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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, December 6, 2023

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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/892019399?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:57] Good evening everyone. It is 6:02, so if you can please take your seats so we can get started. If you haven't had an opportunity, the attendance sheets are in the back along with a bunch of flyers, so please help yourself.

[00:01:18] If you would like to sign in via QR code, it is here. Please let us know that you're here. And now we are going to move to Dr. Carter, who's going to lead us in a connection activity.

[00:01:36] Good evening and welcome to SEAC. On the screen you see four winter pictures, those of you who were in our work session the other day, this may look familiar to you, but we're going to change it up a little bit. In your table groups for just a couple of minutes, and if there's no one at your table, please join another group. But looking at those four pictures, which one could you relate to most about where you are in your journey with special education right now? And for example, I will give you my pick is the young man shoveling snow there. I feel like right now we're going

[00:02:13] through a special education audit and I feel like instead of snow it's files and we are just moving through them as fast as we can. So in your table groups or with folks that are near you if you just

[00:02:28] take a few minutes and talk about those pictures. Okay just if I could have your attention back.

[00:03:56] We're not going to share out tonight because it's a really packed agenda but I just wanted you guys to have a few minutes to sort of unwind from the day and and have some conversation but our first presentation tonight is about transition which is something that is on the minds of parents and educators from the time a child enters school all the way through their journey so i'd like to introduce jenna arndt our special education supervisor who oversees transition and she'll

[00:04:26] get us started thank you dr carter i'm going to introduce suzanne birch and sarah hendricks who are my transition specialists and support our team very very heavily so we are going to talk about the transition journey this evening and on this slide here if you're watching at home if you have the slides pulled up the link here

[00:05:02] is live to the worksheet oh there's a worksheet it's on your table if you're here. And at home, you should just be able to make a copy. If you can't, we'll try to get that fixed. Okay, so tonight our conversation is going to surround all levels. We're going to talk elementary, middle, high, and post-grad transition, and what that might look like at school, and how we might be supporting it, as well as what it can look like at home, and how you as parents can also support that journey. Oh, and there's a QR code in the corner, and so if you have questions, please scan

[00:05:41] the QR code and then you'll let us know. Thank you. Okay, so our first thought of the evening is who supports transition? So from our standpoint, parents, case managers, transition teachers, and there's one in every high school that supports that pyramid. Job coaches, again, there's one in every high school that supports that pyramid of those students. Teaching assistants, coaches, scout leaders, religious leaders, youth group leaders. So we'd like for you to just take a few minutes and think about someone who has helped shape where you are today, whether that's personally, professionally, and how did they impact who you are today? So think about it and talk about it

[00:06:22] with the folks around you, please. Good tip. Anyone want to share? Oh, sorry. Anyone want to share out

[00:07:26] what they talked about? Anyone who has helped along your journey? No pressure. Oh, wow, this is really high tech.

[00:07:56] As a special needs parent, I think I get my best intel from other parents. It's less filtered more honest um not couched in bureaucratic terminology and fear of saying the wrong thing so for me personally it's been i've learned so much from other parents anyone else okay so when we talk about transition um at the different ages and the different levels we talk about some

[00:08:34] activities that we can do in school or that our students can work on at home to increase um their awareness so when we are looking at transition for elementary school we are starting to discuss what work is what does it mean to work participating in career days at schools we really want our students to learn about jobs learn about different jobs in the community and what they look like in elementary school we start assigning classroom jobs what you know everyone loves to be the line leader or everyone loves to return the library books you know so they become jobs that they become someone's responsibility every day they know

[00:09:14] that's what they're gonna do or for a week or however that looks but it helps our students begin to structure something and be bring in some of those leadership skills and some of those other opportunities to remember I have to do that that's my responsibility I have to make sure everyone's library

books get returned we're starting to look at careers of interest typically at the elementary school we're really exploring like community helpers police officers, firefighters, doctors, that sort of thing. But that's not to say that we can't explore other community helpers or other jobs in general. We really want to start having students talk about the work that they see people doing and what

[00:09:52] is of interest to them. We communicate with adults about students' career choices and pathways or about starting to think about pathways. And I know we think elementary school, what do they know? But at every age students have interests and even if we explore an interest at elementary school if it doesn't remain an interest in elementary school or middle school that's okay they've learned something they've learned that maybe they don't like something as much as they thought they did so it's okay to have them explore many different options we can work on in-school or community CII getting the students involved and then also school-based businesses a lot of our

[00:10:31] elementary schools do run school-based businesses so we would also consider that in-house CII where the students have a job that they go to every day or every other day. Maybe they run a little coffee shop. We have a school that has a garden and they run a farmer's market. So all different kinds of things that could be happening. For our students at home, in elementary school, this can look like taking part in household chores. Probably not their favorite thing to do. I know it's not my son's, but he's learned a lot of responsibility like

[00:11:07] feeding the dog when you eat the dog should eat if he doesn't then you know if you're hungry he's probably hungry too being a community helper doing things in the community helping a neighbor raking the leaves you know things like that making decisions and choices about things at home what to wear to school should I wear a coat or not is now a good time to have a snack or should I wait you know should I clean my room or should I leave it messy we all know that there's repercussions to some of our decisions right so if you leave it messy what happens you solve to clean it later talking about your hopes and dreams for the future with your child and them sharing what they think they want to do

[00:11:45] and then participating or practicing explaining what you what help they need to get work done so if they do have a job at home maybe a household chore and they really don't like it or they struggle with it one of my son's chores is to take the trash out but boy he can't figure out how to tie a knot in the bags to for anything so he's like mom I got it out can you help me tie it so we're still practicing you know tying the knot in the bags so that he doesn't spill it all over so talking about what what they need help with so they can be successful in that job or in that chore that they're trying to do so on your

[00:12:21] table everyone has like a note sheet there should be enough for everyone at the table and there's some at the surrounding tables if you want to grab one of those think about your child that's in elementary school or your child when they were at elementary age think about the things that you feel like you could work with your student on at home maybe take some notes the things you might need help with and who might help you at the elementary level and then something new to you if you're have an elementary age parent or elementary age student we're gonna turn to this form after we discuss kind of each age level so if you don't have a lot to write down this time that's okay but

[00:13:00] also at your table turn and talk to those around you maybe you're a high school parent and you could offer something to an elementary parent that you did at home that worked really well and that you felt like it helped prepare your student for you know this kind of transition journey and some

responsibility so we'll give you about two or three minutes to turn and talk and then we're gonna move on and take some notes oh and if you're by yourself

[00:13:23] feel free to join a table that isn't by yourself all right all right we're gonna

[00:15:45] move on to middle school and you guys will have a chance to talk about this more so if you could all right thank you so now we're going to talk about middle school and exploring employment opportunities so at school in middle school it would look like identifying interests and skills so that's when we start talking about specific interests to each student strengths needs things like that learning about accommodations and modifications that they may need beginning a career portfolio building on those academic skills that they're

[00:16:21] going to need for jobs in the future or college or whatever they choose. School based CII, so CII just like elementary school that is happening within the school building and then CII in the community and for a middle school that might look like job tours, job shadows or unpaid work experience. So those are some of the things that you'll see your middle schoolers doing and experiencing at school. Okay, so now we're going to look at at home. So at home and middle school, some of these activities would look like volunteering with community groups, talking to adults that they

[00:17:01] know about what they're doing for work. So that could be family, it could be neighbors, things like that. Helping meal plan and shop. So this is a big one. I think it's a great opportunity at this age to have students say things that they might want to try, try new foods, help shop, maybe set a budget for it go shopping together talk about which you know there's two two brands of cheese here which one should we purchase and why things like that trying new things so not only just food but maybe trying a new club maybe try an instrument maybe try theater or something like that and continuing and expanding household chores and responsibilities so maybe more than taking

[00:17:40] out the trash maybe now they have a floor of the house to take care of or maybe they write the grocery list or something like that so these are just some of the opportunities that they have at home that could work towards these pathways in the future so like we did for elementary school we're going to look at that paper and kind of go through those three categories talk with your table mates and just kind of answer some of those questions so you guys can right ahead and do that

[00:18:09] sorry to interrupt all this great conversation but it was brought to our attention we're talking about CII and we haven't really said what that means and so some some parents who are coming in now community independence instruction so working on some of those work skills and independent living skills either in

[00:18:43] school or out in the community so sorry about that okay so the next grouping of

[00:21:17] students we're going to talk about our high school grades 9 and 10 so we separated it 9 and 10 and 11 and 12 we recognize there's a little bit difference when you're starting in high school versus when you're getting ready to leave those feelings are different the experiences are different everyone's going through different emotions so we separated it the at-school transition can look like exploring part-time employment and applying for jobs so that's looking at who's who's working or who's looking for workers in your neighborhood maybe it's seasonal help maybe it's over the summer that type of thing contacting the division of vocational rehabilitation that's DARS

[00:21:55] Completing work experience based on interests. So that is talking with maybe your transition teacher in your building and saying, "Hey I have a really of a huge interest in animal care and are there any vets that I can work at or can I go to an animal shelter?" Participating in any career exploration preparation classes offered at high school. So CTE classes, so maybe there's a culinary arts class or a computer class or any other elective. So maybe there's a yoga class.

[00:22:22] maybe you're interested in NASM if you want to be a personal trainer. Meeting with career center, school counselor and transition teachers. Those should happen at least once a year hopefully. Learning about resources, joining our Schoology group for example. Completing interest inventories and searches. So every year before students have their annual IEP they are completing interviews and transition assessments with our transition team.

[00:22:51] Participating in CII and school-based businesses, and that's a continuation of what they've been doing. And at home, what can we do at home? Having conversations with parents about plans for the future and finances. So we do not encourage anyone waiting until senior year and saying we have \$20,000 a year for you to go to college and your student is looking at an out-of-state school that's 50.

[00:23:15] I may be using myself as an example of that. I've just had two students graduate. Volunteering for a cause of importance, so getting out there and volunteering. So whatever's important to you, do that. Give something back to the community, have a sense of pride. Planning for summer employment. Preparing for the SATs and ACTs, and that includes understanding how to ask for the accommodations.

[00:23:36] So working with your school counselors, working with your transition teachers. How do I utilize those accommodations? How do I get them? And exploring transportation strategies. Are you going to be a driver? Have you signed up for driver's ed? Behind the wheel. What do you need to do in order to get that driver's license?

[00:23:53] Or if you're not going to be a driver, how else can you get around? Is there a public transit? Will you be a walker? Do you know how to use Uber? That type of thing. Okay, and then high school age 11 and 12.

[00:24:09] So again, you're getting ready to leave. You're starting that journey out of high school. Everything's looking a little bit more intense. So re-examining your interests, preferences, and needs based on work experiences. Learning about training requirements necessary for career of interest.

[00:24:24] So if you are interested in the military, what do you need to do in order to be in the military? You need to take the ASVAB. You need to understand what's required, your physical requirements, that type of thing. So exploring those, exploring post-secondary options, such as CAST, the military, Project SEARCH, college, trade school, et cetera.

