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Loudoun County School Board, Human Resources and Talent Development (HRTD) Committee Meeting, Thursday, March 21, 2024

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/926103217?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] Hi, this is Dena Griffiths. I think we can call to order for the HRTD committee meeting for March 21st, 2024. We will begin with public comment. We had a sign-up sheet. We do have one person here that wants to speak.

[00:00:17] So if you could, we'll start with public comment. Thank you.

[00:00:35] Good afternoon. My name is Sandy Sullivan, and I currently serve the members of the Loudoun Education Association as their president. First in looking over your proposed items with information items, I'm confused and want to understand what's happening with personal leave.

[00:00:51] It looks like that's all going away, and sick leave is being increased in most calendar schedules, and whatever the plan is with that, it would be great to have leave that would be personal as well, so people would have something set aside for weddings, any of those kind of personal things we were pleased to see in terms of calendar development that a committee is being considered and LA would like to be a part of that committee I look forward to the discussion about exit surveys and we believe they should be confidential and very meaningful for the school system to

[00:01:28] help make positive change and we're very pleased to see that the policy removal of policy 7016 from the was removed from the agenda and it was Proposed to be deleted. That's the employee complaint policy and it's an excellent vehicle for employees to make sure they're heard and The school system can improve. Thank you. Miss Sullivan. I didn't know I don't know if you want to speak to any of that or as far as the sick leave. Thank you So I the sorry the sick leave and the personal leave

[00:02:03] I have talking points to speak to when we get to those items and I do plan to address the removal that I requested For 70 24 and 70 16. Thank you so much. We're gonna move to item 3 Approval of the February 22nd 2024 draft minutes. Could I please have a motion to approve those minutes?

[00:02:29] Thank you, Miss Donahue the motion has been made and seconded. Thank you. It miss Chandler Is there any discussion on the minutes? Minutes approved. Thank you. We will move to item number four, which is policy 7318, separation of staff.

[00:02:55] Ms. Bolin will be presenting. Thank you. Thank you. This evening, we are bringing forth policy 718, separation of staff members as an action item. This policy was originally brought forward at the February 22, 2024 HRTD committee meeting as an information item and was then sent for stakeholder feedback.

[00:03:21] The revisions to this policy were mainly recommended by Division Council to simplify and clarify the separation process. And at this time, I will ask Ms. Davis, HRTD Director, to remind the committee of the revised changes.

[00:03:42] Good afternoon. Policy 7318 as revised, as Lisa mentioned, was recommended changes from legal in terms to simplify what previously was a more complex policy. The revisions focused on three main types of separations for employees, retirement, resignation, and dismissal, and defines each, as well as outlines the procedure in which a staff can separate from employment.

[00:04:09] Throughout the revised policy, links and references were incorporated to clearly guide staff to other applicable policies and regulations the information can be easily accessed the revised policy also mirrors the sba guidelines and other districts we did create and draft an accompanying regulation which is not an item that we generally bring to the school board but i did want to point out that the regulation that accompanies the policy outlines the specific requirements and timelines for separations as well as what occurs

[00:04:41] in the event a resignation is denied thank you thank you is there any discussion thank you mrs Mrs. Griffiths. Ms. Davis, could you please -- I see that was a feedback item -- could you please speak to what happens if a resignation is denied?

[00:05:05] MS. I can. Let me just locate it in the resignation. It is a couple of pages long. So in the regulation, it talks about resignations being submitted to the superintendent, outlines timeframes. So within one week of submitting a resignation request, a licensed employee may withdraw that request to resign such request should be in writing to the superintendent or designee upon the expiration of a one-week period the superintendent shall notify the school board of the decision to accept or reject the license employees recognition and then within two weeks of

[00:05:45] such notification the school board may reverse the superintendent's decision and as of now this is still the draft regulation so it has not been finalized thank you miss Davis and has there have there been any instances where an employee has submitted and a statement of resignation which was denied

yes there have been and typically that revolves around if there are felony charges and we are going after a termination an actual termination that then could

[00:06:20] result in a revocation for a life and license recommendation so typically that That is the only time I have seen where a resignation has been denied. Thank you. Ms. Bolling and Ms. Davis. Any more discussion?

[00:06:37] There is no more discussion. We will move this to an action item for the next board meeting. Is there a second? Ms. Griffiths, may I make a motion to refer this item to the full board as an information item?

[00:07:02] I second that. now um oops we will now move on to item number five policy 70 7712 thank you so 7712 is our policy for um sick leave tonight we're bringing forth the revisions for that and together we are

[00:07:36] recommending the deletion of policy 7714 which is personal leave and before i hand this over to mr bennett to kind of go through the recommended changes i would like to give this committee a little bit of a background. HRTD has heard overwhelmingly that 10 and 11 month employees need more than three personal days throughout the school year. In the fiscal year 24 budget, HRTD brought an item forward in an effort to increase 10 and 11 month employees sick leave

[00:08:12] to 14 days to be applied equally across the division of all staff, as well as to elevate personal days from 3 to 5. Unfortunately, that has a really hefty price tag with it, and it did not make it forward in that budget, in the fiscal year '24 budget.

[00:08:34] Recognizing that fiscal year '25 was going to be a similar type of budget crunch, we knew that we could not bring forward that same thing again and expect it to go through. Additionally, we have been asked routinely, why can't we just have PTO?

[00:08:53] Why can't we have one bucket and just use it as we see fit? And unfortunately, due to VRS rules, that would remove a benefit for employees. And part of the rule for VRS is you can use your sick leave to buy credit.

[00:09:10] Well, if we put all leave into PTO, paid time off, then they no longer have the ability to use that leave to buy credit or service hours towards their retirement. So this policy bringing forward today, this evening, is our attempt to mesh the two of those together and provide PTO, but really as sick leave and still offer an opportunity to increase the ability to use personal days from three to five.

