21] Why do we need a whole other set of people? And there's this other weirdness, which is they're not in the Office of Special Education. They're in the Diagnostic and Prevention Services, which is another just very weird thing. And then, again, the weird, we have separate teams and separate org chart locations for 504 and IEP and IDEA, instead of considering it a continuum.

[02:11:48] And in practice, what we are finding is reports that the people who work on 504 teams don't know a lot about SPED. And the SPED folks don't know a lot about 504 because of that separation, and that separation doesn't always help us. Go ahead.

[02:12:12] Do you have a question? Oh, yeah, go ahead. Thank you. My question to you is the following.

[02:12:29] So when we talk about eligibility coordinators that you are suggesting to be removed from the process, who is going to do the job of the eligibility coordinators? From what I am understanding, eligibility process is very complex, and it requires bringing a lot of people together and a lot of phone call and a lot of scheduling so I that sometimes falls on the case managers and or in other words the teachers and the therapist it becomes the

[02:13:04] responsibility to manage that that eligibility meeting so if we don't have an coordinators we might take the teacher from serving the children because they would end up doing what the eligibility coordinator is designed to do so that is not we are not recommending that teachers become the people coordinating this and replacing the eligibility that is not at all our recommendation um what we are suggesting is that what happens in other districts is that it's the like the school psychologist who's running those meetings sometimes it's the assistant principal running those meetings

[02:13:40] which is often what can happen in our iep meetings right um we are suggesting there's this um these special education deans that are relatively new um and that you know this is a responsibility that they could have to be managing these meetings because they're closer on the ground to what's happening um but we aren't saying we have the magic answer we're just saying we're concerned that what we're doing doesn't isn't working well and it doesn't make sense and it's costing a lot of money to have all this administrative overhead um where we think maybe um it'd be more appropriate and more cost-effective to have those functions served in a different way.

[02:14:20] Definitely. I'm just worried about the burnout of the teacher that end up serving the kids maybe 3% of the time and doing paperwork 70% of the time, and it's happening. Yes, we agree. But there is also a burnout happening when some of the teacher and staff have to go to an eligibility meeting and spend a couple hours in an eligibility meeting, and then a month later they have to go to an IP meeting.

[02:14:43] And because there's a couple people who are new to that meeting, we have to go back over the entire case history again and they have to sit through it. So we could also streamline it by having the same people so that they can come to that IEP meeting and basically start from, we already talked about this. Yeah, I don't know a lot about this.

[02:15:02] I got into this because my kid has an IEP and I have sat through two IEP meetings with two random people who come from LCPS administration and the teachers and I and the assistant principal, we all know what we're doing. right? We all actually, we have a great relationship, open, we worked on it together, and then we get in this meeting, and what should take a, yep, this is good, let's sign off on it, ends up taking an hour of going back and forth with that administrative staff who I never ever see again, right? And so I, if that is getting rid of that, if that is their role, I am all for

[02:15:39] that, because we already had everything else done. It's not like this person was putting together the IEP they weren't it was the teachers and we had a meeting about it before our IEP meeting so we kind of went over everything so it just seemed again a waste of an hour for the six people now who have to sit

there during that whole meeting when we were all good. This is certainly a lot to process and think about especially as the special education director that you kept referring

[02:16:14] to but I do want to say that I think that a gathering of data on going all the way back to Ms. Kearney or Dr. Kearney I'm not sure who and how many students with disabilities were here at that time what kind of structure was in place because only being here a year I don't know but I will tell you that the number of staff I understand sometimes the need for change in roles and change in structure and always looking to rethink special ed, especially with the shortage and the stress that we put on teachers because of the shortage.

[02:16:54] And I am always willing to look and rethink. But I do think that it's important to have objective, hard data when we look at that. And anecdotal and perceptions and own experience is important too. But I think that global view of what it's like to sit in the seat and what the schedule looks like.

[02:17:15] For example, some of our folks that work directly with teachers, these brand new provisionally licensed teachers who need support and teach the reading strategies and things like that, really looking at what they do every day and how that support is given.

[02:17:32] And I'd be happy to provide a report with any data that you would be seeking, because I think it's important to have all the information when we make decisions. Thanks. And, you know, just, and again, these are just recommendations and thoughts that hopefully will start a conversation.

