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Loudoun County School Board, Specialized Programs & Centers Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 2, 2024

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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/930082418?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] Right. Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to call this April 2nd meeting of the Special Programs and Center Committee to Order. My name is Dr. Samaria Rasheed, and I'm chair. We appreciate your presence today, and the purpose of today's meeting is to, I guess, we could review the agenda, but there's a lot of things we can do. We have to definitely approve the minutes, and there's some information items here about Hillsborough Charter Academy's renewal application and dual language immersion program.

[00:00:31] So a couple of things, exciting things on the agenda. And before we proceed, we value public input. So if there's anyone from the public who wishes to address the committee, you could feel free to fill out a speaker card at the registration table. And I noticed that nobody filled out the public comment registration.

[00:00:50] So I think we can move on or we can move forward. They don't want to talk to us. No, they don't like us because it was raining and they were like, yeah, we don't want to talk to them today. But no matter what, your input is always valuable to us. We need to approve the minutes from our last March 5th meeting.

[00:01:06] So has everyone had a chance to review the minutes from the March 5th meeting? Are there any corrections, additions, anything like that? Okay, so if there's no objections or corrections, I'd like to make a motion to approve the minutes from March 5th.

[00:01:24] All those in favor, say aye. Second. Okay, thank you. Sorry, I skipped a beat there, but yeah. Thank you. So the minutes have been approved. There's somebody else here, I don't know. In spirit. Yeah. Okay, great.

[00:01:40] So now that the minutes have been approved, let's begin by just -- again, I reviewed the items on the agenda just now. Are there any adjustments or additions to the agenda? And if so, please raise your hand and state your proposed change. Okay, all right.

[00:01:59] Let's move on to our agenda item. So the first item is the HCA or Hillsborough Charter Academy renewal application. I'll turn it over to Ms. Lehmann to present. Thank you. Good afternoon. recall during last month's meeting we began this presentation and we ended the last ten minutes of meeting with a presentation from Hillsboro Charter Academy about all the work they do at Hillsboro their curriculum and what they offer students who attend so we are now continuing with what was on last month's agenda with actually looking at the renewal agreement so to give the committee a little bit of background during the summer months we reviewed the

[00:02:37] old agreement and made some recommendations to HCA knowing that they would be presenting this renewal application about things that just needed to be revised to be in alignment with current practice in LCPS they incorporated those changes and in addition presented some additional changes for review we've been met with them several times division council and I and you have a copy in front of you of all the red line changes but in the interest of time most of those are things that were suggested or things that are fine are changes in semantics, change in the morning for clarity, the things that

[00:03:12] have risen to the level of needing your eye are listed in the attachment HCA proposed changes in the renewal agreement. And there are various areas that we will focus on during the course of this meeting. We have various representation from different departments in the division who can share more information about each of the sections. So looking at proposed changes in renewal agreement checklist the first section that has an asterisk that needs to be discussed is section 3.3 which is can be found on

[00:03:43] page 6 of the agreement and I will defer to mr. Lewis to discuss it thank you so section 3.3 talks about the facility requirements themselves and the changes are being proposed you see there in red are the school board agrees to annually consider the HCA facilities for inclusion in the capital asset preservation plan, the CAP, and the capital improvement plan, the CIP, to maintain facilities to be on par with

[00:04:19] other LCPS schools of similar states of repair. So the concern from the staff perspective is that these buildings were leased to the HCA whatever time, whatever year that was, I don't remember what it was, as is and where and so there are we have not done a an assessment of that building to know what that means it is unclear what it what is meant by on par with other schools of that status of repair and so we have some real concerns with the language as presented here because it is not clear as to what is really being asked for I

[00:04:58] mean there and there's another section later that talks in more specifics but But we would be opposed to this language as it's an open end, and it is in contrast, I think, to the as-is, whereas statement of the lease and the original intent of the agreement.

[00:05:16] Should we jump in as this goes along, or do you all want to do this? Sure. Go ahead. Sure. I guess I'll say our side of it. And, yeah, I mean, obviously anything on the particular verbiage we're obviously very open to.

[00:05:34] But I think -- and we can kind of take this with 29.1, I don't know if you all want to jump ahead to that because it kind of comes in the same question there as well what we're saying and I'm happy to better define terms however we can is that certainly that was the original intent of the agreements when I think when HCA became a charter but as we discussed at the last meeting obviously things have very much changed in the last 10 or so years and we're now faced with a facility that is really not at the same level Also, for example, we talked about last time Catoctin Elementary, built in the same year and a number of years ago underwent a major renovation.

[00:06:12] You have another facility like Banneker Elementary with I think one more student than us that is about to undergo a very major renovation. So again, like the exact details of what that looks like, that's kind of the part we'd like to work out. But we think on the whole, it's now time for each state to be sort of brought up to the 21st century.

[00:06:31] stem school and we'd really like to get up to that level that we would have for any other special program that we would be operating here in the district to be at that equivalent level questions from the committee before I ask mr. Lewis perhaps for a little bit more information maybe I can open the floor for discussion any questions any comments not right now but any do you have anything anybody else well the question is how will we proceed through

[00:07:09] this this agreement because we have a lot of sections to discuss so this would be the decision of the committee if and jump in folks but this would be the decision of the committee to decide whether we are going in a different direction that was the original intent when the charter was established as mr.