[00:24:44] Understanding that we have post-secondary programs that do require a student to have an applied studies diploma. So if there's a student who is on an applied studies diploma track, finding out about cast and project search, talking to your transition teacher about that. Again, preparing for the SAT and ACT, discussing how to access accommodations in college and or in the workplace. When you leave high school, it is no longer the responsibility of the person who is providing instruction to you or teaching you. It is now the responsibility of that individual. So understanding why you have an accommodation, how to access it, why you need it, and being an advocate for yourself. And then at home, transition can

[00:25:23] look like managing post-secondary applications. That is a huge undertaking at home. Have a way to track those applications. How to have a way to track scholarships. Things like that. Developing transportation strategies. Again, now you're in 11th and 12th grade. You want to be out on your own independent. And how are you getting there? And having everyone on the same page with that.

[00:25:43] Parents and student. And exploring independent living options. And that can include are you, if you go to college, will you be living in a dorm? If you live in an apartment do you know how to manage an apartment do you know how to manage your finances do you know how to cook a meal do you have to do laundry any of those things if you're going to be living in the community what does that look like do you will you have a job that will pay for all of that will you need the help of maybe a waiver or the support of MHS ADS to explore that oops I went too far okay so again we're going to give you a few moments to talk

[00:26:19] with your table groups about your experiences there just as you have the

[00:26:23] last two. We hate to end this conversation but I promise you're going to get another chance to turn

[00:29:34] and talk. We did have one question come in so far and so we wanted to take an opportunity to answer that question and it was, I believe if we're understanding or interpreting it correctly, it was how can we increase STEM opportunities for our students in the community and I'm going to equate it to like CII but then I'm also going to equate it to like some exploration potentially. So I will say we are certainly always looking out for STEM opportunities and as many as there are in our community around us unfortunately we don't always have a lot

[00:30:12] of takers for having our students come in and shadow or participate in opera in work opportunities so if anyone knows anybody we are open for suggestions and I'm going to take this moment to talk about the blue flyer that's on your table before we move on and we are piggybacking off of the other work group that we hear about so often that is very well attended and has had great outcomes so we are gonna have a transition subcommittee work group we have three sessions scheduled for after the new year and so in that work group

[00:30:50] some of the things we intend to explore are how can we expand our opportunities in the community for our students, how can we, um, open up more doors, some of those STEM opportunities and other opportunities that our students might be interested in. Um, and then also, um, how can we better support all of you in our transition journey and make sure you have the information you need and make it more accessible. And we're also going to spend some time, um, learning about and talking about school links because we know that's new to everyone and the access and support that it could provide you and your student through this transition journey so we will be sending out further

[00:31:27] information for you to sign up but if you're interested in attending all or any of those work groups we would love to have you it will be open to the public we're gonna move on all right so now we're gonna talk about post-grad and transition so when we are talking about post-grad students we are going to be talking about increasing independence and stamina so this is really important and we see it all the time we need to have students out trying things even if they're going to the same store as you maybe walking and having their own list

[00:32:03] of things to get making sure they are you know walking the dog for stamina maybe they take a little like a class with some friends outside of school expanding social network that goes right along with

taking those classes for stamina but making sure they have something that they can participate in outside of school so while they're still going to school and they're a student in the post-grad we want to make sure that they start branching out and having those opportunities with peers and maintaining community partner relationships which is very important so we want to establish them while they're

[00:32:39] in school and maintain them so that they are carried on once they leave so oh sorry okay so we thought it would be great for you guys to hear from some of our LCPS students and how they think their transition journey is going and who may have helped them and what they're doing in order to meet their goals. So we just have a few students up here. We're going to play their videos and we're going to start with Jax. All right,

[00:33:15] can you start off by telling us your name? My name is Jax. All right, where are you in your education journey? I'm in the CAS program. Where? Rockridge High School. All right. What are your plans for the future? Working with preschool kids, specifically in preschool, maybe even more out for like second grade. Okay, very cool. Who helped you in your journey? Transition teachers

[00:33:51] from the CAST program, Ms. Moran, Ms. Dodge, Ms. Jones. Anyone outside of school? My family. What activities did you participate in that helped guide you in your journey?

[00:34:17] So different transition assessments, CII work experience, anything like that? Yes. So what kind of work experience have you gained? I've worked with younger kids in a preschool setting and in a private setting in a private area in Leesburg.

[00:34:43] Do you want to tell us what that place is? The Arc of Loudon, it's in Leesburg. all right so that were those paid or volunteer volunteer work okay and are you working towards paid work or do you have a paid job i have a paid job i work in a specific area that will get me towards a career okay and what do you do for the paid job i work i do one-on-one with a specific

[00:35:12] student names um through what uh the parks and rec okay and how many days a week do you work five days a week all right is there anything else that you want to talk about any other experiences that have helped you get you where you are with your first paid job uh rosalie carter right next door what did you do there um working with a second grade classroom

[00:35:43] I'm in a classroom with one or one students or multiple students in a specific area. Okay. Are there any other activities or things you did within CAST or in your high school that have helped you get your position working with kids currently? Yes. I've done volunteer work for a couple of years. Okay. Anything else you want to share? All right. Thank you.

[00:36:21] Now it's on. Okay, and the next student is Alex, and I'm sorry about that typo, and I'm, see if we can get, this should be good.

[00:36:49] Okay, hi, could you tell us your name, please? Uh, Alexander Bradbury. Okay, and, uh, where are you in your educational journey? Um, well, I am an intern at Project Search. I just graduated from Brightwoods High School back in 2023.

[00:37:06] um i work in laundry okay um uh it's a really cool place to work honestly i mean it's probably one of way better than where i worked at previously i worked at uh i would ci back in school i you know worked at cvs uh bramilton library i also worked waxpool elementary school none of those jobs were like

this at all okay yeah awesome and what are your plans for the future uh either get a job here or get a job at the national conference center or ashby ponds would also be very nice

[00:37:44] okay thank you and who helped you along your way in your journey well i gotta thank quite a few people actually i gotta uh thank my transition teacher over uh briar woods for helping me get me ready for the real world my both my um i gotta thank my case manager miss wilburn and my job coach Miss Mary also awesome and is any how about either at home or oh my dad definitely helped me my mom also helped me awesome yeah and you already talked a little bit about your CII work so tell us a little bit about how project search

[00:38:23] helped you and your professional and personal growth it helped me learn how to work with other people regardless how I felt about them or not it taught me how to deal with people I'm not I'm not like but it also taught me how to better myself and you know I also made some new friends which is great you know can honestly say this is you know probably one of the probably one of the better times of my life I think it's gotten so much better since you know I joined this program that's great yeah that's awesome is there anything else you want

[00:38:59] to share about Project Search or your experience or anything else I want to say that some advice to anyone who may be doing this next year or anyone who's going to get involved in this. It may be tough at first, but I can assure you it's going to help you.

[00:39:17] Like it helped me. So don't be scared. You're just fine. As long as you do what they ask you to do, just be fine. Yeah, so I really can't think of anything else. Great words of wisdom, Alex.

[00:39:33] Thank you so much. And Alex is here tonight if you want to stand up and take a bow, sir. Thank you for participating.

[00:40:05] Can you tell us your name? - My name is Hector Amaya. - Hector, thank you. And where are you in your education journey? - I've been singing this year, looking forward to getting my standard diploma, and I had some work experience and volunteer experience.

[00:40:27] - Okay, awesome. And what are your plans for the future? - Getting another job and working with animals, or probably going to college or trading school for mechanics. - Okay, awesome. And who helped you along your journey?

[00:40:45] Ms. Siska, Ms. Matos, Ms. Collwood, Ms. Chanko and Ms. Kuzi. - Very nice. And can you tell us what activities did you participate in that helped guide you along the way? - Going to pet resort, going to an energy volunteer and working at Rich Stop Coffee, personal finance, English 11, oh, and Career Pathways.

[00:41:16] - Okay, Career Pathways, great. Is there anything else that you want to tell us think is important for us to know i had a teacher who's still working here she reminds me of my mom and she helped me with math and science oh that's awesome that's very good well thank you so much

[00:41:36] thank you and i am in the cast i am planning on getting my driver's license and a paid job my daughter counselor is helping me get my license from workforce center my transit teacher

[00:42:05] helped me get my first paying summer job for you can you tell us um your name oh yeah my name is gabriel quinones okay nice to meet you and what where are you in your educational journey i'm a

[00:42:38] senior at dominion high school okay and what are your plans for the future uh my plan is to to apply to a university called george mason university for mason life oh mason life nice um and so who

helped you along the way when you were trying to figure out what you wanted to do my mom my dad my teachers and my friends nice and can you tell us what activities you did to that you participated in

[00:43:13] to help guide you marching band for three years and i'm determined youth leader conference for two years and also i also do volunteering at sunrise senior center and also i did volunteer for my church wonderful can i ask you a follow-up question what do you do in the marching band i play the drum set like i used to okay cool um do you have anything else that you want to share with

[00:43:52] us about your experience or your journey oh yeah what's up so i'm i'm actually working on getting and appliance studies diploma applied studies yeah very good okay awesome and also i do cii for burlington co-factory and women giving back nice and i do some volunteering with my dad for

[00:44:28] starbucks oh i love that okay and also learning the laden county transit bus very cool so you can can get around by yourself oh yeah is that easy or hard oh that's easy okay good that's great well thank you so much for sharing with us today thank you so now that we got to enjoy some of our students

[00:45:04] and what they view transition as on their journey um we just wanted to share a few resources with you um we have this the parent schoology group code up there so if you haven't already joined that please do so um we have when the bus stops coming come uh coming up saturday february 3rd um and we also have linked a transition teacher list right here so the all the lists that we went through for each age group was not touching on everything um it was not in you know as in-depth

[00:45:40] as you can get and you might come across a question or a concern or point me in the in the right direction and you we provided you this list so you know who your transition teacher is there's a transition teacher at every high school but if you don't have a student in elementary or middle you just go to your your high school clusters transition teacher and you can ask them or set up a time to meet or anything like that so let me just pull this up really quickly so you can just okay we'll fix that I'm not sure why that's not working everything worked

[00:46:15] earlier yes promise so that will be fixed and it's also going to be up on our parent Schoology group if it's I think I actually uploaded up there so if it's not already it will be but if you have a question even if your child is in elementary school and it's a question for the future there is no please reach out to your transition teacher there may be steps that you could be taking now or things that they could help you with along the way so please reach out to

[00:46:42] them. So if you are already a member of our Schoology group, then this may look familiar to you. But if you are not, we really encourage you to join because this is where we add resources all the time. This is what it looks like when you enter the Schoology group using that code that we provided. If there's any upcoming events or things, we put it on this first page. These are

[00:47:18] the updates. So if there's an event coming up and we want to share information, share the flyer with you we will just list it right here and then as the event has taken place we will take it down and then on the left side over here there's a button it says resources and we have broken down everything with transition into color-coded folders so look for the journey that you are trying to explore so if you have a student who may need some additional support as they are going through there is a folder for that if you're interested in leisure there's a in specialized

[00:47:53] programs. There's a folder for that. What happens when a student turns 18? There's a folder for that. We also include things for mental and physical health resources. Career planning, military, your

college-bound student. So there's links to how to ask for your accommodations in college, that type of thing. So you can look through some information on what type of transition assessments we use. As we find wonderful resources, we include those. So this is being updated.

