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Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting, Monday, December 4, 2023

Date Monday, December 4, 2023
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 39m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/891288260?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-21. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] Good evening. I call to order this December 4th, 2023 season finale meeting of the curriculum and instruction committee. The first item on our agenda is item two, public comment. I've been notified that we have no one signed up for public comment this evening, so we will pass over that item and move to item three, the approval of the draft minutes from the October 2nd, 2023 meeting.

[00:00:29] there a motion yes thank you chair i move that we approve the minutes from the october 22nd 2023 meeting i will second is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor of approving the minutes from the october 2nd meeting please raise your hand and say aye aye that motion will pass unanimously of committee members present with miss reaser absent for the vote we'll now move to item 4 which is our loan action item for the evening which is revision of policy 51 25 alternative

[00:01:04] paths to attaining standard units of credit so i know this was previously before the committee as an information item but it's been a while i think so i'll ask staff if the uh any significant changes as a result of the policy review process and or anything else you'd wish to present dr ellis thank you mr. Sorotkin so I can give just a brief reminder since it has been a while so this is not part of the regular five-year review process but rather it was being brought to committee to add newly enacted Virginia code language so

[00:01:42] section section C is new and again as a result of updates to code so this was reviewed by legal reviewed by cabinet it was presented to CNI in September it was posted for feedback in October and being brought to you for action there is feedback posted in board docs for you this evening including a separate document for SIAC feedback and a document with the feedback from the

[00:02:17] public website and based on that feedback there is one minor edit that I I would like to recommend to you on line 22 of the clean copy. The title of policy 5360 should include homebound instruction, and that was pointed out in a couple of places in the feedback.

[00:02:39] So the change is simply that we would add homebound instruction, homebound and in parentheses. So it would read policy 5360, parentheses, homebound and home-based instruction. on line 22 of the clean version? Yes sir. Okay so is that reflected and is that reflected in the red line also? It is it is not but that that's that's my recommendation that if you were to vote on it I would recommend that amendment. I see committee members is there any any questions regarding the changes? Thank

[00:03:14] you chair I was going to actually ask for that change I'm curious in the other feedback that's there there much of the feedback says no feedback no feedback but there were two items both out of the equity committee could we take a look at those and if staff could provide some feedback sure so there was a question about the 20th clock hour of instruction this is to indicate the time during the school year when a student enters and that's something that the counseling works with the family when they enroll so essentially if they have missed more

[00:03:53] than 20 hours of instruction then they that's that's the cutoff point that makes sense and then the other piece of feedback one is these are these are minor edits so in line 22 accommodations is actually not part of the standards competencies or objectives accommodations would absolutely happen but I don't I think it was a misinterpretation of of the sentence itself so it wouldn't make sense to add accommodations there 20 line 26 through

[00:04:29] 27 and line 68 reference of school division that's pretty consistent with other LCPS policies so I don't think a change is needed there and in line 64 the use of the word Virginia rather than voe is mirroring code language so I wouldn't make recommend making that change either thank you for providing that context I don't have other questions thank you miss okay at this time I will move that the curriculum and instruction committee review and approve

[00:05:02] staff recommended changes to policy 5125 including adding the words homebound instruction to the end of line 22 and refer the policy to the full school board for adoption seconded by Miss Ogedegbe any further discussion dr. Ellis I do have one question for clarification so given that this current school board has one more meeting staff is wondering if we might not wait and put it on the January agenda so the new school board isn't taking action on something they

[00:05:42] have not had as an information so speaking as board chair that's going to be my general philosophy for the sub for the December meeting where even if things passed out of committee unless it for some reason staff notifies me that it's time-sensitive I'm going to try to not have this board to consider something as an information item that the next board would then have to consider as an action item we'll just hold it for the January meeting but I don't think that necessitates us waiting on an in committee I think we can pass it out and just have it held at that point okay so any further discussion seeing none all those in favor of the motion please reach your head and say aye aye that

[00:06:20] motion will pass unanimously of committee members present with miss reasons are absent for the vote that will conclude our action items and we'll begin on our five information items starting with 501 revisions to policy 5080 class size which was referred back to committee by the full board so I would ask staff if there has been any further review or any any any recommended changes since the board reviewed it a few months ago thank you mr. Sorokin so once the

[00:06:58] the board referred it back to committee and I believe the reason for that was the addition of CAC feedback that this committee did not have a chance to look at when when the committee sent it to the board staff has reviewed CX feedback with division council we do not have recommended changes that being said I'm happy to walk through CX recommendations okay so their first recommendation was that they had concerns about changes being made to current class sizes and so just to clarify there was no actual change in class size in the policy I