[00:07:24] Lewis was referring to so when the charter was originally established and mr. Lewis feel free to jump in and we were closing the facility in which it is now located and so that is why the building was given to them as is whereas yeah I might need some help from mr. Allen regarding anything though that would be conceived as a financial incentive to the to the charter school and whether or not we can even do that and mr. layman is correct that we were closing that school and also with the Middleburg school we closed those school

[00:08:02] buildings school board took action to close those buildings and then the request came to lease those and so that is why the the agreement was as is where is because the we were not going to spend any more money to improve those facilities because of the condition they were in and the need we didn't have the need for them and so the school board at that time took took action to essentially close those buildings and take those out of our inventory thank you mr lewis i can elaborate um in terms of the virginia code there is a requirement that funding and service agreements between local school boards and public

[00:08:38] charter schools shall not provide a financial incentive or constitute a financial disincentive to the establishment of a public charter school and so that speaks to the establishment there is attorney general opinions that provide guidance on this but as we're looking today in terms of what's negotiable under the virginia code you know all other costs for the operation and maintenance of the facilities used by the public charter shall be subject to negotiation

[00:09:10] between the charter school and the school division that's under 22.1 to 12.6 d so there is legal authority that provides for some negotiation with respect to this but in terms of my my understanding here there are in terms of the capital improvement plan and the capital asset preservation program there's a long list of items that have already been projected um as a practical matter and so at this time you know while it may be negotiable in the future i

[00:09:44] don't think as a practical matter um there's any flexibility um but you would know better than i do in that regard mr lewis maybe i can ask if you don't mind mr allen to clarify the items already rejected did you say rejected or projected uh projected okay yeah so we do have some items um with encouragement of the the previous board that we did do in the cap the capital asset preservation plan there is no capital expansions in the CIP itself the capital asset preservation plan is more of a maintenance repairing and replacing of

[00:10:22] certain equipment and so those things were done the board did also give us guidance to do the secure vestibule at both the charter schools so we did those projects as well and so that's I guess where we're looking for as well as to get some more guidance into the future as to as to what to do with with the cap but the sections as charter school folks referred to in chapter 20 or 29 of this goes a lot farther into expanding and actually adding space so that's a an entirely different scenario I think it from our perspective and if I can just

[00:10:59] provide a little more color to it as well I think for what everyone's saying here I think it's important for us to highlight in the cap in particular are there certain items that maybe have been passed over in the past by previous boards that we can look into there and frankly mr. Lewis would know more of the things that have been you know skipped over um and we'd like to obviously expand into those and some might not be necessary won't be needed to be added so in terms of the agreement what we'd like to see is at least some direction from the board um as to if you are all interested in adding us to at least expanding that in one regard or another and that's something we can certainly work with staff on to say what's appropriate what's necessary some things might not need to be added on and certainly we appreciate the things that have been done so far like this year of yes

[00:11:38] of yule and i know we're getting some work done with i think curbs and some other things this coming summer and we've gotten some other work done in the past as well so that that's for the cap piece and yeah on the improvement plan we can wait to section 29 on that but again some of the things that we discussed last time as well to get the facility to really fit frankly the number of students that we have now I think when the charter was first done I think it'd be very fair to say it was a school that had I think 60 some odd students at the time and now we're at 144 and absolute max and awaiting less of over 400 so the situation has certainly changed that's why we'd like to change the the agreement here and I know in the past the difficulty has been that the agreement

[00:12:18] and the lease have not been allowed us to do it and the five years are up and here we are thank you did any other questions or comments so for me the biggest the biggest issue is the safety for the students and you know I just wanted to know has there been in this like I just by looking through what was presented I didn't find or I couldn't see if there was anything of immediate concern when it comes to the safety of the students in the building I don't

[00:12:53] know if that was addressed before so to some degree so for a while we were using the facilities over at the old stone school the building across the way the Hillsborough Town Hall essentially and that

became a concern while construction was going on over at that building people coming in and out there were not proper bathroom facilities so we've had to bring that back into the building so that now we are essentially utilizing classroom space where there's a stage space right now so that's one particular concern Paul I'm a few any other well we've had to do a lot of renovation of our art cottage it's a outdoor portable

[00:13:29] and it is now I think it's been on the property for 23 years and generally speaking those are replaced in a 10 to 15 year you know that's that's generally what we look at I think as a school system so we've now spent a lot of money on our side in order to get it up to specs and another thing that we were looking at is mr. Lewis and another gentleman we're talking recently about

[00:14:02] renewal of playgrounds and you know our playground again is about 25 years old and without any additions or changes made to it. Now, it does go through an annual review for safety.

[00:14:20] And, you know, sometimes it's simple things like, you know, tightening some bolts here or there or whatever. But, you know, part of what we're saying is that we do have 144 scholars at our school. They're all LCPS students. All of our teachers are LCPS teachers.

[00:14:39] And, you know, those are, you know, somewhat inequitable, in our opinion. Thank you. Any other questions or comments? I know we have a whole list here to go through. Any suggestions as to where we should start or anything that's highlighted before we go on?

[00:15:00] If you don't have any more questions on that particular item, since this is just an information item, Mr. Allen tells me these are all information items, so we'll just give you all the information tonight, and then you'll have time to think about it. So let's go on to page 14, sections 5.3 and 5.4, which is on the consideration of the grade levels that attend the charter school.

[00:15:17] And I would ask Mr. Lupino Esposito, I remember we talked about this. Yes. And we were going to take it out, but you met with the board and now it's back in. Yeah, so this is a matter, and again, this is not a sort of a hard and fast thing for us, but we would like to, again, considering the facility, there is no space to do this right now, so I will leave that at the front.

[00:15:39] And frankly, for any plans that we do have and comes to capital improvement, this would also not be included on this particular site. But what we'd like to see, at least just sort of indicated from the board, is that if there is any sort of interest in us looking into expanding into a middle school program as well.

[00:15:59] Again, there's other pieces in this agreement that we'd have to come back for anyway. We'd have to make a new site, so that'd have to be approved for through the board as well, and a whole bunch of other factors. But we want to at least maybe open that door and discuss just having the idea that this could be authorized so that we can start looking into that process so that it's even on the table versus just saying, look, we're just an elementary school and that's it.

[00:16:21] We don't want to start running down a path of looking into this option if we know that the board is just not interested in us expanding the program in any way. And Mr. Allen can probably fill it in as well, but I think for the purposes of getting approvals of a charter school, this would be the way to add in the program in that regard, because otherwise you'd have to sort of either convert another old school or put it in a certain area where, I forget the exact verbiage, but the other requirement for a charter school.

[00:16:46] So that would complicate things a little bit. And this would just be, I think, an easier route into getting into a middle school program. But there are no imminent plans at this point for expanding to upper grades. But that is your vision. You'd like to see it expand to middle school, I want to say.