[02:17:50] Yeah. And it sounds like we are. Mission accomplished. So my last comment, and I think restructuring is always good. I think restructuring is always good and then looking at the way we do things.

[02:18:08] I think one issue is consistency across the county. I don't think that every school does it the same way. I say that because when you talked about the separation of 504s and IEPs, and I manage both. So when I'm sitting in an eligibility meeting or referral meeting, we're talking about the possibility of accommodation and interventions or going to a 504 or going to suspect of a disability. I'm doing it right there. So I think that there's lack of consistency across the county, and I think that that's probably one restructuring. And then I hear about the role

[02:18:43] of the dean. If my dean had to oversee sitting eligibility meetings, she would die. I mean, all the work that she does, and I say this because I'm hoping that we truly understand the role of the dean. We truly understand the role of assistant principals who are overseeing the 504s and IAPs and interventions and all that we already do. And if I didn't have an eligibility coordinator, that's another hat that I'm wearing. So I'm not saying that restructuring and thinking about doing it differently is the wrong thing. But I think that it's important to know what deans and

[02:19:17] administrators already do. And before we eliminate these positions, I have meetings coming up. I need my eligibility coordinator. If you want to make me an eligibility coordinator, you might want to remove my hat as an assistant principal. So just think about, I just think it's important to know what the people are already doing and then think about the restructuring. And so I guess I have a question too. I've sat through a bunch of eligibility meetings for my kids. And what I perceive as a parent is that I see an eligibility coordinator come in and they're running the

[02:19:53] meeting. They're the note taker. But at the same time, we still have the psychologist there. We still have the assistant principal. They're all sitting in the meeting, except for instead of taking notes,

they're sitting there listening. And so I think part of us is just trying to say, are we being redundant? Are we not using our time most effectively? Could someone else in that room be filling out the form? Is there something particular that's happening that we don't know about that these eligibility coordinators are doing? And that's a good question. And that's why I think it's important. I think it's more than the eligibility coordinator

[02:20:32] just filling out notes. I think it's a lot more than that. So I think that identifying the roles of each person involved, and then deciding, then figuring out who we need and who we don't need. If we think that eligibility coordinator is just there to fill out notes, I think that's a misconception. So that's why I think it's important. I'm glad I'm here tonight for my first meeting. But I just really think it's important to identify the responsibilities and roles of each individual before we put that responsibility on someone else.

[02:21:07] Yes, we agree. I mean, that definitely would have to be part of the discussion. absolutely oh there we go no it's working thank you Isaac um thank you Mr. Barber for sharing that perspective of a school-based administrator and um Dr. Carter thank you so much for reiterating the fact that we are more than happy to gather the data and look at the data I it was mentioned that these recommendations were made to start a conversation and certainly know that they will start a conversation because at the heart of what we're talking about behind these positions

[02:21:45] is people. And so I am quite sure that tomorrow when I enter these doors, I'm going to have to face some people and their feelings about the conversations that were had tonight. And I'm happy to do that and certainly support their continued work and their roles across our schools in supporting staff, in supporting administrators, in supporting and serving students. What's more importantly when we shared our proposed staffing enhancements, it's important to know that we don't work in isolation. So the five

[02:22:23] offices across the Department of Student Services, we come together and we look at our data, we talk about our needs, we look at our historical information. Teams get to work in individual offices, directors come together, we also have monthly meetings where we're talking about budget needs, we're talking about what are we seeing across our schools what are the needs that are arising and how can we work to address them within our current staffing so certainly any enhancement that we have requested it's not necessarily going to come to

[02:22:57] fruition because it all depends on the budget and certainly the priority and dr. Spence has been clear our school board has also been clear that it is a a focus on retaining the high quality staff that we currently have so I appreciate the recommendations but also wanted to share the perspective of it's sure we can have these conversations but I want us all to be thoughtful that there are people behind these positions that we're discussing and they have a meaningful impact and make a difference every day and if you don't get the

[02:23:30] opportunity to walk in their shoes on a daily basis it might be easy to have a a perception of, oh, well, we might be able to shift that work here, or we might be able to do that. Again, all about looking at where we are, all about looking at where we've been, and looking at where we need to go. Thank you. Very well said. Thank you. Thank you.

