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Loudoun County School Board, Equity Committee Meeting, Thursday, May 2, 2024

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 16m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/942337219?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. Welcome to the May Equity Committee meeting. For this evening, we are going to start with public comment, and we will have two minutes for public comment.

[00:00:24] And because the person who's doing public comment has been with us multiple times, I'm going to let her govern herself accordingly. Andrea? I feel like I should get a nameplate.

[00:00:44] i read the following on the will you move it closer i read the following from the 2023-24 equity committee priorities enforce the physical separation of biological girls and biological girls in school bathrooms locker rooms and private personal areas in a way that does not violate student privacy. How is this on the equity committee priority list? The reverse

[00:01:24] should be true. Those who identify as transgender often face adverse educational outcomes because of a lack of equity in schools. This lack of equity stems from a lack of trans-inclusive non-discrimination policies in our public schools our public schools public schools

[00:01:56] please affirm transgender students thank you black lives matter thank you our next item on the agenda is approval of march minutes and april minutes because at the last meeting we did not approve the march minutes and so we have two months of minutes to approve they were sent to you earlier

[00:02:35] this week from helen and i'm asking do i um have any in corrections to those minutes yes i just have a quick question which is on the meeting limits for last month for april 4th under the uh public comment it says uh the committee ought to act as the conscious of the los angeles county public school system and it maybe that's exactly what was said but it just didn't seem to make sense so i just wanted to clarify if that was in fact meant to read los angeles county public school

[00:03:12] system or it should be loud in county public school system helen can you answer that for me

[00:03:42] the minutes from april at the very bottom okay we will make that correction any other corrections that you observe then i move that we accept the minutes with that one correction from march and april do i get a second second okay it's been properly moved and seconded that we accept the minutes from both march and april now we don't have any information items except i wanted to

[00:04:19] make an announcement we have sent to the board the full school board the request that we discussed earlier that you, the committee members, would be members of the committee for two academic years rather than one. Because if you see that the way the charter was written, it was written for one calendar year from January to December. And as we got started in January, it took us two months to actually find you and select you. So if there's someone who would like not to serve for two years,

[00:04:58] you can let me know, and we will find another person from your category to fill your place. So the board has not yet voted on that, so we have sent it to the next board meeting that we will serve for two years, and that is the reason that last committee meeting we had you to list those priorities for 23-24 and 24-25, okay?

[00:05:29] Now, I wanted to share with you that equity is a journey, not a destination.

[00:06:02] Our first meeting, we had introductions of the DEIA staff and what types of direct student-related activities they were involved in. And we also had the members to indicate what is your why for being on the equity committee.

[00:06:19] Our second meeting involved presentation of some model equity journeys in various schools here in Loudoun County, as well as we collected your written priorities for two school years.

[00:06:42] I took your yellow sheets that you submitted at the last meeting, and I had a couple of other teachers to help me read your writing, and I typed up those priorities. So what we're going to do now is, Christiane, is going to pass out to you those priorities.

[00:07:01] And just know that everyone has a voice. So what I typed was everybody's first choice, their first priority for the 23-24 school year.

[00:07:19] So we are passing those out to you. No, no, no. Thank you so much. and once you get them in your hands the first sheet the cute sheet that has the green leaves on it you know how teachers are they always got to have something I'm a teacher at heart the first

[00:07:58] sheet has the priorities all listed in no particular order I simply took your sheets and typed and typed and typed and what I'd like for you to do it is 20 minutes to six right now I'd like for you to take 10 minutes to read through those priorities.

[00:08:18] And on the yellow sheet that is attached, I'd like for you to sort of scribble what you think your top priority is. And you'll probably see yours in that list, so you might choose yours. But there's another

step to this. So if you'll take the next 10 minutes to take a look at the yellow sheet, I'm sorry, the sheet with the green leaves.

[00:08:43] And then on the yellow sheet, write what you see as your top priority for this school year.

[00:14:07] The chatter tells me that you've finished.

[00:14:45] Even Dr. Barrett. Good afternoon. What I'd like for you to do, now that you have selected your one from that long list, is possibly at the table.