[00:17:03] Yeah, middle school, looking through six through eight. And again, very preliminary, and it's just something that we're hearing from our community pretty much every day, particularly when the kids get to fifth grade. They really are interested in, hey, why isn't this happening yet? So the kindergartners now would probably have a long shot, but it's something we just want to at least consider.

[00:17:22] Okay, and once they're finished with HCA, these students then go out to just regular- To whichever happens to be their neighborhood middle school. Okay. So most of them go to Harmony Middle School currently, but to about five different ones. Okay. And I think you, did you want to, I'll turn it over to you, Ms. Lehman.

[00:17:44] Sure. I'll just add that we, from staff's perspective, we are not concerned and we're happy to have the conversation. I think we would share the same concerns that were just shared about the practicality given the space constraints right now. But that doesn't mean that we're not open to having the conversation in the future when space is available.

[00:18:08] All right. For the next section, 6.0, did you all have a question on this? Because I'm looking at it I'm thinking this is the enrollment one yeah no I think that was a probably something got moved around the document is sort of a mess on the formatting but yes yeah go to page 15 8.0 student conduct and you can see there from the proposed red line and that they were looking to add some language regarding consulting with office school administration to consider a return of students to their home school and we have made some

[00:18:41] recommendations about lesser lesser what what am I trying to say as consulting to consider but not a return I think the original verbiage that you all had proposed was a return to the home school and we were we were proposing changing that to having a consultation with the office of school administration to consider a return that's in alignment with what we would do in any other school so that's anything else on that one guys no I don't believe so except for that we were looking at that for both attendance and for you know student behavior so for instance if we had most of our scholars are driven by their

[00:19:20] parents and if we have a scholar who is chronically tardy or chronically absent we also would want to be able to have the ability to return that child to a school where he or she might be able to attend via school bus whereas they can't right I might propose we would need to add some language there because that wouldn't be a consultation I don't think with the office of school administration I think that might involve the attendance office right so we can make that note yeah just overall it was that we would like to have a little bit more leeway in that regard on what we can do yeah I'm both those

[00:19:58] fronts I have a question 234 down under 8.0 you talk about a return of students to their homeschool due to excessive attendance?

[00:20:17] Did you mean absence? Yes. Oh, good. Attendance issues. I think it was supposed to say attendance issue. It says attendance issue, which absence would be an attendance issue. Indoor, yes, yeah, okay. It doesn't say issue there, but okay.

[00:20:33] Oh, there we go. The sentence construction is a little, yes. Oh, that one had me good, so okay. Yeah, no, we prefer when I don't come in. It's just an empty, no. There's lots of room in. Any other questions on that section?

[00:20:52] All right. I believe we now go over to Section 27, which is related to staff, hiring, evaluation, and we have two sections there that HCA requested a review of, right, 27.7 and 27.9? Yes.

[00:21:07] Well, and also 27.1.1, there was just -- and maybe this is not necessarily for board discussion. We were just not sure on the school board personnel requirements, if there are any additional ones. But actually, I didn't highlight that as a discussion item, so that's my mistake.

[00:21:24] 27.7. I think that's just a paperwork thing that we can go over. 27.7. Oh, yeah, so the evaluation. So our original red line had suggested that we were able to add on additional evaluations.

[00:21:39] The reason for that is that, obviously, as we like to say, it's sort of a school of choice for everybody HCA right so obviously for teachers and other personnel who come to the school we do things differently right like we do our grading differently we do a lot of other pieces of the puzzle very differently and right now the evaluation that we do is obviously the standard LCPS evaluation for for teachers but we are looking at and we haven't developed anything yet and maybe this is part of the question that we can answer here we are looking at ways to say how can we properly evaluate a classroom teacher and other personnel that may be LCPS employees along with the HCA employees along the lines of what

[00:22:18] we find is the most important aspects of being at the job obviously there's a our ability to not recommend them for reassignment but to us it felt sort of like empty that we can just say like yeah by the way you weren't cutting it but not having the actual process of how that would go so we would like to just be able to create one that matches and again as some of our programming may change that would change frequently so having to come back and get reapproval from a future board could be a question mark and we wouldn't want to lose that ability to do that evaluation in the future and Paul if you want to add anything yes I'd like to I think we're very comfortable with bringing anything

[00:22:52] additionally to the board but we just want to have it be stated within the renewal that we have the ability to it again it would not be in lieu of doing a teacher evaluation through the LCPS current standards it'd be in if we do something would be in addition to and we would just like to be able to have that in here so if and when we develop that we could bring it back and as opposed to starting from scratch saying well you don't have the ability to do something in addition that's the reason why we've asked to have that added into the

[00:23:30] current document any questions all right 27.9 the question that has been raised is whether the employees at Charter Academy can be included in the Virginia retirement system they are willing to pay the fee but we've kind of gotten the runaround from from VRS says it's the local decision and we feel it's a VRS decision so but that's the request is whether they're so the

[00:24:05] question for you all is whether you would have any objection so HRTD was not able to send a representative today however they did say that and I won't be able to answer any questions about this I'm just letting you know I'm happy to take questions back to HRTD but they've said that their contact at VRS has communicated that if an employee is not an LCPS employee they cannot be reported to VRS. We were told that we would need to make a change to policy or the charter agreement to make them an LCPS employee for it to be allowed.

[00:24:42] That makes sense. Now I do understand that you said you wouldn't be able to answer any questions, but I just want to put something out there. So in other words, if we were going to be bringing someone who currently is not under VRS, maybe who is employed by HCA rather than LCPS, the answer is no on them unless we transfer them over to become an LCPS employee.

[00:25:13] And then, of course, they would be eligible for all the other benefits that are associated with being an LCPS employee. Yes, that's correct. Okay. Thank you. I have a question. So currently -- if you can elaborate, so currently, what is the standard currently?