[00:07:38] know that's hard to follow between the clean version and the red line version because we were trying to change language to clarify the language so just to clarify we are not increasing class sizes in this policy the second recommendation was to add at line 87 make a new section D specifying that no more than 25% of students in a collaborative or inclusive classroom shall be students with disabilities we are meeting this in practice and both staff and division council had concerns about putting this in policy because it

[00:08:18] gives zero flexibility again we do meet this in practice and I cannot imagine a situation where we would go above 25% but we didn't feel like it was appropriate for policy recommendation three is that at line 64 and 81 remove the word division-wide and we again consulted with division council we also reviewed code language and this matches code language changing this to school

[00:08:55] as as suggested would have could potentially have significant budget implications and it does match code so we were comfortable sticking with that and those were the three recommendations from SEAC so again no recommended changes based on that thank you dr. Ellis committee members any questions regarding the either the SIAC recommendations or the policy as a whole

[00:09:29] thank you I just realized I'm the only other committee member so it's sort of obvious so for recommendation to you're saying in practice we meet that but can you describe for us where the guidance is on what what the proportion of students is is that stipulated elsewhere in policy but it's just a different number or where is that it is in special education code so so it's actually already in in code language I don't have the exact number but I could certainly

[00:10:07] get that for you and again having it in in policy just eliminates any potential flexibility should we ever need it I haven't ever come across the situation where we do but it made us and division council nervous to to put that in code and in the special education code what's the percentage I think it is 25% but I can get that for you okay but if that's the language that's in code do you have

[00:10:40] any flexibility anyway great question I'll find it any further questions or discussion okay so this is I know this this has already gone out through the policy review process so I think this could just be brought back subject to the whatever the next C&I chair wants to do I think this I don't think it needs to go out for policy review again I think it could just come back as an

[00:11:09] action item next meeting will do okay that will take us to 502 first review of recommended changes to policy 8360 school publications digital and/or print mr. Slevin thank you mr. Srock and I have

mr. Jeff Roundsley here our director of teaching learning k-12 who will be speaking about this policy as board docs noted it is up for its five-year review most of the changes have to do

[00:11:45] with recommendations from division council or BSBA model policy guidance so mr. Rensley will walk through the changes good evening so before I go through the changes I just want to point out that dr. Michelle Picard our supervisor of secondary English reading and writing Melissa McQuillan who is our specialist in secondary English and reading and writing and a team of our teachers who teach our journalism courses all contributed to revising this policy so I just want to point out a few changes that are here as well if you look down at C1 on line 20 under disruptive content there's an addition of materials that

[00:12:23] advocate prejudice hatred violence or harassment that's all meant to align with some of our current policies that are already in place in LCPS in section two we pointed specifically to the code of Virginia that that defines what obscene content is so that there are no needs to change that as the code changes. In section 4, content that endorses unlawful activity, those are all suggestions made by our division counsel during his review. And in section 5, content that compromises the privacy or reputation of an individual, there's some additional definition

[00:12:58] of what exactly that means that is pulled from the VSBA model policy. So those are the changes that are included in policy 8360, and we're happy to answer any questions you have about that thank you mr. roundsley and I appreciate the I think it I think it's appropriate just to hue to the code of Virginia as far as the definition of obscene content given I think that's consistent with what we've done during the book selection process and some other things so it's really being consistent with that process for those definitions so I think that makes sense

[00:13:31] miss Ogedek Bay any any questions okay so I think barring any objections I think this is ready to go through the advisory committee and public review process and then get brought back as an action item at a later date thank you next we have item 503 policy 8310 theatrical presentations thank you mr.

[00:14:02] shrockin similar to the previous policy this policy is up for its five year review and mr. roundsley is going to take us through some of the changes and updates all right so again this policy was done in collaboration with mr. Michael Pearson who is our fine arts supervisor and mark Rogers who is our performing arts specialists in consultation with our performing arts teachers who reported this policy has been working well and so the changes you'll see reflected here are minimal in section a the changes to official school-sponsored presentations that was just trying to point directly to what we wanted to see happen with this policy of getting the principal's approval and

[00:14:39] just making sure that information was very clear to any teacher who might be accessing this and using this policy further down in section two you'll see note of policies 50 55 54 20 regulation 54 20 a 54 20 b and 54 20 c that's all pointing towards recently adopted policies since this policy was initially adopted and aligning this policy with some of the other policies that have been recently adopted around controversial or sensitive topics and in section b non-school sponsored presentations takes the place of facility use requests that's an

[00:15:17] an alignment of language that is found in other policies around school-sponsored and non school-sponsored activities we could take any questions you might have on that committee members these are very straightforward changes so I this is sort of a light comment but growing up with a mother who's been in academia I think the word pedagogy is something that is not in most people's vocabulary so I appreciate the plain language

[00:15:57] update which makes it a little more accessible but other than that I don't have other comments thank you and neither do I so I think that as Miss Okedegbe said I think these are relatively straightforward and ready for the normal policy review process okay that will take us to 504 for an update on the middle school intramural sports program pilot mr. Perry thank you mr.

