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Loudoun County School Board, 2nd Tuesday School Board Meeting, Tuesday, January 9, 2024

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/901274431?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:40] Good afternoon. I call to order this January 9th, 2024, Loudoun County School Board meeting. I will move on to agenda item two, approval of the consent agenda. Is there a motion to approve the consent agenda? Motion to approve. Ms. Chernoff. Ms. Chernoff made the motion. Is there

[00:01:11] a second? Second. Thank you. Is there any discussion? This is on personnel. Actually, it's a list of personnel, right, that are being hired. Is that correct? Do we have that list to look at? I believe that you can look on the list on your on the computer on the

[00:01:45] agenda. Do you have that on? So if you look under the consent agenda on board docs under item 2.02 personnel actions you'll see that list is included on board docs. You just click on that little file looking piece on the right. Is it possible to have it itemized to see what the salaries are for everybody being

[00:02:17] hired i'm sorry can you repeat that this is a new list of people being hired this week or this month is that correct is there any way we have a list of new hires yes i'm sorry yeah so there is a list of new hires on there yes and um is there a way to um see what the salaries are and make sure they're in line with the bands for what we hire can we include that um confidentially in the future

[00:02:55] So, Ms. Bowen, do you want to address the question about salaries and just how salaries are assigned maybe more broadly? So, in general, there isn't discussion under consent. And so, if you wanted

to pull this and have it as an action item for discussion, I think you could ask to do that.

[00:03:15] And or we could just have this conversation maybe like after tonight and figure out what you're looking for and get it on there. but we can also sit down with our human resources team and kind of go through how salaries are assigned. So it's assigned based on experience and pay grade.

[00:03:32] It's fairly standard. Thank you. Is there any more discussion? Okay, clerk, would you please open the vote? Board members, please record your vote.

[00:03:59] Clerk, please close and display the vote. Motion passes unanimously. We will now move on to agenda item three, the advisory committee update.

[00:04:21] Dr. Smith, would you like to introduce and talk a bit about the advisory committees? Before we start. - Yes, thank you, Chair Mansfield. So the school board advisory committees are defined in policy 2310 as a committee appointed by the school board to increase community input on specific issues, to include citizens from magisterial districts and one or more appointed school board members, member liaisons.

[00:04:45] It's been past practice for the school board advisory committees to provide an update to the board once or twice per year regarding the work taking place, successes, challenges, and future work. Tonight, you'll receive an update from the Gifted Advisory Education Committee that's co-chaired by Hilary Coley and Patty Peterson.

[00:05:02] Good afternoon. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to address the board. So we are here this afternoon to provide an overview of a very general overview of the gifted program and an update on the work of the Gifted Education Advisory Committee, also known as GIAC.

[00:05:32] I'm Patty Peterson. I'm a gifted resource teacher at Algonquian Elementary School and the mother of four identified gifted students. I'm Hillary Coley. I am also a co-chair to GIAC and I'm a parent of an LCPS gifted student. So the gifted education advisory committee serves as a support group to review and make suggestions about the gifted programs and to promote community awareness a gifted education. School personnel, both teachers and administrators, community members,

[00:06:11] and parents and family members serve on the committee. Ultimately, GIAC here is to support the approximately 7,800 gifted learners in LCPS and work with the gifted education team. So we'd like to share a quote that drives the work of the gifted education advisory committee. This is a quote from the National Association for Gifted Children. Gifted and talented students need gifted education programs that will challenge them and enable them to make continuous progress in school. So in the field of gifted education we know that gifted learners come from all racial, ethnic, and cultural populations as well

[00:06:50] as all economic strata. We also know that gifted learners can have learning and processing conditions that require specialized intervention and accommodation and these students are twice exceptional or 2e learners. The LCPS Gifted Education Program looks to current research and best practices in gifted education to identify and provide services for students from diverse backgrounds.

[00:07:20] Elementary gifted services in Loudoun County include the SEARCH program, which targets kindergarten through third grade students with bi-weekly lessons that focus on the five thinking keys that build critical and creative thinking and foster growth mindset for all K-3 students. Our EDGE program

targets our students who have demonstrated advanced academic potential, but come from groups that have historically been underrepresented in our gifted programs. And through that program, the

[00:07:56] gifted resource teachers provide lessons that enrich and nurture the student's potential. Our DCI, or Differentiated Classroom Instruction program is meant for 4th and 5th grade students who have gone through our identification process and may not qualify fully for gifted education, but have demonstrated high ability in either language arts or math. And we're able to provide enrichment activities for those students as well

[00:08:29] as to their teachers. The fusion program, which happens to be my favorite, is meant for 4th and fifth grade students who are formally identified there is an alternating curriculum for leadership and innovation as well as they receive similar services to the DCI students enriched education in language arts and math and these are formally identified learners in addition the gifted resource teachers are essential in their buildings because of the other services that they provide they

[00:09:04] help conduct gifted evaluation process the administer ability testing they serve as a resource to staff members as well as providing resources to classroom teachers for enriching all of the high ability students and are available to conference with families when we get to the middle school level our spectrum program enables the middle school students to engage in project-based learning independent research and inquiry and real world problem

[00:09:38] solving. At the high school level, gifted learners self-select advanced academic offerings such as honors level courses, advanced placement courses, dual enrollment, technical and career focused lessons. They can also apply for the specialized programs available through the Academies of Loudoun, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, the Summer Residential Governor schools, and our new pre-international IB, or international baccalaureate program.

[00:10:13] Now we're going to turn our attention to the work of the Gifted Education Advisory Committee. GIAC meetings give members and participants opportunities to work in small groups to discuss issues related to gifted education and to make recommendations about LCPS's gifted services.

[00:10:30] Committee work is grounded in best practices in gifted education. To stay abreast of the current research and best practices, the committee invites experts both within LCPS and outside to share their expertise at the meetings. On this slide, you're going to see some of the topics we address at the GIAC meetings this year, and we always invite in our experts in the field to join these meetings to help teachers and families understand and support gifted learners. Now, we're going to talk a little bit about the gifted plan. So, school divisions in Virginia required by Virginia Department of Education to identify gifted learners and provide

[00:11:08] instructional services to meet their needs. They are also required to develop a gifted plan that is the blueprint for how they will identify and meet the needs of gifted learners. This plan includes the division's philosophy statement on gifted education, a definition of giftedness, goals for the program, and how the division will identify students in need of services, how they will notify the school community about gifted services and other components about program operations one of the major initiatives that GIAC undertook this past fall was to review LCPS's gifted plan provide feedback on the plan and

[00:11:44] approve the plan for presentation to and approval by the school board some highlights of our LCPS gifted program are I think especially important the our continuation of efforts to increase those

students from historically underrepresented populations expanding the professional learning opportunities for administrators teachers and other LCPS staff collaborating with other departments to develop curated instructional resources that support all high ability learners in the classroom providing services to

[00:12:24] over 1,000 students across the edge program and the edge program has also hosted six family academy meetings or is about to based on the Jack Kent Cook Foundation grant and the work of Loudoun Education Foundation and this helps provide families with strategies to support their learners of all types we've also collaborated with the Virginia Association for the Gifted as we will host the upcoming 2024 Spring Gifted Association conference and it's going to be held at our Academies of Loudoun, a good chance to show them off.

[00:13:00] And then hosting, as Hillary mentioned already, a variety of guest speakers and experts speaking both to families and staff. And now, actually, the advisory committee has made several recommendations for LCPS to consider as we continue to enhance gifted services.

[00:13:18] I'm not going to read all of these to you, but I'm going to highlight just a few of them. First of all, to continue to invest in gifted education by providing high-quality resources, appropriate staffing, and dedicated space for the programs, continue to support and implement an expansion of the International Baccalaureate Program and LCPS, as well as other special programs that promote rigorous pathways for students.

[00:13:44] And the committee itself is implementing more frequent meetings, alternating between virtual and in-person, so we can expand our outreach and include more participants in those meetings. We thank you for taking the time today to listen to us and let us present our information.

[00:14:04] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Cole and Ms. Peterson, and thank you for your update and recommendations for next year. Board members, do you have any questions for Ms. Coley and Ms. Peterson regarding Gifted Education Advisory Committee?

[00:14:23] Dr. Rasheed. Hi. Thank you for your presentation. I just wanted to ask if there were any specific examples of the expansion of the IB program. I saw a great list for the other programs. But if you knew of any for the IB program, just from my own knowledge.

[00:14:43] That comes out of the Special Programs Department, but we will make sure to get that information. Okay, thank you. But I just know that many of our gifted learners are interested, so any new programs, we're very happy about it.

[00:14:58] Thanks. I hope we can mention, too, that at a recent GEAC meeting, the Special Programs Department presented information, and it had so many parents excited and interested in seeing this program grow and flourish. Madam Chair, I think Mr. Slevin, who works with the special programs, can answer the question about IB expansion.

[00:15:22] Of course. Mr. Slevin. Dr. Rasheed, thank you for the question. So when we talk about IB expansion, the conversation really is about expanding it to additional, one, expanding it to additional high schools. As you know, we have two high schools that were just authorized for IB.

[00:15:39] one in Leesburg and one in the West. And so thinking geographically about specialized programs, where might be future high schools that we have an opportunity to expand. But there are also

different levels of IB as far as opportunities for students within Loudoun Valley and Heritage High School.

