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Loudoun County School Board, Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee (MSAAC) Meeting, Wednesday, April 17, 2024

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 24m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/936517895?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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

[00:00:00] Good evening everyone, we are going to get started, we're running a little behind schedule. So it is Wednesday, April 17th, and I'm very happy with all of you for joining us and coming together tonight. Tonight we are here to highlight the Student Affinity Groups, it is our first annual Affinity Expo, and I'm very excited, we're expecting students, they're probably on their way, and with the way traffic works these days, it's going to be a little bit.

[00:00:29] So we're going to get started with the first half of our program. We don't have a printed agenda, so if you would just bear with me and kind of go with the flow, I'll be your wonderful MC for the evening to walk you through. So we are going to begin with what I'm very excited for.

[00:00:45] Our first speaker is our superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence. He's going to come share with us and speak with us. We have been fingers crossed, toes crossed, eyes crossed, hoping that he would be able to join us this year, and I got the phone call this morning that he was going to be here, and so I am very happy to welcome him so he can speak with us and just share his vision with us. So without further ado, I have Dr. Spence. Thank you. So good evening. It's great to be here with you.

[00:01:19] I do sincerely apologize. It's taken me so long to get to this committee. It's been a full dance card for the last seven months, but I'm glad that I'm able to be here this evening, share a little time with you and just talk a little bit about the work that we've been doing and some of the work that I think that we need to do. So I have on the slide here, the screen here, a slide that we shared with principals this week at a meeting. And the context for the conversation with our principals was really about the school improvement process and the nature of the work that has to

[00:01:54] happen in the school improvement process. And so kind of undergirding the school improvement process, in my perspective, and one of the ways that I've worked as a superintendent to try to improve how we serve children in the communities that I've been in, is to understand that the work that we do is not about a collective experience. The work that we do is about the individual experience of young people. And so up there on the slide, you can see those are aggregate division level reading scores, aggregate division level math scores. Just two examples of data. We could

[00:02:31] pick any other piece of data in the school division that matters to us, and we could create a similar slide, and you would see similar trends. And so what you see is kind of the colored part of the pencil. Oops. What you see is sort of the colored part of the pencil is the score itself, and then the grayed out part of the pencil is the thing that I think is most important. So how many of you have heard the term achievement gaps. Okay, so we've heard the term achievement gaps. I find as I delve into the conversation around achievement gaps, and since this is the minority student

[00:03:06] academic advisory, we're going to talk about academics and achievement for a minute. I find when I delve into the conversation about achievement gaps that there's different layers of understanding about what that means. So oftentimes in the literature in the field, when we talk about achievement gaps, what we're doing is comparing children to children. And so what we would do, for example, is we would look at those SOL reading pass rates, and we would look at the highest performing group of children. In this case, it would be the white children in our district.

[00:03:35] And we would say they were scoring at 81% in aggregate. And then we would look at another group. So let's take, for example, our black students. We say our black students were performing at 73% in aggregate. And so the achievement gap there, if you just do the quick math, is eight, right? It's an 8% achievement gap. And that's how it gets talked about. It's how it gets talked about in the press. It's how it gets talked about in the literature in our field. But the reality is what we need to be thinking about is the opportunity gap, the gap that exists in gray

[00:04:09] for every single child. And that is the gap to 100% success. When SOLs first came out, so I'll be dating myself here, SOLs have been around for a little while. The very first year I was teaching was the first year for SOLs, first year for that state assessment system.

[00:04:29] And when those came out, we would have school improvement conversations where, well, we got better at it over time. We weren't very good at it at first. But school improvement conversations over time where we would do things like say, okay, well, our scores for our black students is 73% of reading, so what's our goal for next year?

[00:04:47] And we'd go, it's 76%. And we'd go, why? And we'd go, well, because that seems reasonable. Like smart goals, like attainable, if you've heard of that, right? Like it seems reasonable, 76%. That seems like a reasonable, attainable goal. So 3% growth. And just, I don't know what happened, but over the

course of my career as an educator, I've become a little bit disillusioned with that perspective on incremental goal setting.

[00:05:11] I think that I don't, as I say to people all the time, I don't want to be the educator who circles all the names of the kids in red who aren't included in that 76% goal, right? Because our goal has to be that every child thrives who we serve. Every child deserves the opportunity to be successful.

[00:05:28] And so the real gap that we need to be talking about in our work are all the gray bars for any student group that we care about, for any student that we care about. It's all the gray bars all across the board. That's the real gap. And so it's the gap between a student's success and their opportunity to really be successful, right?

[00:05:47] So where we see students who aren't thriving, how do we get them there? And so the context, kind of to just kind of put that more plainly, and I say this a lot too, is it's not our job to be excellent for 82,000 students a day in Loudoun County. It's our job to be excellent for one student 82,000 times a day in Loudoun County.

[00:06:07] And I say that because when I was earlier on in my career and I was kind of contemplating how do you do school improvement work, how do you really change the numbers and impact the data, because it's hard to impact this data, right?

[00:06:23] I mean, this is not, I mean, if you were to look at data across the Commonwealth and, frankly, data across the country, you're going to see very similar trends. And it's hard to move the numbers. It's just kind of digging into the research, but also digging into my mentors and asking them, like, for folks that I knew were changing numbers and making differences in the lives of children, you know, how do you do it?

[00:06:45] And they said, it's really simple. You just have to get to the individual student level. You've got to know students by name. You've got to know their strengths. and you've got to know what they need in order to be successful. You've got to know where their challenges are, and then you've got to build a plan for that child with that family to help them thrive and be successful.

[00:07:06] And you can't ignore that it's an individual effort that's required. And that's hard. I have to tell you for the teachers in the room, they'll tell you this. That's hard because if you've got 20 kids, 30 kids in your classroom, or if you've got 150 kids over the course of your schedule, it's hard to be individual about it.

[00:07:25] but it's the only way that we can really fundamentally move the needle for kids who need us. And these gaps between where students should be, which is 100% successful and where they are, exist for all of our students. They exist for every spectrum of our community. They exist for every spectrum of ability and aptitude. They exist in every school. There is no school that is singularly knocking it out for every kid. It just doesn't happen. But it doesn't mean it can't because it does happen in some places. There are pockets of excellence throughout this country.