[00:25:32] So if the person is an LCPS employee, then they have access to VRS. And then if they're an HCA employee, they do not. So we were wondering if there was a way to sort of piggyback on that in any way possible because we were getting the same answers that you all were getting. But now we have a straight answer, which is it would have to be an LCPS employee.

[00:25:49] So, yeah. Thank you. And just the only indication, I want to make sure we brought it to you all because they were saying, well, it's a local decision. So I want to say if you guys thought it was okay, then we can go figure it out with VRS. But evidently, they've already answered. So there we go. Thank you. All right. Very good. That takes us to 29.1, which we referenced earlier, which is, again, referring to funds and specifically the CAPP and the CIP mr. Lewis yes thank you miss layman so this is a continuation of the the item in section 3.3 and I think I maybe take a

[00:26:27] better approach to this is to to put this in the a framework of risk for the school board so years ago the school board at our recommendation from staff decided that that building was to a point where it was not worth continuing to maintain and bring up to speed so we decided to close the building at which point we leased it to the charter school as is whereas as we talked about before and so now I think what we're hearing is they're confirming that it needs a tremendous amount of work and asking the school board to take back over which we've already made that decision that that risk was not really where we wanted to be this in particular in 29 asked for permanent facilities to be added for

[00:27:04] music art stem steam counseling intervention service so a major renovation so it also and maybe I can get some clarification it says to develop a plan no later than FY 26 it's not clear to me if that means in the FY 26 CIP six-year window or in FY 26 and so either way that's not something that we could speak for the board and how you would approve the CIP in the future the other part of the risk is the age of the building condition of building may be

[00:27:40] determined as I said when we surplus the building and decided to close the facility we did not do a full assessment of what would need be needed so the building code may very well require a complete gut of the entire building and possibly demolition of parts of that we wouldn't know without doing a study we also haven't done a zoning study to see if the site would allow additional space So, there's a tremendous amount of risk with this paragraph that we wouldn't be able to assess for the board without doing a full-blown study.

[00:28:13] All that to say we are not in support of that paragraph from a facility's perspective. And I can fill in. Yeah, that was a matter of just sort of putting in a timeline. Understanding that the CIP obviously is a six-year window that this obviously would have to be put toward the end of that window into the next year gets on.

[00:28:34] So, we certainly understand that as a matter of sort of the timeline for negotiating and getting something into that plan and yeah I mean I think everything Mr. Lewis said is true which is I think is all the more reason why we feel that there is a need for the board to act on this as Paul mentioned before you know these are LCPS students these are LCPS a lot of LCPS teachers not all of them as just discussed but all the classroom teachers are and a good chunk of a number of other personnel are as well and when we look at other buildings in the district like I mentioned a few before Catoctin there's also Waterford that's similar in size as well they are getting all these facilities added on and I understand certainly from the perspective of the board at the time this

[00:29:14] was an experiment and at this point it's our sort of internal joke is that the experiment is over it worked and now we're trying to figure out how to enhance things even more we have a massive demand for for students to come to the school and at some point I think it would really be hurt harmful to the district overall if we had this sort of excellent facility excellent program but But because the facility has essentially begun to crumble, therefore we no longer have Hillsborough Charter Academy.

[00:29:42] I don't know what the solution would be otherwise. There's just simply not enough funding, I'm not complaining about the per pupil, but there's simply not enough funding in the per pupil to operate a school and spend millions of dollars to get it up to a standard that we would have to any other school in the district. And again, some of the details on this, I would love for us to be negotiating over the details on this rather than on the principle of it itself.

[00:30:05] The principle of it itself is where we feel strongest is that there needs to be improvements. Prior to the school switching over to HCA, there were issues with the gymnasium. A lot of people left because we don't have a gymnasium. You both have been there, as we call the cafe gymatorium. It covers quite a bit, and now even the stage is sort of part of a classroom space as well.

[00:30:22] So these are things that would be sort of, I don't want to say standard at other LCPS schools. Obviously, there's a lot of other smaller schools that also need to come up to speed. So we're not certainly alone in this, But for us, when we have this opportunity, there's a huge demand from the community at large, and then again from our classroom teachers and everyone else who's in the building, that we would like the district to really take a look at this.

[00:30:44] And in the same way, you would be evaluating any other special program of where you place it, you know, William Oroby being at Park Ridge, and excuse me, Parkview, and needing the updates there. We're doing this everywhere else where we have special programs. And I think we're sort of in line, and now's the time to ask.

[00:31:00] And the exact timeline, certainly that's something we can chat about, But we would like to see movement on it, however we need to phrase it, to have movement on it sooner than later, and recognizing it's a longer term ask, but it's something we want to get rolling now while we have the door open. And if I might be able to add, as recently as a year and a half ago, we were looking to put a two-room addition, and I say addition, it really would be another portable that would not be directly connected to the school.

[00:31:29] but we were looking to do that. And we got some pricing through facilities. The pricing changed pretty dramatically over about a four or six month period. But we were actually very close to making a purchase and we needed to have that done by December of 2022. We had to make that decision. And we, as the price went up initially, we were told around \$400,000 to do it. And then it went up to \$800,000, then \$1.2 million, and then ultimately somewhere between \$8 and

[00:32:03] \$10 million to do that. So, you know, obviously we were priced out of being able to do that. But besides that, it looked as though LCPS was going to support that move for us to have an additional couple rooms. And one of the things that, you know, we put in here and the bulleted points that you see, that would align very closely to the temporary addition that was put over at Banneker Elementary School. Again, Banneker has one student more than HCA does.

[00:32:40] It was 145 and 144 when I was looking that up just a couple of months ago. So what our hope would be is that with the significant addition that's going, taking place over at Banneker, And I know, obviously, it's a historical building as well, and there's a lot that goes into that.

[00:33:00] And it's an older building. I believe it's the late 1940s rather than the mid-1960s like our building is. That said, that four-room with two-bathroom structure would be absolutely perfect to be brought over to our school.

[00:33:18] And that's supposed to happen for the 26th, 27th school year. I believe that that's going to be removed. So, part of that is in there with, it doesn't necessarily have to be the plan of the school system, but that is a very viable option that would give us the additional space that we need.