[00:48:25] And usually when we add something, if you are enrolled in it, you get an email that says someone added a resource or added this information. So you are getting up-to-date information. If you have a question, if you have something that you really want or you really think that we should share, tell us. Send us an email and we'll look into it and we'll see how we can incorporate it. If you have questions, if you really don't understand it, and you say, I really want someone to go through this with me, just send us an email, and we can hop on a Google Meet with you, and we can walk through it. We're happy to do that. So this is the Schoology group. This is

[00:49:01] where we have a lot of information currently for our parents. Yes, I think I broke it. Yes, you did.

[00:49:23] Okay, we can't turn to the next slide. I know, tech support down. She just went down. I was tech support. Not anymore. Wait, let's see.

[00:49:40] Well, the next slide is our contact information. So I guess she'll never be able to contact us. No, I'm just kidding. Mr. McNeil, can you come fix it? We just need to email us. Please email us. Just kidding. We broke it.

[00:49:58] Jenna broke it. I didn't touch it. You were that one. Leave it to me. I would just like to say I didn't touch that button. She did. To present tech support.

[00:50:19] We're such a great team, aren't we? It wasn't me, it was her. Throwing each other under the bus. That is what we do. I mean, it's literally just our contact with the rest of the presentation.

[00:50:38] Broke. We really broke it. I mean, one push of a button. I wonder if it had something to do with switching over from the... It could have. Does anyone out in the audience have any questions?

[00:51:07] just a reminder you can use the qr code that's up on the screen if you're watching from home to ask any questions being new to this i'm just curious what will happen what will the agenda be at the transition subcommittee work groups this this was more like an overview so what will be

[00:51:45] happen worker so in the january work group the first thing we're going to do is have a presentation on school links which is the new naviance that replace naviance um and so we'll have a presentation on School Links and kind of how parents can access it and what our students can do in there and then we're going to start working on accessibility for hoping to work with those that can come to the work groups to help us expand some of our networking and try to come

[00:52:22] up with that information can be maintained in School Links. There's a lot of opportunities through School Links for students to do job exploration, assessments to learn about their learning styles, their preferences, things like that. Their school counselors are going to use that tool.

[00:52:37] Our transition teachers are going to use that tool. And then in addition, it is a program that our students will have lifelong access to. So when they graduate, they don't lose access to it, which is really nice. They'll be able to refer back, look at things, upload documents there.

[00:52:53] That talks about, you know, transition assessments is one, like we're going to upload the transition assessment students complete there so they have access to them as they age they can have keep

a resume in there and all kinds of things so it's a great program that has a lot to offer so we're just digging in this is our first year using it but we're excited to learn more about it so i just wanted to tag on to what jenna said the work group came about during our transition subcommittee meeting and we've been talking about having our looking at our short-term and long-term goals

[00:53:30] and as jenna pointed out those are some of the areas we looked at another big area we've been looking at is independent living labs to really work on independent living skills either within the schools or having a dedicated facility or some facilities around the county One of the main things what we would like to see is to have these independent living labs more standardized across the county so that we have consistency.

[00:54:01] We have each of the students being able to access the independent living labs, similar to how we have our FACTS classrooms. So each of the schools have a FACTS classroom in the middle schools, and they're pretty standardized. So we're going to be researching, looking up, maybe getting a checklist out there to see, make sure that each of the facilities have pretty much similar capabilities.

[00:54:25] Because right now, we have some schools that have independent living labs, but they're based upon donations. And these are teachers who thought outside the box, and they've come up with these really nice facilities, but they're asking for donations. So would you guys mind explaining what Project SEARCH and CAST, what those are, and who's eligible for those?

[00:55:03] All right. So Project SEARCH and CAST are both post-grad programs for students who have received their Applied Studies diploma. And they are, let's start with CAST first.

[00:55:19] So CAST, we have eight programs right now, so they're all over the county. They're in either schools or community sites. And they have students working on, they have about an hour a day of curriculum time where they learn workplace readiness skills.

[00:55:35] And then they go out into the community and they work on jobs, either unpaid work experience, some of them are getting paid, it depends on where they're at. They work on transportation, so they learn how to ride the bus. And they work on some other independent living skills.

[00:55:52] They work with a transition teacher specific to the program, not the high school. So even if it's at a high school, it is a different transition teacher than the school-based transition teacher. And they have a job coach. Project SEARCH is also a program for our returning grad students.

[00:56:18] They must, again, have an Applied Studies diploma to be eligible. But Project SEARCH is geared more towards a one-year program. So it's a partnership, um, we partner with DARS, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and we partner with Didlake, who is, um, a job coaching and other support company.

[00:56:36] And so it's a one-year program. The students, um, go to Lansdowne Resort. They participate in internships there, um, and at the end of that year, our goal and our expectation is that the students will be prepared for paid employment, so they're ready to exit and be hired in jobs and did like works with the students um as well as our teacher our job our transition teacher and job coach assigned there um to help prepare them with the work experience and independent living skills that they need and then um did like follows the students for at least a year after to help them maintain the employment that they have entered into or find the right fit

[00:57:14] maybe the first job wasn't quite it so they look for another one jenna set the students up to start in the fall however if a student wasn't quite ready and so they have to be able to be there from the start to to the end your potential employers have to really align with the majority of that or some of that because that's what we heard when we last met with LCPS okay maybe it's working in the kitchen or maybe

[00:57:51] it's doing technology or conference room setup if they really love that and they find that that's something they want to pursue certainly will support that but are we're really focused on the skills that they could have at any job that can help them be successful and that's those workplace readiness skills communication conflict and they have to have a little bit of room in their schedule for some flexibility they're also working on some of the onboarding for the internship for that whole second semester but we also get to work on those 20 heart and vascular institute and we actually had a student hired full-time until

[00:58:28] we're ready to pull up and build into another program and hopefully eventually have multiple program hopefully eventually have multiple programs evolved into what we have is our facility operating a little bit differently students being able to still be a part of their home high school and participate but coming in for that unfortunately throughout that process some of the things that we had through in Monroe for a lot of our students with disabilities our students ended up kind of being eliminated from those federal partners here you know for example if you wanted to work at the post office for example there might be specific jobs that they're trying to I know they were just

[00:59:07] doing a job fair recently they're trying to recruit for and for you know some of our students like with autism I have one where if I did the same thing every day or I worked the same shift and I wore a uniform, the same uniform every day, would just be delightful for him.

[00:59:23] So that certainly would give them an opportunity to come into a long-term type of employment where they'd be paid, you know, a better wage, they'd have benefits, and in some cases, you know, even a full retirement. So just wanted to offer that suggestion that we could think in terms as we can, you know, like build up the learning labs and do those kinds of things. But I think a systematic. Thank you guys so much. That was wonderful. Um, we are now moving into, we have a second little extra bonus presentation to do this evening. Um, special programs has come to join us

[01:00:01] tonight. You'll see that they've got a table set up in the back and they're going to come tell us about some of the programs that we have going on here in the county. Good evening, everybody. I hope you can see me. I'm kind of short behind this so you can see a neck floating around. Thank you so much for your time this evening. Miss Katie Clark, our supervisor for special programs, couldn't be here so she sends her apologies and I am just stepping in just briefly to kind of introduce our team. We are here to talk about three

[01:00:41] special programs tonight. This is for all rising ninth graders and we're just so here's our agenda today. We'll begin with introductions. We'll talk about alignment to strategic plan. I will talk about HAMPSI, Health and Medical Sciences Academy, IB program, Navy Junior ROTC, and then we will be in the back if you have any questions for us.

[01:01:09] So here's our team. Not all of us are here. Dr. O'Connor, she's our resource teacher. She is actually writing our curriculum for HAMPSI. I have Mr. Skvarch here. He is IB coordinator for Mr. Bari is IB coordinator for Heritage High School and I have Mr. Bishop here.

[01:01:28] He is a CTE specialist and will be talking about Navy Junior ROTC program. Before we talk about the programs, I want to briefly touch upon that all special programs align directly with LCPS's strategic plan, specifically Goal 1, 1.1 academic excellence, excellence and 1.2 multiple pathways of success. So, my name is Vandana Sharma. I didn't even tell you. My name is Vandana Sharma. I'm a coordinator for Health and Medical Sciences

[01:02:05] Academy. And prior to being a coordinator, I was an assistant principal at Bramilton Middle School and Mercer Middle School. And I was a dean at Eagle Ridge. And the student that you just heard, Alex, was one of my students. He had me in tears in the back, but super proud of him. That was a brilliant presentation.

[01:02:22] So let me talk briefly about HamSci overview. So this program is dedicated, designed to prepare our students for careers in health sciences. And the curriculum is designed to expose our students to science literacy through a curriculum that is designed to develop critical thinking skills.

[01:02:43] As well as preparing our students for industry backed credentials. So when they graduate, they are ready for a future, whatever their choice might be, whether it's school, further studies, whether it's job, or whether it's military.

[01:02:59] We have two host sites, Briarwoods High School and Tuscarora High School, and those are the feeder schools that will feed into those two sites, and we have brochures in the back with all this information, so if you need that information, it will be right there.

[01:03:16] Here's a brief, quick timeline for HAMSci. The portal just opened a few days ago on December 1st for students to express interest. This is a lottery system, so it's a random selection of students through lottery. Our first cohort of students will begin in the fall.

[01:03:32] It's starting next school year, 24-25. And by the time these students are seniors in 27-28, that would be our program's full implementation. So here are potential pathways for HAMSci. We offer two pathways. One is biomedical sciences, which is strictly biomedical sciences for all four years.

[01:03:52] And then we have the language of medicine. And that is actually a blend of biomedical sciences and the language of medicine. And language of medicine is basically administrative side of medicine. Regardless of the pathway our students choose, I want to make sure that I reiterate that both these pathways will expose our students to work-based learning experiences, clinical experiences and will prepare them for industry credentials if that's the path they want to choose. So here are the three core focus areas for HAMSAI Academy, patient care, curriculum,

[01:04:27] and post-secondary opportunities. Patient care came about when we spoke with our industry experts and higher education representatives, and they kind of strongly recommended that we incorporate patient care and some soft skills into our curriculum. And when we looked at those competencies that they recommended, we realized that it kind of aligns directly with LCPS's profile of a graduate.

[01:04:56] Critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creative problem solving. So we are being very deliberate, very intentional as we are creating the programming of HEMPSI to incorporate these soft skills and competencies into our program design.

[01:05:13] Second focus is curriculum. It is a rigorous curriculum. classes will be honors level. We will delve into anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, medical interventions, all those things along with developing critical thinking skills for our students. And last but not the least, post-secondary opportunities. As I mentioned when I when we started that the main focus of our program is to prepare our students for whatever path they want to choose, whether it is getting into a two or a four year program of education, or getting directly into workforce, or exploring interest in military.

[01:05:52] So our program is designed to afford those opportunities to our students, whatever path they may choose. And I speak really fast, and that was a lot of information, but I said earlier, we will be right in the back if you have any questions, I will be happy to take those over there.