[00:08:04] There are pockets of excellence in Loudoun County. There are teachers who have 100% of their students thriving and very broad spectrum of ability and aptitude and everything else. And then there are schools that do this and there are schools across the country and school divisions across the country that understand that if you can create the culture that we're about the individual child and we do everything we

can to make one child thrive all of those gaps all of those gray bars will start to color themselves in and that's what I that's the work that I engage in that's that's

[00:08:38] the work that I've done and kind of hung my hat on as a leader in education for the last 25 years and and and I think that's the work that we have to move forward with here in Loudoun County we do really good things we just need to start thinking about how we how we close those how we close those gray bars so I wanted to just kind of share that thinking I wanted to thank you for the work that you are doing to support us I want to thank our students who are here who are going to be candid and talking with you about the supports that they need and the ways that they're creating those

[00:09:17] layers of support in our schools I want you know thank the educators who are in the room who have the heavy lift and the responsibility of making sure that we build a culture around the individual student and make sure that we collectively build our efficacy around being able to reach each child and I want to thank this committee for for being here and for you know it's not by the way there this committee doesn't exist in many school divisions across the commonwealth this is kind of unique and and we're fortunate to have it and we need to be recognizing that and we need to leverage the power of that to continue to support our work. So my challenge and my encouragement

[00:09:55] for the committee is to hold us accountable for coloring in those gray bars, to hold us accountable for making sure that the experiences of our students, the lived experiences in our schools are experiences that are reflective of a belief that children deserve our best and that one of our main responsibilities in education is to eliminate predictability. So I guess I'll sort of end on that when we talk about equity there's a lot of different ways to talk about equity and I know that's been a major focus of the committee to be talking about equity and thinking about the way that we the way that we approach that in our work and I know we have an equity committee that also

[00:10:34] talks about that and I think it's really important just like I started off talking about the definition of achievement gaps I think it's important that we're really clear about what the definition of equity is and and for me I mean there's lots of definitions out there and people have misunderstandings, in some cases, deep misunderstandings about what equity is, and they get angry about it. But there are also some things that are really important to embrace and understand about equity. And number one for me is that equity simply means all children have the opportunity to thrive, the opportunity to be successful, not only the opportunity,

[00:11:08] but the resources and supports needed to do so, and that we have eliminated predictability of outcome. Because right now in America, you can pick any measure you want, and I can more or less predict the outcome for children based on the reporting groups that we talk about that go all the way back to No Child Left Behind. So you can talk about poverty, you can talk about special needs, you can talk about being an English language learner, you can talk about where your parents live, you can talk about the color of your skin. There are things we can talk about that create predictability and outcomes for children in our public schools. And we have to take a position,

[00:11:45] and I have to take a position as a leader, and we have to take a position as a committee and as a community that predictability based on those things is unacceptable. And it's unacceptable because we know better and we can do better. And it's just harder work to do it. But that's why we're here. And so I want to encourage this committee to hold us accountable to that, to be a partner in those conversations

with us, to recognize to, let me say this, this is, as I said earlier, it's easy. It's not easy work. It's difficult work. It's going to take

[00:12:20] time. It's going to take a significant effort on our part. And, you know, it's not flawless. I've tried to say to most of the community meetings I've been in, like, don't expect flawlessness or perfection out of me. No superintendent can achieve that. And that doesn't mean we're not going to keep trying. We're not going to keep working every day to be better. Because the one motto I live my whole life by is, be better tomorrow than you were today. And that's going to be our goal here in Loudoun County. So I appreciate you all giving me the floor for a few minutes, and I'm happy to, I don't know if I'm allowed or supposed to, but happy to just take a few questions. I was told I had like 15 minutes, so I've gone about 10, so I have about five minutes

[00:13:00] of questions if you have any. Yes, sir. Sir, thanks very much for coming, and thanks for your words. So on equity or emphasis, that was fantastic. I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about how you're either going to incentivize or hold districts accountable for improving in that area? Yeah, so here's, I mean, we can get into the sort of the details of it, and I'll have a post-entry plan report that's coming out. So for those of you who've been to a listing session, you've heard me talk a little bit about my entry plan, and I'll have a report that's going to come out, and I'm going to talk a little bit more specifically in that report about

[00:13:39] here's some things I think we need to do in order to, you know, kind of change what I'm seeing or move us forward, and I think we all want to move forward. But to give you a very specific example, one of the things that I really have hung my hat on is a very specific school improvement process.

[00:13:58] And that school improvement process is designed to be very granular in the data analysis work that happens and to have the leadership team from the school, and that's not the principals, that's like the teacher leadership, instructional leadership, and the principals at the table with my team and have that group empowered to make decisions in the moment about the strategies needed to move the data in that building, to be very clear about what that data is and why it needs to move, and then to identify the specific plans for children that will accomplish that, and then in the middle of that conversation be empowered to say, okay, if we're going to do that, these are the resources we're going to need to do that.

[00:14:33] And so I've been asking our board, for example, to give me some flexible staffing so that if they say, well, we're going to need another math support position, that we can say, okay, you're right, you're going to need it, we're going to give it to you, And then create the environment where everybody knows what the challenge is.

[00:14:50] Everybody understands what the plan is. Everybody has the resources and supports to do their job. And then the expectation, it's not an incentive, it's an expectation, is execute. Go do that work, get it done, and let's see improvement. And it kind of talks about it up there at the top where it says we're not setting incremental goals. I expect to see improvement.

[00:15:06] And where I don't see improvement, that's where I step in with my team and hold my people accountable. Yes, ma'am. Good evening. Thanks for being here. Having watched the presentation in the equity committee last week about how equity is living and breathing in the cultures of some schools, one takeaway for me was that diversity in leadership plays an enormous role on how big a part equity is demonstrated.

[00:15:37] What is your office doing to hold schools accountable for equity in their hiring practices and in their applicant pools? So, again, we'll talk more about that as I kind of push my report out. And I will say this, I have been doing kind of a comprehensive look at our hiring practices and how we hire principals and how we do leadership development and how we think about hiring our staff.

[00:16:00] And I've been sharing some of the things that have worked for me in the past. And so we'll be beginning to implement those as we head into the new hiring cycle. Some of it is because, for example, with the principalship, my team, particularly the chief schools officer and the department of school leadership, and then me, I'm the final layer of approval on who gets put forward to be a principal.

[00:16:26] I just ask a lot of questions about that. You know, I'm clear that I expect us to be bringing forward candidates who are highly representative of our communities and who are able to lead schools in a way that is reflective of that ability.