[00:15:04] And you chose numbers, and I think a jury sat you at the table that your number represented, or you sat at the table where your number, that your number represented. I'd like for you to have a conversation with the people around the table to see if possibly three or four people might come up with one top out of the four or the three or the five that are at your table.

[00:15:34] And if you cannot, that's fine. as I said to Andrea a minute ago I typed exactly what you wrote on the yellow sheets and everyone has a different opinion then I had a person who said to me I didn't know you wanted them in first second and third order I just wrote them so I think my number three should be my number one so but you are going to get all of them as time goes on and what I'd like for you to consider

[00:16:02] is as you work as a group what are some action items that you might be able to take you and your group might be able to take to push a student or an administrator or a teacher or your own child further down his or her journey of equity for an example my staff aide tried to push me down the journey she says that's old school for you to pass them out on a piece of paper I said yeah but

[00:16:41] somebody's gonna forget their laptop if I don't put them on paper so I put them on paper I'm old school so she's trying to bring me forward and push me forward in terms of equity but I feel that it's equity that everybody in this room got the same thing in front of him or her so that's my equity journey with that piece of paper however I know I need to move out of the you know the last century in terms of technology I know that but I have three people in my house that are engineers

[00:17:15] I don't have to so I'm making a joke out of it but I am saying to you that I'd like for you to um now talk among the people at your table in terms of whether or not you might be able to convince the guy across the table or the lady at the end of the table or or me because I'm going to walk around and listen to your conversations as to what should be the very first priority for your

[00:17:45] group because of your thoughts can we do that now for 10 minutes the conversation is rich it is rich

[00:30:10] I put a green sheet on each table I'd like to be able to collect that one green sheet at the end of your conversation. And some individuals said they had two instead of one. And if you have two instead of one, I'll accept that. And that'll be that much more information we can distribute to

[00:30:31] you or get back to you for next month.

[00:37:06] What if the equity committee could report out and get out before 730 tonight? Would that make anyone sad and crying? And so we're going to start, I think, with table three to, is that your table number?

[00:37:39] Everyone can keep working, and I'll give five more minutes before we start talking, 'cause I know once we start talking, it's hard for others to concentrate and focus. So, five more minutes?

[00:37:57] Okay, thank you.

[00:47:53] Okay, we're gonna ask table three to start the process of reporting out. Who has a timer on their phone that they know how to use? Okay, so we're going to give each table four minutes.

[00:48:21] Four minutes. And we're going to start with table three. All right. Can we have your attention, please? Good evening, everyone. My name is Anna Purdy. I am principal at Meadowland Elementary in Sterling. I have a couple questions before I begin.

[00:48:39] Is anyone in this room currently homeless? Will anyone in this room go home to no food on their table? possibly no access to a refrigerator? Is your internet searching dependent on your child's device? Our economically disadvantaged families are likely not at this table, and they're likely not at many of the tables where these decisions are made. And I am here as a principal of a Title

[00:49:17] I school to share that economically disadvantaged students in our community need to be a top priority. So I'm going to give you an example of one school but there is plenty more and I and all of us at this table, let me be clear, we would like to see equitable practices extend far outside the constraints that we have kept it in thus far. So at my school I work with students on

[00:49:53] their mental health every day, many of whom have no health insurance. I work with students on their physical health every day, many of whom do not have health insurance. I work with students on actually getting their immunizations every day because they do not have health insurance. I work with families on helping them diagnose actual illnesses because they do not have health insurance. In addition to this, I work directly with families on supporting them with finding

[00:50:23] housing, food, free after-school programs, all kinds of basic needs. This is happening in Loudoun County, and from the sounds of many of our school board meetings, you wouldn't even know it. This group needs to be talked about, and in particular, the schools that are serving our Title I populations needs to be talked about. So, for those of you who don't know, Title I is a federal program.

[00:50:55] If more than in Loudoun, if more than 50% of an elementary school is experiencing some sort of economically disadvantaged, then the school may qualify for federal funding. With that federal funding comes an additional slew of federal mandates, all of which are academic and attendance based.