[00:15:59] And all of those things are what we'll be exploring with new board throughout the term. And so that's what I believe the advisory committee is recommending, that we continue to look for opportunities to expand. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Slevin. Are there any other questions? Ms. Chernoff. I sort of have an add-on to that. Do you feel right now, I mean, you're recommending that we expand those programs, which would be through special programs. Are you seeing right now that there are kids that aren't getting into those slots that would like to? Do we have any data on that information,

[00:16:34] gifted kids that can't get in because the slots are filled? I don't have any data on that right now, but we could certainly look into that. That would be interesting to see. And then I had one question, which was, can you just talk a little bit about, I have had the privilege of seeing search in schools in action. It's wonderful. If you could just share a little bit about what the curriculum is, how that's developed so that literally all students have access, which is really wonderful. So is it same school to school? How are those plans developed? If you could speak to that. I will talk a little bit about how the curriculum is developed. And I'm going to ask

[00:17:10] Ms. Peterson, since she is a search teacher, talk a little bit about the curriculum. But each summer we have a group of gifted resource teachers that get together, they review the bank of lessons that we have available for the search team, and we update them and make tweaks and make those available for teachers. We also have a very robust mentorship in the gifted program, so veteran gifted teachers will work with new teachers coming in to help support them so that they have the curriculum

[00:17:43] resources that they need the search program focuses on the five keys of thinking of perceiving connecting i mean i'll get this wrong now today um perceiving connecting creating evaluating and i'm leaving one out and i can't my brain just let it fly i'm sorry um but all of our lessons are tied into those keys in different ways and we try to make sure that not only are we modeling addressing the students in each of those ways and and taxing their thinking in each of those

[00:18:19] directions but also getting teachers to realize that reading from a book or reading from a slide deck isn't enough that our students really need a lot of hands-on application of the concepts that they're trying to learn and so a lot of the things we bring in involve manipulatives like tangrams or pentominoes and problems that the students need to solve independently.

[00:18:45] And that's probably the strength of our program because the children get so excited when we bring lessons in that they feel like they're playing, but they're learning, and they're thinking, and they make their reasoning so clear to us. One of my protégés that I mentored teaches in one of the Title I schools, and her comment was that through these activities, Even students that don't have the language can demonstrate their ability.

[00:19:16] And that's probably the most important thing we do. So thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for your presentation. Thank you for your work. It's so important, really valued. Are there any other questions? Ms. Donoghue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:19:33] I don't have any questions. I just also wanted to say thank you for the presentation and thank you for the service that you do for our students. Anyone else? Mr. Vice Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just wanted to thank you again as well for the presentation.

[00:19:50] I think one of the things that I'm most excited, no question, but one of the things I'm most excited about is in the elementary services specific to search. I am very excited about this idea around discovering or helping a student uncover their own potential because you have students where that potential is very apparent, right?

[00:20:11] And then you have students where that potential needs to be really uncovered and due to maybe certain barriers or different needs that that student might have so that they can then be identified at a later point. And so really, thank you for your work.

[00:20:27] And then I'm also very curious, it doesn't have to be kind of addressed now, but very curious for the future to learn more about the identification process and how that kind of unfolds for a student or a family. Thank you. Thank you very much for your presentation.

[00:20:43] And I'm looking forward to meeting you all as your liaison for the school board we will now move on to our work sessions starting with item 4.01 from business and financial services the annual comprehensive financial report and school

[00:21:03] activity funds annual financial report and i will turn it over to miss willoughby good afternoon i am here to present the fy 23 annual comprehensive financial report and the audit findings or the result that we received. Loudoun County Public Schools has prepared and published the FY23

[00:21:40] Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. These financial reports present the financial position and results of the operations measurement by the financial activity of LCPS, various funds for the fiscal year ending June 30th. The ACFR was audited by the accounting firm of Cherry Beckett, who expressed an unmodified opinion on the financial statements. And how that translates is that that is the best possible result of an audit and so that's the first blue check mark that we have up there for our ACFER for the district-wide funds. Second is our school activity funds. The audit here

[00:22:17] was conducted by Robinson Farmer Cox. They also provided their audit report. I should mention in board docs there is a tremendous number of documents that will be referenced throughout this presentation. So Robinson Farmers or Farmers or Cox's report is in board docs. It also resulted in a clean audit and that the information was presented fairly in all material respects. The third area is for our two charter schools. The ACFER also includes the financial reports and

[00:22:55] disclosures for the Hillsborough Charter Academy and the Middleburg Community Charter Schools. They are presented as discrete component units for LCPS, and similarly, Loudoun County Public Schools, our annual financial report becomes a discrete component and rolls up into the county's financial report. So there's a building of financial information here. The audit firm of Robinson Farmer Cox and Associates also performed the audit for the two charters. They resulted,

[00:23:30] Their findings were a clean audit in that their financial statements were presented fairly. They don't get the extra notation of in all material respects as each charter school had one material journal entry identified during the audit that was corrected during the audit as well.

[00:23:51] Next slide, please. Specifically with the annual comprehensive financial report, this is the annual report where we compile all of our financial data. It consists of the financial statements for all of our funds.

[00:24:08] There are notes, analysis, disclosures, and statistical information for FY23. As I mentioned, also included in the ACFER are the charter school statements as well as the school activity fund statements. LCPS, as I also mentioned, is a component unit of the county, and so we will roll up and you would see our information included in their ACFER.

[00:24:33] Next slide, please. The highlights of... or the big takeaway is the general fund balance. And this is usually what the main question is in terms of where do we end FY23. So out of the entire ACFER, it's usually looking at the number that is in the box, which is the unassigned fund balance of 9.1 million.

[00:24:57] So these five categories are the five items that represent our ending fund balance. And so if I just start at the top, We have \$22.2 million that was part of the fund balance that will roll over into the following fiscal year.

[00:25:14] And what that represents is encumbrances and contracts that are carried forward from one year to the next. There is a line drawn to mark one fiscal year compared to the next fiscal year. But there are some activity and work and orders that need to continue on irrespective of a date.

[00:25:34] So the encumbrance rollover is a method to maintain, you know, continuing the operations while also meeting the needs of accounting requirements. The next category up there is \$12 million for a subsequent year appropriation. And this is where during the year we identify during the projections and carve out a certain dollar amount to roll over to the next budget year as a funding source.

[00:26:02] And so historically, for the last several years, we have carried over \$12 million. And during the development of the FY24 budget, we had also, again, identified carrying over \$12 million. I'm going to skip the box and come back to that. The next item after that would be inventory.

[00:26:20] We have just under \$1 million worth of items valued that is captured in inventory. This could be paper, for example. And then finally, the last category is prepaid expenditures. Again, referencing where there's a line drawn to distinguish one fiscal year to the next, but you can have items that need to be paid for early.

[00:26:42] So the most common example here could be a conference, especially for a school system where when school is out over the summer, there could be the opportunity to attend conferences. So there may be a conference in July, but you need to pre-register or make travel arrangements that may occur in June.

[00:26:58] So we prepay for those items, And then they, in terms of the accounting, gets recorded as a prepaid. And then in the following year, it is expensed. Going back up to the unassigned fund balance of the \$9.1 million. Of that amount, this is the amount that is, well, in its entirety, this is the amount that is returned to the county.

[00:27:20] Of that, the \$3.3 million during the budget process last year was appropriated back to LCPS for collective bargaining. So there was an arrangement between the schools and the county that we would earmark \$3.3 million of our fund balance and ensure that it was returned to the county, and then the county reappropriated that back to us.

[00:27:42] So the true unassigned balance that went back to the county would be \$5.8 million. \$9.1 million, while a large amount, represents 0.56% of the budget.

[00:27:59] So again, this is where the scale of the budget, it's helpful reminder that it's the unassigned fund balance represented less than 1%. Next slide. The next category is our school activity funds.

[00:28:18] These are the funds that are managed at each individual school. The principal has the authority and governs those funds. These funds are usually derived from fundraisers or donations and are to be used specifically for the student or the school. We have a policy, I think it's 4115, that also outlines the expectations and guidance regarding usage of the school activity funds. Each school has their own

[00:28:53] individual fund. I'm sorry if you could go back a slide. Each school has its own individual fund, meaning they also have their own individual bank account. The auditor's report here did not find any significant audit matters. However, they did find opportunities to strengthen internal controls as well as operating efficiencies. Specifically, the most recurring items are what's listed on this slide, which is related to posting of expenditures into proper accounts, as well as untimely deposit of funds. The chart on the right, though, is what we are most proud of

[00:29:30] of working with our schools that out of the 96 schools that have school activity funds 78 percent of those schools received zero findings from the auditor. The remaining schools we had a little over a couple dozen findings and recommendations. As you can see on this chart there has been a progressive improvement of the schools having zero findings. You know our department has been focused on having high expectations for our schools and we provide high support to help them achieve these zero findings. Some of the examples include we have

[00:30:09] in business and financial services a dedicated financial training staff that provides monthly training sessions so we are constantly working with schools and principals and then we also have periodic internal audit reviews as well just to kind of make sure we're keeping everyone on their toes so that we can continue this positive trend of having zero findings with our schools.

[00:30:37] Next slide, please. Hillsborough Charter Academy. Included in board docs, you'll have the auditor's report, you know, signaling that the financial statements were presented fairly. There's the governance letter that identified that there was a material misstatement related to an expenditure, which then they corrected during the audit process.

[00:31:00] And that also the opportunity to strengthen internal controls, and that was related to how some of the expenditures were being reported. Moving on to Middleburg Charter School. Similarly, the auditor's report found that the statements were reported fairly.

[00:31:19] They also, again, had an expenditure that needed to be corrected to avoid having a material misstatement. And then their opportunities for strengthening their internal controls and operations were related to posting of expenditures and also in making sure that their deposits were held in accordance with federal insured limits.

[00:31:43] Middleburg, you may be aware, has made progress regarding the concerns noted in previous audits. They had remedied the majority of the concerns from previous audits resulting in the removal from probation a couple of months ago. These results continue to show the improvement, and as I had presented to the prior school board, whenever they removed them from probation, that the recommendations from the auditor here were lower risk in terms of our audit matrix, and so we feel confident that both Middleburg as well as Hillsborough will continue to make improvements, and we are also available to continue to provide support.

[00:32:20] Next slide. Finally, the accounting team is absolutely to be commended for their consistent high-caliber work. Not only do they have a record of clean audits, but are also recognized for their financial reporting by ASBO and GFOA. As you can see here, they have a 14-year award streak. Our participation in both of these prestigious programs demonstrates our commitment to financial transparency and our commitment to fiscal and financial integrity. These award programs are the highest form of

[00:32:56] recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and their attainment represents a significant accomplishment and then i will just close with that we have also submitted our fy 23 acfer for award consideration by both these organizations and i'm confident that we will be here next year and we'll have 15 years in our streak and with that i'm available for any questions thank you miss willoughby board members do you have any questions regarding the presentation

[00:33:28] dr rasheed thank you for that presentation it's very helpful um just had one question i know that in the management memo of MCCC, there were multiple bank accounts. I think that, well, is it safe to say that there could be multiple bank accounts because the maximum that could be deposited would be \$250,000, and is that allowed? Exactly, and I think that was the findings, that they had an account that was over the federal insurance limit, and so the recommendation was that they needed to open another one and adjust their funds, and I believe they already did that.