[00:16:42] And two things that I've, so in Virginia Beach, I mean, honestly, so I don't talk all the time about what I did in my last school division, but I was, by way of background, if you didn't know, I didn't really go too much into my background, but I was the superintendent of Virginia Beach for nine years prior to coming here. And one of the things that I was able to do through just establishing the expectation that we needed to diversify our leadership group, I was able to move that to about 30% of our leaders in the division were, you know, from minority groups in the division. And then two things that then happened. One is

[00:17:21] when you hire diverse leadership, diverse leadership tends to hire diverse teaching faculty. But there is also a problem in terms of the pool of available candidates in the teacher preparation programs. I don't have the data with me, but if I put it up, it would show you that we've had a significant decline in the last 10 years in people going into the profession through the teacher preparation program. So like a 35% decline in who's going in. And then of the number of current candidates in the state of Virginia, it's a shockingly and alarmingly small number of

[00:17:57] minority candidates in our teacher preparation program. So part of the challenge is that there simply aren't enough candidates. And so I actually think we have to go back further than the hiring process. And we have to go back to the experiences that children are having in our schools. Because I don't know about you, but if you have a terrible experience in school, you're probably not going to want to spend the rest of your life there, right? And so I think that we have to kind of take a multi-pronged approach to this. And we have to say, listen, we want to, so we have grow your own programs that we have in place and we're going to be expanding and we have to be able to go to students and say you would make an you're an amazing mentor and role model in your community

[00:18:33] right now as a peer some of them are in this room and i was saying you'd make an amazing teacher we want you in our grow your own program and we're going to give you a contract um you know before you graduate to come back and teach with us so those kinds of efforts that have to be underway as well and then we have to go out and we have to make clear the message that we want people to work in Loudoun County that people are welcome here that minority candidates are welcome here a diverse group of teachers is welcome here and we'll have a great experience in our schools and I think if we can just continue to push on that message and and there's some things we can do in the hiring process so hiring by law is is kind of a blind process and until it's not

[00:19:11] but on the kind of the front end when you're screening applicants it's it's a blind process we don't we can't ask and we don't ask about race but when a principal is interviewing candidates they know who they're talking to and they can tell me that and then I can ask them I can look at their data over time and I can say to them so tell me about your hiring practices and tell me why you're interviewing candidates of color but you're not you're not hiring them and and simply beginning to have those conversations made a significant difference where I was before and I think it'll make a difference here so I think a lot of it frankly is just establishing the

[00:19:49] expectation and kind of holding people's feet to the fire through the data. It's not about like me and you personally. It's a data conversation to say, well, your numbers in your hiring process reflect that you're not interested in diversity in your building. Please tell me more about why that is. And I think the more we have those conversations, the more people come to understand what we value and what we expect. Yes, ma'am. Hi, thanks for being here. Just to kind of echo on the last equity meeting we had, we did have fantastic principals and equity leads come and speak about all the wonderful work they're doing. My question is, are you now currently identifying

[00:20:27] or, I don't know what the right word is, buildings that aren't as supportive or committed to this work? So what I would say is that the team that's being led by Dr. Ellis Williams, we've had some good conversations about their need to be more directly involved in the process of selecting the equity leads so that we can ensure we have people who are really committed to being in the schools and championing this work and then our job and my job is to support her and then with my principals establish the expectation that this is work it's not something new it's not like an

[00:21:07] add-on equity work is not something you do differently from teaching it's not something that you do differently from school leadership it's part of the lens through which we have to do our work and having these conversations is part of that but having her team work with the equity leads so that we can identify areas where we have rapid opportunities for improvement and areas where we have tweaking to do and i went way past my five minutes so that was 10 minutes and i don't there's a whole big other part of the agenda i don't want to hijack any more of your time but i am sincerely appreciative um of the opportunity to be with you um this evening and and i'll just

[00:21:44] conclude by saying thank you again um as i do anytime i'm in a room full of people thank you for being here because you have choices about what to do with your time and you've chosen to be here and that signals a lot about what's important to you and what's important to you is important to me. So thank you. Again, thank you, Dr. Spence, for joining us.

[00:22:06] We appreciate your support and we see and recognize all the hard work you were doing within our division. Now I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Clark from Safety and Security and he has a presentation for us as well. Good evening, everyone.

[00:22:27] Got the unenviable task of following Dr. Spence here. So it's going way downhill, folks, way downhill.

[00:22:56] So again, good evening, everyone. My name is John Clark. I'm the Director of Safety and Security here in LCPS. And as you may know, part of Dr. Spence's entry plan was to convene a blue ribbon panel to examine all things safety and security here in LCPS.

[00:23:13] So you may be asking yourself, what the heck is a blue ribbon panel? And basically, in the simplest terms, if I can get this to advance here. I'm not going to cooperate. Oh, it's not up there?

[00:23:31] Okay, stand by. Thank you. Stand by.

[00:24:02] Technical difficulties here. Can't get this minimized here.

[00:25:33] All right. Okay, folks. Sorry about that. Business here.

[00:26:11] See, I wasn't lying. It was all downhill after that. Okay. Let's see if we can get this to work. Okay. We're in business here. Okay. So again, you may be asking yourselves, what the heck is a blue ribbon panel? So in the simplest terms, it is a group of external experts that come in and look at one aspect of an organization. So in this case, a group of security

[00:26:48] experts that came in and took a look at everything we're doing in terms of safety and security here at LCPS. So this is an apolitical group, and they have no direct authority, but all of their recommendations will be provided to Dr. Spence for his consideration. We had a very focused mission set. So we examined physical security, technical security, cybersecurity, and mental health resources here in LCPS. We started working on this as soon as Dr. Spence arrived back

[00:27:25] in September. And then between December and March, the panel met multiple times. And during those meetings, we really pulled back the curtain in terms of what we're doing in safety and security. So we gave them everything and anything we're doing in safety and security.

[00:27:43] So we explained our security methodology, our security philosophy, gave them all of our policies, protocols, procedures, talked about SSOs, SROs, our security patrols. We gave them a tour of our 24-7 security operations center that we run out of LCPS.

[00:28:04] We gave them a tour of a school here at LCPS to show them all of the standard security assets that are in place across every one of our schools. We walked them through all of our visitor management protocols so they could experience those firsthand at a school.

[00:28:21] We talked about threat assessment. We talked about training, drills, crisis management. We talked about our anti-bullying campaigns, our anti-drug campaigns, cyber security, counselor support, our glazing on glass throughout the county.

[00:28:38] So we literally gave them everything and let them chew on it. as they saw fit. So we did that. And then actually in March, they gave us a list of recommendations, which I'm going to get your feedback on tonight. And basically in April and then part of May, I'm going to be going out to stakeholder groups like this and getting more feedback. So this is an ongoing process in terms of the feedback. So in terms of who was on the panel, we had a great

[00:29:10] group. Of course, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office was there. Boy, they're just not cooperating with me tonight. Okay, here we go.