[00:16:33] i can i'm going to give a quick overview i'm excited to sorry i'll step it away from me um i'll give a quick overview of um i'm excited to first off offer this overview of our middle school pilot program um we're going to talk about participating schools sports that we currently offer participation numbers success stories challenges and the gratitude so um the participating schools this year we the pilot included four middle schools and those are harper park river

[00:17:12] bend smart seneca ridge and smarts mill we broke up each quarter we offered a different sport based on student entrance that we had developed and heard so we did a seven on seven flag football first quarter which we just completed second quarter we are just starting volleyball third quarter we're going to do three on three basketball and then fourth quarter we're going going to go seven on seven soccer just to kind of describe how we get to our lcps playoff tournament it starts with a group pool play so if you're enter if you understand that or if you've been

[00:17:50] part of a group pool play before it's basically a teams are in a round robin format they play each other in flights or brackets and then the top finishers from each of those flights advance to the to the playoff division of their school bracket the winner and runner-up of the playoff bracket then advances to the lcps middle school tournament between the four participating schools so we'd have a total of eight teams participating in the lcps tournament participation numbers so far in seven on seven flag football we had 254 participants amongst the four middle schools

[00:18:26] So far, in six-on-six volleyball, we have 451. I imagine our largest is, you're going to see three-on-three basketball. It's probably going to be well over 700. Seven-on-seven soccer, we also anticipate those numbers reaching somewhere between 700 to 800 students.

[00:18:48] Sorry. Our success stories, as you see right there, is that was our first LCPS Middle School Intramural Flag Football Championships. That was the picture with all the teams participating before the tournament actually began.

[00:19:05] Next slide, please. You'll see some of the other success stories. We took pictures of multiple teams. Obviously, you can see in the top left, the principals were taking a picture. There's the intramural trophy, each team representing their schools.

[00:19:24] We took the number one team from each school is representing these pictures. and then you just see an action photo. Next slide. Other success stories, we did have Riverbend. They were known as the Pretty Boys. They ended up winning the middle school championship 27 to 22.

[00:19:44] It was actually a really crazy ending to the game, and I think Mr. Soraka was there. So not to make this long-winded, but the quarterback got the ball. Riverbend had the ball. There's three seconds left on the clock, right? So all you had to do is run the ball out, right?

[00:20:02] Well, he throws the ball up in the air. So the ball is now a live ball until it hits the ground. And Seneca Ridge intercepted it. And literally one foot from the touchdown line, they pulled his flag. So he reached across the line, but his flag was pulled beforehand.

[00:20:20] If not, Seneca Ridge would have won the game. So what that tells us, you always see like in a basketball game, you always see as the clock is winding down, you see them throw the ball up. football it's the ball is still alive until it touches the ground so there's a lesson learned by riverbend i'm sure that court that young man probably will remember that when he's playing football at potomac falls next year um next slide these uh so yes there's a link here to the wtop article i just took some quotes um some excerpts so um mr principal cotone um was

[00:20:57] cited in in the article and then these other two quotes were from our students who were interviewed by WTOP representatives and then a smart's mill made a highlight video of their season it was it was a great video it showed everyone having a lot of fun and their staff members put this together and shared it with us and I just thought I'd share that with you all as well next

[00:21:23] slide please sure it should work but you're in you're in a long one so yeah

[00:23:12] the season's six weeks long so during that time they're taking excerpts out of this six weeks of play so called multiple teams playing they had they actually had 11 teams participate so that's smart smell so the next slide is just some challenges just kind of making you aware you know we're starting a pilot without time for preparation we literally um you know this was approved in a budget we got the funding

[00:23:45] on july 1st so finding school staff to help support the after school programs giving equipment ordered in in time to start the program some of the some of the items were initially that we ordered were back ordered so we had to switch to other items to make sure we could make this work creating a handbook and participation forms and getting them vetted through legal and risk management was also a challenge you know we had to develop rules from you building I guess it's like building an airplane while you're still flying so and then the distribution of the

[00:24:23] information to the schools and communities so we had to get all those things in place before we could actually distribute the information to the schools and communities so I'd like to go to the next slide and talk about our gratitude. So things that I'm really appreciative of is we have a great relationship with our PRCS program. They helped align all these fields for us, which meant we're aligning four, if you haven't been out to one of those programs, but we actually have four fields on a regulation football field. So that's how we were able to play basically four games at a time,

[00:25:00] so you're keeping our students engaged and active and not just standing on the sidelines. The principals and site-based middle school coordinators were incredible, and they still are, and they're still doing a great job. We hosted the championship at Dominion High School, and their staff was wonderful in helping us with this.