[00:51:18] While my supervisors and while our school board is extremely concerned, as they should be about academic growth. Our boots on the ground are dealing with the hierarchy of needs where we are on basic needs. We have extremely little differentiated staffing based on our school needs. There is a little bit, but it is very few and far between. And if the school board would

[00:51:50] to dive deeply into Title I schools, they would see that our academic needs are exponentially more significant than any other school. And my job as the principal is to be the lead learner, the lead instructor. Unfortunately, I cannot do this job because I am a social worker. I am a housing expert. I am a food and security specialist. I am a health care provider. I am a problem solver.

[00:52:26] I am a mental health professional. We have to get the ear of this county.

[00:52:43] Table one. My name is Sue Cowan. I'm a school counselor over at Mercer Middle School. I'm proud and honored to be part of this group. We had a very interesting and not wanting to stop discussion. I'm not sure that we came to any final decisions. If I could trace out where our discussion went, it went as follows.

[00:53:12] To kind of get back to basics, what happened? Why do we have an equity committee in Loudoun County? That was where that question about what was the equity audit of 2019? Not all of us know what happened back then when we were found guilty by Attorney General Mark Herring for not being equitable in terms of black and brown learners and their access to the academies of Loudoun and to the gifted and talented program.

[00:53:41] So going back to that data and making sure we all know what that is and what our why is. So that was where our conversation started. We then had a very lively discussion about what accountable means and how we can make sure that each and every school in Loudoun County has equity leads that are actually doing things that can be measured and that are aligned with the values of equitable practices as outlined in the hopefully strategic plan since that has already been approved.

[00:54:16] We had a discussion about measurable goals, and we had a discussion about making sure there's diverse staff included through hiring pools, which is part of a larger effort as well to be inclusive. There was discussion about hate speech and how important it is to tackle that because it is very hard to be inclusive when there is hate speech going on through teens and preteens and adults who are wary of doing anything about it.

[00:54:48] So there's a lot to be done, and in terms of prioritizing, we had a difficult time. We have three things on our paper, consistent, accountable, visible practices in schools by equity leads, measurable goals as they relate to the strategic plan, inclusive environments to include diverse and representative staff.

[00:55:16] Okay. I think you guys were tripping our notes because we have similar action items. So the three of us at our table, we all had two or three priorities each.

[00:55:36] But I think that the action items that we listed should be able to address all of those in addition to some of the others. So I think we can summarize our actions as data plus process equals consistency.

[00:55:51] And I think that the other table was talking a little bit about measurements and criteria and data to support improvement. So gathering data, we thought that we could research the methodology that's in place today or in the reporting on the hate speech to see how that information was collected and also looking at ways that actively interrupting that speech in progress

[00:56:27] might be a mitigation strategy for preventing that or reducing that. But also, I think, you know, we kind of doubted the validity of some of the data that was in some of those reports.

[00:56:44] Just on the surface, it seemed like it was pretty low. So researching the methodology might help to uncover the, to add some validity to those numbers or to add some validity to numbers.

[00:57:03] Let's see. Additionally, identifying what those obstacles are and how they can be addressed, perhaps in the data and in the research, we can see what some other schools have done. We don't need to reinvent the wheel here. We're only one county among 3,000 counties in this country, and I believe many of them have similar problems that we do.

[00:57:31] So it's important to look at other school districts and see how they've handled some of these problems. Were they successful? And all of that would play out in research and data. So we can we can cherry pick the good ideas and apply them here and learn what doesn't work and try not to repeat errors.

[00:57:54] Let's see. And then finally, we can also look to other schools, how they've addressed the private personal areas and in doing so in an equitable manner. I think this is one of those touchy subjects that we

were a little uncomfortable tackling, but, you know, we can't bury our heads in the sand.

[00:58:16] It is an issue, and I think that there are opinions on many sides of that issue, but supplementing that with data and information would help us as a committee make informed recommendations to the school board.

[00:58:36] Did I miss anything? Did you want to speak to it? Yes. Okay, so I mentioned earlier data plus process equals consistency, and that will in turn lead to better accountability for the district. Thank you.

[00:59:05] Hello, my name is Christiana. I'm a student at Stonebridge High School. One of the things we went over was providing extra support for students with underperforming in grades.

[00:59:33] And what we have in school now is you can come to school during, like, at 8 in the morning. And as a student, nobody really wants to do that. And if you can go during study hall as well, but students have other things to work on during school hours, like other classes, and you can't just focus on one class.

