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# Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting, Thursday, March 7, 2024

Date Thursday, March 7, 2024  
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)  
Length 2h 6m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/920604821?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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

[00:00:01] Good morning everyone. I would like to call this meeting of March 7th, 2024 of the Curriculum Instruction Committee to order. My name is Lauren Chernoff and I'm the chair of the committee and I'm joined by my esteemed colleagues, Dr. Deans and Dr. Rashid and we appreciate your presence here today. Before we proceed to our formal agenda, we will work, we will have public comment.

[00:00:23] We value the public input. If there's anyone from the public who wishes to address the committee, we ask that you fill out the form. We already did that. So we will now open the floor to public comments. If you wish to speak, please come forward. We ask that you state your name, that you limit your comments to three minutes or less. And we have one public comment today from Sandy Sullivan. So go ahead and come on up. Good morning. I'm Sandy Sullivan, an elementary school teacher who currently serves the members of the Loudoun Education Association as their president. First, I'd like to thank Ms. Chernoff for bringing forward the grading and assessment policy for

[00:01:00] discussion. With the resounding concerns school board members, LEA, Dr. Spence, and others have heard and brought forward since this policy was revised in September of 2021, it needs to be examined. Concerns need to be heard and discussions need to occur for our educators to be able to provide for the needs of our students and receive the support and respect they deserve. Being reflective is a skill we expect both our educators and students to practice and utilize. Reflection is needed now.

Regarding the elementary instructional schedule, LEA is heard from many elementary employees, members and not yet members. This change was made with

[00:01:37] input from a focus group or focus groups, but wide range input was not sought. An understanding of why this change was being made was not clear to elementary classroom teachers and specialists. LEA held meetings with concerned employees. Each meeting before the scheduling change occurred and after focused on what was beneficial or potentially beneficial about the change and what changes and potential changes, what challenges and potential challenges were seen. One theme that resonated with me during a meeting we held this past November was educators saying

[00:02:12] they missed the kids, specialists saying they missed the kids. Long gaps between when specialists meet with classes caused this feeling. Ensuring students retain the skills presented from one class to the next is challenging with fewer sessions per week. Extended class periods for our younger students are challenging in many cases. Both of these important issues, the grading assessment policy and elementary instructional schedule, come down to ensuring LCPS is listening to its employees and working together to make decisions that support all of our educators and students. I will close with what I've said during my remarks at all curriculum instruction committee

[00:02:49] meetings this year. I look forward to when these committee meetings are held so your educators and the general public who have regular work hours will be able to attend and participate. Thank you for providing comments. Your input is valuable to us. All right. We will now move to approve the minutes from our last meeting. Has everyone had a chance to review the minutes? And are there any corrections or additions?

[00:03:19] Seeing none, I move to approve the February 7th minutes of the C&I committee. Is there a second? A second. A second by Dr. Deans. All those in favor? Aye.

[00:03:34] Aye. All those opposed? Excellent. All right. And now we will move on to our action items. So today we have item 4.1 which is the LCPS gifted plan. And I believe that we had the presentation the last meeting and we reviewed that.

[00:03:53] There were no corrections or recommendations at that time from the committee, so we will ask to move that to an information item unless there is further discussion before that. Any questions for staff? Okay. Mr. Slevin?

[00:04:09] I would just note that we would plan to have a similar presentation that Ms. King gave to the committee to the full board when this is presented as an information item, so the full board will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. That sounds great. So we will go ahead and move that to an information item on, I believe, the April 9th school board meeting.

[00:04:27] That would be the recommendation. We are looking at the possibility of including in the agenda for next Tuesday. It's in there as anticipated, depending on action today. But it really is up to the chair if it will make it on the agenda. So we'll be flexible.

[00:04:44] Sounds great. All right. Next, we are going to move. Do we need to vote to move it to action? Yes. Oh, okay. To move it to the full board. To move it to the full board. All right. So can I make the motion? Okay. I'm new here, guys.

[00:05:00] I motion to move the gifted plan as an information item to the full board. Is there a second? Second. All those in favor? Aye. All right. We will move it. All right. Next, we'll move to item 4.2, which is revisions to policy 8310, theatrical presentations.

[00:05:19] And again, we have been through this policy several times in the curriculum and instruction meeting. And I believe there was one last addition that was requested for the regulation to include something of principal having it written form.

[00:05:35] So I saw that in the regulation, and I appreciate that. Could you highlight that for us? Sure. So since at the last meeting, the committee had asked to see the updated regulation prior to moving this to the full board as an information item. And so we've included the updated regulation redlined in board docs.

[00:05:53] And we also have, as a part of that regulation and approval form, which I have on the screen, but is also in board docs, that will put in writing the conversation between the principal and the theater teacher just to have documentation of the approval. Wonderful. And I will say that when this agenda went live, I was reached out to by several of the theater directors and teachers around the county, and they were very excited to see that added in and really appreciated that we followed their feedback.

[00:06:20] So thank you so much. We will now, are there any, is there any discussion or questions? All right, so we will now move to, move this to the full board for information as well. So is there a second? I second.

[00:06:36] Dr. Dean seconds. All those in favor? Aye. All right, we will move that to the full board as well. All right, next we have our first information item And I know we have some very thorough new presentations today. I'm excited to have you all here. So the first information item is 5.1.

[00:06:54] We're going to get an update on the English Learner Program. I believe that the presenter is Ms. Charisse Rosario, who is the Director of English Learners. So welcome and thank you. All right. Good morning.

[00:07:10] Hello, everyone. This morning, I will provide you a brief overview. If we can go to the next slide, please, Neal. A brief overview of the Division of English Learner program, information related to the WestEd program review, as well as Title III monitoring.

[00:07:27] And I'll provide you some updates on program enhancements work underway and our future goals to provide a foreshadowing of our needs moving forward. Next slide. This is a gentle reminder of the organizational structure of the Division of English Learners.

[00:07:46] I have direct oversight over offices in blue. Looking from left to right, you'll see K-12 EL instruction divided by the elementary and secondary offices. We have a dedicated EL professional learning team, a family and community engagement office, the Welcome Center, and Head Start and Step programs.

[00:08:09] This morning, I plan on focusing just on our English learner program. So we're going to go ahead and take a closer look here. This is a bit of information in getting to know our program. This slide provides a depiction of our students and teachers.

[00:08:28] The left portion notes our EL population since 2020. We are surpassing enrollment numbers prior to the pandemic, as we currently have over 11,500 EL students and counting. LCPS is enriched with

124 languages other than English spoken in the home and is the home of families from 163 countries.

[00:08:54] We are the third largest EL program in the state of Virginia behind Prince William and Fairfax. To the right, our EL staffing has grown and is reflective of our EL student growth. I'm thankful to the board in supporting our duly identified enhanced staffing standards, which was implemented this school year, which supports the needs for additional EL teachers at the secondary level to support the unique needs of our students who are eligible for EL services and have a documented disability, otherwise known as duly identified.

[00:09:30] Diving into our review and monitoring, the EL program was reviewed by WestEd, which is an external nonpartisan company who is a national leader in research, development, and service. Their mission is to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for all students.

[00:09:50] Data was collected that included EL curriculum review, stakeholder surveys, and classroom observations. WestEd concluded their review of the EL program in January of 2022. Recommendations were shared with division staff and stakeholders at a school board meeting held February of 2022.

[00:10:10] Presentation links and resources are hyperlinked for your convenience and are available in board docs. Since the 2021-22 school year, the EEL program addressed recommendations toward an enhanced improvement plan. In the school year of 22-23, we provided an update to the board on how we responded to those recommendations provided by WestEd.

[00:10:32] This school year, we were also scheduled for a five-year Title III state and federal monitoring visit, and we're awaiting final report. However, I can share that feedback was overall positive with no findings. Next slide, please.

[00:10:49] Although Title III federal state monitoring occurs every five years, we hold these requirements as baseline in program planning to ensure we're meeting state and federal compliance in serving our EL students and families. I have provided you a handout to include all areas for which we were monitored for your reference, and this includes the breakdown of the state and federal Title III requirements.

[00:11:14] I'll give you a moment to read this slide as it notes five of the ten civil rights requirements for servicing ELs. While local dollars support the majority of our state and federal requirements, those that are highlighted in purple are the purpose and the allowable use of the Title III funds.

[00:11:44] And they specifically support the development of English language proficiency, which is better known as ELP, and academic achievement of our ELs students. They're used to ensure that we have an effective language instruction program, educational program, which is otherwise called LEAP.

[00:12:03] You might hear that here from time to time. Professional development around servicing our L students and parent, family, and community participation. We apply for Title III funds every year as part of our consolidated grant application, which includes Title I, Title II, and Title IV.