[01:06:10] and I'm going to pass it on to Mr. Skvarch and he will talk to you about IB program. Thanks so much. Good evening everyone. So once again my name is Michael Skvarch and I'm here to talk to you a little bit about the International Baccalaureate or IB. I always like to start out by talking a little bit about those two letters. I for international because this program got its start at international schools throughout the world. The program exists in just about every country on the planet and embedded in each and every one of the IB courses you're going to see a global perspective and an international mindset at its core.

[01:06:49] B for baccalaureate which is formally defined as an examination that prepares someone for higher education which is a very fitting name for the program as this is a set of college level courses that have college credit eligible classwork that prepares a student for their next steps.

[01:07:11] So a little bit about the International Baccalaureate. The first thing is that I'm a representative from Loudoun Valley and there are two schools that have this program available: Loudoun Valley High School and Heritage High School. And there is a mechanism for any 8th grade student at any other middle school throughout the county to be able to access this program.

[01:07:33] So the timeline you'll see here has been our journey in becoming an IB World School and actually getting to the point of graduating our first set of IB diploma graduates. Last year we were going through authorization and we actually were fully authorized at the start of this year.

[01:07:50] This year we're busy working with our teachers, setting up the curriculum and planning ahead for the start of the classes which occurs next year in the 24-25 school year. that pathway underway we're excited that in the class of 2026 will be our first set of graduates for the IB diploma so a little bit about what exactly is going on when we say international baccalaureate when we talk about IB coursework what's our focus well the first and foremost you're gonna find that the student and the attributes and dispositions that help a student be

[01:08:27] successful in whatever they choose to undertake is at the core of the IB so So the learner profile attributes that you see here make up the foundation, and by the end of the program, students are able to articulate what these are and how they can grow them in themselves beyond high school.

[01:08:47] How do we do that? Well, we focus on making sure that students have experiences in which they're engaged in their skill building, that self-management, social skills, and focusing on research across the board so that students are capable of processing information, tearing it down, building it back up with their thinking skills, and then communicating out in a variety of different forms.

[01:09:13] Now the teaching that helps us provide those skills opportunities, follow the list that you see here. You'll find that when we talk about IB coursework, it's going to be focused on inquiry, where

questions lead the way. It's going to be based on conceptual understandings, which means that the coursework helps students see that it is not just that any given discipline, whether you're a lawyer, whether you're seeking to be a plumber, whether you're seeking to be a doctor, that you have to know a wide variety of skills, and that you're going to pull from science.

[01:09:46] You're going to pull from English. You're going to pull from your language classes, and all of that comes together to make a whole. So conceptual understanding means that you can see what you're learning in context broader than a given discipline. You'll see developed in local and global context.

[01:10:04] Super important with the IB is that students have a grounding in what is going on in their backyard that's here in Loudoun County, Virginia, United States, and that they see the connections between what is happening here and with the world at large. You'll see a focus on teamwork because students have to work together because I don't know know any job that I can think of where you don't have to interact with other humans and and produce something new. So students learn that they can do so much more together than they can alone. You'll see differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. The International Baccalaureate sets a high standard for

[01:10:42] rigor and we set the supporting blocks that are necessary for any student who's motivated to find success within the program. And lastly informed by summative assessments and feedback. Across the board, feedback is the cornerstone of how we get students to grow, and you'll see that at every step along the way. So when we say the IB diploma, you're going to see that when a student comes to Loudoun Valley or Heritage High School, there's really two different ways they can go. The first is to be a diploma candidate. So when

[01:11:15] we say IB program, we're really referring to the IB diploma program, and what that is is that a student takes a full set of international baccalaureate courses across all the different disciplines, an added course called Theory of Knowledge, and then they complete two additional pieces, an extended research paper and a creativity activity service project that come together to create the IB Diploma, which is an internationally recognized diploma that a student could take to just about every country on the planet in order to pursue the opportunities they have.

[01:11:51] That being said, it's also highly valued by schools in Virginia and the United States, across the United States. Beyond just the diploma, students at Loudoun Valley and students coming in from other schools also can take IB coursework piecewise.

[01:12:07] They can take one course, they can take two. There is a wide variety of availability for a student when they come to become part of the program. An important thing to note is that much like College Board, the International Baccalaureate organization does provide accommodations and you have to file those accommodations just as you would do with College Board.

[01:12:29] There's a similar process even though those are two separate organizations. Key thing, the International Baccalaureate is college credit eligible coursework. So a student navigates a course, there is an examination that they take at the end and And a piece of that exam that actually occurs during the course itself, which come together for a student to earn a score between 1 and 7.

[01:12:52] Their final score on that can be taken to a college or university, and based on that university's policy, a credit can be awarded for the student. It's important to note that the IB Diploma program, IB Diploma candidates, and IB coursework are all highly respected by colleges across the board.

[01:13:12] So with that in mind, in terms of heritage and valley, because we are the two locations where you can find an IB program, you'll see that through the logistics and student opportunities portal, which I'll talk about shortly, that these set of schools are what feed heritage and valley alike.

[01:13:29] And you can find much more information about this on our website. So a little bit about program logistics. I've talked about international baccalaureate, and we've heard from health and medical sciences. So the process for an 8th grade student to enroll in these different course works are as follows.

[01:13:48] The first is that an 8th grade student could navigate to the Student Opportunities Portal, which actually opened December 1st. So it is live and available for students to submit interest, and that portal will remain open until January 31st. Once a student submits interest within that window, they will be entered into a lottery for each of those separate programs.

[01:14:10] That lottery will run on random selection and then those students who are in the first set of students to be offered a position or a seat will receive an offer. Students who do not receive an initial offer will be added to a wait list and then as students make decisions on the various programs that they have access to, students come off the wait list to proceed through the process.

[01:14:34] Notifications - we've spent a lot of time trying to work so that students will receive notifications on their entry into a special program at roughly the same time, which for now is going to be early March. It's also important to note that after January 31st the student opportunities portal does not close. It's just closed for the initial run of the lottery. So a student who decides on February 1st that they're interested in the program can still go in and submit interest. They'll be automatically added to the end of the waitlist and then that will continue throughout the course of the rest of the year one other important thing as you

[01:15:12] know students and parents are making decisions about special programs is that for health and medical science and for the IB transportation is available and it works off of a hub stop system what that means is that there's generally a school whether elementary middle or high nearby your residence in which a bus will come and pick up a student from that hub stop take them to the special program school and then they can be returned to that hub stop in the afternoon transportation to and from the hub stop would be the responsibility of the family and with that thank you very much for

[01:15:49] your time to talk about the international baccalaureate and some of the logistics for health and medical sciences i'd like to take this opportunity to turn it over to mr bishop for navy njrotc thank you pal well done for new programs you know every story's got a hook right so I'm going to talk to you a little about something that happened a long, long time ago in a land far, far away. That would be Congress, Washington, D.C. In 1964, the Naval Junior ROTC program was born through public law. It took until 2009 to come to Loudoun County. That's a little

[01:16:27] while, but we got something for you I think is going to work. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about what it is first. So the mission is, first and foremost, this is not a military recruitment tool whatsoever. This is a leadership development tool. It's a program that's going to help your child reach their potential, and that's all it is. We're going to develop those leadership skills so that the children, as my colleague said, you got to work with the team, right? It's always about the team, even though you have individual achievement. We're going to work on character so

[01:17:04] that we build the character, not that we have characters, that we have character, which is a different thing entirely. We're going to talk about honor and teach them about honor, how they

demonstrate to others their integrity, right? When they tell you something, it's what's going to happen. We're going to teach them all that good stuff, and then we're going to work on the service aspect where they're going to work with different teams, and they're going to go out in the community and do various things. So the order is, the focus is on order and precision. What I like to say is really self-discipline and time management. That's what it comes down to. Respect for authority. How

[01:17:44] do you work with a boss how do you work with the boss's boss how you how do you demonstrate ethical behavior patriotism and service are very big with us so you will stand up and you know pledge allegiance to the flag and you'll do all that great stuff but you'll be able to be part of everything that happens at Loudoun County High School if that if you want to play football or you want to be in the band theater it doesn't matter you're becoming a student at Loudoun County High School and you're going to be there for four years or as long as you want to stay in that program. We talk about admission requirements, but really it's open to Loudoun County 8th grade

[01:18:23] students who are rising to 9th grade, whether they're homeschooled, public school, or private school. You're going to be a student there for four years. We only take 25 out-of-boundary students though, right? So right now we have about 200 students in the program, and roughly 90 of those are from outside of Loudoun County's boundary. The same thing happens here December 1st through January 31st. You're going to go to Student Opportunities Portal. Then a committee, which is slightly different than this lottery system, a committee is going to select students to advance to that next phase. So they're going to have interviews. And that interview process comes from

[01:19:03] Loudoun County High School and Captain Johns and Gunny Gatins and Senior Chief Fitch. So they're going to, and then of course their administrative team and the counselors and also So they'll just have questions and things.

[01:19:18] On the portal, the student's gonna find a writing prompt that they have to complete in order to submit their application. Once that interview process is over, then students either be interviewed or they'll be offered a spot or a spot on the wait list.

[01:19:38] So we do competency-based instruction. They can be part of their career and technical student organizations. They will earn industry credentials. They'll take the ASVAB test And they're going to get some work-based learning experiences, too. Transportation is the same as this. You're going to get on a hub.

[01:19:54] You'll be at a hub, and they'll pick you up and take you to Loudoun County High School, and then they'll take you home. One second. My friends took like 20 minutes apiece, so I'm just going to take a couple of minutes. The guys out at Loudoun County running this program do a fantastic job.

[01:20:15] And even if your student is not in the program, go take a look at it, all right? It's a fantastic leadership development program, and we do hope that all of our children will give it a chance and apply for the program.

[01:20:32] Okay, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it. It's great to see your smiling face again, sir. Thank you very much. I don't have anything else to add to that except here's our information, and I know that we went over this information pretty fast and a lot of it, so we are in the back.

[01:20:52] If you have any questions during your break, we'll be happy to take those. I know you have a packed agenda. And thank you so much for having us today. Thanks. Thank you all so much for coming

and sharing that really awesome information.

[01:21:11] Like she said, the table is back there. We're going to take a five-minute, a tight five-minute break to get comfortable, ask questions, and then we will move on to our business meeting.

[01:25:39] If everyone could please make their way back to their seats, please.

[01:30:03] All right. My name is Liz Crotty. I am the SEAC chair. We are going to start our December business meeting. The QR code is up if you didn't get a chance to sign in earlier.

[01:30:24] I would just like to introduce everyone. Jennifer DiDonato is our SEAC vice chair of planning. Our vice chair of membership is Carla Sola, here to my left. Our vice chair of communications is Shanaz Khan.

[01:30:40] Katie Rosenbrook is our secretary. And Sharon Trof is our past chair. We have Dr. Paige Carter, who is our staff liaison. Tiffany Polifko, who is our school board liaison.

[01:30:57] And then our school board liaison alternate is Erica Ogadugby. I'm going to go over this really fast this evening because we have a lot to cover. The role of SEAC is to advise the local school division of needs in education of students with disabilities.

