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Loudoun County School Board, 2nd Tuesday School Board Meeting (*moved due to Winter break), Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Date Tuesday, November 28, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 7h 30m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/889506048?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 2026-10-19. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] as we do.

[00:00:00] Good afternoon.

[00:02:04] I call to order this Tuesday, November 28th, 2023 meeting of the Loudoun County School Board. The first item on our agenda is remote participation. However, Ms. Corbo notified me she would be at least somewhat late in requesting that tonight as Ms. Sheridan may also be requesting remote participation later this evening. So with that, we'll move to item

[00:02:32] two on our agenda which is disclosures starting with Mr. Morris. Thank you Mr. Chair. As a member of Loudoun County School Board I'd like to let the public know that my wife and I are subject to the terms and conditions of the insurance and pay and other assets. We are two of over 10,000

[00:03:04] employees who's uh who's in would be impacted by any discourse uh i will faithfully make sure that i do not uh adversely affect the the impacts of what we're working and that this disclosure will be a record in the clerk of the court the school board for five years thank you thank you mr morse for that novel reading of the disclosure statement.

[00:03:37] Mr. Mahedovee. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and their health insurance, and any of the discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPA's employees.

[00:03:55] Specifically, I'm enrolled in LCPA's health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees, one in excess of statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included. I can and well participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years.

[00:04:15] Thank you. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:04:33] Specifically, I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included.

[00:04:51] I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. and we will return to disclosures in the case that we allow remote participation for those that need to read it.

[00:05:08] That will bring us to item three on the agenda, approval of the consent agenda. Is there a motion, Mr. Mahedvi? - Yes, Chair, I move that the Loudoun County School Board approve the items posted on the consent agenda on the board docs. - Seconded by Ms. Reeser, is there any discussion?

[00:05:26] Seeing none, we'll open the voting board. Board members, please record your vote, And please close and display the vote.

[00:05:43] That motion will pass unanimously of board members present with Sheridan and Corbo absent for the vote. That will bring us to our work session. We have three items in an action-packed work session today. And we'll be beginning with item 401, FY25 budget priorities of the school board.

[00:06:04] Ms. Willoughby. - Thank you. As part of the budget calendar that the school board adopted for the FY25 budget development, We had designated November 28th, this work session, as an opportunity to get feedback from the school board on budget priorities.

[00:06:23] We are deep in the budget process currently, and so this is the opportunity to provide an update as well as share some additional information.

[00:06:46] Sorry, I'm having, if you could, there we go, thank you.

[00:07:05] So this is a review of the preliminary fiscal forecast, and I wanted to start here just to refresh on the numbers that had been shared previously with the school board typically we would have rough numbers from the state house and senate committee by now to update our forecast but the process has been different this year in terms of the numbers though you'll see the expenses that was shared earlier for the fiscal forecast we have again the enrollment section growth related to enrollment at the range of zero

to 23 million of additional expenditures we have our biggest category of salaries and benefits with a cost estimate there of an additional

[00:07:45] seventy seven million dollars we had 15 million identified for operational and maintenance increases such as inflation to base costs and then we had also during this preliminary fiscal forecasts identified 30 million dollars for enhancements and other possibilities so the total estimated expenses that was presented was a range of \$122 to \$145. On the revenue side, again, circling back to the state funding, without any additional information, we are still looking at the range of \$9 million to \$14 million. I will share, though, that just late yesterday afternoon, the state did release the

[00:08:24] local contribution index, or the LCI numbers, for the upcoming state biennium budget. The LCI is the calculated percentage that measures the local government's ability to pay for education. The current biennium's LCI for LCPS is 0.545. And for the next biennium, the LCI has increased 1.2% to 0.5518. What that means is that based on this percentage, the local government or Loudoun

[00:08:56] County should be able to fund more and we'll see a reduction in state basic aid funding. It is important though to note that this is only one variable and we are waiting on additional state information such as re-benchmarking, I'm sorry, re-benchmarking, sales tax forecasts, etc. that may offset the reduced state funding resulting from the LCI change. At this point though, I would not be surprised if we received no further information until the governor releases his budget on December 15th. And so just returning back to the slide, we were looking at a county

[00:09:33] funding requests of a range of \$113 to \$131 million. We do have updated information from the county. The county FGOEDC, which is basically their finance committee, did meet on November 14th and provided two tax funding scenarios that are presented on this slide. The equalized rate option is shown in the middle and would reduce the tax rate to achieve a fairly flat

[00:10:11] tax bill for the average Loudoun County resident. Based on the estimated equalized rate, it would have, it would yield a real property tax rate of 83 cents. The net new LTF available would be 83 million dollars. The changes related to increase CIP cap and debt expenses are deducted along with the county's commitment of funding the county's affordable housing fund. Further, the county is also recommending that the post-budget adoption changes totaling 16.3 million be considered part

[00:10:49] of the base adjustment. And this is very helpful for LCPS that they are considering this as part of the base. That would result in a net new LTF available funding of 36.1 million. When we apply a 60-40 split, that would yield 60 percent or 21.7 million coming to LCPS. This level of funding would not cover our basic budget changes, such as the annual employee step increase that alone costs about \$26 million. County staff also share the same concern of the level of funding not being

[00:11:24] adequate to fund their basic budget changes as well based on the equalized rate. The second scenario is the current rate. The current rate is 0.875. After you do the same deductions, it would yield a net new LTF of 156.1 million. Once you apply the 60-40 split to that amount, 60% would yield 93.7 million for LCPS. So those are the two scenarios that the county finance committee has

[00:11:58] recommended forward to the full county board of supervisors. Once we receive more official guidance, we will update as appropriate and include in the budget. Balancing LCPS's needs is always challenging, and the county guidance really emphasizes this.

[00:12:33] The fall forecast projected a county funding request of \$113 million to \$131 million. Using the current tax rate scenario that generated \$93.7 million would still leave a gap ranging from \$19.3 million to \$37.3 million.

[00:12:49] Budget work is still ongoing to address this gap, but also ensuring that LCPS needs are being met. A common misconception that is routinely heard is tying enrollment with budget changes, meaning if enrollment is flat or 0% growth, then the budget should also be flat or reflect a 0% increase.

[00:13:14] It's important to understand that when enrollment is flat, LCPS will experience budget increases such as annual step pay increases for employees, inflation on base costs, and items that LCPS has no control over, such as VRS contribution rates. For FY25, this is especially true because despite projecting a flat enrollment for FY25, two new schools will open in the fall.

[00:13:39] Students will be redistributed, but it will require new staffing and resources to open these two new schools in the fall. So just circling back to the fall forecast again, emphasizing how a funding level of \$93.7 million will not go very far beyond providing for the base ongoing costs.

[00:14:01] The budget team does work with departments to review historical spending and projections to identify savings to trim the budget or for reallocation to other priorities. This has been especially true this year. To help with prioritizing, we have a budget priority activity for school board members and members elect.

[00:14:26] I'm sorry, I'm not sure what is happening with the slides. There we go.

[00:14:46] So this is the same activity that we had from last year. Each of you including our school board members elect will receive a packet of cards. You should have in front of you a packet of cards with different initiatives seeking your guidance. I'll briefly go through each card on the following slides. There will be a separate section regarding compensation and the guidance that we are seeking there. After I have reviewed the slides with you, school board members will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. We will then enter the feedback portion of the activity where individually school board members and school board members elect will have 10 minutes to provide feedback on your assigned cards. It's important to note that these

[00:15:25] are not binding decisions, but an opportunity to provide guidance in the development of the FY25 budget. You can also provide additional information on the back of your card, and you will also, you also have in your stack three blank cards to provide any other feedback or to add your own priorities. The second portion will, I'll ask the school board members to work with a shoulder partner to discuss your ideas and priorities with one another and we have a lot of five minutes for that activity and then finally each school board member will have two minutes to share out any comments or feedback they would

[00:16:01] like to share so as I start going through these cards I want to emphasize that they are not in any order nor is it an all-inclusive list. These are a sample of some initiatives that we thought would be of interest of the school board and that we particularly wanted to obtain feedback on.

[00:16:24] The first card that you have is related to an alternative school program. This initiative is to start an alternative school program at the North Star School for required student placements, alternative disciplinary student placements, and possibly intensive programs for students with autism spectrum disorders and emotional disabilities.

[00:16:48] The cost here for the additional FTEs and resources needed to start this initiative would cost \$2.8 million as indicated in the top right corner of your card. You'll see on the bottom right of your card you have two options.

[00:17:04] You can check mark yes that you would support the superintendent including this in the SEON or the superintendent's estimate of needs or no you do not support the superintendent including this. and again you do have the opportunity to provide any additional feedback on the back of your card as well the second card is related to the ib program the school board initiated the multi-year

[00:17:38] ib program during the fy 23 budget two schools are currently approved for ib programs and this initiative would expand to one additional high school in the eastern or southern region of the county the cost associated with this program expansion is \$300,000 and again

[00:17:59] we have the yes or no box available for you the next two cards is related to the step program first is option a and this is to convert the step program to full day as presented during the November 14th school board meeting this option would add 10 additional step classrooms, converting all step classes to full day. This would provide

[00:18:38] a full-day preschool opportunity for 320 students. There would also be additional state revenues to expand this program, and that is factored into the net cost. The net cost for option A is \$1.6 million. Option B is a phased approach.

[00:19:12] This phased approach would begin with converting five of the ten-step classrooms to full day this would provide 160 full-day opportunities for students and keep 160 seats as half a day the remaining classrooms would be transitioned to full day in FY 26 again state revenues to expand this program are factored into the net costs and the net cost for option B related to the step program is \$800,000 the next slide is related to the middle school

[00:19:47] intramural sports program the FY 24 budget included funding to support a pilot intramural sport sports program at four middle schools the pilot program has been successful and other middle school principals are interested in participating in the program based on survey feedback this initiative would expand the program to all middle schools and the cost for this expansion would be half a million dollars the next initiative or actually item that we

[00:20:24] want feedback on is related to capping the number of students attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. LCPS has traditionally allowed any student who is admitted to TJ the opportunity to attend. An increasing number of students have been attending in the past several years and LCPS has experienced rising costs in the form of tuition payments to Fairfax County Public Schools. A cap could be instituted that maintains the current number of 411 seats and avoids an estimated \$800,000 cost increase in FY25 that would

[00:21:01] come from sustained enrollment growth. So that opportunity, that initiative would actually cap the number of students. And so if you were to check the box yes, this was a little confusing as I was looking at it late this afternoon, a vote of yes would actually be that you would want to continue Having students attend TJ with no cap, and no would be that you would support the savings and capping.

[00:21:41] And if you just want to write cap or no cap, we can take that translation as well. Again, then you have three blank cards, which are your opportunity to provide any additional feedback to us.

[00:22:02] The next section is related to compensation. And as I mentioned, because compensation is so important and comprises such a large piece of our budget, we wanted to provide additional information before we pose the questions.

[00:22:18] I first wanted to start with the new salary scale naming convention. We attempted to get this off the ground last year, and we started by referencing what is currently known as the teacher salary scale as scale A, universal salary scale as scale B, and auxiliary scale as scale C.

[00:22:37] but we did not sustain it through the year. So we want to try again to get this into our normal reference to these salary scales. So you'll see scale A being referenced, but we'll routinely put in parentheses teacher scale until we are very comfortable with the new naming convention.

[00:22:56] Next slide, please. Again, just a reminder that personnel costs comprise almost 90% of our operating budget. So if LCPS is \$1.7 billion operating budget with 90% being personnel costs, it does not take much to make a substantial impact to the budget when we discuss compensation changes.

[00:23:19] And this is why, again, it has its own section. Next slide, please. Historically, the school board has prioritized employee compensation to address recruitment and retention. This chart shows historical pay increases awarded by the school board compared to annual inflation rates.

[00:23:41] Prior to COVID, the pay increases were higher than the inflation rate, and then during COVID, though, there was a flip-flop where inflation outpaced pay increases, and that is shown in fiscal 21 and fiscal 22, where the blue is the inflation rate, and it is larger than the average salary increase that is shown in orange. It's important to note, though, that the school board still prioritized employees during this time, and during FY21 still provided a pay increase when our neighbors did not. Recent data forecasts that the most recent pay increase for this fiscal year

[00:24:17] totaling an average of 7.8 percent will return to exceeding the inflation rate. Further, the compounding of these two factors illustrates the average teacher salary increases outpacing the inflation, and that is what is shown by the lines. The compounded salary increases is the orange line and the compounded inflation increases is depicted by the gray line next slide please focusing on scale a for our teachers this chart further illustrates the investment the school

[00:24:55] board has made in improving the teacher scale for the master's lane a 48 percent increase has been realized over the last 10 years you can also see the sag that was occurring and how it's been addressed over the years and the sag is what was happening in the blue line which is the fiscal 14 which is where we started this measurement.

[00:25:17] And you can see that from step one, there was a slight sag that was occurring in the line. And then there has been the strategic efforts to address that sag that has resulted in the line shown in black, which is the FY24 master's lane.

[00:25:36] Next slide. Recognizing the importance of compensation on recruitment and retention, we also closely watch how competitive LCPS is compared to our neighbors. This chart shows LCPS's current FY24 Teacher Salary Scale, or Scale A, in blue, compared to the market average.

[00:25:58] The market average is comprised of Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington, and Alexandria. This chart depicts the market gap that begins to occur during the mid-career steps. So you can see where around step 10 or 11, LCPS begins to fall below the market average.

[00:26:17] When we ran analysis last year, it would have cost at least \$73 million to close the market gap. So it's not cheap to try to fix this all-in-one action. Next slide.

[00:26:33] One last comparator, comparing LCPS starting step and step 10 for the bachelor-master lane of scale A, also known as the teacher scale. is shown on this slide. Over the last several years, LCPS has been the leader for the bachelor's and master's step one. Unfortunately for master's step one, for FY24, we have slipped to ranking of third in the region. We did, though, make progress on the master middle step, moving from rank four, where we had been for the last several years, to rank three. This is

[00:27:13] a direct result of the targeted scale adjustments that we have been making over the years to address the market sag and is one of many indicators that we monitor next slide please for scale B and C universal and auxiliary scales just a quick reminder too that the school board has also consistently invested in keeping these positions competitive through a multi-year review cycle the heavier lift occurred with the initial review cycle that occurred between FY 17 and FY 22 having all positions reviewed and adjusted to be competitive with the

[00:27:49] market as well as reviewing placement practices with the second review cycle you see a considerably reduced amount as now the goal is to maintain our competitiveness going forward next slide one additional slide before we move to the question card and that is just information related to pay increases and how it relates to the cost of insurance increases for FY 24 we we looked very

[00:28:26] closely and so the lowest annual pay increase was a pay increase of 7.1 percent, yielding a pay increase of \$2,710. For FY24, the most expensive health plan that we have is the POS Family Health Plan, and the 4 percent premium increase there is an additional cost of \$314.

[00:28:52] So annually, the net increase is a little over \$1,700 to an employee in this situation. Every year that we look at making recommendations to health increases, health premium increases, we run this analysis to ensure that employees are in a net positive situation.

[00:29:15] It's also important to note that for FY25, for example, if we are looking at just a step increase of two and a half percent, but we are also recommending an eight percent premium increase that the percentages are relative to the base number it is being applied to. I often hear and I often see the misconception of it's going to negatively impact my check because it's eight percent more in health premiums and I'm only receiving a 2.5% pay increase.

[00:29:49] But again, 2.5% on a larger number is going to yield a number that is larger than 8% on a smaller number. And again, once we get into FY25, we will again update the slide. This is just the example for FY24.

[00:30:07] Next slide. The final card that you have in your packet is related to compensation. So now that I've refreshed and briefed you related to compensation and historical changes, there are three questions we would seek your feedback on.

[00:30:26] One is continuing a targeted scale A adjustment that applies a larger percentage adjustment towards the mid to ending steps of the salary scale lanes. This will result in teachers at the beginning and ending steps of the scale having a smaller percentage adjustment.

[00:30:47] The second question is opposite to question one, and that would be applying a flat COLA, meaning all steps of all lanes of scale A would receive the same percentage adjustment, but does not make

any improvement towards addressing the market sag that occurs.

[00:31:04] The last question is a question that we also asked last year. So this is seeking a recommitment by current and incoming school board members to achieve salary scales, where step increases are consistent.

[00:31:22] So, for example, each employee moving a step on any of our salary scales would see a 2.5% step increase versus the range that occurs now. This would continue to be a multi-year initiative as attempting to do so in one year would be very costly.

[00:31:43] For example, a high-level calculation yielded that it would cost over \$80 million to develop a teacher scale or scale a that had consistent two and a half percent step increases so that was just for that one scale next slide please so now that I have went through all the slides and all the questions that are on your cards I'll open it up if there are any clarifying questions that any of the school board members were would have and I have my colleagues available to assist with any questions

[00:32:21] Thank you, Mr. Chair. So regarding the question card on salary increases, is there space to give you feedback if we think something different should happen than three options? Yes.

[00:32:38] Please do so on the back of your card or if you wanted to use one of your blanks, either would work. Any additional clarifying questions? Mr. Beatty. Thank you. Looking at slide three with the expenses and operations and maintenance/capital outlay, It says reinstatement of technology purchases removed from FY24 for year-end purchase.

[00:33:00] Could you explain what's happening in that spot? Last year in finalizing the FY24 budget, we had identified, I believe it was \$1.5 million of technology purchases that we moved out of the FY24 budget request and funded out of LCPS's projected FY23 year-end funds.

[00:33:25] This is, while that is a helpful budget technique, it does always pose a problem going forward because you don't have that number in your base budget. So this is adding, so included in that \$15 million is \$1.5 million to reinstate that number.

[00:33:41] Okay, thank you. Any additional clarifying questions? Seeing none. So now we will, oops, I'm sorry, go back one slide. So now we will give you, I have 10 minutes indicated, and I'll just kind of watch the room if it takes less than 10 minutes, but this is where you will have an opportunity to go through your cards, to notate yes or no, in addition to providing any additional feedback on the back or to populate your blank cards.

[00:34:16] And we're going to, board members, we're going to multitask a bit while we do this. I've seen that Ms. Corbo has logged onto the WebEx, so we'll briefly return to item 102 for remote participation, as I've been notified that Ms. Corbo would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting.

[00:34:32] Ms. Corbo, could you please state your location, whether this is for a medical or personal matter, and if anyone is present with you at your location? Thank you. I'm home, I'm alone, and I'm asking for remote participation due to health and medical reasons and a disability.

[00:34:49] Thank you. At this time, I'll entertain a motion that Ms. Corbo's remote participation tonight be granted for a health and medical matter. So moved. Is there a second? That motion will fail for lack of a second.

[00:35:06] Ms. Corbeau, do you have any other requests related to remote participation you'd like to make tonight? Yes, I'd like to ask for remote participation due to personal reasons. At this time, I will entertain a motion that Ms. Corbeau's remote participation be granted due to a personal reason. So moved.

[00:35:22] Moved by Mr. Morris. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Okedegbe. Any discussion? Seeing none, clerk, please open the voting board at this time. And board members, please record your vote.

[00:35:43] And please close and display the vote. That motion will pass 5-2-2 with Sorotkin and Mejeda be opposed and Sheridan and Corbo absent for the vote. Ms. Corbo, could you please read your financial disclosure at this time?

[00:36:04] Yes. As a member of the Logan County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:36:23] Specifically, I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance and may be affected by any potential changes to health insurance. Specifically, my son is an LCPS teacher who does not reside with me and is not dependent on me. These subjects include thousands of employees, well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected, of which I am included.

[00:36:44] I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you thank you okay so we'll now return to our work session uh miss willoughby i saw most most board members writing down as we were as you were going through your presentation so i think unless there's any objection i think we're probably ready ready to proceed i would also ask the chair if recognizing that there are um we have a couple people missing and i will also share that we will

[00:37:21] send Ms. Corbeau a packet of the card so that we can get her responses as well if you wanted to do the sharing with a shoulder partner if you just wanted to go straight to just each individual school board member sharing their priorities I think in the interest of time and the items we have on the work session we could skip to just sharing out sharing our priorities okay okay so then if we would we would allot two minutes roughly to each school board member again this is just the opportunity to publicly share out any comments and feedback that you would have

[00:37:56] I'll also note that when complete the budget team will compile all the cards from the school board members as well as the school board members elect we will summarize those into one document and share those with the current and incoming school board and also post them on the budget website okay thank you so we'll we'll just go around the around the the square starting with miss day uh miss reaser you want me to read my answers from the cards no just if you have any

[00:38:35] any thoughts or anything you wish to share if anything regarding the budget priorities i support continuing with the ib program that we voted to implement i support the conversion of the step classes as the board has previously discussed and supported I support continuing middle school intramural sports which the board has previously discussed and supported and I support sending students are allowed in students to our regional governor school which the board has previously discussed and

[00:39:12] supported thank you thank you mr. Morris thank you mr. chair in a in an effort to clarify my original disclosure I think it necessary to for me to give the real one disclosure. So I'm going to go ahead and read this. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agendas regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, or any other discussion that may include or affect salary benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, my spouse is an LCPS employee who may be affected by any potential

[00:39:49] changes to employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance. These subjects include thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected of which my wife and I are included. I can and won't participate fairly objectively in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years.

[00:40:09] Moving on to the content, the first thing I'd like to say is that although the compensation guidance provides us three different solutions, the targeted scale A, flat COLA, I think often we're required to make a combination of those.

[00:40:25] So, personally, I support the targeted scale A, but I understand that other adjustments may be necessary in order to achieve that. And I fully support the board being made aware of minimum and maximum pay raises, both percentage-wise and dollar-wise, so that we know the impacts upon the employees.

[00:40:48] I'd also like to further the discussion on extending the top rung on the pay scale, which we haven't done, I believe, in the last six or eight years. I'm trying to recall if it's been done. So at some point, I'd like to discuss the impacts of us adding one more rung to the pay scale.

[00:41:10] Each year, what we've done is we've provided funds but not adjusted the top pay scale. And the challenge with that is the VRS impacts are felt by the top of the scale employees. So if we could take a look at that. I do not support a cap on attendance at Thomas Jefferson.

[00:41:32] I think we have an opportunity here to continue to send our students to one of the best high schools in the nation. And I wouldn't want to shortchange them of that opportunity. I support option A of the STEP program over B.

[00:41:48] I think that STEP is obviously something that our community needs. I think that it is under-requested due to the fact that it's a half-day program. And I think that once it becomes a full-day program, we're going to see a significant increase in families that are requesting those services.

[00:42:04] So I fully support that. Not included in here, but something I'd like to capture is any supporting content we need for our literacy update. We talk about the content, the actual textbooks, but there are support documentation and other content that we need to consider that could benefit both our teachers and the students as we try to wrap our arms around the new literacy program.

[00:42:32] So I think that's something, I don't know if it's identified. I'm sure the superintendent probably already has that in part of his proposed budget, but I want to make sure that that's captured somewhere as well. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Chair. As I looked at all these and I looked at the presentation, I think it's important that we consider the macroeconomic situation we're in.

[00:42:54] And I think adding more programs is probably not prudent this time. So for that, I wouldn't support the proposed alternative school program, given that it's another three million. I do, but contrasting that, I do support the expanding the IB program.

[00:43:13] And I think that's in line also with I do not support capping the Thomas Jefferson high school attendance. That would save money, but I think, as my colleague said, it's one of the top high schools. I think expanding the IB program would give more opportunity for a top-tier educational experience for our students.

[00:43:32] And so for that reason, I would actually support expanding the IB program. But then looking at the step programs, I wouldn't support either of those. I would not support expanding the middle school intramural sports pass we already have.

[00:43:49] And then looking at the teacher scales, I think, as was said earlier, a targeted scale is probably the best idea in this situation. But often it's much more complicated than that. So I'm okay with looking at all three options just to give us more, well, give the next board more things to look at.

[00:44:07] Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mahedby. Thank you chair. So I'll begin with some of the new items that I have perhaps to look at. We looked at the math intervention pilot this year and hopefully I guess my sort of request is that we expand the math intervention program to all elementary schools based on what we've learned so far from the pilot program.

[00:44:32] So that's sort of my one to ask. The second is sort of just similar to what we have been preaching on the Let's Talk app. I know Let's Talk is everywhere, but over the course of what I've also learned is, especially in terms of how we are tracking and managing everything, let's go back to special education.

[00:44:54] All the communications, all the tracking today is done through email. I think there are a number of tools, perhaps systems available where the entire sort of tracking of the communication between the parents, the teacher, the deans, et cetera, could be done through a system.

[00:45:14] I mean, there are CRM type available where they do that. I think that would be really helpful. Second is along the same way, how are we tracking the staffing ratios in OSC as well? I believe we use Excel spreadsheets to track it right now.

[00:45:31] I think that's, we need to upgrade that. So my ask is to modernize our system for case management and these kind of things. The third thing I had, I know Miss Willoughby sort of spoke about the fixing, I mean this is a request, I mean as a board member, fixing the salary lag between step 10 and step 30.

[00:45:53] I think you shared we have done a good, we have come across, I think there's still a salary lag that remains between us and the market, especially within Prince William and Fairfax. So my hope is that we take that into, I know it's a big ticket item, but I think we do kind of address and fix that.

[00:46:13] So those are some of my additional items. But besides that, I do support the alternative school program, but I'd like to add support for substance abuse disciplinary students as well. We had, again, that is something that we don't have at North Star right now in terms of if students are struggling with substance abuse.

[00:46:37] And because we are looking to place them for disciplinary actions, we provide an adequate amount of support for them, not only for high school, but also for middle school. I wasn't supportive of the intramural sports last time around.

[00:46:53] But given that it's successful, and I think the principals want it, I do support going forward that we do expand that to all middle schools. Definitely support IV program. I think it's wonderful to see that we're looking to expand that. The teacher program, I think in lack of right now, we are still looking to have additional academies.

[00:47:16] I think we need to look at the academies in general, how we're using the academy building and what programs to have. Based on that, I think this could be coming back. But right now, I do not support us capping it today. But in the future, I think based on how we expand our programs, I think that definitely could be looking forward to having that.

[00:47:36] As far as STEP program, support option A. And I think in the compensation, I think I shared that. I think it's number one, I support scale A. I think that should cover it. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Corbell.

[00:47:53] Thank you. First off, I just want to say thank you to Ms. Willoughby for this presentation and also Dr. Spence and staff for providing us some things to talk about. So first off, I just want to say we need boots on the ground.

[00:48:11] We need teachers. We need to make sure that we fill those vacancies. Without teachers, we can't teach our students. And none of these programs, I couldn't support adding anything more.

[00:48:28] I mean, we truly need to look at our needs in our schools. I know in the past we've approved a lot of administrative positions. I think that needs to stop. And we need to truly focus on boots on the ground, teachers in our schools, servicing our children.

[00:48:46] I agree with pretty much everything that Mr. Morris said about compensation. I think that we have to be competitive, and I think that looking at both ends, beginning and end, we need to take a good look at that as well.

[00:49:02] I appreciate that we've tried to fix that SAG, but again, it's never-ending, and we need to continue that. So I'm very much in support of our compensation. As far as the alternative school, it's a little bit hard without having more data for the need.

[00:49:20] I'd like to see the need. I'd like to see more information. I think that that is something that our school district needs to consider and look at, but I'd also like to see the need. The IB program, again, I'd like to see some feedback.

[00:49:36] I'd like to see enrollment numbers, and then I can make a decision there. As far as the STEP program, something new, and I appreciate Ms. Reeser saying, could we add something new or have another suggestion? And as you were giving the presentation today, I was just thinking about how many kids do we have that actually want to attend or need to attend the STEP program?

[00:49:59] And could these all be, this edition, could it all be, again, part-time to get more enrollment? Or is it because we need full day to get that enrollment where it needs to be? So I'd like more information there. As far as the intramural sports, I have no problem supporting that.

[00:50:18] But again, I'd like to see the data and more information about the need for that, what schools are interested, and what that looks like. As far as TJ, I am not in favor of capping any students who are accepted into TJ for the same reasons that Mr. Morris gave.

[00:50:40] I mean, if we have the opportunity to send our students to the best school in the nation, we should not prevent that if they qualify. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Okadeke. Thank you, Chair. So I wanted to start with looking at the assumptions that you shared with the, if we were to go with the assumption for the higher tax rate from the county, we're looking at a gap of \$19 to \$37 million.

[00:51:09] and what we have in front of us just recognizing that it's between 5.2 to 6 million so there's a bigger gap than what we're being asked to weigh in on here so not for us it's the next board but just something to consider as priorities are discussed to just have options that perhaps cover the gamut i am in favor of funding for the alternative school program additionally as Mr. Mejeveni had mentioned I filled out one of my blank cards to support the

[00:51:45] development of an alternative placement or school to address the needs for students in recovery and/or we're turning from suspensions based on drug abuse and/or distribution just recognizing though that that probably will require support from the state and other sources but I think it's a need that we have as a county and a community and just to state that upfront that that's something that we should be continuing to press, and I appreciate, Dr. Spence, your statements on that in terms of encouraging our state leadership and others to prioritize that

[00:52:24] for funding. I do not support the expansion of the IB program at this point. There's a lot that goes into getting schools transitioned to support an IB program. We are just getting started right now, and I believe just with the shortfalls and the number of other things that need to be addressed that expanding that program, although the cost is somewhat small compared to other things, I think that there are other higher priorities.