[02:23:59] And one quick perspective, just to give you guys a perspective. So having come from various different large divisions in the state, from Henrico to Fairfax to here, what I will say,

[02:24:14] The major difference when you think about the restructuring that we were just talking about, and I mean major, is that in most of those divisions, the reason why some of that allocation of the assessments or the running of the eligibility meetings or being that LEA for those things, local screening chair, some of that is because their structure of administration, especially in Fairfax, Henrico.

[02:24:42] and I want to maybe not Prince William I haven't worked there so I don't want to speak for that structure but they have sped administrators in the building so why there are grade level like 9th 10th 11th 12th there is an additional administrator AP just over sped so that's why that can look really different back when I first came here those conversations were being had that at the secondary level. Maybe we need to have an administrator just over SPED. Then some of that

[02:25:21] could look a little different. But now that SPED falls under grade level administrators that also have various other building-wide things or contents and all of this, it gets a little tricky. So yes, I've experienced different structures. So I know it can be done differently because I've worked in those structures. But there's something missing with this structure that would actually impact moving to some of those structures. So restructuring could mean something like a reallocation of administration, things like that. So if I could fight for something, I would fight for SPED administrators in the buildings, right? Well, and I think we were kind of, what you're

[02:26:01] calling SPED administrator, we were kind of thinking as the deans, even though we know that's kind of new and developing. Yeah, but they're really teachers though. They're actually not all administrators. So that would be a difference too. And, and, and so our thought was those deans shouldn't be just teachers. They should be moved into an administrative because we realize they're classified as teachers. They should be moved in administration and they should be compensated appropriately. So if we're, if we're, if we're taking costs out at, you know, the higher administrative levels, we need to make sure we're appropriately compensating and empowering the lower level and training those lower level more boots on the ground administrators.

[02:26:40] Any other? The original, and Craig, you can correct me on this, but the original concept of the special ed deans where they were going to be directly under the supervisors, right? And so they had that, originally when we thought about special ed deans, they had that administrative role.

[02:27:00] And I think that's why our thinking has always been that they should be more of that administrative role. Yeah, and this is not on here, but this has been another discussion we've had. The deans are kind of funny in, yeah, we need to better define them, but there are contexts in which we're treating them like administrators, and there are contexts in which we're treating them like not administrators.

[02:27:20] And maybe resolving that will help clarify some of these things. So I just want to comment on, because recommendations one and two are kind of linked, right, in a way. And I know that in any budget review process, when you start introducing words like eliminate and restructure and replace, it opens up a lot of discussion, clearly.

[02:27:49] And also, oftentimes, one of the first things that is a target is administration and overhead, because that's kind of the easiest thing to sort of look at and say, well, that's not addressing students on an individual basis, particularly in education. But I think we have to also think about the fact that our administration is very much playing the role of support to those folks in the classroom.

[02:28:12] We absolutely have to fill those classroom positions. But, you know, if one of our problems is retention, which we've been having for a while, eliminating more administration can actually affect that retention problem as well, as those teachers in the classrooms feel less support, less coordination, less folks that they have to rely on as well. I think that perhaps, because this is about a discussion, this isn't, you know, a plan, some of the answer to two, which coming from another district and having

[02:28:47] some experience also in other districts, yeah, the idea that 504s and IEPs are in two different reporting change is bizarre. To my experience, and having had children with both 504s and IEPs and one that had an IEP that became a 504, you're dealing with two different groups of people that's kind of now as a parent, now you're trying to coordinate between those two groups when that really probably should be happening at a higher level within the system. But maybe the answer to the second recommendation actually comes in the first recommendation because maybe

[02:29:25] if there is a restructuring there that replaces some of those positions with a model focused on compliance I mean compliance starts with eligibility right so that's where it has to start and so maybe there's some overlap and this isn't a fully formed idea so it's always dangerous to talk aloud in a group without a fully formed idea, but maybe some of the answer to changing where those eligibility coordinators fit in the system is actually found in the first recommendation, which is, let's look at the compliance thing.

[02:29:58] I think a couple of people have mentioned it as well. Maybe one of the things we could do is look historically at those trends with the OCR reports to actually see and support the fact that, hey, look, our problem here is compliance. It's been trending in that direction, and that's a very objective truth that we can rely on.

[02:30:19] And if that current process with procedural support positions isn't solving the compliance problem, then, yeah, we definitely have to look at restructuring, replacing, all those kind of words. One real quick thing to add on, and this is to, Tedra, to your point, and I think it was someone else's point.