[00:25:19] And then Mr. Sorokin, I want to thank him for coming out and performing the coin toss and presenting the awards during the tournament. Here to answer any questions you may have, it is an exciting opportunity for our students. So, you know, we look at some of the, some, one of the rules is you have to be in school and able to participate, which is also helping our, you know, as we're assessing and trying to come up with methods of combating absenteeism and truancy.

[00:25:47] So I know basic, some of the information I've received so far from our participants is this is keeping our students engaged, active, and wanting to be in school so they can actually participate. Every school is participating two days a week, and basically it's an hour and a half after school each day.

[00:26:08] So they are around caring adults, which is also another way of building relationships, making sure we're having impactful relationships with our students, and having another caring adult that they may or may not know in their school. The other piece I would like to share with you is I am asking for an expansion to all 18 middle schools.

[00:26:30] I know Watson Middle will be opening up next year, but we want them to be, sorry, Watson Mountain is also opening up next year. I know they're gonna be sixth grade, but we would like for them to participate as well. So I'm open for any questions.

[00:26:47] - Thank you, Mr. Ferry. Committee members, questions? Oh, so I, this is really great to see. I generally, these days, try to avoid, you know, taking a lot of credit for things or being Loudoun in front of things, but I'll make an exception here.

[00:27:12] This has been a passion of mine to try and bring this to Loudoun County over the last few years. It took a number of tries to get something that the board was willing to support, but I'm really -- it's pretty incredible to see this come to fruition and the success the program had just in the first season of its first year.

[00:27:32] I'm really surprised and pleased to see that we have more participation in volleyball than we did in flag football. Maybe people want to be warm during the winter months and that's why, but I was surprised by that. But that's really encouraging to see the program growing on itself just for the second quarter.

[00:27:52] I really appreciate all of the staff members who volunteered their time to make this happen. I think we had one funded position or roundabouts or maybe one per school. So to answer the funding, right, we do have one site base coordinator. We do also pay for supervisory roles afterwards because one person can't manage.

[00:28:12] I mean, like, for example, Seneca Ridge has 145 students playing volleyball two days a week right after school. So that's we're using both gyms. It's impossible for one staff member. So we do have part time funding for supervisory roles.

[00:28:28] Okay. But the referees at the championships, and those were, at least some of those, were staff members volunteering their time to make this a success, right? We did pay those individuals on an hourly rate. But yes, I mean, they did still show up on a Saturday for not a lot of money, probably paid for their gas to get to Dominion High School.

[00:28:52] Okay, fair enough. And then I just want to follow on to your remarks about what this has meant to the schools and what it's meant to the students. I know I had some direct conversation with the principals. I think all four of them showed up. We're pretty close to it.

[00:29:09] They did. About what it's meant to the students, the fact that it's helped, as you said, keep their students engaged in school. Certainly, when I started pushing this, I never envisioned that it would, you know, help curb chronic absenteeism.

[00:29:24] But if that's a side benefit to the program that it's having, then that's fantastic. In general, the link between athletics and academic performance has been very well-researched and is incredibly strong. And if that helps with chronic absenteeism and some of the other problems in increasing academic performance, then I think that's fantastic as well.

[00:29:46] And it also provides students who may not have an opportunity to participate in sports a window or an opportunity at their school where, you know, in their community, they might not be able to afford to do so. That's absolutely right.

[00:30:02] You know, we hear a lot and we say a lot, you know, Loudoun County is the richest county in the country or words to that effect. but we have a lot of title one schools we have students at every one of our schools who if this wasn't being offered through the middle school or through their high school they couldn't afford to do in any other way so that was I've talked a lot about about that over the last few years and just providing an affordable on school grounds supervised after-school activity is in many communities it's worth its weight in gold additional questions or thank you

[00:30:40] chair just thank you for continuing to bring something forward and I was happy to support it and as a you know mom of student-athlete it's it is there's lots of benefits for participation in sports and appreciated your leadership on this one so thank you thank you and thank you for the update and looking forward to seeing how the rest of the seasons go with that we'll move to our final information item 505 WO Roby high school annual review of alternative