[00:12:22] Our 24-25 consolidated grant application will be available for your review and approval in June. The application is going to include how our program utilizes local and Title III funds to supporting meeting state and federal requirements.

[00:12:37] School districts who obtain Title III funds are monitored on additional criterion, and that includes implementation of our English language development standards, accountability, and assessment.

Title III funds were used to conduct a review of our EL program by WestEd, and they provided recommendations based on the following guiding questions.

**[00:13:03]** How effectively does classroom instruction challenge and support English learners? How are English learners making progress in terms of language and academic development? How well do school and district structures for collaboration and professional learning expand the expertise of educators to teach English learners?

**[00:13:24]** And how successful are school and district efforts to engage parents of English learners? I will reference those recommendations as it applies within the work of our offices. Next slide, please.

**[00:13:40]** The first recommendation provided by WestEd was to articulate and communicate an ambitious vision and shared mission for English learners' experiences in school. Every student noted in LCPS's vision and mission includes our English learners.

**[00:13:59]** we just specifically call them out in our work. This is our true north, and our approach to reaching this is asset-based. An asset-based approach is truly the underpin of our mission and vision for ELLs. It's about embracing a culture where we acknowledge strengths and expect success.

**[00:14:18]** It's the shared vision that everyone in LCPS must adopt so that we can set relevant learning goals to implement worthwhile instructional strategies for our ELLs. We believe that we have a moral obligation to educate our children as global citizens, and that begins with leveraging their cultures and experiences into the instructional setting as they learn a new language.

**[00:14:43]** Next slide, please. The Welcome Center is the very beginning of our students' educational journey in Loudoun County Public Schools. And thanks to school board support, we are fortunate to have a Welcome Center whose primary goal was to provide timely and appropriate identification of students eligible for EL services.

**[00:15:02]** However, over time, services have expanded to get to know the whole student in support of that educational journey in Loudoun County. While informing families of resources, you'll hear more about their work of the Welcome Center following my presentation.

**[00:15:21]** You may recall the work of our EL face office, which was noted at the LCPS spotlight in January. I've noted these programs that are currently in place to support our schools, our students, and our families. It's important to note that the entire EL FACE team is funded out of Title III funds.

**[00:15:40]** While there were no recommendations noted from WestEd on our efforts related to EL family engagement, I'm looking to expand their support in future budget years, as these programs are really well-received through our EL families and our immigrant youth families.

**[00:15:56]** And you noted some of those metrics in our mid-year goal-setting presentation. As recommended by WestEd, we took a reflective approach to the work of our professional learning team with an emphasis on deepening and broadening opportunities for professional learning and capacity building focused on English learners.

**[00:16:17]** We're fortunate to have a dedicated EL professional learning team, which includes one supervisor and three EL deeper learning facilitators. This is a snapshot of our DEL tiered professional learning plan. It's focused on educators' experiences and understanding of ELs.

[00:16:36] They are categorized in three pathways, emerging, expanding, and enhancing to provide a differentiated support and approach to our teachers' professional learning. In addition, we are strengthening our professional learning approach and resources to support educators of students who are duly identified.

[00:16:55] And as a reminder, these are our students who are eligible for EL services and have a documented disability. West Ed conducted 57 observations at six school sites throughout the division. Some key takeaways from their findings included only 23% of the observations had examples of rigor.

[00:17:19] Teachers were doing the majority of talking in classes, and at all levels, there were no evidence of open-ended questions to allow for higher-level thinking. Therefore, efforts related to instruction have focused on enhancing classroom teaching and learning experiences and opportunities for English learners, and we're doing that by offering quality teaching for English learners, widely known as QTEL, professional learning cohorts at all levels.

[00:17:51] We have made updates to our secondary EL program of studies, we've made revisions to our secondary EL curriculum, and we have created EL co-planning and co-teaching guides. Per the state, we are required to implement English language development standards, better known as ELD, which focuses specifically on teaching language and content concurrently in COTALK classrooms.

[00:18:20] We work closely with our four core content offices, English, Math, Social Studies and Science to implement these ELD standards. Next slide please. WestEd provided two recommendations focused heavily on the roles of site-based educators and deployment of staff to successfully carry out quality learning for all students in all instructional models.

[00:18:48] Per this recommendation, we redefined the role of the EL teacher into three areas of expertise. The first is language acquisition expert, second is being a supporter, and the third is an advocate.

[00:19:04] As a language acquisition expert, our teachers will ensure a language focus and provide opportunities for quality interactions in the classroom. As a supporter, they provide students meaningful access to grade-level curriculum, ensuring that high support and high rigor are embedded into classroom instruction.

[00:19:24] And as an advocate, they ensure appropriate class program and placement and share their expertise. We believe that any teacher who has an ELS student in their class should be considered an educator of ELS. Hence, our robust professional learning development plan that is focusing on sharpening EL instructional tools of all educators, which enhance co-teaching and co-planning practices.

[00:19:49] In addressing WestEd's recommendation regarding a strategic deployment of staff, we utilize data to inform a tiered approach of support. Our tiered school-based approach includes, but are not limited to, data-driven language and literacy support, school-based professional learning, classroom observations, CLT support, and coaching to build teacher capacity and servicing ELs.

[00:20:17] We're currently working with the School Improvement Office to align all of this work. Our ELD framework and information learned from WestEd both note an asset-based approach. I want to take a moment to share with you and the public what this means.

[00:20:35] We're moving away from a deficit mindset to address supporting ELs. Our English learners come to us with a range of skills and backgrounds. We believe that as educators, it is our responsibility to

build on their strengths and bring that into the classroom.

[00:20:54] Next slide, please. When an asset lens is implemented, shifts in instructional practices occur. At the elementary level, the inclusion rate has more than doubled since the initial WestEd review. Following the review in spring of 2022, our elementary EL instruction team visited 59 elementary schools and observed 187 lessons, in which 33% of those lessons were being delivered within the EL students' general education classroom.

[00:21:30] Fast forward to this school year, we visited approximately 20 schools at this point, and so far we've already seen a 79% inclusion rate. At the secondary level, we have followed up with schools who participated in QTEL cohorts and observed a shift in instruction, particularly in the areas of rigor and student-to-student interactions, which has increased significantly.

[00:21:58] Next slide, please. We've developed an EL program steering committee comprised of various stakeholders, which include principals, counselors, special education colleagues, and professional learning colleagues. They've spent time with us last year taking a deep dive into learning about our EL program to include state and federal requirements that were shared with you today, and they provide input on our consolidated grant application.

[00:22:26] This year, the committee will continue to provide input on program planning and work underway, which includes aligning our tiered support in school improvement plans and expanding opportunities for EL family engagement. Moving forward, our goal is to move the dial to increase EL student outcome reports on SOL pass rates, graduation rates, and participation in special programs.

[00:22:55] We will continue to monitor our programs via alignment to the strategic plan. We will measure the effectiveness of QTEL training cohorts as it relates to instructional practices for ELs. We will ensure implementation of our ELD standards in CODETALK classes, and we will continue to provide tiered school support as described.

[00:23:19] Additionally, we are working closely with the Research and School Improvement, better known as RASI office, to identify a logic model that aligns with our program that includes state and federal requirements. Finally, we will continue to reflect on the needs of all L learners and school-based staff to determine resources and those needs in the future.

[00:23:42] Forecasting ahead, I'd like to take a closer look at the elementary staffing standards and how teacher-to-student ratios impact instruction and support English learners. I'd like to explore moving grant-funded positions to local budget to build on our EL-FACE team.

[00:24:01] We anticipate the opening of the Welcome Center in Eastern Loudoun and recognize that this will have an impact in the FY26 budget. We will provide more information about that at a later date. I want to thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much.

[00:24:18] I'll open it up for discussion and questions. I know you mentioned measures for, I think you mentioned QTEL. So will the measures be modified at all, or will they be the same when it comes to developing on this?

[00:24:36] I'm sorry if you already had mentioned that. No, no worries. So we are building on the observations that were conducted by WestEd. And while they've conducted quite a bit of observations, they

were only at six school sites. So our team has taken the liberty of expanding, collecting data to see if it is reflective of our entire division.

[00:24:58] As I stated, the elementary team actually visited 59 schools as opposed to the handful of schools WestEd had visited. And they had determined that the findings of WestEd were very similar. And what they're now doing is that they're revisiting classrooms who have attended QTEL to see if there's a change in that data.

