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Loudoun County School Board, Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee Meeting, Wednesday, May 15, 2024

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- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:03] - Good evening, everyone. We're going to get started. Welcome to our last MSAC general body meeting of the 2023-2024 school year. We're really excited to have you all here. We're gonna end on a really awesome note for the school year.

[00:00:20] I'm very excited about this meeting. We've been planning, well, I've been excited about all the meetings, let's be honest. But I'm very happy that way. But this meeting, we've worked really hard and had some really great conversations about our theme tonight, which is powerhouse partnerships, because there is so much room as advisory committees to the school board for us all to work together, and there are many times that we overlap, and our viewpoints, our feedback, our concerns are completely aligned, and we really believe that there is a space and a place for us all to really team up

[00:01:00] and to really further this work and to make a difference for our students within the division. So we're going to get started. If you're looking at the agenda, a point of order, we are going to move the MSAC announcements to after the Q&A in an open forum.

[00:01:17] So if we pass that, don't worry. We're going to come back to that at the end of the meeting. If you would, just take a moment right quick and please sign in. This is for delegates and for our visitors.

We're trying to just capture who's coming to join us at our meetings, and if you're not a part of our mailing list, we're trying to compile and build a new mailing list for our community members that join so we can keep you up to date on things that are happening with MSAC, and if there's information that we share at our meetings, you can have that information emailed to you so you can have it for your records or to share with your community,

[00:01:57] or if it's something that's going to benefit you as a parent or family member we want you to be able to have access to that information because we are about informing empowering and educating families here to be the best advocate for their students because these are your babies and nobody knows their babies like their parents and their family members so we want to make sure that we support you in the best way possible. Dr. Rashid is not here tonight so we are just going to go past that but she will share any updates that she has with us through email. I will get those from her when she has them, and I'll make sure that I

[00:02:35] pass those on to you. Right now, I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Truvelia Parker so she can introduce our two guest speakers for the evening. Good evening, and again, welcome to our final MSAC meeting for the 2023-2024 school year. I think we should clap it up and give ourselves

[00:03:09] a hand for our commitment, yes, to our students and to our family and to our community for the work that this committee has done. And so one of the things and one of our priorities for this year for our committee was partnerships and collaboration. And so today we're really excited to have two of our leaders from the other LCPS advisory committee, the special Education Advisory Committee. And so we have with us today Liz Crotty, who is the chair for the

[00:03:44] Special Education Advisory Committee, as well as Paige Carter, who is the director of special education for the Loudoun County Public Schools. And so they, along with our fearless chair, Mrs. Erin Conkle, as well as the rest of our board here, we will have a dialogue tonight and talk about some of our successes and challenges as well as some of our priorities for each of our respective committees and our programs. And so we're really excited about the information that we each have to share tonight as well as, you know, have an opportunity for you all to ask

[00:04:20] questions and engage with our special guests as well as with our MSAC leadership and with each other. So with that, I'm going to pass it back to Mrs. Kunkel. So our first presenter will be Ms. Liz Crotty, the chair of SEAC. Please welcome her. I'm really excited for you all to hear her speak and for her to share some of SEAC's goals and their mission, and also just to talk a little bit about how we align and we can partner together. So please welcome Ms. Liz Crotty.

[00:04:59] Thank you all so much. I'm really excited to be here today. I am a mother of three kids here in Loudoun County Public Schools. Kindergarten through sixth grade, all three of them are students who are classified as having disabilities, different disabilities, so that makes it fun and interesting and exciting. So that's been a lot of what's informed my experience here. I found my way to SEAC from a school administrator who was like, hey, you know, would you be interested in representing

[00:05:35] our school on SEAC and I was like what is SEAC and they explained it to me and I was like that sounds like my jam that's kind of my world and I found such a wonderful community there of other parents who knew a lot more than I did and where I they informed me about what was going on in the county and helped me understand what I was experiencing and helped me be a better advocate for my children and to form you know relationships with people both parents and professionals and

[00:06:15] school administrators that have really helped my family so much and I hope have also helped me help other families because that's the most important part of our work right is when you learn something you don't just keep it close to you you have to share it you have to pass it along so that's what brought me to SEAC. I think it's so similar to MSAC in so many ways, just incredible groups of parents coming together for a common purpose. So I'll tell you, just in case, oftentimes when

[00:06:50] I'm out in the community, I get a, what is SEAC? Just like the response that I had. So SEAC is the Special Education Advisory Committee. We are mandated by regulation here in Virginia and perform many of the same functions that you all do in terms of looking at policies, trying to interpret policies that are coming from the school division. We also advise the local school division of needs regarding special education and participate in the development of priorities.

[00:07:28] So SEAC has 21 voting members. We have 77 schools who have PTA, PTO representatives, so kind of a similar structure like that to you all. And we enjoy having a really collaborative and supportive relationship with the LCPS Office of Special Education staff.

[00:07:48] They are involved in all of our subcommittee work and our regular committee and are truly integral to what we do on a regular basis. I have to give a little plug. Our SEAC awards are coming up on June 5th. That is the highlight of our year where we honor our teachers, our administrators, our school staff, community members who have gone above and beyond for those with disabilities, similar to your equity.