[00:31:17] accreditation plan dr. Ellis thank you mr. Sorokin so this evening I have in board docs for you a draft of the alternative accreditation plan for Roby high school by way of background this is an accreditation plan that the school board of any alternative school is required to approve and have board and superintendent signature each year so this is an annual occurrence we unfortunately staff missed the deadline for getting this through the SPC

[00:31:54] committee and we're trying to we're asking that the full board approve it so that we can submit it by January which is why we're bringing it to you this evening so I wanted to walk through just the one minor change and a little bit of background on this plan although you know this background already but just for the benefit of the public so the one important talking point is that the alternative accreditation items in this plan are only used for an alternative school like Roby if the alternative school has an indicator at a level three

[00:32:32] so so each school in the state of Virginia receives accreditation there are certain levels when schools receive a level three of the one two of levels one two and three they are required to take action to improve in that area last year for example Roby had a level three just for the CCCRI indicator and we were able to work with video we to work through the alternative accreditation indicator in in this plan and and they were they actually became a level one in that area the only change that we have to this plan compared to what you

[00:33:12] approved last year is on the 14th page of the document and is related to chronic absenteeism this section was actually in the first plan that was approved for Roby high school and video we recommended that we remove it because we didn't have sufficient data to measure we removed it for the second year and with with the principal and the school improvement office we were able to determine determine the data based on what school the students were being pulled from and we have since added chronic absenteeism indicator back into

[00:33:50] the plan so that's on page 14 there are no other changes to the plan we feel more comfortable having chronic absenteeism indicator the alternate indicator in there should we need it and I am happy to answer any questions thank you dr. Ellis I'm just curious was it was video we saying you don't have the right data to measure this or you don't have enough of a chronic absentee problem to justify this being in

the plan at the time it was the latter we it wasn't a problem we now know that chronic absenteeism is a challenge across across

[00:34:29] all of our schools and we are able to pull the absenteeism data on the students attending Robey from the schools where they are coming from and so that's why we added it back in okay thank you any additional questions so I know this was a time sensitive item so I will I will move to suspend the rules so second all those in favor of suspending the rules please raise your hand say aye aye that motion will pass unanimously of board members present or committee members present with miss Rieser absent for the vote so I will I will now that

[00:35:06] the rules have been suspended I will move that the curriculum and instruction committee review and approve the request for approval of an alternative accreditation plan for W O Robey high school for 20,000 2024 25 and forward this item to the full school board for approval and board chair signature is there a second second seconded by miss okay thank you chair can we can we recommend that this goes to consent so that we can take that action as a full

[00:35:44] board just understanding and I know some I haven't through my committees I know other committees purposefully send things to consent but this is these alternative education plans tend to be non-controversial and I think go to consent by default so I'll certainly place it on consent unless I hear from any other board member that they don't want it on consent any additional questions or discussion seeing none all those in favor of the motion please raise your hand say aye aye that motion will pass unanimously of committee members

[00:36:20] present with miss Rieser absent for the vote that will conclude our information items and bring us to new business is there any new business tonight okay I will I will just say as I've been let's see where do I want to start I've been I've been chair of this committee for the last three years for three of my four years on the board when I first when I first joined the board I was chair of the Triple S committee and I remember my my very first meeting with dr. Jones when she was the staff liaison to the Triple S committee it's funny in

[00:36:58] In hindsight, at the time, I was mortified where I came in with like 10 things I wanted to do or that I wanted to bring before the Triple S committee, and she very politely told me like, well, nine of those 10 things would go through curriculum and instruction and not through the Triple S committee.

[00:37:15] So I may have picked the wrong committee. So I had things I wanted to do in Triple S, and we had a very good and productive year, but i i recalibrated after that and and very much wanted to be a part of this committee to really be a part of the the important work within the department of instruction and curriculum and curriculum and instruction and i think it's really telling that a lot of the not all of them but a lot of the biggest initiatives or changes that the school board has made over the past four years have started as discussions in the cni committee whether we're talking about

[00:37:52] middle school sports like we did tonight or the international baccalaureate program the dual language immersion program revamping early literacy and many more this is where the important conversations of the board tend to start and particularly so within the curriculum and instruction committee and many times it's unfortunate that you know the public or other people only start paying attention to when it gets to the full board level because it's certainly in my experience at least it's a thousand times more productive and collegial to have the conversations in committee and and do the hard work of trying to improve things for our students

[00:38:31] so that being said i also i want to in particular thank dr ellis and mr slevin for being wonderful staff liaisons and partners in in making this all work over the past few years it's it's the way that it's the way that committees are supposed to work and i really feel like things have gone very well here over the last few years and i'm really proud of what we were able to accomplish by working together is there any additional new business seeing none we are adjourned thank you all



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