[00:59:55] So if we were able to do stuff more learning after school and in school, it would help a lot because we don't really get that during school time. And if you are in a sport, grades are always more important than your sport.

[01:00:13] So it's okay to make time to go to a tutor that is provided by the school. Another one was enforce the physical separation of biological boys and girls for locker rooms, bathrooms, and private areas.

[01:00:32] And we don't have much of those in our schools, so in any schools, really. So to have that would probably make people more comfortable. And help support Title I schools.

[01:00:50] I have friends all over Loudoun County that go to different schools. and it kind of sucks to hear like how their schools are and how different it is and how many opportunities that I have that they don't and it doesn't like make me happy that my friends aren't happy with their schools and they want to move schools like you should be able to be happy at the school that you're attending so to make changes and put funding into those schools that need help um the use of the n-word um the n-word is used a lot in school areas and they don't

[01:01:30] really do much i mean they do a lot to stop it but it's not in the correct way and they usually will just like suspend you for a limited time or give you like much attention or detention and i think what really needs to happen is like a conversation with the student and maybe the parent and you can also like teach the student about the history of the word or just have them get involved with things in their school that um like the bsu if their school has that and things

[01:02:05] like that that was really it that we went over hi i'm robin scott i'm the minority student Achievement Advisory Committee member from Blue Ridge Middle School. And we had talked about prioritizing ensuring that diverse applicant pools are available for current and future hires and also to retain those individuals so that the policies and SOPs to ensure consistent equitable

[01:02:43] and effective implementation of equity leads and equity-centered school-based leadership teams across all LCPS schools. Currently, schools are inconsistent with implementing equity effectively and thoughtfully, and some who do not, all schools should be held accountable and establish a consistent equity team on the ground in schools to lead active missions across LCPS.

[01:03:05] And our action items were to become more attractive, to recruit more diverse staff retention, to create that diverse culture, having equity leads come to equity meetings and MSAC meetings, create SOPs for those equity leads and teams, again, working to become an attractive place to work highlighting and spotlighting different schools and their achievements so that people want to come and work here from diverse backgrounds showing up in the schools like speaking of these individuals in this room and holding the people accountable and identifying safe adults and staff in the building that students can go to with the kind

[01:03:43] of inequitable issues that they might have hi good evening everyone dr tiffany forrester i am here representing the Little River District from school board nominee for Dr. Rasheed.

[01:04:20] So the first one we chose is, oh, I'm too close, bullet number five. And thank you for reading the full one so I don't have to. I wrote that one and I realized I need to be more succinct next time. So that one is about the policies and SOPs for equitable, consistent, effective equity leads and equity-centered school-based leadership teams. Two action items that we identified. We really identified that there is a huge gap in between policy and implementation, and so you can have policies written all day. However, if there's not an effective way to ensure that they're being

[01:04:56] followed and implemented with fidelity, it doesn't matter. So we thought a good action item would be to develop an equity accountability framework to hold schools in the districts accountable to implementing the equity framework and the equity leads.

[01:05:14] The presentations last week really spoke to us and we realized that those were probably schools that are meeting the bar, actually exceeding the bar with how they're implementing their framework and so we want to see more of that and ways to actually hold them accountable.

[01:05:30] The other action item according to that bullet is to develop and review equity policies as an equity committee and submit those recommendations to the school board. The critical piece we wanted to note here is we understand that things like that have been done in the past, but what we really wanna see this time is for the school board to follow up with the committee and share their next steps or action steps based off of the recommendations that we provide them.

[01:05:58] The next bullet that we chose to focus on is the one around Title I schools. So we wanted to understand the challenges of Title I schools. I think we all here come to this work understanding that there are a lot of inequities across the board and especially in Title I schools.

[01:06:14] However, we really wanted to take a step back and just survey, audit, and evaluate the challenges of Title I schools in order to really inform a thoughtful and strategic approach to addressing those challenges and resource inequities. Resource can be different things.

[01:06:32] You know, there's no need of putting more teachers there without knowing that that is the resource and equity that the Title I school is facing. So really just going, evaluating, assessing, and seeing what the challenges are, and then letting that inform your decision-making and planning. Forget anything?