[00:52:54] I do support the expansion of the STEP program. If there was time, I would support option A. If there's constraints, I would support option B. I do think the intramural sports program has been a good program. I'd support it but I noted that that's a lower priority in the scheme of things I will also join them the other board members who spoke I do not support putting a cap on attendance with TJ and one of the other things I put on a blank

[00:53:29] sheet is I believe that LCPS should offer bereavement leave as a new category of leave that's available for staff while keeping the current provisions to leverage existing leave categories I just we had a extensive conversation about this within the HR TD committee and I believe that's just a way of respecting some of the most difficult times in employees lives so I would encourage you to continue looking at that and then finally related to compensation mimicking what others have said I think it's more complicated than

[00:54:05] a b or c options we do need to continue to address that mid-scale to ensure that we are competitive locally in that area agree also I believe mr. Moore said making sure that there's clarity and information to the board on what that means in terms of averages minimums and maximums for compensation changes and then making sure that this is their adjustments for all scales it's not just teacher scales. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do support the expansion of the alternative school program at the North Star School. However, I have questions similar to Ms.

[00:54:44] Corbo in terms of specifically what that would look like. I noticed that, you know, on this card there's absent some pertinent information about what intensive programs would look like, particularly for students with autism spectrum disorder and emotional disabilities. So while I absolutely do support that it's a reticent support on my end without more information so I would I would be looking for that and I also recognize that currently the North Star is not equipped to handle incoming middle school students so it's a it's a program in place for high school students but that is a big concern because there are cases where we have middle school

[00:55:20] students that need to access that program I do support continuing to keep what we have in place for students qualifying to go to Thomas Jefferson I think that capping that opportunity would be antithetical to our strategic plan which is helping all students reach their full potential and I think that's something that the majority of the board here is also in support of so I would not support capping those opportunities for students I do not support the expansion of the STEP program into a full day and it is not because I don't find it valuable for for these children but it is because my biggest concern is is what will happen to those children

[00:55:58] if we are not able to fully staff those classrooms. When they are at this age, they are in very formative years with their cognitive, behavioral, and social development, and we already have a situation in Loudoun County where we've got early childhood special education classrooms that aren't fully staffed that are going over their numbers, and that directly impacts the kids in a very negative way.

[00:56:19] So that's my biggest concern with expanding that program and why I would not support that. I do support expanding middle school sports, and I also hesitantly support the IB expansion, but I appreciated Ms. Corbo's comments about requesting more data.

[00:56:36] I think this decision needs to be data informed. Thank you. - Thank you. For the alternative school program at North Star, I agree completely with Ms. Corbo's comments. I really need to see the data there, specifically a gap analysis of what services are currently provided there and what aren't because I was under the impression that at least some of these things are already there.

[00:57:04] The one that immediately comes to mind is the disciplinary student placements. That was a huge issue two years ago and I thought we fixed that problem and had programs for those students there. So I would really want to see what the need is and what the gaps are. Expanding the IB program, I support that wholeheartedly.

[00:57:24] The intent, I think, was never to merely have it at two schools, but to expand that over time. And there's so much research about the efficacy of that program and how it improves student outcomes for students who participate. So I would wholeheartedly support that.

[00:57:41] The STEP program, yes, option A, as many seats as we can possibly find. middle school intramural sports. No surprise to board members that I would support expanding that. I will say as a champion of that over the last few years, I was pleasantly surprised by how many students participated in that this fall.

[00:58:04] In some cases it was over 10% of the whole school population participated in the fall intramural activity and I got so much positive feedback from principals and administrators of those schools and what an enormous difference it made for their students and how much they appreciated it.

[00:58:19] So I would completely support expanding that. Capping the number of students who go to TJ, I believe it was our very first action during our very first meeting where we even suspended the rules to do it to get rid of the cap. I would not support putting a cap back on under any circumstances.

[00:58:38] And I think that's about it for me, okay. So Ms. Willoughby, anything else or that you need from us at this point? just have one more slide in full budget transparency and if we can move to two slides forward please this is related to the school nutrition fund so I have good news that I want to share early on and then some not so good news you may recall this year the USDA lowered the threshold for school to be deemed a CEP

[00:59:14] or community eligibility provision school what this basically means is that based on certain indicators, the entire population of a school can be deemed a CEP school, and all the students can eat at no cost. The lowering of the threshold by the USDA for this school year, though, required a waiver by VDOE, and that did not occur. We do expect that the waiver will be in place for the upcoming school year or next school year, so that we will have more CEP schools that will allow more students to eat at no cost for the

[00:59:51] upcoming school year that's the good news the not so great news is that LCPS has not raised meal prices since fiscal 18 and we are at this time proposing a projected 20 cent meal price increase for fiscal 25 for next school year and we do not take this lightly I will share that we are early indicators of looking at the financial projections of the school nutrition fund we thought that this may be coming forward but it was also during covid and so there were different things occurring and you know in

[01:00:26] addition to having universal meals free because of additional funding from the federal government we also knew that once that ended we didn't want to immediately jump into a meal price increase being sensitive to the you know economy at this point though again we do project that we will have a 20 cent meal price increase for next school year we are still you know very deep in the budget process and looking at other ways to try to mitigate that this is not just a one-sided approach to managing the

[01:01:02] school nutrition fund we're also looking at expenses you know other ways of you reducing our expenses, running more efficiently, that in combination with a meal price to ensure that the fund is stable and that we do not have to seek additional funding from the county to help support this. So again, just being fully transparent and early indication regarding meal prices for next school year. And that concludes everything that I have. We plan on being back obviously on January 16th when the superintendent will present the estimate of needs for FY25.

[01:01:40] Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. At this time, we will move to 402 on the next item. Oh, I'm sorry. Ms. Reeser. A question on this. Yes, absolutely. Go ahead. Thank you. Thanks for the presentation, Ms. Willoughby. I have two questions. The first is regarding the waiver that you're saying that did not come.

[01:01:59] Could you please explain more about why the waiver from VDOE didn't happen? I have no additional information on why VDOE did not submit for the waiver other than just knowing that we were providing information that it was not going to occur this school year.

[01:02:20] So could you just explain what the process is? I'm not aware of what would have needed to occur in order for those funds to be available to the school division for food. So VDOE is like the middleman between the USDA and the school divisions.

[01:02:41] And so they administer and provide oversight of the school nutrition program in terms of the forms, the processing of money between the school divisions and so forth. The CEP, lowering of that CEP threshold by the USDA did occur after the school year began.

[01:03:01] And while I think myself, along with many others, would think that would have been a very helpful thing for communities, The state did not elect to submit the waiver allowing school divisions in Virginia to participate in the revised CEP program.

[01:03:21] Again, I don't have any information regarding the why, but I do expect that they will have the waiver in place for the upcoming school year. And then we can take advantage of that and be able to have additional schools allowed to provide free meals.

[01:03:41] Thank you. I appreciate your explaining that. Do you know how many of our schools would have qualified and what the amount in dollars in savings would have been to the school division? I believe it would be several, and I would take that question and provide you an exact number of how many we currently have in addition to how many additional would have been eligible had the waiver been submitted for this year.

[01:04:09] Thank you. I appreciate that. And then my second question was about the school nutrition fund. Could you remind us whether the surpluses carry over? So the School Nutrition Fund is deemed a special revenue fund, meaning that it is self-supporting with its own dedicated revenue stream and that it also means that it is able to carry forward any surplus balance.

[01:04:36] However, there is a requirement related to the School Nutrition Fund mandated by the USDA that the fund is not to carry over more than, I believe it's three months' worth of expenditures. When that occurs, then we have to submit a spend-down plan to the state, ensuring that we're managing the fund appropriately.

[01:05:02] The thought behind that is that we're not charging more than we need to for meals and just racking up a fund balance, but that we're really tightly managing costs aligned with the revenues. Thank you. I appreciate that reminder because I know we did have a surplus recently, and I just wanted to double check that that there were some special rules about how much you could carry over.

[01:05:27] Thanks very much. Any additional questions regarding budget? Okay. Board members, at this time, we're going to go to 402. Our next item in the work session, which is from the Department of Teaching and Learning, elementary k-2 literacy core resource adoption recommendation just as a heads up we may not have time during this work session to get to 403 on the collective bargaining resolution we may have a little bit of time after this one in which case if we have 10 or 20 minutes i'm going to start on our regular information items and then move collective bargaining to our evening session

[01:06:06] as the first information item but we'll have to play it by ear with how much time we have left over. But at this time, we can start on 402. Thank you, Mr. Strachan. I'm here tonight with Ms. Catherine Neal, our early literacy and elementary reading supervisor, and Ms. Heather Crawford, our elementary English learner supervisor. We are excited to share with the board an adoption recommendation for our K-2 literacy core resource. Today, we will share an overview of the adoption process, review all of the data collected, and share highlights from our recommended resource.

[01:06:41] On this slide, you could see a brief overview of the timeline for our K-2 adoption. We launched our resource review committee back on September 18th with vendor introductions. During this event,

review committee members were able to hear a brief overview of each resource being reviewed from the respective vendor.

[01:07:02] Following that, committee members reviewed all eight BDOE-approved resources independently. Round one reviews concluded on October 13th, and scores from the review committee were gathered to determine the top three products moving forward in our process beginning november 1st materials for each of the top three products were sent to all 59 of our elementary schools for lcps staff and families to review and provide feedback on november 8th our review committee participated in vendor presentations and at the conclusion of this event the top three products were again scored after an open review of two weeks the public

[01:07:37] review period closed on November 16th next slide thank you this is just a reminder if you could go back one slide please this is just a reminder of the eight products that are currently approved by the VDOE all eight of these resources were reviewed by LCPS and the division team next slide this slide provides an overview of scores for each product they are listed in alphabetical order not by score after vendor introductions on September 18th and 19th each of these products

[01:08:11] were reviewed and scored by the LCPS review committee. Next slide. You can see on the table the results from round one reviews. In order, our review team scored the following products in our top three. Benchmark Advance, McGraw-Hill Wonders, Houghton-Mifflin, Harcourt's Interreading. These products were also at the top of the review committee list during last year's review of resources, you may recall. At this time, I will turn it over to Ms. Catherine Neal, who will speak

[01:08:42] about the round two process so round two was a second look at each of our top products review committee members continued to independently review the top three products between october 13th and november 7th on november 8th we held vendor presentations here at the administration building each vendor was given a total of 40 minutes to present about their product 30 minutes to present content and 10 minutes for open question and answer from the review committee the review committee administrators collected feedback from the larger review committee to

[01:09:19] provide an outline for each vendor to address each vendor was asked to focus their presentation on providing suggestions for organizing physical materials sample schedules for how their product will adhere to the lcps's instructional minutes for ela and what other virginia school divisions were implementing their product on the screen you can see an overview of all the data collected from round two. On the left you can see the scores from the review committee. In the middle column you will see the review scores that were conducted by the LCPS DDI team. This group is made up of members from instructional technology,

[01:09:59] assistive technology, as well as others from DDI. The purpose of this group reviewing and scoring each product is to ensure compatibility between the product and LCPS technology. Reviews focused on what students and teachers will see within the interface and the assistive technology that is integrated into the product on the right you can see an overview of the LCPS community feedback this column outlines the number of comments left in support of adopting the respective resource those expressing concern and the total number of comments

[01:10:36] by each product for each product next slide from the beginning of this adoption process transparency has been an important component for me and my team We have organized the data by vendor so that it is easier to see all relevant data in one place.

[01:10:55] A full version of this spreadsheet was provided to you through board docs in PDF form. The packet provides all comments that were submitted by the review committee as well as the LCPS community feedback for each vendor. On this snapshot, you can see what criteria were used during round one reviews, the score for each criteria, as well as an overall score.

[01:11:18] You can then see the total score for round 2 reviews, LCPS Community Feedback Summary, DDI score reviews, and an overview of ed reports. While all three of our top products passed ed reports, it was important to include the individual subscores for each grade level and component because in some instances, those scores varied between products.

[01:11:45] The scores here are in reference to Benchmark Advance. You can see from the slide that during round one benchmark received a score of 3.295, a round two score of 66, and DDI review score of 64.33.

[01:12:01] Benchmark received a total of 67 comments from the LCPS community, 38 were in support of adopting this product, 29 were expressing concerns about adopting this product. On the right you can see the subscores for each of the ed reports criteria.

[01:12:22] Next slide. With regards to HMH Interreading, you can see the overall Round 1 score from the review committee was 2.918, with a Round 2 score of 54 and a DDI review of 81.80.

[01:12:38] Interreading received a total of 107 comments from the LCPS community, 13 expressed concerns over adopting this product, and 94 were comments expressing support for adopting this product. Finally, the right-hand column provides the ED report scores for each criteria.

[01:13:00] Next slide. Here you can see the overall results for McGraw-Hill Wonders. Wonders received a score of 3.184 for round one, a score of 66 for round two, and a score of 94.5 from DDI.

[01:13:18] A total of 67 comments were submitted regarding Wonders, 30 comments shared support for adopting Wonders, and 37 comments expressed concerns around adopting this product. Finally, you can also see the EdReport scores for Wonders.

[01:13:36] Next slide. While the scores from both of our review committees as well as feedback from the LCPS community are a critical piece of our adoption process, we also need to consider the current status of each product as it relates to the VDOE approval.

[01:13:55] Currently all three products are approved K through 2. However, as we look forward towards a core resource for grades 3 through 5, the option to adopt a universal product for K through 5 was important for the review committee in mid-November a draft of the core instructional programs for grades 4 and 5 were presented to the Virginia Board of Education on December 12th the State Board of Education is expected to approve the instructional program guide as presented if the instructional program guide for grades 4 through 5 is

[01:14:31] approved as is both benchmark advance and HMH into reading will be approved for all grades K through five however McGraw-Hill Wonders is currently only approved for kindergarten first and second grade fourth and fifth grade approval is anticipated but grade three approval is not expected until late spring 2024 next slide the review committee expressed an overwhelming concern moving forward with McGraw-Hill Wonders without VDOE approval or even

[01:15:07] anticipated approval for third grade due to this it has been decided by the committee that we will remove wonders from our consideration as we look at both benchmark advance and HMH into

reading comparing scores and feedback from multiple stakeholder groups and data sources we are excited to share our recommendation we are excited to share with you our recommendation to formally adopt Hooton Mifflin Harcourt's into reading as the K to 2 core literacy resource all eight products approved by the VDOE would ultimately support

[01:15:44] students and teachers with the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act however after careful consideration the team has agreed that into reading is the best product to support the students and teachers of Loudoun County Public Schools we are confident that this resource will be the best support for LCPS and we would like to share a few of those reasons with you throughout this process the recommendations from the TNTP report that was shared back in late 2020 remained a focal point for our work HMH into reading will fulfill the recommendations set by the TNTP report

[01:16:23] additionally this resource is currently approved by the VDOE for grades K through 3 and is anticipated to be approved for grades 4 through 5 in the coming month as such since it has been approved by the VDOE this product will meet the requirements set by the Virginia Literacy Act which will require all school divisions in Virginia to implement an approved core resource by fall of 2024 finally hmh into reading received the top rating on ed reports criteria compared to

[01:16:55] that of benchmark advance and mcgraw hill wonders so why is hmh into reading the best choice for lcps from the data provided you can see that this product is the top choice from lcps staff and community members this product received a total of 107 comments of those 107 comments 94 were in support of adopting HMH into reading additionally into reading received a higher score from DDI reviews as compared to benchmark advance while

[01:17:29] benchmark advance received a DDI review score of 64.33 HMH into reading received a score of 81.8 HMH into reading provides guidance and plans to support teachers as they plan for small group instruction which is a critical piece of evidence-based literacy instruction finally this product also provides integrated assessment data to teachers that will help to drive instruction, a recommendation outlined by the TNTP report.

[01:18:05] Of all eight products reviewed and of the top three products for LCPS, HMH Interreading incorporates the most comprehensive skill instruction for foundational reading skills, including skills like phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension.

[01:18:22] When implementing any new core resource, an important consideration is professional learning for teachers. HMH Interreading offers the most robust professional learning opportunities for our teachers. In-person options as well as virtual options are available and will be offered to all LCPS teachers as we move forward.

[01:18:40] In addition, HMH Interreading offers on-demand professional learning where teachers can participate in both synchronous and asynchronous offerings with other teachers implementing Interreading at their discretion. After vendor presentations on November 8th, it became clear that HMH Interreading is the most preferred core resource for a variety of divisions across Virginia.

[01:19:05] Finally, when analyzing the differences between Benchmark Advance and HMH Interreading, the team felt that Interreading provides the most balanced support for both novice and veteran teachers. It was important for the team to find a resource that would be structured enough to support novice

teachers who are still learning their craft and growing their skills while honoring the experience and expertise of our veteran teachers that allow them to incorporate their own teaching style and flair.

[01:19:33] HMH into Reading provides the best balance to support all teachers in LCPS. Next slide. I have mentioned in all of my updates to the Access to Literacy for All project that we know there is no perfect program for teaching children to read and write.

[01:19:51] Every program will come with strengths, as well as areas that will need strengthening. For interreading, we know that we will need to enrich vocabulary routines and strengthen high-frequency word instruction. Support for these areas will be developed in conjunction with the Division of English Learners and the Office of Special Education.

[01:20:11] Additionally, as with the implementation of any new resource, we anticipate that teachers will need support with analyzing the student data provided by interreading and how that will impact their instruction, as well as groupings for small group instruction. We will continue to rely on the Office of Research Accountability and School Improvement to support us as we move forward with analyzing data from end to reading.

[01:20:34] And finally, we anticipate that teachers will need support with managing and organizing materials for instruction. It will be critical for teachers to have time with the materials during the second half of the school year so that they will have ample time to get familiar and receive professional learning.

[01:20:53] Here you can see a comment left by an LCPS staff or community member. I'll give you a moment to read over this quote. Slide.

[01:21:19] you read through these quotes I want to draw your attention to the alignment with you fly that's our phonics program as well as cross curricular connections found in into reading and finally this is a comment of support which shares the alignment between letters our professional learning and into reading

[01:21:59] next slide my team and I firmly believe that literacy cannot happen in a silo in order for all children to be successful readers and writers and speakers we need others at the table Margaret Osbury supervisor specialized instruction and I have identified it have identified a few key ideas of how into reading support students receiving special education services you can see on this screen into reading provides explicit phonics instruction using the I do we do you do format with soft scripted lessons additionally there are a variety of

[01:22:38] opportunities to read connected text and decodable passages and engage with language and rich text there are multiple points of entry in lessons for learners at various levels and scaffolding is built throughout the lessons to support understanding finally instruction is structured in a systematic manner to ensure new learning new learning connects to previously learned concepts while the strategies are supportive for those students receiving special education services we know that these items are also best practice for all of our students Heather Crawford supervisor of Elementary English Learners is here to share more about inter-reading supports

[01:23:17] for our English learner students and teachers. Similarly we know intentional support for our English learner students is critical. HMH includes spiraling of comprehension skills. The notice and note protocol within the product integrates comprehension and writing which is typically the final domain to develop for ELs. The think pair shares throughout the product are embedded throughout lessons. These

allow wait time, additional oral language opportunities, and lowers the effective filter for Yale students into reading provides explicit teaching of writing conventions however sentence stems and formulaic expressions

[01:23:56] will need to be added to support our multilingual learners so from here a public review period for into reading will remain open through December 12th digital access remains open for all LCPS staff and community members to access and physical copies will remain available in the administration building during the December 12th meeting the school board will take action to adopt or or not adopt HMH into reading.

[01:24:31] If the board approves into reading at the December 12th meeting, ordering of materials and planning of professional learning will begin so that teachers can start the onboarding process in early 2024. In January, 2024, the new board will vote on how to move forward with an adoption for grades three through five.

[01:24:49] The new board will be able to choose between doing an in-depth review and adoption of HMH into reading or hold a full review process for all VDOE products approved for grades three through five. We appreciate the time to share our findings and recommendation for our core literacy resource to support our youngest learners.

[01:25:11] My team and I feel confident that HMH into Reading will be the best choice to support LCPS, staff and students as we move forward in our literacy journey. Thank you for your time. - Thank you, Ms. Neal and team. Board members, I will open it up for questions at this time.

[01:25:26] Ms. Ogadegbe and then Ms. Polivko. - Thank you, Chair. - First of all, thank you so much for the presentation and for just the amount of information that's been shared. I know last fall, when I joined the board, this was one of the first things in front of the board at that time.

[01:25:47] And I know a lot of work had gone into decisions and it may have been frustrated to be told we need to wait, but I think it was the right thing to do, to wait to make sure that we were aligned with video we and then clearly with what came back with wonders not being approved for grade three obviously that would have been a concern but I appreciate the process I appreciate the expanded access to materials this year materials were delivered to all of the schools which was great in terms of making sure that all of our teachers who wanted to look at the materials had access to them the transparency of

[01:26:27] sharing the assessment data from the committee from public comment and from staff is very helpful so I just appreciate the thoroughness of this process and the amount of information that's been shared and I'll just put a plug in there it wasn't really clear to me last year we were not provided access to information from the assessments and I don't know if that's an internal procurement thing or a state procurement thing but certainly having that access gives confidence to the board in making a decision and so as much as possible

[01:27:03] going forward as long if you can share that level of detail as these decisions are made it's very very helpful thank you Mr. Polifko thank you Mr. Chair I do appreciate the wealth of information that we've been given tonight I have a few questions if you could please clarify in relation to the comparison between the advanced program and into reading in the round one committee scores where you're looking at the big five phonemic awareness phonics fluency vocabulary and comprehension the committee scores and the advance are higher than those in into reading and my my concern

[01:27:41] specifically is with fluency and comprehension because as our students are learning to read they cannot comprehend unless they are fluent and so I was hoping that you could please provide some clarifying information about why the program that's being recommended has lower scores in those areas than the one that doesn't thank you so I can provide some detail around what our committee members were asked to complete for round one they for all of the areas that are listed there under round one you can see

[01:28:19] the five pillars of literacy including writing also SOS OL alignment culturally sensitive materials, differentiation, and extension opportunities. They were asked to rate on a continuum of one to four. And so that's why you can see that all the totals there are within that one to four range.

[01:28:41] Really with fluency and vocabulary in all of the areas for the five pillars, the scores were very close together. advance was like around at that 3.1 range I think was the total not having a 3.2 range and then HMH into reading I believe was a 2.9 so it was just different variations from around those 50 people as they were rating on that continuum of one to four we did go back and look at the video e rubrics the video e rubrics are posted on the video e site and you can go in by each component and

[01:29:20] each question fluency and vocabulary i will say for many of the programs are probably an area no matter what we would have adopted would be areas that we would need to really look at enhancing because i think that there were areas that we needed to help support in all grade levels even especially getting into the upper grades which is something we'll be taking a look at in the in late winter spring additional questions uh miss corvo and then miss reaser um thank you thank you for the presentation. As many of you know, this has been something that I've been

[01:30:00] very passionate about since my very first day of taking office, actually, prior to. And so seeing us make a strategic move that is going to benefit children is wonderful. I do have a few questions, and possibly this is what you will be presenting at the next meeting, but I'm wondering specifically what do we have in place to support our teachers and as far as training and also

[01:30:34] what access will this program have for decodable readers for our students to use is this something that that is going to be teacher intensive as far as printing and making photocopies or will we have um decodable books um available for um for our teachers thank you miss corbo i'll turn it over to miss neil but we do want to emphasize part of the reason why we are looking for this adoption at this point is that we are hearing from teachers that they're they're ready to move

[01:31:11] towards a new resource and they also recognize that they need support and so we once we have the decision we do have plans to roll out professional learning in the spring not waiting until the summer or the fall of next school year and so miss neil could talk a little bit about early plans for that and also speak to the question around decodables yes I think that was probably one of the the pieces of feedback that we've received from our teachers is being able to engage with the new materials prior to the start of next school year which makes complete sense

[01:31:47] so even looking at our county-wide PD day on March 5th I believe it is we are looking at providing teachers time to engage with that resource and begin some of the professional learning around using that resource in addition to my on my team I have eight additional instructional facilitators that will be working with their schools to help provide some additional support to really kind of get them used to the resource and to open it up we've looked just a little bit at some of the professional learning options that HMH offers and

[01:32:26] there's a variety of options that are also presented in a variety of ways for example we can there's asynchronous and synchronous options there's face-to-face options coaching options and so we can definitely take a more in-depth look at that to see what would best meet our needs in regards to decodable texts HMH does offer decodable texts at great at the grade levels I believe K through 3 there are decodable texts and so part of our question is going to be looking at those decodable texts and making sure that there's enough options for students

[01:33:04] that was something that the committee really looked at and one of the things that was kind of appealing from HMH was some of the different options with decodable text we also have been working to build up our libraries of decodable text and so I know that just within the last couple years there's been many schools that have been opening up their book rooms and providing additional copies of decodable text that teachers can use and so those those resources can additionally be implemented with this instruction as well with HMH as far as

[01:33:42] making copies I know that that was something that was really top of mind for some for teachers a lot of our teachers and that can be definitely something that we look at in one of the the resources the copies was so that the students could bring something home and share with parents and keep it home and so that's definitely something that we can look at with HMH into reading I thank you miss Rieser thank you mr. chair thank you for the presentation for all the work you all have done to get us to this point I just have a question about the community feedback do you know if each of those do you know where the

[01:34:18] community feedback came from? Like, are you able to see what the role of the person submitting the comments was? And more specifically, do you know if each instance of feedback is unique or is it possible that the 70 or so people who shared concerns about advance and wonders are part of the same 90 that shared support for interreading? It is possible that we could have had duplicates of people providing responses.

[01:34:52] The way that the feedback was set up was there was a QR code at the schools with each of the different resources that they could -- that parents, staff members could use to log in to the Google site and then complete a Google form.

[01:35:09] They were asked to select which program they were looking at and then whether they had or if they were expressing support or expressing concern for that product and then they had opportunity to provide feedback. So is the data disaggregated in any format showing how many of these pieces of individual feedback are educator versus parent?

[01:35:38] With the exception of looking, if they provided their email address, you might be able to see if it's an lcps.org email address. But other than that, we wouldn't be able to disaggregate, you know, what the role is of that community member.

[01:35:58] Okay. And how much of a role did the feedback play in the decision that was made? I realize that's not a quantifiable answer that you can give me, but even a subjective one would be helpful. Thank you. I think in looking at the different pieces of data, really taking into our review committee feedback, like understanding that the video we had already approved all of these programs we knew that we were already looking at programs that we're going to meet the

[01:36:34] intent and purpose of the Virginia Literacy Act but understanding that we looked at the committee feedback we also looked at the DDI reviews because that was important knowing that teachers and students would be able to use the resource interface successfully was very important but then also the community support and feedback those responses were they I would say that those three were really kind of the how we looked at those scores and I did get that from the presentation I think I was trying to dig a little bit deeper and understand

[01:37:07] like how they were weighted in the decision relative to each other I don't know that we waited one more than the other I think we took really those responses and really tried to come up with a decision that was going to best meet the needs of our teachers and staff okay thank you I appreciate it - Absolutely.

[01:37:30] - Additional questions for discussion? That's right, Mr. Mahedby. - Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the presentation. And I think the slide one, the first one you were presenting somehow wasn't there. I think we moved to slide number two, I think. But I guess the reason I'm trying to remind back is that it showed a good sort of comprehensive process that this entire thing went through.

[01:37:53] And I think the transparency to make sure that we involved not only through the staff, but opened up for feedback and I know it's available for everybody to come and see and to review that. So I'm kind of glad where the result has come to and I think if you go back to, I was going back and trying to look at the dates, I think it goes back to November 15, 2022 when we were having this meeting and I think the discussion at the time was we were presented an option to either accept it

[01:38:29] to wait for video II and I think this is just a I mean it's it's a study by itself for the incoming school board members and sometimes I know you we all want to rush it not Russian to but we want to make a quick decision but sometimes it's better to wait and to have the process have had everything go through a process to come to a better sort of conclusion so the difference between November 15, 2022, and today's, it was Wonders at the time and NHMH, and I think the one more fundamental difference between the two programs, I believe,

[01:39:07] was between Lucy Calkins and Phonics and so on and so forth. So, you know, again, as Ms. Korba mentioned, this is something, when I was a chair of the CNI committee, this is the first assessment sort of where we start with the whole literacy, and I'm kind of glad to see this is coming as an information item, and this board would get a chance to vote on it, I couldn't be more happier that we'll be able to implement something that we all champion as incoming school board members, and seeing that this is gonna come to a sort of, hopefully a good closure going forward for our literacy program.

[01:39:43] So anyway, thank you for the staff, and thank you for the community for sharing the feedback, and I look forward for supporting this at the next school board meeting. - Any additional discussion? - Dare I ask, is there any interest and placing this on consent for our next board meeting?

[01:40:04] No, I didn't think so. We'll place this on action for our December 12th board meeting. So board members, we definitely do not have time to tackle 403, but I think we should be able to get through at least one of our regular information items.

[01:40:19] So without objection, we're gonna go to item 1201 at this time from the Department of Support Services, Dulles Area Elementary School attendance zones, including the establishment of an attendance zone for Henrietta Lacks Elementary School.

[01:40:38] - Thank you, Mr. Meheve. Tonight we are presenting to you the information item after a couple of public hearings and work session and an overview provided back in earlier in the fall. And this is for Henrietta Lacks Elementary School that will share a campus and a boundary with Hovater Elementary School, with Henrietta Lacks serving students K-2 and Hovater 3-5.