[00:34:01] Okay, all right. Thank you. Any additional questions? Yes, Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby and thank you Madam Chair. This is extremely comprehensive and I will be honest a little bit out of my lane so I appreciate your help in answering the questions ahead of time but it seems like there are only control issues because of that last statement on the check mark at Hillsborough and Middleburg and not other LCPS schools. Is that how I am to read that? Is that correct? Correct. Okay and then is that are there different ways that they have to report their

[00:34:37] finances, or are the standards the same across? The standards are the same across. There are different nuances in terms of the financial reporting. Okay. For example, for LCPS, we're producing a comprehensive report that includes notes, management analysis, whereas, and statistical information, whereas the school activity funds is your basic financial statements, and similarly with the charter schools. Okay. Thank you for that. And then for the activity funds in policy

[00:35:14] 41-1-15, is that how I said? 41-15? It says other including donations from school support organizations. Does that include PTA and PTSO? If a PTO or PTA or PTSO or booster club or any outside organization made a donation, that would be a funding source for the school activity fund.

[00:35:34] Okay. But if they have their own separate budget, that's not part of school activity funds. Is that correct that is correct thank you any other questions seeing no more questions we'll move from item 4.02 to 4.02 from the finance and operations committee the revised cost per pupil for tuition purposes and miss willoughby would you like to speak to this item i will once the budget is adopted each year the next step is usually setting the tuition rates for out of county and out of

[00:36:11] students who attend LCPS schools. Back in September the tuition rates were set for the 2023-24 school year. This was actually even later than what we typically would have set rates for and that was related to the prolonged budget or the budget process at the state. But regardless back in September we did set initial rates for the school year and also had informed the school board at that time that there were

possible additional actions that could come forward that may result in us adjusting those rates. That is then what occurred when the state provided additional

[00:36:49] funding to LCPS and we obtained \$12 million in an additional appropriation from the county that adjusted the budget in a way that we needed to revise the calculation for the tuition rates. So the revised in-state but out-of-county tuition rate for the current school year will now be \$14,482, and the out-of-state rate for students is \$21,015.

[00:37:17] These rates are assessed quarterly, and typically it's related for students who are moving in and out of the county during the school year, and the families don't want to disrupt, you know, having to transfer the student or they're preparing to move into the county and so they start so typically the rates are not full year of what we're receiving we're usually receiving for a shorter period of time also just historically we have maybe a range from about maybe 12 to 24 families that pay rates

[00:37:53] right now we have based on the the latest snapshot I think we have about 10 families that we are currently assessing for tuition rates and so with that that is the revised rates that we are asking the school board to approve and if there were no other questions we would recommend bringing this back to action at the next school board meeting are there any further questions okay so let's move this to action for the next board meeting on january 30th 2024 thank you again miss william

[00:38:31] moving on we will move on to item five which is the closed meeting is there a motion vice chair Yes Madam Chair. I move that the Loudoun County School Board recess this public meeting and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to 2. 2-3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following discussion, consideration, and interview of prospective candidates for the assignment and appointment of employment as division counsel as authorized by section 2. 2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:39:04] consultation with legal counsel employed by or retained by the school board pertaining to actual litigation concerning Loudoun County Circuit Court matter CL23-5107, and requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as authorized by sections 2.2-3711A7 and 2.2-3711A8 of the Code of Virginia.

[00:39:27] We have a motion by Mr. Streffi. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Donohue. Any discussion? Seeing no discussion, we will now vote on the motion to approve going into closed session by electronic vote.

[00:39:46] Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote.

[00:40:01] Clerk, please close and display the vote. The motion passes unanimously. We are now in closed session. Thank you.

[00:43:52] She like kind of accidentally double clicks it.

[00:52:28] Amy. Listen, one, two, three. One, two, three.

[01:11:34] Hey, good afternoon or good evening.

[01:30:32] We'll wait for a few minutes. I'm in it.

[01:30:58] The board is coming out of closed session. Is there a motion, Mr. Streffi? Yes, Madam Chair.

[01:31:13] I move that the closed meeting be adjourned, that the Loudoun County School Board reconvene its public meeting, and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was

taken in the closed meeting. I move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting, whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and whereas 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law,

[01:31:50] now therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and only such public business matters as identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Loudoun County School Board.

[01:32:13] We have a motion by Mr. Struffy. Is there a second? Second. We have a seconded by Ms. Donna Hugh. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we will put the motion to a vote.

[01:32:29] Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote. Clerk, please close and display the vote. The motion passes unanimously.

[01:32:49] We are now moving on to a motion required by closed session. I move that the Loudoun County School Board approve and accept the superintendent's recommendation of the appointment for the position of Loudoun County School Board Division Council as discussed and considered in closed session.

[01:33:05] Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. Is there any discussion? Yes, Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Madam Chair. So I had some questions about the process for the selection of the Division Council candidate.

[01:33:29] And I had the opportunity to ask some questions of Ms. Boland during our closed session. And I was hoping to ask her to repeat some of that information now for public consumption.

[01:33:46] Ms. Boland, would you please speak about the process of how this happened? Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the question. So the Division Council position was posted on September 21st. It is actually still posted as it is an open until filled posting. There were nine applicants at the time the interview process occurred and there are still nine applicants this the process for Division Council was

[01:34:20] Followed as is described or prescribed in policy, school board policy, HRTD's recommendation for the minimum number of candidates interviewed at any time for a position is a minimum of three, as long as the applicant pool allows for this.

[01:34:41] This position did allow for that minimum to be met. Outside of that, this position was posted not only on LCPS's website, but it was also highlighted on one of our paid-for LinkedIn postings, and it was blasted out through other job sites, such as Indeed, Top School Jobs, as well as many others.

[01:35:14] and interviews were held with a number of panelists the process ended with a second interview and Ultimately with the chair and vice chair having an opportunity to meet with the candidate before the school board discussed this evening Thank you, Ms. Boland and I also just wanted to note that we were afforded the opportunity during closed session to Review the cover letters and resumes of the applicants who were selected for first-round interviews

[01:35:46] And personally, I found the quality of the proposed candidate to receive an offer to be significantly noticeably higher than the others.

[01:36:02] And I appreciate very much having the opportunity to be able to review those other materials. Thank you. Any more discussion? Seeing none, we will put the motion to a vote. Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, and please record your vote.

[01:36:19] Clerk, please close and display the vote. And the motion passes unanimously. Congratulations.

[01:36:38] At this time, we'll go into recess and be back for our evening session at 6.30 p.m. How about 6.35? The board is now in recess.

[01:47:10] That is so fantastic.

[02:03:20] I think I've told people.

[02:04:22] Good evening.

[02:05:02] Thank you for your patience. The board is coming out of recess at this time. The board will be picking up with item 8, the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. The ensemble, who will be leading the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, is the Heritage Guitar Ensemble.

[02:05:18] The Heritage Guitar Ensemble is comprised of advanced and artist-level students. Several have participated in the PAVAN Regional Governor's School, and this year, two were selected for the All-Virginia Guitar Ensemble. Past performances include local venues, like the Rust Library and out-of-town performances, to include Yale University, Radford University, New York, and Cleveland.

[02:05:45] This year, the ensemble performed as a part of a 1,000-person guitar ensemble for the World Cultural Festival on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Director Dr. Kevin Vigil holds degrees from Shannantooa University, Yale University, and the University of Memphis.

[02:06:05] He joined the faculty of Heritage High School in 2005, and, as of this year, also teaches 7th grade guitar at Harper Park Middle School. He was named the 2014 Shenandoah University Teacher of the Year for LCPS and presented with the Sir Winston Churchill Commemorative Crown by Churchill Fellow for his work in guitar education in 2017.

[02:06:31] At this time, I will ask everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and please remain standing for the National Anthem.

[02:08:32] Thank you all so much for being here tonight and for your performance. Being a music major myself, I very much enjoy listening to our young musicians.

[02:08:47] Thank you. We will now move on to item nine, student and staff recognitions with 901. One LCPS spotlight, Division of English Learners, Family and Community Engagement and Office Recognitions with Ms. Rosario and Ms. Ocampo presenting.

[02:09:08] Good evening, Dr. Spence, Chair Mansfield, and members of the board. My name is Cherise Rosario, and I serve in the role as Director of English Learners.

[02:09:25] We are thrilled to kick off the first spotlight of the year with our EL Family and Community Engagement Office, also known as DEL FACE. Back in 2021, a small team of three was formed using Title III funds to ensure EL families are supported and engaged in their child's education.

[02:09:50] In just a couple of years, this team has grown to accommodate the growing needs of our EL population and has developed programming that you will hear about this evening. We will connect our work to the LCPS strategic plan, share the vision and mission of the Division of EL Face Office, and provide you an overview of our programs to support our students and family engagement efforts.

[02:10:18] Lastly, we'll provide you some time to ask some questions. Our DEL FACE office is dedicated to and deeply rooted in our 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence, specifically within Goal 4, Engaged Community under Action 4.1c.

[02:10:38] The DEL FACE office is part of a family engagement workgroup that is made up of cross-departmental team members. Their work has resulted in an array of resources to support school-based family engagement efforts across the division to include a newly developed welcome guide for school office staff that outlines best practices to welcome students and families to a welcoming, inclusive, and affirming school community.

[02:11:10] Their work also includes a rubric for schools to self-assess their family engagement efforts. Without further ado, I would like to introduce Sarah Ocampo, our DEL FACE coordinator, who will share a bit about her team, our vision, how we define family engagement, and an overview of our programs.

[02:11:32] Sarah? Thank you, Charisse. Good evening, Dr. Spence, Chair Mansfield, and members of the school board. I'd like to start by greeting you in the top three languages, Spanish, Arabic, and Farsi, as we often like to greet our families.