[00:29:47] Let's see. Nope. Okay. Stand by. Well, I do not know what is going on now. Where's my technical security guy? Let's see. Switch back because nothing's

[00:30:20] happening. I'm trying to advance. Yeah, there's a slide. None of the animations are coming up here. Yeah, nothing's coming up on the slides. Any idea? Now we end it and go back in. Where was it?

[00:30:45] So while he's doing that, I'll just talk about some of the experts that we had helping us out. So, of course, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, the Leesburg Police Department, the Middleburg Police Department, Percival Police Department, we had the FBI, we had the U. S. Department of Homeland Security, we had the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, their Virginia Center for Campus Safety, we had Loudoun County Mental Health, we had Loudoun County Office of Emergency Management, Leesburg Office of Emergency Management,

[00:31:19] We had K-12-6, which is a cyber organization dedicated to the K-12 environment. So we had a ton of great external participants that really helped us out in this process. And then, of course, internally, we had a host of subject matter experts, a lot of them from central office here, that would come in and provide briefings on key topic areas and answer questions as needed.

[00:31:44] We also had level representation from all of our educational levels. So we had principals from the elementary level, middle, and high school level serving on the committee or panel as well. Can we advance past that one?

[00:32:30] No, there we go. Okay. So, yeah, my apologies. It never works when you want it to, right? So the overwhelming sentiment from the panel was very positive. They clearly recognized the outstanding work that we're doing here in Loudoun County in reference to safety and security.

[00:32:49] We had a lot of great feedback that came from the panel, but obviously we definitely wanted them to hone in and give us some recommendations and potentially identify any gaps. So they were able to come up with several recommendations, and I'm going to go through these right now for you.

[00:33:08] These are in no particular order, all right? So the first one is to add more security coverage to elementary schools, add more security coverage to after-school events, ensure Wi-Fi coverage throughout the entire school.

[00:33:25] That really comes in handy during an emergency. Creating a full-time supervisory position for our security operations center, which is 24-7. Prioritizing training for the school, security and threat assessment training. Ensuring all of our SROs and SSOs And mental health professionals are on every threat assessment.

[00:33:50] Having the school board label us in safety and security as a law enforcement unit. That phrase is a little confusing there. It doesn't mean we would start carrying guns and arresting people. What it simply means is that we would own all of the video records here in LCPS.

[00:34:09] So all of our security camera footage, those would become security records and not educational records. It would allow us to share those with law enforcement as needed. Creating a formal alternative education site for our high-risk kids.

[00:34:28] Assessing public safety radio coverage in all of our schools to make sure it's adequate. Creating a basic cybersecurity and social media best practices course. And then adding a digital analysis to all of our very serious and serious threat assessments.

[00:34:44] So this would take the form of a social media workup and an open source workup on the subject of a threat assessment in LCPS if it came back serious or very serious. Okay, so those are the recommendations.

[00:35:00] And again, what I'd love to get from you all tonight is some feedback on these. So we're going to use a platform called ThoughtExchange. Anyone familiar with it or has used it before? Okay, so if you could just grab your mobile devices, you are going to download this code, if I can get it to show up here.

[00:35:37] Okay, there it is.

[00:35:57] So if you could grab that QR code for me. Once you get logged in, you're going to have to answer one question, just stating your role here in LCPS. Give you a minute.

[00:36:12] Once you all get into it, I'm going to put the recommendations back on the screen so you can see them for reference. Is everyone in?

[00:36:30] Okay. Yeah, it's going to collect your thoughts. Yes. You'll see it. Yep. Yeah. They can get in too. Yeah. No, no, no PII data. No. Yeah.

[00:36:57] It should prompt you to ask a question. Yeah. Get started. Yep. Hit get started. It's going to ask you a question. Explain. Go ahead. Next. Yep. You can just scroll through until you get to the start of it. Keep going to next. Is everyone in or are we still working? Everyone's in. Okay. So what we're going to do is we're going to take two minutes and you're going to put your own thoughts on these recommendations into the platform. Okay. And then we're going to take the last two minutes

[00:37:32] to rate some of the thoughts you're seeing within that same platform. Okay. So for these first two minutes, and I'll time you, you're just going to go in and put your thoughts. So what stands out to you based on these recommendations? What resonates with you? What do you think should be a priority for us? Okay. That's the thinking we're looking for. Okay. So you can go ahead and start that And here are the recommendations.

[00:38:06] Those are probably hard to read, but some frame of reference there. And I'll set a timer. So again, take the first two minutes to provide your thoughts. And then we'll get into rating thoughts.

[00:38:31] What stands out to you all? What resonates with you all?

[00:40:00] Okay, about 30 seconds left, but we can continue longer if you'd like. Don't feel rushed.

[00:40:14] What is an SOC? That's a great question. Who asked that question? Who asked that question? Raise your hand. Yeah, that's a great question. So that is our security operations center, 24-7 security operations center that we run.

[00:40:36] QR code, it's frozen again on me.

[00:41:26] I can't even get back to it. Okay, so if you're ready, go ahead and move on to rating some of the thoughts you're seeing there. So this is an AI platform that kind of gathers all of the feedback.

[00:41:45] And then the items that are getting the most attention will kind of bubble to the surface. And we'll be able to see that if I could ever get this thing to work.

[00:43:08] All right, so you can see here Wi-Fi coverage is kind of bubbling up to the top there with a 4.4 out of 5 stars rating on that recommendation. So it's a pretty cool platform that will give us kind of some instant feedback.

[00:43:28] And what we're going to do is once we gather all the feedback, we're going to share that with Dr. Spence so he can make some informed decisions on how to move forward. How's everyone doing?

[00:43:47] Want some more time to add some ratings or thoughts? Are we good? All good? Okay. Any questions?

[00:44:06] Yes. Yeah, thank you. I was just wondering, like, if you could give us some more information on what being classified as a law enforcement agency would entail, like, besides just the security footage thing, you know, like, what else does that mean?

[00:44:33] Yeah, that's a good question. So it's a complicated topic. A lot of school divisions do classify their security department as a law enforcement unit. But again, basically what it means is that all of the records reference security would become, quote, security records.

[00:44:53] Right now in LCPS, they're educational records. So we have limited authority to share those because they are educational records and they are protected by FERPA. So when they become security records, that means we have more freedom to share them as needed, if that helps.

[00:45:14] Yes? Taking away, if they are records of the school, why does it have to be law enforcement involvement? Isn't that infringement on the rights of the students? I mean, why does it have to go to that extent?

[00:45:30] So it doesn't necessarily have to be law enforcement involved. It's just a classification of the division of safety and security or any division of safety and security within a school district. I mean, is there a reason why it's gone from protecting the privacy of the students to completely taking it away from the schools and putting it in the hands?