[00:09:43] and that's my very brief overview and I will turn it over to mr. Bennett to kind of go through all of the recommended changes because there are additional changes as well evening so the biggest changes as as miss Bolin referred to you'll see on in the red line version on lines 14 and 16 and that's basically to elevate the number of days currently for 10 month employee they have 10 sick days this basically takes their personal and turns it into sick so you'll see

[00:10:19] that elevated to 13 days and then you'll also see the 11 month employees who currently have 11 sick days those three days get added and they become 14 days there's also on lines 113 I think it's 113 114 is the new paragraph that refers to the the ability to use up to five days for personal reasons so it's as miss Bolin said it's a cost-neutral way to kind of meet the teachers needs that give them more latitude without

our ability to increase days so that particular paragraph you see that's paragraph F and it kind of outlines the

[00:10:58] parameters that they can use up to five days for a personal reason in a given school year those are the most significant changes in this policy There's a few minor little editorial things, but those are the significant changes. Thank you. Is there any discussion? Yes So just to clarify I see It says all full full-time employees. So anyone who's receiving benefits will receive this specific benefit. Yes

[00:11:34] Yes, ma'am. All right. Thank you any other comments or discussion. It's don't you thank you chair Griffith miss Poland Is this in any way related to the other policy that is no longer on the agenda for today?

[00:11:54] No, ma'am. Not at all. And I forgot to speak to that, but I will after a decision is made on this. Thank you. These are information items. If we could, we'll move on to 5.02, policy 7714.

[00:12:14] So 7714 is coupled with 7712. 7714 is personal leave. And if sick leave were to move forward with the addition of the personal leave days, we would therefore no longer need this policy, and it would be our recommendation to delete this policy.

[00:12:34] Thank you, Ms. Bolin. Any discussion? Ms. Dunning? Thank you, Chair Griffiths. Ms. Bolin, since I realized because of the stage that we're at, this has not been circulated for comment in the community yet.

[00:12:55] But that being said, have you received any input from teachers, from the LEA, from other staff, since this agenda has gone live with this proposal? I have not received any personal feedback.

[00:13:10] We did circulate the concept today during the teacher advisory. We let them know that it was coming this evening. We also let them know that, of course, it would go out for public feedback at the conclusion of the meeting, should the committee decide to move forward.

[00:13:32] And there was no negative reception. The only comment that I do recall receiving was not understanding why there was a recommendation to delete personal leave. It is my hope now that there is more of an understanding.

[00:13:50] - Thank you. - Is there any more discussion? - There's no more discussion. We will move on to 6.01 and that is the candidate's journey.

[00:14:10] - Can I just confirm that the committee would like to bring this back as an action item, these two policies for the next committee? - We can move it to an action item. - Perfect, thank you. And then Chair Griffiths, if it's okay, I'd like to address the ask to remove 7024 before we move on to the candidate's journey.

[00:14:34] - If there's no discussion, we'll remove 7024. - No, ma'am, I'd like to address the rationale for why. - Oh, address, okay, right now? - If that's okay. - Go ahead. Thank you so much. So I did want to, and I know that I reached out to each of you to prepare you for this evening, but I did want to address the removal of the recommended revisions for policy 7024, which was the grievance policy for non-exempt support staff and supervisory staff, as well as the recommended deletion for 7016.

[00:15:11] So the intent, in short, the intent, HRTD's intent for policy review is to do two things. One, make sure all employees have avenues to review, address concerns, and two, to simplify the process for employees.

[00:15:29] It is still our intent to bring these policies forward at a later date to committee, but through further review, we continue to work with stakeholders. We felt like there were still some holes and gaps to where our policies did not address everything we were hoping to, to ultimately then come back and request the deletion of 70-16.

[00:15:52] It is still our intent to look for a simplified process for employees on how to bring forward their concerns, because there is a number of avenues and there is confusion. But I did want to address that. These policies will come at a future date.

[00:16:08] Thank you, Ms. Bolin. And with that, we will move on now. We will move on to discussion items 6.01. HRTD committee, the candidate's journey presentation. Thank you. Thank you so much. So it is with great excitement that I get to turn this over to Mr. Phillips. He is the HRTD director that oversees the, sorry, I'm trying to look at my screen and present at the same time.

[00:16:42] He is the director that oversees school-based staffing, recruitment, and substitutes. And this evening, we'll be introducing many of those team members and walking the committee through the candidate's journey. Thanks, Ms. Boland.

[00:17:00] Thank you for allowing me to share information to you tonight about recruiting and staffing. Tonight, you'll get a very high-level overview of these teams and what they do to support our strategic plan. As a reminder, here is the driving statement from our strategic plan that we center all of our actions.

[00:17:23] This graphic was taken from the superintendent's estimate of needs, which gives all a look at the HR department as a whole and the different functions that they perform to support our staff. Next slide, please. Tonight, we're going to take a look into this slice, school-based staffing, recruiting, and substitutes, and we provide you a deeper understanding of the school-based staffing and recruiting teams.

[00:17:48] Substitutes and subcentral are scheduled to be discussed at a later date, particularly the June HRTD committee meeting. Objectives for the presentations will be to, as Ms. Boland said, meet some of the team members and see its structure. Talk to you about what we describe in Loudoun County as the candidate's journey.

[00:18:05] Candidates and hiring managers, providing tools and supports for them so that we have best hiring practices. Finally, taking a look at the hiring process for candidates, the different steps that they go through. and then giving you a time to ask any questions that you may have.

[00:18:23] Next slide, please. Here is the organizational chart or structure of the teams that are under my direction as their director.