[02:30:39] what would be really helpful too as a parent if these people are doing other things it'd be great to know that right instead of just walking into a meeting with someone you've never met before who's questioning what you and the IEP team have decided right as a parent it would be great to know like hey this is this person and this is their role and the role isn't just to sit here it's this is all the things they're doing and I think that would make it more impactful as a parent to realize they're part of our team, this is what they're doing, instead of right

[02:31:12] now, and again, I don't have objective data, I have what I went through, was it just seemed like an outsider coming in and trying to change things at the last minute. So, in the interest of time, like I said, this is starting a conversation, so this isn't the last time you guys are going to have an opportunity to talk about this and provide feedback by any means, but if it's okay, maybe we can move on real quick.

[02:31:40] so the last two things are pretty quick uh one is about the independent uh living labs so congress stated congress's stated purpose in creating the idea was to quote ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education employment and independent living and the idea requires school districts to consider how each student with an IEP will transition to their next stage in life beyond k-12 education some students require direct

[02:32:19] explicit instruction in independent living skills LCPS is current not currently meeting the needs of these students this is an area that has been underfunded and largely ignored for years and parent dissatisfaction is consistently reflected in SEAC's annual survey. Existing independent living labs are often put together through community donations which these amazing teachers go out and solicit on their own just to get stuff for their kids in these in these labs and they do not address all areas of student needs. Students with disabilities should have access to appropriate equipment and facilities

[02:32:56] for their learning just as we would provide for non-disabled students. So SEAC recommends that we ensure that students with disabilities have access to dedicated independent living labs with a standardized build-out or we can modify the existing family and consumer science facilities with standardized equipment and supplies both of which would be funded through budget appropriations and we're not forcing these teachers to go out and solicit donations from the community for something that we should be funding out of our school board budget and then

[02:33:28] And then the last and final one is that we do support Special Education's \$80,000 budget. One question on that one?

[02:33:44] Okay. So this is Office of Special Education requested \$80,000 for transportation for Project SEARCH. Did you want to define? So around our county we have CAS programs and we have a Project SEARCH program.

[02:34:02] Our project search program is like an internship-based program that you're working under an employer to get ready for your workplace readiness skills. And this is geared towards our students with disabilities who are between 18 and 21 and who are working towards an applied studies diploma.

[02:34:25] So transportation is a related service as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations for special ed IDEA regulations. A school district is required to provide transportation to and from locations where the students receive special education and related services.

[02:34:43] And the U.S. Department of Education has a guidance document on this that explains it in much more detail. SEAC received reports that LCPS is not providing transportation service or reimbursement to our students participating in Project SEARCH. LCPS is obligated under IDA to provide transportation for students participating in either CAST or Project SEARCH who have transportation and their IEPs as a related service.

[02:35:05] So because of that, we do absolutely support this budget ask for \$80,000. Any comments on that one? Okay. First, can we check quorum? Okay, then.

[02:35:24] If we don't have quorum, we cannot take a vote. Thank you all. I know that this one went a little long, but we were at least hoping to have a discussion. You lulled us in with only a few policies. And then I forgot that we had that other thing.

[02:35:41] I'm just kidding. All right, guys. will try and speak quickly we are going back in time this evening to school year 2021 2022 we give an annual report for each year this one is delayed due to some issues with funding and timing and all that stuff so we I appreciate your patience as we go over this I think you'll find when you hear the information that it is still relevant today and it's helpful especially as we start having these budget conversations to see that these are existing concerns that we are still trying to address today so I think most of you are

[02:36:20] probably aware that our SEAC your commit begins on September 1st ends on May 30th we have 21 members and delegates we delegate various subcommittees to monitor problematic issues and future items of concern we like to have a PTO representative or PTA representative from each school that can report on activities important to the special education community to each of their schools. In 2021, we had 17 voting members and 42 PTA PTO representatives. That year, we had many accomplishments. We reviewed and provided

[02:37:00] feedback on seven school board policies, which is kind of funny because we did much more than that in our September meeting this year but that shows you how our scope has changed we updated the SEAC bylaws to allow SEAC members to participate in business meetings electronically after the pandemic we held an additional SEAC business meeting in June of 2022 to review five policies at the administration's request we hosted the SEAC annual awards in June of 2022 with an in-person awards ceremony celebrating our everyday heroes and we chartered a new standing subcommittee