[00:45:54] Yeah, so it doesn't take it away from the schools. The privacy aspect is still there. But when there's a security issue that necessitates sharing, it kind of allows you to do that more freely, even though you can still do that under FERPA, as you probably know, through the health and safety exemption.

[00:46:14] But that was the genesis for it. So if there's already a way to do it, why are we adding to that? So again, nothing's been added right now. These are just the recommendations from the panel. So I didn't make the recommendation. It came from the panel. So this can actually not go through?

[00:46:31] Absolutely. Okay, understood, thank you. Yeah, none of this has gone through. Yep, and that's why we're gathering your feedback for that exact reason. Yeah, thank you. Any other questions? Yes. Yeah, and I guess I just went through that exercise we just did, and this was the exact concern I had, is why the need or why the recommendation to make that change?

[00:46:56] To the law enforcement unit? To the law enforcement unit. And second, when I was going through this there was no way for me to put in that input because that was a that was the first thing i thought of oh you can put that in thought exchange and just absolutely i know but it didn't come up you know like you mean it didn't rise to the top it did not but we'll see it we're going to run a report we're going to see every comment okay yep so if you put it in there we're going to see it okay but yeah that is concerning because i i don't know that i we need more law enforcement I'm saying the law enforcement term is a little misleading.

[00:47:31] Like I said, we're not going to be carrying guns and arresting people. Even the term and how you explained it, I don't think I want my child's information with a law enforcement agency for more easy sharing. Yeah, again, great feedback.

[00:47:46] That's why we're doing it. Just creating a digital tool to handle. Which recommendation are you talking about? No, not recommendation.

[00:48:02] I said, if I understand what you said correctly, we are not having any security policy change. We're just having a tool that manages reporting or collecting information. Because I don't understand the purpose of the blue committee recommendation of creating this if there is no change in policy.

[00:48:24] Are you talking about the law enforcement unit? Law enforcement, I mean, basically what I looked at, the notes that you put over there, there is ways to, my attention went to, like, rating kids for high security, risk, children.

[00:48:40] Is that something that we had before, or is that something that is introduced new within this tool? So, again, all of these are just recommendations made by the panel. None of these have been implemented yet. All of this is going to be presented to the superintendent for his consideration.

[00:48:57] Okay. And what drives that decision, whether we will adopt it or not? That'll be up to the superintendent. Going directly to what you presented, we are trying to remember the slide that was on for three minutes and then putting comments into a box that is like...

[00:49:15] Yeah, but the comments that you're making now, you can put into thought exchange. But we're not... Like, I have questions about what was up on the board anyway. Like, I don't think we're at the point where we're actually rating the general conversation.

[00:49:30] Like, I think we have questions, a lot more questions clearly, about the various surveillance issues, I mean, what the recommendations are, because we're not necessarily saying, okay, do you approve of one, do you approve of two, do you approve of three? We are just giving general comments about general information.

[00:49:48] Absolutely, yeah, and ultimately the decision is with Dr. Spence in terms of what he would like to implement based on these recommendations. But how would you know which specific point is what I'm saying? Because there are some that are extremely concerning and some that we don't know enough about. So can we, is there a way to go over what you have had up?

[00:50:07] And I think there were multiple people who wanted to ask more questions about specifics. Sure. Can we do that? Sure. As opposed to like using this, I feel like is a little. You can ask any question you want. Okay. So do you mind if we put those back up on the board? The recommendations? Yes, please. Sure. I think that would be helpful. Yeah.

[00:50:29] Okay. I'm being told we're going to have to wrap it up. But let me put these up here just for another two minutes here. Can you also make this report accessible so we could read it in detail before we were able to comment on it or comment later or share it back with our schools or anything like that?

[00:50:52] So it'll be pushed out to the superintendent, obviously, and then there's going to be a public briefing on it at the May 14th school board meeting. Okay, good.

[00:51:16] Thank you, folks. i apologize for those technical difficulties but i know you guys have a big agenda here so i am being ushered off thank you though i just have one more quick question um specifically does add more security personnel include like medical profession after school include like medical professionals like athletic trainers and all that because usually there's like one to two for three to four sports teams that are partaking in practice after school at the same time across the whole

[00:51:52] campus which is a lot like it's a lot for two people yes so the answer is no it does not include athletic trainers we're talking about just security folks well mr clark thank you for your time and thank you for coming to share with us i know we all have a lot of questions and concerns and we will work to get more information out to you so you can ask your questions and your thoughts and your voice can be heard we're just ushering the schedule along for the evening because we're

[00:52:29] pretty packed, and we want to make sure that we give our students ample time to share their stories and their experiences with us. I'm going to go ahead and move to our delegate spotlight. I've been very excited about this for the last couple of months, and I'm going to turn the floor over to one of our wonderful delegates. Ms. Banan, can you tell me how to pronounce your last name?

[00:52:50] Please work. Please work. Please work. It's in there. There we go. Okay. Let's hope this doesn't go downhill. Thank you for being here. Thank you for having me. My name is Benan Malcawi. I'm an MSAC delegate for Potomac Elementary School in Sterling, Virginia.

[00:53:28] I identify as Arab Muslim American woman and I'm also the vice chair of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee of Loudoun branch. I began as an MSAC delegate since 2021 and like many of you in the room I had to navigate learning our school community being engaged with the staff the PTA, the families.

[00:53:54] Potomac Elementary is a very diverse school. With the demographics, we have over 45% that come from minority backgrounds. I will talk a little bit more about these demographics because the statistics can vary widely depending on how you view them. We have a very supportive leadership in the school that really champions diversity and equity.

[00:54:16] And that helps from the elementary school level, really helps instill these values for our students. As an MSAC delegate, I observe, I engage. It takes a lot of reaching out to the teachers and staff.

[00:54:31] It takes a lot of initiative, especially reaching out to the PTA and finding your spot in the conversation between planning for school activities and then coming to report back from the MSAC meetings and also understanding the constraints that the schools go through and understanding how to navigate those.

[00:54:52] Potomac Elementary, we pride ourselves for having a very diverse parent engagement level and language-based engagement. We have an Arabic language parents group called Finjan Kahwa. We have a Cafe Compadres for Spanish-speaking families and a Parents Chai for Farsi-speaking families.

[00:55:13] So one of the issues as an Arab-American community that we face in Loudoun County, And as a reflection of the Arab-American community in the larger American society is that we're kind of an invisible minority when it comes to data and statistics. And the reason why is every time, ever since we signed up our daughter at LCPS, one of the first applications we had to fill out, you fill out a survey that says, how do you describe yourself?