[00:25:16] So we're hoping to continue to pull that data together to see the effectiveness of the student-to-teacher interactions, student talk interactions, and just building on those meaningful interactions that are crucial to oral language development and to see how that will be impactful to student outcomes in our past rates and student participation in the measures that are being noted in the strategic plan.

[00:25:42] did i answer your question a bit there okay good it is a lot it's a lot and i recognize that i've given i'm capitalizing on this time to give you as much information as i can to learn about the program and to build your foundational understanding to help support us in guiding the direction of our program dr deans you indicated that you were considering opening a welcome center in the east is that okay do we know about concentration of students are they are they equally distributed

[00:26:17] or are they more in the West or the East? Thank you for that question. So the opening of the second Welcome Center has been a part of our CIP process for quite a number of years. We are looking to have that opportunity finally in this coming school year.

[00:26:35] Jennifer, our Welcome Center Supervisor, will provide you a bit more information on how we're dividing support to our district within those two locations. We're excited about the potential opening next year and it will have some budget impacts with regards to staffing and additional information that may not be noted in the CIP.

[00:26:53] So more information is to come there. But Jennifer does have a gorgeous presentation laid out for you to give you more information that might answer some of your questions. I was just trying to see the level, not staffing level, but the student numbers in the schools in different parts of the county.

[00:27:16] So we have collected that information over time since we have been servicing the entire district at one location. And Jennifer has the data that will support the clusters that will attend one center versus another. And she has that data available to present to you.

[00:27:32] Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Any other questions or discussion? All right. I have a couple. Okay. First of all, I just want to thank you so much for your work. I know since I was in the schools when WestEd was actually visiting Guilford where I was, this has been a long process.

[00:27:51] and you know some of the feedback was really hard to digest at the time and you guys have handled that with grace and you've been very responsive and I know how deeply you care for this community and I really appreciate that it shows by the numbers here and the reflection I do have some questions about the switch from interventionist to co-teaching especially particularly at the elementary level and I want to note that you've mentioned the staffing for elementary and I know this budget we pushed forward with a huge increase in middle and high to support EL so we're working towards that but I know that they're it's not that teachers don't want to co-teach they do

[00:28:29] they really love that model and the guides that you've put out are wonderful the doability of it though sometimes can be a challenge with staffing with WIDA testing taking as much as it does and many of the other obligations that these EL teachers sort of get sucked into at the school level so I'm just curious how you're collecting that feedback if you're hearing that feedback and how we can better support you to support the teachers to be able to implement a true co-teaching model which which I know will be very effective. No absolutely and thank you for that question because that is something that has been as risen to the ears of our elementary EL team

[00:29:06] and we are supporting schools at really shoulder to shoulder around what that looks like because every school is so different. I think what we want to caution is that our EL teachers have been removed from their true role as a language expert and have been pulling students out, if you will, for small group instruction, just solely focused on being an interventionist. And that isn't their area of expertise. However, we value and recognize the importance of learning the work around literacy that is a part of our work, but is not only our work. So we see this as a shared

[00:29:42] responsibility and recognize that some schools do need additional support, meaning more EL teachers, if you will, because the needs may be greater at that particular school. So we are working with schools specifically to address those. And I do want to take a better look and a closer look to the way our current adopted EL elementary staffing standard is listed. It does support specific proficiency levels, if you will, but I think there's a little bit of room to grow in that effort. Yeah, I thank you for that answer, and I agree with you, and something that's, you know, really interesting is this sort of evolution of this population. You see it in the graph. I

[00:30:21] mean, it's astonishing how much our population is changing, and, you know, I know teachers are always working on that language track versus the core academic track, and sometimes there's overlap, but I know you mentioned with the PD plan that general education is included, and really we are sort of moving, I feel like, in that direction where everybody is everything, right? We all have our specialties, but these kids are, they're all of our kids. So can you speak to a little bit of what specifically general education teachers are being offered for EL PD? Absolutely. So that first

[00:30:56] tier that I've shared with you, there's an EL foundations training, which is phenomenal. And what we've done there, thank you for that, because visuals are so important. What we have done there is that we have pulled the best of the best of all of the professional learning that has been provided to our district over the years.

[00:31:14] So you will see elements of PSYOP, Excel, which is heavily focused on vocabulary, in addition to other instructional strategies. And that foundational training there is so well received by our general education teachers.

[00:31:30] More importantly, in addition to QTEL for those that are invited, because it provides the language and the foundational understanding that all teachers need to collaborate with their EL colleague. So I would strongly recommend that teachers capitalize and take a part of that. In fact, our first-year EL teachers are required to take that training amongst other training to build their capacity because we find that a lot of our new EL teachers are career switchers and may not have gone to school specifically for second language acquisition, so we want to build that language gap.

[00:32:02] So we do encourage that any training that you see on the emerging pathway is an ideal training for a general education teacher of an L who may have an L in their classroom. You will also notice that

there's welcome center training because there's valuable training around how students are identified and the resources that they provide to support instruction.

[00:32:23] And we also have our ELD standards training there, which does address all of the language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and all of the levels that a student can land once identified. Thank you. Go ahead. I'm really pleased that you took the WestEd snapshot and carried it further yourself by getting additional data beyond WestEd.

[00:32:49] Because WestEd tends to just do a snapshot versus a deep dive. I've worked for West Ed, and I just know that, you know, the goal is to go in and fulfill the contract and walk away.

[00:33:05] So I'm glad that to hear you say that your staff then took it a step further. And I felt it was important that we did that because our, as you stated, Lauren, so beautifully, Ms. Chernoff, like we, they, it was a hard pill to swallow. We're doing great work.

[00:33:21] We have been doing great work for a very, very long time, and we're going to keep that moving forward. but there's always opportunity to grow. And when we look at our student outcomes, we see there is a huge gap, and we need to know where is the gap, where is it lie. So we want to capitalize on what we're doing well, and we want to enhance where we want to enhance.

[00:33:39] Hence the EL Foundation training, a lot of great training there. Teachers were asking, well, what happened to that? And we're saying, we still have it, but now it's just retitled, right? So that this way it's a little bit more digestible to support their efforts at the school level. So, yes, and we wanted schools to see that there are opportunities to shift.

[00:33:58] Teachers are doing a lot of the talking and losing opportunities for students to engage and practice that language because it's so important for them to practice the language that they are receiving. We've all gone to Spanish class, and you forget how to speak Spanish because you don't use the language, right? So when you think about your own experiences, well, some of us have gone to Spanish class.

[00:34:17] Let me just not make that as a general announcement. whatever language second language you might have chosen to study many of us forget it we might hear it but we forget it because we're not practicing it so we want to make sure that's included in instruction go ahead yeah yes you find any challenges in any of the like um uh the time for this for the teachers to to go through this and that's my main concern because there i know

[00:34:56] there's not like you're not adding to it i know you said it's retitled like it's a different name to it. But do you find any challenges with that? Yeah, we do. I mean, I think this is a district effort that we need to address, professional learning and required trainings, and that's something we're working very closely with all varied offices within the division. These trainings, and I want to clarify that professional learning versus training, I think we're starting to identify that there's a difference. This is to enhance their practice, and this is available and power school at a teacher's discretion, at their availability, where there's time to obtain a sub, and things of that nature.

[00:35:33] Is there room to grow? Absolutely. But these are targeted for the educator. You'll see that it's targeted specifically with the lens from the educator's lens, like if I want to build on my instructional practices, what professional learning may I consider?

[00:35:50] Some of this is required, some is not required. For example, our new teachers have a required professional learning track, but most of these are optional for our teachers. But to address your question related to time, time is not only against us, it's against many of us, and I think we're working collaboratively to address that.

[00:36:11] Would you add anything else to that, Neil? Because I think that is a district concern. And it just echoes the feedback that we're hearing from the schools and teachers in terms of communication about expectations for professional learning. So that's a point of conversation and we're continuing to work with Dr. Spence, work with other members of cabinet to make recommendations about PD.

[00:36:36] But I would just say the efforts of Sharice and her team to align the professional learning clarity, like this is it, like these are our recommendations, is a step in the right direction. because I think just communicating expectations is also something teachers appreciate.

[00:36:51] Like, this is where the information is. It's aligned. You don't need to go looking for it in different places. You read my mind because I was going to ask about that as well, Dr. Rasheed. But, you know, these are the kids in front of us. So these are the things that teachers want to know more about and to meet the needs.

[00:37:10] And like you mentioned, the gaps. I mean, I've said it a thousand times. But we've got to address it. and we are, and it is a partnership. It's not just EL and isolation. It's not just reading interventionists. It's not, you know, it's not just gen ed over here. It has to be a team effort because as we see from the numbers, we are growing and we have big needs.