[01:41:04] exception of the 24 25 school year where the school board took action to allow the second graders to stay at Hovater so they didn't have to switch from one school to the other before you is only one plan under consideration this point is the staff plan and tonight we have the plan with the rationale in the item for for your review and your consideration we will be having a public or a public hearing on December 4th in front of the board as well so you can hear us more information from the the community the staff plan includes it's

[01:41:42] pretty simple we're moving DS 06.4 from Aldi and DS 08 from Elaine Thompson and DS 6.6 and 6.9 from Goshen post elementary schools oh and so that's all we're doing to add that to both Hovater and to Henrietta Lacks so mrs. Tate and I are both here tonight we have any questions and we're happy to take them Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Board members, any questions regarding the staff plan for Henrietta Lacks Elementary School Zoning?

[01:42:16] I will, I've spent a lot of time taking a look at this and taking a look at alternative options, all of which were worse than the staff plan, which is why I did not propose a plan of my own. That being said, I will more than likely propose an amendment to the staff plan to grandfather in rising fourth graders in addition to the rising fifth graders that are covered by policy to allow them, given the number of times that the older students have changed schools in the last few years for a majority of these zones, to allow them to stay at their current school if they so choose.

[01:42:56] Any additional comments or discussion? So we will bring this back for action during our December 12th board meeting. And with that, we'll move to 1202 from the Finance and Operations Committee, LCPS Electric Bus Pilot Program, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean School Bus Grant Program, round three.

[01:43:21] Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll pass this over to Mr. Lewis. Thank you, Mr. Morse. mr. Davies and I are here tonight and as he gets ready to start he's going to give you an overview of actually an update on the bus pilot program to date and all the experiences we've had with with those and this will be not only an update for that tonight but also then a consideration for expansion of that program within the grant programs that are available to us I did want to remind the board that in June of 2020 this board took action to approve a

[01:43:59] resolution calling for a state and federal climate action change and some of those points are relative to tonight's conversation and one of those was for the resolutions to for the school board to direct the superintendent to develop recommendations to expand environmental curricular and educational opportunities student support student advocacy and include student voice and environmental and climate policy and practice discussions we're very happy to have we have a director of sustainability coming on next week that will help us with with all those actions and the resolution went

[01:44:37] on to say the school board directs a superintendent to report to the school board changes in state and federal policy that support the goal of reducing carbon consumption along with staff proposals to make best use of those opportunities and facilities and transportation so this will be one of those proposals that staffs providing in keeping with that in addition to that the strategic planning goal three

includes a strategy to improve energy efficiency across the division so just wanted to make those connections to the strategic plan and with that I will turn it to mr. Davies who's going to go

[01:45:11] through the update and the application for the grant good evening um so as mr. luis mentioned uh in response to the june 20 uh school board resolution on climate action transportation uh we have a carbon footprint of 14 000 tons of carbon annually we burn 1.1 million gallons of diesel and 300 000 gallons of gasoline uh annually so that's a fairly large footprint uh that we leave each year uh so back in 2021 we partnered with dominion and began an electric bus pilot program five thomas electric buses based at parkview and these have been

[01:45:49] running for the last two years and have accumulated a total of 114,000 miles with a total fuel savings compared with the electric of 18,900 total I'm sorry 17,900 total annually for the two years in 2022 we received two grants from Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for a total of 16 electric buses six were part of the first grant and 11 were or 10 were part of the second grant. Those first six have been in operation since the beginning of this school year based at

[01:46:25] Cardinal Ridge and we are in the process of receiving the remaining 10 over the next two next month or so. We expect to have them all on hand by the end of the calendar year and the remaining five of those will be at Cardinal Ridge with another five at Emmerich operating out west. In addition to these efforts we've also been moving forward with testing the viability of electric vehicles within our white fleet and starting with six driver's ed vehicles the first two were deployed at the end of last year at woodgrove high school and the remaining four are going to be deployed once the chargers are installed at tuscarora and heritage and lastly

[01:47:04] we've been also testing a single propane bus since the beginning of this school year with great success and significant fuel savings there as well for that one bus with that epa has announced the third round of grant opportunities for electric and propane buses with applications that are due on January 30th, 31st. LCPS has applied for the previous two rounds, but so far has been unsuccessful and we're still waiting the results of this second round. LCPS is recommending that we apply for the third round of EPA grant funds with a request for 10 electric buses. This would

[01:47:42] take advantage of the roughed-in stations that we have in place at Cardinal Ridge and Emmerich, so the For those 10 buses would be relatively minimal. And then 15 propane buses that would operate out west where an existing fuel facility for propane already exists.

[01:48:00] We are also recommending that we expand out our white fleet electrification with the purchase of two transit vans for the warehouse, as well as six SUVs as part of our purchase going forward. And with that, I'll go ahead and take any questions.

[01:48:19] If I could, Mr. Schrockett, I failed to mention one thing. did provide some reliability information in the item for the electric buses and mr baity had asked for some information in comparison with what we have with our existing diesel buses and that was just uploaded this afternoon and so that information is provided there and it shows pretty uh equal performance between the the the two different types of buses uh to date with our experience and we were not able to do a a full evaluation of the entire fleet with nearly 600 buses so what we did do was provide a comparable number another five buses or six five buses that

[01:48:57] we have in service with a comparable age and mileage on it so that's what we were trying to accomplish and that's there for your review as well thank you board members any questions or discussion regarding the grant program round three mr baby thank you actually i'm curious more about the propane infrastructure this point thank you for the answer the questions Given the short turnaround, I guess it fits, and it's good to see that there's similar in reliability.

[01:49:32] Regarding propane, though, how does that differ than our current diesel and gasoline infrastructure? Do we need to provide more facilities for that? I think you mentioned we have some kind of setup in the Western Loudoun area. There is a supplier that exists out in Percival right now that can fuel propane buses.

[01:49:50] If we were to go for a full expansion of that within the entire fleet, we would need to expand fuel facilities, and we would likely make that part of any fuel contract that we would engage in with a supplier for them to provide the facilities for that.

[01:50:09] Do you have an estimated cost on that, or is that still to be determined? I do not have an estimated cost on this. And then going back to the electric buses, I actually had a chance after the most recent discussion as a full board about this to meet someone who sells some of the buses.

[01:50:26] And he was talking about some of them are coming with three sets of batteries. Are we incorporating that in this plan, or are we going to continue with the two sets of batteries that they seem to come with? So the five electric buses that we were getting for Emmerich from IC, they do come with three sets of batteries.

[01:50:46] So they are the long-range version of those buses. Those have a range of approximately 200 miles. And then, okay, so then I noticed that there's fewer passengers for those Emmerich buses. So would that, does the extra battery affect the number of passengers? It does, because it's all about weight.

[01:51:04] The extra battery pack does increase the weight of the bus and therefore reduces the cabin capacity. So that's something that we're evaluating. That's one of the reasons why the routes out west are longer and the ridership is less dense. So we feel confident that we could do that.

[01:51:22] Okay, thank you. Additional questions or discussion? Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the presentation. Mr. Davies, was there consideration given to using the electric buses for the students that go to Thomas Jefferson? And if so, what was the evaluation?

[01:51:40] So there is, so one of the things we've noticed, we've tested the buses going, excuse me, we've tested the buses driving into D.C. and back. So we can be fairly confident about the distance that we could use them for TJ.

[01:51:59] The recharge recovery time is a factor. If we fully deplete the battery, which likely would be the case if we're going that far, having enough opportunity during the midday break to recover that charge is something we would need to test more thoroughly before we employ them right now in that in that regards well with the charging stations at park view i mean those buses return they don't stay out in fairfax county right correct they do and and they're they're plugged in during that midday break so they're they leave in the morning and in

[01:52:36] the afternoon with a full charge and that's one thing we've noticed as well with the with the level two chargers down in cardinal ridge which have been in operation since the beginning of the school

year is that because the the routes are relatively short we're able to recover with the slower charge, we're able to recover the charge during the midday break so that even with the slower chargers, we can have the buses leave in the afternoon with a full charge. So would you say that if there was infrastructure that the buses could use to recharge at locations outside of Loudoun County, that that would be helpful to using the buses more for field trips and for

[01:53:15] transportation to the governor's school? Definitely for field trips. Likely that would not really factor into it for for TJ because we wouldn't really have we wouldn't want to have the bus sit there for an hour with the driver waiting for the recharge we want it to be parked but for for field trips certainly of course. Thank you. Board members any additional questions? Is there interest in placing this item on consent for our next board meeting? There is not so we'll place this on action.

[01:53:49] Board members at this time we are going to recess and we will be back at time certain 6 30 just because we went a little out of order i'm just gonna recap once we get back we'll do our ceremonial items student school board representative comments superintendent's report public comment action items then we'll do the remaining item from our work session 403 and then we'll start

[01:54:15] on our remaining information items after that the board is now in recess good evening everyone the

[02:30:58] board is coming out of recess and we'll pick up our evening session with item seven which is the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem. Both will be performed tonight by the Rock Ridge Singers from Rock Ridge High School. They have performed for the Salvation Army Red Kettlebell Kickoff Ceremony, the U.S. Department of Education, the Virginia Music Education Association Conference, and on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center as part of a Music in Our Schools Month celebration. Members of Rock Ridge Sings are consistently selected for district, state,

[02:31:34] regional, and national honor choirs, in addition to the Virginia Governor's School for the Visual and Performing Arts, National Young Arts Foundation winners, and others. At this time, I will ask everyone to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and remain standing for the national anthem. The United States of America, to the republic for one nation, under God, for all.

[02:32:40] It was wonderful.

[02:33:36] Thank you all for being with us here tonight and for that performance.

[02:33:58] board members at this time we're going to return to item 102 as I have been notified that Brenda Sheridan would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting. Ms. Sheridan could you please state your location whether this is for a medical or personal matter and if anyone is present with you at your location. Thank you Mr. Chair. I am at my home in Sterling Virginia.

[02:34:21] I am alone and this is a personal request. Thank you. At this time I will entertain a motion that ms sheridan's request to participate remotely for personal reasons be granted moved by mr sheridan uh sorry mr mehedvi is there a second second seconded by mr morris is there any discussion on the motion seeing none uh we will open up the voting board for a vote and board members please

[02:34:53] record your vote at this time and ms corbo what is your vote yes clerk please record a vote of yes for ms corbo please go ahead and close and display the vote at this time that motion will pass you anonymously with Ms. Okadegbe and Ms. Sheridan absent for the vote. Ms. Sheridan, could you please

[02:35:28] read your financial disclosure at this time? Yes, thank you. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and our health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I'm eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This

[02:36:08] disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. So now we will return to our agenda at item eight, which is our student school board representative comments. And we'll begin with Manya Mamidi, who is a senior at the Academies of Loudoun and Briarwoods High School. She is a driven and outgoing individual with a passion for the arts. She has been learning both classic Indian dance and music for 12 years and now teaches vocals and piano at a local music school. She is an active member of her school's student council

[02:36:46] executive board and leads her school's machine learning club. She aims to attend College for computer science, and spends her time crocheting, working on coding projects, and watching videos of cats. She is eager to see what this school year can bring and what we can do on the school board to serve our community. Hi, everyone. Good evening. My name is Manya Mamadi. I'm a senior at the Academies of Loudoun, and my home school is Briarwoods. I would like to begin by thanking my principal, Dr. Priddy, for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to thank Ms.

[02:37:22] Whistler and Ms. Hiltner for their continued support and dedication as our academy's student Council Association sponsors. The Academies of Loudoun is not a typical high school, as the students I attend with come from 17 different high schools in all parts of Loudoun County. Through both co-curricular and extracurricular activities, our students have excelled in research, collaboration, and innovation in all fields of STEM this past year. Offering many specialized STEM and research-oriented pathways, the Academies is home to a vast array of skills and interests. Last school year, 182 Academy seniors created novel research projects, Seven of them going on to publish their research in scholarly journals.

[02:38:01] They studied subjects such as machine learning, molecular biology, retinal degeneration, drone swarm, sustainable energy, and Parkinson's disease, just to name a few. And although we don't have sports teams like our home high schools, we definitely have no shortage of school spirit or competitive drive.

[02:38:17] Academy students have competed in placed and won regional, state, national, and international competitions in entrepreneurship, robotics, graphic design, health, and medical science. science, skill trades, information technology, and science. At the State Future Health Professionals Conference, Academy students brought home 18 trophies.

[02:38:35] At the Regional Science and Technology Fair, four out of the five finalists were Academy students. And at the SkillsUSA State Leadership Conference, Academy students placed first in four events. Our school culture is truly unmatched, welcoming students from all over the country and encouraging collaboration between all pathways.

[02:38:53] Through authentic integrated research projects, such as the NASA High Altitude Balloon Project, engineering students and AP Biology students have collaborated each year for the past four years to design a vehicle and a payload to test the effects of near-space environments on subjects such as slime molds, flatworms, and butterflies.

[02:39:13] The unique opportunities we have, the hands-on skills we gain, and the passionate people we meet at the academies are invaluable contributors to the world in the fields of STEM, and I couldn't be more proud and excited to represent the Academies of Loudoun as a student school board representative. Thank you. Thank you. Next we have Mara Burns who is a senior at Stonebridge High School. She has competed on the varsity field hockey and swim teams for all four years and was a swim team captain last year. She is a member of PEER, a student-led program that mentors rising

[02:39:52] freshmen and underclassmen, delivers anti-bullying assemblies, and provides support for fellow students. She is also a part of the teacher cadet program and interned with the guitar program at Trailside Middle School to learn more about music education. Mara is very passionate about the arts.

[02:40:11] She is the president of the National Music Honor Society, president and founder of the Stonebridge Songwriting Club, and a proud member of the Stonebridge Guitar Ensemble. Thank you, Chair Persons Rookin. Good evening, everyone. My name is Mara Burns, and I am the student representative for stonebridge high school i would like to thank my principal dr flynn and the stonebridge counseling team for selecting me for this incredible opportunity i would also like to thank my parents for always supporting me and everything i do finally i would like to thank our school board members for their time and efforts to increase the quality of our schools

[02:40:51] as well as congratulate the successful school board candidates who will take office in january i look forward to working with you and wish you the best of luck in 2021 more than 42 percent of students felt persistently sad or hopeless and nearly one third experienced poor mental health according to the cdc this issue goes beyond covid and it is getting more and more serious those with poor mental health may struggle with school decision making maintaining social connections and their physical health additionally mental health problems often go hand in hand with an increased risk of drug use and experiencing violence at stonebridge high school we are very

[02:41:29] committed to the mental health of our students because we have to be we have a strong mental health team that includes an incredible counseling team, a school psychologist, a school social worker, and a student assistant specialist. In addition to the unified mental health team at Stonebridge, we support our students through groups like PEER and Sources of Strength. Sources of Strength organizes many positivity campaigns throughout the year, most recently with a chain of paper links outside the cafeteria that encourage students to identify their strengths. These strengths included Things like positive friendships, healthy activities, mentors, and more.

[02:42:07] Peer students spread awareness about mental health on social media, conduct one-on-one contacts with fellow students to ensure they feel supported academically and emotionally, and also plan the Bulldogs Don't Bully Assembly each year. In my two years of experience as a member of Peer, I have found that students who need mental health support may not realize it. Even if they do, they don't know how or where to ask for it.

[02:42:31] it, they may even be ashamed to ask for it. Through advisory, we could continue to destigmatize mental health, emphasizing the importance of asking for help. If students still have

reservations about seeking support, we could provide a text number or Google Form specifically for peer and sources of strength, where students could reach out and receive support, as well as a listening ear. We could post this around the school, as well as on the Stonebridge website and social media. Additionally, many of our past efforts to connect to students

[02:43:06] about mental health have not been as effective as they could be. Many students brush off the Bulldogs Don't Bully Assembly or Sources of Strength campaigns because they believe them to be cheesy or unrelatable. To address this, we could make a required feedback form for students to make these initiatives more impactful in our community. In PEER, we do contacts with students one-on-one, and to prepare for these contacts, we receive training from our school social worker, Ms. Sapala, and our school psychologist, Dr. Lichtman. The skills I have learned through peer have been invaluable in my peer contacts but also

[02:43:42] with my friends family and myself while peer and sources of strength do an excellent job of supporting our students and spreading positivity we have seen mental health concerns in our schools increase at an alarming rate just recently there have been ten suspected overdoses across six Loudoun County high school since the school year started this should not be happening it breaks my heart that this is happening to kids just like me but unlike me they may not have been educated on substance abuse, health and coping strategies, or ways to reduce stress in programs like PEER or Sources of Strength. There's no reason that these life-saving skills should not be taught to all students in

[02:44:22] LCPS, but a majority of the time they're not. Even in cases where they are, they are not taught in a way that connects to students. This year, PEER, SEA, and Sources of Strength members were given the opportunity to mentor underclassmen and advisory, and we could use this advisory time to educate our underclassmen and our upperclassmen about mental health strategies and the dangers of substance abuse in addition to teaching these skills we could also offer resources to students such as an accessible reporting form QR codes to request a peer contact and any other websites or apps that can help us trust

[02:45:02] management and mental health needs comprehensive mental health education is essential in reducing the crises that have been too prevalent in LCPS connection is key if we can get through to students and be honest with them about the signs of mental health issues such as substance abuse and depression then we can help them help themselves and their peers everyone has the opportunity to make a difference here all we have to do is listen to our students I will try my best to implement these ideas at Stonebridge and I encourage the school board members both current and incoming to keep these ideas in mind when building policy and support programs throughout the county thank you so much

[02:45:40] for your time and finally we have elizabeth bennett who is a senior at the north star school last year elizabeth was on the superintendent's advisory council as the representative for north star in her free time she likes to read write and paint and elizabeth said it is a pleasure to be here and meet you all and i'm excited to see what happens next thank you uh hello my name is elizabeth Bennett, and I am a senior at the North Star School. I would like to thank my principal,

[02:46:20] Ms. Mittenberg, for this opportunity to be here. I have been at the North Star since the building opened back in fall 2021. Before I came to North Star, I was at Briar Woods for one year during distance learning, and I was struggling with my mental health and couldn't keep up with seven classes at all at once. Once I came to North Star, though, I quickly caught up with my classes and instead of being two years

behind in school I am now set to graduate just one semester later than my original track. The North Star School is an alternative education program typically designed for students who

[02:46:59] prefer a smaller high school setting and for those who have moved to LCPS from another school system in an alternative format. At North Star schedules are created in a 4x4 model allowing students to complete four credits in each semester. Students are able to focus on four classes at a time rather than having seven credits on alternating days. One of the things that drew me to North Star was the 4x4 block schedule and the ability to focus only on four classes at

[02:47:37] a time rather than the usual seven. Another thing that I love about North Star is how small the class sizes are. I am able to know the names of everyone in my classes and my teachers know everyone and their individual struggles and needs. At North Star I can have one-on-one conversations with my teachers. I can ask as many questions as I need and I can get support to do my absolute best in class. Some people may think that North Star is

[02:48:12] a school that is only for students who have been in trouble but that is not true. Many of the people I personally know at North Star are there because they fell behind, be it from a mental health crisis, medical issues, or other life events, and they simply want to get back on track or graduate earlier than they could at their homeschools. While the North Star doesn't currently have clubs, our new Activities and Engagement Coordinator is developing a schedule in collaboration with students and staff to allow those things to happen. They are coming soon. The North Star

[02:48:50] School also does not have sports teams, but we have many student athletes who participate at their home schools. The good news is our librarians help with North Star School spirit with the events they put on in the media center. Our librarians often do themed book displays for things such as Banned Books Week or Hispanic Heritage Month, as well as putting up posters about holidays such as Diwali and Yom Kippur, and awareness posters about important issues like

[02:49:26] stroke or endometriosis symptoms. This first semester, we have had many school-wide events. First, we celebrated Unity Day on October 18th, which works to raise awareness about bullying. During the month, North Star students and staff added leaves with positive statements to a painted tree on our cafeteria windows.

[02:49:48] We have had the opportunity to meet with Northern Virginia Community College staff to learn about attending college. We also had 12 seniors who attended a field trip to the Nova campus. The North Star School has hosted multiple open house events for high school students and their families to learn about the academic programs we offer.

[02:50:14] We also had over 40 visiting staff from different high schools in Loudoun. This year, the faculty and staff have worked very hard to continue to enhance the school community and school culture.

[02:50:32] The North Star Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS, team continues to spend countless hours preparing North Star students to be STARS, which stands for service, trust, attitude, and respect. Each month, we also host a STAR Symposium, which is a time for parents and students to come together to learn from North Star staff about important topics and for them to share feedback.

[02:50:58] Tomorrow night, the North Star School will host the symposium, and the topic will be presented by our school psychologist, Ms. Conkle, who will share a very important presentation about the

signs of suicide. Signs of Suicide is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program that teaches middle and high school students how to identify the warning signs of suicide and depression.

[02:51:24] We encourage you to attend and learn how to talk to your child about their suicide prevention education. Through SOS, students are learning to acknowledge the signs of suicide, show their friends they care, and tell a trusted adult.

[02:51:41] The presentation will cover the warning signs for suicide and depression, as well as actions that parents can take if they notice the signs or their child comes to them for support. Please try to attend. Overall, there are many, many things that are wonderful about North Star, from the staff to the structure to the administration, and I recommend all to consider it for any student currently struggling in their high school career.

[02:52:11] Thank you all for your time. Thank you for all three of you for being here with us tonight and for your remarks.

[02:52:27] Before we move to item nine, I am going to take a brief moment of personal privilege at this time. Last meeting, we recognized our school board members elect on their election, but one more recognition is in order. I would like to take a moment to congratulate our own Algonquian District School Board member, Atuzza Reeser, on her recent election to the Virginia General Assembly, where she will represent the 27th district in the House of Delegates.

[02:52:58] I'm looking forward to seeing what you're able to accomplish in Richmond and supporting your ideas. Congratulations, Delegate-Elect Reeser. At this time, we will move to Item 9, which is the Superintendent's Report.

[02:53:21] Dr. Spence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the board. It's my pleasure to share this report with you this evening and share some good news from around our school division. Starting with, I'll note that over 150 LCPS students from five of our high schools and the academies of Loudoun visited Dulles Airport for its inaugural Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Workforce Development Expo.

[02:53:44] The Career Shadowing Pilot Program provided students the opportunity to learn about careers available at these area airports, where students also learned about public safety and skilled apprenticeship opportunities. I want to thank the Office of Community Connections and Programs for coordinating this event for our students.

[02:54:02] Next, students from six middle schools participated in BLOOM, which stands for Building Learning opportunities and options in medical sciences exploration day. These hands-on exercises provided our students with a glimpse into medical science careers. They were able to engage in a question and answer session with Inova administrators, learned about proper nutrition and healthy habits on the Inova health bus. They practiced CPR with Loudon Fire and Rescue and used virtual reality tools to experience the science behind health and wellness with the Future Kings, a non-profit after-school program focused on STEM. This is the second year for Bloom, which is coordinated

[02:54:40] by the Office of Community Connections and Programs. More than 370 11th and 12th grade students participated in Job for a Day, which is a career shadowing event coordinated by the School Business Partnership Executive Council. This year, the School Business Partnership Executive Council

recruited 66 business partners to host students for a day of learning about various career fields and the education and skills necessary to succeed in these fields.

[02:55:06] The number of businesses participating in job for a day this year was a 32% increase from last year. And the School Business Partnership Executive Council continues to look for partners to expand this annual career exploration opportunity to reach an even greater number of students in 2024.

[02:55:27] Earlier this evening, the board was talking about middle school intramural sports. I'm pleased to note that the Riverbend Middle School Pretty Boys defeated the Seneca Ridge Middle School Gorillas 27-22 to capture the inaugural LCPS Middle School Flag Football Championship.

[02:55:43] Flag football is the first sport to launch as part of LCPS's Middle School Inaugural Sports Pilot Program, and two teams from Harper Park, Riverbend, Seneca Ridge, and Smarts Mill Middle Schools competed in the championship tournament. LCPS's second middle school intramural sport, volleyball, began its season on November the 6th.

[02:56:02] I am pleased to announce that the Association of School Business Officials International has recognized LCPS for excellence in budget presentation with the Meritorious Budget Award for fiscal year 2023-24.

[02:56:18] This marks the 13th straight year that LCPS's Department of Business and Financial Services has received this honor. We want to congratulate the Department of Business and Financial Services on the award. I'd like to note that the LCPS EdFy team, which is composed of staff from the Department of Digital Innovation and the Office of School Improvement, won the Rookie of the Year Award at the EdFy Alliance Conference held in October in Austin, Texas.

[02:56:45] The team won the award for creating a real-time assessment score dashboard that enables our LCPS teachers to spend less time pulling test scores and more time doing the important work of planning and educating. This tool gives our teachers the data needed to drive instruction and provides it in a single platform.

[02:57:02] Shown here in the photo are just a few members of the EdFIDE team, Joanna Kaler, Jonna Griffith, and Seju Shastri, who attended the conference to receive the award. Congratulations to all members of this team. Board members, as noted in previous board meetings, I will be updating the board on an ongoing basis on my entry plan.

[02:57:25] As a reminder, here are the stated objectives of this plan, which are guiding decisions about where we are focusing our time during this process. As another reminder, the areas in which we focus include the four goal areas of 1LCPS, which is our division's strategic plan.

[02:57:44] Now, since the last time we spoke about the entry plan, I have continued to meet with key communicators from around the county, including members of the faith community, members of the business community, and economic development community. I will continue to be holding these meetings.

[02:58:02] I view these informational meetings as the foundation for an ongoing dialogue with members of all of our community as we move forward into the future. I've also met with each level office in Dossal to review data school by school. I have reviewed recommendations from our mental health task force, and I

wanna say, based on what we heard tonight, it's clear there is more work to be done, but I do appreciate that the task force continues to meet monthly and has put into place many mental health resources.

[02:58:32] And I will just note some projects currently underway include increasing the number of community partnerships to bring more mental health resources into the school setting and working with HRTD to expand mental health and wellness resources and experiences for LCPS staff members, another important part of that conversation.

[02:58:51] I've been briefed by staff in terms of our focus on exemplary staff. I've been briefed by staff and met with individual board members on the topic of collective bargaining and had the opportunity to attend yesterday's LMP meeting where collective bargaining was discussed as an action item and a resolution forwarded for discussion to the board this evening.

[02:59:10] I also continue to work with HRTD to look at our onboarding process and how we are working to ensure that our employees feel they have the growth opportunities and professional development they need within the division. I am also, as we lean into the budget conversation and as we talked briefly about earlier this evening, taking a hard look at our LCPS compensation and benefits plan and comparing to like school divisions and private industry to ensure that we are competitive.

[02:59:38] In addition to scheduled superintendent's advisory committee meetings, I want to point out that my educators cabinet meetings will be starting in late November, well, very shortly. The educator cabinet is a small group of teacher leaders from each level that will meet with me and with Dr. Ellis on a quarterly basis.

[02:59:54] These teachers were nominated by their principals to join me in this endeavor so that we might have ongoing and candid discussions about what our educators need in order to thrive. Regarding our area focused around an enriched division, I have met, as you all know, on an ongoing basis with our school board members, and we're also in the middle of hosting our new school board members for an orientation, including two full days of orientation this week, which I think have been really terrific.

[03:00:22] As a part of that orientation, our new board members have been able to and will continue to meet with each cabinet member as well as division council and have had the opportunity to discuss things like agenda planning, norms and protocols, and the possibility for a future retreat.

[03:00:39] We also have many meetings scheduled with our media partners, and I look forward to continuing to meet and collaborate with them in the coming months. And then as many of you know, as was again discussed earlier this evening, we are currently in the midst of the budget development process.

[03:00:55] So I am continuing to analyze that process and work with the budget team and Mrs. Willoughby to ensure I understand this work and how I might best support the board as we move forward. And then finally, with regards to goal four, this is a good time to remind the board that we are in the process of a communications audit.

[03:01:13] A community survey is going out this week, and more than 20 focus groups will occur next week, including focus groups of parents, students, community partners, teachers, and staff. And I'm looking forward to getting those results back and reporting to the school board in the spring about any recommendations for improvement in our communications.

[03:01:31] So just as a reminder, my intention is to update the board frequently over the coming months, and that process will continue through the late spring as it continues to inform my understanding of the work ahead of us. So, and I will look forward to providing our newly seated board the next update on February the 20th.

[03:01:52] And Mr. Chair, that concludes my report. Thank you, Dr. Spence. That will bring us to item 10 on the agenda, which is public comment. Thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment process.

[03:02:11] The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and community members and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system. Speakers must limit to the time allotted based on the number of speakers tonight and the agenda this evening.

[03:02:28] All speakers have been allotted two minutes each for public comment. Please be advised that speakers who miss their time slot will not be called at a later time. All audience members shall maintain civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times.

[03:02:44] Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting, obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa, interrupting speakers, attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair, and approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other meeting attendees. Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, profanity, or other like breaches of respect, nor may speakers target,

[03:03:24] criticize, or attack individual students during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official. Additionally, complaints regarding division employees should be directed to the school principal or an appropriate school division official. Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board. Per LCPS policy, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period.

[03:03:53] Violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting. Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in, on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda, limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons, or the public comment period ending for the evening.

[03:04:20] Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom prior to the start of the meeting. Please provide 12 copies of materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through LCPS-TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43.

[03:04:46] And the live stream of the meeting may also be viewed on the LCPS-TV website. Tonight, we'll begin with our in-person speakers, and they'll be followed by our virtual speakers.

[03:05:03] And so our first in-person speakers are Brenda Bengston, to be followed by Sandy Sullivan.

[03:05:23] E-S-P-E-C-T. Let's teach peace. We all deserve to be welcomed and valued, included and supported, to see the benefits of academic and social-emotional learning. Public schools are not to blame for all societal problems.

[03:05:42] Solutions require decision-making and ownership, not shouting. Teachers need help with a legitimate concern, overdoses. Teachers are not medical experts or law enforcers, though we take EpiPen, CPR, insulin, and child neglect and abuse training.