[00:33:40] And so, we really want to have that be part of a discussion, too. And certainly, we're not asking Mr. Lewis to say, yes, that would work, or no, that won't work. But on the other hand, it does seem like a very fair and reasonable option for a school that has the exact same number of students.

[00:33:57] Any other questions or comments? I think we are, I know that was 29-1.

[00:34:15] I'm assuming that included, we were okay with 29-2. No, it's a little different. It's a little different. So I'll ask Mrs. Willoughby to speak to 29.2. so 29.2 describes the funding calculation the while there is a lot of red language here is basically has just been streamlined and simplified the the language that was currently in the contract the only material change is on the very first sentence changing the calculation from an annualized basis to a

[00:34:51] quarterly basis and that allows for a more stable funding stream to the charter school so we saw that as a favorable change and again the rest is more just an opportunity to try to simplify the funding calculation yeah and thank you because we were making sure we had the right lines and I think probably one of these drafts is still not quite adding up on that line A and B and C but we'll have to clean that up but thank you I appreciate that any questions on that that makes sense all right and I don't know what we were this has changed so many times I'm not sure what we were referring to on page 35 because

[00:35:30] there is no 37.2 do anybody else remember what that was that extending the credit piece which actually in the copy you sent us back wasn't changed back but we were okay with it changing back to the original language it was the the no credit 37.2 it said like without without prior approval of the board and we had put it in there and then none of us could remember why and you guys didn't want it and so we agreed so yeah that was one I'm not sure what happened there we might have been thinking of something else when we made the edit so we're good with it returning to the original language thank you those are all the

[00:36:08] sections that need to be reviewed. Thank you, Ms. Lehman. Principal Vickers, if you can expand on one thing you had mentioned a few minutes ago, something about four rooms. Like, I'm just interested in knowing that just a little bit more. Certainly. And, you know, if I speak incorrectly, I would

really ask Mr. Lewis to jump in. But with the bond referendum that passed for Banneker Elementary School there was a significant bond referendum

[00:36:43] recently that passed to renovate that building and with the renovation also there is and this I think they were two separate things so they already had planned I should say the board had already planned to add a four-room modular addition onto Banneker, which happened this past summer. And it is a modular that has a plumbing run to it. And truly, that's exactly what we are looking for for our school. And that modular was

[00:37:19] put there, constructed and put there this past summer with the understanding that with the bond referendum passing that the renovation and the additions that are being done at Banneker would make the four-room addition that was put on this past summer no longer necessary.

[00:37:40] That's the way I understand it. I may be incorrect. And if that is the case, then what we would like to have is a strong consideration by the school board to look at that structure and understand that projecting a couple years down the road, that our school would be very willing to pay the, well, it depends, I guess, how much it costs, to be truthful, but we would be very interested in finding out how much the cost would be to move that structure over to our property and, you know, for us to pay for the hookups that are necessary and for the move of that structure.

[00:38:16] Now, that four-room structure that you're saying, in the bullets that are presented in 29-1, are you saying that would replace all of these or are you saying it would fit into that? No, it would not replace all of those. We do not currently have a music room. Our music program is run on our school stage. I think you may remember that. And so that would be one of the programs that would move into the new structure. Our STEAM program, and I know you had an opportunity to see that as well, would also have an opportunity to go out into that building

[00:38:53] we don't currently have any teachers workroom or lounge at all and so you know that also might move out there we don't really have a conference room for special ed conferences or for our school counselor to meet with a group of children currently and so and that's the way the building was constructed in 1966 but some of those needs are much more evident now than they were i'm sure you know 50 some years ago and so that's the idea if i could also just add and clarify we

[00:39:29] mentioned earlier um the eight to ten million dollar number uh just to clarify that that was when i believe in 21 or 2020 i forget when we went we had done we worked with an architect and came up with a very rough idea of what we would like that would be a more permanent facility on the grounds uh right now the way things are set up we're we're currently using a drain field we're getting out to town water so that'll open up a quite a bit of land on the property that was was currently not usable and when we had gotten some estimates on it that were significantly lower from our architect but when we came to the district they said that was an eight to ten million dollar improvement for the site again that's a couple years ago I don't know what the new numbers would be not we're sending everything else mr. Lewis mentioned as well but to give a sense of

[00:40:09] that would be sort of more of our long-term vision so in the same way that Banneker has this temporary facility now with these four rooms and as sort of a holdover to make things work frankly a little better for just the day-to-day like you know the special ed meetings and things that are happening every day and the music classroom that's happening every day that would be we think a good holdover until we can get something into the CIP down the line again knowing that we're looking six years out all the time

with the CIP to do something like that when either those buildings or other ones became available within the district while we are still planning to do something long term presumably on that other site but again notwithstanding zoning and other considerations that's something we would like to look at that would include all

[00:40:47] these other parts. You know, obviously anything that's a four room facility couldn't have a gymnasium in it unless it's, I think, 22 foot ceilings or something like that. We looked into this at some point. So it couldn't cover everything, but at least as a temporary holdover until we could get something through the CIP, that's what we'd be looking to do.

[00:41:03] The one you mentioned for Banneker, is that also, I'm assuming that's also a temporary for Banneker. Okay. All right. Thank you. Madam Chair, if I may. Yes, please. Counter to what I said before when we were looking at the earlier section, I see this as a distinction from considering inclusion in the cap or SIP.

[00:41:26] My understanding is this is a request to add additional structures that are not currently in existence. And so that's a little different than just the maintenance and operation, which is negotiable under the code. I see that as a distinction for consideration for you all.

[00:41:43] And that to me could be construed as a potential financial incentive to the establishment of a charter school. So as we think about this as the board considers that, that's one point. The second point is then how is the charter school able to build new structures on their premises if not for the school board?

[00:42:05] And the code does allow for the management committee or the board of the charter school to accept gifts or donations or grants for such purposes, considering that they're mission aligned. And then as a practical matter, it's also my understanding there's a distinction as to why the board continues to add and to plan for renovating schools such as Banneker and doesn't necessarily for a charter school.