[00:37:31] So I do appreciate that you've put this menu together because as someone who's been QTEL trained, which I love, I think it's really valuable. So thank you guys so, so much. Does that close us out for this one? Did you guys have anything else you wanted to say?

[00:37:47] I just want to thank you, and it's a nice segue to Jennifer for the Welcome Center. Yeah. Thank you for your questions. I just want to acknowledge Sharice's leadership and her role in the work that is happening with the team, but she also has an incredible team. Do you want to take a minute? You have a few members of your team in the audience. Oh, yeah, thank you for saying that.

[00:38:04] I knew I was short on time, but yes, the team I had just shared, we have our elementary team. If you guys could just raise your hands. We have Heather Crawford, and we have Stephanie there. She's our EL elementary specialist and our supervisor.

[00:38:19] We have Jaylon Tombalouk. She's our secondary EL supervisor. And then we have Gabriela Hash, who's our professional learning supervisor. And anybody else in the room besides Jennifer, our welcome center? Sarah Ocampo is not here, but you've had the opportunity to see her at our January spotlight.

[00:38:37] And you all know Alexis, who oversees our Head Start and Step program. And I don't think I'm forgetting anyone else. Am I forgetting anyone? I don't want to do that. Yes, I have a phenomenal team, and I don't do this alone. I truly stand on the shoulders of my team. So thank you for that opportunity.

[00:38:55] Thank you so much. All right. With that, we will move to 5.2, which is a perfect segue to the LCPS Welcome Center. And we will welcome Jennifer Ferentz. Is that correct? Jennifer Ferentz will be presenting, and we'll pass it to you.

[00:39:10] All right. - Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to share with you the work of my amazing staff in the Welcome Center. I'll speak to our history a little later in this presentation, but just for a quick overview, the Welcome Center opened its doors in August of 2015, and we have been phasing in services since then.

[00:39:29] We are grateful for the support of each and every school board since the creation was approved, and we are looking forward to working with the current board to hopefully finally fully realize the LCPS Welcome Center. So, the Welcome Center's multilingual staff provides students and families with a welcoming and affirming introduction to Loudoun County Public Schools.

[00:39:50] We offer students and families the information and resources they need to be engaged and supported partners in their students' education. And then, next slide. We also determine eligibility for language instruction educational program services. So, LEAP services.

[00:40:08] Evaluate secondary international transcripts. Conduct social academic history interviews. review exchange student applications, and then another slide, identify language dominance for assessments to determine eligibility for special education services, register students enrolling in specific schools the service is still being phased in, and support school staff as they welcome students and families to their school.

[00:40:34] So we also have created some resources in the starting in the center of the slide there. We have a resource booklet for elementary and secondary families. They are currently being updated will have the new logo on them. We originally created it to share with kindergarten families who came through the Welcome Center since their appointments were rather quick. At school request, we expanded the kindergarten one to an elementary one and added the secondary booklet. These are available in several languages and are posted on our internet site for schools to download. And then moving to the right of the slide, in collaboration with all of the content offices, the school counseling office and the high school office, we created

[00:41:14] and maintain the international high school transcript evaluation guidelines the welcome center provides a centralized system evaluating all international transcripts for students entering loudon county public schools at schools for whom we are not yet registering students the school counselor is still responsible for evaluating international transcripts of students registering english only and then our most recent project is on the left of the slide there and it is the welcoming families to lcps guide for student school office staff the impetus for this project came from collaborative conversations we held with school staff in spring of 2022 as we were

[00:41:51] planning to phase in registration services. This document was a collaborative effort between the Welcome Center, EL Face Office, the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, and the Department of Communications and Community Engagement, and feedback from a lot of other people as well. And it is now part of the resources maintained by the Family Engagement work group. And then kind of rounding out what we do, we also create and deliver annual required training about the identification and placement of potential EL students, scheduling for secondary EL students, and evaluating international transcripts. As a reminder, this last training

[00:42:29] is for the school counselors that are still required to evaluate international transcripts for students registering English only. And then on the next slide, you have an overview of how we organize

ourselves. I also gave you a handout of this. It's a little bit easier to read. The Welcome Center organizes itself around four teams, registration, assessment, counseling, and family engagement.

[00:42:52] Each team has unique responsibilities, but all teams work collaboratively with one another to ensure both families and schools have the information they need for a smooth and successful transition into LCPS. In addition to providing a visual representation of our organization, it also provides a brief summary of the work of each team and information on how the team is staffed.

[00:43:15] So as I shared earlier, the Welcome Center opened its doors in August of 2015. We opened with three full-time staff, of which only one staff member had a 12-month contract. And needless to say, summer is when we are the busiest. On the next slide, I will share a brief overview of how we phased in services since opening.

[00:43:34] But I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the significant debt we owe to our part-time staff. We would not have been able to do everything that we have done to support schools and newly registering students and families without our part-time staff and the reality is that still today we rely heavily on our part-time staff to register students, to review resources with families, to gather social academic histories, and also to administer various assessments.

[00:44:01] All of these are conducted typically in languages other than English, are highly technical and require a significant investment in training. So on this slide, I highlight some of the significant moments in Welcome Center history So as Cherise mentioned, phase one of the Welcome Center was to return instructional time to EL teachers by assuming responsibility for determining eligibility for language instruction educational program services.

[00:44:28] We started with the Parkview cluster and then expanded to the Dominion and Potomac Falls clusters in our first year. It became immediately apparent that schools also needed support with international transcript evaluation. So by the end of that first year, we transitioned from a cluster-based phasing in of services to looking more as a level-based approach.

[00:44:47] And so by the start of the 16-17 school year, all high school and middle school students who were registering with a language other than English were routed to the Welcome Center. At the time, the Welcome Center only had one counselor, so while we evaluated international transcripts, we still relied on schools to enter the student's course history into our student information system.

[00:45:07] Thanks to a previous board, starting with the 18-19 school year, we were able to add an additional counselor, which allowed us to enter the course history ourselves. This reduced the amount of time school-based staff had to expend on technical details and provided them more time to make connections with newly enrolling students and families and develop their pathways to graduation.

[00:45:26] In the summer of July 2019, we began to develop our family engagement team. They created a family needs assessment to better guide conversations about resources, as well as support schools and families with parent view activation. Additionally, we converted our assessor position to a 12-month position to provide the desperately needed assessment oversight in the summer and added a full-time program assistant, thereby reducing some of our reliance on part-time staff.

[00:45:52] The following year, which was July 2020, we extended our counselor contracts to 217 days, and this also provided additional summer support. In July 2021, some part-time funds were reallocated to create a full-time family liaison position, allowing us to expand services of our family engagement team.

[00:46:11] They now conduct the social academic interviews for elementary students and also secondary students transferring from U.S. schools, secondary students transferring from international schools. Their interviews are conducted by our counselors. That year we also added a lead screener position, and both of these are examples of work being done by part-time staff transitioning into full-time staff.

[00:46:31] And this is sort of a theme of the Welcome Center. We have part-time staff doing work, transitions into full-time staff eventually. And then in anticipation of opening of our second Welcome Center, we asked for our second assessor and lead screener. And while we are still working towards our second location, these additional staff have been beneficial, as the assessment team has taken on additional responsibilities due to staffing changes and then also additional state data reporting requirements. And finally, almost a year ago, the first of our two permanent locations opened at the historic Douglas High School Education and Development

[00:47:03] Campus, and with that move, we have begun phasing in registration services. So as Charisse mentioned, the long-term plan is to have a western and an eastern welcome center. Our eastern location was plan to be co-located with the Sterling Elementary School but as bids were being received in October of 2022 they were all rejected and LCPS staff is currently engaged in efforts to secure a lease space somewhere in the Sterling area for our eastern location. And then on the next slide we have some of the data you requested. It's just a visual. I don't have the specific numbers here

[00:47:42] but this is our planned distribution of school support. So you can see that there are more schools assigned to our western location however this distribution will divide student family volume almost equally between the two locations this data is based on a five-year average and just as a note the two small unlabeled slivers up in at the top of the slide in blue are Loudoun Valley and Woodgrove clusters to answer the previous question the majority of the fifth

[00:48:14] students and families come to us from eastern Loudoun and Dulles South okay and then specific to our current status the welcome center is currently providing registration support to all schools in the central loud and planning district that is down the bottom in the red this accounts for 31% of the students who will come to the western welcome center and then pending final budget approval for FY25 we hope to add a full-time registrar so with our current two part-time registrars and the additional full-time register by the end of the 24-25 school year we hope to have phased-in registration services to all of the schools that will be supported by the

[00:48:54] Welcome Center West. So just the schools that were in the blue on the previous slide. And you might be wondering then what happens next. So we are very forward thinking in the Welcome Center. This slide depicts a screenshot from our vision plan for continued phasing-in of staff and services with the opening of Welcome Center East. We are hoping, as Sharice mentioned, we are hoping that our Eastern location will open at some point in FY26 and that by the end of FY27, we will see full implementation of the Welcome Center.