[00:08:19] And so we have that coming up on June 5th at 630 at Rockridge High School. And it is open to all if you would like to come and join us for that. We have a fantastic time celebrating the great accomplishments that are happening in our school district. We also, I wanted to mention, we have a SEAC survey that we will be sending out shortly that is for all families who have a student with disabilities.

[00:08:45] And we would really appreciate anyone filling that out because what that does is it gives us information about what we should be focusing on. Because sometimes it's hard to know when you only hear things from, like, one or two people. Is this really a concern that we should be spending our time on?

[00:09:03] Or, you know, maybe those are just one-off things. But when we have a survey where we get all these different responses, we can see, no, this is actually a real issue that we should spend a lot of our time on. So we truly appreciate every response that we get and hope that when you see it, hit your email box, that you will fill that out for us.

[00:09:27] That would be wonderful. We have four subcommittees, specialized literacy and math, meaningful inclusion, policy and compliance, and transition. And I just wanted to highlight a couple of things from each of those subcommittees that we've been working on this year to kind of give you a flavor of what our work is.

[00:09:49] So in literacy and math, we have work sessions in addition to our subcommittee meetings that take place during the day, oftentimes with staff from LCPS. We've had presentations on MTSS, which is the multi-tiered system of supports, math interventions, early childhood special education, decision matrix for interventions.

[00:10:15] And it's wonderful because we really, we give feedback on things that are currently being implemented in LCPS, and we share where those pain points are for us as parents, and sometimes are able to help provide just a slightly different perspective that might be useful to staff.

[00:10:36] One of the things that we've been talking about recently is how we can better notify parents about testing results that our students are getting when they're not meeting certain benchmarks so that parents understand what testing happened where they may have some areas that they need to improve on and what interventions might need to take place so that's one area that literacy and math are looking at for meaningful inclusion this is an area that's very close to my heart in terms of how our students can have like an equitable

[00:11:13] experience. We talk about how we want our students with disabilities to be thought about in the beginning when we develop priorities and not be an afterthought that we then need to retrofit things to make it work for them. Like, think about them in the beginning when we talk about academics or after-school activities or events. Recently, we provided recommendations on inclusive playgrounds.

[00:11:40] We found that a lot of our students, not a lot, but some of our students weren't actually getting access to our playgrounds. And we wanted to understand the scope of the problem and provide some recommendations on how we can make it so that all of our kids have access to a playground that's going to meet their physical, social, emotional needs, all those things.

[00:12:03] So we have those that will be available on our website. We've provided them to the school board members and we'll be working with them to try to change the playground policy going forward. In our policy subcommittee, we've provided feedback on school board policies, a lot of them just like you guys have, but with a focus on areas like discipline, bullying, care of students with diabetes, student records, technology, and then we'll be looking into restraint and seclusion, and school safety recommendations over the summer.

[00:12:39] In our transition subcommittee, we've also had work sessions where we've talked about independent living skills labs, school links for students with disabilities. That's the new counseling career readiness program that you guys have probably heard about from your kids.

[00:12:58] We've done site visits to Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, and also the Davis Career Center in Fairfax County to see what are other places doing to help students with disabilities get ready for great and meaningful careers, you know, and see how it's similar and maybe how it's different and, you know, see if there's things that we would like to mimic as well.

[00:13:25] The other thing that we're focused on is creating pathways for our students with disabilities in all of the CTE offerings. that's the career and technical education. We want to make sure that our kids all have access to this career readiness. Not all of them are going to be going off to college, but they all need to have a meaningful, you know, life after school. And so we want to make sure that our kids are included in that. And then another thing that we've been interested in there is removing the Algebra 1, SOL, and PSAT admission barriers to MATA or other programs like that, unless it's

[00:14:03] truly applicable for the coursework and then providing necessary support for successful outcomes we don't want our kids to just get in the door and then leave quickly we want them to be able to get there stay there and you know accomplish what they set out to so that's just a little highlight about what SEAC is doing there's so many terms that we talk about in terms of meaningful inclusion and equitable outcomes that shared language and so when I was speaking with Erin we were like you know we're all using that same common language and it would be great if we could

[00:14:42] work together between our committees and also with LEAF as well and really establish what does that mean here in LCPS and let's work on that together versus like in our own isolated silos you know and actually have, hopefully, a more robust conversation about that.

[00:15:06] We're going to hold questions to our Q&A so that way we can get through the presentations and then we can just have a really nice, meaningful conversation where we can share thoughts, ideas, ask questions, take questions, hear what your thoughts are.

[00:15:26] So we're going to go to our next presenter, and that is Dr. Paige Carter, Director of Special Education for LCPS. Please welcome her. Good evening and thank you for the invitation.

[00:15:41] I absolutely love talking about the students we serve and in Loudoun County, you may or may not know, but we serve around 10,409 as of last week. I was away, I hadn't checked today. It is a moving target as we have year-round eligibilities for students with disabilities and also the natural transition of people moving in and out of the division.