[01:31:15] We submit reports, we assist the school division interpreting plans, and we review policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to their submission to the local school board.

[01:31:31] I'm going to begin with public comment. We use public comment to inform our work, to guide the work that we do in our subcommittees. are, we have two public comments this evening. Both were submitted virtually. So our public comment focuses, we ask people to focus on systemic issues that they are experiencing, not on individual concerns or specific situations. So I will start with our first one from Erin Burns. Currently,

[01:32:06] Countryside Elementary has three out of the seven special education teachers case manager positions filled. Three teachers are trying to do the work of seven teachers. Students are not receiving all supports outlined in their IEPs. Progress reports have not been completed due to data not being taken or not available. Classroom teachers are unable to collect data as they have not been trained to do so.

[01:32:32] Parents are seeking compensatory services. The lack of staffing support for Countryside Elementary for the special education students is putting further strain on good educators and leaving children even further behind. LCPS needs to figure out how to better support their special education teachers while staffing is being addressed. This is our second public comment which is anonymous. Dear SEAC and Loudoun County School Board, as a devoted mother of a special needs student that attends LCPS, an engaged member of the community, and a

[01:33:09] taxpayer within Loudoun County, I am writing to gather your support to strongly advocate for two policies. One, extend LCPS-ECSE pre-kindergarten reverse inclusion classrooms from half days, four hours, to full days, six to seven hours. Two, increase the number of these classrooms throughout the county due to increased demand. In regard to the request of full-day special education for preschoolers in reverse inclusion classrooms, the extension is paramount and impactful. It is particularly important for the development and growth of

[01:33:45] our special needs students who benefit significantly from increased special education hours, extended socialization, peer modeling opportunities, and improved chances for kindergarten readiness, including acclimation to longer learning environments until 3 p.m. like kindergartners.

[01:34:05] research highlighted in the national center for biotechnology information article titled early childhood inclusion a decade of research from the national early childhood technical assistance center underscores the immense value of full-day preschool participation for students with diverse learning needs i would like to list the many benefits of a full-day ecsc preschool classroom one enhanced special education hours special needs students require more specialized attention and focused education to foster their growth extending the school day provides invaluable

[01:34:44] additional hours dedicated to tailored interventions and targeted support that are instrumental in their progress two socialization and peer modeling longer school hours facilitate extended periods for social interaction and engagement among students this extended time together creates a rich environment for special needs children to learn from their peers model behaviors and develop crucial social skills three improved kindergarten readiness full-day participation significantly enhances readiness for kindergarten by fostering better learning behaviors improving

[01:35:22] cognitive development and strengthening foundational skills this preparation not only benefits the students but also supports the readiness of the broader LCPS system for incoming students. Four, preparation for longer learning environments. Extending the preschool to full day helps students, especially those with special needs, adjust to longer periods in the learning environment aligning their experience with the duration of a typical kindergarten day.

[01:35:48] This adjustment prepares them for the transition to kindergarten and the longer learning hours that come with it. Five, benefits to special needs families and caregivers. A full-day preschool for our special needs students will not only extend learning time for educational enrichment but also reduce stress on families and caregivers. It will allow families more time for special needs parenting work such as coordination of appointments, therapies, paperwork, IEP meetings, and advocating for their children. Currently there are only a handful of ECSE reverse inclusion pre-k classrooms in Loudoun County. With the

[01:36:26] growing population and growing number of students with special needs, we absolutely need to add more full-day ECSE reverse inclusion classrooms in all elementary schools. As a member of this community and a taxpayer invested in the well-being and success of all of our students, I would appreciate your support in urging the LCPS board to prioritize this matter. These changes would be pivotal for our special needs students' holistic development, kindergarten readiness, and acclimation to longer learning environments, resulting in significant advantages for the broader LCPS system and its educators. Your support in extending the preschool reverse inclusion

[01:37:06] classrooms to full day sessions and creating more ECSE reverse inclusion classrooms countywide will not only foster individual growth, but also positively impact the readiness and success of our school system. Thank you for your steadfast dedication to our students' success, your advocacy and support in this endeavor will undoubtedly make a substantial difference in the lives of our special needs students and the efficiency of the entire system. Sincerely, a special needs

[01:37:34] parent. Okay. All right, and now we have our Office of Special Education update from Dr. Paige Carter.

[01:37:52] I need to refresh. All right, give me one second. All right, so first of all, it is Inclusive Schools

[01:38:23] Week and we're having different activities across the division but the the logo that you see there is something that was designed by our office and the National Inclusive Schools Week organization slips my mind what it is right now had a wonderful slogan about draw me in and it was such a great play on words but we thought draw me in felt like after the fact a little bit and so what we really wanted to do was emphasize the fact that true inclusion is all, all means all. And so we were

[01:39:01] really excited to, Nan Lewis from our office designed that and we thought it was a really cute logo. We'll be using that on a couple of different newsletters and things like that. But the updates I have for you tonight are, first of all, who are we serving? And it is right now 9,870 students with eight IEPs plus 98 students recently found eligible within the last 30 days who do not yet have IEPs developed, for a total of 9,968 students with disabilities.

[01:39:30] So we are growing. I wanted to share also about special education vacancies. I wanted to put it in a bar graph to show you that we are making progress on filling the vacancies over the course of the fall, but here are the specific information.

[01:39:49] I met today with HRTD as well as business and finance to calibrate our data to make sure that we indeed had the same teachers in the same slots in the same places to make sure and we indeed did it was a really good day to verify our information as we prepare for the budget but at the elementary level we have 15 teacher vacancies right now four in ECSE four program teachers six cross cat teachers and one vision teacher and we have three teachers assistants vacancies right now, one in a program, one in CrossCat, and one one-to-one recently identified position.

[01:40:29] And then at the secondary level, we have 33 teachers, five programs and 28 CrossCat positions, and 13 TAs, seven in programs and six in CrossCat. So those numbers have gone down substantially over the course of the months, but that is a 95% fill rate, which sounds really great, unless you're the teacher that's missing a TA or the TA that's missing a teacher or the students in that classroom. So I don't want to by any means under stress how important it is that we fill

[01:41:04] these vacancies. We are using a couple of head hunter kind of agencies that support sort of like traveling nurses. Folks are familiar with those teachers who are looking to be employed through an agency and we've been able to secure a few of those folks and they should be starting in the in the coming days so that will help those numbers will go down for sure by January with those folks but we just want you to know that the national teacher shortage is impacting everywhere and I am really proud of how many positions we have been able to fill some of our colleagues across

[01:41:44] the state are in not near as good of a position as we are so I am I am thankful for that all right as I shared with you in November we are under a montage of audits this year four different ones but I want to provide updates on two of them for you tonight the video e cyclical monitoring is well underway the supervisors and a couple of other folks and some administrators are reviewing files and answering questions for VDOE they have so 386 files were selected by

[01:42:21] VDOE randomly for us to audit about 95 files 98 maybe additional questions that we had to identify and answer so we have selected files at random to audit and so how it works is they'll have a particular question will go with a file for example did the student have a meeting notice for the most

recent IEP when was that notice generated when was it sent were the right people on the meeting notice did the right people come to the meeting those are the kinds of

[01:42:55] things that we are looking for in these audits and how the state looks at that is if say we're looking at 35 files well we are looking at 35 files for each question but one of those files was not perfectly in compliance then that is going to come back as a no and when we look at we haven't analyzed the yeses and the nos but I did want to share with you a couple of things we've found so far first of all we have in almost all circumstances the right people at the meetings and we are sending notice of meetings a lot of times we're contacting

[01:43:31] folks by email or by phone and they're saying yes and they're coming to meetings and all the participants are here but one of the requirements is that we send a meeting notice in writing and we're not always doing that a lot of times if it's your I don't know your seventh IEP and you have a great relationship with the family you send out an email everybody comes and we generate the meeting notice right then and there and give it to you and that feels okay but that's not in compliance there there is regulatory language on that meeting notice that we need to get out to families and so that was one thing that we've identified that we're going to put a

[01:44:05] self-initiated corrective action plan in place to make sure that we remind folks that we are getting the meeting notice out in a timely manner in writing as the regulations require. Now we are looking for this entire audit to be complete around by February 1st. However, the state says that we should learn how we did sometime around July. So we'll have an idea of how we did based on our own data but we'll get the results back from the state no later than July is what we're told and then we have the internal staffing audit going on right now there was a newspaper article

[01:44:43] recently that talked about the staffing audit and what they are doing is looking at not only how we staff and the vacancies that we talk about things like that but how we monitor staffing who determines the budget for different staffing things like that so right now interviews and school visits are ongoing by our auditor and we expect a full report after the new year I believe at the February board meeting Tedra is that correct right so we should have that information very soon all right

[01:45:17] and then this is one more shameless plug for the parent survey if you have not had an opportunity to complete the parent survey. This is for one of our special education indicators, indicator eight. If you could scan that barcode and fill that in and send it in, we'd surely appreciate it.

[01:45:37] And I believe that is the end of mine. Tedra?

[01:45:57] - Good evening. It is so great to see you all this evening. Thank you for being here. Thank you for participating in our transition activities and learning more about our special programs. This slide is chocked full of information. So first and foremost, we have been, as a division, running what we have lovingly called a new school board member boot camp.

[01:46:18] So we have scheduled five full days with all nine of our school board member elect folks, and they have had the opportunity to go out to schools, they have ridden buses, They have toured the county and seen our facilities, and they have learned an overview of each department that makes up LCPS.

[01:46:43] When I tell you that it has been positive and engaging and meaningful, I truly mean that. it's been a lot of fun to share the passion behind what drives us as educators so that when they take office and have their first meeting on January 2nd they are prepared to serve our community next we are in the midst

of budget season we the superintendent will be presenting his estimate of needs on January 16th and that will start the process of our public meetings and work sessions. Our key priorities coming out of the Department of Student Services, we continue to be focused

[01:47:22] on special ed staffing, as Dr. Carter has so aptly highlighted. While we are making progress towards our vacancies, the teacher shortage is definitely real, and LCPS has realized that impact this school year. We are also having very focused and meaningful conversations on alternative educational programming.

[01:47:44] As a school system, we've identified six options. We have two disciplinary options. We've identified two transition options for students with substance use challenges and those that require some additional support in transitioning back from residential or hospitalization settings.

[01:48:04] And then we have also identified a need for public separate programming for students with disabilities, specifically those with intensive needs in the areas of autism spectrum disorders and emotional disabilities. Up next, Dr. Carter has highlighted it, our third-party audit, as you guys have been keeping up with Dr. Spence's entry plan.

[01:48:26] That is something that we're also excited about, to have someone else to come and take a look at our practices, our policies, and our procedures, and how we're implementing and moving through the special education process. So we have identified some possible vendors to support that process.

[01:48:42] and we will be sure to keep you all updated on a monthly basis as we move through that process. We're trying to make sure that the Office of Special Education can complete the federal program monitoring with the Virginia Department of Education and then dig into the third-party audit because it's still going to be a great deal of work.