[02:37:37] meaningful inclusion that began last school year so our survey we put out a survey each year in april or may and it was the analysis was completed by dr adam winsler of child research evaluation data and information technology services in george mason university he also completed our 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 CX survey analysis. So it's helpful because he has that historical data as well that we can look at. We will be posting the document of the full

[02:38:15] CX survey analysis. It will be on our website so that if you would like more information, you can go to that um so it's the analysis summarizes the following the overall parental satisfaction for the county whether parental satisfaction varies according to students school district disability category and school level type notable changes in parental satisfaction from the different the previous school year also results from a qualitative analysis of parents

[02:38:46] open-ended responses to the survey. So in 21-22, it was administered in English and Spanish and had 612 total responses, 563 that were complete and 49 incomplete. So the ones that were incomplete were excluded from the analysis because there was a large amount of information that was missing or it was inconsistent and possible combinations of responses.

[02:39:12] The 563 responses included cases that had information on disability category for the student, the school district they attended, their level of schooling, and at least one response to a satisfaction with or agreement with survey question.

[02:39:30] Overall, the analysis showed that about 76% of our parents are satisfied with the special education services that they received in 21-22. A sizable minority of 24% are not satisfied. Satisfaction was noticeably below satisfaction with the intervention team meeting process.

[02:39:50] For overall dissatisfaction with LCPS services, the percentage of parents who were dissatisfied increased from 21-22 by 2-10 percentage points. There were a few areas that showed improvements from 2020 to 2021.

[02:40:09] Those included 504 eligibility, assistive technology, and behavioral supports. The rest of the services showed increased dissatisfaction, with the most problematic areas in terms of decline were transition services after high school, dispute resolution rights, intervention team meetings, and staffing.

[02:40:30] Parents had a lot to say in the 21-22 school year, which is great. Even though we had fewer respondents than the previous year, those who did respond provided more overall open-ended responses

than before.

[02:40:47] There were many insights and helpful suggestions. Overall, the most common responses suggested, asked for were increased staff, more resources and better training given to our special education staff, increased resources and attention given to mental health for students with disabilities, a desire for LCPS to more strongly prioritize our children with disabilities, a desire for more consistency across schools, teachers, and personnel, increased communication and collaboration with parents as partners, especially with respect to the IEP process, better transition planning for after high school, and enhanced

[02:41:24] efforts to ensure that real inclusion takes place both in the classroom and for school events. Recommendations that we have are during the 21-22 school year, SEAC heard from many special education parents and community members regarding not meeting the students' need by providing sufficient compensatory education or recovery services.

[02:41:47] It was, I don't know, I'm sure that there are other parents who had experience with this, but for some of our students who were not able to access their learning, it was a difficult process to go about getting compensatory or recovery services if you even got them at all.

[02:42:06] So while this was not addressed in the SEAC survey, it was discussed and raised as a significant concern during the school year. In comparing the 20 to 21 areas of concern to the 21 to 22 survey results, SEAC continues to offer recommendations in many of the same areas as these needs are not being addressed and are continuing to impact LCPS students with disabilities.

[02:42:28] The survey most notably outlined staffing, dispute resolution, transition, and ESY to be areas of significant dissatisfaction. SEAC is concerned that there is a lack of vision in correcting these barriers impacting our students with disabilities as these areas of concern are not addressed year after year.

[02:42:48] SEAC is hopeful with new leadership these concerns will begin to be addressed. So our recommendations under equity. Additional equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. To address and achieve equity, LCPS policies and procedures must be aligned and barriers identified and addressed.

[02:43:11] There continues to be a disconnect between what is stated by the administration and the practices within LCPS schools. SEAC encourages the school board to carefully consider IDEA, Title II of the ADA, and Section 504 when revising and reviewing LCPS policies. Closely examine LCPS special education staffing and implement practices and ratios to maintain teachers.

[02:43:35] SEAC encourages the school board to support the training for substitute teachers and teaching assistants before working with our students. Fund the continuum of special education by maintaining a virtual option of schooling for K through 12 students. Work with the Department of Student Services and the Office of Special Education to support the efficacy of IEP services delivery for high school and middle school special education students.

[02:44:04] Encourage the Department of Student Services to update IEE fee-limiting cap-to-market rates. Encourage the Department of Student Services to carefully consider providing compensatory recovery services for students with disabilities who experienced learning loss.