[00:42:31] And I think Mr. Lewis is in a better position to kind of explain that distinction. with the banneker facility itself is it is a historic building and so we came to the board with three different scenarios to do whether we just did an addition or a renovation or an addition and a renovation and we chose that that the path we're on right now because of the history of the building and to preserve that history just like we did for the Douglas school so that puts that in a slightly different situation I will say that we also have space for all the

[00:43:08] folks that are going to the charge school in our other schools because those schools are located next to Mountain View and other schools whereas Banneker is geographically located farther away and there was not a way to do that so it's not practical and so it makes more sense to continue to work with the Banneker school because of the proximity or lack thereof to our students than would be in the northern part of the county where we do have other schools that are available so those are part of the reasons in addition to what I mentioned before was the the condition of the the Hillsboro School at the time we as staff recommended the board and they accepted that that that building was in a condition that just didn't make sense to continue to try to piece together and so

[00:43:48] there we were essentially taking it out of our capital program because it was not efficient to do so and now we'll be asked to put it back in the capital program mr. mr. Lewis if you can tell me what is Banneker using those those temporary facilities for specifically I'm just curious so yeah sorry I left that out so in a temporary position during the construction of the pro of the facility well two things one is

Banneker needs more space for the current kids they have based on the size of the classrooms and the number of students that are attending they need more the classrooms than they have currently so

[00:44:26] we're adding that capacity for that but also as swing space during the renovation so as as kids are next to or involved in areas where construction will take place we needed the extra space for those students to be pulled out of the main building to keep them safe keep them as far away from the noise as possible I will say that if the school board decided to move modular classrooms from one place to another the cheapest part of that process is the boxes of the modules themselves though they placing on the campuses or what's expensive and that's what even if at one point in time that you ought to ask about getting a

[00:45:02] free one from somewhere it still costs a tremendous amount of money to put together there. I'll also add the cost that we provided last year, a year before, whenever that was, was also contingent on a zoning review. So we haven't determined yet because we would have to hire an engineer, go to the town and to the county to see if we would be allowed to add on, whether we could add on four classrooms or all these other things on the list, it's not yet known because the zoning requirements restrict certain amounts of expansion for each building based on the size of the building size of the lot I will say we haven't yet agreed with the town to connect to the sewer line so the septic field is still in play and so we can't

[00:45:41] set the building on top of that at this point we have connected water but not the sewer line and so you know we did the water line you know as to try to mitigate risk for the school board as it is our building we were operating a well there and so the town is just now incorporating well and sewer water and sewer into their their community so lots of things that go into that planning and those are things that we'll be talking with the board as we go forward with the CIP this fall.

[00:46:09] - Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Is there any questions or comments right now? I think we went through all of the items in the proposed changes on this document. I'm all over the place.

[00:46:25] - Dr. Ashut, if I can just add, I'll just mention on the last note, it's certainly not a final decision, but we have the mayor and one of the members of council on our board, so they are certainly supportive, I will say, at least from their perspective. Obviously, notwithstanding the exact details of it but they are supportive of expansion as well from the town of Hillsboro and then also to mr. Allen's point on the incentive or disincentive question I think as we referenced earlier the Attorney General's opinion from believe 2010 or 2011 had said that it would not necessarily constitute an incentive even if additional funding were given to a charter school so in this regard I think that would be our sort of sort of cure of that problem that

[00:47:04] the question presented was if somebody if a district was giving less than per pupil would that be a disincentive and the Attorney General said no but additionally does not necessarily mean that if you give even more funding it would not it would constitute an incentive I think in this instance doing something that is you know a similar improvement again to something like Banneker or Waterford or Catoctin Elementary obviously with the larger population there but again the same age of the school I don't think that would be constituted as an incentive when you're essentially equalizing this school along with all the other ones that you have in the district and frankly it's ones that are the exact mirrors of it like Catoctin thank you for that thank

[00:47:44] you so much and thank you for everyone's you know giving all that information it's a quite a quite a lot quite a lot is there any questions or any other comments anybody else okay so so if there's no

further comments well we can move on to the next agenda item if that's okay which is dual language

[00:48:22] language immersion and I'll turn it over to mr. Neal Slevin to present one

[00:48:34] minute to transition the teams sure take your time this is not a delaying

[00:50:05] tactic ready dr. sheet thank you for the opportunity to provide input an update to the committee on our dual language immersion program in LCPS and also the future of dual language this item is at the request of one of the committee members to have a little bit of a discussion on what are some potential next steps when it comes to expanding opportunities for dual language immersion in loud and county public schools I'm joined by mr. Jeff Roundsley

[00:50:43] our director of teaching learning k-12 and miss Kelly James our world language and culture supervisor and also some members the world language team as Angie gets back there and miss Lisa Quintero in the back and they are here to show support so with that I'm going to turn it over I think to mr. Roundsley to start So I'm actually going to turn it over to Ms. James to go over some of the important information.

[00:51:07] And I just want to kind of highlight again Louisa Quintero and Angie's work in getting this program up and running. Louisa has been an integral part of that. And a lot of the work that we'll share here today has been based on the work that she's done to support. So I'm going to turn it over to Kelly to go through some background information.

[00:51:25] So our special programs and academies are directly aligned with our strategic plan, specifically Aligned Action 1.1, Core Academic Excellence, and 1.2, Multiple Accessible Pathways to Success. So today we're going to go over the Dual Language Immersion Program, we'll go over some of the interest data, and we will talk about program expansion and what that might look like moving forward.

[00:51:53] So LCPS Dual Language Immersion Program is designed for families who'd like their children to learn another language while receiving the same high-quality academic curriculum as students throughout the division. Students in the program are immersed in two languages simultaneously. The program aims to develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural understanding.

[00:52:14] Instruction is divided between the two languages as a 50-50 model. This is a two-way dual language where both English language learners and English dominant language students acquire a second language while building upon their first language. The dual immersion program promotes academic achievement, cross-cultural understanding, and linguistic proficiency.