[02:11:53] Saludos. Marhaban. Salaam. My name is Sarah Ocampo, and I'm the coordinator for our growing DEL FACE office. Tonight, I am joined by some of my team members, Ms. Blazquez, Ms. Burgos, Ms. Sethi, and Ms. Cheng, along with our family members.

[02:12:12] We are a multicultural and multilingual team representative of our EL student and family population. Each member has been individually chosen for their strong language skills and cultural diversity, well as a deep passion for engaging English learner families to support their students. Our vision is in alignment with the LCPS vision which is to empower English learner students to make meaningful contributions to the world with a small caveat that we strive to accomplish this by nurturing partnerships and a sense of belonging between schools, families, and the

[02:12:50] community. Since family engagement can be defined in different ways, I'd like us to explore the definition we have adopted as an office and as a division. We define family engagement as the process of building authentic homeschool partnerships with parents, adult caregivers, family members, students, and staff that support strong personal and academic outcomes.

[02:13:16] I'd like to highlight two phrases that stand out from this definition. Number one, it is the process of building meaningful relationships, which are essential to number two, supporting personal and academic outcomes. Our work within family engagement is deeply tied to student learning and student achievement. Research indicates that when schools, families, and the community come together in strong partnership, student outcomes are supported. There is an increase in graduation rates, increase in attendance rates, increased numbers in students pursuing higher education, improved job

[02:13:52] satisfaction for our staff, and reduced turnover rates. In essence, deepened family engagement is crucial for the success and well-being of students but also of our staff and our families. How does the DL face office bring family engagement to life? Our DL face office supports schools on inclusive EL family

engagement efforts. We offer professional learning to staff and share resources to include those for immigrant youth. Tonight I want to highlight four programs we have established as a team that serve EL families directly and their

[02:14:30] implementation throughout our district. Number one is the Family Room. Number two is the Parent as Educational Partners Program, which we also refer to as PEP. Our EL Student and Family Feedback Circles, and the Welcome to LCPS Family Workshop.

[02:14:48] Let's begin by exploring the Family Room. The Family Room is our virtual space where we gather with EL families across the division via Google Meet on the last Tuesday of every month to learn about a variety of topics, including how to access ParentVUE, the admission process for the academies of Loudoun, the gifted education program, pathways to graduation and more.

[02:15:09] Our FACE team coordinates with central office staff to share their areas of expertise with Yale families and our bilingual FACE facilitators serve as the hosts and interpreters for each one of these sessions. Sessions are held bilingually in English and Spanish at 6:00 PM and in English and Arabic at 7:00 PM.

[02:15:28] Family attendance ranges between 80 to 800 participants. Families are given time to have their questions answered and their feedback is collected in a quick three question poll. This feedback informs the relevance of each session and our future planning.

[02:15:46] Next we have our Parents as Educational Partners or PEP program. This is an optional school-based program designed to provide staff continual opportunities to engage and cultivate meaningful relationships with the families of English learners throughout the school year, strengthening crucially important homeschool partnerships.

[02:16:05] There are 10 curriculum units to help EL families learn about the US school system and participate more fully, in addition to learning about school personnel, health procedures, report cards, parent-teacher conferences, among others. While EL families receive information on how to participate in their schools, they also have an opportunity to support one another, and they strengthen their sense of belonging.

[02:16:30] Schools interested in conducting this program must identify at least two staff members who receive annual training and a small stipend for planning and leading these sessions throughout the year. Our 70 plus PEP instructors who are dedicated to the work of family engagement, also serve in other roles such as EL teachers, librarians, counselors, family liaisons, among others.

[02:16:53] This is a long lasting program within the division of English learners. It has proven to be successful in many schools where families express having learned valuable lessons to support their students. Furthermore, schools such as Sterling Middle School and Guilford Elementary have been able to partner with community organizations to share additional resources and engage from 150 up to 300 families while providing a warm meal and childcare to ease families' participation in these sessions.

[02:17:24] Thirdly, our DEL face office offers opportunities for EL families to provide feedback via the EL family and student feedback circles. Schools who have identified EL family engagement as a need reach out to our office to plan and conduct EL family and/or EL student feedback circles.

[02:17:43] Our bilingual phase facilitators conduct these circles in the language of preference, collect the data and provide a summary report to school administrators. We then meet to debrief and discuss actionable next steps based on the feedback received.

[02:17:58] Since last school year, we have collaborated with eight to 10 schools across all levels, with the majority of the schools being at the secondary level. there it is, that's a picture at Sanders Corner Elementary.

[02:18:19] Last but not least, and based on the feedback and review of data gathered from EL families who visit the Wellcome Center, we identified a new program that began this September 2023 to support EL families and students in their transition to their new school. For this reason, we titled it, Welcome to LCPS Family Workshop.

[02:18:37] This program is designed to provide new international families with a brief overview of the topics noted on the slide. This workshop is held monthly at the historic Douglas High School and language interpretation is provided. Every month, the immigrant youth instructor team with the assistance of LCPS interpreters personally invite approximately 100 new families to attend our workshop via phone call and email in the family's preferred language of communication.

[02:19:04] Families who attend are given a printed toolkit in their language of preference that includes information shared for their future reference. Families also engage in a short community building exercise which they often identify as their favorite part of the session. As we conclude our presentation, I just want to tell you I'm so eager to continue to grow and expand our programs, and I want to leave you with this quote.

[02:19:30] No matter how skilled professionals are, know how loving families are. Each cannot achieve alone what the parties working hand in hand can accomplish together. Thank you so much, and we welcome your questions. Thank you, Mrs. Ocampo.

[02:19:48] As a person who wants to make certain all families are welcomed and a big believer in family engagement myself, I want to thank you for making certain our English language learners have the supports and the resources to become partners in their students' education. Thank you.

[02:20:05] Open it to the board. Anybody wants any questions? Dr. Rasheed. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you so much for that awesome presentation. Very helpful. It's good to see that there's a lot of community involvement with all this. And speaking of, I just was wondering if there was any involvement from, like, virtual Loudoun or, like, for example, the PEP program.

[02:20:28] Is that offered to the parents of the students that go to virtual Loudoun? And also my other question was, are there any involvement from the charter schools? Or do you see any involvement from the charter schools with the PEP program? This year we have focused primarily on our school-based staff and our schools in person, per se.

[02:20:49] So we will look into exploring Virtual Loudoun. It is an area of need and several staff members have expressed for next school year, planning to incorporate them into the community and providing resources for them as well, and including charter schools.

[02:21:04] That would be something to consider as well. - I would also add that a lot of the schools, the homeschools of the students who attend Virtual Loudoun, teachers typically reach out to those families

and offer them opportunities to attend the pep sessions at their local schools. - Okay, all right, thank you.

[02:21:21] Any other questions? April, Ms. Chandler? Hi. Thank you so much for coming tonight and for sharing your wonderful program with our school board and with the community. Very happy to see how well your organization has used social media to reach out to families.

[02:21:40] I'm curious what other methods you use to make sure that you are reaching families that need your services. That is an excellent question. And we have drafted a careful communication plan that starts out with a principal update that is reviewed by my director prior to sending it out.

[02:21:57] We also communicate with our EL teachers, our family liaisons, our Office of Community and Communications Engagement Office also helps us prerecord Blackboard messages in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

[02:22:13] We send them a follow-up email, and we also have our own subscriber email list with over 600 families. So with all of that and over the past year we have seen a great increase in our attendance over the past year. Thank you so much. Any other questions? Oh, Vice Chair Strafi. As someone who was an EL student, I know firsthand the importance of building and nurturing relationships with families in the broader community. So just want to thank you for your presentation. Thank you.

[02:22:48] Thank you so much. Any other questions? Yes, Ms. Donoghue. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, ladies, for your presentation, and thanks to all of you for the incredibly important work that you're doing for the students in our community. You said that currently the PEP program is offered at 32 schools in LCPS.

[02:23:11] Are you currently working on expanding the program, and if so, how does that work? I think you mentioned earlier schools reaching out to you to express interest in starting up a connection? So our PEP program is funded by Title III funds, and so we have a budget allocated to support schools with this program.

[02:23:32] I often meet with our EL teachers and encourage them that they establish this program at their school because I find that it is one of the best ways to engage with our EL families. We wait for schools to reach out to us because it does involve training and time commitment in order to establish this program.

[02:23:51] So we would love for all schools to include a PEP program. However, we do know that funding can be limited, but we're working to try to support our schools in any way we can. And what are you doing to ensure that the schools are aware of the programs that you're offering, PEP specifically?

[02:24:13] So we often do presentations for our school-based staff. We present at our annual ALT, which is the administrative leadership team conference that we do internally. So we participate in as many professional learning opportunities to talk about family engagement and the existence of PEP as much as we can.

[02:24:35] Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you, Ms. Rosario. Thank you, Mrs. Campo, for your presentation. Thank you. At this time, we'll move to item 10, student school board representatives' comments.

[02:24:57] We will begin with Jack Zettemoyer, who is a senior at Broad Run High School. Some of the activities that he participates in are peer, captain of the varsity cross-country team, running indoor and outdoor track, and a part of the Broad Run Jewish Student Union.

[02:25:16] Jack plans on attending college, majoring in biology, and minoring in mathematics on a pre-med route with aspirations to become a pediatric gastroenterologist. Jack? Hello, school board members, staff, and members of our community.

[02:25:37] I want to thank you for having me here today. I wanted to give a special thanks to my principal, Mr. Spage, and my past peer advisor, Mr. Zick, who have given me the opportunity to speak here today. I would also like to thank my parents and teachers who are here supporting me.

[02:25:55] I want to highlight some of the amazing things that our students have done at Broad Run. At Broad Run, we are able to provide our students with an opportunity to show their creative and artistic talents. For example, Unbound, our literary magazine, has won the trophy class rating this past fall with their Worlds Beyond Windows edition.

[02:26:18] Also, Broad Run's theater department, Spartan Stage Studios, put on an amazing fall production of The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, which went on to become one of the highest grossing productions in Broad Run history. Spartan Stage Studios also went on to become regional champions.