[00:49:26] On the table above, starting in FY26, it shows how staff will be deployed between the two locations. And then the row highlighted in yellow shows projected additional staffing needs for full implementation. And I've also provided this slide as a hard copy to you, a little bit easier to read.

[00:49:45] Okay. So, you can go to the next slide. Finally in support of Action 4.1 Family Engagement of the 1 LCPS 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence, families who visit the Welcome Center have two opportunities to provide feedback on services.

[00:50:01] Upon completion of their Welcome Center visit, families are asked to answer a short survey. The questions on this survey focus on the Welcome Center environment and the services provided. Data from this year's initial survey have been provided as a handout. The second opportunity for families to provide feedback is via a follow-up survey.

[00:50:20] This survey was piloted last year and it was decided that we would continue to gather information in this format. The focus on this survey is the family's transition into the student's school. Data is collected via a phone call to the family in the spring. Additionally, in promotion of a culture of continuous improvement, I wanted to share that the Welcome Center is on the program evaluation schedule for next year on the Policy 3310 evaluation of new and established programs so in closing all Welcome Center staff both full-time and part-time work collaboratively to ensure both families and schools have the information

[00:50:57] they need for a smooth and successful transition into LCPS it is my honor to lead the office and help cultivate the high-performing teams of professionals to realizing the mission and goals of Loudoun County Public Schools and on behalf of the entire Welcome Center office we thank you for providing this opportunity to share about our work and hope that you can visit us sometime in our new location. Thank you. Thank you so much, Jennifer. I really appreciate this information. And I just want to say, no one tells you as a school board member that as soon as one budget season ends, the next one starts. So I appreciate it. I really feel like this is

[00:51:36] going to be our year for our budget. And so we will definitely be appreciative of the hard copies and, you know, have that in our minds and welcome the advocacy. So I know the work you do is important, keenly important, getting our kids in classrooms. So do we have any questions or discussion?

[00:51:52] Go ahead, Dr. Rashid. Thank you for the presentation. It was very helpful. I especially like the data and the pie charts. That was really helpful. And I just wanted to ask you, do you see any trends with the data that you presented? Like, for example, I know that when it came to phasing in the registration services, there's some from the western parts of Loudoun, and I was wondering if you see a trend of that growing, or what parts do you see that are growing, and which ones do you see kind of decreasing, if any?

[00:52:19] I don't know if we've seen any decreasing. I would say that we are seeing families moving into areas of Loudoun that they haven't historically moved into. We've also seen different schools. I know earlier this fall, my counselors were like, oh, I've never seen this transcript before.

[00:52:37] I've never seen a transcript from this country. So I think the trends that we always think of are still standing there. They're not decreasing. But we are seeing students and families moving in from other places and into other parts of Loudoun County. And I would say that, generally speaking, in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, many of those families landed in Rockbridge, in Broad Run, in Riverside, and some other places where – and now moving more into the Dulles South area.

[00:53:08] Do you find that, like, if they're making more schools out, like, for example, in the western area of Loudoun, do you find that there's more trends coming from there because there's more schools being built there? I'm just curious. I'm not part of the planning, so I don't know if I can answer that specific question.

[00:53:26] I don't know if it's related specifically to the new schools being built. It could also just be where people are able to find housing, where they have family that's already settled. Sure. Thank you. In terms of

tracking the enrollments from their arrival in the county to their enrolling in school, are you seeing a lot of delays in enrollment?

[00:53:55] I don't think so. And actually, when we're taking on the registration of services, I think it will speed up the process, actually, because what happens now is for the schools that were not providing registration services, the students start at the homeschool, and then they come to us, and then they go back to the homeschool to finish the registration.

[00:54:12] And then also in that case, like if you are a family and you have an elementary student and a middle school student, you have to go to both of those schools. But whenever they're able to come to us for registration, first of all, there's not that back and forth. We try very hard to do the registration, the assessment, the history, the resources, all of that in one day.

[00:54:29] And then we can also support the entire family, so elementary, middle, and high. school versus are you able to ascertain what their home school is if they are doubling up with other family members and yeah we follow the same registration processes as all the registrars at the home school and so you know as part of that process they have to provide documentation of their residents so with that wonderful tool that they have where you look up the address that tells you what school it is and so yes okay any McKinney Vento families where they are homeless

[00:55:05] Yes. Yes, some. And then we work closely with McKinney-Vento office on that process as well. So just like at the homeschool, oftentimes if they are qualified for McKinney-Vento, sorry, not sure of their specific terminology. I know that I think qualified or certified is the correct word there. Then they are able to begin enrollment immediately as they are working through some of those others. So it's the same process for us. Okay. I just had one question about how you all collaborate with the county and their resources i know that like i mean this week i was at an interfaith dinner and we were all talking about how can we collaborate better and you know

[00:55:44] the welcome center actually came up and a lot of churches locally are offering english language classes for adults and services for kids and they were like how can we get connected into a network can you speak to how that collaboration process happens i know we're trying to work smarter and not harder, and meet the needs, because there are a lot of growing needs, as you mentioned.

[00:56:06] Well, as part of the work of the full-time family liaison, she does go out and make those connections with those resources so that we have them, and tries to stay current, because that's always the challenge of trying to stay current with who is offering what. She also attends the family liaison meetings and is part of that cohort of staff, just like our counselors are connected to the counseling office, our registrars are connected to the registrars, our assessment team connects with the assessment office and also the EL office so we kind of try to keep them connected in with the other staff at the division level and then also at the at the county level as well so we we have actually partnered with the library they provide us folders and with information

[00:56:46] about the services that they provide and so what the family engagement team has done is we kind of use those folders and then personalize them with the additional resources that the family may request. Wonderful. I would love to explore that more. I think that we're so big. There's just so much, and there's so much good happening, but we could maybe join forces. Yes, and I would say that we tend to provide resources more on the global level for the entire county, and then we do tell families that

whenever they get into their school, their family liaison at their school can give them the specific resources in their own community. Yeah, huge shout out to them. They do amazing,

[00:57:26] incredible work um so i appreciate that i think that that's i will look forward to a visit and you invited us i would love that so i will follow up with you i will be coming by um so that would be wonderful so maybe we can learn more and have further discussions but i really appreciate that anything else no all right with that we will move on to our last information item 5.03 the elementary instructional schedule. And, um, I believe we're going to have a presentation by Elaine Lehman and Jeff Roundsley. And before you do, can I just provide a little bit of context of why I put this

[00:58:02] on new business? Um, so I just, I really wanted to take a minute. Um, obviously I'm a elementary educator at heart and this has been, you know, an interesting year rolling this out. So I wanted to provide some context for why I brought this as new business. Um, over the past eight weeks since I've gotten into office, and I know my colleagues as well, we have gotten many, many emails and spoken with many elementary teachers and staff and principals about this master schedule. I've also lived it. I was an elementary school-based facilitator and supported teachers and students daily, so that's a unique perspective, so sorry for that. And that's why I asked to have this then

[00:58:41] move to an information item. And I just, I really do want to start by saying I'm grateful for the staff's receptiveness to use this as an opportunity to be reflective and to use feedback to better support our schools and staff and that you guys were already aware of the challenges and receiving feedback and that it was always part of the plan throughout this year to solicit feedback and make adjustments so it wasn't like it was a one-stop shop and I think some staff may feel like it was but that you all I have learned through this process that was always part of the plan and you know presuming positive intent always we know that this was you know rolled out meant to

[00:59:21] be responsive it was meant to be helpful and particularly addressing a lack of common planning time and allowing for adequate minutes to teach all subjects and for many many teachers that we've heard from it has been exactly that so I know we're going to be talking about a lot of the logistical feedback and I just want to make sure that you know as a result of this master schedule there were wide implications for teachers and staff and their ability to effectively feel like they could do their jobs. So combing through it beyond just the logistical minutes solutions that we're going to propose I think in this presentation or you're going to propose I did want to draw out

[00:59:58] a couple of underlying themes that also just went with the rollout if that's okay. One theme that was strongly resonated with me was a general feeling of disconnect from the school-based staff when the district rolls out these kinds of decisions. While a master's schedule is never going to garner 100% support, we have an opportunity to better listen and incorporate the feedback that we've heard and make our teachers and staff true stakeholders in this master's schedule process.