[00:18:43] Tonight here with us, we have Laura Collins. She is the supervisor of elementary staffing. Next to her is Christy Hurd. She is the supervisor of secondary staffing. The staffing supervisors are supported by two staffing coordinators and two licensure specialists.

[00:19:01] Each assigns specific schools and responsibilities to support the hiring of school-based employees. Also here tonight is Karen O'Neill. She is the supervisor of recruitment. Pictured all three. Well, there was a third picture. I'm not sure what happened there, but we have three other recruiters that Karen supervises.

[00:19:20] Lynn Caldwell, he is the teacher recruiter with an emphasis on teacher cadet and educators rising. Jonathan Mandina, he is our universal non-exempt recruiter who works collaboratively with

support services and has a workspace in the Transportation and Support Services office, and Jordan Stark, who is our diversity recruiter and works with our teachers in training, or our student teachers.

[00:19:44] All three of them are on recruiting trips right now. Behind the scenes supporting all applications and job postings are three recruitment assistants. Please note that the entire recruitment team also collaborates with the non-school-based staffing and operations team directed by Nicole Davis.

[00:20:02] Together, in collaboration with HRTD and other LCPS departments, the teams work the events, fairs, programs, and other activities from concept to implementation, some of which you will hear about in this presentation. Next slide, please. In support of LCPS's Strategic Plan for Excellence, HRTD is striving to be the employer of choice while creating common recruiting, interviewing, and selection processes across the district.

[00:20:29] We commonly refer to these processes as well as the supporting actions as the candidate's journey. Knowing that many candidates apply to multiple schools and positions, HRTD works to develop and promote consistent practices across these schools and departments. Next slide, please.

[00:20:48] Here is a graphic that shows what the candidate journey looks like, broken down into four main parts. Awareness, consideration, application, and selection. Within each of these sections, HRTD works alongside hiring managers and candidates to ensure responsive processes and customer Service while providing opportunities and resources as the employer of choice. This includes hiring manager workshops and trainings, virtual webinars and in-person training on interviewing and resume writing, and tools and resources on the LCPS website and within hiring manager toolkits.

[00:21:26] In this graphic, the candidate's journey is broken down further into an interconnected continuum of services as HRTD strives to create an overall exemplary staff. We will highlight some key actions and achievements from within the continuum supported by the teams here tonight.

[00:21:42] Please note that the presentation is not inclusive of all of our actions and achievements supported by the teams, but ones that will give you a better understanding or perspective of our organization and its operations as a whole. The first step is awareness, branding, and marketing.

[00:22:00] How do we promote LCPS as the employer of choice? One of the first things we did as a team was work with school hiring managers and teams to create employee value propositions or EVPs. What is it that each school can offer its employees through its vision and culture? What is their differentiator and compelling characteristic to attract prospective candidates? We also revisited these EVPs after COVID with the shift in workers' needs to address their needs to feel more connected. Here you can see the LCPS EVP from the main page of our applicant tracking system, otherwise known as what

[00:22:37] we call Talent Ed, modeled and crosswalked with our current strategic plan. Recognizing that the recruitment team from each school is just as important as the efforts of the recruitment team in HRTD, we created an air table on the LCPS careers page to showcase the school's EVP to prospective candidates.

[00:23:00] Many times, candidates in letters of intent holders want to quote-unquote shop around to see the differences between schools before making their decision on where they're going to work in Loudoun County. In addition to the EVPs, the recruitment team has created many partnerships to showcase LCPS's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are a platinum partner with the Diversity in Education program while connecting with many HBCUs and MSIs and attending national conferences to create connections for pipelines for teachers of color.

[00:23:40] Next slide, please. Finally, the recruitment team leverages technology to increase awareness of Loudoun County Public Schools. Subscriptions to sourcing services like LinkedIn and Handshake have provided more exposures of recruiting efforts and for hard-to-fill jobs. Every job posted on the LCPS applicant tracking system is also scraped to a national job board, School Springs, another sourcing opportunity. Talent Ed, with whom LCPS partners for its applicant tracking system, is also developing more robust sourcing tools within its own platform.

[00:24:17] Next slide, please. Consideration. How do we develop or get candidates to consider working for Loudoun County during a national teacher shortage? Here is a snapshot of some of the activities done by the recruiting team.

[00:24:34] The recruitment team, in collaboration with other teams within LCPS, is actively working to create a robust candidate pool from which hiring managers can screen as many candidates as possible. In addition to the college and LCPS hosted fairs, the recruitment team also oversees a Grow Your Own initiatives, including JMU, GMU, and teacher cadet programs.

[00:24:57] In addition, LCPS has partnered with an international visa-sponsoring company, Participate Learning, to provide experienced and certified elementary school teachers to the district. We look forward to creating a tuition assistance program to move support personnel into licensed teacher roles through partnerships with various career switcher programs.

[00:25:17] Through recruiting events and initiatives, last year, LCPS was able to offer 182 early letters of intent for the hiring year while making contact with over 750 candidates. Through its own hosted events for licensed staff, LCPS was able to hire 52% of the candidates that were interviewed.

[00:25:38] This year, with about five weeks left in the early hiring season, which goes to April 30th, we have already surpassed last year's number of the letters and tents offered to candidates. Next slide. How can candidates efficiently declare their intentions to work for LCPS and be seen by our hiring managers?

[00:25:59] In October of 2021, LCPS switched to TalentEd, a more efficient and user-friendly applicant tracking system. Levering technology, applicants are now able to apply and receive job alerts from any device, including mobile ones. Additionally, HRTD has continued to build out the internal tools within the program to improve communication to our applicants while allowing hiring managers to view as many candidates as possible, even when the hiring manager is not on the road with the recruiting team. Finally, applicants can monitor the status of their application as it relates to

[00:26:36] job pools, along with automatic emails sent to applicants with various triggers. This also includes sending electronic job offers through Talent Ed concurrently with phone calls from our HRTD staffing members. As we know, LCPS employees are our biggest asset, and we are very happy that the HRTD FY25 budget initiatives reflect the continued investment in having LCPS be the employer of choice.