[00:55:39] And as our family's Arab-American, what category do you think we would or should choose? So our country of origin is in Asia, but this is not a geographic question. It's a racial question.

[00:55:56] We're not two or more races, and we actually do prefer to say. So that last one doesn't help. Having a category other in some federal forms do help, but Loudoun County's surveys do not have that. So based on U.S. Census, we are categorized as white.

[00:56:15] We do not identify as white. we do not share in the privileges of being white, and we definitely face a lot of issues that the white community doesn't face. So if we think about the impact of this miscategorization on data and analysis and issues related to diversity, to equity, to demographics, to access to resources, community needs, to translators and different language-based issues, A lot of these are not included in the data and statistics.

[00:56:46] As of April 2024, the U.S. Census update from the White House Office of Management and Budget has finally included a category for Middle East and North Africa, thanks to the efforts of a lot of Arab American and Middle Eastern advocacy organizations, one of which is the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

[00:57:07] And now currently, all federal surveys and applications will include this category, so at least we can begin to hopefully see the data come in to recognize at least the numbers, the demographics, but also the implications of a lot of these issues, not just related to diversity and inclusion, but also related to access to resources as well.

[00:57:31] As a community, we will also follow up with LCPS and the Virginia Department of Education to ensure that this rollout of the new federal survey is reflected in LCPS's new surveys and new racial categories.

[00:57:49] And so it's going to change a lot. So this is how the new category is going to look. It's going to be a little more detailed as well, giving you an option to put down the country of origin. So it really didn't take that much, but this is dating back from... you know, over a decade worth of advocacy to include that. A little bit about our community.

[00:58:08] There's a lot of overlap between how we understand our identity. As we're celebrating Arab American Heritage Month, which is in April, a little bit about Arab Americans have ancestry in one of the world's 22 Arab nations that would identify as Arab. Adding to that, Middle East and North Africa as a category includes countries like Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, which widens the category of understanding. However, not all of them are Arab. So when we say Middle East and we say Arab, they're two different things, even though there's an overlap.

[00:58:42] Adding to that, the category of Muslim. Not all Muslims are Arab. Not all Arabs are Muslims. And one interesting fact is, as the history of the Arab American community in the United States, the majority of them are not Muslim and are actually Christian, especially the early migrations of Arab-Americans. So that's one of the issues when we're dealing with issues related to the, whether it's the community of Middle East community or Arab-American, we can't just, there are intersections, there are overlaps, but they're also very distinct categories.

[00:59:15] We're very proud and very happy to see LCPS mark Arab-American Heritage Month. Last year, it was marked on April 13th on the Facebook page. This year, on April 15th, We were hoping next year on April 1st to mark the month from the beginning so that it doesn't feel like an afterthought.

[00:59:35] Nonetheless, we appreciate the effort to mark that as well on the county-wide. For our school, we are having several activities that celebrate and mark this month.

[00:59:50] That takes a lot of parent initiative. It is not coming from the school. It is really coming from the community initiative. The school did offer us a display at the front of the school where we can display

some of our souvenirs and our culture. Our wonderful librarian, Dr. Copeland, put a display of books related to Arab American heritage in the library.

[01:00:10] Our students, there are over 30 Arab American students and really over 80 students from Middle East backgrounds. So that comes up to about 20% of the school's population that is actually missing from the school's data. So when our principal says that our school is 43% from diverse backgrounds, we're actually much more diverse than we believe.

[01:00:32] That's in areas such as Sterling. There are areas in Ashburn and Aldi that are just also just as diverse. So when we look at it aggregately in all of Loudoun County, we're really talking about major shift in data and understanding how this community is not only not reflected, But the diversity of Loudoun County itself is not reflected in the data and statistics.

[01:00:58] We had our students, Arab American students, got their little 30 seconds of fame on the morning show in which they would go out every morning and speak about their language, their culture, their heritage and background. So that's the rosy part. But as many minority communities, we understand that there's a lot of navigating the not very nice stuff that happens in our county.

[01:01:22] and as a reflection of the overall community nationwide. Particularly at this time and this year, our students are navigating a lot of different incidents of both anti-Arab bias, explicit bias, implicit bias, and there's a lot of intersection of racial, ethnic, religious-based bias that is hard to pigeonhole into one category.

[01:01:48] To look at just some of the examples from our cluster, On the elementary school level, for example, a religiously and racially based comment was made from a teacher in elementary school in a fourth grade level, a comment that was made about 9-11 and the perpetrators of 9-11 being of Arab and Muslim background. It was taken in a context that was not in the educational context, causing much psychological and emotional trauma for several of the children in the class. Luckily, and by coincidence, our neighbor got to speak to me

[01:02:27] about this incident, and as an MSAC delegate, I did go and report it to the principal, and the principal really took some serious measure to deal with the incident. On middle school levels, for example, in our cluster, we had a bus driver who pointed out on several occasions to two students who wear hijab calling them oh the ragheads i see you from far away raghead is i mean are we treading on hate speech are we treading on racial derogatory terms that is made by a staff member these are adults dealing in a position of responsibility towards our children

[01:03:06] at the intersection one of the students is both arab muslim and african black and so the intersection of all three has caused such a major trauma for her, causing her to miss over 30 days of school before she even went to her family to tell her why she's refusing to go to school and why she's refusing to get on the bus. This is an incident, again, that got brought to the attention of the ombuds office, and that was in thanks to the presentation that the ombuds came and gave at the MSAC meeting, in which I immediately told the mom, you take it all the way up to the

[01:03:43] Ombuds office. You take it all the way up to the DEIA office. These are incidents that cannot remain on the school level. Other issues in our cluster as well. A history teacher dissuading student from making a history project on Gaza, telling her there's not enough resources on that. On several occasions, the student went back to a teacher saying, I want to make the project on Gaza, dissuading her from that.

Implicit, explicit, call it as it is. On high school level, then there is the fallout from the pro-Palestine student walkout starting last year in October.