[03:06:04] Never did we imagine administering naloxone. Alcohol and drug abuse are not new and not limited to schools. The pagans sold PCP here in the 70s. There was an alcohol-related car fatality of a student in the 90s.

[03:06:23] And in the 2000s, cocaine and heroin were in Loudoun. Society still suffers from fallout from 2012, when Purdue Pharma contributed to the opioid addiction epidemic.

[03:06:38] Over 80,000 opioid-involved overdose deaths occurred in the U.S. in 2021. Learning loss, absenteeism, mental health issues, racial animus, bullying, homelessness, and substance abuse exist.

[03:06:58] But what are the root causes? We're encouraged to see collaboration by citizens, law enforcement, and schools. grateful for a caring community and committed personnel. Can we work together for solutions without shouting?

[03:07:18] Let's teach peace, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Thank you. Sandy Sullivan, to be followed by Fatima Mojadiddy. Good evening. I know many of you noticed as the audience grew during your work session.

[03:07:39] We brought our rally inside so we could hear your discussions. It's meaningful that your educators will have the opportunity to provide public input before you discuss your collective bargaining resolution. You will hear from your employees, and we will be able to hear your discussions about the collective bargaining resolution.

[03:07:58] In your resolution to create a resolution for collective bargaining, you developed your own timelines and rules, and now we have two weeks until that deadline. The draft resolution in its current state, despite a number of positive revisions from the Legislative and Policy Committee, is not acceptable.

[03:08:15] The resolution created by anti-worker law firm has a long list of problems, and we have found out through FOIA that the cost of working with that law firm has cost loud and taxpayers nearly \$14,000. What can be done now? Remove the expiration dates from our authorization cards.

[03:08:33] It is time to toss the anti-worker language from the draft resolution. it's time to work with your educators. School board, it's time. Bring the LEA to the table to fix the draft collective bargaining resolution. Respect your employees, listen to our expertise, no decisions about us without us.

[03:08:52] - Thank you. Fatima Mojadidi to be followed by Banan Malkawi. - I'd like to start by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territories of the Piscotwe and the Manahawk indigenous communities.

[03:09:12] And I bring up indigenous because Palestinians are indigenous people. in Palestine, and we have a genocide going on. 15,000 people have been killed in Gaza. 5,500 of them are children. The situation is well documented.

[03:09:27] Craig Mokheber, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, resigned calling it a genocide. Josh Wolf, director of the US Department of State, resigned while calling it ethnic cleansing, occupation and apartheid. It's all documented. We can't sugarcoat this, it's out there. So having said that, we have students in Loudoun County who have organized protests, And there's been a crackdown on their protests and their right to free speech.

[03:09:52] Superintendent Aaron Spence, your first email was somewhat good. You mentioned mental health resources. And your second resource was Department of Defense. There's no sugarcoating that Department of Defense is funding and arming this genocide.

[03:10:07] Whether you agree with that or not, that is not a resource for mental health for communities experiencing trauma who are connected to people there. My own community, I'm from Afghanistan, 20 years of U.S. occupation, you don't send us the Department of Defense for our mental health.

[03:10:23] Please don't do that again. Your second email, and not to lump this on you, this is for the whole school board. The second email used the word hate speech three times, antisemitism. When you don't connect to our communities, this is what creates unsafety. Those students did not commit hate speech. They did not commit any antisemitism. They stood up against a genocide for a free palestine please talk to our communities because we don't want another wadea who just you know was shot was stabbed 28 times palestinian child the three the um three young palestinian men that

[03:11:00] were shot a few days on saturday we don't want that to happen so please stop accusing our young people of hate speech because that actually endangers our lives thank you thank you banan malcawi to be followed by sarah hussein bazar good evening i'm calling on our educational leaders to support our students in processing the humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine.

[03:11:28] Please don't let anyone undermine your intellect or that of our students by telling you that the Israel-Palestine issue is too complicated to be addressed in schools. Our nation is knee-deep involved in this, and our students are well aware and exposed to raw footage of our country's involvement in schools being bombed halfway across the world.

[03:11:47] Your mission is to empower students to make meaningful contributions to the world. They cannot contribute science and technology without contributing values of human life and freedom first. In social-emotional learning terms, these peaceful student walkouts are reporting bullying they are seeing on the world stage.

[03:12:08] Please don't pit communities against each other. Who are the students participating in pro-Palestine walkouts that you insinuate are perpetuating hate speech? They are students from all backgrounds: white, black, Asian, Hispanic, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern. Jewish students calling for humanity to stop the carnage. These young minds will forever remember how their educational leaders handled this pivotal moment. Are we a community that follows blindly national trends of pressure, silence, and fear? Or are we community leaders that support our students in understanding the world and creates for them an environment that

[03:12:46] fosters critical thinking, solution finding, and safe spaces for civic discourse, debate, and yes disagreement you are responsible for and to them for their inclusion and belonging through your policies but today you are silencing and discriminating against hundreds of students because you are more

offended by colors symbols and chants then you are offended by exclusion hate and misinformation free Palestine is a call to free ourselves from silence fear and

[03:13:20] violence. You're asked to make a pivotal decision today. You either choose fear or choose education. Thank you. Sarah Hussain Bazar to be followed by Rima Zayada.

[03:13:48] My Lord, expand for me my breasts with assurance and ease for me my task and untie the knot from my tongue so that they may understand my speech. My name is Sarah. I'm a Muslim-Palestinian-American residing in Loudoun County.

[03:14:05] I'm here to provide emotional support for my niece, Umayma, who has been censored by the school administration at Freedom High School. On the day of the walkout, Umayma was prepared to offer her speech, but her excitement was quickly turned into disappointment when a school administrator tapped her by her shoulder and hushed her with the words, too political. The words occupied, Zionist, colonial were deemed too political by the administration of Freedom High School. Many credible organizations and human rights groups

[03:14:40] have called Israel a Zionist and apartheid regime due to the 75 years of ongoing oppression, occupation, and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people in occupied Palestine. These constrictions placed on your student body do not reinforce your LCPS statement of empowering all students to make meaningful contributions to the world.

[03:15:04] We are a neurodiverse society, the threads that make up the American culture. But when you exclude one people, the American cloth becomes frail and weak. the young lady in the chamber. You spoke so eloquently in which you shared a valuable and powerful thought. All we have to do is listen to our students. I strongly agree and I commend you.

[03:15:34] Listen and learn. Listen and learn from your student body. Thank you. Thank you. Rima Zayada to be followed by Omya Hussein Bazar. Good evening. Excuse me. I'm a longtime resident of Loudoun County with four children that have attended LCPS all of their lives. My children are the children and grandchildren of Palestinian immigrants. Aside from our kids coming to school every day to learn math and English, we teach them to be good people and to stand up for what is

[03:16:13] right, even when it's not the most popular thing to do. When our children stood in peaceful protests to bring awareness to a humanitarian crisis that directly affects them, they were met with an email by you, Mr. Spence, that minimized their voices and called them anti-Semitic.

[03:16:31] For the record, Arabs are Semites. When the students of Stonebridge peacefully protested, their principal, Mr. Flynn, shut them down and gave them a dismissive attitude that was captured on camera on video. He did not attempt to have meaningful dialogue with his own students.

[03:16:49] He should be ashamed of himself. Yesterday, a student at Mercer Middle School was forced to remove a top that he was wearing that has a symbol of a Palestinian map. There was no hateful speech. There was no symbols or anything on the shirt that was a slogan that described hate, yet he was told it made others uncomfortable and had to be removed.

[03:17:14] Where do we draw the line? Most recently, students at Lightfoot High School were told by the administration that they are not allowed to wear Palestinian colors during protests, red, black, white, and green. This is actually shocking. The list is growing and it is becoming more offensive each day. There has

been no effort by any of you on the school board to reach out to the Palestinian community and bridge the gap and have a dialogue.

[03:17:36] As quickly as you, Mr. Spence, were to draft an email calling our children anti-Semitic, I will argue that what you guys are doing by censoring our children is Islamophobic. In a county that prides itself on diversity and acceptance and with a motto, empower all students to make meaningful contributions to the world, you have done just the opposite and you have to do better.

[03:17:56] Thank you. Omaima Hussein Bazar, to be followed by Todd Fielding. My name is Omaima. Here is my censored speech.

[03:18:15] My experience living in occupied Palestine under the Zionist colonial regime, Israel. When I would visit my grandparents in Der Ammar, the Israeli occupation forces would stop and search my mother's car, which would prolong our drive and horrify me and my siblings. Being Palestinian is the main reason why they would stop us.

[03:18:33] Palestinians in Occupy Palestine are subjugated daily to this type of treatment. The color of our license plates is an indicator of the apartheid system the colonial regime Israel has created for only Palestinians. During middle school, the IOF threw tear gases while we were outside for recess.

[03:18:51] The teachers had to rush us inside and safeguard us. I also witnessed one of my neighbors being taken for questioning by the IOF. Mind you, he was just a teenager. Another traumatic moment was when an Israeli soldier targeted his gun towards my mother.

[03:19:07] The oppression Palestinians go through under the Zionist regime Israel did not start on October 7th, but 75 years ago. 75 years of conscious ethnic cleansing, genocide, oppression, occupation, wrongful imprisonment, displacement, dehumanization of people, and I can go on and on.

[03:19:26] Palestinians just want to be free and liberated from the shackles of the colonial regime Israel. thank you thank you Todd Fielding to be followed by Sam Sharif so before I became before I became a teacher I was a journalist I covered a lot of school board meetings board of supervisor meetings town and city council meetings I always got concerned when boards would go into executive session it felt like it was always best to have deliberations in public some would even say that

[03:20:03] sunlight is the best disinfectant that's why I was sorry to see that the school board took the route it did when it came to collective bargaining. If these deliberations were done in public, many of the problems and roadblocks you are encountering now would have never happened. Please take that into consideration with any further deliberations you make. Please, from this point on, make every effort to craft a good resolution in public. Take off the expiration dates from the cards. Extend the proposal's deadline past December. Expand the scopes of items to be bargained. Show your staff, the public at large, that you are willing to support

[03:20:40] and to go into collective bargaining with open minds. As an employee, I would prefer that you take compassion in consideration when you are deciding what to do with this proposal. There are employees in the district who cannot afford to live on their current wages. These are employees who deserve your best efforts. So please, put your efforts into a true good faith effort with staff to make collective bargaining a reality. Do what is best for students,

[03:21:14] staff, and the community. Thank you. Thank you. Sam Sharif to be followed by Rasha Asad. Hello. I stand before you today a proud Palestinian Muslim American and a parent to three wonderful and amazing children who attend both John Champ High School and Mercer Middle Schools. To speak to you about the alleged concerns outlined in the superintendent's letter that was directed

[03:21:50] toward our students' support for Palestine to not only be unfounded but also forcefully wrong. While we are equally concerned with the hate speech of all kinds, we have found that the slogan, from the river to the sea, has become increasingly distorted over false and misconstrued claims that neglect its true meaning, which is our yearning for freedom and liberation for all Palestinians, equality, freedom, and justice for all, from the Jordan River all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. Who are you to tell me what my own words mean?

[03:22:21] The only people that understand the true meaning of what the statement means is a Palestinian or those who have been familiarized and have educated themselves with the ongoing 75-year Zionist and military and settler occupation of Palestine. You deeming what these particular words mean to an entire community and to me as a Palestinian, I find extremely offensive.

[03:22:43] You don't know the history. You don't know our struggle, our values, our culture. You don't know our traditions. You don't know what we as a community have had to go through. you don't know the meaning of the verse and it's okay to not know but the hypocrisy is real and to be quite honest shameful the double standards are even more absurd this nonsense talk about what you believe to be is anti-hate anti-semitic speech must come to an end we have we feel offended as parents and students in the arc in your in this county and unsafe from the disheartening standpoint that's the superintendent has taken considering that over the past month and a half there has been a surge in hate crimes against palestinians which includes a stabbing of three students at

[03:23:23] Brown University and a six-year-old boy who was stabbed 26 times to death in his own home. We find this bias in targeting against our community and students and children to be inappropriate and out of context and out of order. We encourage you to educate yourselves on the true history of Palestine rather than continuously fanning the flames of the environment of hate speech.

[03:23:41] Thank you. Rasha Saad to be followed by Khalid Araki. First, let me say... Excuse me, one moment.

[03:24:01] Rasha Saad was the called speaker. This is my son. So he's going to go first and then I'm going to come right after him he's right i'm right after him so we're just switching okay that's fine yeah thank you first let me say from the river to the sea palestine will be free is not an anti-semitic chant it does not call for the annihilation of the jewish people it calls for the justice of the palestinian people the two are not and should never be mutually exclusive a simple google search using diverse sources will show this to be true you sent out a statement on november 6th condemning

[03:24:39] the hate speech that happened during student walkouts. Your principals all affirmed and reiterated your statement via PA announcements. I'm here to describe to you the upheaval and hurt you caused to us, the students. My MSA and countless others involved in the movement were absolutely blown away. We felt attacked and confused. What did we say? We asked. We didn't say anything bad. We followed all the rules. What happened? We look bad. These are actual comments from my friends and I who thought we had completed successful and peaceful walkouts.

[03:25:12] You are supposed to empower me to make meaningful contributions to the world. That's what your mission statement says. And yet I was silenced and accused of being anti-Semitic. I was not given any chance to voice what this chant means or explain myself.

[03:25:28] The opportunity to listen to differing views and opinions, the opportunity to learn how to debate and participate in civil discourse was stolen from me. You also stole my sense of belonging to my school community. We were commended for holding successful walkouts.

[03:25:44] We felt heard and supported. And in one moment, you took all of that away. And now you're banning more chants and even our colors. This is not inclusivity. These actions do not foster belonging. In fact, these actions make us feel unsafe and attacked.

[03:25:59] We need you to understand the impacts your words had on us, and I hope you do now. Thank you. Rasha Saad to be followed by Corey Brunet. So you just heard about my son's experience as a pro-Palestinian student, but it gets worse because you could have done better, Dr. Spence. You could have simply reached out to our community. You could have used the communication channels that we've all worked so very hard to build, things like the Equity Committee or MSAC. I know you received letters from community members and other organizations before your statement, which you

[03:26:39] ignored. Now, our students are being told by your principals that they're not allowed to say free Palestine. They're not allowed to say free Gaza. They're not allowed to say cease fire now. They're not even allowed to have the Palestinian colors in tandem. This is erasure, Dr. Spence.

[03:26:58] None of these things is anti-Semitic, and you would have known that if you had opened up the channels of communication or even responded to these parents and organizations who have been reaching out to you. You know, I remember being in high school after 9-11. We were silenced, we were scared, we were othered, and we felt unsafe. We were branded as terrorists just for being Muslim.

[03:27:21] I have seen the change in my children's schools. I have been so thankful that they never had to go through what I went through. I should have known better. If you had reached out, you would have actually empowered these students to make meaningful contributions to the world. They would have engaged in critical thinking and debate and seen examples of what that looks like. They would have felt heard, seen, supported, and safe. They would know that their voices mattered and that they belong to this community. No matter the outcome of these discussions, these students would have been empowered. But no, you sent out your statement, you banned the chant, and instead of empowering

[03:27:59] students, you accuse them of anti-Semitism and hate speech. Our students deserve to feel like they belong. They deserve to know and understand in their bones that they're entitled to the same rights as the student next to them, no matter the color of their skin, their religion, or their political opinions. Because, Dr. Spence, from the river to the sea means justice and equality everywhere all the time, not just sometimes or when it's convenient for you.

[03:28:25] Corey Brunet, to be followed by Jonathan Radau. Good evening. My name is Corey Brunet, and I'm an English learner teacher at Broad Run High School. Loudoun County employees have been signing authorization cards since the spring of 2021.

[03:28:42] By imposing a two-year limit to the life of the cards, you are suppressing the voice of employees. You are sending the message that some employees are worth more than others. We ask that

you remove the expiration date on all cards. We also implore you to invite LEA representatives to work sessions concerning collective bargaining.

[03:29:02] We have been trying to reach school board members since June and were ghosted. We had to make a FOIA request to find out what you refused to tell us, that you hired Isler Dare, an anti-worker out-of-state law firm. You did not do your due diligence in hiring them, and now look at all the lies they have been telling you, that you can't discuss collective bargaining with your constituents, that you shouldn't refer to out-of-state districts for tried-and-true collective bargaining resolutions, that it's okay to exclude multiple entire departments from collective bargaining by calling them confidential.

[03:29:36] I can tell you that my DDI colleagues at Broad Run have access to nothing more than I do. Why should they be excluded? Don't these issues raise red flags to you? You have already paid Isler-Dare \$14,000. What a waste of taxpayer money.

[03:29:53] What happened to the resolution that LEA presented to you? Was it even considered? You could have saved a lot of money by using it and working collaboratively with us instead of hiding behind literal closed doors since June, Limiting our participation to two minutes every two weeks is not collaboration.

[03:30:11] It's voice suppression. Is this what you want to be your legacy? Voice suppression? Your insult of a resolution is only a draft. It can be fixed, but only if you invite us to your work sessions now and insist that employees have an active voice in the resolution that will affect employees' work lives.

[03:30:32] LCPS will never outperform its educators. Thank you. Jonathan Radau, to be followed by Sabrina Bazar. Sabrina Bazar, to be followed by Hibah Salah.

[03:30:56] I'm going to share a story about a recent hate crime that occurred in Jersey City. His words. I was at Grove Station Restaurant in Jersey City on Sunday night.

[03:31:17] My friends had just left in their Uber, and I was waiting on mine, which was taking quite a while to arrive. At one point, some random guy asked me where I was from, and I said Baltimore. Then he said, no, where are you from from? Hesitant, I responded, Palestine.

[03:31:32] He then walked away, and I thought it was a bit odd. I then noticed a group of people who was looking at me and laughing at me, attempting to harass me from a distance. I let the manager know and stayed away from them. I paid my bill, walked out, and that's when he asked me.

[03:31:51] Started yelling racial slurs at me, and then one of them sucker punched me right in the face, which caused me to fall to the ground awkwardly, twisting my knee and bumping the back of my head on the pavement. They continuously kicked me, spat on me, called me a terrorist.

[03:32:07] There was a bad word before the terrorist part. Called me all sorts of names, and I recognized his Israeli-Arabic accent. Any Arab could recognize that accent. Long story short, I ended up in the hospital, needed a head CT scan, had a fractured nose.

[03:32:25] But all I could think about was the six-year-old child a month ago who was stabbed 26 times, and the three Palestinian college students who were shot in Vermont over the weekend. One of them probably not being able to walk ever again.

[03:32:41] I bring this story up because Palestinians in school, children in your school systems are on their phone looking at 20,000 kids that have been murdered that look just like them. So I ask our school

administration and our officials here what will be done to help them feel secure in their school system so that they don't feel that they'll be on the brink of a hate crime.

[03:33:08] Thank you. Hibba Salah to be followed by Zainab Zaki.

[03:33:23] Zainab Zaki, to be followed by Zaina Sharif. Zaina Sharif, to be followed by Jenna Sharif.

[03:33:44] Hello, I'm here standing before you today as a first-generation Palestinian-American. And I'm here with my peers to discuss the illegitimate and unfair accusations that have been made by our superintendent. Specifically, the ones against the chant from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.

[03:34:02] This chant does not ensue any sort of violence nor hatred. It is a simple yet meaningful phrase that simply means from the Jordanian River to the Mediterranean Sea, the Palestinian people will be free from its oppression and will not be a part of an apartheid state. In no way does it mention the harming of any other kinds of people, and it should not be assumed that it does. My whole life I've attended Loudoun County schools, from Sterling to Aldi.

[03:34:25] I've always faced my fair share of snarky remarks from my peers, from the mocking of Arabic language to terrorist comments. I know I'd identify when someone is spewing hate. From the river to the sea Palestine will be free is nothing of the sort. It is a phrase that ensures hope in the souls of any person that realizes what happening in Palestine is a settler colonization regime, and it is a genocide of its indigenous people. Demeaning the chant not only takes away the hope and comfort it brings, but it also adds to the eradication of the Palestinian people and

[03:35:02] their culture. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Jenna Sharif to be followed by Tracy Lane. Hello, my name is Jenna Sharif. I'm an 8th grader attending Mercer Middle School.

[03:35:27] I came to the school board meeting today to talk to you about the importance of why you're taking away just a few words from my vocabulary. From the river to the sea, you have taken away my freedom of speech. But instead, I want to talk about an incident that happened at school yesterday to my younger brother, who had his freedom of speech taken away from him yesterday.

[03:35:45] On Monday afternoon, my brother was called out from his class and told to report to his house office, in which he was met with his 7th grade dean and case manager. He was told not to worry and that he wasn't in trouble, but that he was violating a certain dress code, policy code 8030. Policy code 8030, which states, discrimination, harassment based on racism and hate speech is not allowed.

[03:36:05] He had a jacket with a map of Palestine on it, which was filled with the history of Palestine and the colors of our flag. Now, I don't think there's anything offensive about that, considering it was filled with red embroidery, green olive trees, and black and white kaffee. That's like someone wearing a map of the United States with a flag in it.

[03:36:20] Saying that he violated this policy would be the same as him wearing a shirt that says KKK or a Nazi symbol. Are you comparing my country and my flag to the Nazis and KKK? That is hate speech and causes me to feel uncomfortable. But you can't take away my country, my flag, my culture, my heritage, and my identity.

[03:36:38] I refuse to allow you to silence us. You cause students to feel insecure and discriminations against based on where they are from. I think the school board and the equity committee should re-

educate themselves on Palestine and its history rather than follow what the mainstream wants you to know.

[03:36:53] Thank you very much, and Free Palestine. Thank you. Tracy Lane, to be followed by Brandon Kerr. My name is Tracy Lane.

[03:37:09] I'm an educator here in Loudoun County. What if educators set an arbitrary expiration date on grades? Only fourth quarter grades would count. What if educators decided that any student born on an odd number day and an odd number month were not permitted to advocate for themselves at all?

[03:37:29] What if students were only permitted four reassessment opportunities per year and two of them were selected for them? What if educators only allowed communication with students and families in the 11th hour, like the last week of school? What if educators engaged with their students and families in their classrooms the way LCPS has engaged with educators and LEA throughout the collective bargaining process?

[03:37:57] LCPS expects educators in schools to engage in restorative practices for students. It is time for LCPS to walk their talk. And remember, educator working conditions are student learning conditions. LCPS's proposed collective bargaining agreement does not repair the relationship with educators.

[03:38:18] Authorization card expiration, arbitrary exemption of employee groups, strict limits on what working conditions can be bargained, Communication with anti-union law firms rather than educators that are the strength of LCPS are all evidence of a broken relationship.

[03:38:36] We started the movement for collective bargaining because educators need a seat at the table, the table you are all sitting at right now. This agreement is an all caps punch in the face to educators, in the face of educators that are the strength of LCPS, the educators that are the voice for our students.

[03:38:58] Let's use those restorative practices on the relationship between educators and LCPS. Let's get rid of the what-ifs. I challenge you to engage with educators the way we engage with our students. No decisions without us. Thank you. About us.

[03:39:14] Brandon Kerr, to be followed by Esther Johnson. Good evening. My name is Brandon Kerr. I'm a math teacher at Light Ridge High School. Today, I'm here to address a critical flaw in the proposed collective bargaining resolution, the 24-month expiration date on cards.

[03:39:36] While this is an improvement over what was originally proposed to the Legislative and Policy Committee, it is still far too restrictive. This is disregarding the voices of those that have been supporting collective bargaining since its initial stages. As you're probably aware, LEA held a rally right outside in the hallway during your recess.

[03:39:54] And during that rally, I posed a question to the crowd of how many of you signed your cards in 2021. A majority of the group raised their hands. We are the people that have been fighting for this since day one, and to disregard our authorization cards at this point is, frankly, unacceptable.

[03:40:10] Every card signed is a testament to an ongoing commitment to collective bargaining, and they must be honored in full to trigger a fair election. Furthermore, the development process of this resolution has been alarming, to say the least. LEA presented draft language back in June, and yet the board disregarded this in favor of language that was developed in consultation with an anti-labor law firm.

[03:40:32] This process, which was not made public until November, appears strategically timed to rush and limit the public input and union input on this important matter due to a self-imposed deadline of December 31st. We strongly urge the board to adopt the original language proposed by LEA, allow for some kind of process that allows a meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders.

[03:40:53] Alternatively, an extension of that arbitrary deadline would be appropriate to allow the incoming school board members to address these significant oversights. In closing, I implore the board to respect the foundational principles of collective bargaining by acknowledging all authorization cards, engaging, and transparent collaborative process.

[03:41:10] Thank you. No decisions about us without us. Thank you. Esther Johnson to be followed by Meredith Ray. Hello.

[03:41:28] All right. So I don't know if you guys have noticed, there's a repeated theme. We keep talking about we want to collaborate. We'd like to collaborate. And that seems to be consistent across the board. Everyone wants to collaborate. If we would just have some collaboration, this would be all much better.

[03:41:49] So I want to talk to you guys about some grave concerns that I have about the restrictive nature of these working conditions that are defined in this current collective bargaining resolution. Limiting negotiations to just four topics per bargaining unit is not only impractical, but it severely undermines the diversity of needs across our employee groups, from bus drivers to custodians to teaching assistants to teachers.

[03:42:14] Each group has unique concerns that cannot be adequately addressed under these constraints. This limitation not only restricts dialogue, but also inadvertently fosters a divisive environment among our employees that are now going to be forced to fight and compete for attention for their special needs.

[03:42:33] Equally concerning is the exclusion of subjects and rights reserved to the board in the negotiation process. This includes that really broad and overly used term, other duties as assigned. Such restrictions strip us of the ability to negotiate for fundamental aspects of our jobs, aspects that directly impact our daily work and well-being.

[03:42:56] Therefore, I urge the school board to reconsider the definition of the working conditions in this resolution. We're not asking to negotiate every issue simultaneously, but we do demand a framework that allows for a broad and inclusive range of topics. Such an approach will not only benefit the employees, but also enhance the overall functioning and morale within LCPS.

[03:43:18] Also, please extend, like just lift the expiration date on the cards so that if we need to go on and keep collaborating, we have time to do so. Thank you. Thank you. Meredith Ray, to be followed by Chris Countryman.

[03:43:37] First, as an LCPS parent and concerned community member, I would like to state my support for the right of our teachers to take part in a collaborative collective bargaining process.

[03:43:53] The majority of you have voted to allow the teachers to organize, and what good does that do without allowing them a seat at the table to negotiate the resolution. Second, on November 6th, the superintendent sent out an email addressing concerns about pro-Palestine student demonstrations.

[03:44:10] However, what struck me was the apparent selectivity in addressing these issues. Before the superintendent's email on November 6th, there was a demonstration at Woodgrove High School. Students

displayed professionally printed signs and banners, creating an environment that made some in the LGBTQ community feel unsafe. Surprisingly, this did not warrant a special email or attention. In addition, last school year, 499 of the 890 reported hate speech incidents in LCPS were specifically targeted at the black community, and black students

[03:44:44] constitute only 7% of students countywide. This stark disproportion underscores an issue that also demands attention. It's crucial to question the consistency of the response. Why did an incident that made a portion of our community feel unsafe not receive the same level of attention as others?

[03:45:02] These disparities in treatment raise concerns about the priorities and the values that we uphold. The superintendent's email signaled out pro-Palestine student demonstrations criticizing them for not being conducted in a respectful and a peaceful manner. However, considering the incidents that transpired just the week before where similar concerns were not met with the same urgency, it seems inconsistent.

[03:45:22] As a community, we need to address these issues with consistency and a commitment to upholding the values of respect and inclusivity. Let's work together to foster an atmosphere of understanding where every concern is addressed with the same level of urgency and care. Thank you.

[03:45:38] Thank you. Chris Countryman to be followed by Daniel Brubaker. I'm an elementary school teacher here in LCPS.

[03:45:54] And it says right here on both of these boards that we engage, empower, and enrich. Why do you want the students to engage, empower, and enrich, but not your frontline staff? I did a Google search earlier today. It said collective bargaining is supposed to be a process through which the union and its employer exchange proposals, share ideas, mutually solve problems, and reach a written agreement.

[03:46:21] This current school board and LCPS administration made a decision to pay money to lawyers to write a policy to keep us quiet, rather than just pay attention to what we had to say. You have shut us out of the process and delayed it over and over again, playing a lawyer's game. This is not a game.

[03:46:44] This is our lives. This is what we do every day. Give us a seat at the table and let us help. Administration thinks we want to be heard. What we really want is to be valued, to share our knowledge and experience so that it can be acted upon.

[03:47:00] Allow us to engage, be empowered, and enrich the agreement being considered. The time for this board to create a meaningful agreement has passed. I attended the LNP committee meeting yesterday. While I applaud that the questions were being asked, I am outraged that some of these questions were being asked for the very first time yesterday.

[03:47:22] They should have been considered months ago. Not only that, the answers being provided by administrative staff was not completely accurate. Only you didn't know that because we weren't allowed to give input. Please reconsider this.

[03:47:39] Do what is right. Let the new school board make the decision. Right now, you need to remove the expiration date on bargaining cards. Extend your self-imposed December deadline. Include us in writing the policy and give the new board time to carefully consider or what is before them, instead of rushing to a decision.

[03:47:59] Thank you. Please yield the mic to the next speaker. Thank you. Daniel Brubaker, to be followed by Erica Harris. A strong analogy is used to underscore the gravity of a problem.