[02:26:35] I also wanted to mention our amazing athletes here at Broad Run. For the first time in school history, both Broad Run's boys and girls cross-country teams qualified for the state championship meet at Oatlands. Tarek Ben-Lakottam put on a very notable performance winning the state championship and in an earlier meet this year ran a time that puts him in the top 50 runners in the nation.

[02:27:00] Broad Run Cheer also had a great year making it to the regional championship and Broad Run Football had a successful year as well having 11 athletes on the all-district teams and four athletes on the all-region teams. Broad Run Golf also had a good run with two athletes competing at the regional championships. I would also like to mention some of the amazing clubs that Broad Run boasts and what they have been doing this school year. Pierre has been focusing on many things that have been affecting our community right now. This includes substance abuse. As we all know, there has been an unfortunate increase in fentanyl overdoses

[02:27:37] in Loudoun County. This past month, Peer put out a campaign in school and on social media to raise student awareness of what the dangers of substance abuse are. Broad Run's National Honor Society has also recently conducted a blood drive in which students are able to donate blood in school and save many lives. Upcoming this week, Broad Run's SCA is hosting a winter pep rally which will increase our school spirit. Speaking of school spirit, Broad Run's spirit section, the Maroon Crew, was recently ranked sixth in Virginia out of all spirit sections. Broad Run has also been focusing on

[02:28:14] spreading our care initiative. We want students at Broad Run to C, communicate, A, accept, R, respect, and E, to engage with others. We want there to be a wonderful community at Broad Run in which we are helping to encourage with our CARE Initiative. I want to thank Mr. Spage and the school board for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I also want to thank my family and friends for coming to support me today. Thank you.

[02:28:45] Thank you. Next we have Sarah Kelly, who is a senior at Loudoun Valley High School. She previously attended Kenneth Colbert Elementary School and Blue Ridge Middle School. Sarah is an editor for The Viking, her school's newspaper, as well as secretary for Valley's Music Honor Society.

[02:29:05] Tri-M, co-founder of the Women's Empowerment Club and leader within Project Lit. This is Sarah's sixth year playing clarinet, and she loves being able to bring together Valley's various music programs through Tri-M. In order to pursue her goal of becoming a journalist, Sarah attended the Washington Journalism and Youth Conference and is a national youth correspondent. Outside of school hours, she spends most of her time doing Color Guard. This is Sarah's fifth year as a member of her school's marching band and she is captain of her color bar team. Sarah loves being a part of

[02:29:44] her school through these activities and is very excited to represent her school this year. Sarah. Good evening. My name is Sarah Kelly and I'm a senior at Loudoun Valley High School. I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking my principal Dr. Ross and Dr. Spence for the opportunity to speak here tonight and represent my school. Over the past four years I have watched our school work through the challenges of COVID-19 and come back even stronger especially with our new venture towards earning our international baccalaureate authorization. Across academics, athletics, and other activities, Valley students have shown how hardworking and passionate they are.

[02:30:19] This past year, we've achieved many honors. In our senior class, we were proud to have three national merit semifinalists, Anna Gang Gao, Edwin Kyle, and Perry Zhang, as well as two national merit commended students, Lauren McDonnell and Rylan Wells. While all county orchestra auditions will be in January, we were proud to send four students to senior regional Orchestra. We were excited for our choir students who were accepted into and performed with the all-county choir. Due to snow this past weekend that didn't really happen, our all-district band auditions were rescheduled to this upcoming Saturday, and we're excited for our students to participate and audition then. In November, our Student Council Association did a wonderful job

[02:30:58] with their presentation on student voice within Valley to this school board. For the past two years, our newspaper has been awarded the National Student Press Freedom Award. Students' voices are respected and listened to here at Valley, I'm very grateful to be an editor for a publication that has such a wonderful relationship with our school administration, allowing us to freely pursue our journalistic endeavors. This year, our newspaper was awarded second place for best use of social media through the National Scholastic Press Association. Additionally, a senior editor, Mackenzie Bunn, earned third place at a national level for her reporting on systematic change.

[02:31:32] In our athletics department, we were proud to send many students to compete on all district, all region and all state teams. For the first time in Valley's history, our field hockey team won states. Our winter sports teams have been working very hard and we are excited for the season to come. Our athletes have shown true spirit and we are incredibly proud of their accomplishments. During our school day, we are very lucky to have Viking time where students can catch up on work or check in with teachers. On Fridays, it becomes a time for student-run clubs.

[02:32:00] This incorporation into the school day allows for greater participation in clubs and we are proud to have 50 clubs at our school, which allows for many diverse opportunities to engage with our peers and community. Dedicated students in Loudoun Valley's Service Initiative Club gave back to the community through their Thanksgiving food drive, which successfully supported over 20 families. This past December, they organized donations of winter clothes and other necessities for families alongside our Black Student Union and Women's Empowerment Club. Valley students work hard to give back to our community through running events such as Safe Night Halloween and volunteering for the Special Olympics. We are in the heart of

[02:32:37] Percival and I'm very grateful to attend a school that is so closely knit within our community and allows for many wonderful opportunities. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you both for being here with us tonight and for your remarks. At this time we will move to item 11, the superintendent's report. Dr. Spence. Thank you Madam Chair and members of the board. I'm pleased to present this report to you this evening. First I want to acknowledge that in the weeks leading up to our winter break our newly elected school board members joined lcps administration for five days of board orientation this orientation included presentations from our departments data dives

[02:33:16] school and site visits and much more and it was really a great way for us to get to know each other and hit the ground running before the start of term so board members i just want to thank you for spending that time with us i know you were all very busy it meant a lot to me and to our team that we got to dedicate time to learn and begin to build relationships and talk about our priorities Next, I want to take a moment to congratulate a member of our team.

[02:33:41] Congratulations to our Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Ashley Ellis, on being awarded the 2024 Virginia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development Leadership Award, or VASCD.

[02:33:59] This award is presented to only one educator annually in Virginia for outstanding leadership in curriculum instruction and or assessment. And of course, we are very proud of Dr. Ellis' selection for this award and celebrate her commitment to LCPS. Dr. Ellis will be presented with this award on February 9th at the awards luncheon in Richmond. Again, congratulations, Dr. Ellis, on this award. I also want to acknowledge another employee who has been recognized, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education.

[02:34:26] Dr. Lee Smith has been named the Association for Career and Technical Education Administrator of the Year for Virginia. Dr. Smith will be honored at an awards luncheon on January 11th at the Virginia ACTE Professional Development and Leadership Seminar in Richmond. She's held her current position since July 2016. Prior to that, Dr. Smith served as assistant principal of the Monroe Technology Center. The Virginia ACTE provides leadership in developing an educated, prepared, adaptable, and competitive workforce, and we congratulate Dr. Smith on this achievement

[02:34:58] as well. Congratulations go out to Randy Morgan as well. Mr. Morgan is a third grade teacher at Hillsborough Charter Academy. He was named the December Shine recipient. Mr. Morgan was nominated by one of his students parents for his dedication and support for every student that he works with shine which stands for spotlighting heroes in education is a joint lcps and loudon education foundation employee recognition program members of the lcps community are invited to nominate lcps employees who inspire who are innovative and who go above and beyond allowed an education

[02:35:36] foundation works with community partners to provide a gift of up to 500 and as the december recipient, Mr. Morgan, received a two-night stay at a cabin in Luray and a gift certificate to a local restaurant. Congratulations again to Mr. Morgan. I'm also pleased to announce that Cigna has selected LCPS as a recipient of their Gold Level Healthy Workforce designation for demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of employees. The Cigna Healthy Workforce designation evaluates organizations based on the core components of their well-being program including leadership and culture program foundations program execution whole person health

[02:36:16] and utilization of Cigna's resources organizations recognized with this designation set the gold standard of excellence for whole organization health earlier today heritage high school students participated in the participating in the plant the moon challenge spoke with astronauts on board the

international space station this event which was hosted by the by the Virginia space consortium provided our students with the opportunity to learn firsthand about living and working in space and how space research impacts life on earth. The Plant the Moon Challenge is led by Heritage High

[02:36:52] School science teacher Amy Goodyear. During this project, students participate in experiments much like the astronauts. Specifically, they examine how vegetable crops can grow in lunar soil. As Ms. Goodyear said, this type of innovative opportunity truly has students reaching for the stars. I also want to congratulate Ragda Kodali, a senior at Briarwoods High School. She has been selected as one of Virginia's five nominees for the U.S. Presidential Scholars for Career and Technical Education. This program honors outstanding high school seniors whose

[02:37:27] performance demonstrates excellence and is one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. The Presidential Scholars Award is only awarded up to 161 students. So congratulations to Raga. Riverside High School's DECA chapter has done a lot of giving during its day of giving on Thursday, December the 14th. The Riverside DECA, which is an association of marketing students, donated to a number of charity organizations, giving more than \$25,000 to the Cystic Fibrosis

[02:38:02] Foundation. Of this amount, \$11,540 was raised by the Step for CF Walk. The Loudon Breast Health network received \$9,000 which was raised through Pink Week and then Powderpuff football game and Mobile Hope a Loudoun County non-profit that provides support and emergency shelter to youth was the beneficiary of the Rams for Hope food drive. Congratulations to the Riverside DECA chapter on the success of their hard work and kudos to the generosity of the donors and organizers who participated alongside. We want to thank those students for their commitment to community service

[02:38:37] and madam chair that concludes my report thank you dr spence at this time we will move on to item 12 which is public comment thank you for engaging with the school board through public comment process the school board welcomes comments from loudon county residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system speakers must limit their comments to the time allotted based on the number of speakers and the agenda

[02:39:11] of this evening, all speakers have been allotted two minutes each for public comment. Please be advised that the speakers who missed their time slot will not be called at a later time. All audience members shall maintain civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times. Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility decorum and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering,

[02:39:50] applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting. Obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa. Interrupting speakers. Attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair. And approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker staff member or other meeting attendees speakers should refrain from vulgarity obscenities defamation profanity or other like breaches of respect nor may speakers

[02:40:27] target criticize or attack individual students and or individual division employees during public comment speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official. The school board requests that comments on an individual student or employee related matter not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements. Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board.