[00:52:43] In 2022, students and families were surveyed to indicate interest in a potential special programs within LCPS. 56% of respondents indicated interest in a dual language immersion program, which led to the pilot of our DLI program in the 2023-2024 school year.

[00:53:00] Also in 2022, families were surveyed on their interest in world language courses. It's important to know that this survey was not specific to dual language immersion and respondents most likely had middle and high school courses in mind.

[00:53:18] One of the key takeaways from the survey was that Spanish was the most frequently selected language of choice from both parents and students. The chart on the next slide shows a closer in look at the top 10 languages across the division from both parents and students.

[00:53:39] Just because I know throwing a chart up there takes a minute to process. So we -- this particular survey, we surveyed both families and individual students. On the left, we have the parent choices, the number of parents that indicated the language as their top choice, and then the percentage of the overall participation.

[00:53:56] and on the right you could see the top language student language choices for students and this was this was administrator administered in December of 2022 so I'm going to give a brief overview of some of our options and the way we're thinking about expansion for dual language immersion so currently what you're seeing on the screen is the the timeline for the current program as we have it laid out at Potomac and Sanders Corner Elementary School and as you can see by that column that's highlighted in green next year our students will move

[00:54:36] into first grade move through second through fifth grade and so we would have this program fully funded for these two schools in FY 29 for K through five and so that remains our primary focus right now is making sure that these programs and the students that we've kind of committed this to have an opportunity to pursue this through their entire elementary school career and so K through five would mean that we would have 300 students at each school so total capacity of 600 students

[00:55:13] in these two programs at Sanders corner and at Potomac so 300 at each school we also know that on the next slide there's a lot of interest in expanding this and that these students will then move into middle school so we have begun thinking about what that might look like at the middle school level so traditionally students in LCPS have the opportunity to begin world language instruction in seventh grade obviously these students who have participated since kindergarten are going to be at a different level when they arrive and so Kelly and Louisa and their teams and teachers have been thinking about what this might look like and how we would expand this into middle school and then so these are our top priorities are making sure that those students

[00:55:53] at Potomac and Sanders have a full pathway to complete through elementary school and that we also have opportunities for them to continue dual language immersion when they move into the middle school level we do know there's tremendous interest in dual language immersion and in being able to expand this and so that's also a consideration of us thinking through if there are other languages or other schools that we may want to support but one of the one our priority right now would be making sure that those students who are currently enrolled have opportunities both throughout the rest of elementary school and into middle school and three big things that we're thinking about as we do this is staffing so

[00:56:28] we have been very fortunate that we are staffed for next year but identifying high quality teachers who are able to teach this very kind of specialized program is an area of concern and one that we continue to work with our hrtd team to make sure we are identifying those teachers that we are making sure we're being responsive to the community interest and support so that survey is part of it but I know there is a lot of community interest around dli and sustainability so again the idea that we're able to sustain this both through elementary school and into middle school for those students who have chosen to participate in the dual language immersion program so those are

[00:57:04] things we're thinking through and I think on our final slide here you'll see that again the idea that we are actively thinking through what does this look like at middle school how do we support dual language immersion as students move into the middle school level and what this looks like for students who are coming into middle school with a high degree of language learning and how we support them so I

believe that is our overview and open to any questions you might have I love language I'll start with that I started when I was in seventh

[00:57:43] grade and I went all the way through college so that aside my question is if we go through middle school what happens at the high school level are we going to try to continue dual immersion for high school classes or will the dual immersion program that they've been in count for high school credits there is so much more that they have to cover to get a high school diploma so where does this program go at the high school level or does it just stop in middle school

[00:58:17] so I'm gonna give just a broad answer that because we were just kind of thinking through what this looks like at middle school but I know one of the things that Louisa has talked to us about is the opportunities for students to be able to potentially apply their language learning in other areas so medical transcription is one that I know Louisa has talked to us about but but giving students really specialized career-oriented workforce opportunities to start applying their language in real-world settings after they have gone through that curriculum that we currently offer through the AP level in their languages so that's one option I don't think this is a fully fleshed out

[00:58:56] idea yet of what this might look like we're really kind of concentrating right now on how we support the middle school level but I think there are lots of opportunities for students to take that language that they've been studying and really start applying it into real-world settings. And I think that might be what a high school model may look like. I have a few questions. So just to piggyback off what Ms. LaBelle had mentioned.

[00:59:21] So, and I know this is kind of, we're just, you know, making the ingredients right now for this. My question was that, like, if you have any thoughts about how would this fit into, like, let's say, other programs like the IB program or, you know, how, like, they really go into languages for, I think, four consistent years when you're in a program like that.

[00:59:41] Would this fit into that, or would this kind of liaison into that? Or if you had any thoughts about it, or we haven't gotten to that point yet. I mean, there's certainly some overlap with, like, the higher-level IB courses, but the way that IB is right now, they're, like, it's meant for second language learning.

[01:00:00] At this point, they would be beyond, they would be above that level. And the other question I had was, the only one worry, I think, And I'm all for learning the languages. I think it really opens and broadens the student's mind. And it kind of rewires a student and makes them learn more.

[01:00:19] But what would be the plan, if any thoughts, if a student, for example, heaven forbid they fail or they don't do well in something like this, in the middle of the pathway, in the middle of the process, is there some sort of fallback?