[01:04:21] Several of high school and some middle schools around Loudoun County, students from different backgrounds, both Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, black students, Hispanic students, and allies from different backgrounds rallied to go out and protest in support of ending the war and calling for a ceasefire and calling for a free Palestine. On a school-wide level, there was a big fallout from the statement that was issued by the superintendent and how it was contained and understood with the students on a school-by-school basis as well. There were a lot of arbitrary rules

[01:04:59] that came out depending on the school. We had a student who was told that they couldn't wear a jacket that had a flag in the embroidery of Palestinian heritage, a jacket. They couldn't wear a jacket. There were some arbitrary rules in which students couldn't wear the colors of the Palestinian flag. Ironically, this was around December, and the colors are red and green and black and white, which is very Christmassy. So that we found that ironic. So these are some of the issues that our students are navigating in their schools. Some of them we do get to get wind of, and we get to hear, and a lot of our students are really not coming and telling us, and

[01:05:38] a lot of the parents are not coming and telling us, so we're not really even aware of some of these incidents that are ongoing on different levels. However, and in this room, we really stand on the shoulders of a generation that has worked very, very hard to navigate the climate of understanding hate speech, understanding discrimination, understanding bias, and from various communities. And we have the access to support, both in Loudoun County and this community, in this room in particular, is really where I

[01:06:16] learned to speak up. And I learned how to access the levels of support that we have, starting with just picking up the phone and reaching out to the DEIA office. That division is our safety net. It is our backbone, and we're in full support of the DEIA division as a whole, of MSAC as well, where I learned a lot of this.

[01:06:42] The ombuds office is another access of support, and learning to speak out and really empowering our communities to speak out when they do face incidents, empowering our students first. They need to come back and let us know what is happening on the bus, what is happening in school, what is happening with their teachers, especially when we're dealing with adults and dealing with staff members.

[01:07:02] And the other issue is cultivating community and support and engagement within our own communities, within our own clusters, and so forth. That was my final slide for today until I had to add an 11th hour slide around 4.45 right before heading out here.

[01:07:21] At Potomac Elementary School, we have multicultural night coming up on Friday. And we were very excited. we have several students who are making presentations from different countries in the world. My daughter included is doing a presentation on Palestine. And the school called us informing us that students presenting Palestine and multicultural nights cannot include comments such as free Palestine, cannot include or mention that Palestine is an occupied country.

[01:07:53] That's a fact. It's not politics. They said we don't want to include politics in multicultural night. For us, Palestine being an occupied country is not politics. It is a fact of life. And therefore, it is part and

parcel of the identity that we live with, and we walk with, and we breathe with every single day. And the interesting thing is, had it come last year, had multicultural night been April last year, would this been an issue? Or is it because it's in the news cycle right now? So these are some of the issues that we're navigating as a community.

[01:08:28] We still fall and we stand on the shoulders of a lot of the people in the room here that have navigated the different dynamics of these issues facing our communities. And we hope that we rally together as a community to understand these different dynamics and really spread the awareness of the beauty of the heritage and the cultures and the expressions that we share all together in Loudoun County.

[01:08:58] Thank you very much. Again, thank you, Benan, for coming and sharing with us. When we started our delegate spotlight, she was one of the first delegates after Robin to reach out to us and say that she wanted to share just her viewpoint because I think there is space and there is room within MSAC for us to continue to open our doors and to welcome different viewpoints and cultures in so we can learn from them and we can learn how to better support and how to better advocate for every student in our district.

[01:09:35] Right now, we are going to kind of break away. We have one table set up from affinity groups just sharing some of their work. I was going to invite Ms. Shalonda Davis up if she had a few moments to just speak about the importance of these affinity groups and what they do and kind of give us an overview, and then we're going to kind of break and discuss.

[01:09:54] I know that there are students in the room, and if some of the students feel comfortable sharing some of their experiences with affinity groups, please do. This is a safe space for you. We're here for you, and we want to support you and hear from you in any way possible. But I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Davis now.

[01:10:18] Greetings, everyone. Like she said, my name is Shalonda Davis, and I am the student activities and engagement coordinator at John Champ High School. I am a newer member to the LCPS family, relocating to Virginia from Texas as a civilian military spouse. I do have a vast background in working with affinity groups in three different school systems in two other states prior to arriving here, and I'm also a mom of two, almost three now, LCPS students. I stand before you today to emphasize the profound importance of affinity groups within Loudoun County Public Schools, particularly highlighting the incredible

[01:10:54] collaborations flourishing within various chapters at John Champ. Affinity groups are not just clubs and organizations. They are pillars of support, understanding, and empowerment within our school community. In a diverse and dynamic educational environment like ours, affinity groups play a pivotal role in fostering inclusivity, understanding, and respect among students. These groups provide a safe space where individuals with shared identities, backgrounds, and experiences can come together and celebrate their uniqueness, share their challenges, and amplify their voices. At John Champ, our affinity groups are not just symbolic, they are powerhouses

[01:11:33] of collaboration and advocacy. Whether it's our Gay-Straight Alliance, the Black Student Union, our Latinx Club, our Muslim Student Association, or any other group, each chapter stands as a testament to the strength found in the unity and diversity.

[01:11:50] The collaborations within these groups extend far beyond the walls of our school. Through community outreach, awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives, our affinity groups are making a

tangible difference not only within our school, but in a wider Loudoun County community.

[01:12:09] One of the most remarkable aspects of these collaborations is the way they transcend boundaries and bring together students from different backgrounds and experiences. In a world often divided by differences, our affinity groups serve as bridges that connect us, reminding us of the power, the empathy, the solidarity, and the mutual respect that comes from each and every student.

[01:12:30] Moreover, the impact of our affinity groups goes beyond the academic realm. By providing a sense of belonging and support, these groups contribute to the holistic development of students, nurturing their confidence, self-esteem, and leadership skills.

[01:12:47] As we celebrate the achievements and collaborations within our affinity groups, let us also reaffirm our commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all. We continue to champion diversity, equity, and justice both within our school community and beyond. Affinity groups are not just the spaces. They are a movement. Movement towards a more inclusive, understanding, and compassionate world. We can stand together hand in hand as we continue to build a brighter future for all. I'd like to take a moment briefly to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our Black Student Union at John Champ High School. I am honored to be a co-sponsor

[01:13:26] for this amazing group. This year has been nothing short of extraordinary marked by significant milestones and impact initiatives that have truly brought our community together. Our BSU this year has also chartered a chapter of the NAACP demonstrating our commitment as a campus to advocacy, empowerment, and social justice.

[01:13:47] This partnership opens doors to even greater opportunities for our students to engage in meaningful activism and effect positive change in our society alongside the Loudoun County chapter of the NAACP. Furthermore, our dedication to academic excellence and cultural awareness has shown brightly through initiatives like the increased enrollment in our Honors African American History program.

[01:14:12] Our program didn't exist last year because it was a low student turnout. So our club made it a point to reach students and teach them about what that class would do. So this year, they had a gallery rock showcasing the rich history of African Americans dating from the 1700s to present day.

[01:14:33] And those presentations were created by students and delivered by students. And this was a great testament to the depth of learning and creativity with our community. It's through events like these that we not only educate ourselves, but also inspire others to appreciate the richness and diversity of our heritage.