[03:48:17] The Virginia state flag features our state seal, which depicts the aftermath of a rape. The violated woman now holds the tyrant who raped her at bay with a sword to his throat. The accompanying motto is, sic semper tyrannis, thus always to tyrants.

[03:48:33] The woman represents the people. The man represents the government. The people have a right not to be raped by their government. Rape is something that is done by animals or by evil people, such as the October 7th Hamas attackers, who calculate that they will not be able to secure the victim's willing consent to what the rapist intends to do to them.

[03:48:56] Rape is wrong because it is the theft of something precious and personal, without the consent of the one from whom it is taken. While rape is primarily understood as sexual assault, it is also used to describe other abuses, which brings me to my point again today.

[03:49:12] The citizens of Loudoun County hold something precious: the supreme right to hire, fire, set hours and working conditions, pay rates, holidays, spending priorities, and facility requirements throughout the LCPS organization, which consumes two-thirds of our tax dollars.

[03:49:28] That belongs to us. This school board is elected by the citizens to carry out our will by overseeing and directing the operation of LCPS. The Loudoun Education Association is in this room salivating to have their way with us. You can tell who they are. They're the ones, once again, who are dressed in communist Democrat red. However, neither you all nor those who will replace you in January own the powers that we delegated to you temporarily. Not owning them, you also have no right to give them away to a big business, whether the Loudoun Education Association or any other teachers union.

[03:50:01] Please do not participate or condone the rape of the Loudoun citizens. Please tell the LEA to zip up their pants and move along. Thank you. Thank you. Erica Harris to be followed by Nikki Corson. Nikki Corson to be followed by Susan Cox.

[03:50:27] Hi, I'm Nikki Corson, English teacher at Heritage High School, Dominion teacher and parent before that, and sponsor of the Jewish Student Union while at each school.

[03:50:46] Both are no place for hate schools where relationships with the Muslim Student Association is an important one. I am so disheartened to see the current divide. This is a big conflict with big feelings attached to it. Students don't always know the best way to handle and articulate these emotions to avoid being inflammatory and hurtful.

[03:51:06] I very much appreciate that LCPS has put a value on freedom of speech while also warning against the use of words and messages that do convey blame, spark fear, and alienate others. In fact, students have been using this inflammatory messaging, and it has caused hurt.

[03:51:26] Even tonight, the words genocide and from the river to the sea are being defended. As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I can't even begin to describe what hearing those words feels like, especially when the attack of October 7th is being left out of the conversation.

[03:51:50] In fact, both antisemitic and Islamophobic hate speech have surged dramatically across the country. LCPS should not be a part of that. Many Jewish students are hiding their identities and staying silent. My JSU students were even turned away when they reached out on a humanitarian level.

[03:52:06] Local anti-Semitic incidents often go unreported out of fear or are not shared with the community in the same way other hate speech is. I know this is not the intended outcome from using these words, but it is happening. And using them is not in alignment with the LCPS equity vision of empathy and inclusion.

[03:52:24] I do join the Muslim community in advocating for conversations between these two affected groups and agree that it must be addressed. Above all, we are people, neighbors and classmates, all human, but we need help because this is bigger than all of us. We need more guidance from our school system.

[03:52:40] Teachers need to know what to say if the topic comes up in class. - Thank you. - Susan Cox, to be followed by Yolanda Lemon. - Oh, a little current events.

[03:52:55] Education Secretary Miguel Cardona yesterday said, quote, I think it was President Reagan who said, "We're from the government, we're here to help." By leaving off the first part of Reagan's words, he either ignorantly or intentionally changed the meaning of the quote.

[03:53:12] Here's the actual quote. Quote, the nine most terrifying words in the English language are, I'm from the government and I'm here to help. Unquote. Can our education secretary really be that ignorant of history or is he a bad actor in trying to rewrite history and teach untruths?

[03:53:28] Was it opposite day? If it wasn't so sad, it might be funny. It's disturbing in 1984 ways. Are we an idiocracy where our educators, secretary, and our leaders get it so wrong?

[03:53:46] Completely opposite. Clearly the best and the brightest aren't being picked for leadership positions. We are told our borders are secure. They're not. We are told no one was sexually assaulted in a bathroom. There was. We were told you want to build trust and be transparent, and yet it took over two weeks to notify the community about the fentanyl overdoses.

[03:54:07] We are worried for our children, our community, our country. We are worried about oppression, oppressed narratives, DEI, dropped literacy rates, wasted money that's being spent. If the people don't hold you to account, who will? When the government doesn't act in accountable ways, I really understand the former President Reagan's message, quote, "Government is not the solution to our problem.

[03:54:31] Government is the problem," unquote. So, quote, freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction, unquote. Former President Ronald Reagan, can't we all unite to keep America's freedoms alive and well from this day forward?

[03:54:51] Free speech is necessary for everyone and respectful debate. Thankful. Thank you. Thank you. Yolanda Lemon, to be followed by Brian Davison. Good evening. My name is Yolanda, and I am the president of Christian Educators Empowerment Group.

[03:55:18] In a recent Loudoun County School Board meeting, the Loudoun Education Association, LEA, raised concerns about the draft collective bargaining resolution, particularly the requirement for a majority vote from all LCPS teachers to become the exclusive representative.

[03:55:37] To those unfamiliar with unions, this may come as a shock. But in most union elections, tallies are based only on the number of people who show up to vote, not the size of the bargaining unit. So if

there are 500 teachers in a bargaining unit, but only 10 show up to vote and six of them vote for union representation, the other 494 teachers are stuck with the unions too.

[03:56:07] This means the LEA wants to represent all teachers with just a majority of those who vote, leaving the rest subject to their decisions, raising questions of fairness and representation. As a teacher in the Loudoun County public school system, I, along with many other colleagues, seek an election-free from union coercion.

[03:56:31] Requiring a majority vote from the entire bargaining unit is not only a reasonable request, but the only way to ensure a truly fair election. Unlike the financially well-supported LEA leadership with ties to larger educational associations, Loudon teachers are solely educators.

[03:56:53] We are concerned about LEA's deceptive practices that complicate an already intricate issue. Our focus is on performing our jobs and supporting our students, not navigating unnecessary complexities. Let's reconsider the draft resolution, which only demands LEA to earn half of our votes to represent all teachers.

[03:57:16] If this raises concerns for them, it prompts a legitimate question. Thank you. Brian Davison, to be followed by Suzanne Satterfield. Good evening.

[03:57:32] I'm shocked to see Atusa Reaser actually showed up for her job today. Superintendent Spence, last week I asked you about Title I and about how your administrators were lying about its intent. Have you gotten back to them and corrected them on where Title I funds can be used?

[03:57:49] So if it's not school-wide, or why is Willoughby still employed today? And she refuses to answer Ms. Polifco's question, honestly. Second, so y'all got an award for a real-time student assessment dashboard. Harris, how long have you been asking your staff to build a dashboard?

[03:58:07] You're on your way out, and they still haven't built it. Every single one of them basically gives you the finger at every meeting, and you just sit there and take it. You should fire this entire staff. Next, student education is about political events.

[03:58:23] And I see we have the pro-Hamas and pro-terrorist organizations up here commenting. Excuse me. Please refrain from commenting during other people's public comments. Thank you. So I think it's important to educate the students about what has actually gone on about the event.

[03:58:40] Around 1947, 1948, the UN provided a two-state solution. And who didn't like it? The Palestinians. They thought they could beat the Israelis. and they got whipped even when they brought Arab armies in. So ever since then, they've lost their homeland. Now, how hated are the Palestinians around the Middle East?

[03:58:58] There is not a single Arab country who will let one of them in. None of them can come in as refugees because they are hated. Now, we have warships in the Middle East to go rescue the hostages that Hamas took. This woman over here said, my country, when she described herself as a Palestinian American, but she's referring to quote-unquote Palestine.

[03:59:19] Do you think they would go serve our military and rescue American hostages in Hamas' hands? This is what our students have to deal with. And the notion that they represent America, why were they even allowed in here? It's a requirement that they stand for American values.

[03:59:35] So students, don't you be confused by these pro, including the LEA who supports this Marxist nonsense. Thank you. Please remain silent during public comment. Thank you. Excuse me. Please remain silent during public comment.

[03:59:51] Excuse me. If we don't restore order, we're going to take a recess before resuming public comment. Please be silent during public comment. Thank you. You don't come often, but he's asked you several times. He's asked you.

[04:00:10] Excuse me. Please stop. Excuse me. Suzanne Satterfield, please. Thank you. In less than 90 days on the job, Spence is failing to build trust-informed relationships by playing games with the school board, the public, and the press. He must be reminded that he is a public employee hired by the school board, paid for by the taxpayers.

[04:00:31] He is not in charge of the school board. He and his staff are to work with the school board in the best interest of the students. He is already hidden behind the policy claiming a school board member's request for information will take more than an hour, therefore refusing to do the work, refusing to be transparent.

[04:00:49] Senior staff claims they don't have info during committee meetings like a number of students enrolled in a particular class, so it gets pushed off until the next meeting which is a month later. No wonder nothing gets done. He lashed out at a respected member of the press criticizing his approach to journalism.

[04:01:06] FOIA requests are still being ignored. Admin staff continues to think money grows on trees when asking the board of supervisors for up to an additional \$131 million for 2024-25 even though enrollment is down 2,000 since students from 2019 when all of the SEL and equity started rolling in. He claims that he needs the VDOE to give him guidance on reporting drug overdoses, yet he states over and over that he's unsure of the legality of Governor Yunkin's model policies, which were backed by the VDOE.

[04:01:41] In March, a father of two children in LCPS stated that his daughter was a victim of anti-Semitic slurs and did not feel properly was handled by LCPS, but a sixth grade transgender special ed student had been well loved by staff. Under Spence, nothing's improved. LCPS looks the other way when it comes to anti-Semitism and love bombs gender questioning students. Shame on you.

[04:02:07] It's time to end the political walkouts. Staff must also keep their political beliefs and ideologies to themselves. No, Mr. Spence. It's not the First Amendment right to do that on the job.

[04:02:18] Thank you. Jessica Smith to be followed by Andrea Weiskopf. Andrea Weiskopf to be followed by

[04:02:55] Jessica Smith. The only thing between the river and the sea are Jews. My name is Andrea Weiskopf.

[04:03:14] I am of Jewish descent and a survivor of actual sexual assault. Collective bargaining is not sexual assault. A number of LCPS administrators in this building have told me, sub Rosa, that they support my advocacy. But when a building principal decided that his teachers should sit still look pretty and put a letter in my file, no one in this building had my back. When I had to defend and advocating for marginalized students, only the Loudoun Education Association advocated

[04:03:53] for me. And now I am advocating for the LEA. LCPS has pushed forward anti-educator policies, such as Policy 7030, and they have done so with this board's support.

[04:04:10] This board has betrayed its educators. members have claimed not to be responsible for the collective bargaining insult put forward by LCPS, but you are the school board and the buck stops with you. You have had months to address collective bargaining. You did not. Now you need to remove the expiration dates on the cards and let us collaborate with the new school board. You have failed your educators. Black Lives Matter.

[04:04:49] Thank you. And Jessica Smith is our final in-person speaker, and then we'll begin on our virtual speakers. This morning, 911 dispatch received a call from the SRO stationed at the North Star School.

[04:05:10] A 15-year-old female, unconscious, unresponsive, in the bathroom. Three doses of Narcan were administered before heading to the emergency room. The cause was a vape pen that was apparently laced with an opioid.

[04:05:27] Thank God this student was in a normal stall bathroom and not a floor-to-ceiling room. Or you would have a death investigation on your hands. The floor-to-ceiling bathroom renovation program needs to stop now.

[04:05:48] You are all jeopardizing the safety of our students who make poor decisions. We know through science, adolescents' brains are guided more by emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex.

[04:06:09] Spence, you have failed at every turn to communicate, to be proactive concerning these opioid poisonings. You were not present at the one and only fentanyl awareness meeting at Parkview a few weeks ago. You would not entertain legitimate questions by a local media concerning why you did nothing when you knew about the epidemic of overdoses occurring at many of our schools.

[04:06:36] You refused to respond to questions concerning the overdoses by a school board member, Corbo, because it was going to take more than an hour of time. This fact alone should wake parents up to know that their students are not safe behind Loudoun County Public Schools. What will it take for you to act and be responsive concerning these opioid poisonings? At what cost? A death? Thank you. We'll now start with our virtual speakers.

[04:07:14] The first virtual speaker is Mariam Fazal. I'm sorry, can you hear me?

[04:07:45] Yes, go ahead. Okay, sorry. Okay, thank you. So I wanted to talk about freedom of speech and the right of freedom of speech. I wanted to make people understand that from the call from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free is a call for freedom of people under apartheid. Imagine being so offended by a rallying cry for freedom. This same sentiment has been used from the same slogan, Black Lives Matter. People are so offended that they started saying all lives matter. It doesn't mean that all lives don't matter. It just means that black lives do matter. The same thing is with from the river to the sea. It just means that Palestine will be free. And it's hypocritical to say otherwise

[04:08:25] because the Likud party, which is the ruling party, won 62% in Israel, also has that same statement in their charter. It says, from the river to the sea, from the river to Jordan, Israel will have sovereignty. It's the same statement. So to be offended by one party's statement and not by the other party

is just hypocrisy at its finest. Also, Nelson Mandela also said that South Africa is not free. We are all not free until Palestine is free.

[04:08:52] Nelson Mandela said that. I also want to talk about students' right for freedom of speech and to be wearing Palestinian colors and for their right to speak. It was the year of 1969 when the Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that students do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.

[04:09:13] This case came about from the Vietnam War in Tinker v. Des Moines. If LCPS continues to silence students and in their right to speak freely, then they are asking for a lawsuit. We can just ask Scott Smith about this.

[04:09:29] That's all. Thank you. Scott Pakula. Good evening.

[04:09:49] I'm here for advocating for virtual distance elementary. As budget discussions are coming up about April 25th, when the motion was voted down to simply figure out how to fund the virtual distance elementary program. At the time, board members explained to us that you were \$16 million in the hole.

[04:10:10] The program had low attendance and that the community wasn't advocating at the right time in the budget cycle when we advocated for that program. I wanted to remind you all that there was a constant stream of folks, sometimes it was as high as 20 to 30, asking the school board to continue the program.

[04:10:28] But you have to understand that after your 20th time coming to these school board meetings, asking you guys to reinstate this program, you have to understand that it's, you know, it feels futile at a certain point. Virtual Distance Elementary was funded by LCPS, you know, using the COVID funds, and they hired 20-some teachers for the program. And then, you know, as COVID kind of died down and people start returning the in-person learning, that staffing numbers didn't change. So the question I have for the school board is that I understand you were thrown around the 3.2 million, but understanding that the

[04:11:05] number of students went down wouldn't it seem obvious that you could just simply you know reduce staff to kind of you know meet the demand of what you know you know folks need to kind of accommodate this program i mean now's the time i mean the budget cycle is coming up and i hope in your information segment you revisit the motion to fund a virtual distance elementary as an option for any student in loudon county that would like to attend virtually thank you thank you and our

[04:11:32] final virtual speaker tonight is Ki Pan. Good evening. Good evening. Please bring back virtual distance learning elementary. VDE was the only program that offers full day synchronous learning for our students. Synchronous learning means that the students and teachers interact in real time using online platform and tools. In this way students can benefit from the social and academic

[04:12:09] aspects of our classroom. Since the closure of the virtual distance learning elementary, families have been left without any support or guidance from the school system. Many left the school system needing to find alternative ways to provide a proper education to their children, given their unique circumstances this is unfair and unacceptable we need to bring back vde

[04:12:41] thank you thank you and that will conclude public comment for today board members at this time we're going to take a short recess please be back ready to go at 8 25 the board is now in recess

[04:24:08] the board is coming out of recess and we will pick up with our election our action items starting with 1101 from the HRTD committee, revisions to policy 7030 staff time schedules. Ms. Okadekbe.

[04:24:25] Thank you, Chair. I move that the Loudoun County School Board accept the revisions to policy 7030 staff time schedules. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Morris. Ms. Okadekbe, would you like to speak to your motion? Thank you so much, yes. As I mentioned last time, I am also offering an amendment that I would like to share now.

[04:24:50] So I would like to move that the policy as revised in board docs is revised as follows. On the red line version, at line 192, add the following language, new section D.

[04:25:06] for the purposes for the purpose of this policy occasionally means infrequent not routinely scheduled supervisors principals may have teachers school-based staff arrive before students or remain after dismissal dismissal occasionally to participate in professional development which supports the employee in their learning and role specific to their job meet with parents usually done once in the first quarter at the elementary level and mostly during a teacher workday and or

[04:25:41] for a whole school staff meeting to receive information relative to the work site. Such meetings opportunities are usually not more than once per month and not every month with the exception of a staff meeting and I just to clarify this should be at line 56. The Ms. Okadekby, the entire section that you read should be inserted at line 56 of the red line?

[04:26:15] Yeah, let me just get back to that because I have my notes in another thing. Yes, that's correct. Okay, is there a second for the amendment? Second. Seconded by, I think Ms. Reeser was first, seconded by Ms. Reeser.

[04:26:31] Ms. Okadekby, does the clerk have the language that you're proposing to enter? Yes, she does. Okay, thank you. And if I may speak to the amendment. Yes, go ahead. I just wanted to ask that first, but yes, go ahead and speak to your amendment. I did email it earlier. I just want to recognize that none of this is necessarily perfect.

[04:26:52] This policy dates back to prior to our summer break. I believe we first started talking about this policy in May. There's been a lot of discussion about the word occasionally, which was introduced in an effort to further limit the instances of times at which staff are asked to work beyond their regularly scheduled times.

[04:27:16] It's also offered with this additional language to make clear to both staff and supervisors when those requests become excessive that there is specific guidance not just in regulation or practice but in policy that staff and supervisors can look to if there are complaints or disputes from an employee about excessive requests for working beyond regularly scheduled time. Thank you. Thank you. Additional discussion

[04:27:52] on the amendment. Mr. Morse. I would like to find out what the thought is from either a current principal or a principal who was recently a principal as to the restrictive nature of the language and whether, you know, we're in a reasonable area or whether it's considered potentially too restrictive for them to conduct day-to-day operations in the school. Is there a principal who can speak to that or a staff member from their recollection? Because the language

[04:28:29] talks about once per month, but not every month. And I don't know that that's adequate. So could staff please speak to that? Dr. Smith. Yeah. I mean, it'd be tough for staff to speak to it because they just heard the amendment and it was pretty long. So I think the, I didn't hear a lot in there that concern me in terms of like how we would often use time as a principal with staff after after school hours for example but i also maybe we need to read it again because i want to

[04:29:08] make sure that there's not to your point that it would be overly restrictive for a principal who says hey i have this thing that came up and i really need to meet with my staff or i really need a teacher to do this for me and they no longer have the opportunity to do that i'll reread And then I also want to share that this language came directly from HRTD as language that was developed to be sent out as guidance when the policy was approved.

[04:29:38] So just the language was not my own. So again, at line 56, the suggestion is to add a new section D for the purpose of this policy, occasionally means infrequent, not routinely scheduled.

[04:29:57] supervisors and then in parentheses principals may have teachers slash school-based staff arrive before students or remain after dismissal occasionally to participate in professional development which supports the employee and their learning and role specific to their job meet with parents usually done once in the first quarter at the elementary level and mostly during a teacher workday and or for a whole school staff meeting to receive information

[04:30:32] relative to the work site. Such meetings opportunities are usually not more than once per month and not every month with the exception of a staff meeting. Mr. Morris. Thank you Mr. Chair.

[04:30:50] So what it sounds like is you've restricted the possibilities to those four tasks one of them being, let's see, to participate in professional development, which supports the employee in their learning and roles specific to their job, to meet with parents in a whole school meeting. So those are the only three opportunities given. It doesn't say such as, it identifies three. So is it your

[04:31:25] intent by this language to limit principal's ability to have employees stay after for any other purpose other than those three. Additional discussion? So I will say again, I'm open to a suggestion if there's a further clarification of language, but I don't think that we should pass a policy with a word that nobody understands what it means. So if adding the words such as

[04:32:03] would satisfy that need, again, I think there's been a lot of conversation and there isn't a perfect or clear answer and this was an attempt to make sure that there was at least additional clarity on what has just been a very long conversation about the word occasionally oh dr. Spence so I appreciate that I'm pulled this up so

[04:32:40] thank you for the clarification that this came from staff apparently you got this in June when there was some question about wanting some clarification around what guidance we might provide to principals. So I'll give you an example based on the language that you just used that pops into my mind and the example is back to school nights. They're not contemplated in this language and so that would be a challenge with limiting language to say principal would now like okay based on this policy can I ask a teacher to stay for back to school nights. Oftentimes we ask teachers to help cover school dances that's not

[04:33:20] covered in here and so we would have no staff chaperones for school dances we wouldn't I mean I think this there's I think I guess the point is I think there are some unintended consequences to the language and at the very least there would need to be something that would be more inclusive in saying

these are some examples but it is not limited to so that we could at least point to our principals to say now you know this is the typical expectation but there are other times when you may want staff to stay around and help or come to back to

[04:33:56] school night I mean that's certainly an important one I mean so anyway that's kind of my two cents on that based on just the language that I'm looking at here on the screen miss Okedekbe so if I if I can offer if I can offer this then so if I'll just reread this again and I can send it electronically but for the purposes of this policy occasionally means infrequent not routinely scheduled supervisors

[04:34:32] principals may have teachers school-based staff arrive before students or remain after dismissal occasionally for activities such as but not limited to participating in professional development and the rest of the language would remain the same so without objection the maker of the motion for the amendment will be so modified.

[04:35:02] So additional discussion, Mr. Morrison? And I will support that amendment. Thank you. Additional discussion? Seeing none, we will proceed to a vote.

[04:35:21] I'm going to read what I have on my end one more time just to make sure we've got it straight. So it says the new Section D inserted at line 56. Yeah, line 56 of the red line would read, the purpose of this policy occasional means infrequent not routinely scheduled supervisors principals may have teachers slash school-based staff arrive before students or remain after dismissal occasionally for activities such as but not limited to to participate in professional development which supports the employee in their learning and specific role to their job

[04:36:01] meet with parents usually done once in the first quarter at the elementary level and mostly during a teacher workday and or for a whole school staff meeting to receive information relative to the work site such meeting opportunities are usually not more than once per month and not every month with the exception of a staff meeting I'm actually going to offer an amendment to this because I think even even including the language you know such as but not limited to like explicitly leaving back to school night off this list seems like an omission

[04:36:35] for one of the most common things that are outside normal working hours. So after such as, but not limited to, I'm going to move to amend by adding the language back to school night.

[04:36:55] Second. So seconded by Ms. Okedegbe. I think I covered it, and so I'm not going to speak any further to it. Is there any additional discussion on my amendment?

[04:37:14] Ms. Okadegbe? This is so minor, but to participate would then be changed to participating. I'm sorry, can you say that one more time? Instead of, since participating in professional development comes next, instead of, you have limited to back-to-school nights and then participating in.

[04:37:36] Oh, so you're saying to add it. Take out the two and make it, yep, grammatical change. One moment. Okay, so I will, without objection, I will modify my amendment so that that phrase now reads, for activities such as, but not limited to, participating in back-to-school nights, professional development, and so on.

[04:38:05] Is there any additional discussion on the amendment to add the back-to-school night language? Seeing none, we'll proceed to a vote, and it's just for that. This is solely for the addition of the back-to-school language, and then we'll be back to Ms. Okedegbe's amendment after that.

[04:38:24] So the voting board is open. Please go ahead and record your vote at this time. Ms. Corbo, what is your vote on the amendment? Yes. And Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote on the amendment? Yes. Okay. Clerk, please record a vote of yes for both Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Corbo.

[04:38:52] And please go ahead and close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously. So now we're back to the Ms. Okedegbe's amendment to, for that paragraph as amended.

[04:39:12] Is there additional discussion, Mr. Mahedby? Thank you, Chair. So I guess I have a question for Dr. Spencer. The last line, I think, which is still there, right, Mr. Sirotkin, such meeting opportunities are usually not more than once per month and not every month with the exception of a staff meeting.

[04:39:31] So is that limiting to one or just saying just such as? It's the language that I have for that sentence is such meetings slash opportunities are usually not more than once per month and not every month with the exception of a staff meeting. So I would read that as it could be more than once a month, but that wouldn't be the norm.

[04:39:52] But I would defer to the maker of that motion if they have a different interpretation of that. No. Okay. Any additional discussion on the amendment to add the paragraph as amended? Seeing none, we will proceed to a vote on that.

[04:40:10] if we can open the voting board. And board members, please record your vote at this time. Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote on the amendment? Yes. And Ms. Corbo, what is your vote on the amendment? Yes. Okay. Clerk, please record a vote of yes for both Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Corbo, and then please close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously. We are now back to the base motion to adopt the revisions to policy 70-30 staff time schedules as amended. Is there

[04:40:49] any additional discussion? Seeing none, we will go ahead and open the voting board. And board members, please record your vote. And Ms. Corbo, what is your vote on the base motion? Yes. And Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote? Yes. Please record a vote of yes for both Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Corbo, and then close and display the vote. That motion will pass 8-1 with Reeser opposed.

[04:41:18] We're now on 1102 from the HRTD committee, revisions to policy 7714, personal leave. Ms. Okedekbe. Thank you, Chair.

[04:41:36] I move that the Loudoun County School Board accept the revisions to policy 7714, personal leave. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Morris.

[04:41:52] Ms. Okedekbe, would you like to speak to your motion? We reviewed this last time. I will just note that the motion in Board Docs is a holdover from HRTD, so that should be updated in the minutes from today.

[04:42:10] This policy, the changes here were to add a Section C that addresses how days are prorated, and that's really the only change.

[04:42:27] There was, I know we discussed this last time, there was very little discussion and no questions. Is there any additional discussion on the changes to policy 7714? Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[04:42:45] So at line, excuse me, at line 36, it states employees who have resigned and overused their earned personal leave will be charged in their final paycheck and or will be invoiced for any amounts not recouped. Does that mean if an employee is terminated, this wouldn't apply?

[04:43:06] I think that's a question for staff. I'm sorry, Ms. Reeser. Can you tell me what line you're on again? Sure. It's in Section C, Line 36 to 37. It talks about an employee who has resigned and overused personal leave would be charged.

[04:43:27] And since it says resigned, I just wanted to check and see if terminated was intentionally omitted from this change. Mr. Chair. I don't think terminated was omitted.

[04:43:48] It just wasn't included or specifically spelled out previously, but we would absolutely want to recoup the funds if they were terminated as well, so we could add terminated also. I'm not suggesting an amendment, but I was just asking for clarification.

[04:44:07] I actually would be more likely to support the policy as written than with the amendment, but I'll leave it. I was just going to ask a question. It says late start or early release. Would early release cover termination?

[04:44:24] An early release could absolutely cover termination. An early release really here is in regards to the early release if we allowed a teacher to be released from their contract terms.

[04:44:45] But it could absolutely cover termination. So, Ms. Reeser, you'd prefer to have termination in there or not? No, I just don't. I'm not going to support this provision. At all, really. I think that we probably shouldn't be in the business of trying to recoup money for personal days that have been used as a benefit that we give our employees because they need it at the time that they take it.

[04:45:09] And what happens later with their contract or their employment may come out of many different circumstances, and I just don't support the change. I'll just leave it at that. Ms. Boland. So if I could just clarify, part of why this was added was to, at the request of committee to make sure that we were clarifying and being transparent with employees, this is a practice that is already done because we front load benefits.

[04:45:40] So they would have used leave prior to it actually being earned. That is the only time we would attempt to recuperate. not after they've already earned the leave. No, I appreciate the clarification.

[04:45:59] So what kind of educating are we doing when we onboard someone around that? Or when our employees are taking that leave, at the time that they're taking it before they've actually accrued it, is there some notification of that fact each time it occurs?

[04:46:16] So there's not a notification each time that it occurs. At the time of hire, they are informed of how the leave works, how they earn it, when they accrue it, how we do front load it on July 1st after the first year, and what would happen if they were to leave before that leave was earned.

[04:46:36] Okay, thank you. Additional discussion, Ms. Ogedegbe. So I'll just say from my experience, this is pretty standard in organizations that front load leave. If you can take and have the flexibility to take leave before you've earned it, It's always with the understanding that if you leave early for any reason, you would, you know, owe back your employer the basically the compensation for leave that you hadn't accrued.

[04:47:12] So I would actually offer an amendment. And I think, you know, there are many ways in which employees leave employment. It could be resignations.

[04:47:29] It could be termination. It could be retirement. and would offer on line 36 an amendment which states that employees who leave their employment with LCPS and had overused their earned

personal leave will be charged in their final paycheck or will be invoiced.

[04:47:58] I will second that amendment. Would you like to speak any further to your amendment? I mean, I think it's clear, and again, this is a standard practice. I think with every employer I've worked for in my career, that's too long to say right now, but I just think that if you use leave before you've earned it, the expectation is you owe your employer for that time.

[04:48:24] And I would agree with that, and that's been standard in any company I've worked for or dealt with as well, so I will support that amendment. Any additional discussion? Ms. Reeser? Thank you, Ms. Boland, for the additional clarification that it's front-loaded.

[04:48:42] I appreciate that. Additional discussion? So this is on Ms. Okedegbe's amendment. Could you just read that amendment one more time? I didn't write it down, but it would be employees who leave.

[04:49:02] Have left. Who have left LCPS and overused their earned personal leave. So employees who have left LCPS. So replace the word resigned with the words left LCPS.