[00:27:06] We are very proud as the employer of choice that LCPS is the first Northern Virginia district to offer incentives to attract top talent to its district as licensed staff members. And you can see those three tiered of the new teacher signing bonuses. Next step is choosing the candidate.

[00:27:28] How do hiring managers select candidates for the job? Over the last three years, HRTD has led hiring manager training sessions on building job-related competencies, interviewing questions based on each competency, candidate look-fors, and debriefing protocols to best mitigate bias while selecting candidates for interviews in subsequent positions.

[00:27:50] You can see examples from each of these on the next two slides. These collaborative training sessions have allowed hiring managers autonomy to build capacity within their own administrative teams while emphasizing district-wide common practices. Some of these practices include interviewing at least three candidates for a job, conducting interviews in a panel format to get diverse perspectives while selecting the candidate, and using scoring rubrics to rate the quality of candidate answers.

[00:28:20] Next slide, please. As a result of the tools and processes put in place by both hiring managers and candidates, the proportion of ethnically, racially diverse licensed staff members has increased by 31.7% from 2017-18 school year to our current school year.

[00:28:39] The increase of teachers in color was from 12.6 percent to currently 16.6 percent, and that total number of licensed staff has increased by over 1,000 licensed staff members in that same period to now a number of that is over 7,500 licensed staff members.

[00:28:59] Consistently, our fill rate for this school year has been over 98% for our school-based license positions, which is higher than our local competitors when we look at last year's VDOE reports, although we do anticipate the shortage of licensed staff to continue to impact staffing needs in our near future.

[00:29:19] As we continue to provide support to hiring managers, HRTD is working on the next phase of the candidate journey of immersing candidates into both LCPS and the school culture to improve retention of hired candidates. Next step.

[00:29:38] You've seen the candidate's journey holistically. Now, what does it look like specifically for our candidates? This slide shows the steps a candidate takes to move through their journey when identified for a prospective hire from the time of their application. Many of these steps, particularly at both ends of the process, the beginning and the end, are managed through our applicant tracking system, which also allows a prospective candidate to complete most of the activities of a new hire checklist asynchronously.

[00:30:07] Additionally, we leveraged the applicant tracking system to automate communication to both candidates and hiring managers throughout the entire process. An analysis of our last hiring season showed that the time to hire, which is between steps three and five, the time from the hiring request submitted to the HRTD staffing team member to when a verbal written offer was made to the candidate was an average of four business days, and our time to fill the number of business days from when the offer request was submitted to the HRT staffing member or the hiring request to when the employee is completely clear to begin work was 24 business days.

[00:30:46] Note, both of these statistics were on external hires. Internal hires and transfers obviously occur more efficiently and more quickly. Thank you for that great presentation.

[00:31:03] Are there any questions? Yes, Ms. Tania. Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you for that excellent presentation. And I also wanted to thank the staff members who are here in the audience for the work that you're doing in this critical area to support our schools.

[00:31:21] I would like to know a little bit more about what we're doing to try and increase our, making great strides so far with diversifying our workforce. But what are our plans to continue to hopefully improve those numbers in the future?

[00:31:37] I'm very happy to see that there is an increase, but it seems that the percentage of people of color in our workforce currently is significantly different than the statistics of our overall Loudoun

community. So many of the things, especially the career switcher programs that we're partnering, typically, statistically, more teachers of color will go through an alternate route to the licensure path or pathway to licensure than the traditional college so that's what one of the reasons why we're

[00:32:14] very happy to be bringing on creative solutions like participate learning i teach and educate virginia the jmu gyo grow your own modules those will provide our support staff currently working for loud and an opportunity and our support staff is as a total more diverse than our teaching staff so hopefully those numbers will increase in addition to that for our teacher cadet program we offer all of our seniors who are in teacher cadet one or two an early letter of intent to come back and work for us in loudoun county public schools as a teacher when they when they complete

[00:32:53] their degree well our student body is becoming more diverse our teacher cadet class is becoming more diverse so as a result those teachers coming back to us are going to be more diverse this is our first year of that group coming back so we're about 20 percent so we gave about a hundred letters of intent during the covid year uh driving around to all their houses to give them the letter and all their swag bags and we have about 20 uh teacher cadets coming back some who are in that cadre of 2020 are also in a master's program so they still have two more years to say that they're going to come back to us when they finish their masters these are the ones finishing mostly their bachelor's

[00:33:31] degree. That's wonderful. Thank you very much. Any more questions? Any more discussion? I do have a question. Where do people of color go besides applying normally or going to career fairs? I saw that you have a lot of career fairs listed. Where are they going, if you could clarify? Can I ask a clarifying question? What do you -- going where? Oh, well, you said different channels. We're going through different channels to find jobs. I thought that was what you said. No, we are creating

[00:34:07] different channels for potentially having more pathways to licensure for teaching. And in those alternate pathways, you're more likely to find a teacher of color in those pathways than the traditional university going to some of our larger Virginia institutions or Pennsylvania institutions.

[00:34:31] They're more likely to get a bachelor's degree in a non-teaching field and then say, I want teach and these other pathways or channels are providing that alternate route for them okay thank you any other questions thank you thank you very much for the presentation I think with that we can move on to the student staff calendar thank you chair Griffiths so this evening we are bringing the student staff calendar development process to begin this conversation this is

[00:35:07] different than what I brought forth at the board meeting. The board meeting was to have the full board look at options based on our Election Day dilemma. This is to start the conversation about the development of future calendars. As a full new board, we would like to start to determine the philosophy of this board, especially given the opportunity that we do have three years approved, now two, and we do have some time to work through this board's philosophy

[00:35:47] and way of thinking in the development process. Additionally, as we grow and as the calendars become more and more complex, we are hopeful to have various avenues to garner feedback. Surveys are not always the best approach, but they're one of the only ways we can get out to so many stakeholders.