[01:49:04] We anticipate with the size of LCPS that that third-party audit could easily take anywhere from eight to ten months to complete from beginning to end. Okay, an update on mental health and substance use information we have an increased focus on our community partnerships we have expanded our memorandum of understanding with the Williams Center and we'll be providing telehealth services for some of our students at the high school level. We also have several fentanyl awareness events that have already taken place one on November 4

[01:49:41] one on November 28th, and we have one scheduled for the 18th and the 21st of this month. We will also be scheduling an additional four to five opportunities in the second semester, and we are also going to be providing infographics for all of our schools to post in their high traffic areas, such as bathrooms, cafeterias, hallways, and locker rooms. We are also working as a legislative priority to work with the General Assembly to move forward having regional

[01:50:16] recovery academies for students that are bad or that that are battling substance use. The first one has launched in Chesterfield County so we have been watching that model and how it is serving their students and it is serving the surrounding school systems in that region, so we are excited about being able to host that opportunity for Region 4.

[01:50:43] The next update is the revised attendance policy. There was an email communication that went out division-wide updating everyone on the impact of chronic absenteeism. So what changed? The accreditation status changed.

[01:51:00] the Virginia Department of Education reintegrated attendance as an accreditation marker for all schools across the state. So what did that do to LCPS last school year? We went from an attendance rate of about 11% to 18.8% of our students being chronically absent.

[01:51:23] So we know that it's imperative for students to learn, to be able to access, participate, and benefit, they have to be here with us. So we have had to update our attendance policy. It went through the normal policy process.

[01:51:40] We started the work on the revisions of the policy started last semester, and it went through the policy review process starting in August and was fully adopted by the school board on October 24th.

[01:51:57] So the policy does outline what is an excused absence, what's an unexcused absence, the importance of notifying schools to make sure that you are making schools knowledgeable of absences.

[01:52:13] Our data as a division has indicated that our highest rates of absenteeism are kindergarten and first grade, 11th and 12th grade, And they really are book-ending those scheduled time off from school, like fall break, winter break, spring break.

[01:52:32] And while certainly we want families to be able to travel and connect with friends and family that live farther outside of this region, we still have to stay very focused on making sure that students are here in school so that they can make meaningful progress.

[01:52:52] that's my update thank you thank you Tedra first thing I want to do is we have some virtual participants this evening so I'll entertain a motion to admit our virtual participants into our business meeting okay Shnaz made the motion Katie

[01:53:22] seconded it let's take a vote now all in favor aye all opposed any abstentions All right, you are all admitted, Elizabeth Bayard, Kathy Lambert, Lakshmi Raghaven, and Sarah Plattenberg.

[01:53:44] Up on the screen, you'll see we have a QR code, which will take you to our budget concerns and recommendations, our draft document that we'll be going over this evening. So if you would like to use your phone so that you can access that.

[01:54:00] We did not put everything that's in the document in our slides, because then we would have a 100-slide show, and I don't think anyone wants that. All right, so first off, we met to speak about this at our November meeting.

[01:54:22] For anyone who wasn't here, we relayed our initial draft of our concerns and our recommendations. We got some feedback from our participants at that meeting. We then took that information, we met with staff, we met with Dr. Carter, we met with Tedra, we met with Ms. Parnell and, you know, really tried to understand concerns, get a bit more information, ask a lot of questions.

[01:54:52] Then we met again as a policy and compliance subcommittee and did a little bit of revisions and tweaking to our concerns and recommendations. So we will be going over those and then hearing from you all, the community, as to what you think with the revised version.

[01:55:12] So our first concern is that there are shortages, high shortages, for special education teachers and related service providers. In fiscal year 24, special education teachers and related service provider positions were cut during a time of growth in population for students with disabilities.

[01:55:32] school staff and parents are asking for more positions to be added who work directly with students. Concern two, retention of special education and related service providers is a significant problem. Concern three, having multiple departments that serve students with disabilities appears inefficient for ensuring best practices and consistent compliance for our students with disabilities and makes it challenging for parents to navigate. Concern four, transition services is

[01:56:06] an area that has been flagged as needing improvement by LCPS parents for years in SEAC annual survey results. Designing and consistently implementing quality transition services has been an area of need for many years and the current model where this is an additional duty on many

[01:56:34] administrators has not been successful so our budget recommendations are so first off I'm sorry I'm just going to go back a little bit for our concern one about the shortages there are high numbers of vacancies within special

[01:57:12] education schools have needed to send their special education teachers to other schools to cover shortages each vacant position affects numerous students teachers and service providers who had to cover shortages collapse programs and switch schools during fiscal year 24 31 cross-categorical special education teacher positions were cut three speech language pathologist positions and three and a half occupational therapist positions these cut positions have affected every school and because related service providers cover such

[01:57:49] large caseloads it has caused significant stress to the remaining related service providers and for our concern too regarding the retention of our special education and related service providers our special education teachers assistants and related service providers are dedicated talented staff who do some of the most difficult jobs in public education for the benefit of our most vulnerable students SEAC and LCPS school board have received many reports that they are overworked example, unreasonably high caseloads that disregard intensity of student need, more

[01:58:24] service minutes of speech therapy than hours in their work week, overburdened with additional duties, example, meetings and paperwork, underappreciated, and experiencing burnout. Their expanded workload and/or travel as itinerant positions is not fully accounted for in the staffing ratios we currently have.

[01:58:44] Cutting positions last year further exacerbated a problem where teachers-related service providers felt overburdened SEAC has received many reports and retention data shows that many staff are leaving for other roles in LCPS neighboring school systems or leaving the profession entirely concern three and four which I already read do not have additional comments so for our recommendation one LCPS supports restoring cross-categorical and related service provider

[01:59:20] positions cut from the fiscal year 24 budget that's the one that we're currently in right now and staffing to account for growth in addition SEAC supports the department of student service request for additional positions to staff 23 new programs and restore 10 collapsed programs these were ones that were collapsed for this current year and including four adapted PE teachers two occupational therapists, and two speech language pathologists, which is responsive to

[01:59:54] concerns one and two. The Division of Business and Financial Services under-projected the number of cross-categorical students for this school year quite significantly. Fiscal year 23, last school

year, had 732 cross-categorical teacher positions and was reduced to 701 positions this school year to serve a forecasted 7,010 students.

[02:00:23] We currently have, now I don't have the updated number because Paige just gave it to us and I don't remember it, I'm sorry. But as of this weekend, we had 7,937 cross-categorical students which leaves a discrepancy of 93 cross-categorical teacher positions and there will be continued growth throughout the year which will exacerbate the shortage. In addition to those 93 missing positions we also currently have 52 unfilled positions as of this weekend. So you'll see in our document that we put together

[02:01:02] a little chart that showed the actual number of students, the teachers that we had in 22-23 and what that ratio looked like, which was one teacher to 9.39 students.

[02:01:19] Then for 23-24, the Division of Business and Financial Services forecast that 7,010 students, which gave us 701 teacher positions and should have resulted in a ratio of 1 to 10, Except, we had a much higher student growth than was anticipated, and now with the 7,937 students with 701 teachers, we have a ratio of one teacher to 11.32 students, which is

[02:01:58] where we found the 93 missing positions. We would need those 93 positions in order to get to the 1 to 10 ratio, which is what we should have been aiming for. And then in addition to that, we have the 52 vacancies.

[02:02:15] Additionally, three speech-language pathologist, 3.4 occupational therapist positions were removed. While these may not seem like large number of positions, each SLP has a caseload of 55 students and OTs are similar.

[02:02:31] The effect of removing these positions had significant impact on remaining related service providers. Providing programs comes with higher than normal student needs for related service providers and we need to ensure that we are not further burdening our existing related service providers.

[02:02:49] Some of LCPS's programs are designed to include the support of related service providers. These positions need to be properly staffed in addition to the teachers. SEAC encourages LCPS to consider providing incentives to recruit these positions and supports providing retention bonuses and hazard pay that may be needed to address varying levels of need. It is important to provide competitive pay at all levels that will help attract and retain teachers. SEAC encourages LCPS to consider continuing to expand recruiting relationships

[02:03:28] with well-regarded universities, expand relationships with teacher cadets and students who take the early childhood class in lcps high schools provide placement for children of teachers who live out of state or neighboring localities in the school or community where the teacher is working and consider using either an internal or external recruiter with a specialty and special education recruiting so that was a lot just going to take a little breather here does anyone have Any comments, concerns, things they would like to share?

[02:04:02] Craig? It's said a lot of different ways, but it was a total of 10 positions held harmless, and I've already gotten those back this year because our numbers were higher than projected, but I was able to secure these three, right?

[02:04:19] Because there are seven that are not filled that we did not lose because they weren't filled when we started, if that makes sense. But we lost the ability to get those seven in full staff. It did. It eliminated 10

positions, and we were able to get two back.

[02:04:39] So we were able to get two back, but we still, if we would go to full staff. And so, you know, it says two positions in here. I think that we need to put in there that we cut 10 positions. You know, call a spade a spade.

[02:04:55] If we're going to do it, somebody's got to take responsibility and say, I cut 10 positions. Ten positions are not in there anymore, not two. We need all 10 of those with ability to get all of those back. And the only way we're going to do it is by calling it what it is and putting it in the resource.

[02:05:10] These two positions that are listed here are to cover the services. That's what's happening in the classroom is that they're all going to groups when they should be individual because we don't have enough positions, which is why I'm saying we're talking about concerns. To me, that's a huge concern that needs to be in here, that we now no longer even have the ability to fill enough positions to be able to do what the IEPs are requiring us to do.

[02:05:36] And rewording the IEPs is not the answer. The answer is not to go back to the IEPs and say, well, we can't find enough speech pathologists, or we're not allowed to have them because of the budget. We now have eliminated these positions that we could have filled were we to be able to find the speech pathologists. That we would add.

[02:05:51] So it's in addition to the restoration of the 10 would be my preference. Yes, and that's definitely... so last year for people who didn't follow the budget process closely it was very difficult for us to determine how many positions were we actually losing there was a lot of um statements that were made at school board meetings that you know were confusing the the budget document itself was very confusing to SEAC and we had a hard time really nailing down what it was that was happening

[02:06:26] And even today, looking at different, you know, presentations and things like that, you see a lot of different numbers that are out there. So hearing that it's, that it is indeed, it was the 10, that 10 is still, even though we've been able to add back a couple of those, we haven't fully been able to realize those 10 positions cut and SEAC could, yeah, make sure that that's, yep, right.

[02:06:57] And we have a completely new school board coming in. And so we need to, I think that's part of what we're trying to do is we're trying to explain what happened, where are we, where do we need to be? So thank you so much for that. Yes, Craig.

[02:07:13] Two things. Is this on? Okay. First, I would propose that we split recommendation one into two because there's actually two recommendations there and I think that started with some of the confusion. There is a recommendation to roll back prior cuts and then there's a second recommendation which is we are adding programs, and it is to fully staff the programs that we are adding.

[02:07:38] And I think when we put it in one, it kind of jumbled the two together. And so I think if we split them, it will be more clear. The second is, yeah, a pervasive problem when we're discussing these things is that there's budget, which describes pots of money and really, you know, money to fund a position.