[04:49:25] At this time, we'll proceed to the vote. Please open the voting board, and then board members, please record your vote. And Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote on the amendment? Yes. And Ms. Corbo, what is your vote on the amendment?

[04:49:41] Yes. Please record votes of yes for Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Corbo, and then close and display the vote. That amendment will pass unanimously. We're now back to the base motion to adopt the revisions to policy 7714 as amended.

[04:50:00] Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, we'll proceed to the vote. Board members, please record your vote. And Ms. Corbo, what is your vote? Yes. And Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote?

[04:50:16] Yes. Please record a vote of yes for both Ms. Corbo and Ms. Sheridan, and then please close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously. We'll now move on to our final action item from the Specialized Programs and Centers Committee, Middleburg Community Charter Schools External Audit Results and Recommendation.

[04:50:39] Ms. Shardin. - Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the Loudoun County School Board remove Middleburg Community Charter School from probation under the conditions of continued attendance by MCCS to the LCPS Principal Meetings and the LCPS Fast Forums.

[04:50:56] - Is there a second? - Second. - Seconded by Mr. Morse. Ms. Shardin, would you like to speak to your motion? Yes, I'll just reiterate that MCCS has met many of the requirements for improving their records and financial keeping and have come into compliance with our recommendations previously stated from staff and met those requirements in the last audit, and they're working towards continuing that.

[04:51:23] And so the committee did recommend to remove them from probation. and I believe at the last meeting you wanted to do this in a formal vote and not just put it on consent. That's right I thought it was I thought it was only fair given that the formal way that they were put on probation that we extend them the same courtesy when taking them off of probation and I as long as I'm speaking I do want to commend Middleburg Charter for their efforts to reduce the number of audit findings and come in compliance with the audit results. I will note

[04:51:58] that they did still have two audit findings that were repetitive and were from previous audits, but were noted in previous audits, but they are. It is a significant improvement over where they were before, and it's clear that they've been making efforts to improve. Is there any further discussion? Mr. Chair, if I, sorry, could I finish? I was going to. Oh, I apologize. Yes, go ahead. I just wanted, and I will, it'll be an add-on now. I'd also like to commend our staff that has worked with them diligently to help them through the process and get them to a point where we could consider removing them from probation. So I think it would be appropriate to also thank

[04:52:36] the staff that has worked with them. Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I see here noted in board docs that on, I know we had a lot of discussion in April around whether they needed to be put on probation or not, because there was a, another review pending that happened on May 16th. On May 16th, in board docs, it says that the two on-site financial internal audits were presented highlighting that continued financial concern was still ongoing. So I think

[04:53:13] we definitely made the right decision. And I'm wondering if looking at these notes in board docs on September 29th of 2023, it says that there were still two opportunities identified for improvement. So what evidence do we have that it wasn't just the mere fact that they were on probation that caused this improvement? In other words, what evidence do we have that taking them off of probation wouldn't just put us back where we started? Because it seems to me that the only

[04:53:49] difference is the fact that they were on probation, that these improvements occurred because of the probation. So why wouldn't we continue with that? Mr. Morse? I don't know. That's kind of a scary question, because like a criminal who goes to jail, and you say, well, if they didn't commit any crimes, what evidence do we have that being in jail was the reason they didn't commit any more crimes? Well, that's what probation is about, because you believe that they've addressed their

[04:54:24] problems, that they are headed down the right track, and that they deserve probation. So that's kind of the way I was viewing this. Ms. Reeser. So rather than engaging in a hypothetical, I'd just like to know if anyone has an answer to the actual question. If there are still ongoing opportunities for strengthening, I read that to be a polite way of saying that there are still problems ongoing. Are there still ongoing problems? Ms. Willoughby. Thank you. When staff first brought

[04:54:55] this to the SPC committee, there were ongoing multi-year repetitive high risk concerns that we were sharing. The remediation actions that Middle Board Charter has taken have resulted in a more positive external audit. The two remaining deficiencies, while they escape exactly what they were, I do remember though that they were of lower risk. So while they were also previously

[04:55:31] identified ongoing concerns, that they were of a lower risk, which also led to the recommendation to remove them from probation. I appreciate that, Ms. Willoughby, but it says here that these two items are repetitive deficiencies from the previous year.

[04:55:51] So whether the level of risk is high or low, the fact that even on probation, there continued to be repetitive deficiencies leads me to believe that the probation should continue and I will not support the motion. Thank you. Sir, any additional discussion on the motion?

[04:56:12] Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the questions that we need to be asking are, one, what was the criteria for MCCA to be removed from probation? And two, did they meet that criteria? Do we have that information readily available for the board this evening?

[04:56:30] I do not have all the specifics available, as I was under the impression from the last meeting that there were no additional concerns in that this was only being brought as action as Mr. Strachan mentioned to give the same opportunity of highlighting removing them from probation versus it going on to consent.

[04:56:55] So I do not have that specific information in front of me at this time. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. So if we are not sure if they have met criteria, I'm confused as to why we would be voting to remove them from probation.

[04:57:12] My understanding is that they met criteria in order to be in this position right now, which is the board's consideration to remove them from probation. Maybe another individual on the board is able to speak to that. My understanding is that MCCS had done what was required of them by LCPS to be removed from probation at this point in time.

[04:57:37] If I may, Chair, while I don't have the specifics, what I can share again from the beginning is that there had been a multi-year concern from the external annual audit that staff brought concerns to the SPC committee based on our internal audit matrix.

[04:57:55] That audit matrix is a matrix that identifies different deficiencies that may occur during the annual audit that is performed by our external audit company with each one of our individual schools.

[04:58:11] So all 98, 99 schools undergo an external audit. The decision to bring the recommendation forward was that even though it was a charter school and has its own separate board and operations, that the financial responsibility and oversight is still under the purview of the school board.

[04:58:32] So we wanted to treat them the same. Based on that audit matrix, the volume and the severity of the risk is what led staff to bring forward the concerns and the school board ultimately placing Middleburg Charter on probation.

[04:58:49] Since then, the remediation plan involved a series of internal unannounced reviews or audits that were performed. We saw corrective action being taken.

[04:59:09] We worked diligently with them, with Middleburg Charter, in addition to seeing them also taking the concerns much more seriously than they had previously. The big final action was this year's or the FY23 external audit that resulted in finding just the two deficiencies.

[04:59:33] And again, those two remaining deficiencies were a much lower risk based on our audit matrix. Therefore, based on all those actions, that was what led us to the recommendation, removing them from probation the next opportunity for review would be next year's external audit so while I can understand some of the concern of removing them from probation and that there is a risk associated with that I see that risk being low based on what we have seen and no different than any

[05:00:08] risk we have with any of our other schools and their individual annual audits. Is there any additional discussion? Seeing none, we will proceed to the vote, which is to remove Middleburg Charter Community School from probation under the conditions of continued attendance by MCCS to the LCPS principal meetings and the LCPS fast forums. Board members, please

[05:00:38] go ahead and record your vote at this time. And Ms. Corbo, what is your vote? Yes. And Ms. Sheridan, what is your vote yes one moment please do you can can you clear the vote just so we is that

[05:01:15] possible okay so just go ahead and record your vote one more time it'll change your vote i just want to make sure we have everyone recorded correctly and please please go ahead and close and display the vote that motion will pass 8-1 with reaser opposed so that will conclude our

[05:01:47] action items and we're now going to pick up our remaining item from the work session which is item 403 collective bargaining resolution misery sir it from the legislative and policy committee although not marked that way on the agenda well thank you mr. chair the legislative and policy committee was tasked by the school board to recommend a draft collective bargaining resolution

[05:02:24] for consideration by the board by the end of this calendar year. This came to the LMP committee at the end of March, where we began by having the Loudoun Education Association present to us their proposed resolution.

[05:02:44] And we had to take a break for a little while from working on the collective bargaining resolution in order to develop our legislative program for the Loudoun delegation to the General Assembly. And we recommenced work in earnest in the LNP committee earlier this fall.

[05:03:07] There were substantial changes made to several provisions of the draft policy, and it came back to committee last night where it was passed out of committee with a recommendation for adoption to the school board. And this evening, we have both Mr. Allen and Ms. Johnson, together with Dr. Smith, ready to present the draft resolution.

[05:03:34] Thank you, Ms. Reeser. While it would be customary to have our outside counsel who have appreciable experience in the area of collective bargaining to be here tonight, they had unavoidable conflicts. That said, I'm glad to walk the board through and outline the current draft collective bargaining resolution the board has before it and answer any questions the board members may have.

[05:03:55] I'm joined here today by Christy Johnson, HRTD Associate Counsel, who has experience in the field of collective bargaining. What you have before you is the LCPS draft resolution providing for collective bargaining as recommended by the Legislative and Policy Committee, which I'll refer to as LMP Committee.

[05:04:13] It includes recitals, definitions, including bargaining units and scope of bargaining, the rights of employees and employer, the duties and rights of the exclusive bargaining representative, certification and decertification procedures for the exclusive bargaining representative, procedures for the collective bargaining agreements and resolving issues, and prohibited conduct and resolution procedures.

[05:04:41] With the understanding that this is the first time that many of you are first reviewing this draft resolution, I'm glad to provide you an opportunity to review and ask questions, either to Ms. Johnson and me or to members of the LMP committee who have more familiarity with this document.

[05:04:57] The objective of tonight's work session is to provide the board at large an opportunity to review and ask questions to inform next steps. I'm also glad to walk you through certain decision points that the LMP committee reviewed and ultimately came to a decision on, which are incorporated in the draft you have before you.

[05:05:17] So with that overview, I'll hand it back to the board for direction. Thank you, Mr. Allen. I will defer to the board chair. My understanding was that you were ready to present an overview of the collective bargaining, the resolution that passed out of committee.

[05:05:44] Is that correct? Yes, that's fine. I'll walk through the decision points at this time if we can go through each section by section. I think that would be helpful, and also just the general major points of what the resolution is, what the different sections are, and what the recommendations of the committee were.

[05:06:08] Certainly. Thank you, Chair. Section 1, as you'll see, includes the definitions, which provides for the various potential bargaining units. You'll also see that it defines the bargaining units to mean a group of employees who share a community of interest and may reasonably be grouped together for purposes of collective bargaining.

[05:06:30] One decision point that the LMP committee determined concerned the definition of working condition, which is on page 5 at line 156. This involves how negotiated topics or bargaining topics between the exclusive bargaining representative and the board are selected.

[05:06:49] The LMP committee were presented with four options of a working conditions definition. It requested and reviewed data on what other school divisions have included in their collective bargaining resolutions in terms of the number and scope of negotiated topics in bargaining.

[05:07:06] That's what is being projected currently. On page 5 at line 156, you'll see that this definition of working condition provides for a maximum of four topics that are negotiated by the board, by its designated members and or designees, and an exclusive bargaining representative. Only the topics, and again up to four, that are agreed to by the exclusive bargaining representative and the board by its designated members and or designees prior to the commencement of collective bargaining negotiations are what's provided. In each

[05:07:42] successor collective bargaining agreement, the parties, again the board by its designated members and or designees may each make proposals to bargain up to two additional bargaining topics. Section 2 provides for the rights of employees.

[05:08:02] Section 3 provides for the rights of the exclusive bargaining representative. Here to note, you'll see on line 193 through 201, this collective bargaining resolution does provide and afford for the potential opportunity for the exclusive bargaining representative to consult with their individual members.

[05:08:32] On Section 4, that provides for the board's rights and responsibilities, and it should be clarified that this resolution shall not be deemed in any way to limit or diminish the authority of the board through the superintendent to manage and direct the operations and activities of LCPS to the fullest extent required, authorized, and permitted by law.

[05:08:55] It sets forth those items that the board retains exclusive rights and which shall be prohibited subjects of collective bargaining. You'll see there's 13 items there. Section 5 provides for bargaining units.

[05:09:17] You'll see there's two bargaining units identified, certified employees, excluding any administrative employee, confidential employee, temporary employee, athletic coach, intern, or volunteer. And the second is the non-certified employees, excluding any administrative employee, confidential employee, temporary employee, athletic coach, intern, or volunteer.

[05:09:43] Section 6 provides for the labor relations neutral, who will be an impartial adjudicator in various circumstances, and sets forth the roles and duties of the labor relations neutral, who I may refer to as LRN in the future.

[05:10:07] Proceeding to Section 7, this sets forth the certification and decertification of exclusive bargaining representatives. Here, specifically, this provides the procedures on how employees first show their interest in being represented by an employee organization.

[05:10:30] That requires a 30% showing of interest from employers in a particular bargaining unit. An election thereby follows whereby employees in a bargaining unit would vote on whether they want to commit to having a particular potential exclusive bargaining representative serve as the sole exclusive bargaining representative for that bargaining unit.

[05:10:56] Some school divisions have a provision which includes a threshold of employee participation in an election, given that the result of the election would bind all employees in that bargaining unit to that exclusive bargaining representative to which such employees would be paying dues. The LMP committee determined to recommend a collective bargaining resolution without such a provision.

[05:11:18] So what that would look like is that if hypothetically only two employees of a bargaining unit participate in an election between multiple potential exclusive bargaining representatives and they vote for, let's say, one over the other, and there's only two employees from that collective bargaining unit in the vote, they could bind hundreds or thousands of employees within that bargaining unit to the prevailing potential exclusive bargaining representative.

[05:11:56] The next section, 8, which is on page 15, provides for collective bargaining duties and related procedures. This indicates at section A as to when commencement and bargaining begin, and that indicates kind of a timeline that's set forth that accommodates the LCPS budget preparation schedule.

[05:12:21] As you'll see in the last sentence there, failure of the parties to reach agreement by October 1st shall constitute an impasse and automatically trigger impasse resolution procedures under this resolution. Section 9 discusses impasse resolution.

[05:12:42] This was the last decision point that the LMP committee contemplated, and it concerns the process for an impasse resolution. As an initial matter, an impasse is a situation where the parties are unable to reach an agreement concerning the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement.

[05:12:59] That includes an initial collective bargaining agreement and probably any successive ones. The impasse resolution procedure the LMP committee is recommending to the board provides for the following. Given budgetary implications, if by September 15th of the year preceding the commencement of the upcoming fiscal year, either party may declare an impasse.

[05:13:20] It's discretionary and provides for the flexibility that if the parties are close to an agreement, they have time to work together in good faith to finalize a potential agreement. However, this option provides that pursuant to Section 8A of the resolution, which we just reviewed, if an impasse persists through October 1st, that shall automatically trigger an impasse, again due to budgetary implications for the next fiscal year.

[05:13:45] Once an impasse is declared or triggered, either party may seek mediation, for which the parties would share the costs and services equally. The parties shall engage in mediation for a period of 30 days unless the parties mutually agree to extend or terminate the mediation or reach an agreement.

[05:14:07] The mediation process is advisory only, and the mediator shall have no authority to bind either party. If the parties mutually agree to some or all of the matters through collective bargaining and or

mediation, those agreements can be implemented subject to the school board approval.

[05:14:23] If the mediation does not resolve the impasse and the impasse continues past the expiration date of an existing collective bargaining agreement and the terms and conditions of the expired CBA shall remain in effect until the earlier of one of two things, the parties reaching a new agreement or one year from the date the collective bargaining agreement was scheduled to expire.

[05:14:46] As you'll see, notwithstanding all of this, the Board may, in its sole discretion, choose to continue any and all of the provisions of an expired collective bargaining agreement, and the parties can still continue to bargain in good faith or voluntarily reach an agreement during an impasse.

[05:15:02] section 10 outlines the approval process of a tentative agreement section 11 provides for the prohibited conduct and resolution procedures section 12 provides for strikes and lockouts which pursuant to virginia code section 40.1-55 are prohibited section 13 sets forth timelines

[05:15:38] time limits section 4 clarifies computation of time as to uh pursuant to this collective bargaining resolution. Section 15 provides for notices as to who would receive notice for each party. Section 16 discusses severability. If one provision is found to be unenforceable and valid, illegal, that the rest of the provisions will still be deemed valid. And the final section, 17, provides for what happens in a conflict with state or local federal law, how that's resolved,

[05:16:17] and the governing law that's applicable which would be the constitution and laws of the commonwealth of virginia at this time we're glad to entertain questions thank you mr allen for that overview miss reiser anything else you'd want to add as committee chair prior to opening it up i i just want to thank the the staff and the committee members who worked on this um the lea for their input at the beginning and their continued input and working with us to try to improve the document

[05:16:51] that we have i want to thank that miss ogudegbe and and mr mehedaby for coming to some of our committee meetings and weighing in as the work was being done and not just um uh you know waiting until now to um to to help us ask the right questions and um i'll turn it back over to you mr chair all right thank you miss thank you miss reaser board members i'll open it up at this point for questions and discussion.

[05:17:23] Mr. Morse. Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of discussion about the 24-month cycle with the signatures, signature cards. Can someone walk us through what the deadline is tied to? And my understanding is that the process was timed to when they submitted the cards, but that we have had on our side of the court um, all of the action for the last six months. So I'm kind of interested in knowing, you know,

[05:17:56] what that restriction is and, and how that is set up. I can start and then turn it over to Mr. Allen. I mean, one, one point that was clarifying for us was you might remember there were some cards, um, collected in the beginning to trigger the drafting of a collective bargaining resolution to begin with. Um, those cards serve a dual purpose, which the committee learned during its deliberation so the full board may not realize that they also include language that could be

[05:18:31] used depending on how the labor relations neutral determines who the exclusive bargaining representative will be. So those cards serve a dual purpose, which might have been unknown to board members previously. Therefore, the expiration of them becomes relevant to the actual collective bargaining agreement, whereas we may have been under the impression that they're only relevant in

triggering the drafting of a resolution did i explain that correctly mr allen and do you want to add anything to that that's my understanding i'll let miss johnson clarify given her practical

[05:19:11] experience if any clarifications need to be made thank you my understanding is consistent with miss reasers and mr allen's here that's basically the essential issue with regard to the cards so i think an issue before us remains whether we want there to be an expiration on those cards at all or not learning this this information. And just to try and speak a little more practically about it the cards that were I'm going to paraphrase so just like no one this that this isn't the exact

[05:19:47] language that's on the cards but our understanding is that the cards that were used previously they could have just said you know I I support collective bargaining in which case that's pretty much the only thing they could be used for was the initial showing of interest in collective bargaining but the cards say something like I support collective bargaining and also I want the LEA to represent me as the exclusive bargaining representative so there was when in the initial draft that we looked at in committee there was an expiration date of 12 months from when those cards were signed, but because this process is dragged out so long on everyone's end,

[05:20:28] the LMP committee decided to extend that to 24 months so that if those cards were signed within the last 24 months and they had that verbiage about who the employee wanted to represent them, they could be used for that purpose. Sounds fair. Do we have the date when that's going to become an issue? When is the first series of signature cards going to become void with the 24-month?

[05:20:57] While Mr. Allen is looking, it's my understanding that some of the signatures would already be in jeopardy. I'm not sure if that's correct, but one of the questions I was going to ask for staff is, if that's the case, given the certification process that we put in, I'm sorry, I guess the certification process that we put in place for checking those cards, I mean, Is that something that would be cumbersome to repeat in order to potentially weed out anyone who's no longer an employee, but then allow the rest of the cards not to expire?

[05:21:32] Thank you, Ms. Reeser. I personally was not involved in that process, so I can't provide appreciable input in that regard. I believe Ms. Boland may have a response. Unfortunately, I was kept out of the loop to keep HRTD separate from the process.

[05:21:56] Mr. Falcone brought in digital experience professionals, other outside LCPS employees to help with accounting and determination, but HRTD was not part of that. I do know that it was quite extensive process, and there was data that was pulled from the ERP team, but I can't speak to specifics.

[05:22:24] So I think there was also an extensive process in collecting the signatures. And I think in good faith, my recommendation to the board would be that either we go through the process of removing any cards that are not current employees or that we allow the cards to stand without expiring.

[05:22:46] Any other? Well, I'll go back to Mr. Morris for a follow-up and then go to additional board members. I agree with Ms. Reeser that take out, remove the non-employees and allow the cards to continue to be used for that process.

[05:23:04] I think that's a reasonable approach. Thank you. Additional questions or discussion? Ms. Okedekpe. Is that on this or just in general? In general, just an information item and anything related to the collective bargaining resolution.

[05:23:21] I have a series of questions if you can humor me. So the first thing is in one of the committee, I believe it was in a committee meeting I had sat in, I believe that the committee members had asked staff for a timeline of all the dates with dependencies so that there was clarity on what the schedule looked like for the first year and subsequent years just because there are so many dates and deadlines and so forth throughout the proposed language.

[05:23:53] So I wanted to ask if that was forthcoming. I don't have any memory of what you're referencing, but I'll defer to staff in case I'm forgetting something. Thank you, Ms. Reeser.

[05:24:09] I'm so good. My recollection was, my takeaway was, is there flexibility within the dates that are within the collective bargaining resolution? And my understanding is that there is, but we have to be generally aware of the budgetary implication for those dates.

[05:24:26] Okay. Thank you. That's a good clarification. And I understand that the date around September 15th is specifically tied to the beginning of budget planning for the upcoming year. So that makes sense. On line 92 of the current version in board docs, there's a definition for confidential employees.

[05:24:45] And I wanted to know if this definition and scope of what confidential employees are, is that consistent with prior designations of confidential employees that have been used outside of this document?

[05:25:01] Lisa, you might speak to this, but my sense is we've not necessarily had to identify confidential employees outside of the scope of this conversation.

[05:25:17] Is that correct? That would be correct. We do have confidentiality agreements that many of our departments have signed for employees that do deal with payroll information, benefit information, certain employee-specific information, HRTD employees sign a confidentiality agreement in regards to the work that they do, but we have not had to define or designate employees or employee groups in certain positions as confidential.

[05:25:52] And so is this list, therefore, in line with those who sign a confidentiality agreement? So I want to say there's no, I mean, it is in alignment, yes, but I do think more individuals sign confidentiality agreements than are necessarily designated as confidential employees in this document.

[05:26:18] I think this document's definition of confidential employees is similar to how I have seen confidential employee groups defined in other collective bargaining resolutions. Okay. I don't have a specific suggestion, but it just seems like a very broad definition and there are, you know, sometimes there are employees.

[05:26:44] I would expect that the intent here is that you don't end up with a, number one, an employee who's involved in the, on the staff's administration side, collective bargaining for the organization or with access to information that would be inappropriate for somebody in a bargaining position for LCPS, for the employer, or introduce a conflict of interest.

[05:27:16] It's just a very broad definition, so I appreciate that feedback. On section five for the bargaining units, why are athletic coaches excluded? Most or, you know, a lot of them are also teachers or staff, so I'm curious why athletic coaches are excluded. I defer to Ms. Johnson on this question. Thank you.

[05:27:56] Thank you. Ms. Ogadegmi, if I understand you correctly, you're asking why are they defined to not be included? Yes. Let me find this section again. I think it's section five starting on line 278. Is that what

you're talking about? Yeah. I'm scrolling. Yes. So starting on line 278, it says that both the certified and non-certified employees excluding and athletic coaches are listed. I'm wondering why athletic coaches are an excluded position. Typically,

[05:28:36] Unless the athletic coach is a permanent employee and, you know, operating in a supplemental capacity, those are temporary employees, so they would not ordinarily be included. Okay. Thank you so much. Just, okay. And thank you for pointing me to that.

[05:28:53] Yes, and the definitions. Got it. Okay. So, in the facility usage, referring to Regulation 6310, I took a look at the associated regulation.

[05:29:09] I'm just curious how LEA would count. There are different kind of classes of organizations, and I'm assuming they would count as a nonprofit and therefore get the fourth priority for facility usage.

[05:29:29] So I just wanted to understand how LEA would be classified as an organization for facility requests. If you could bear with us while we pull up the proper regulation to review that thank you and while you're looking kind of as a follow-up if they are considered non-profit um they per the regulation would also have to have proof of insurance i don't know if

[05:30:01] that's something that they have um planned and relative to the second part of that yeah so could i think um we i think as a matter of course from an operational perspective would not want any external organization using our facilities without that insurance so they may not be expecting it but it would need to be understood that a bargaining unit would need to have that in order to use our facilities.

[05:30:30] Understood. Okay, I appreciate that. And just so that it's clear and folks are aware of that. I think while they're looking at the regulation, I mean, I could add, because it's regulatory, it may just be a situation where we would need to designate a specific priority for a bargaining representative group.

[05:30:50] I think that makes sense. The other question I have in general is because facility usage is reviewed and approved locally, there is um language that that the um that it should be you know i lost the line numbers because they changed from the draft from last time uh let's see but it's it's basically says that

[05:31:27] they should be provided every opportunity to have the space it just and having it go through the local building administration, just to make sure that that expectation is clear to the local buildings as well. Is that a question? No, I'm trying to find the line. Hold on one second. Sorry.

[05:32:00] I think I know what you're saying. Oh, it's line 202. Sorry. Requests in accordance with this shall not be unreasonably denied. So we just want to make sure that each building is realizing that they shouldn't be unreasonably denying the space requests right and if if adopted as in this resolution that would certainly be part of the conversation and in general that is the process we follow for facilities use we don't unreasonably deny facilities use we kind of the test of reasonableness is do we have the space do we have custodial support and do they meet the requirements

[05:32:36] for the use okay thank you so much miss okay i was able to confirm that um with our chief operations officer, that we do classify them under the fourth priority as a non-commercial entity.

[05:32:54] Okay, thank you. And then to Dr. Spence's suggestions, probably something to review. On line 209, it references the request for that the bargaining, the exclusive bargaining

[05:33:31] representatives um could receive a from lcps human resources a spreadsheet of employees names higher dates job titles work location and work emails twice a year i'm curious um if all of that

information is stored centrally in the erp if that frequency could be more frequent than that perhaps quarterly or is that manually pulled from different places i'll need to divert miss

[05:34:02] on that i'm sorry could you repeat the question so there's a section in the section related to the exclusive bargaining representative rights in section 3 line 209 or 208 to 209 it says that they have the right to receive from lcp's human resources a spreadsheet of employees names higher dates job titles work site locations and work email addresses twice a year my question is if all of that data is stored in the central ERP, could it be pulled more frequently, perhaps quarterly?

[05:34:42] If it's all stored, it shouldn't be a problem to pull it more frequently, even quarterly. And does that sound like that is information that's in? It would absolutely be information that would be able to be pulled.

[05:35:00] I don't foresee it being an issue. I think it's something that they could set up a sort of like a canned report to pool if it was needed quarterly. Thank you.

[05:35:23] In that section as well, there's specific language.

[05:35:38] So, again, on Section 3, Rights of Exclusive Bargaining Representatives, there's language that talks about holding group meetings, meeting with newly hired certified employees. but there isn't language that talks about the right to meet with an individual and we do see language in employee rights that they have the right to have their exclusive bargaining unit on lines 174 and 175 it talks about to be represented fairly by their exclusive bargaining representative in the handling of employee grievances and the conduct of collective

[05:36:16] bargaining. So I think that there should be language in Section 3, the rights of exclusive bargaining representatives, to address the fact that they have the right to meet with an individual employee to discuss and, you know, to meet with them and discuss their concerns. There is to speak on behalf of and represent the interests of, but since it addresses meeting with groups of people in meeting with newly hired certified employees. It doesn't discuss meeting with

[05:36:53] existing employees. Thank you, Ms. Ogadigwe. So my understanding is the rights of an exclusive representative to access employees and information is a negotiable topic that can be further negotiated. And that's my understanding of why it's silent currently under Section 3.

[05:37:13] Okay. I appreciate that clarification. That makes sense. Thank you. Under the impasse options, the when this was um the previous version in board docs that was being discussed in committee there were two options for impasse options um and the previous one had kind of two steps for possible

[05:37:43] mediation steps one was with the um it's a funny name but it's the federal hold on i'm scrolling and scrolling.

[05:38:01] I could do search words, but I wasn't so smart. Hold on. So Section 9, Part B, it talks about mediation through the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, but there's

[05:38:30] a whole section up above that refers to the LPN or the neutral party, and it's not referenced in the current draft for the impasse resolution so i'm one or the lrn rather so i'm wondering why that was removed and if it was removed why do we have the whole section that describes what an lrn is so that i can i can jump in there uh so there was a lot of there was committee discussion about that and the there was one of the one of the options had was one of the options was just

[05:39:08] mediation and then the other option was mediation and then if that was unsuccessful going to a labor, an LRN, a labor relations neutral, and the committee decided to do the former and just have the mediation process. So the LRN is, I think it's defined because it's used in other parts of this, such as certifying the employee signatures for showing of interest in elections and things like that, but it would not be used during the impasse process.

[05:39:44] - Okay, thank you. And this is my final question. Starting on line 651, so this is impasse section I, and it addresses if the impasse continues past the expiration date of an existing collective bargaining agreement, and this is new language, lines 652 and 653, the terms and conditions of the expired collective bargaining agreement shall remain in effect until the earlier of.

[05:40:19] And I'm curious because it still has the impact of one year from that date that it is no longer in effect.

[05:40:38] And then on line 658 and 659, the board then has sole discretion to make a decision. And I'm curious, unfortunately, last night I had a committee meeting that started 30 minutes after LNP, so it didn't make sense for me to come with only staying for the first 30 minutes to hear the discussion.

[05:41:01] But I know I had inquired to get information about what I understand is called an evergreen clause, so I'm curious about what the discussion was there and why we can't have a mutually agreed upon agreement remain in effect until a new agreement is agreed upon.

[05:41:24] And, you know, effectively, if it expires, it's up to the sole discretion of the board as to what happens, which seems one-sided. So that was also discussed in committee, and there were essentially three different options that were considered.