[00:36:11] So we are looking to work to develop a calendar development committee of various stakeholders that would include staff members, students, parents, board members, of course. And so we are beginning that work here with the three of you in the hopes to continue it.

[00:36:30] I'm going to turn it over to Nicole Davis so that she can provide the committee with a background and what our direction looks like. Good afternoon. So I'm here tonight, as Ms. Bolin mentioned, to present to you a brief overview of the calendar development process, past, present, and future.

[00:36:52] As you know, it all starts with our vision and mission. LCPS is committed to centering the work around helping every student pursue and reach their full potential and empowering them to make meaningful contributions to the world. The creation of adoption of a student school calendar is a foundational step to fulfilling that mission.

[00:37:16] So as you can imagine, it can be difficult and complex endeavor to build a school calendar that meets the needs of more than 80,000 students and families, as well as over 13,000 employees, while staying true to our core values and the 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence.

[00:37:37] So this slide will provide a brief historical overview and some information in regards to the development of school calendars. We are guided by our policy and regulation 7040 as well as Virginia code. Policy and regulation provide guidance on student school calendar and teacher calendar development, designated holidays, staff development days, inclement weather procedures, and more.

[00:38:05] Under Virginia code, all Virginia school divisions must provide 180 days or 990 hours of instruction per year. LCPS students attend school daily for six hours and 15 minutes of instructional time, which exceeds the state requirement for instructional time by 45 minutes, approximately 45 minutes a day.

[00:38:26] The division has a long-standing history of over 30 years of having what we call a fixed calendar, which has greatly benefited families and staff by being able to plan for school days, work days, and breaks. Over the last 30 years in education many school divisions create calendars to meet a minimum requirement which leads to the need to remove plan days off or extend the school year when inclement weather or other emergencies occur during school closures instead of continuing with this type of

[00:38:59] makeup day system prior divisional leaders chose the path of a fixed calendar or a banked time concept which has remained to this day and as you can see snow days have become a byproduct of that fixed calendar so as mentioned in the previous slide lcps has a long-standing history of a fixed calendar to help gain a further understanding of the calendars over time we have put together this chart which represents 18 years of data to include the number of student

[00:39:36] days, teacher contract days, holidays, breaks, start and end dates, and the number of professional development days over time. As you can see, the calendars have historically reflected 180 instructional days for students and 197 contract days for teachers, 194 which are assigned. So how did we get to where we are today? We have worked diligently with a variety of stakeholders and connected with colleagues. This included listening to presentations and

[00:40:14] discussions from prior school board meetings, including listening to public comment and feedback from school board members. In 2021, the school board at that time worked diligently with various stakeholders, including local religious organizations, such as All Dulles Area Muslim Society, Adams Center, the Jewish Community Relations Council, JCRC, and others to identify one holiday of significant value representing the different religious observations to designate as school holidays. This resulted in an addition of five holidays at that time in 2021 going from

[00:40:50] 13 to 18. Additionally, HRTD has worked over the years and sent multiple surveys to gain feedback from staff and families attended committee meetings including advisory committee meetings and participated in calendar alignment committees with six local school divisions in these discussions meetings were centered around calendar development best practices and potential opportunities to align calendars in the future after gathering stakeholder feedback

[00:41:24] and in response to the school board discussion at the main 9th 2024 school board meeting 2023 school board meeting excuse me when we adopted the 2024-25 and 25-26 school calendars we were able to glean the following guiding principles for calendar development 180 instructional days 197 contract days for teachers 194 which are assigned three unassigned establishing the start date for students the second to last thursday in august and prior to labor day establishing the

[00:41:59] start date for teachers six days prior to the start date for students establishing break times including winter break and spring break 17 established holidays a focus on equal quarters and designation of student holidays and teacher work days so what's next as Ms. Bolin mentioned we are working on the establishment of a calendar committee which will involve various stakeholders our community and advisory groups additionally we will continue discussions and review all of

[00:42:37] the feedback received tonight and in the future discussions for the development of school calendars we continue again to participate in advisory committees and work with neighboring school divisions to provide calendars that best support the needs of student and staff however prior to moving forward with this work we would like to hear from you the school board regarding your philosophy on the development of school calendars.

[00:43:02] What have you been hearing from your constituents? What should we continue doing? What should we do differently? Is there an interest in alternative calendar options? For example, some divisions are doing a four-day student week with a five-day employee week.

[00:43:19] Is year-round school an interest? We look forward to continuing conversations and your feedback. Thank you. Thank you so much, Ms. Davis. Any discussion? Yes.

[00:43:35] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you guys so much for putting this together. It's very informative. And I would like to acknowledge your hard work over the last several years to really bring this clear philosophy forward. And I want to express that I've heard from many constituents an appreciation for the consistency. I think, you know, families may not be with us all 13 years, but they are often with us for an extended amount of time and having that consistency to allow for summer vacation planning and and i mean so many of those things are done as far out um that are

[00:44:13] providing that consistently consistency is really um much appreciated um i would also like to acknowledge i think um it would be fair of course i wouldn't want to necessarily make um like plan a flag on the decision but i'm so excited to hear what the committee will have to say about snow days i think it's fair we haven't really had to use them in a significant way since 2016.

[00:44:45] there certainly have been variations in the weather but it is i think we should always be willing to innovate and it would be interesting to see if the community feels that way as well I don't necessarily know what my position is yet on full day or full year school.