[02:44:20] In transition, we encourage the Office of Special Education to create a systematic way to track life skills and workplace readiness skills, create a blueprint of what equipment materials would be in every independent living lab, identify and prioritize building needs based on school programs, capital and then capital improvement budget impact, remove Move the Algebra 1 SOL and PSAT admission barriers to the MATA program.

[02:44:52] MATA is housed at the Academies of Loudoun for those who aren't aware and it has our trade programs and so to have access to those trade programs you have to actually have taken Algebra 1 and taken the PSAT.

[02:45:10] Consider creating transition training centers to support a variety of transition training at key locations across the county, create a community independence instruction CII framework, and provide funding to encourage full elementary and middle school participation.

[02:45:27] Under accessibility, we encourage the Department of Student Services to partner with the Department of Teaching and Learning to create procedures for ensuring accessibility to instructional materials across all LCPS classrooms. This is an ongoing issue. LCPS to include all students in the planning process for lessons and utilizing inclusive design practices, such as universal design for learning in our classrooms.

[02:45:52] This is an ongoing issue. Literacy, reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting, and math instruction. SEAC encourages the school board to encourage LCPS to, under literacy, utilize TNTP K-3 curriculum review recommendations to update LCPS practices.

[02:46:13] Clearly define the implementation of policy 5350, parent notification for screening and assessment, and define remediation framework for students not meeting benchmarks. Update and publish the MTSS specialized literacy decision matrix to provide transparency and guidance to IEP teams, increase training on teaching morphology.

[02:46:35] Math, develop a decision matrix to assist and provide transparency and guidance to IEP teams, and we've actually been working on that in our work group. Staff specialized instructional facilitator math positions. This has also been changed a little bit, and now our CIFRs have morphed into being both for literacy and math. In conclusion, SEAC appreciates the opportunity to report our efforts and recommendations to the LCPS school board. We'll be doing that in mid-November. We maintain that students with disabilities should be prioritized by considering and implementing the recommendations

[02:47:15] identified in this report. We appreciate the opportunity to work alongside the Department of Student Services, the Office of Special Education, and the LCPS School Board. All right, so real quick, we've got a, that's the end of the report. We've got a did you know section that we'd like to do really quickly. Melissa is going to share that with us. She's one of our SEAC members and an attorney at law. So this is a new thing we were trying to start this year, like one minute of an interesting factoid that might be helpful to parents of

[02:47:51] students with disabilities. And tonight's topic is independent educational evaluations or IEEs. Did you know that parents who disagree with their child's special education evaluation have a right to request an independent educational evaluation or IEE? This is an evaluation done by private evaluator that is paid for by LCPS. The parent has a right to one IEE each time the school evaluates the student for special education. However, an

[02:48:25] IEE can consist of multiple tests such as a psychological and educational and a speech and an assistive technology assessment, all conducted as part of one IEE, often by multiple providers. The school is prohibited from limiting the tests done as part of an IEE to those tests already done by the school. So if you feel like the school did not evaluate your child in all areas of suspected disability, you can request an IEE and have those missing areas assessed along with areas already assessed by the school. You can request an IEE in an

[02:49:03] eligibility or IEP meeting or via email to your child's case manager all right I sent out the the SEAC meeting minutes for April May and October but we cannot vote on them because we do not have quorum so moving along reports and updates I'm just gonna skip these for this evening we'll go over these at our next meeting really quickly since I didn't get a chance to do this at our last meeting Jennifer DiDonato was appointed the vice chair of planning because we had a vacancy so thank you so much Jen for stepping into this role we

[02:49:40] really appreciate it okay our 22-23 CX survey data is currently weighting analysis since we just got back the prior year we are now going to move forward with getting that sorted let's see for our PTA PTO membership we're doing great we have 72 schools with PTA PTO representatives now think back to that report I just gave and I think it was maybe 40 so we have made some huge strides there we still have 24 additional that are needed so maybe if

[02:50:17] there's anyone watching and you want to check in with your school and see if PTA PTO representative is needed we have 18 voting members currently three open memberships. So again, our membership form is on, application is on our website. Please fill it out and send it to our vice chair of membership or to me, the SEAC chair, whichever. We will be meeting tonight at Clyde's after the business meeting, the executive committee will. Also, I just wanted to quickly go over our new subcommittee co-chairs for this year. For meaningful inclusion, we have Tom Ketchum and Carla Sola. For policy and compliance, we have Craig Metz and Melissa Wall.