[05:41:43] One was that if there was an impasse, that the current CBA would expire immediately on whatever the expiration date for the CBA was. The second option was that it would extend for up to one year in the case of an impasse.

[05:42:04] And then the third option was what you were talking about, where it would be evergreen and the existing CBA would continue indefinitely. And the option, the consensus option in committee was the second option where it would remain in effect for up to one year rather than being evergreen.

[05:42:24] And then just as a follow-up question, so it will essentially, there's an extra year tacked on, but then lines 658 and 659 essentially negate that because it says essentially that notwithstanding, the board in its sole discretion can choose any or all of the provisions of an expired collective bargaining agreement unless that, does that mean the 24 months later?

[05:42:56] No, I think the intent, and maybe the language here needs to be revisited or cleaned up, but I think the intent is that if there's no active CBA, the school board has the discretion to do what it wants. So my interpretation of this is that this is saying the existing CBA must continue for up to one year.

[05:43:21] after that point it it does it does not continue but the school board could choose to do any could choose to do whatever it wants to if there's no cba reached which would be the case anyway okay that that makes more sense and then maybe it is you know following that the board it's following that year it's basically it's protecting the existing cba for one year after which point if there's no new agreement the board could do it at once okay that that makes sense to me thank you and I'm done. Thank you for bearing with my questions. Any additional questions? Mr. Beatty

[05:44:00] and then Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair. And then Ms. Corba. One of the changes from the committee version that we did that in one of its many drafts was a section on the ability for the number of people that needed to vote in election. So we had a public comment tonight that said only six people showed up and four people voted in favor of the union the union would stand and so the clause the paragraph that we got rid of and I'll read it just so everyone knows and this was on 44 of

[05:44:36] one of the drafts that I have the results of a certification election may not be certified by the LRN unless at least 50 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit participate in the election in the event that less than 50 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit participate in the election the other end may upon a showing of good cause order a rerun election to be held within 30 days of the conclusion of the election.

[05:44:56] There shall be no more than one such rerun election. That is in the event that less than 50% of employees in the bargaining unit participate in the rerun election, the exclusive bargaining representative will not be certified. So my understanding was this is just a safeguard to make sure that you didn't have a situation where six people, 12 people, 100 people could show up and effectively control the rest of the bargaining unit.

[05:45:19] So I plan to make a motion when this comes up as an action item to add this back in, I think, having maybe less like a 40 percent threshold might be more reasonable again because we're trying to just make sure that there's a certain threshold of people taking part in this election process. So that's one thing that I think the board, you know, other board members should know as they go through this. And second, you know, as if you look at the impasse sections in what is nine, the key thing here is no matter what happens in any of these impasses, the school board retains

[05:45:57] all the rights. The union can't strike. The board can't be compelled to do something in any of this arbitration. So I kind of struggle with this whole process in and of itself, because at the end of the day, the board is going to have all its authority, and this is just kind of a show. But, you know, that's what I said in committee, and I'll just say it for the larger public as a record of this. May I clarify something? Yeah, Ms. Reeser, do you want to clarify? Yes. So I'll start with the last thing that Mr. Beatty said it is Virginia code that the union can't strike and it is Virginia

[05:46:32] code that the board retains its authority so those things cannot be contracted around and that is correct so the entire purpose of collective bargaining is to include staff in the process even though the board does by law retain those responsibilities and to provide some clarification on the language that was stricken the language that was there basically meant that the way the the agreement reads now whoever shows up to vote gets to have their voice heard just like in every

[05:47:07] democratic election that we were elected in people who don't show up to vote don't get counted as a no that that's all that that um the language that we removed that the majority of the committee members agreed to remove just made the process democratic like all of our elections. I'm going to turn it back to Mr. Mejedevi. Thank you. Ms. Korba? Ms. Korba, your turn. Oh, I thought I was

[05:47:44] after you. No, you can go ahead, please. All right, sure. So I, after listening to public comment and listening to LEA and also listening to some of their rally that they had today, I can certainly see their concern, and I'm wondering if we have a copy of LEA's draft policy.

[05:48:14] I thought that that was discussed at last night's meeting, and I was hoping to see it on board docs, and I didn't see it. I'm wondering if we have that and how that was used to create what we have now. Thank you, Ms. Corbo.

[05:48:34] Just as a bit of background, the LLMP committee heard from LEA at its June 5th, 2023 meeting, wherein the LEA presented information as to its perspective on the collective bargaining resolution process and LEA's proposed collective bargaining resolution.

[05:48:49] My understanding was that at that time, there was perhaps a slideshow, but the proposed collective bargaining resolution was not made public at that meeting, and that request was made, I believe, yesterday by a committee member, but in consultation with the committee chair based on the fact that that proposed collective bargaining resolution from LEA, that draft, was never made public.

[05:49:18] that's why the decision was determined not to post it on board docs today and to further expand on that it was brought to my attention that the full resolution was shared by lea's council with our council so it was a council to council communication and was never part of the public record so it was presented to us in slideshows at the open meeting and remain between council so it was

[05:49:53] unavailable to be attached to board docs as a result. The second part of my question is how was was their draft used in what we see here today? Yes thank you Ms. Corbo. LEA was recognized as a stakeholder in that L&P committee meeting and they were given the opportunity to provide input during the process of developing the collective

[05:50:28] bargaining resolution. Looking at contents-wise, my understanding from the slide deck that was made available publicly was that definitions, rights of employees, rights of exclusive bargaining representatives, board rights and responsibilities, certification and decertification of exclusive bargaining representatives collective bargaining duties and related procedures and past resolution prohibited conduct and resolution procedures severability were sections within that when we include those sections so there is comparable

[05:51:06] overlap in that regard and another item I guess just more broadly to your question mr. Corbo on LA's involvement it's my understanding that LCPS engaged and some collaboration reached out to get LEA's thoughts by way of VEA on any specific items they wanted to include. They declined that opportunity, the concern being that such input would be misplaced. That is because LEA has not been elected as LCPS's exclusive bargaining representative. It would not really be proper to attempt to establish specific bargaining subjects outside of

[05:51:45] the collective bargaining process, which can only occur, generally speaking, when employees have requested an election and a potential bargaining unit seeking election as an exclusive bargaining representative has received a majority of votes cast. Based on that understanding, my understanding is that LEA, again by way of VEA, advised that it was not in a position to provide the LMP committee with specific bargaining priorities because it had not been elected as LCPS's exclusive bargaining representative for any potential bargaining unit.

[05:52:18] Simply put, it would be problematic for the committee and LEA to have jointly established what specific issues a collective bargaining agreement would address when LEA does not officially have exclusive representative status at this time and when there may very well be other interested potential exclusive bargaining representatives.

[05:52:38] There's an appreciable concern, as it's my understanding, other bargaining units within Virginia school divisions have elected other exclusive bargaining representatives, such as Teamsters, potentially over Virginia local education associations and other Virginia school divisions.

[05:52:56] That's not to say that there can't be other ways LCPS and LEA can collaborate, given that LEA is the employee organization. But the VDAOE has published a list of educational organizations that has several dozens of educational organizations that could seek potential bargaining unit status at this time.

[05:53:18] I hope that provides greater clarity. Yes, thank you. And I just wanted to also thank Ms. Ogadugny for all of her questions. you know, as you were asking them, it really triggered many things in my mind, too, on things that maybe we still need to work on and have clarification on. I'm also curious, just with the timeline, I thought that that was a truly valid question. I mean, I know we have looked at these cards. It took us so long to figure out how we're going to validate the cards.

[05:53:58] LEA, it feels like we are just stringing along LEA, and are there other, what other organizations have come forward, or is LEA the only one that has come forward at this point? Yeah, yes, at this time, since to date, we just have the March 28th resolution authorizing collective bargaining, my understanding is that other potential exclusive bargaining representatives would be waiting to see kind of the substance of the school board's collective bargaining resolution in terms of the guardrails that are established here before they might come

[05:54:35] to play or express an interest. And today, as we know, there hasn't been a collective bargaining resolution with the terms and conditions set forth providing for those guardrails at this time. So it's too early to say. So would another organization have to go through the same process with collecting the cards and having them validated and so on? That's correct. And how long has it has lea been holding on to these cards it seems like years uh i can't answer that with any

[05:55:09] specificity um what i can say is that it was in january 31st when um they determined that and conveyed that they had the sufficient amount of cards that's all i have for right now thank you mr madby thank you chair so i guess mr allen i'm gonna go one i guess i'll i'll mention a couple things and i guess i don't understand because we're not the only one that's going through this process i think you highlighted some of the school divisions in the in northern virginia who are

[05:55:46] going through it can you share the status where prince william is where fairfax county is um because i from what i understand they haven't fully adapted it or they're still going through it i know fairfax has set up some study and they were still going through a study for that so i don't know if you have information as far as what they're doing so far certainly i i can to the best of my knowledge convey uh my understanding is prince william county schools is ongoing in the terms of uh the process of collective bargaining agreement negotiation they did pass a collective

[05:56:23] bargaining resolution in november of 2022 their exclusive bargaining representative is the prince william education association um what's being projected on the screen has about um there's actually eight or nine um other virginia school divisions of which i'm aware that have uh entered into a collective bargaining resolution they're at various stages um at currently and arlington for instance passed its resolution in may 2022 they do have exclusive bargaining representatives they

[05:56:59] have an administrative personnel bargaining unit and a license as well as a support personnel bargaining unit that were established and they do they have reached an initial collective bargaining

agreement. Richmond public schools I will say their license and school support personnel exclusive bargaining representative is Richmond Education Association but their administrative personnel exclusive bargaining representative is Teamsters and so the status and process of their collective bargaining agreement negotiation it's been completed for licensed and school support personnel.

[05:57:39] That contract runs from July 2023 to June 30th, 2026. But I believe it's ongoing for the administrative personnel. So I think this policy, I mean, obviously it was in committee and it's coming out today for the first time in front of the full board.

[05:57:59] I think as Ms. Reeser mentioned, I did get a chance to attend a couple of meetings. I think the first one, it was still being figured out what that resolution would look like. And I think the second meeting, because of the time, we were not given the opportunity to ask any questions.

[05:58:14] So I didn't really have any engagement to be asking any questions as far as what this, and I think it's more since the last time I attended that. So having said that, I think, I mean, today is being brought up. I mean, it's such a huge document.

[05:58:30] I mean, you went through, I think I was just timing it within 15 minutes, and I mean, I appreciate you going through it. And there's so many sections to review and what that means, not only for the school division, but from, let's say, from the collective bargaining unit as well.

[05:58:49] So, and then wouldn't we want to see what the pros and cons or what has, you know, what are the other divisions sort of learned within the Northern Virginia area? So, again, I'm going to pick Fairfax County or Prince William.

[05:59:05] Before we kind of impasse on, you know, we go on this journey to say, you know, which options we want to pick. So I'm kind of where I hear the concerns as far as, and I do, you know, this is my lessons learned. This is not the first time I feel like something's been rushed through it.

[05:59:22] You know, the one policy I have many regrets over, and I've been very vocal about it, was, again, rushed through it. So I cannot be in support of, you know, again, as good of this perhaps a resolution is, but just coming to a point where just running it through.

[05:59:41] Because we set some arbitrary deadline that by the year end, we have to do something about it. I think this board did it. I mean, we as a collectively, I guess I'm part of the board that did it. But I'm not so sure, like, where I am. I mean, I'm one of the only nine board members here. Where I feel like, given this, I mean, even if we come back and review the next two weeks and come back with all sort of amendments, changes, et cetera, and I think as Ms. Corbo has talked about, even looking at the resolution from LEA, I'm not even sure what that's going to be on December 12th.

[06:00:16] So, I mean, I guess this is my thought with this board is, I mean, do we want to look at how other divisions have gone through and what the experience has been, what they've bargained on, and based on that, make a decision as far as how we move forward versus here making a decision about which options we select.

[06:00:37] And then even in the document, I guess, the options, there are four options there. But when it comes to impasse resolution procedures, there's only two options being discussed there, Mr. Allen. So what's being projected on the screen, further slides down, which is on board docs.

[06:00:57] We did look at the eight or so other school divisions and what their impasse resolutions provisions within their collective bargaining resolutions provides. And so the LMP committee did review a comparative glance at those districts who have gone before us and what's included in their collective bargaining resolution to inform their decision making and recommendation.

[06:01:22] Mr. Chair, could we perhaps have IT scroll through? I think that Mr. Allen is referencing the other pages, but I'm not sure if we want to scroll through that. I mean, it is in board docs, but just to add to what he said, we did have those discussions in committee.

[06:01:44] And there were many more than just the final options that are being shown to you now, but it would be impossible to convey everything that transpired in committee, I think, in a PowerPoint. So, I mean, I'd like to understand what is the lessons we have learned from Prince William County, because they're going through it.

[06:02:04] It's been a struggle from both sides. And so, you know, again, this is about doing in good faith. And so what are the lessons learned from that that we can learn to say, well, how do we adjust for that? Ms. Reeser.

[06:02:20] Yeah, I think it might be helpful if staff wanted to comment on what some of the other resolutions landed upon. There is a chart here where you presented to us what other divisions adopted.

[06:02:35] and maybe you could explain where we landed coming out of committee and perhaps with some of the changes you've heard support for tonight on this spectrum of resolutions. Thank you, Ms. Reeser.

[06:02:52] If we take the definition of working conditions, for example, which are the first two slides, I believe, or first two pages of this document that's being projected, We looked at the number and scope of items negotiated in the first collective bargaining agreement.

[06:03:13] And by we, I mean the LNP committee did. But you'll see that the Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Prince William, they're all included here. And they have specific items, wages, hours, benefits, listed as specific scope of items negotiated in their first collective bargaining agreement.

[06:03:41] And my understanding is based on this data, LNP committee determined that of the options that were initially presented, they seem to be more in line with what other school divisions are providing in terms of the number and scope of the items.

[06:04:01] I will say it's my understanding, if we're looking specifically to your question, Mr. Mohedovey, Falls Church City Public Schools defines working conditions or the scope of negotiated topics as wages, benefits, and working conditions defined as format of evaluations, hourly schedules of non-certified employees, duty-free lunch, and the roles of existing employee committees.

[06:04:28] So by the count of it, that's four or five, but they're, as you can tell, are very limited in kind of scope compared to Prince William County, which I believe is defined as wages, certain benefits, and subjects that are not prohibited subjects of bargaining, which is larger in scope with respect to the, quote, subjects that are not prohibited subjects of bargaining.

[06:04:55] And it's my understanding that Falls Church, given the kind of more clarity around the specific number and scope of items, that's been beneficial in terms of negotiating kind of their collective bargaining agreement, is my understanding.

[06:05:14] Maybe I should have added a more caveat. I mean, divisions of our size, too, and that's why I mentioned Prince William and Fairfax. I mean, Falls Church is, you know, again, in comparison, I mean, it's a school division, but I don't want to say anything more, but that's kind of where my reference is.

[06:05:33] So Prince William is still going and negotiating right now. That's not settled what we have tonight, what we see in this table, I believe, right? That's right. Both are ongoing in terms of their collective bargain agreement negotiations.

[06:05:49] And including Fairfax, too, I believe. Fairfax is still ongoing. They've set up a study, or they have passed the resolutions to move forward. So my understanding is that Fairfax County Public Schools has a collective bargaining resolution that was passed in March 2023, but they have not elected an exclusive bargaining representative to date, so no one to engage in the collective bargaining agreement negotiations.

[06:06:15] And my other sort of question, I think on this, specific about the options, where it says number and scope of items negotiated in the first CBA, so the options are four, three four and four and different combinations of that so is that and then it says on the this number of items negotiated in successor cbas would be up to two additional so it'll be let's say we go with four then the next would be two and then two every year on is that how i understand it so it'll be so it'll be aggregated like first year we do four the next year we do two and the

[06:06:52] two and two is that how it's thank you that's my understanding they you wouldn't just negotiate for and then the next collective bargaining agreement kind of abandon what you've already negotiated on you said you abandon or you build up on it correct you'd build on it you would not abandon what you previously agreed to yeah thank you uh additional discussion miss corba okay thank

[06:07:24] you um so i i'm wondering um does does lea currently have access to employees during the workday so i i defer to to staff other staff um with respect to to that so thank you miss corbeau i will do my best to answer this question so um during the workday if it is not a um during the

[06:08:01] contract day during the school day uh when students are in the building the simple answer would be no um lea or any other non-lcps organization would not have access to lcps employees during their contract at work day um at times such as um our new educators um event the that was renamed to one one outstanding or outstanding educate new outstanding educators or outstanding new educators

[06:08:38] they were permitted to have access to employees during that event just like other non-LCPS organizations as well as the beginning teachers institute but during the normal school work day they would not have access. Thank you and I'm curious if if this would ever go to a work session where LEA could be, we could actually hear from LEA or other organizations that are interested.

[06:09:24] So I'm going to just continue to try to answer the question to the best of my ability. I'm not sure if that meets the definition of what we offer for work sessions. I do know that Dr. Spence has had continued conversations with LEA and worked with division council about possible access to employees during the workday, and I know there are continued discussions happening, but I'm not sure I'm the best person to speak to the ability to have that

[06:10:02] during a work session. I just, again, you know, I appreciate what Mr. Mahedvich brought up about You know, many of his comments I agree with and his concerns also. And this is supposed to be a good faith effort.

[06:10:21] And I know that we have had the majority in support of collective bargaining. And now that we have an outside firm that we hired that is perceived to be anti-employee or anti-labor law, it seems we're no longer in good faith.

[06:10:44] And, and to me, I want this agreement to be the best it can be and have them put from both sides. And as we can already see, we have LEA at the table upset with us, um, and, and upset with the process.

[06:11:00] And it would be hard for me to support something because I don't feel like it has been done in good faith. I don't feel like they, they or other organizations who are interested in representing our employees have had the ability to come to the table and actually have a conversation in a work session about the resolution. Dr. Spence. I guess I just want to perhaps reiterate a point that that your counsel was making earlier and just sort of maybe distinguish between the two stages of

[06:11:36] this right so so one of the things that I keep hearing is that the LEA hasn't gotten to to give input on what should be in the resolution and I'm not entirely sure that's true I think the committee did take their proposed resolution into consideration and there's been numerous opportunities for public comment my my take just quite frankly from an administrative perspective and and having spoken to colleagues around the country who do this is that it like the premise that you would allow the

[06:12:09] person who wants to be the bargaining unit develop for the board the resolution that it creates that it uses to create collective bargaining as a process is I think the word was cart before the horse in one of the emails that we got from VEA council that the appropriate time for LEA or any bargaining unit to be at the table would be in the collective bargaining process so once the board has said we're going to bargain and then a representative says we want to represent a

[06:12:48] particular bargaining unit or multiple bargaining units and then that election occurs and then they are certified as the as the elected representative of that bargaining unit that that's the appropriate time for them to then come to the table and begin bargaining with the school board through the administration on matters that address things like access to employees and and other things that can then be identified in that process and so then to say like well they wouldn't have the opportunity to identify what's in the bargaining process that's not based on the way the resolution is written that's just not true both parties would have to agree on what's going to be bargained for

[06:13:26] or bargained over that's how the resolution is constructed is that both parties would have to agree on what you're going to bargain around and i think lea my perspective last night in the lmp committee was has successfully provided input that they didn't want to set a list of those topics that they would prefer to have that more open-ended.

[06:13:49] And I think the board heard that. The committee members on the board heard that and did not choose option one, which would have set a list of topics. And that more broadly allows LEA, once the bargaining process begins to, or I shouldn't keep saying LEA, that more broadly allows the representatives of the bargaining unit to then bargain over what those conditions are that the board and through its representatives and the representatives of the bargaining unit are going to try to come to some agreement on.

[06:14:20] So, I mean, I think the conversation that somehow LEA should have been involved in writing this resolution, at least from my perspective as the person who's going to be working on the administrative

side of this conversation on behalf of the board, is sincerely cart-before-the-horse kind of conversation.

[06:14:37] That's not the appropriate place for them. They certainly can provide input. They've done that. It's not their responsibility and the appropriate place for them to be engaged. That's just my perspective. miss okadek bay and then miss reaser thank you and i just want to highlight because what i've heard from both mr allen and dr spence is that we heard feedback from vea council and there's some audio

[06:15:05] issues with for another mic that's on okay it's resolved um that the um that they didn't feel comfortable providing specific input on this stage of the process because there isn't an identified exclusive bargaining representative. So, and, you know, VEA is as the parent organization for employee organizations for the state of Virginia. I feel like, you know, there's alignment

[06:15:42] with an organization that exists to represent employees and educators in Virginia. So just just to highlight that i i feel like um it's not the intent to exclude but there is that next step where again what is actually bargained for is one of the first steps that will be discussed and defined once collective bargaining begins miss reaser thank you mr chair uh i wanted to respond to miss ogadegbe to just clarify um i i believe it was council for vea and that is who came to

[06:16:21] the first LNP meeting to present. So they were speaking on behalf of LEA, not VEA. And I also wanted to just address a point that Mr. Mejedevi brought up, which we discussed regarding the expiration date, the self-imposed expiration of the date by which, it's not an expiration date, the date by which we are to decide on this resolution. We discussed that at length, and I'm going to ask counsel to correct me if I'm wrong because I'm making some conclusions here. I think it's largely irrelevant because if we don't do it by then,

[06:16:58] the next school board can still do a collective bargaining resolution. If we do pass something by then, the next school board can amend what we pass. So I'm not really sure what the play is with that date, but it does exist. It is there. I have not been able to discern any rationale for why it needs to exist. We certainly could remove it, but we can also continue to work on this and bring this back next time and vote on it or delay voting on it and remove the expiration date. But even if we do approve this, it is subject to amendment by the next board. And I'm certain

[06:17:36] that regardless of what we pass, the next board is going to have opinions about things that should have been different in it. That's going to happen anytime you change the composure of nine people sitting up here and i would like to ask council to weigh in if i've gotten any of that incorrect thank you miss reaser uh just to clarify so the march 28th uh 2023 resolution does provide for the december 31st 2023 deadline in the sense that the board has to either adopt or reject

[06:18:11] a collective bargaining resolution by by that time and so that that's how it currently reads so to the extent this board could amend that resolution that is permissible to extend and afford a new deadline for that. And yes, my understanding is that to the extent this board were to adopt a collective bargaining resolution down the line, a subsequent board could move to amend that collective bargaining resolution. So we have to take some action by the end of the year, but that action can be amended.

[06:18:49] I mean, the result of the action can be amended. Down the road or subsequently, yes, that's correct. Does that address what you were trying to get at with regard to your questions around the December 31st deadline? Yeah, thank you.

[06:19:05] I did, I mean, I think from Mr. Allen, I think it looks like we'll have to take some action whether we change the date from December 31st to whatever the date might be. But I understand, I mean, every policy is a living document. And any board, I mean, we could have made like 100 changes to a policy document.

[06:19:23] I understand that the next board can come back and make the changes to it. But it's not about that, right? I think where I'm feeling, and again, I'm just one of the nine board members, having gone through one more critical policy in Loudoun County, which divided the entire county and I think got all those things, where I feel we rushed through that process.

[06:19:42] And I don't feel, I feel the same sort of, same vibe that we're rushing through it because we set up, and again, I'm part of, we discussed it for December 31st and where this is being brought up is today on end of November and in two weeks we're supposed to make a decision on it. I feel it's and again it's not so much a passing the buck to the new board but it's giving the opportunity for to make sure that even from our from LCPS perspective and from the from the new board we do get a little time to digest this versus rushing

[06:20:19] through it. Now I could change it. I mean, maybe the next two weeks, I mean, I'm going to have some more conversation and maybe things could change. But I think at this file, I just feel like there's so much to, and again, I understand Dr. Spence. I mean, and again, maybe I was not the one talking about that, you know, LEA has to drive this policy. I understand that this is a resolution coming from the board and what we are bargaining on. But I think the overall resolution itself and how the process has gone through from committee.

[06:20:50] First time we're seeing this, and that's where I was speaking about. - So I've been working with the members elect fairly closely over the last few days, and I could tell you not one of them has said, "Oh, please, please dump collective bargaining in our laps."

[06:21:11] And maybe I'm wrong about that. They can let me know if I'm wrong in that regard. But I feel like, I mean, we're getting to the point the term where there are certain things we could put we can postpone and put on the next board but given the fact that it took three years for us to get to this point and where there's nine brand new members elect who are coming in who are like completely fresh to this like if we delay this to the next board like that's going to delay collective bargaining by months and months if not longer so i would just encourage board members to keep that mind when they're when they're if they're

[06:21:47] contemplating postponing this to the next board uh miss ogadegby had her hands up and then go back to mr mehedby thank you and i i appreciate your relaying that sentiment i was curious about that so i i appreciate that um my question just going back to the question of the expiring signature cards is there an action that's required or something that we need to do i just lost tracking the conversation about what we're doing about that there seem to be general support for that i also support removing that restriction but what do we need to do

[06:22:25] there i can i can cover that if you don't mind miss research so there's we we amended it in committee to um extend the expiration of cards that have that language on them from 12 months to 24 months so if if the board wanted to extend that indefinitely or remove it or set a shorter date or whatever, that would just be, I think, an amendment to that section of the resolution to do so.

[06:22:49] Okay. So that's in the resolution itself. That's in the resolution itself. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair. And I can, I mean, I think, I hear you. I mean, I think this is something the new board has already have a number of things coming into from budget to a number of items that they'll have to deal with starting in January, but that doesn't mean, I mean, they have to make a decision on January itself.

[06:23:14] mean at the same time they could have time to digest and and perhaps maybe we get a chance to even more study more on this thing before we go down a path of it so that's what I was alluding I mean again yeah but I mean it's I mean we we when we came on the board nobody signed up for COVID either so but we were dealt with it so anyway I think I got my point across is there any additional discussion at this point I do not see any so we will bring this back for action during our last school board meeting of the term i'm not not gonna even i'm not gonna even

[06:23:53] ask no uh so board members uh information items at 1201 and 1202 were heard during our work session so we are going to start with information item 1203 from the finance and operations committee adoption of new policy 6360 emergency and weather related operations thank you mr chair mr lewis still with us? He stepped out for a minute. He stepped out. Oh, he stepped back in. Welcome back,

[06:24:30] Mr. Lewis. I'll do a soft shoe until you get seated. So this is an opportunity to provide a new policy concerning weather operations. I really want to compliment staff on this because there is a matrices created by staff that really goes through all the different scenarios on what different weather emergencies we may have. I think it's a template that we should be using in a lot of other areas as well. But I'll turn it over to Mr. Lewis for discussion.

[06:25:02] Thank you, Mr. Morse. As Mr. Morse said, this is a new policy, and we've taken it through the process. I'll just walk through the different parts of it for the board's awareness, since it is a brand-new policy. And we did get comments from the community and a couple other places.

[06:25:25] and for some reason I'm having trouble finding the sheet there it is so we want to talk through it and in address closing and delays of schools we had not had that in policy in the past and and provide some guidance that would also provide for employees so that they knew what the disposition of employees even if we closed schools or delayed schools what that meant for the employees as well and then probably promulgate the regulations to implement that so that was the chart that Mr. Morris was talked about. I will say that that chart has been in use for

[06:26:03] several years in the background and so that helps us in the wee hours of the night communicate back and forth to one another. You'll notice that it has letters and numbers in there so we know that when I call the CCO's office we use message A1 or B2 or that way so we get the language.

[06:26:21] They're pre-recorded to help us get the numbers out quicker in that process. It is for short-term disruptions in schools it's not for long-term disruption and you'll see there's some of the comments in the item that we received from SEAC that talked specifically about what to do with certain types of students and those we feel we did not make changes to the policy because we felt like they were better suited for the continuity of operations plan and for longer term plans so this this was relegated to short-term activities and then we also talk about what happens with after school and weekend activities if schools

[06:26:59] are closed and they are closed as well because that has been a topic conversation over time as well and then we just have some some general descriptions our definitions I mean and then we've listed all

the concerns and comments we got throughout the process and again most of the comments came from from SEAC and we believe those don't really apply for to this policy but to the continuity of operations policy so that is a quick overview and so I'll be happy to answer

[06:27:28] any questions board members any questions or discussion regarding this new policy seeing none interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting miss corba okay looks like we've got consensus will miss sheridan i agree thank you thank you so we'll place this on consent for our next board meeting and that will take us to 1204 from the student services committee revised policies

[06:28:03] 8290 threat assessment for the protection of schools. Mr. Madby. Thank you, Chair. This policy is being brought forth through the Senate Bill 1359 and then updated the Virginia Code section 22.1.79.4, which requires that the new threat assessment team members complete a initial threat assessment training and all threat assessment team members complete a refresher threat assessment training every three years. I'll just go to the policy in the red line version. There's a new paragraph that

[06:28:40] was added on line 38 of section four. New threat assessment team members should complete an initial threat assessment training and all threat assessment team members should complete a refresher threat assessment training every three years. So that was the initial sort of change that the staff had made. We got some feedback from SEAC about making sure that the threat assessment team also include a team from the special education staff as well so the the this there is two updates made one is that you will see in the board docs there is a

[06:29:17] regulation document and the regulations there is an update as well let me just open that in the regulations under line 35 it says new threat assessment team membership complete initial and sorry this is the right version make sure I I got the right copy open.

[06:29:45] Let me break. That is the correct section. Line 35, section 2. New threat assessment team members should complete initial threat assessment training and all that threat assessment team members should complete a refresher.

[06:30:03] Threat assessment training every three years. The required training and continuing education of threat assessment team members is coordinated by the Office of Diagnostic and Prevention Services and shall align with a comprehensive threat assessment. And the second paragraph, and then going further on line 168, when a student with disability is a subject of threat assessment, the team shall interview staff who have knowledge of the student's unique individual needs.