[00:45:06] I think it would be really interesting to dig in and really study it and see what all of the benefits are. But I'm always open for exploring creative ideas. So thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. Ms.

Dunahue? Thank you, Chair Griffiths.

[00:45:24] I would echo Ms. Chandler's comments. I very much appreciate this very thoughtful and informative presentation. And I'm very grateful, especially for the recent innovations to the calendar that incorporated the diverse religious holidays and observances to better reflect the makeup of our entire LCVS community.

[00:45:47] That's something that I think is very important and that I would absolutely like to see continue since you inquired about our priorities and philosophies and approaching the calendar. That being said, I am also interested, although noncommittal, in this idea of your own school.

[00:46:11] I've certainly been contacted by a number of students expressing interest in the four-day school week, which is honestly not something that I had thought might be realistically feasible. So it's very interesting to hear that there are other districts that are having a four-day week for students, five-day work for educators. So I'm interested to hear more about what that looks like in other districts and how it's working for them. I am a little curious. So I grew up in Illinois and

[00:46:49] we did not have the fixed calendar. So we always had snow days and how long we went into the summer you know determined was determined by how much snow we did or did not have during the year and I there is a lot of value I think in the approach that LCPS takes now as Miss Chandler said with the predictability of being able to make plans related to those same rationales I have been curious why our spring break is always tied to Easter rather than being on a fixed week in the spring and

[00:47:25] And I have wondered if there is an appetite to make a change there for the notions of being able to plan in advance, have reliability, consistent scheduling every year, things of that nature.

[00:47:43] So I thank you for that question. We actually approached this as a possibility when we were doing our multi-year calendars and put a survey out, and based on the results that we had, now recognizing although we feel like we got a good response, it was nowhere near our current student and staff population.

[00:48:10] I mean, it wasn't even 10%, so there was not an appetite at that time, and as Ms. Davis mentioned we're also part of in a committee or a focus group of various divisions that focus on the calendar and and we recognize that it's important to pay attention to what Fairfax and Prince William do because we have families that work in Loudoun and live in these other divisions and may have students going to those schools but at that time there was not an appetite we were we were looking into and we will continue to look into those things thank you and

[00:48:48] and then I did just have one question so this the proposal to have a calendar committee I was curious is that new for the for our current calendar development or is that is that the approach that has been used in the past to create some of our previous calendars so we have never utilized a calendar committee in the past and you know to be completely honest with you the calendar was pretty structured in the way that it was established and has only recently gotten

[00:49:19] more and more complex and the complexity involves more and more feedback because it impacts more people in various ways and you know from an HR perspective it's It's actually difficult to have the instructional calendar in HR, but it's always lived here.

[00:49:44] And so making sure that we're not just focused on, from an HR perspective, on the adults, but making sure that we're focused on the students as well. One other area where I've gotten some questions from constituents is, why do we start on a Thursday?

[00:50:01] Which I assume has to do with block scheduling, but I do, and that is what I tell them, that I think it has to do with block scheduling, although since my kids are in elementary school, I'm not 100% confident on that, but I do get that question. Why do we start on a Thursday? So I'm actually just going to go back to the guiding principles.

[00:50:20] So some of this is a philosophy, a board philosophy, a division philosophy. And so as Ms. Davis said, through the various presentations, feedback, we've been able to ascertain what not to ask because we've gotten the same responses and where the areas of focus typically seem to be.

[00:50:42] And there, you know, when we went to Thursday Starts, there was some pushback, and then it was loved. And part of that reason was, yes, it's difficult to start in the middle of the week, but it gives students an opportunity to start, have a weekend, and regroup after a long summer.

[00:50:58] And it gives high school or secondary a chance to do both A and B classes, which is why we've stuck to Thursday start we were asking the question every time and presenting an option for Monday and the school the previous school board finally told us stop doing that thank you and if I may add when I was growing up we started school after Labor Day and we ended around June 20 something but again it

[00:51:32] wasn't fixed it depended on the snow days so we actually didn't know exactly We had an idea of when we were going to graduate high school or when the school was going to end in June, but they would extend it or take days away, and you would, you know, it would end the school year sooner or later.

[00:51:53] So that's something that I'm sure you're getting. And I understand wanting to create the committee, and this is complex. It's really complex. You're dealing with a very diverse calendar. People have their opinions. Me personally, I'm not sure.

[00:52:09] I would love to bring Columbus Day back. You know, just dismissing it, dismissing, you know, Italians and Catholics, that's something that I've thought about for a while, or just to mention it on the same day. So those are questions I have.

[00:52:27] Well, my question was actually on the snow days, and that's where I was talking about what I grew up with, where you didn't always know what day in June you were going to finish school. So I don't know if we can go that route.

[00:52:44] I have no idea. And as far as year-round school, I'm open to that. I'm not sure if that could be implemented in this county, but I would certainly love to hear your ideas. But I'm sure you're getting a lot of opinions, And I did see that you did send a survey this week.

[00:53:08] I also feel like I've been filling out these surveys for years. And it's been the same thing every year, where I may have requested after Labor Day, after Labor Day. And it's been the same. So I don't know.

[00:53:23] Are you really getting from your surveys most people requesting to start in August? I mean, everybody I talk to is after Labor Day. So I'm just curious about that. So actually, yes.

[00:53:39] And you will get access. We will, the research office will pull together the survey results and the comments in a fashion that is easily, more easily readable. And that will be presented for the school board in board docs.

[00:53:55] But surprisingly, yes, we do get more requests to start in August than we do after Labor Day, which again was another stop bringing us an after Labor Day start option from the previous school board because we would bring upwards of five or six options and they actually, those two options, they asked us to stop bringing.