[01:07:09] With the DEIA department, and we have some members of them here tonight, is relationships in those schools, and there are how many of you?

[01:07:25] six of you in your department, eight, okay, in those schools that they've been able to get into and form closer relationships with, those schools' equity journey have far surpassed other schools who may not have a person working directly with them. Not that every school needs an equity lead or an equity facilitator or an equity supervisor, but there are some schools where I have visited

[01:07:59] all of my schools and like six outside of Broad Run. And when I walk into a building and ask a principal, who is your equity lead? And he has to go to the secretary to find out the name of his equity lead. That tells me that that principal is not using the guidance given to him by the equity department in terms of progressing his equity journey. So I just want you to know that when we

[01:08:30] think of relationships, we know that we got started, we didn't get started until March. Here we are now in May. We only have one more meeting and I'm going to bring back to you some things that you've written tonight as well. And then we don't meet in July and we come back together in August. It is difficult for you, there are 35 of you when you all are here, to impact, how many schools we have,

[01:09:05] 99? Impact 99 schools. But if every person can impact who they can and which school they can and which child they can, then we could move that equity barometer forward by relationships.

[01:09:25] And so the challenge for the summer for the equity committee is I'm going to ask you to keep a record of the relationships that you develop over the summer with a school, with a parent, with a child, with an administrator that will move the equity barometer forward.

[01:09:48] because it is only through relationships that we can make a difference when it comes to equity. Being from the segregated schools of the South, there were laws that were put into place to say that we could not be discriminated against. But when we received the textbooks, the used textbooks

[01:10:21] from the white high schools where they had written negative terms in the margins because they knew we were getting the books, then that said to us that we were not as important as that other school.

[01:10:39] So I've been there, done that, and so I want you to know that even if we were to write a curriculum of equity, it would not be moved forward unless there were relationships that encouraged individuals to move it forward so could i have those green sheets can someone collect those for me and could i ask miss deans could i could i add something to what you just said so beautifully

[01:11:15] yes ma'am the title one schools get offered the furniture that some of the other schools get rid of when they get new furniture amen and i know i'm in a school building i do want to say help me helen the next equity meeting is june the the first thursday in june

[01:11:51] who has a calendar june 6 um i know that i cannot divulge your individual contact information but if you're sitting at a table with someone that you feel comfortable sharing your individual contact information with i would like for you to give them your phone number or you get their phone number so that you may talk one-on-one. Remember, we have a FOIA thing here that five of

[01:12:25] you can't get together unless you're here in this public meeting, but one-on-one can talk. Can you talk about what you have come up with at your table with the people at your table one-on-one and come back next meeting with additional feedback and input? If you would do that, I would appreciate it. And what I'm going to do next time is give you a list of the second and

[01:13:02] third priorities that you wrote last month, as well as your combined sheets that you gave this month, just for you to have to use in your progressing the equity journey that you choose to move forward. And I think most of you got my newsletter from Broad Run. And near the end, it said, on a scale of one to 10, where are you on your equity committee? And on your equity

[01:13:36] committee, if you indicated that you were at seven, then by December, you should be at nine. or maybe we're going to expand that scale. Whatever it is that you do by your consenting to be on this committee, it means that you are interested in equity. And I'd like for you to find a way for you to promote the equity journey in your environment. And let me say that there are

[01:14:13] two people in this room that have sent me emails, and you know you can find every school board member's email about some concerns at a particular school. If that school is in your district, create, develop a relationship with that school and have that school, ask that school, that dean, that counselor, that principal, who is your equity lead? And then if you would like, I can go in with

[01:14:48] you to talk with that equity lead. But an email to me is not going to resolve it. A relationship we will resolve it okay do we have any other business from any individual any comment any

[01:15:06] feedback okay turn turn her mic on for her um i don't know like the place to discuss it it's like the same thing but i had like other issues that weren't on the list but could i like when i give

[01:15:40] you the the the others from the second and third priorities it may be on that and we'll get i'll get those out to you by email over the next week. And if yours is not on that list, then we can add. Okay. This is our new student representative.

[01:15:58] And we're looking for a few more good students.



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