[01:00:35] Because I'm trying to avoid students to feel like they're being discouraged. you know like oh I don't language is not for me for example if a student said that because look I didn't do well is do you have any thoughts on if there's a different pathway or maybe they can switch a language or something like that in the middle of that time frame so currently the only language we would offer through dual language immersion would be Spanish is the only language that's currently in place but I think that our teachers and the staff at those schools work really hard to make sure students are successful there we do have through the special program opportunities when students if they elect not to continue there is a process that we follow to make sure that they are

[01:01:15] placed probably back at their school because these are these students are coming from schools throughout LCPS so the school administration and Katie Clark who helps there's Katie Clark who helps oversee the process for placement in these programs work really really hard to make sure first students are successful and second that if it turns out not to be for them or for their family that they are afforded the opportunity to go back to their school and attend school in a traditional elementary school setting. But I would add and correct me if I'm speaking out of turn that's that's a risk we need to be aware of that's where that word sustainability comes in because if

[01:01:53] we start with 50 students in kindergarten it's very possible that six years later where they're in fifth grade that cohort is shrunk and so we have smaller class sizes in the fifth grade and so while we want to avoid that it's likely going to happen attrition is natural over time and so while we do have off-ramps it's also going to make the program feel I wouldn't say more expensive but the efficiency of the program may reduce as the number of students decide to go to it in a different direction so so currently we are able to add new students into this

[01:02:29] program in first grade so if a student were between kindergarten and first grade to decide I don't want to participate in this anymore we have a wait list of students that could be moved in to fill up that class the video e does not allow us to add students into the dual language immersion program after first grade so if students were to leave after first grade there is an opportunity or potential that you could end up with a very small class of students in fifth grade worse more students to choose not to continue and so that's again to reinforce that idea of sustainability we want to make sure we can keep as many students as possible in these programs supporting them and making sure they're successful to avoid that attrition and leaving that to be a

[01:03:08] very small class at one of these schools that has not been the case so far students are choosing to continue and move on but that is I think something to keep on our radar that we're continuing to provide that support especially as students move into taking SOLs or other standardized tests where the parents may have more concern about you know our students making progress and learning again has not been a concern so far but something that we monitor and make sure we're addressing with teachers and schools and if I can add to what mr.

[01:03:38] Rounsley said students are not students who are in English native speakers are not allowed to enter the program after first grade but students who are native Spanish speakers are allowed to enter the DLI program so we do have a Spanish-speaking waitlist and we can add those two students to the program and maybe this is a little silly for me to ask but what would determine a native speaker than or not like is there an assessment is there something that we can is there something that that can assess if a student would be or are you pertaining to proficiency if a student kind of shows that they're very proficient in a in English is that what you were mentioning is that

[01:04:17] what you were referring to yes and when they and when they register in LCPS it asks what their home language is and that that determines where like whether they are a heritage Spanish speaker or a heritage English speaker. And if you can, I mean, again, this is really early in the stage, but it's just a thought that I was thinking, aside from Spanish, what would be, I mean, is there anything in the forecast for another language after that? Or are we going by the survey data that we had? So, again, I want to make sure, like, the priority here is helping or supporting those students who are currently in there, but there is a lot of interest in

[01:04:56] dual language immersion. So, as an example, there were plans early on to offer Arabic in the school level not in a dual language immersion and it was based on this survey and based on student interest and based on particular schools where students were interested in pursuing arabic that we did not move forward with that and had other priorities but that is the kind of thing that we would look at is the the student interest the sustainability and our ability to hire staff members who would have that ability to teach in a native language or a heritage language

[01:05:29] But again, it would be really based on community support and community interest in offering something like that. And while we clearly have a shared vision for expanding opportunities for students in LCPS, part of this will come from board direction.

[01:05:52] We did not plan to recommend the expansion of a dual language immersion program in FY25 just because we just started this program. We are still piloting it. Do we have the right staffing model? Do we have the right support? But we could in the next few years consider expanding it based on the interest and the success that we've had.

[01:06:12] But it really comes down to prioritization of the board. We also have an interest in expanding IB. Health and medical sciences will be opening up and we'll be looking at potentially entrepreneurship, for example, as another opportunity in our secondary schools. So part of that is conversations at this committee level, Like we could bring back some possible recommendations in the future.

[01:06:35] It could be a conversation at the whole board level when we're having strategic discussions at the board level during a work session. At some point we'll be bringing special programs generally as a topic. So really it'll be a community conversation that staff will be engaged in and then a board level conversation in terms of strategic direction, if that makes sense.

[01:06:56] And just one last question. So the two schools that this would be implemented, you had mentioned in the previous slide, it's S.A.N. and Potomac Elementary and Sanders Corner Elementary. Okay. Potomac and Sterling, Sanders Corner and Ashburn. Okay. And I'm just curious, and maybe you did mention this and I didn't hear it.

[01:07:11] Is there a particular reason why those two schools? Is this where this was, you know, any particular reason why another area or? Well, those are the schools that are currently there and currently at. The kindergarten program is open at those two schools. And those schools were selected through an interest process.

[01:07:30] Those principals expressed interest. but we also evaluated capacity in terms of, could they sustain, 'cause we opened the program, about half the seats to outside, so do they have the capacity for additional students to come in over a six year window of time?

[01:07:48] So those were two of the main ways that the schools were selected. But I could go back and share the presentation we did on the selection process if you'd like. - Well, thank you so much. Any other comments or questions?

[01:08:05] I can see, just as a thought for the future, that as you decide to add on, if you decide to add on more languages, I think that possibly the American Sign Language Program would be a good addition.

[01:08:22] First of all, a lot of special ed students depend upon that to meet the qualifications for language for graduation. Secondly, if you can speak ASL, then there are a lot of job opportunities available

immediately There are so many places that need that, and so few people who are good at it.

[01:08:41] So just as a thought for the future, that might be something you really want to look at. Also, if we're looking at continuing this with other languages as well, expanding even more, what I'm noticing up there are that the most preferred languages tend to be European-based or European heritage.

[01:09:06] it might be good to consider putting in some from other sections of the world so that we have a more global look to our program. So those were just two passing thoughts that I had as we've been discussing this. Thank you, Ms. LaBelle.

[01:09:28] Thank you so much for this awesome presentation. The data is very helpful, and it's very exciting. You know, looking forward to all of this to come to fruition. So with that, I know we ran a little bit over, and our next meeting is scheduled for May 7th.

[01:09:44] at 3:30. Please mark your calendars. And if there's no further business, I entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting. And all those in favor of adjourning, say aye. Oh, yeah, sorry, sorry, skipping a beat again. I entertain a motion to adjourn.

[01:10:00] I would move to adjourn. Okay, so you second it. Okay, yeah. So all those in favor of adjourning, say aye. Aye. All right, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you.



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