[02:07:57] And then there's people. And unfortunately, we now live in a world where we don't hire all the people but a different perspective on the prior cuts that to me might be a little more heartbreaking is we had money for 10 SLPs. We just never actually staffed them. So we already had the money because we

recognized that kids had needs. We never filled those positions with bodies because we couldn't hire them. So some set of kids who could have gotten services didn't because there

[02:08:32] wasn't a body to provide the service. And then when it came time to look at the budget, it was an easy thing for an administrator to say, well, I'm not actually cutting a person. I'm just cutting like, you know, crossing off a line item on a spreadsheet. But we forgot the fact that we had that money there to hire a person because kids had needs and we knew that and we identified that and we just never got the person. Had two quick comments to make too. So in addition, it's thank

[02:09:12] you for sharing that what you're seeing in the classroom is that we're going from one-on-one speech therapy services to group speech therapy services, whether the kid needs that or not, but because of these staffing shortages. As a special education attorney with a law firm, we have several advocates and attorneys that work in Loudoun County, so it's not even just my personal experience. These are multiple professionals working in Loudoun County. What we are seeing consistently across the county is that where in the past, IEPs would say students would receive 30 minutes of speech language services once a week, twice a week, whatever the case may be, four times a month. Now we're seeing consistently they're saying 20 minutes. So there

[02:09:49] seems to be this systemic process of now cutting students' speech language services to 20 minutes instead of what historically typically had been 30. And again, we believe that this is because of these severe staffing shortages. And, you know, not to point fingers or blame blame, but, you know, As this gentleman said, let's call a spade a spade.

[02:10:08] We were understaffed to begin with, and now we're looking at not refilling those positions. The second point I was going to make besides the cutting to 20 minutes that appears to be pretty systemic is that I personally had an anecdotal comment made to me last school year from a professional in Loudoun County who said that they were the number of – they were assigned students to their caseload by headcount, right?

[02:10:40] So a number of students, flat number of students on their caseload. But what was not taken into consideration is that one student might be getting 30 minutes of speech-language services a month, and five of their students on their caseload could be getting two hours of speech-language services a week.

[02:10:58] That there's this great discrepancy between the intensity of the services that were being assigned to an individual speech-language pathologist, for example. And this individual told me anecdotally that what's happening is that these therapists are being signed caseloads.

[02:11:17] When you look at the service minutes, are more service minutes than literally they're being paid to work in a week. And that doesn't even include the amount of time they would spend doing testing, which we all know who have kids with IEPs and eligibility are a lot of time doing the testing, writing the reports, attending eligibility meetings, attending IEP meetings, and I don't know, having lunch. I mean, these therapists aren't even taking lunch. I mean, this is a significant problem. And, you know, and I know, and I feel this, it kind of feels like, oh, well, it's only

[02:11:52] two speech therapists. How bad could that be? The problem is this lack of recognition that it was horrible to begin with before they cut these positions and that and we are seeing the evidence in the field systemically of how kids are suffering from these decisions um just a general question i'm kind of new to the i have a little one is first grade and he has iep does speech 15 minutes

[02:12:27] actually um so even less but from last year what was the difficulty i just want to know that we had with actually looking for a specialist to hire? Was this, didn't have the individuals or was it because it's still coming back from COVID?

[02:12:44] Do we have kind of a general thought of what the difficulty might've been? The difficulty for hiring which group of people? Speech. We are actually only have one vacancy right now in speech.

[02:13:01] So, but in the previous years when we didn't hire, what actually happened was when, Once those positions were determined to be held harmless, those positions, most of those positions were filled, and then through attrition, you know, a couple of people retired, one stayed home with their baby, I can't remember the rest of them, but then once that happened, those positions, because they were held harmless, we did not rehire for those.

[02:13:26] So it wasn't that we didn't fill them, it was that we, there were two or three, I think that, depending on the time of the year, may have been open from time to time, but all 10 were not vacant at the same time, if that makes sense. Right, right. This year, the ones that retired or whatever, yes, except for we added three back or two back and now a third in the

[02:13:55] coming weeks. So another concern, and I'm not sure how this is supported in the budget, but perhaps is helpful maybe in justifying in the business case, is the role of related service in transition and also the role of related service, particularly with the speech-language pathologist for reading comprehension.

[02:14:22] Particularly, this happens a lot for our kids with autism as well. So that's always a challenge where we're discussing that at the IEP table and we're sort of being told, like, oh, that's all incorporated and it gets done, but we're not really getting, what do we need to help justify that to roll up into budget?

[02:14:38] Do we need to be able to put some of those things in service time and planning in the budget? But that is definitely a concern, transition, and then also where they need to be supporting language that coincides with the reading comprehension as well.

[02:14:55] So I think maybe we could use like a clarification. Do our students who are in the transition programs, do they, you know, once they get to that postgraduate level, do they still receive related services? Yes, they are still receiving them.

[02:15:14] Okay. Maybe the way that we should look at this when this comes up, because it's going to come up again, whether it be speech pathologists, OTs, teacher's assistants, whatever it is that we're dealing with, maybe instead of trying to eliminate positions that we're already understaffed in and that we're already stretched and putting more, all we're going to do by taking the workload from these positions that wasn't filled or that would go off and we're doubling the workload of an already stressed out department is we're just going to start getting rid of the few that we have.

[02:15:50] Maybe instead we need to look at what we're doing to hire these pathologists. Maybe whether it's an increase in their pay. Maybe whether it's a change of their case. Maybe we need to look at what we're doing to try and hire them and why we're not able to hire them. I know some of it's that they're not out there. I get that there's a teacher shortage.

[02:16:07] There's a shortage on a lot of things. But, you know, when I have a shortage in workers and I'm doing something with my construction business, I can offer more money. I can offer different incentives. I

mean, we got incentives from, I was reading, Some people at the administrative building got car incentives and stuff.

[02:16:25] So we're doing that at the administrative level so that people can have car incentives to drive themselves back and forth to work. Why can't we do something for the speech pathologists that are actually doing something for our children? Sorry, I almost forgot.

[02:16:47] There's one more systemic thing, this lack of speech-language staffing that's impacting children in the classroom and in their receipt of services. and something else that came to light last year was that in order to look nobody's a bad guy here I don't want it to come across that way in any way people do what they have to do to survive in their jobs and so what was happening is that when speech language pathologists would schedule students on a specific day and the students who would get scheduled even though their IEP might say 30 minutes of speech language services a week if they were scheduled for Mondays well just take

[02:17:27] a look at the school calendar. How many Mondays would we miss, right? A lot during a school year. And those services were not made up. That was a regularly scheduled school holiday. We don't have to make that up. And they didn't. If they went to the school, let's say on a Monday when school was in service, and the student had been pulled for an assembly, or the student had been pulled for testing, or the student, so the student was physically there and present to be able to be provided their services, those services were not provided, they were not made up. These are the

[02:18:03] practical things that are happening in our classrooms with our most vulnerable students in this district, our students with disabilities, and services that an IEP team said they needed to receive a FAPE, they weren't receiving. Not because these aren't incredibly dedicated staff who cared deeply about these kids.

[02:18:24] That wasn't the problem. The problem was historical, not implicating current leadership, but historical decisions about staffing put these amazing providers in a horrible position in how to serve their students with disabilities.

[02:18:44] And that's why we keep bringing this up. That's why we keep talking about it, because we want our kids to be served. We want them to receive a free and appropriate public education.

[02:19:09] With regards to the issue of the SLPs and the OTs, I would just add that needs of the community, intent to deliver, and regulatory compliance are more at odds with each other than they should be. But that's the reality that we always have to sort of bump up against and try to overcome.

[02:19:28] So just a couple of quick comments. And I wanted to echo what Craig had mentioned earlier about splitting recommendation into two, because I think it is confusing the way it's read right now. I think that that's certainly a good suggestion I think and I know that you covered the concerns first I know there's a couple more recommendations to cover but in I think it was the first concern that was listed where we listed the 1 to 10 ratio and this was in the actual budget text not necessarily in the slides if we have a citation that we could add I think that would just strengthen that number because that 1 to 10 is sort of illustrated as a goal or laid out sort of as a goal but I think we cited that particularly because it's

[02:20:08] going to people that are new on the school board if we have a citation there i think it would strengthen it and also if we had some numbers on the retention rate problem that we're having with sped teachers and sped staff i think that would also strengthen both the concern as well as the recommendation

that would follow on and as we get to those other recommendations but since you raised it in the concerns i think that in the um uh the the last two which i think it comes out as recommendations four and five, but I don't know if those exactly mapped to the concerns.

[02:20:43] The notion of, which is right here in concern three, about having multiple departments, bringing that together perhaps under one department, that actually strengthens the question as it relates to procedural support and maybe making that job a little bit easier, because if you have a single department where you're looking at complying with these regulations, you don't have a different department that's also trying to comply into many cases with some of the same regulations. So it, it kind of, I think maybe we ought to add some text there that

[02:21:18] says, Hey, by the way, this, this recommendation here, when it comes to the, um, reorganization of that department can also perhaps help the issue with the prescript, the procedural support issue as well. I know we're going to get, I know we're going to get into it, but I know it was raising the concern so i decided to pick it up now all right so recommendation two do we want to

[02:21:54] just go through them and then do vote the voting okay i mean okay all right all right recommendation two seac supports building special education staffing proposals from identified student and teacher needs rather than based upon administrative ratios applied to projections from the Department of Budget and Financial Services, which is responsive to our concerns one and two.

[02:22:23] SEAC encourages the Office of Special Education to perform an analysis of the actual unique needs, severity of needs, of students receiving special education, the scope of teacher responsibilities, and special education service settings.

[02:22:38] This includes analysis of current staffing, current IEPs, functional behavior assessments, intervention plans, student progress, projected future needs, current teacher responsibilities, and the environment students are receiving services. And this was taken from the 2020 JLARC report on page 130. Once this analysis is complete, build the special education staffing proposals from identified student and teacher needs. And for anyone who's not familiar, the JLARC report is the joint

[02:23:14] legislative audit review commission okay got it right and they that's a part of the right you know the governmental body that works with our state government and gives suggestions in various areas okay that is the end of what we have for recommendation two are there any comments or concerns all right i'll move along recommendation three cx supports increasing the number of special education contingency positions and giving the office of special education

[02:23:53] additional implementation flexibility for those positions which is responsive to our concerns one and two special education student population and needs changed significantly throughout a school year budget predictions made in December are implemented in the following year starting in August and the nature of special education creates significant uncertainty when looking 12 to 18 months in advance. Contingency positions give the Office of Special Education operational flexibility to help meet student needs and stay compliant with laws and regulations. SEAC's understanding is that the Office

[02:24:32] of Special Education typically uses all of its contingency positions by September indicating that current levels are insufficient to address mid-year changes. Do we have any comments on that one? Okay. Recommendation four. SEAC does not support adding additional administrator positions in the Office of Procedural Support, which is responsive to Concern 3.

[02:25:03] The current procedural support model is not meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities. SEAC understands the need for positions that ensure compliance and fidelity to the law. SEAC encourages the division to examine existing roles and responsibilities of current staff and consider realigning and clarifying positions to ensure that compliance is applied consistently throughout LCPS.