[02:50:57] Specialized programs, well, we've now renamed them, but literacy and math, we have Alicia McFadden and Aaron Rozelle Poe, and for transition, we have Shanaz Khan and Catherine Moran. I'm going to skip our subcommittee reports tonight, and hopefully we'll have a really nice in-depth report at our next meeting.

[02:51:19] We had our first specialized, well, no, literacy and math work sessions at the LCPS administration building. We had the first one on October 23rd. It was great. Please, everyone, mark it on your calendars. Come on December 4th from 9 to 10.

[02:51:35] These are wonderful opportunities to really, it's not a passive thing. It's very active and engaging and, you know, going over some of the difficulties or opportunities that we have within our literacy and math.

[02:51:53] Let's see. Upcoming meetings. We do not have anyone on the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee representing SEAC. If anyone is interested, please reach out to me. We would love to have someone who could take that on. The early literacy textbook adoption.

[02:52:09] I think that's all just wrapped up. but there's information. I think everyone probably got an email today that all the curriculums that we're looking at are going to be in your schools, I think, starting

tomorrow. So be on the lookout for that. Equity Committee meets tomorrow night, and the Gifted Education Advisory Committee meets on November 9th.

[02:52:33] Parent Resource Services, thank you so much, Leanne, for sticking it out here.

[02:52:46] I'm Leanne Kidwell. I'm with Parent Resource Services, And this is how you can contact me. And let me go to the next slide. We only have one workshop in November. It is from the Preschool Child Find team.

[02:53:03] And it's understanding your child's behavior. Behavior is a tool of communication. So please, if you have little ones, it's going to be at the historic Douglas School on Tuesday, November 14th from 6:30 to 8:00. And I will see you there.

[02:53:18] And please register online. Thank you, Leanne. All right. And now we have our school board liaison, Ms. Tiffany Polipko. Thank you so much. I will be brief in the interest of time. I will not take up too much of your time. I just wanted to quickly review some of the updates that we had. Actually, this took place last summer. But I did want to let everyone know that the Capital Asset Preservation Program, within that program, we have been able to complete playgrounds,

[02:53:57] the inclusive playgrounds, at several of our schools. So the projects were completed at Lowe's Island Elementary School, Rosalie Carter Elementary School, Hutchison Farm Elementary School, and Broad Run High School. So with the completion of these inclusive playgrounds, LCPS has met the target that was specified in Policy 6320 Playgrounds by having at least one inclusive playground in each LCPS planning district.

[02:54:28] This is a great thing, but it doesn't mean that our work is done. by any means. So I remember at the last committee meeting, we were presented with some information, I think it was public comment, by an individual about their dissatisfaction with some of the playground situations, and one in particular that we have here in the county. So this does not mean that all is good and all is well and we don't have more work to do. We certainly, as a board, we need to be looking at these particular schools within the county where needs are still not being met for our special education students but really i mean it's not just special education students it's all of our students this is not going to be an ongoing issue that we're going to need to

[02:55:07] continue to address and in addition to that in particular one of the concerns that came up is that some of these playgrounds i think it's actually the one at broad run high school in particular if i'm not mistaken liz that we don't even have a special education program at that school that's accessing that playground right now and so we should we really need to make sure that where we are allocating these resources are in fact where they are going to be used by students so I'm not sure what the process was in in constructing that playground at a school that

[02:55:42] doesn't currently have a special education program other than the fact that is is it a potential that programs move from time to time yes and we know that that happens but again I I'm not sure why that playground was constructed there if we don't have a special education program at Broad Run.

[02:55:59] Thank you. All right, Paige. Good evening. I'll be quick. Okay, I promised your report on special education vacancies, and last month, had I given you a report, it would have been 66 teachers and 49 TAs, but as of Tuesday morning, really data from Monday, 56 teacher vacancies and 25 TAs.

[02:56:33] That's a fill rate of 94% for special education teachers and 97.5% for TAs and BAs. And while that is still a lot of vacancies, we are in a much better shape than the majority of school divisions in the state of Virginia. And so that is something that we are proud of.

[02:56:51] Another thing that we are doing right now is using hiring agencies to find special education teachers. And we have been able to secure a few, and there are several in the hopper, four in the hopper right now, going through processing through their agencies.