[02:41:00] Per LCPS policy 2520, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period. Violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting. Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda,

[02:41:36] Limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons or the public comment period ending for the evening. Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom prior to the start of the meeting.

[02:41:56] Please provide 12 copies of the materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through LCPS-TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43.

[02:42:16] The live stream of the meeting may be viewed on the website. We look forward to hearing your comments. We will start with the first speaker, Brenda Bankston. The good life for your kids is where you make the ordinary extraordinary, where you make the natural miraculous.

[02:42:51] It's where you make the everyday unique. Shmuley Boteach. I heard the question, how do we feed our extraordinary recently? Women in the class responded, they never felt or were told they were extraordinary.

[02:43:11] They missed the extra, even from parents. A favorite Broderon High School teacher saw that extra in me. Junior year in English class, she quickly observed I was not challenged needed a quicker pacing. She went to guidance and changed my schedule. For that extra she saw in me, my ability to analyze, spell, research, and write, and her embrace of social emotional learning, I am forever grateful. She hiked with us during a weekend club for upperclassmen to Sugarloaf

[02:43:50] and Mary's Rock. After graduation, we exchanged a few postcards, but lost touch. I wish I could find Pamela Palmer to thank her for encouraging me to realize diversity in thought, view others with equity, and show inclusivity. I sincerely hope for our more than 81,000 students that they find an educator who helps them feel extraordinary, one who understands that content is enhanced by

[02:44:23] caring, who promotes autonomy and problem solving without punitive measures. Some students may only get to feed that extraordinary at school.

[02:44:46] Thank you. Sandy Sullivan. Good evening. I'm Sandy Sullivan, an elementary school teacher who currently serves as the members of the Loudon Education Association as their president. LEA has tried to work with the school system since we were banned from work site visits during the workday. Dr. Spence, we had looked forward to you providing a memorandum of understanding which provided lea building access with reasonable terms it did not dr spence we do look forward to working for looking forward to working with you and

[02:45:20] collaborating with you to develop a mutually agreed upon mou school board members we look forward to your support for the loudon education association to regain building access which we've had in the past and have been excluded from for a year now the loudon education association looks forward to working with all of you. Thank you. Jennifer Siron, and the next person will be Bill

[02:45:48] Ziegler. Hi, my name is Jennifer Siron, and I'm a parent of two LCPS high school students, and I'm an English language teacher at Parkview High School. I'm here tonight to advocate for revisions to the LCPS drug policy and Regulation 8240. Since November, there's been a lot of talk in Loudon about how fentanyl is 70% more potent than other opioids. We equate this with lethality,

[02:46:22] one pill can kill. And of course, that is our first concern. But that potency also means that it impacts the brain more powerfully and in ways that researchers are still studying. Addiction is more intense, quicker to develop, and harder to recover from. If you talk to people who have gone through rehab for opioids, they tell you statistics like 59% will relapse during the first week of sobriety and 80% will relapse during the first month. Two years later, less than 10% will still

[02:46:56] be sober. What this means for us, the Loudoun County community, is that traditional policies and regulations, such as 8-2-4-0, which send children to do repeated stints in ISR, are ineffective at best at redirecting behavior, and even potentially deadly. Because the intensity of the craving, the need to chase the dragon and pursue that high, in tandem with the intense fear of the physical pain experienced during withdrawal, consume these children's minds and bodies. It also means that we will need to develop interventions that provide long-term

[02:47:35] support that adapt over the time that they're in Loudoun County to their changing needs. And so I'm asking you to begin the process of revisiting 8240, which won't be easy or perfect, and it'll probably take a lot of revisions. But I'm hopeful because Loudoun County was recently awarded.

[02:47:58] thank you thank you the next is bill sigler to be followed by megan o'meara good evening i'm bill sigler and my wife lauren and my daughter lily will also be speaking tonight lily received special permission to transfer for her senior year due to serious mental health and bullying issues she applied for an athletic eligibility waiver two doctors and school staff from her prior school supported her request the county denied her request when we appealed the county staff told

[02:48:34] the prior board that such waivers couldn't be granted for medical welfare and that the county would lose its VHSL membership if it granted Lily's request. This was all wrong. VHSL has confirmed in writing to us about what the correct VHSL rules are. The county staff didn't use them and the prior board was misinformed. We have been asking the county for eight months now to talk about this with us, but no one will. Instead, the county staff has recently told VHSL that Lily, the doctors who supported her and the school staff that supported her lied about the real

[02:49:10] reasons for her transfer. And we ask, why? What purpose does it serve for the county to stop girls like Lily from playing sports? VHSL says they can play. Why is the county putting kids with documented medical conditions at risk, and thus the county at risk? Why are there boys who transfer schools and get to play football all over this county while girls like Lily are punished?

[02:49:34] Why are taxpayer funds being used to fight Lilly in court? You've heard from parents all over this county about this issue. 22 of them are here tonight with us. They're here because they support Lilly and other kids who have stood up for themselves. A mistake was made.

[02:49:50] Please do your job and fix it. This impacts not only my daughter but many other kids. You can address it. It only takes one of you to call a closed session to discuss it. You can suspend the rules and vote to overturn the decision. We will dismiss our court case if you will just fairly reconsider Lily's request under the correct rules.

[02:50:10] This will show all students that the rules matter and this new board cares. Thank you. Thank you. Megan O'Meara, followed by Lily Siegler. Good evening.

[02:50:36] Congratulations on your election to the board, and thank you for your commitment to our students and their families. My LCPS colleagues and I are especially heartened by the priority many of you have placed already on student mental health. As you are aware, some LCPS students have been struggling with opioid addiction and have gone largely unsupported by the school district, despite calls from school staff for more resources as early as last May.

[02:51:01] We were assured that the administration at that time had formed a task force to study data on medical emergencies at school, including those possibly involving substance abuse. Chief among our concerns is the need to revise Policy 8240 and Regulation 8240 to reflect the current climate of student opioid use.

[02:51:20] Students at risk of overdosing in school should be immediately referred for treatment, not placed under the supervision of our in-school restriction teacher. In order for this policy to be effective, we need, right now, at minimum, a dedicated full-time student assistance specialist, preferably two in every high-needs school, along with an additional school security officer.

[02:51:44] My school, like all schools in the district, shares our SAS with another school, and her Her work on behalf of our addicted students has far exceeded her job description of providing preventative counseling services. That is a role she now simultaneously fulfills with her new one, crisis management.

[02:52:01] She moves between two schools every week to give drug prevention presentations while constantly monitoring her phone for calls from our at-risk students, their families, and the community partners she has found to support them. It is my understanding that the district has declined to provide additional staff, including another SSO to high-need schools because it is believed that this would be an unequal distribution of resources. On the contrary, allocating more staff to high-need schools is a matter of equity and it is an urgent one. Our students' lives are at risk and they deserve this support now.

[02:52:32] I hope you will agree and that you will reiterate this recommendation to the administration. Thank you. Thank you. Lily Sigler, followed by Jessica Kirkland. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. As you know, I transferred to Independence High School over the summer by special permission of the preceding board. I was immensely grateful for this as it felt like what I had endured would not continue and that I could enjoy a happy and healthy senior year. I was prepared to put the past in the past and embrace the new year, excited for the opportunity. However, I have spent my

[02:53:08] entire first semester engulfed in another battle that never needed to happen. Simply put, I am being punished for taking action to protect my mental health. I thought the adults involved in this process would care about my mental well-being, but they have not. I do not understand why. Why have they gone to all against all the opinions of doctors who have treated me for years please reconsider my request for a waiver and reconsider how the county applies as policy as a graduating LCPS student I also ask that you prevent this from happening to anyone else your students mental health matters teachers have always encouraged me to express my interests and passions not reversing this decision prevents me from pursuing those passions and

[02:53:44] participating in the life of my school and forces me to continue to feel the weight of the trauma I have experienced I've always been the first player on the field to pick another up regardless of what team

they were on. And I try to show the same level of support to everyone off the field as well. I'm asking for the same kind of support from you.

[02:54:02] Lacrosse is the main activity I have to cope with my mental conditions. Please take action to help me so that I don't lose this outlet. Please show that the county cares about mental health and providing opportunities for kids like me. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Jessica Kirkland followed by Lauren Sigler. Hello my name is Jessica Kirkland. I'm an LCPS parent and LCPS teacher. My colleagues and I have attended school board meetings in the past for the same reason we

[02:54:38] are here again tonight, to express the dire and urgent need for LCPS to take immediate meaningful steps toward better addressing the issue of opioid use and abuse in schools. When managing this crisis, teachers and administrators are often told, you didn't sign up for this. That is true, we didn't. However, as public servants who ran for election and accepted a leadership position on the school board, you did sign up for this, and it is my hope and expectation that you will prioritize addressing this issue with the urgency and focus that is needed to better support LCPS

[02:55:14] students, staff, and families. A main priority for the school board should be immediately reviewing and revising policy and regulation 8240. This policy is outdated and insufficient for the reality of what opioid crisis looks like in schools in 2024.

[02:55:32] It must be revised and updated to provide more robust guidance and support for schools to meaningfully address student opioid use and abuse. The current policy provides for no support or response beyond increasing days in ISR and alternative placement options that don't exist.

[02:55:49] This creates a vacuum that keeps students in drug crisis in the same environment in which they experience drug crisis. My colleagues and I have met with many stakeholders to craft a list of short, medium, and long-range needs that the school board should work with Dr. Spence to address.

[02:56:06] We look forward to sharing these with you and working together on this issue. As leaders, you will face many calls for competing needs, but please know this one is a matter of life or death and should be one of the highest priorities on your agenda as a new board. Thank you.

[02:56:23] Lauren Sigler, followed by Rebecca Lasky. Good evening. When my daughter Lily was a freshman, she discovered, as she was starting high school from home during COVID, an organization called Morgan's Message.

[02:56:39] Morgan's Message was founded by the family of Morgan Rogers, a lacrosse player from this area who, while attending Duke University, died by suicide. Lily founded the very first chapter of that organization in all of Loudoun County. I truly believe that if it were not for her participation in that organization, she may not have had the courage to speak up to us, to her school psychologists and others, and ask for help to remove herself from a situation that became detrimental to both her physical and mental health.