[06:30:31] So these, the second sort of paragraph in the regulations came from the feedback from SEAC and the committee felt that we wanted to make sure that the special ed team member who has a knowledge of the students day to day was also involved in the threat assessment team there's also a section on line number 46 going back to redline policy other consideration for the team again based on the factors team members may confer with the relevant stakeholders such as but not limited to general education teacher of record special education case manager if

[06:31:07] applicable and parents so in this was a another paragraph that the team the committee added to make sure that we we had a comprehensive um uh team who are evaluating the threat assessment so again those were the two big changes in here and the policy went for the committee and then eventually was voted forward to this full board for as an information item thank you mr mehedvi board members any questions or discussion regarding the proposed policy

[06:31:37] changes seeing none is there interest in placing this on consent for our next board meeting ms Jardin? Yes. Okay. We will place this on consent and that will take us to 1205. Also from the Student Services Committee, revised policy 8630, inspection and review of educational records.

[06:32:05] Mr. Mahedby. Thank you, Chair. So this is part of the cyclical review procedure for policy 8630, but I guess for the description, since there's a number of changes, I'm going to pass it on to Ms. Richardson to help us walk through this project policy.

[06:32:23] - I'll actually be taking this one. So we will walk through policy 8630. Policy 8630 again was due for its five year review, was brought to the Student Services Committee. The substantial changes have been to move the sections that are titled procedure into a regulation to make the policy clearer.

[06:32:43] We did have some committee, some feedback on the policy regarding emails referencing students being a part of educational records. I just want to clarify that emails may be a part of the educational record if they are deemed as appropriate to be a part of the educational record, but not every single email that references a student through every single system that we receive every single day would be a part of that educational record.

[06:33:12] So those were the changes and the feedback that we have for the SEAC feedback, and I'm happy to take any questions. Thank you, Mrs. Smith, my apologies. One more thing I'd like to add to this policy. During our budget work session, I mentioned about some technology modernization and again, I was mentioning about the fact that Mr. Smith mentioned that the emails could be deemed as a record.

[06:33:39] But again, you can imagine if a staff or a teacher has to go through finding all the emails of all the communications related to the IEP or the student, it is quite intense and again, it's time intensive, labor intensive.

[06:33:54] So my proposal is that we, LCPS invests in a, again, I don't want to call it CRM because we've gone that, but a CR line tool where all the communications, all the interactions related to the IEP happen through the tool versus happening via email.

[06:34:15] Again, the communication will still going through email, but everything, all the records, all the interactions will be maintained as part of the system versus going back to the email and so on and so forth. And again, there's a lot of things I can talk about it, but again, just to kind of bring the context of this policy to one of my sort of proposal about modernizing, again, was related to this particular policy.

[06:34:39] Board members, any questions or discussion? Ms. Ogadugbe. Just following on that line of discussion, I think the other opportunity, if we're using a CRM for more extensive aspects of communication between staff, whether that's teachers or other staff that are working with students, the CRM can then, it's easier to maintain

[06:35:13] records retention policies and to consider those communications as part of a student's formal record. Whereas if you have emails throughout people's personal inboxes, I know that there are technical ways to retrieve emails that have maybe been deleted. Some people, I'm not this person, some people live by deleting all emails they've ever read. And they only keep the emails that they haven't read in their inbox. But having it as part of the CRM opens up a discussion

[06:35:45] possibility about what systems contain a student's official record. I know that we grappled with this at the higher ed level when we introduced CRM technologies. So just to reiterate, I think that there's

promise there in using, in expanding the use and certainly not something we can weigh in on, but just speaking for the purposes of the record. Thank you. I'm curious. I know I had some discussions a long time ago when I was on the SSS committee about how we were moving to a different

[06:36:24] IEP system that had some additional capabilities, at least regarding redlining and changes to the IEP over time. So I'm curious whether that system has anything in the way of, you know, CRM functionality or what my colleagues are discussing. Yes, thank you for that opportunity, Mr. Sorotkin.

[06:36:45] Our current digital platform for which we use to manage our special education process does have the ability to send PDF documents directly to parents. And then the documents in PDF form are also accessible through ParentVue.

[06:37:02] Additionally, parents can sign and give us consent for implementation through our Virginia IEP digital system. Thank you. Any additional discussion?

[06:37:18] Ms. Polifko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a clarifying question about educational records. So I understand the discussion around emails related to students with an IEP. But why is it that an email regarding, you know, an email for any student would not be a part of the educational record unless it is printed out and put in the student's file?

[06:37:44] So emails can be a part of the educational record if it's determined by the administrator or whomever that it is needed as part of the educational record. Think about getting 20 million emails a day, every single attendance, every single call to the office, and all of those being combined into an educational record that needs to exist from kindergarten through 12th grade plus five years.

[06:38:10] So it's 18 years of that amount of data. So when we get into reviewing educational records, having a parent come in and look at a million documents becomes a little bit overwhelming for them. So the idea of this policy is to be technically feasible, but also to really put the information that needs to be in there instead of millions of documents that don't really need to be, that aren't really as considered as part of the educational record.

[06:38:36] Any additional discussion? There are interests in placing these policy changes on consent for our next board meeting. Ms. Reeser? Ms. Sheridan? Yes.

[06:38:51] Okay. We will place this on consent for our next board meeting. That will bring us to our final information item requested by Ms. Polifco regarding LCPS walkouts. Ms. Polifco. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am hoping to use a few minutes this evening for the board, administration, Dr. Spence, to have a discussion about how we're handling the anti-Semitic statements and how we are aligning them with policy 8030 and regulation 8030 in our policies here in Loudoun County Public Schools.

[06:39:25] What I'm noticing is that there's a discrepancy in how things are being executed across schools. And I'm wondering what kinds of modifications we may need to be putting into place regarding policy, regarding how we're handling student walkouts.

[06:39:41] We've discussed students using hurtful language and not being aware of what they are saying. And that it may be not being aware that what they are saying is having a harmful impact on the recipients. I know we've had those discussions in the equity committee that I've been a part of over the past year.

[06:40:02] And I certainly am a proponent of free speech. People are free to express themselves and to speak, but they are not free of consequences. And so I would hope that we can have a discussion this

evening around how we're going to handle this moving forward and what we're going to do to repair the division that is clearly in place in our school system right now with not only our students, but with parents as well.

[06:40:31] This is not where we should be. And so there needs to be a discussion about how we're going to handle this moving forward and how we're going to truthfully discuss what's going on and how we can improve the situation for our students and families.

[06:40:54] Thank you. Additional discussion?

[06:41:07] Dr. Spence? Do you think that Drs. Mitchell and Alice Williams could provide a little bit of insight at least into what we have been working on and to some of the challenges that we're dealing with and some of the guidance that we are trying to provide our principals, if the board will allow us to just have a little bit of that conversation.

[06:41:48] So I just want to, I'll take a few moments just to kind of share what our current guidance is and some next steps. So we have provided some guidance around student walkouts and demonstrations in terms of parameters, such as not happening during instructional time, Providing them a space and an opportunity where administrators can be present as well as any, for example, safety and security staff to make sure our students are safe.

[06:42:18] And providing them a time and a space to do that. We are also currently working on a regulation to put in place to clearly define what happens and what is allowed during those student walkouts. For your specific question about discipline when students are using hate speech, we, looking at our current SBAR codes, anytime that happens, we do anything from restorative practices and mediation.

[06:42:50] If it is intended and it is repeated and prior efforts aren't working right now, the most that we can consequence is ISR and school restriction. So as you stated, we are using moments right now in these unprecedented times to make them teachable moments and learning from both sides how we do that.

[06:43:14] And I'll let Dr. Ellis Williams speak more to that. Before I start, does anyone have any questions pertaining to what Ms. Mitchell spoke to? So as it relates to the ongoing supports that have been in place since we have been engaged in supporting our students after the tragic events of the 7th, administrators, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, equity leads, and the division of DEIA as well as DOSL have been collaborating to provide support for our students.

[06:43:44] Dr. Spence has proactively been meeting along with a team that consists of whomever is needed in a moment to meet with the representatives from our Loudoun County interfaith community, as well as to the point of Ms. Polifco, you asked about repairing a division. So the all Dulles area Muslim society, we have a meeting with them tomorrow.

[06:44:04] We have been in communication with them, as well as the community Hope for Our World events organization and JCRC, which is a Jewish Community Relations Council for the greater Washington area. So the decisions that have been made thus far, which I have to admit have been in the moment and very reactionary because we hadn't had circumstances such as this.

[06:44:25] When we had student walkouts and protests in the past related to wearing a mask, et cetera, there was some form of uniformity as far as what you were discussing or what point you were trying to raise. Right now, we're faced with a myriad of truths that are all true. So with that, as a division, our main

focus is to support our students' safety that is social, emotional, as well as physical safety and the spaces, and really being in contact with the aforementioned organizations to inform our decision-making as it relates to language, as we just brought up earlier, vernacular related to what's happening right now in the world, as well as supporting individual families,

[06:45:04] building principles, equity leads, and whoever has this on top at the moment on any given day at any given time. So we are in a hamster wheel right now, admittedly so, because I think That's the response of most divisions who have the populations in which we serve, and we want to do our due diligence in doing so.

[06:45:24] So we continue to. Tomorrow afternoon, we're meeting with the All-Dulles Muslim Association. Tomorrow afternoon, Thursday night, we're meeting with JCRC for open. In addition to the listening sessions, we have a separate listening session where Dr. Spence will be there with the community.

[06:45:42] It's the community at large as well as the Jewish community and the other participants. Sunday at 6 p.m. we'll be meeting with another group that's interfaith-based as well at 6 p.m. on Sunday. So we have been meeting with both virtually and in person, securing all of the information because we recognize that the capacity that some of us may hold as it relates to being able to articulate, explain, and support the efforts around what's happening without a full understanding has led to some of what you heard tonight. Misinformation, the locking up of let's not talk about anything and there have been a cadre of responses and to that

[06:46:19] point Miss Mitchell will be hosting a meeting tomorrow morning which includes myself our representation from our mr. West as well as Miss Allen to be able to continue the uniformity of messaging because there was never a time where principals were told to ban colors or to not allow students to have the conversations what was stated was if you don't have the capacity to cultural competency the

[06:46:53] understanding and sensitive and nature and empathy to address such things then you should not be engaging and to reach out to those of us who do have it some principles have done that but we have a hundred plus principles and all it takes is for three to have a misstep with the best intentions right to mitigate what we saw or part of what we saw this evening I I appreciate your feedback and I appreciate you coming down and and bringing this to the school board so that we have a more full understanding of how things will be

[06:47:30] occurring moving forward and what types of events you have lined up to address these issues thank you our division is also working in collaboration with Dossel to put together art projects to allow students the space to unpack what they're experiencing without having to rely upon an adult's capacity to mitigate conversations that they may not be prepared for or intimidated by discussing as well so there'll be more information coming forth about that as well but that takes time because we want to do that right because we're finding that as much information we try to be transparent about somehow we often miss

[06:48:08] the step for someone in doing so so it may seem slow process in incremental but We have to be because this is a very sensitive topic with multiple truths that are all true for multiple fractions of our society.

[06:48:24] We have to be conscientious about that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Dr. Spence, did you want to add something to that? You seemed as though you had something to say. Yeah, but maybe I think I saw Ms. Reeser wanted to ask a question, so I'll wait and see if I need to answer it there.

[06:48:45] Ms. Reeser. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask if we could follow up with some clarifying information out to the community about some of the mixed messages, especially the wearing of what are actually Christmas colors.

[06:49:02] I actually had a student ask me tonight during the break about whether wearing an ugly Christmas sweater was going to get them in trouble because those are the colors of the Palestinian flag. And I don't think it was in jest, I think, that the students are confused about what is allowable and what isn't.

[06:49:24] And I don't think it's specific to this particular walkout. About five years ago or so, when the Parkland shooting happened, there were students in middle school, in both of the middle schools in my district. I was not the school board member who had conflicting information about what they were allowed to do.

[06:49:41] And about a month preceding that, there had been walkouts around the Muslim travel ban. And the students felt like the two sets of walkouts had been handled differently. So I think any time there is subjective decision making, which is naturally going to happen from building to building to building over two different incidents, you're going to get some friction there with consistencies.

[06:50:07] But I think we should do our best to try to clarify some of the misunderstandings that seem to be reported tonight. Yeah, so I think I can maybe layer in some of what I was going to say in response to that as well. So, yes, there's additional work that we have to do, as has been kind of alluded to.

[06:50:27] We're obviously responding to a fairly kind of unprecedented moment for us in trying to work our way through this and learn as we go and educate ourselves and build our own capacity. And for sure, so you heard about a conversation that's going to happen tomorrow morning.

[06:50:44] Part of that starts internally. So getting clear with our legal counsel and our school leadership on what is and is not permissible. Making sure that we revisit that because some things, it sounds like, have been communicated that were not communicated from a division level, but that we're just decision-making in the moments.

[06:51:02] I'm confident, well-intentioned, but, you know, have created some issues for us. And so we for sure need to have that conversation and provide some follow-up. And we will certainly take on our advisement and think about how do we communicate, again, about some of these challenges.

[06:51:23] But I want to say with that, this is complicated. This is incredibly nuanced, despite what other people might think. This is incredibly nuanced, and this is not a position school divisions are typically in. And I mean, I'm not making light of this when I say, you know, we're not Middle East diplomats, right?

[06:51:43] So we're trying to figure out how do we navigate in this space. And so what I am saying to you and what I'm saying to our community is our obligation is to make sure our students are safe. Our obligation is to make sure that they are safe both physically and safe emotionally in terms of feeling like they're not going to be bullied, that they belong in our schools, that they can be who they are, and to create the environment and conditions for that to be the case and to be very firm about that with our leadership in our buildings.

[06:52:18] That goes in all kinds of directions, right? And so I'm just, you know, I'm not going to kind of get into defending certain things, but there may be speech that one child uses, however you want to define

speech, that another child finds harmful.

[06:52:34] We can't just dismiss or ignore that, right? When you're not dismissing or ignoring that, that doesn't mean you're accusing someone of being hateful. It just means we've got to address the fact that somebody is feeling that. And what do we do with that? And then have to make some decisions in the moment around that and kind of lean into counsel, lean into policy and try to figure out the right way forward.

[06:52:54] And lean into the communities that we're talking to and trying to figure out how do we have these conversations so that we can actually have a conversation. And know that we're committed to that. And we have been agonizing over every word of every communication.

[06:53:11] And so what we want to communicate, we also want to make sure we don't do so in a way that creates problems for us that we didn't anticipate. Because, quite frankly, that's what's happening kind of every time we're trying to communicate around these issues. And I think most importantly, what we can do, as I said, is get clarity for our school leadership about, A, what is permissible, but also the need to pick up the phone and call and get support if something's happening.

[06:53:38] We have provided, as Dr. Mitchell mentioned, much clearer guidance now on how students may walk out. So I want to address that quickly, if I could, about what that guidance looks like and why. Because there's been a little bit of conversation about maybe we're treating different walkouts differently.

[06:53:55] And I want to say our intention is to not do that moving forward, that all walkouts will be treated similarly. And when I say that, I'm talking about the logistics of student protest. We have an obligation to keep our children safe. I was deeply concerned when I was viewing and seeing reports of a walkout that we had where we had parents yelling at each other near our students, very angry, saying things to our staff.

[06:54:26] And that's not a safe environment for our students to be in. And so we're removing that possibility. Our students will not be in that environment. Our students will be in an environment if they want to protest where they are allowed to do so, but it will be in a supervised environment that we can secure.

[06:54:41] We've provided that guidance to our schools so they understand that, and that will be our guidance moving forward. And so the second part of that then becomes the guidance about what is permissible during those protests. And the board has some policy on this, right?

[06:54:58] So it's not supposed to occur during instructional time, and that is something that we're wrestling with a little bit because so far it has been occurring during instructional time, and that's not permissible by policy. So then we have to figure out what do we do, how do we address that with students who may choose to continue to engage in that without being overly punitive but recognizing there are consequences for violating those policies.

[06:55:20] And then we have to figure out the nuances of the individual protests and make sure that there is consistency of application about what is permissible when students are protesting. And in general, what is going to be permissible are those things that would be articulated as free speech, so long as that speech does not create undue disruption for us in the school environment.

[06:55:44] That's clear in the court precedent that it cannot create a disruption for us. And so long as, in our estimation, it is not creating an environment that is unsafe for other students. That's where it gets a little trickier, and that's where I think we all have to remain open-minded and have conversations with each other and be willing to kind of, instead of, you know, I say this all the time, like we can't run to our corners and scream at each other.

[06:56:08] We have to come into the middle of the room and have a conversation and say, I appreciate that you don't feel this is that way, but that's very hurtful to me and vice versa and figure out where is the place where we can either agree to allow things to happen with understanding or say it can't happen because we can't get to understanding.

[06:56:25] And to me, that is the work that we have in front of us in that, you know, kind of answering your question about communication that I'm a little hesitant to communicate on until we've had these other conversations with members of our community that need to happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[06:56:44] On the topic of consequences for leaving class, just going back to the example that I was giving you about after the Parkland shooting, I know some of the students at one of the middle schools in my district were told that they felt that there was some nebulous feedback about this will go in your in your record and what will colleges think and I think they felt intimidated by that and I and I think that that's not actually correct I don't think that walking out of class is the type of thing that's

[06:57:21] reported to a college it's certainly am I correct about that this is this is kind of an age-old interesting conversation about student discipline in general in general students disciplinary records are never reported to a college that's That's just not, what we send to colleges are student transcripts and discipline records are not on student transcripts.

[06:57:44] Some, depends, some colleges may specifically request that information from a student or ask them to sort of give their own record and then rely on the student to either report it or not. But we don't typically provide student disciplinary records to college. More importantly, what matters is that we have consistent application of our expectations when it comes to students leaving during instructional time and that we get clarity for our principals on what that looks like.

[06:58:09] And that's something that we are working through right now. I agree with that. And I appreciate your answering my question. And it's not so much the example that is important or the facts in my example. It's the fact that these misunderstandings seem to recur every time, even many years apart with what is communicated to the students about the consequences, their rights, and even though First Amendment rights can be complicated and gray, a statement like

[06:58:43] that about disciplinary records being shared and what is this going to do to your chances of college seemed to me on the surface to be clearly aimed at discouraging the exercise of that First amendment, right? And this statement about you can't wear these colors seems to also fall into the category of information that is being conveyed by an adult in authority to our students and our children. So I think clarification around that, even if it's in terms of instruction to building

[06:59:17] administrators, because I'm going to assume it's just a mistake on their part, but that's how it's being translated to students and families and who are reading different intentions into it. They're reading intentions into it that it has to do with the content of the speech or the reason for the walkout.

[06:59:40] So just as a final note on that, I agree and I hope I'm expressing that our intention is to continue to build our leadership capacity at the school level around that issue because clearly if, and I don't have direct specific evidence in a lot of cases. I have one thing that I do know we've addressed, but clearly if some of what we heard tonight was in fact being said, I would have some constitutional concerns, and I think we would have to understand clearly why they were being said. So we need to make sure we're having

[07:00:15] that conversation with our leadership and correcting any misconceptions and making sure that we also revisit that with any students who may have heard those things mr. Madby I'll be brief again I appreciate that I think dr. Williams I think I want to go back to your statement about many truths to it but again this is a complex issue I mean again this is a sort of a complex and a learning moment for LCPS because this is not something perhaps LCPS has gone through but I think I I don't want to say what to do but from what a conversation I had with dr. Williams

[07:00:55] and you, and I know that you guys are at least in the right directions on that. So I, again, look forward to some of the work that you guys have been doing and coming out of that. So I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you, and thank you for your continued support and directing persons to us to get the right information. Sai, thank you.

[07:01:12] Mr. Agadekbe. Thank you. So I wanted to first express appreciation for what I, I don't remember the date, but there was a, it was an equity committee meeting shortly after October 7th and just being there and there was a mother who had talked to you, Dr. Ellis Williams, right after the meeting and had expressed some concern and Palestinian mom who was talking about just the challenges they were

[07:01:51] having in terms of having conversations with children and explaining things. And I think that the approach of making sure that we are here for all of our students and making sure that all of our students are feeling supported and safe in all of the ways that you've expressed physically safe emotionally safe and supported i i wanted to just ask and i might have misheard but i heard you say that there were conversations that were scheduled with adams with the um a jewish organization with

[07:02:28] an interfaith organization, is there a meeting planned with members of the Palestinian community understanding that Palestinians are of different religious backgrounds? Yes, I didn't want to belabor with the list, but I have a two-page document here. So we actually, we've not left out anyone who's been impacted as well as those that may not be perceivably impacted in our silent during a situation because it's impacting peripherally. We know how trauma works, right?

[07:02:56] You could be peripherally impacted because you have a friend who's experiencing emotional discourse because of what's transpiring. So it may not be your particular situation based on your ethnicity or culture, but you share a space and you're also impacted.

[07:03:12] So we've also been meeting with our student equity ambassadors as well to get a barometer for what's happening in schools and what's on top for them. And we're going to continue to have the conversations because what we're finding is the information that we're getting from our students when we meet with them is not always in tandem with what parents come to our meetings and discuss.

[07:03:32] So we really want to get to the crux of what their experience is to be able to inform the steps that we're going to take. And that's ensuring that the adults have the appropriate actions or responses and vernacular to be able to continue to support them. Okay. So I just will say I appreciate and trust that you

are actively engaging with the community, which is what is necessary in this moment, because we need to figure out a way to support all of our community, which is pluralistic. So that's all.

[07:03:59] And thank you for clarifying. Thank you. Any additional discussion?

[07:04:18] Thank you very much for the information. Very much appreciated. With that, we'll move to item 13, our closed session. Is there a motion, Mr. Mahedvi? Yes, Chair. I move to the Loudoun County School Board, recess this public meeting, and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.23712 of the Code of Virginia for the following discussion of the performance conduct of a specific public employee, Employee 0112823, as authorized by Section 2.23711A1 of the Code of Virginia.

[07:04:52] Mr. Mahedvi, I believe you misread the employee number. Could you just restate that? Sure. 0112823. Thank you. Is there a second? I'll second. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, please record your vote once the voting board is open, which it is.

[07:05:19] Ms. Sheridan, your vote? Ms. Sheridan, your vote? Yes. Ms. Corbo, your vote? please record votes for miss sheridan miss corvo for yes and please close and display the vote

[07:05:30] that motion will pass unanimously we are now in closed session the board is coming out of

[07:19:41] closed session is there a motion mr mr mehedvi yes chair i move that the closed meeting be adjourned that the lowland county school board reconvene its public meeting and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting i also move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting resolution 12 dash 23 slash 24 whereas the Lowne County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of Virginia Freedom of Information Act and whereas section 2.2 3712d of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that

[07:20:20] such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law now therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification applies and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered by the Loudoun County School Board. Is there a second? Seconded by Mr. Morse. Any discussion? Seeing none, please open the voting board and

[07:20:54] vote on the motion ms corvo your vote yes ms sheridan your vote yes okay please record votes of yes for ms sheridan and ms corbo and please close and display the vote that motion will pass unanimously we're now on item 1304 motion required by closed session i move that the louden county school board adopt the hearing officer's report and recommendation dated november

[07:21:28] 3rd 2023 and does hereby dismiss and terminate employee 0111 2823 from employment effective immediately is there a second second seconded by mr mehedvi is there any discussion seeing none uh we'll open the voting board board members please record your vote uh miss sheridan your vote yes miss corvo your vote yes okay please record votes of yes for miss sheridan and miss

[07:21:58] Corbo, and please close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously. We're now on item number 14. Given the lateness of the hour, we're going to skip, without objection, we're going to skip

board member comments and committee reports, which brings us to item number 15, new business.

[07:22:21] Is there any new business tonight? Mr. Beatty. Thank you, Chair. So I had the opportunity to attend the community listening session last night at Woodgrove High School on the western non-attendant zone changes that were proposed at last meeting. It was incredibly clear during the meeting and I believe the staff can back this up that these changes are not desired and more than not desired by the community they're happening incredibly quickly with the abbreviated attendance zone process the rejected population harmony will only be at most nine over at capacity in five years I think the abbreviated process is not the right way to readjust for such a small potentiality if we think back to Leesburg changes we made last fall we had a major overcrowding in multiple high schools that prompted the need to

[07:23:00] go through the regular process and I appreciate the staff for doing their job looking at the numbers and providing ideas to the board but I think the time is not right for such a change if this becomes a problem the next year or so after I think the process to go be the through the full attendance on change so that all the possibilities can be considered and so I asked the board that we not vote on these changes and I think it would be just to our parents if we could do it tonight so I ask that we suspend the rules and that we vote to not adopt any changes to the Western mountain secondary school tenant zone for the fall of 2024. There's a motion to suspend the rules. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by

[07:23:36] Ms. Ogadegbe. This motion is not debatable and it requires a two-thirds vote in order to pass. So please open the voting board and board members please record your vote at this time.

[07:23:55] Ms. Byrne could you open the voting board please? And board members please record your vote. Ms. Corbo your vote? Yes. And Ms. Sheridan your vote? No. Please record a vote of yes for Ms.

[07:24:14] Corbeau and a vote of no for Ms. Sheridan and please close and display the vote. That motion will pass with a two-thirds majority with Mehevee, Sheridan and Reeser opposed. So Mr. Beatty you could make you can make the motion to vote the motion you intended to make at this time. I move that the board vote to not adopt any changes to the Western Loudoun secondary school attendance zone for the fall of 2024 i believe that would be a motion to postpone indefinitely which it is

[07:24:51] that that would be the form of the motion the motion to postpone the the um boundary changes indefinitely that's your intent is there a second seconded by miss okadek bay mr reserve i'm sorry mr i'm all over the place today uh mr beatty would you like to speak to your motion uh just to reiterate what i said it was a strong you know the article said there are 50 parents i think there was a lot more than that. Pretty much everyone did not want this at the time. I think if we were going to go through this process, it should be through the normal attendance zone because you can look at the Western Loudoun and there's a lot of areas and a lot of things you could do. So I

[07:25:29] think that would be the more appropriate venue. And again, I think, you know, given the end of our term, I'm not sure making it at this point is a prudent decision. Thank you. Mr. Madby. Thank Thank you, Chair. So I'm going to speak to the voting no on suspending the rules.

[07:25:50] You know, I've said that, I think, in the, you know, we always suspend the rules to make this decision. But since it's a new business, I thought it would be an information item tonight, and then you can have an action item next board meeting. I mean, that would be the normal recourse of what this could have been played. But I don't know, Mr. Lewis, do you have any thoughts about what, on this particular motion?

[07:26:12] - So we have had the information. We had a community meeting last night to try to add a step into the abbreviated process at Mr. Srockin's request. We were there at the community meeting as well and heard loud and clear, as Mr. Beatty said, that the community is not in favor of that.

[07:26:31] We did look into the future, the six year projections, and see that Harmony Middle School was reaching and exceeding 100%. So as Mr. Beatty said, our responsibility bring the board those ideas we are not strongly opposed to or yeah not strongly supporting doing that so we're perfectly fine with mr. Beatty's recommendation to indefinitely propose that and to do a full-blown process rather than abbreviated when the time comes and I'll certainly weigh in since I represent the the other half of Western Loudoun or or some aspect of it at this point

[07:27:11] I, I think Mr. Beatty and I were largely in agreement, largely in agreement after taking a look at the numbers about, you know, it's, it might be nice in theory to do something about this, to balance the capacity between the two middle schools and two high schools and to solve the cluster, the cluster split problem with Kenneth Colbert.

[07:27:33] Uh, but I, I also agree with Mr. Beatty that, uh, this is, I think this is something that we could postpone and, and let the next board take up with a, with a full or even abbreviated boundary adjustment process at that point. Um, I, my plan that absent a motion to postpone, uh, I was planning on coming back with a mo, an amendment to the staff plan that would essentially grandfather in all secondary school students who are currently there so that it would only be rising sixth graders and students younger

[07:28:09] than that who would be affected so i will certainly still propose that if the motion to postpone fails tonight but i think this unlike the item earlier tonight i think this is an item that we could postpone until the next board so i will support the motion to postpone miss reaser thank you mr Chair. So I had, I want to associate myself with Mr. Mejedevi's comments. I was also expecting that it would be an information item tonight and come back at the next meeting for, for a vote, just so that there would be the opportunity for the public comment that, or public input via email that the

[07:28:47] rest of us who were not at the meeting last night could have heard. But since we're at this juncture now i have no problem supporting the motion since you both heard from the public and have reported that to us and for full disclosure i wasn't able to attend the meeting tonight it was right after Imp and i had a couple of other obligations afterward but my school board assistant was there and gave me a full report on what happened and certainly in addition to that i've been talking to community members and have received all sorts of emails and there's certainly a lot of concern

[07:29:21] And while that's not necessarily a reason not to go through with it, certainly we did with Loudoun County High School and a couple of other things because of the dire overcrowding in those places, this doesn't rise to the same level. So I think there's more time to take a more measured course of action.

[07:29:41] Additional discussion? Seeing none, we will place the motion to postpone indefinitely to a vote. Please open the voting board, which it already is, and board members, please record your vote. Ms. Corbo, your vote?

[07:29:57] Yes. And Ms. Sheridan, your vote? Yes. Okay, please record a vote of yes for both Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Corbo. And please close and display the vote. That motion will pass unanimously.

[07:30:18] All right, is there any additional new business? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you, board members.



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