[01:00:23] Another theme I heard was whoever wrote this doesn't understand the day-to-day life of a teacher, and that can be hard to hear, but this feeling was tied to the lack of transition times and seemingly unrealistic expectations of cramming everything in down to the exact minute. You just can't physically be in two places at once, and elementary children are especially unpredictable, and it takes time to move them from thing to thing.

[01:00:48] And I like to say, like, have you ever seen a kindergartner put on a glove? Like, it takes minutes. So those transitions that were, you know, not included necessarily or how that was perceived in the

current master schedule made some staff feel like this was not realistic.

[01:01:05] And furthermore, I've heard that some of them say that by not meeting the minutes prescribed that were scheduled, they feel like they're failing in their job, and we just really don't want our teachers to feel that way. And again, I know this wasn't the intention or the desired outcome, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to be reflective.

[01:01:23] The last thing I heard, and this one was particularly tough, was that this schedule is impossible, but luckily our principal let us do what was best for our students. But that's quickly followed up with, please don't tell anyone. We don't want them to get in trouble. I sincerely hope we can evaluate if we are potentially sending a message where school leaders feel like they aren't allowed to make decisions that best meet the needs of their students and their schools.

[01:01:49] Even if one person says that, I think that that's a concern. One of my goals through this committee is to bridge the gap between schools and policies and decisions. And I think we do have that opportunity to help bridge that gap here by offering these beautiful short-term and long-term solutions. And as we work through this, I'd like to see us prioritize our school's ability to have autonomy and trust them to do their jobs when it comes to each individual school's community needs.

[01:02:14] To me, giving that autonomy and trust will show that we are responsive and, in turn, help build up morale. So thank you for being open to this dialogue. I know we all share a desire to support our students and our teachers, and I really look forward to improving this master schedule together. Can I start?

[01:02:31] So thank you for that introduction. And before Mr. Roundsley and Ms. Lehman go into the presentation, I just want to acknowledge the staff here that represents and leads our teachers and makes important decisions in terms of what's happening in the classrooms and terms of time and resources.

[01:02:48] We have Michael Pearson, our fine arts supervisor. Elaine Stanford, our music specialist. Julie Galvin, our art specialist. Amy Riggio, our health and PE specialist. Amy Wheeler, our health and PE specialist. Darryl Timothy's back there, who am I missing?

[01:03:04] Alyssa Moritz. What I am blown away by is the relationship these people have with our teachers in the building and troubleshooting and conversations and relationships with the principals. And one of the things that we've been working on since 2019 is a loud voice from teachers saying, we need support with this elementary instructional schedule.

[01:03:26] We have a lack of consistency. There are different experiences in each building. There's different experiences that teachers are having. My principal is doing this. Can you please help me, Mr. Pearson, in advocating for making sure arts is prioritized? And so while this has been a difficult conversation, the relationship these folks have with the teachers in the buildings have been something that has been a strength of ours.

[01:03:49] And I appreciate you noting that this was in response to an ask from teachers. I was just out at Balls Bluff Elementary School last week or two weeks ago talking to the arts specialists there saying thank you so much for listening and putting this in place. We're having conversations with teachers.

[01:04:06] We know it's not perfect. We know adjustment needs to be made. But thank you for trying to find a path for a solution. So while it's not perfect, and we do have some recommendations for making it

better, I just want to acknowledge the relationships that this team has with schools and the teachers.

[01:04:24] So with that, Mr. Roundsley and Elaine, if you wanted to kick us off. All right, thank you very much. And thank you for giving us this opportunity to talk through this. And we look forward to hearing your thoughts about our thoughts from all the feedback that we've received. So I'm Elaine Lehman, the director of elementary education.

[01:04:40] I think I've met all of you before. I'm Jeff Ronsley, director of teaching and learning K-12. And I also want to acknowledge this is a conversation that just goes beyond just teaching and learning in the elementary office. Heather Ross, our supervisor for school counseling, is here as well. And our school counselors play a huge role in the information we're going to share today as well.

[01:05:00] So this is a conversation that involves lots of different departments within this building. Very good. So what we'd like to share with you today is we'll provide a little bit of background. We've already heard some from Mr. Slevin, but we'd like to provide a little bit more. We'll share the original goals of the instructional schedule and ongoing goals.

[01:05:17] Jeff? We're also going to talk about how we've collected some of that feedback in lots of different ways. And I know you all have heard that as well, but some of the feedback we've heard. And then at the end, recommend some potential changes that we can make quickly for next year, but also some changes that may require some long-term planning and thinking.

[01:05:35] So we want to start with some key definitions so that we're all speaking from the same dictionary. We'd like to introduce two terms, instructional minutes and instructional schedule. So the instructional minutes are what we are referring to as the amount of time students and teachers interact with each content area, English, math, social studies, science, during the course of the school day.

[01:05:59] And the content supervisors collaborate to ensure that their instructional minutes and priorities fit within the confines of a school day. And then the instructional schedule defines how the structure of the entire day maximizes learning and efficient operations during the day.

[01:06:15] And examples include not only the content areas, but the inclusion of the other requirements, lunch, recess, specials, things like that. Oh, is this me too? Okay. So the challenges prior to the current school year, Mr. Slevin touched upon these a little bit already, but there was a lack of balance in the instructional events across the four core content areas.

[01:06:41] And as a matter of fact, prior to our work around this, the four content supervisors hadn't had a conversation around what the individual expectations for each subject were and required. So anyone that's been in an elementary school or in an elementary classroom knows that there's about nine hours of instruction that could easily happen within the course of the school day.

[01:07:00] So the start of this was for them to talk together about what do we have in front of us and what can we do to balance that. So schools were left to make their own decisions around which component to shorten, which component of reading instruction to shorten, which subject maybe to leave out, maybe science, in order to fit within the confines of the day, given the materials that we had.

[01:07:21] So intervention as well was only happening once per day. We often heard from teachers, we're handling our reading intervention very well during a designated intervention time, but we need time for math intervention as well, and that was not designated anywhere in the instructional schedule.

[01:07:38] Additionally, there was a lack of common time between teachers on grade levels. It varied from, you know, three times a year when major data points occurred during the year to some schools had common time, were able to create common time on a daily basis for their teachers.

[01:07:55] So that was an issue that we were also trying to address in the lack of equity and balance across the division. So the instructional schedule for our various specials was difficult to align because we had, going into this, music was a 30-minute length, music and PE were of 30 minutes, art was 50, search was 45.

[01:08:14] We had a lot of different parameters. As a matter of fact, back in 2011, I believe, we worked with Dr. Mike Rittig, who was an international scheduling guru. He's the one that did our block schedule at the middle and high school. And he worked with us in an elementary pilot, and his comment at the time was, I've never seen this before.

[01:08:31] I've never seen these lengths of time. And I know that Mrs. Sharon Ackerman, who was the director of instruction at the time, said, well, the reason music is 30 is because that's the minimum amount of time that a teacher has to have for planning in their school day. So that was our minimum amount of time.

[01:08:46] So there were individual decisions made that didn't necessarily work together in creating an instructional schedule. So with all of that in mind, and also with what Mr. Slevin shared at the beginning, these were some of the goals that the elementary instructional schedule was meant to address and that first one is support schools students and teachers and I hear in the feedback that you shared that wasn't always shared or communicated in that way to our teachers but really this was a way to provide them with common planning with some consistency and also to make sure from our content supervisors that the curriculum and the work that we were asking them to do was

[01:09:23] feasible within the school day it wasn't just for teachers to say you have to stick to this amount of time but also for our curriculum to be reflective of what a teacher's day actually is. Again, to make sure that our students across LCPS have a consistent and equitable experience in their instruction and their specials and across their schools, to give our teachers time to collaborate and work together and to make sure that our teachers who are on an itinerant schedule, traveling between schools have some consistency in their day and their schedule as well.

[01:09:51] And again, to note, as we did at the end, to continue this conversation and to continue to collaborate to make sure that the work that we were doing was supportive of our teachers and of what's happening in our schools and to listen to the information that was shared back to us. I mean, I would add when this work started last year, it started in around January of last year.

[01:10:11] So that was post-budget, thinking about where we are now. So we were trying to come up with a solution for this that was budget neutral because nothing had been identified or proposed in the budget that had just been passed. So we knew it wasn't going to be a perfect solution out of the gate, but we felt it was critical that we move forward because of some of the things in our strategic plan that speak to some of the things that the schedule is enabling us to do like collaborative time for instructional planning.

[01:10:38] So what does a typical elementary school day look like? So the elementary day is 405 minutes in total and there are numerous things built into the instructional day in addition to core instruction. We have intervention for English language arts of 30 minutes, lunch 30 minutes, recess 30 or 40 depending if you're kindergarten or one to five.