[02:57:11] We are extremely proud of our daughter for working to spread mental health awareness while she was suffering and for knowing when it was no longer safe to stay in the place she was. Multiple medical health professionals supported in writing to the board that she needed to move schools and that she needed to participate in her activities and that it was vital to her mental health.

[02:57:31] You can only imagine what it's been like to try and explain to Lily for the last eight months why adults don't want to help her. Why when she spoke up, she was punished. Why that no one seems to care that she needs this for her mental health. Denying her the opportunity to participate is a punishment to her mental and physical health.

[02:57:50] And it's telling her that she had to lose parts of who she is in order to heal. How does the school system look at their student and tell them that they have to give up what they will heal in order to get better mental health? Especially when so many statistics show that sports are vital for girls, especially in this time of COVID and this post-COVID world.

[02:58:12] It makes no sense. And to a person, when we talk about it, they are outraged that this is what has happened to Lily. and many of them are here, and I want them to raise their hands so you can see them. This community needs you to take action and tell its students that their mental health matters.

[02:58:29] You can remedy the mistakes your predecessors made. Please don't punish your students for making their mental health a priority. Thank you. Rebecca Lasky, followed by Ana Garcia-Games. Ana Garcia-Games, followed by Joshvi Shandagari.

[02:59:06] Josh V. Chandigari, followed by Brian Davison. Good evening. My name is Josh V. Chandigari, and I'm a senior at John Champ High School.

[02:59:31] First, I'd like to thank the board for the opportunity to speak in front of them tonight. Today, I would like to bring attention to a silent killer present in our school cafeterias, a silent killer present in almost all the foods that we eat, a silent killer that is present in the form of seed oils.

[02:59:47] stripped of all of their nutrients during processing, they have a buildup of trans fats, and if they are continued to be consumed by students, it can cause inflammation, clogged arteries, and heart diseases in the future of students like me. Vegetable oils and canola oils have been claimed to be some of the healthiest oils when, in fact, that is not the case, and unfortunately, school menus have succumbed to this misconception. They are just as bad as consuming trans fats. From Doritos to chicken nuggets, there is almost no school menu item that does not contain any vegetable oils. And when students were informed of this, they were alarmed and almost 100 students signed a petition in support of removing seed oils from school lunches.

[03:00:27] It is the school's job to keep students safe through nutrition, through any means. And it sometimes like with conflicting information, I know it's hard to make it make it so that students are as healthy as possible. So when information like this comes to light, it is important to take action to stop it. And I understand that removing all seed oils at once is impractical, so instead I asked the board to make one single change. Instead of Lay's kettle cooked chips, which are cooked with sunflower and canola oils, which are two of the most dangerous seed oils out there for us, I asked them to

[03:01:03] replace it for Boulder Canyon avocado oil chips, which are cooked in avocado oil, which are much more healthier for students. And this is a small change and an easy step in the direction of healthier school lunches and it'll cost the district almost nothing both of these chips chip variations cost about the same amount i want i really want students to be as healthy as much as i do so please let's work together to make this a reality thank you so much thank you brian davison followed by andrea weiskopf andrea weiskopf

[03:01:40] You belong here. That phrase is prominently featured in my classroom. It is more than a class motto. It is a philosophy. If my students know commas and types of character conflict, but don't

[03:02:15] feel welcome in my class, I have failed. If you balance the budget, but children don't know they belong, you have failed. You haven't, timer is back and forth. I don't want to overstep my time.

[03:02:33] I had three minutes. Now I have one minute. I just. It should be two minutes. Okay. That's what I mean. Yes. So. Where did you. Oh, I have no idea. So. Let's go ahead.

[03:02:48] All right. One and a half. How about one and a half minute? Oh, I'm almost done. Okay. If you balance the budget, but children don't know they belong, you have failed. It isn't enough to support our students. You must advocate for them.

[03:03:06] You must advocate for students who are LGBTQ. You must advocate for students who are English language learners. Students who have been marginalized due to their race or socioeconomic status must know that they belong.

[03:03:23] Create and uphold policies that assure that every student knows that they belong here. Black Lives Matter. Thank you. And now we'll move on to the virtual speakers. Jannie Cho. Today I'm speaking to request the board to reconsider to bring back the VDLE program.

[03:04:00] This program was successful with providing real-time IEP support for my children. The individualized support they could receive easily completed in breakout rooms, decreasing classroom distractions and allowing the student to complete schoolwork efficiently. The VDLE program provided equity for all children and to get them to have quality education they deserve. Other virtual state programs like the VAVA K-12 is not equivalent to what VDLE provided for my children.

[03:04:35] I would like to request the board to review the budget to bring back VDLE for the elementary students who had benefited. VDLE provided free and public education, education equity, fully free environment, and live synchronous classes.

[03:04:52] Again, I'm speaking to requests to bring back the VDLE program for my children and other students in Loudoun County. Thank you. Thank you. Tim McClintock, followed by Scott Pakula.

[03:05:10] Asking to reinstate the Virtual Distance Learning Elementary Program. I've been advocating to keep this program going for some time, not just for my child, but other children as well. I've heard how much this program means to them, and I wish to share how much it means with me.

[03:05:26] I have a little role in third grade this year. For her first and second grade, she had been attending the Virtual Distance Learning Elementary program. In it, she and her older sister, who is now in secondary, have thrived in the program. It is what every parent hopes for their child in school.

[03:05:42] She was happy and excited to learn. Unfortunately, since the program was not available this year, we were unable to put her in person due to medical issues. We had to find the best viable option we could. Now she's in a virtual program that isolates her and provides her little-to-no instruction aside from assignments on a screen.

[03:05:59] My wife and I have worked daily to help her with her studies and guide her, but without regular interaction with a teacher, it is hard for all of us. That and the isolation it creates has turned our child into a sad and frustrated little girl. I'm concerned for her mental well-being.

[03:06:16] It breaks my heart every time I see her upset, cry, and tell me I want my old school back. Often I don't know what to say. LCPS had a solution that can help her and many more in the community. Had the program been advertised last year, I'm sure the attendance would have been much higher and better reflect the need of the community.

[03:06:36] Please reinstate the Virtual Distance Learning Elementary program. Let everyone know what it is and what it can do for students. Please bring out my daughter's old school back. It would mean so much to her, to me, my family, and so many more. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:06:53] Scott Pakula, followed by Kupan. Good evening. Good evening. I'm here today to discuss the virtual distance learning elementary program. This program provided an engaging educational environment that served as a viable alternative to traditional in-person learning. It catered to a diverse range of students from those with special needs to victims of bullying and other in-school issues and children who simply just thrived in this mode of education. Parents have been advocating tirelessly for the reinstatement

[03:07:30] of the virtual distance learning elementary program for a long time now. However, without support from the school system, many families have been forced to leave the school system, given no alternative. The repeated pleas for action have left many feeling exhausted. I urge the board to consider the request of these families.

[03:07:50] Please work together to reinstate the virtual distance learning elementary program and make it available to all students that wish to participate. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Ki-Pon followed by Mary McClintock. Good evening. I'm here to advocate for the return of the virtual distance learning elementary program. This program, a lifeline for many families including

[03:08:21] mine, offers a fair and safe education free from bullying and mirrors in-person schooling. It's time to reinstate the virtual distance learning elementary program and ensure it's available for everyone. Thank you. Thank you. Mary McClintock, followed by Valerie Smith.

[03:08:47] Virtual distance learning elementary in the budget. Many students need this program, like my daughter. She has a medical disability. Since the program ended, we met with her homeschool over a series of 504 meetings. In those meetings, doctor's orders were not followed, and she was denied simple ADA medical accommodations and assistive technology to keep her safe, and prevent a life-threatening situation. We made the painful decision to withdraw her from the school district. Other families also withdrew their children. The program supports LCPS's statements on inclusivity and equity. It is supported by SEAC, LEA, and MSAC. For the last

[03:09:27] two years, parents have spoken up about the benefits for their children, those with health issues, those with learning disabilities, those who have been bullied, those who learn better in a virtual environment. It offers what the Virginia State programs do not, a fully synchronous program faith in a least instructive environment, IEP, and 504 real-time services. It follows LCPS hours.

[03:09:50] Teachers use technology and empower these kids. They communicate via email, instant messaging, virtual classrooms, and breakout rooms. There's less anxiety because these students can ask for extra help without drawing attention. Teachers can instantly check a student's work. There's a community, meaningful interaction through the day, collaborative learning, lunch bunch, school clubs, pep rallies, diverse learning is happening for diverse learners.

[03:10:15] Kids are further ahead in technology but still have to do pen and paper activities. Attendance issues have decreased because there's less visits to the nurse, less time loss moving to school specialists, and less absences.

[03:10:31] Kids with disabilities are empowered, and attendance increases. All students are challenged to receive help quickly when needed. Our daughter is a smart, caring child, but she's not invisible. Please reinstate the program, talk to parents, students, and teachers, and ensure faith.

[03:10:48] Thank you for your time. Thank you. Valerie Smith, followed by Caitlin Smith. Provides an indispensable safety net in which any elementary school child can receive an equitable and inclusive education in an interactive classroom setting with LCPS teachers and peers during a typical school day schedule in a way that is safe for them when they are unable to attend school in the building due to serious life-impacting situations. A distance learning student being able to safely return to

[03:11:24] the building is a way to measure the success of the school because it gave the child the safe setting to navigate challenging circumstances and to reach a state of improved physical and mental health. We know that life can change at any time, in a heartbeat, and this school gives vulnerable children who need it a lifeline to the essential childhood experience of learning with a teacher and making friends during what would be a resounding, difficult, and isolating time.

[03:11:51] This elementary school might not have been your child's elementary school, but it was the elementary school for children in our own community who need our support and protection. The reality of these children having their school being the only one in Loudoun County to close as a way to manage a budget that favors to enhance the exceptional by sacrificing the well-being of the vulnerable children is unethical and morally unacceptable.