[01:14:52] I'd also like to share and recognize the incredible dedication and unwavering commitment to our BSU and African American history program for my co-sponsor, LaShondra Carter. She would have been here tonight, but she's holding it down at school, preparing for our spirit week, so she's there and I get to come here.

[01:15:12] But her passion for education and advocacy has been instrumental in shaping the experiences of our CHAMP family and the students of our Black Student Union. Through her tireless efforts, Ms. Carter has not only imparted knowledge, but has also empowered and inspired our students to embrace their heritage, celebrate their culture, and strive for excellence in all endeavors.

[01:15:34] Her leadership and guidance has truly been a cornerstone of our BSU community, and we are immensely grateful for her invaluable contributions to our school and the lives of her students. And I can say that as a colleague, as a friend, and as a mother of a student in two of her classes. BSU has become a true beacon of unity and celebration through events like our Taste of BSU, which was a part of our gallery walk.

[01:15:57] BSU partnered with the African American History class, and after the visitors went through the gallery walk, they were able to join with BSU for our Taste of BSU. This is where they had delicious foods from diverse cultures that they prepared as families, and they were shared and enjoyed by all.

[01:16:16] The one thing I love about that is it's bringing kids back into the kitchen with their families to learn about those family recipes that they can continue to pass on to future generations. Our inclusive spirit coupled with our ever-growing membership now exceeding 180 students and not just African-American students, students of all different races join in our club.

[01:16:39] This reflects a deep sense of belonging and camaraderie fostered within our BSU family. This year, the John Champ Muslim Student Association has dedicated its efforts to fostering a sense of belonging and engagement within the Muslim community at our school.

[01:16:55] Through daily and weekly prayers held on campus, as well as weekly gatherings featuring a range of activities from safe space discussions with guest speakers to interactive games like Scavenger Hunt and Jeopardy, MSA has provided a platform for students to connect, share, and grow together.

[01:17:12] Moreover, their community commitment has extended far beyond our school grounds, and it is evident by their initiative to organize an inter-MSA charity basketball event with neighboring high schools, strengthening the bonds and outreach within a wider Muslim community.

[01:17:28] At CHAMP, inclusivity is paramount, exemplified by the provision of a designated location and schedule for prayer time during the school day, ensuring accessibility and accommodation for all students and staff. Our prayer room can be utilized by anyone that would like to pray for any faith.

[01:17:48] Our JCHS MSA's proactive approach not only enriches the experiences of Muslim students, but also fosters a more cohesive and supportive community for all members of CHAMP to thrive. I'm immensely proud of the resilience, passion, and dedication by each and every member of our John CHAMP affinity groups.

[01:18:08] Together, we have not only created a vibrant and inclusive community within John CHAMP, but have also made meaningful contributions to a wider society. As we continue this journey forward, let us together collectively uphold the values of unity, empowerment, and advocacy that define our affinity groups, and let us inspire others to join us in building a more equitable and just world for all. Thank you.

[01:18:38] Thank you, Ms. Davis. Thank you for sharing what the goal is and the vision is of affinity groups. It is really amazing and awesome to hear the impact they can have in their schools, in their communities, that it builds young leaders for the future, but also that these students get to come together and to support each other and lift each other up and encourage each other every day at school is a really wonderful thing to hear.

[01:19:06] So now we're going to kind of break away. If you would like to visit the table back there and ask more questions, please do. But if you're not going to move about the room, a question I'd like for you all to

contemplate and we can come back together in just a little bit is what we can do as MSAC delegates to support the student affinity groups in our schools.

[01:19:25] How can we reach out and be a support for them? Because oftentimes we're the adults in the room that maybe we can lend our voice in a way that lifts the students up or opens a door for them and helps them as they go about their goals and their mission and their work in their schools.

[01:19:42] So we're going to break for about 15 minutes. And please just talk amongst yourselves, visit the table. Again, if there are students that would like to share anything, please feel free, and we'll be back shortly. Okay, everyone, I'm just going to reconvene us, the words escape me at this point, for just a couple of minutes, and then we are going to close out for the night.

[01:20:11] Again, I just want to thank Dr. Spence for coming and sharing with us. I want to extend our thanks to Mr. Clark for presenting to us as well. Thank you to Ms. Davis and the John Champ Black Student Union for setting up a table for us and sharing what you do.

[01:20:30] We are so grateful. And, again, I think that it is awesome to hear what these kids can do and how they can, you know, support each other and lift each other up but also be prepared leaders for the future.

[01:20:47] I have a couple of announcements. The first announcement is please don't forget if you have not RSVP'd, I will send it to the MSAC delegates again. I'm having email technical difficulties this week. But I will send you out the RSVP link for the equity. It is our annual equity and award ceremony.

[01:21:06] This is the one time MSAC where we can let our hair down, we can relax, we can be together in community, we can smile and laugh. And we can really celebrate the work that we've done around equity and advocating. And we get to celebrate some great administrators. And even more important, we get to celebrate the students that are doing this work.

[01:21:25] So please plan to join us at the historic Douglas High School next Saturday from 1 to 3.30 p.m. We're going to have a good time. We're going to have a fun time. And I hope to see you there. And I lost it that fast. The last announcement.

[01:21:42] Here we go. Last announcement. We are holding MSAC Executive Board election on May 15th. The nominations are now open. MSAC delegates, you will be receiving an email in your inbox.

[01:21:59] First thing tomorrow morning, we are accepting nominations from today, essentially through May 10th at 11 p.m. You can submit your application, a headshot if you want, and a either two-minute video or a up-to-1,000-word statement as to why you would like to serve on the executive board.

[01:22:24] The nominations that are being accepted for are MSAC chair, MSAC vice chair, and MSAC secretary. If you have any questions, please reach out to MSAC outreach. They will be able to answer your questions.

[01:22:40] I can't. Don't ask me. Please don't. I can't answer your questions after today. But if you have questions about serving as chair, I am very happy to answer those questions and reach out to you or provide any feedback or insight that you're looking for. But we are looking to hold elections for the executive board, and the election will be on May 15th, but we are drawing up a new system where we will allow everybody to vote virtually, and you will have a two-and-a-half-day window to vote.

[01:23:09] You only get one vote, so if you're not sure, up until 6 o'clock on Wednesday, May 15th, hold your vote and vote then. We will send you all of the voting materials, the applications, and whatnot for you to peruse and go over. So with that, I'm going to adjourn for the evening.

[01:23:27] Thank you all for coming. Thank you for your patience, and we'll see you next Saturday.



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