[00:54:26] Additionally, sort of kind of in alignment with this, one of the alternative calendars that we've also been talking about, we get a lot of feedback, at least at the secondary level, that after SOLs and AP exams, there's kind of this lull, and they don't know what to do for the next several weeks into June. And so one of the alternatives that we've been sort of looking into is whether or not to even start earlier in August and end in late May.

[00:54:59] So we start earlier and end earlier. That's an alternative, and us responding to this consistent concern about we go so much later and the kids are kind of done, and what does that look like, and is there an appetite for that, and how does that work?

[00:55:23] Additionally, with the year-round calendar, what does the appetite for that look like? you know the four day yes we're watching that very closely because it does seem like it could be beneficial to our staff but we have to also think about our families and where that might work for families that have secondary students that could stay home while parents work on the fifth day or the Friday or Wednesday or whatever day that is what do we do for our elementary kids and if we're going to recommend that we then have to have a solution and is it something we can

[00:55:56] partner with our students and open our high schools and have some type of program is can we can we partner with Parks and Rec what does that look like so we recognize that regardless of the alternatives we are going to have to have other solutions because there's going to be other impacts the other thing is in regards to snow days we've had this fixed calendar forever I think you know from an HR perspective we're open to other things but we also have to make sure that the board and the public are aware of the potential consequences of those other things

[00:56:35] so there's been a desire or a guiding principle that we go 180 days and we've added this extra time we're consistently talking about learning loss we're consistently talking about the need tutoring we have staff members who say they don't have enough time in the day currently to to to do all that we ask them to do with students so if we remove snow days which are a byproduct of the schedule that we've currently developed that means a reduction of instructional days or a reduction in instructional

[00:57:13] hours and that's just for students then we have to also look at if we remove in If we remove snow days, removing instructional days, what do we do with teacher contract days? They're contracted 197 days.

[00:57:29] They're paid for 197 days. They're scheduled to work 194 of those days, giving them three unscheduled work days to utilize for training and other things. What do we do with those other days if we remove additional days, and how does that impact them?

[00:57:49] So there's some other things that we would have to think about that we have done over the years to allow for this fixed calendar and what impacts those might have. So I just bring those up because those are some of the things that we think through on the back end when we bring them forward.

[00:58:06] And I know it's not always great to have presentations, but we definitely want to try to educate the board on the history of how we got to where we got and some of the trouble to make sure you're aware

of the red flags. I appreciate that, and I think this is up for further discussion.

[00:58:26] I don't know if you needed answers today on anything. No, we did not need answers. This was the start of this conversation as we move forward. We don't look to bring anything for the future years until the fall, so this is the start of the work and the start of allowing you to ask questions and really dive into it.

[00:58:45] This was great. Thank you so much. And maybe now we can move on to 6.03. I had asked you about exit surveys, and if you can explain that. When an employee leaves, I got the impression that it's optional to do an exit survey, where they probably should be required, if you can just talk to that.

[00:59:13] So it is absolutely optional. I'm not sure we'd want to make it required. The employees have two opportunities. They actually have more than two, but I'm going to start with two. So when an employee completes a voluntary separation form, they are presented with an opportunity to complete an exit survey.

[00:59:37] Recognizing that we have employees that are fearful of potential retaliation for being honest on an exit survey prior to their last day of work, We have worked diligently over the past several months and actually implemented sort of an enhancement in November that would, one, request that the employee submit their personal email address at the time that they voluntarily separate, and that allows us to then provide them the exit survey, a link to the exit survey to their personal email address.

[01:00:15] There is an automatic setup reminder, which will remind them that they haven't completed it. And this happens after their last day of work. So there's no fear of potential retaliation. Now, what I will say, up until now, adding the personal email address has not been a requirement.

[01:00:38] It will now be a requirement. And so this is the first year. So we are working to set sort of a baseline data. We have someone that reviews the information that comes in. We are tracking. We are putting trends together. We are hoping that it will inform actions around potential issues in buildings with certain supervisors that we could help support and change the culture or morale or build up whatever needs to be built up.

[01:01:08] But additionally, our hope is that we have a more truthful response that we can then address immediately. And if there is a possible issue, we could maybe keep that employee from leaving the division.

[01:01:30] Thank you, Ms. Boland. Any questions or discussion? Ms. Chandler? Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there any way to provide the exit survey without tracking the data back to that personal email account? So it is anonymous.

[01:01:49] They put in their email, and the information that we receive back does not have their email included or their name, but there is a field that if they feel that they would like to talk to somebody, they can add their information, and someone from HRTD would reach out appropriately. So even though it's going to the personal email, it's clear that the data that's coming back isn't necessarily tied to the personal email.

[01:02:11] Correct there's a disclaimer with that information. Oh, thank you very much. Miss Donahue. Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. What are the questions asked on the exit survey? We can we can provide you with a sample.

[01:02:30] It's quite lengthy. Thank you. Thank you. And if I may add, I mean, anybody leaving a job, it should be confidential. I'm curious to know why people are so hesitant. Why do they feel like there would be retaliation?

[01:02:49] I think it's just a culture. It's a culture shift. We have interactions with individuals all the time that are afraid to get fired. It's just a culture shift. It's creating a culture shift. Even with the disclaimer, even with saying that it is anonymous, there is still a fear. We're working through it. I'm not really sure I have the answer.

[01:03:20] Do we offer them to come in in person to do the exit survey? we have never offered that they come in in person to complete the survey we offer the opportunity for them to meet with an HR individual which could absolutely be in person it doesn't necessarily stipulate in person on the phone it would be at their at their preference the only reason why I mentioned that is every company I've ever worked for the person would come in and meet with HR or an HR representative.

[01:03:59] There's no issues, but then there is issues, and it would be duly noted. So I don't know if there's any way we can improve on that at all. I know you're working hard on this, and you've probably thrown all these ideas around, but I'm just curious to know why we don't have more, because I think that would help with retention.