[01:10:58] 50 minutes in the school day for specials. Morning meeting, which is where our social emotional learning curriculum is presented, 20 minutes each day. And arrival and dismissal, 10 minutes each day. So those are just rough estimates.

[01:11:15] - And so with that remaining time, this is how the school day, the instructional minutes are allocated for our K through five students. So you can see English language arts, math, science, and social science. A few things to point out about this.

[01:11:30] first the guidance of science and social science happening every day that is a significant change that you'll see for our for some of our schools that wasn't always the case they rotated in different ways sometimes by unit sometimes by week schools had various ways that they were doing this so part of the goal here was to ensure that the skills that students gain through social science and science instruction are part of their daily experience in schools the drawback to that and we'll talk about this later is that it's a relatively short amount of time so for schools to go deep and to kind of delve into these topics in meaningful ways, that can be a challenge.

[01:12:04] And these are areas where students really can explore and practice inquiry and practice some of the deeper learning skills that we talk about across LCPS. So that's something that we'll come back to when we talk about our recommendations. And then I also want to point out another thing that we will come back to is the 80-minute block in ELA. There is an impact there around the HMH program that we adopted, so we'll talk about that in just a minute. The rest of our allotted times for ELA work fine within this and then we want to also point out that that ELA time is um can be spread out across other areas so science social science have key areas where we can really address literacy and bring that in so those minutes can help count towards that as well so the way the

[01:12:43] instructional schedule is laid out these would be the minutes that we are allocating to each subject each day um and then the frequency of our specials so again all of the times are 50 minutes that's what allows for teachers to have that common consistent planning time in their day music happens one time a week art one time a week PE two times each week and then library and counseling are on a rotating schedule so one week a school would have library the next week they would have a lesson presented by the counselor and again these are areas that we're going to return to when we come back to some of the recommendations we're making

[01:13:17] for future planning I think we go to the next slide yeah all right so throughout this school year, we have jointly collected feedback on the elementary schedule in a variety of ways.

[01:13:34] We've met with teachers with the Loudoun Education Association. We have attended the superintendent's teacher advisory committee and done a survey with that group and some activities. The principal and the assistant principal meetings have been a touch point for us as well. The subject to area contact meetings with the content supervisors, they've collected ongoing feedback, and we've had some let's talk submissions as well to provide some feedback so these are just some examples of the comments that we've heard and as noted in that introduction there are both sides of this there are multiple sides to how teachers are feeling about this those comments on the left

[01:14:13] tend to reflect some of the positive comments we've heard again the idea that we can teachers can go deeper with content and and another one that we've heard is it took time it wasn't great at the beginning, but as we have gone along and kind of learned how to structure the time, especially in our

specials blocks, that it's calmer for students, that teachers can go deeper and delve deeper into topics. So there are a lot of positive examples of what this has brought.

**[01:14:38]** On the other side, some of the challenges we've heard, and I'm sure you've heard as well. One is about repetition, not seeing students enough. So we've heard that from our music teachers, that as students are trying to learn music or prepare for a musical or a concert, having that time once a week is just not enough time for students to recall the information and to remember and also for library so with that every other week rotation and movable Monday schedules there are times where our librarians are just not seeing students as often as they want to or providing access to the library as much as they would like.

**[01:15:10]** Another comment that we've heard consistently from our specials teachers is around the length of the time especially for students in our younger grades so that K through two or K through one is just 50 minutes is just too long of a block of time for PE or music and again we've heard various sides of that but that's another piece of feedback that raises up from teachers consistently. Jeff already talked to touched upon this just a little bit go ahead Jeff. Well so these are some of the feedback we've heard said the scheduling and staffing for libraries insufficient that are school counselors by virtue of being in the master or instructional schedule and being

**[01:15:49]** scheduling of that time, that can be a little too, can be far too restrictive for them. So if there is an emergency that comes up or a student who's in need, it's really hard to pull that counselor because they're already built into the schedule for a teacher who's expecting to be able to go to their planning. So having that counselor as part of the instructional schedule really does limit their ability to do some other really important essential aspects of their job.

**[01:16:10]** The transition time is not sufficient or not incorporated into the instructional minutes for our time in science and social studies is not sufficient to allow for deeper learning, too long for K-1, and then the movable Monday schedule can result in, especially with that every other week rotation, can result in a teacher missing students for a prolonged period of time.

**[01:16:34]** All right, so some recommendations, taking that feedback into consideration. Some of that was perhaps anticipated, but some of that was not anticipated. I would like to say the lack of transition time was wonderfully helpful to hear that from teachers because we've never included transition time on the paper instructional schedule because if you're in a three-story building, it's going to take you a different amount of time to get to PE than if you are in a one-story small school with four classrooms at each grade level.

**[01:17:03]** So it's always, that was an assumption we were making. We're going to make sure that we are not making that assumption going forward. So we would like to consider additional library staffing for our largest elementary schools so that because that is where the challenge is in providing library on a weekly basis so our schools that have more than five classes at a grade level are challenged to meet weekly with the one librarian and just for a little background history library is the one thing that is not staffed in the way the other specials are staffed the other specials are staffed by number of classes in your building and library is staffed by the total number of students in your building so that is why so we

**[01:17:41]** need to adjust that. That's an adjustment that obviously has budgetary implications. We would love to remove counseling from the weekly specials rotation and if we could make library a weekly special we could remove counseling from the rotation. So those two things go hand in hand. And we'd like to

revise the guidance language to clarify that if it says 100 minutes for an area of instruction you can take minutes to transition. You can wrap up your instruction within that amount of time and get where you need to be and that's completely fine. I will say in the initial guidance, it was, you know, this is flexible time, but we need to start somewhere for consistency, because we were very inconsistent across the division.

[01:18:20] And then we'd like to revisit the instructional minutes for ELA at grades 4 and 5 to align with HMH, because in the HMH resources, the instructional minutes guidance indicates that it's 90 to 120 minutes, and if you think back to that previous slide, it was 80 minutes at grades four and five.

[01:18:39] So that's something we're going to need to revisit in our curriculum materials and guidance. Is this where I am? Yes. Okay, also, we'd like to, this is exciting, speaking with social studies and social science and science offices.

[01:18:57] You saw in the lower grades, we had 20 minutes daily for each of those subjects. And they felt strongly about that for the daily instruction component of that because research tells us that that has a longer impact, having the frequent touch points. And we are going to revise that this year to allow schools, I have heard from a number of schools that they just love it.

[01:19:16] I know when we have been doing our academic reviews this year, some schools have said we love it, it's working well. But other schools are saying we would like the opportunity to combine blocks and have longer blocks. So we don't want to revert to every other unit where students might not be having any science or any social science for a number of weeks.

[01:19:35] But we would, those supervisors are willing to allow schools the option to combine the time. So you have 40 minutes of one subject one day, 40 minutes of the other subject the next. And we think that will be welcome, a welcome addition. And then we'd like to continue to provide professional learning to our special areas, library music and PE.

[01:19:55] Those that were not using the 50, did not have a 50-minute block prior art already did. So that's why they're not listed there. just to provide further professional learning on how to best utilize a 50-minute block with students. And that's something that's already happened and has happened on our professional development days.

[01:20:13] And I think all of our specialists would be able to speak to a teacher and the feedback we shared was that had that earlier that said it wasn't working, it was hard at first, but with continued understanding of the needs of our youngest learners and how to structure that time, the time has improved in many of our teachers' classrooms.

[01:20:37] All right. Long-term recommendations. We would love these to be short-term recommendations, by the way. Address staffing standards with library to make library equitable with music and art staffing at the elementary level. So staff library by the number of classrooms as opposed to the total number of students in the building.

[01:20:57] If we were to fix this for next year, that would be a minimum of six additional positions to support weekly library. those positions obviously would be divided across many, many schools. There are 18 schools that fall into the greater than five classes per grade level that we discussed. A maximum, if it is actually staffed as the other areas are staffed, it would be 14.9 positions to make it equitable.

[01:21:26] I would say that those six positions, as Elaine mentioned, those librarians would be traveling a lot to cover that, and there's things that we can do. There are some schools that only need an hour of time because they have one extra class or something along those lines, so schools are in very different places with their need for this. That's something that we'd have to look at as we think about how to best staff them, but those six teachers, if it were six positions, would be spread pretty thin across many schools. And as Jeff already mentioned, and I've already mentioned,

[01:22:01] we'd like to align the staffing standards for music, art, and PE so that it is equitable across all schools. All those staffing standards we haven't mentioned previously were done at different points in time historically, and were vastly different from each other, even though they're meeting the same needs.