[03:12:18] The question of all of us must ask is not how much money is in the LCPS budget. Instead, we must ask this school board and all CPS superintendents if they consider the vulnerable children and special education community in their own eyes, mind, and heart to be seen and to be equal enough to be financially supported and protected by their own elected school board members. LCPS can prove their active recommitment to equity for all children by funding and re-educating this school and all OTPT special

[03:12:56] Ed's NSLP position. Thank you. Thank you. Caitlin Smith followed by Ben Smith. The elementary school distance learning program took away the ability for many parents to send their children to in-person schooling without putting their family's health and safety at risk and also left many students without a way to receive a steady and quality education. On the Loudoun County Public School

[03:13:32] equity page is a quote. For our community, equity means being committed to providing a safe, supportive, inclusive, affirming, and respectful environment for each student and staff member that fosters success, growth, and academic rigor. Removing the elementary school distance learning program was inequitable because it has prevented many students from attending Loudoun County public schools since the COVID-19 pandemic just because of their health risks. We need you to continue working to keep Loudoun County public schools safe and equitable for all. Please vote

[03:14:11] to bring back the elementary school distance learning program. It's your responsibility to do so. Thank you very much. Thank you. Ben Smith. Can you hear me? Yes, we can hear you. And I graduated from a virtual distance learning elementary school. I went to this school because I have health issues. My

doctor said I can't get very easy to take if I catch an infection from someone else at school. I was going to see my elementary education. I had kind and great

[03:14:48] teachers and was able to talk and make friends with my peers in my class just like going out because they went to school and I barely know what it was safe for me. This school gave kids with serious needs the chance for the first time to go to school in a virtual class to make friends. When you are in a homebound school program, you are taught by teachers, by yourself at home, and you do not talk with any other kids and you don't have a class.

[03:15:11] I made awesome friends in my 5th grade virtual class and we had to try to learn and work together in class during school day. I don't have any, if I didn't have these friends from school, I'd feel lonely. Every kid should be able to go to school in a way that can be safe, be in a class with their teachers and peers and have a chance to make friends. Why did all of you decide to close this virtual school?

[03:15:31] why is the school's budget money for something else why is it more important to spend the money on the elementary school for all the kids are in this one they asked for the chance to go to school in a class with their teachers and peers just like the other lcps kids are lucky enough to go to school in a building thank you and good night thank you and with that we will conclude public comment for today thank you all for coming out and providing your public comment we appreciate it we will now move on to our information items starting with 1301 curriculum and instruction

[03:16:09] committee revision of policy 5125 alternative paths to obtaining standard units of credit with dr ellis presenting dr ellis thank you chair mansfield good evening board members this evening the only information item we have for you is a policy that came out of the curriculum and instruction committee on december 4th 2023 the committee voted to send it to the new board in january so you had the opportunity to hear it as an information item before seeing it as an action

[03:16:42] item policy 5125 alternative path to attaining standard units of credit is being updated to align with new virginia code by way of background each year the vsba provides school divisions a list of recommended policies policy updates based on changes to code this is an example of that The most recent version was adopted by the school board on January 25th, 2022, so this is not part of the five-year review cycle.

[03:17:13] That being said, we do still follow the regular policy review process. So in accordance with that process, Division Council reviewed the code updates and made recommendations incorporating newly enacted Virginia Code sections 22. 1-370, 22. 1-371, and 22. 13-380 to include new Section C of the policy, children of certain federal employees.

[03:17:41] As set forth in the newly enacted law, the purpose of this section is to, quote, remove barriers to educational success imposed on school-age children of certain federal employees because of frequent moves and service of their parents.

[03:17:59] This new code section provides for the waivers of specific courses required for graduation, specific testing requirements, and alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation can occur on time. So following the normal review process, these proposed changes were then reviewed by staff and presented to the CNI committee on September 11, 2023, and those draft changes were posted on the website and shared with committees for feedback from October 4th through October 18th.

[03:18:33] They were then shared as an action item at the CNI committee on December 4th. In terms of what you see in board docs, it's what you will typically see for a policy information item, you'll see a redlined version of the draft policy, a clean version of the draft policy, some of them can get pretty messy, and any policy feedback we received during the review process.

[03:18:59] So now I'll point out the recommended revisions that were approved by the C&I committee, and I'll be referring to line numbers in the redlined version. Per one of CAC's recommendations, line 23 of the redlined version has been updated to include homebound and home-based instruction to accurately reflect the name of policy 5360. Section C, starting on line 50, is the new section that I referenced earlier that has been added to reflect the newly enacted Virginia Code sections. Other changes in red are either grammatical or technical

[03:19:36] changes for better flow and to mirror existing LCPS policy language. So at this time, I'll turn it back over to you, Chair Mansfield. I'm happy to answer any questions and depending on the will of the board the item will be brought back at the next board meeting for action or on the consent agenda. Thank you Dr. Ellis and congratulations for your award. Do the board members have any questions? Yes Ms. Donoghue. Thank you Madam Chair. I did tell you I was going to ask all the questions all the time. I think that's good.

[03:20:18] Dr. Ellis, I see in the feedback that we have in board docs a couple of comments from the equity committee including a question about the 20th clock hour of instruction and how students know if they qualify. Can you speak to that?

[03:20:36] Yes. Give me one second to find that. So the 20th clock hour, this information is really for the school counselor, so the school counselors work with the students and review their credits and when they're entering and how many days of the course have already transpired so they would

[03:20:58] communicate with their school counselor okay thank you are there any other questions seeing none we will move this action this for action at the net school board meeting on January 30th 2024 thank you again Dr. Alice Madam Chair yes just quick question for clarification did you want to see if the board wants that on consent did you want to just do a poll on that or do you want it

[03:21:36] to action was that the recommendation was to for consent or for action if there are no additional questions I think it would make sense if it's the will of the board to go on consent I would like to take a look at it a little bit further thank you okay we'll move it to action um okay so we

[03:22:03] will now move to item 14 close meeting is there a motion Mr. Estreffi yes Madam Chair I move that the Loudoun County School Board recess this public meeting and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following discussion, consideration, and interview of prospective candidates for the assignment and appointment of employment as division counsel as authorized by section 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia, consultation with legal counsel employed by or retained by the school board pertaining to actual litigation

[03:22:43] concerning the Loudoun County Circuit Court matter CL23-5107 and requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as authorized by Sections 2.2-3711A7 and 2.2-3711A8 of the Code of Virginia.

[03:23:01] We have a motion made by Vice Chair Streffi. Is there a second? Second. It's seconded by Ms. Donahue. Any discussion? Seeing none, we will now vote on the motion to approve going into the closed session by electronic vote.

[03:23:25] Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote. Clerk, please close and display the vote. The motion passes unanimously.

[03:23:44] We are now in closed session. Thank you.

[04:41:08] Okay, the board is coming out of closed session. Is there a motion, Mr. Estruffy? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the closed meeting be adjourned, that the Loudoun County School Board reconvene its public meeting, and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting.

[04:41:24] A motion was made by Vice Chair Estruffy. Is there a second? Seconded by Ms. Chandler. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we will put the motion to a vote. Clerk, please open the vote.

[04:41:42] Board members, please record your vote. Clerk, please close and... Gary, it's in your pocket. Look at your...

[04:41:57] It's in your drawer. Clerk, please close and display the vote. The motion passes unanimously. Vice Chair Struffy, do you have another motion?

[04:42:16] Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting, Whereas the Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and whereas 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law, now therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting

[04:42:55] to which this certification applies and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Loudoun County School Board. - A motion was made by Vice Chair Struffy. Is there a second? - Second.

[04:43:11] - Thank you, Dr. Rasheed. Seconded by Dr. Rasheed. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we will put the motion to a vote. Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote.

[04:43:29] Clerk, please close and display the vote. That motion passes unanimously. We will now move on to item 15, board members' comments and committee reports, starting with Mrs. LaBelle.

[04:43:48] Thank you, Dr. Rasheed. I have no reports today. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. I have no report. Thank you, Ms. Donahue. I do not have a report.

[04:44:05] I did want to say a quick thank you to everyone who helped me get to this position, which I'm very excited to be at, and also to say to people who didn't that I'm looking forward to representing everyone.

[04:44:26] And I don't have committee reports yet, but Chair Mansfield has appointed me to be a member of the Legislation Audit and Policy Committee and the Human Resources and Talent Development Committee, which I am very much looking forward to, and also to chair the student services committee.

[04:44:43] And I hope to have something to report next time. - Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. - I have nothing to report as well, but I also want to just echo what Ms. Donahue mentioned. I am very humbled to be able

to serve the Sterling District and the rest of the school division.

[04:45:02] Very appreciative of staff and division leadership for all you've done for us in the weeks prior orientation. Appreciated the opportunity to get to know my fellow colleagues in the last few weeks as well and I will say what I said to you all this weekend during swearing in that I hope that through consensus compromise and even disagreement that we can stretch each other's thinking in service of students and push the boundaries of what we thought was possible for their education again very humble to serve with you all thank you

[04:45:32] mrs. Griffiths no report at this time thank you thank you miss Chandler thank Thank you. No real report at this time. I will say I have very much appreciated the opportunity for our board to get to know each other in the weeks leading up to being sworn in and having the chance to get to know everyone and to sort of get a sense of who each one of you are as we come to spend this time together and work together.

[04:46:04] I hope that I can be of service to my neighborhood, and I'm looking forward to serving on HRTD, on the Joint Committee for the Board of Supervisors, and as chair of the LAMP Committee. So thank you. Thank you.

[04:46:20] Dr. Deans. I would like to say each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others. And then I went and had lunch, and my fortune cookie said serve others. So I think that there's a double dose of service offered, and I would like to offer that to the Loudoun County public schools and community. I would like to thank staff for the wonderful training that they did provide us. It was really helpful. We're all new nine members, and I think

[04:46:57] that it will really, it really helped us to bond together and get to know each other, and I'm very excited to meet with all of you and get to know you even better and work with you for the best of our students and our families and our teachers so with that we will move on to agenda item 16 new business is there any new business tonight seeing none the first meeting of the new school board is now adjourned thank you



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