[02:25:30] There are a number of existing positions both at the school and administrative level who have job responsibilities that include ensuring compliance. Our examples are special education dean, assistant principals, special education supervisors, eligibility coordinators, procedural support specialists.

[02:25:51] SEAC agrees that there needs to be a structure in place that provides consistency in compliance and clear ownership over who is responsible for reviewing compliance. Best practices need to be shared and executed consistently across the division. SEAC encourages LCPS to consider the use of short-term staffing and staffing augmentation, example contractors, to help support the increased workload associated with ongoing and upcoming audits, we all heard mentioned a little bit ago any questions or concerns moving on

[02:26:31] recommendation 5 SEAC encourages LCPS to consider a restructure that would bring section 504 and eligibility under the Department of Special Education which is responsive to concern 3 SEAC has consistently advocated for a true continuum of services there should be consistency for students who may transition from a 504 plan to an IEP or back to a 504 plan during their school career. As the illustration in your document shows, all students who qualify

[02:27:05] under IDEA also qualify under Section 504 in the Americans with Disabilities Act . Teams should be able to seamlessly transition between these to meet a student's unique needs at that specific time. Having Section 504 and IDEA in separate offices unnecessarily segregates what should be seamless decisions regarding Section 504 and IDEA eligibility.

[02:27:32] In addition, because Section 504 and the ADA still apply to students with an IEP, all IEP teams need to be aware of their obligations under Section 504 and the ADA as well as IDEA. This also creates a unified team that can consider eligibility for 504 and IDEA.

[02:27:53] Additionally, eligibility should be housed under the Office of Special Education because they are best positioned to understand the needs of the community and identify and respond to trends in eligibility. This would be consistent with neighboring jurisdictions.

[02:28:10] Eligibility and reevaluation are important components of the special education cycle for students and would best address student family needs as part of the Office of Special Education. We believe this will lead to more efficiency, consistency, and compliant outcomes.

[02:28:29] Any comments or concerns or questions? Recommendation 6: SEAC encourages LCPS to develop and implement a standardized buildout for independent living labs strategically located around the county to allow access for all students with disabilities who require them as part of their educational needs, which is responsive to concern for.

[02:28:58] Congress's stated purpose in creating the IDEA was to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.

[02:29:19] is part of the law. I won't read the citation but it is there and it is part of the law. The IDEA requires school districts to consider how each student with an IEP will transition to their next stage in life beyond K-12 education. Some students require direct, explicit instruction and independent living skills. LCPS is not currently meeting the needs of these students.

[02:29:46] This is an area that has been underfunded and largely ignored for years, and parent dissatisfaction is consistently reflected in SEAC's annual survey. Existing independent living labs are often put together through community donations solicited by dedicated teachers, varying their comprehensiveness, and do not address all areas of student needs.

[02:30:08] Students with disabilities should have access to appropriate equipment and facilities for their learning and these should be paid for and maintained by LCPS, just as we would provide for non-disabled students. SEAC encourages LCPS to ensure that students with disabilities have access to dedicated independent living labs with a standardized build-out or modified family and consumer science facilities, the FACS classes, with standardized equipment and supplies which are funded through budget appropriations.

[02:30:44] Does anyone have any comments or questions on this one? Last one. Recommendation seven. SEAC encourages LCPS to consider adding a transition supervisor position to the Office of Special Education, which is responsive to concern for.

[02:31:07] Transition is an area of great importance, as we all learned tonight, and impact for students with disabilities, and requires a full-time position to oversee transition teachers to provide with a consistent to provide a consistent vision planning partnerships in the community and ensure positive outcomes and growth with the added emphasis for our students directly entering the workforce SEAC encourages the office of special education to support adding a full-time supervisor dedicated to career and transition services the same way that there is a dedicated

[02:31:42] supervisor for early childhood special education to provide a consistent vision across the district. Currently, Career and Transition Services is managed part-time by a supervisor who has competing responsibilities and two transition specialists.

[02:32:00] Transition services are federally required for all students with an IEP and encompass the period of time for a student between ages 14 and 22. Each high school has a transition teacher to meet the needs of all special education students within their school.

[02:32:19] Transition services means -- this is taken from the -- what website was that? It's from the Department of Ed -- yeah, Department of Ed.

[02:32:35] Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, including supported employment, continuing an adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

[02:33:05] So this is from, sorry, this is from the IDEA, the law. Postsecondary transition is unique in that it is a program outside of the cluster structure, the high school cluster structure. For our postsecondary students, there are eight CAST programs and Project SEARCH.

[02:33:24] Transition is an area of great importance and has a direct impact for students with disabilities and requires a full-time oversight position to provide the division-wide transition teachers with a consistent vision, planning, growth, and provide the opportunity to develop and grow partnerships in the community.

[02:33:42] This oversight position will ensure positive outcomes and growth with the added emphasis for our students directly entering the workforce. Does anyone have any questions or comments on that? And then you'll see we have an appendix listed here that gives any other comments.

[02:34:08] Are there some areas that perhaps are today which would give an opportunity for more, inclusive the reverse inclusion environments okay all right we'll word smith it so support they out we don't want anyone to feel left out I'm not exactly sure how to word this but I think that we need to take a kind of deeper dive look into why we're having some of the

[02:34:45] staffing problems and some of the people leaving and things that we are maybe take a deep dive into talking to the teachers, the teacher's assistants, the speech pathologists, the TA, the different positions and why they're leaving, what we can do to help them stay, and then we need to start figuring out how to do that.

[02:35:04] I mean, I know the biggest complaint is the amount of paperwork that a special education has to do in comparison to any other teacher, you know, out there, and why teachers are leaving the special education field because of that. How do we mitigate that? how do we how do we help these teachers help our children and I think that we need to take a deep dive into why we're not able to hire these positions what we can do is it is it appear is it a monetary thing is it a quality of life thing what what can we do to do that and I don't really know how to word that into that but I think that it would be worth spending some money trying to figure that out because I think that's going to help solve a lot of the other issues that are on

[02:35:42] this page I mean I think start to understand the why one of the things that we consistently hear is that feeling of being overworked, which is why we are recommending adding a lot more positions in special education and the related services.

[02:36:00] And I think we need to clean up our language on the number of positions that were actually cut so that we are, in fact, restoring all of those related service positions. Okay, sorry.

[02:36:18] If there could be a recommendation to bring back virtual distance elementary, which was cut last year, I hope this isn't a stupid question, but two months ago I was here and they talked about playground equipment for special education students.

[02:36:49] Is that something we can get budget funds for? Because I'm not sure if that's a totally separate amount of money. I'm not sure how that works. Yeah, sure. Do you want to? So I wanted to address that and also what that gentleman was talking about, Because we actually have been talking about this issue of diving into, and we have some staff members on the Meaningful Inclusion Subcommittee, because that's obviously a big part of this, is it's hard to meaningfully include students if you don't have staff to do it.

[02:37:19] And so we have been diving into that issue a little bit more, and there is a gentleman that's on staff that's working on getting additional data and feedback on what are the reasons, right? What is the trends that we're seeing as to why people are leaving, in some cases, difficulty bringing people on board and so forth to try to look at that and maybe develop some recommendations based upon what we see.

[02:37:41] So we are in the process of finishing that report. And part of that is getting some surveys and feedback from existing staff and teachers related to the playground equipment. And I think probably from that there will be some recommendations, but I think we're probably a little bit ahead of it in terms of making specific recommendations.

[02:38:02] I think overall we all know that there will be a need for capital expense on adding, improving, upgrading playground equipment. But we want to make that a very specific set of recommendations, so we need to probably finish that first.

[02:38:18] but that'll be probably in the next cycle I think would be at the top of the recommendations or hopefully near the top of the recommendations when we have that specific. And I'll just add to that I did see when they were presenting the the capital budget that they they do have they that is one of their priorities is that they are going to continue to upgrade existing playgrounds to the inclusive playground capital improvements as part of the school board meeting so perhaps that would be is restoring some of the things that work we should be we should recommend restoring

[02:38:56] those positions that makes sense to me do we want to do that we add to recommendation one that uh positions for virtual element we are adding to that first recommendation does that

[02:39:19] sound good all right all in faith animously we did it okay moved and seconded the motion is that to adopt the policy and compliance subcommittees recommendation that we have no recommendations is there any further discussion hearing none all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye opposed nay get the easiest part of the meeting and it's one minute long so eyes on me

[02:39:58] all right from their information resources on facebook page the qr code that you have Access to goes directly to modifications for students with disabilities a resource document. It's a great front and back page on modifications kind of the who what and why and then limitations and support community if you happen to fall in the how the Grinch stole Christmas crowd Goal-setting and attainment and support community these minutes as SIAC so we can get them posted on our website

[02:40:36] so does anyone have any modifications or changes to the minutes for April it's an updates these are our 22 23 community concerns that we will be continuing to follow up on teacher teaching assistant related service provide shortages bullying delivery of special ed services and collaborative classroom classes specially designed instruction efficacy of delivery across the county and understanding more what is our co-teaching model and closing learning loss gaps of 18 voting members with three open memberships so we are

[02:41:14] still accepting applications you need to attend three meetings one of those needs to be put together a little summary of what we've been doing in our subcommittees which we will then be sending out to from 9:00 to 10:00 oh it's It's 9:30 to 10:00.

[02:41:30] Mark these down on your calendar and hopefully we will see all of you there. We're also going to skip our SEAC representative reports this evening and maybe we'll do something similar and send out a little blurb of anything significant going on that we would like to share.

[02:41:51] Okay. And now it's Leanne's turn. I promised her that we would get to her. Thank you so much for staying. You're welcome. Welcome. I'm Leanne Kidwell. I'm with Parent Resource Services, and one of your concerns was bullying.

[02:42:08] So, Monday night, we are having a workshop for parents on social media and cyberbullying. So, please, it's here at the admin building from 630 to 830. And then one of our most popular workshops is Wednesday, and it's for the ECSE parents whose kids are transitioning to kindergarten with an IEP.

[02:42:32] It will be here in the boardroom, and it will be the only workshop this year that will be broadcast and recorded. So if you want to participate, if you just want to watch it, that's great. We already have about 60 people signed up.

[02:42:49] We usually have about 100 here. That and when the bus stops coming are our two most popular, so beginning and end. And that's it for me. Have a nice evening. All right. And now it's our time with our school board liaison, Tiffany Polipko.

[02:43:09] And just before she gets started, I just wanted to thank Tiffany so much for all. She's been an incredible hour just to thank you.

[02:43:27] No one wants to listen to me talk because you all would rather go home or go to Clyde's and have your dinner. But I will take 20 seconds. Advocate for this community on the school board has been the greatest pleasure of mine.

[02:43:43] And I wish you all the best in 2020. your home and your jammies you can watch it live stream we will also be home maybe jammies on the bottom and then our our presentation in February is on Valentine's Day who doesn't want to spend it here with us but it'll be on meaningful inclusion and it's a topic that I know all of us care so much about so I know I'm really looking forward to it and I hope you all will kind of exit out on your calendar because who can get a babysitter anyway and just come here and spend it with us feel free to bring your kids and thank you all for sticking

[02:44:23] it out with us this evening we so appreciate it have a wonderful rest of your month and holidays and we will see you in the



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