[01:22:21] So music staffing was vastly different than art staffing or PE staffing. So in aligning those, we actually gain positions, which will help us with this and lower the budgetary impact. And so at this time, actually, we are, according to our needs here, overstaffed in music at the elementary level.

[01:22:42] And so as teachers retire or move on, we are allotting those positions to other areas to help support this as well. And that has been included. That is part of the FY25 budget staffing standards. And lastly, on this slide, We haven't talked a lot about collaborative learning time for teachers, but when we met with the superintendent's teachers advisory group last year to gain feedback on, before we even did this scheduling, this schedule is not, these kind of are happening in parallel, so the schedule was not the cause for the collaborative learning time, but that was something we were working toward ensuring.

[01:23:20] And last year when we met with the teachers, we found the feedback that we were getting were things like, I don't have time to plan, why do I have to meet with my team? So maybe a lack of understanding of the efficacy of collaborative time.

[01:23:36] And this year, what we were hearing is, and what we are observing, we've been in every school. We visit all the schools, and we've seen this in every school. It's 100% in place. And the feedback that we received from that group this year was, now we'd like some more autonomy to kind of direct the content of each of those meetings to the subject area that we're most focused on.

[01:23:55] So it was huge growth for teachers. We're very excited about that. Anything else on this slide, Jeff? I think that's it, and we're happy to answer any questions you might have. Well, we have six minutes left, so are there, I'm sure I don't have six minutes worth of questions.

[01:24:14] Dr. Samara and Dr. Deans, you have questions? I don't. Go ahead. It seems that the solution to every recommendation is increased staffing. Is there not some movement that can be made without increased staffing?

[01:24:30] I think the place where we need increased staffing is to help address the library issue. The rest of it, I think, is just us clarifying guidance and language that already exists. So how we schedule social science or science has no staffing impact.

[01:24:48] It's just clarifying our language. Same thing around transition. The kind of staffing asks that we have here is something to look for in the long term is around library and how we can help those 18 schools that are too large to have library every week create the situation where that might happen.

[01:25:05] And we have some things we've talked about already to do that. But that is one area where I think there would be a staffing implication. Any other questions? Go ahead, Dr. Sheehy. I think you already

mentioned it, but in one of the slides, I think it was slide 12, with the red quotients, if you can reiterate how that was addressed, because I had some constituents reach out with those two similar quotients that you had there.

[01:25:31] So I think that's a balance of there's an implication if we were to shorten those times that we're either going to make them too short, that there's not gonna be enough time for teachers to really invest in that time, or we're going to impact the collaborative planning time that is built into the instructional schedule.

[01:25:53] So if we were to, again, change the times of these to make them shorter, and then we had some that remained longer, it's going to impact the ability of those teachers to be able to collaborate and work together effectively during that time. So what we have seen, I think, and the feedback we've received is that this is a challenge in many schools, but it's one that we feel like we can address through some enhanced support on how to structure that time and how to support students, like what is a development responsive way to use this music block for students and to really help teachers understand some structures that they can put in place through some of our teachers who have been really successful

[01:26:32] as the time is allotted. - Dr. Deans? - If the council is moved out of the rotation time, when would those topics be covered with the students? So the counselor can then schedule individually with teachers, which is what has been done in the past.

[01:26:50] So the counselor will go at the beginning of the school year to each grade level and find the most advantageous time. It doesn't look a whole lot different on the outset, but what it does enable the counselor to do is if there is a disruption to the schedule or the counselor is needed elsewhere, they can go back and reschedule that time when it's not as part of that CLT block.

[01:27:09] So it's scheduled in the same way that it's biweekly. It's with every classroom. It's just not part of the hour that the teachers are collaborating. And along those lines, we typically would not have a substitute teacher if a counselor is absent. So if the counselor is not there, then that impacts that teacher's planning time or time to schedule with their team, versus if it was scheduled with the classroom, that can be rescheduled at another time.

[01:27:35] It wouldn't impact that teacher's ability to work with their other team members. I'm going to ask for some advice from you all. I have a lot. I've been collecting a lot. I asked for it. I've been sharing that I would be the voice.

[01:27:53] So I have a lot of things, many of things that we've touched on, but there's some that haven't been. So I just want to give a few, like, highlights of things that I didn't hear in your presentation that I want to make sure are on the record, and then maybe we could follow up. I did take all the emails, and being the type A teacher that I am, I color-coded them all, and I tallied all the different ones, and just maybe a bigger conversation.

[01:28:17] Um, so one thing that, uh, and maybe we don't answer these, but I just want to put them on because we do need to adjourn, but the search, I got a lot of emails from search teachers about how they're part of this now, but I didn't hear you mention that.

[01:28:32] So they, in K-1, I'm hearing from schools that search is now 25 minutes and paired with counseling instead of the guidance being with library. Did, was that? Can I speak to that? Yeah. So that would also be solved, and I think it's also appropriate at this point in time to give a huge thank you to the

Office of Counseling and the Gifted Office because given what we had available to us last year when we were trying to move forward with this, they were willing to adjust their expectations for their teachers to allow them to be part of the instructional schedule so that we could make this work in the year.

[01:29:08] But if we could get library weekly, all of that would come out. Okay. All right. Thank you for that clarification. I know a lot of the search teachers are worried about the shortening of the lessons where there's, like, they're losing the think time, which is the piece, the anecdotal piece that helps qualify them for the gifted program down the road.

[01:29:25] And so they're, like, they're feeling like they don't know who would qualify because it's just, like, the lesson and they leave, the lesson and they leave. So I appreciate that. Another is TAs. I'm unclear about kindergarten TAs. Have they always attended specials, or was this something new as part of the schedule?

[01:29:41] That has nothing to do with the instructional schedule. That was the expectation when we went from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten. And that is the point in time when kindergarten started attending art, music, and PE. If you recall, when it was half-day kindergarten, we were required to have three hours of instruction, seated instructional time.

[01:30:00] So kindergartners didn't receive specials. So when specials were added to the kindergarten schedule when we went full-day, that's when the TAs were requested to attend specials with them. Okay, wonderful. And then just the last thing that I did hear a lot of, and I know you mentioned SEL, and I'm still unsure of how SEL and guidance kind of work together if they don't, but that might be a larger conversation for us to have down the road, definitely.

[01:30:25] I see you nodding. I would like to have that. But I, you know, it's not that teachers don't value social emotional learning. I think they're a little bit afraid sometimes to speak out because it's got a stigma around, like, if I say that this isn't working, I'm against mental health for kids and I'm against that.

[01:30:41] They're not. mean I we're not but the problem is that the lessons for second step really require about 45 minutes if you get through all the slides so again they're picking and choosing what they're doing and they're feeling like they're not doing it adequately like there's no worse feeling for a teacher right is to like do a lesson and then feel like you have to cut it short um and then I know HMH has an SEL component so might we look at some of that integration into the literacy block and gain back some of that time not saying get rid of morning meeting I mean morning meeting is a gathering point but these are some of the conversations I think would be important um and

[01:31:17] also could a menu be offered like you can do 50 and 50 or you know I don't know like maybe thinking about like if this works for you and if that doesn't and I don't know or offering principals a place to share what has worked for them in a principal meeting or where they can say this worked for us maybe you could try it I just feel like there's a bigger conversation to be had around so much feedback.

[01:31:41] I mean, pages and pages of these emails where teachers took the time. So I appreciate you, and maybe we can just follow up. I think for sure. I think we all know that what happened last year or this year was a big step forward in addressing a lot of things that we wanted to do with the schedule.

[01:31:59] But I think there's also room for us to continue to refine and be responsive to what teachers had to say. I heard from a teacher who told me they feel like they have teachable moments in their classroom that they can't follow through on. And that's heartbreaking. I mean, that's what teaching is all

about. So we never want to send a message to teachers that you can't have those moments, that the schedule is so rigid and so inflexible that we can't take time to have those moments with students.

[01:32:23] So some of that is just us clarifying that information and making sure teachers know that this is here to help and support and guide and not to punish or restrict or, you know, be inflexible. Yeah, I agree. And I think some of that communication could go out and maybe even departments can speak to, you know, why this was decided from each angle you know to help help the specialists understand um i really appreciate you any last questions and we'll move thank you and we'll move to item six is there any new business seeing none um i am going to adjourn the meeting our next meeting is scheduled for april

[01:32:58] 4th 2024 so mark your calendars and if there's no no other business i entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting and actually i will motion to adjourn the meeting is there a second second - Thank you, and with that, we are adjourned.



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