[01:04:22] The sheer number of responses that we've received since implementing this practice has tripled. It has gone up quite significantly. So it's our goal to continue to improve and to look at this.

[01:04:40] I will say I would be nervous about the capacity to call every single employee that submitted a resignation. Unfortunately, even just thinking about when we get the influx, we wouldn't be able to keep up. it would be like we were making a promise that we could never keep.

[01:04:58] But we do continue to improve our processes and hope to look back and be able to do that. And I would like to add that in line with the exit survey, when they do fill out the voluntary separation form prior to completing the exit survey, there's a field asking them why they resign, and there's also an open-ended field.

[01:05:18] So my team will look at that information, and if anything comes up that's out of the ordinary where they mention something either medical or concerning related to an employee relations issue, generally my team will follow up that employee to get more information to make sure that they're heard, they're taken care of, or it's already been addressed prior to the final submission of that resignation.

[01:05:37] So that's like a pre-step before we finalize that. And my last question, somebody dedicated to actually look at this information and distinguish whether or not we can bring that person back or we can't.

[01:05:53] I know you probably mark in your system somebody's not, you're not able to hire that person again for whatever reason. You can put that in your system, but as far as somebody just leaving voluntarily, can we go back to that person and offer them a job in the future?

[01:06:12] I don't know. Something like that. Absolutely. Anytime someone voluntarily resigns, as long as it didn't have anything to do with a criminal charge or in lieu of resignation, they would absolutely be eligible for rehire.

[01:06:29] And you have somebody dedicated to, I mean, we're in a teacher shortage, going back to that person a year or two later. Somebody dedicated is there on the system that can look on the system and say,

hey, we can go back to this person. Like, use it as a CRM.

[01:06:45] What is it, talent ed? Talent ed? Yes. We do not have a designated person that is doing that. Absolutely not. I'd love more designated people, but no, I don't believe anyone on the team would have the capacity to commit to that.

[01:07:06] Yeah, I don't see you guys being able to keep up with all of that. And that's part of the retention issue because there are probably people that separated for a personal reason and would like to come back, but we don't, you know, it's harder to get them back unless somebody's reaching out.

[01:07:25] I don't know. I saw your presentation, but I'm not quite sure how often the recruiters reach out to previous employees to bring them back if they're hireable. Can you speak to that?

[01:07:44] We don't reach out individually to employees. We don't have the manpower to do that with all the events that we run. We do get people who have been in Loudoun and have gone to other districts and realized that Loudoun is the place to be and who do come back. And as long as their references check out in terms of our process for hiring any candidate, whether they were here before or not, as long as their references check out, then they're a viable candidate for us. In terms of the CRM, which I

[01:08:21] think you alluded to. We do have a process in place if someone did leave Loudoun under bad terms that potentially they could return based upon depending on what that was. And we do look at those candidates on a yearly cyclical basis, but not so much like that we're calling them individually. It's more of a let's go through the system. Who's got this mark and why and what are they doing now do they want to come back as an as-needed basis not to go you know keep dragging

[01:08:56] this out but I know you don't have a lot of recruiters and my question my next question would be on on average how many positions you have open because I know a lot of people that applied wait months to hear back and I'm not saying in you know I know you might be short staffed on the recruiters but um on average how many how many positions do you have open right now for example i don't have the number off the top of my head and and um we would have to go i

[01:09:33] mean now you're getting to a point of where it's a little bit of the transition period on march 11th we started posting jobs for next school year so it'd be very hard right now to kind of get that number that would be accurate um right now off the top of my head and looking at our applicant tracking system we do have a weekly report that we would have to go back and get you that number for our licensed school-based staff positions those are the ones that are the most critical in front of students in in the schools that we could pretend we would have to get that number

[01:10:07] for you so i actually have it it's we have currently as of yesterday we have 83 licensed vacancies for this school year and our current fill rate is 98.85% just for context I haven't I have another question I know there's certain times of the year where it's easier to apply and hear back is it is it posted everywhere

[01:10:45] apply now we're hiring now for a specific time as you said we're now in March almost to April so you have the summer so is it being stressed what a really good time is to apply so I think that would be difficult depending on the position for teachers teachers mostly so for teachers it is stressed there are a number of ways that the recruitment team works to send out information about when

[01:11:22] When fairs are, our internal fairs as well as our college fairs, they are working very diligently with the communications office now to really get a marketing strategy. And, you know, in the budget, it is

our hope that this goes through, there is a part-time communications position that is going to be devoted to recruitment and the communication and marketing plan for recruiting, and so it's our hope that that will help to get the word out through social media and other avenues where we don't have that capacity within our own team.

[01:12:01] I did have another question, and it just slipped my mind. I guess I could probably reach out to you later with that, because I think we're going off a little bit. Oh, I just remember what it was. You're having people apply, but are the recruiters calling people, using your system, I don't know if I clarified that before, using your system to find people as well that are desperately needed, like for a French class, to teach French or to teach Latin, anything like that?

[01:12:38] So, yes. No, we don't have a dedicated sourcer, but for hard-to-fill positions, now keep in mind, every teacher position is a hard-to-fill position, so I'm speaking very hard-to-fill position. So our dual language instruction positions, typically our recruiters as well as our recruitment supervisor really does dig deep down.

[01:13:03] In fact, one of our positions, she was able to really just scour LinkedIn for a passive job seeker and ultimately introduce them to LCPS. And we were able to work with them to make an offer.

[01:13:21] And so, yes, the team does work through that, but keep in mind, they also have very full workloads and jobs, so they're not sourcers. It would be our hope that in the future we get a sourcer that does just that. Thank you.

[01:13:37] Any other questions? Well, with that, I think unless there's new business, is there new business? No. I guess we can adjourn for today, and thank you very much.



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