[02:57:10] So that is something I wanted to share tonight. The numbers are going down. And we do have occasional resignations, and so this number was 54 and went back up to 56 last week. So it is a moving target.

[02:57:26] it. Okay, and I just wanted to point out the new resource, the Virginia's Family's Guide to Special Education. There are, I believe, a few copies in the back, but it is available on the VDOE website in many languages. So just wanted to make you aware of that new resource. And it's not all that new. It's several months old, but we did receive our copies. So it feels new to us. Okay, and I just, I put the QR codes here just to remind you that the Indicator 8 survey is still open, and so any families that have not had a chance to fill that out yet, that is part of our special education performance report, Indicator

[02:58:06] 8. So if you haven't had a chance, please fill out that survey. And then I do want to add, I've been calling it a monitoring montage. It's always fun your first year as a director to encounter several different kinds of audits, but we are, and we're excited about the information that this will bring. There is the LCPS staffing audit, which is an internal audit being conducted by LCPS auditors looking at staffing. How we staff, how decisions are made, who makes the decisions, all of those things, all the processes are being looked at. We've had several meetings and we'll have several more where we're answering questions and things like that. And I know they

[02:58:44] are talking to several departments, not just the Office of Special Education. So, but this is a LCPS special education staffing audit. I wanted to be clear on that. And then we have our fiscal monitoring from VDOE. We were the lucky, lucky, we were selected this year, lucky us, and we're, it's a five-year cycle, and they have, this is the fourth year of their new monitoring process, and we were selected this year to be monitored. They have moved to a new electronic system, So while they've had time to iron out the kinks, they changed it a little bit.

[02:59:20] So we'll be in the first run of the electronic process. But basically there are many indicators that the state looks at. It looks at our procedures, our policies, our adherence to compliance, and also the quality of instruction.

[02:59:37] So this could include staff interviews, site visits, all kinds of things. but it's definitely going to include an extensive review of records. And for each item on the monitoring tool, they will be looking at 35 randomly selected by the electronic system, not by us, records, and then while they are in the record, anything that they see that is out of compliance, even if it doesn't have to do with the item they're

[03:00:11] looking at we will be cited if you will for that and have the opportunity of course to make those corrections but they are not just looking when they're in a file they're not just looking at the particular item they're looking at everything so it is a really extensive review and that is actually underway we got access to the electronic version of it this week we'll be looking at it as a team tomorrow and getting our plan

underway and we have until Christmas break to do our part on all of those reviews and do our self-assessment so our our team will be

[03:00:46] quite busy in the coming months fit it filling this putting this into the other things that we do we're also under VDOE fiscal monitoring I switched these around and that looks at our maintenance of effort and the different ways that we spend our money on special education it is separate from the cyclical monitoring. It looks just at finances. If you are on a year where they don't fall at the same time, the cyclical review does include a fiscal component, but we get the whole thing this year. So we will have that as well. And then under Dr. Spence's entry plan,

[03:01:26] we're also going to have an external audit of special education services and supports. I joke about all of the spotlight being turned on special ed, but I am truly excited about what this could mean for us in terms of information that would be extensive trying to gather this information ourselves.

[03:01:47] And so this will provide us with a very clear direction when all of these monitoring procedures are complete. And that's it for me. All right, and then really quickly, Our December 6th meeting is now called Your Transition Journey, and our transition supervisor, transition team, sorry, is going to be presenting all about, you know, different decision-making points and the pathway through transition.

[03:02:26] So we're really excited and looking forward to that presentation. In January, on January 10th at our business meeting, We have Ms. Seaborn from the VDOE who will be coming to present on the role of SEAC in Virginia. And I think that will be really interesting and helpful for both our members and our PTO, PTA reps.

[03:02:48] You know, for anyone who's interested in possibly becoming a SEAC member, it will be helpful for all of us. So I'm really looking forward to having that opportunity. We also, on January 16th, we've just scheduled a presentation on Virginia FOIA with Alan Gerhardt from the Virginia FOIA Council.

[03:03:08] It'll be a virtual presentation, so you can watch it from the comfort of your home and hopefully get some really important information about FOIA as well. So, again, thank you all so much for sticking it out with us tonight.

[03:03:25] We really appreciate you. Hopefully we can get these meetings to be a little bit quicker, but there was some really great information shared tonight. So thanks all again, and we'll see you next month.



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