[00:16:05] But we're right around 10,400 students that we serve under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. We have around, I believe it's 1,079, that fluctuates a little bit too, special education teachers who serve students both in the general ed setting and in settings that are more tailored to needs related to disabilities.

[00:16:31] We have 700 teachers around there that serve in what we call cross-categorical special education. Those are mainly students who are pursuing a standard diploma and working on general education standards of learning.

[00:16:49] And we have 321 programs that serve students with disabilities who are working on an adapted curriculum. And I would like to put in a shameless plug. We have several special education openings in the fall and are competing with neighboring divisions.

[00:17:09] The teacher shortage has us with shallower applicant pools than ever before, yet greater numbers of students with needs. And so it is something that I am not. I'm going to a conference next week with other special ed directors from around the state.

[00:17:28] and I highly suspect that they're going to share that same worry about filling positions and supporting students but we we filled most of our positions last year that is my hope for this year as well but I did want to if you know anyone that is looking for to get into teaching there are multiple pathways to serving students with disabilities I mean I would also like take opportunity to introduce the assistant director of our office, Nakia Prunell. She joined us in the fall and has been a supervisor here for some time, but joined as assistant director, and it has been

[00:18:06] an amazing transition. But really, I just wanted to share with you that our work is very closely related, and I, like Liz, am really challenged by the thought of how can we be more inclusive here in Loudoun in every way that you can imagine? How can we serve all students in a way where everyone belongs? And serving, this is my 33rd, might be 34th, not sure, year in special education,

[00:18:42] and that has been a question all along. We are miles and leaps and bounds from where we were when I started in 1991, but we still have a long way to go. And we're still, and some of the conversations haven't changed at all. Some of them have. So there's much work to do, and I think we'll be better to do it together.

[00:19:13] Thank you, Dr. Carter. Just bear with me for a moment.

[00:19:44] I want to just take this little bit of time for my portion of the presentation, and I wanted to share with you all the MSAC delegates and our community members my school board update that I presented on March 12th. This is kind of just our year in review and what I did was when I presented to the school board I started with where we started the year where we were at that time in March and kind of gave a preview of what we're looking forward to going into the next year for MSAC. So I thought it would be great to share it with you because I know that that presentation happened in the

[00:20:20] earlier session of the of the school board meeting that evening so I we've been trying to kind of work it into the schedule. And I thought tonight would be a great opportunity as we're talking about partnerships and where our partnerships can grow and where the collaboration can go as well, but to also give us an opportunity to just see where we are as an advisory committee.

[00:20:43] We all know the mission statement. I won't read it to you, but if you just take a couple seconds and read it. The only thing I'm going to highlight, as I always do, because I feel compelled to do so, is that our focus, yes, is the minority and minoritized, marginalized students in this district, but it is for all students because if one student succeeds, every student succeeds.

[00:21:13] And every time we as an advisory committee, as a community, open a door for a child, it is our responsibility to hold that door open and let other children know, like, this is a door for you too. This is a way for you to grow and to learn. I don't believe in holding any child back.

[00:21:29] I don't believe in saying, nope, only these kids can go through. If we open a door for students, MSAC is going to make sure that every student knows that it's to their benefit. If one succeeds, they all succeed. So our work and our advocacy is, yes, for minority and minoritized students, but our advocacy really is for all students because I'm sure every parent in LCPS has a moment where they're like, I needed help, and I didn't know where to get that help, and I didn't know who to speak to.

[00:21:55] And if we can be a help, just even a resource to get the help that they need, it is our job and our duty to do so. So where we started the year. This year, our theme has been stepping up for the community. And we have been working tirelessly to make that happen, not just in our MSAC meetings, but as we go out into the community.

[00:22:16] We have really tried to lift up MSAC. We have answered, I think, a thousand different ways, I'm sure. What is MSAC? What does MSAC do? does MSAC do that still? Are you sure that MSAC does that? And my response has usually gotten down to, this is what MSAC is. I'm always proud when I can say Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee, and I can say, this is what we do, and this is what we're about, and end it with an invitation saying, if you have questions or you want to know more, email us, or better yet, come sit in one of our meetings, join this conversation. And so our focus to really step up for the

[00:22:51] community has been advocacy, collaboration, policy and regulations, empowering the delegates, and programs and resources. We really wanted to think about how we wanted to approach MSAC, and really it boiled down to the thought is how do we experience MSAC as parents, as community members, as advocates, and as delegates, that sometimes they can get bogged down into you came to the meeting, you took the notes, you got the meeting minutes, and just read those back to your schools, but we wanted to take you, give you something to take back to your schools or take back into your community that you could really work with. We started the process with kind of a

[00:23:29] rebranding, refreshing MSAC. We kind of wanted to come out of the gate saying, hey, it's still the same MSAC, but it's a lot different now. We wanted to make sure people understood that we were coming at it from a different place, that we were going to focus on building relationships and creating partnerships and renewing relationships within the school division in the district. I met with so many people that I kept saying, if you have something for us, please come share it with us.

[00:23:59] If you have an idea, please share it with us. If you have feedback, please do. And believe me, I got feedback when people were coming to meetings or they were sharing or people saying, we've just been waiting to hear you say, yes, we're ready to partner. And we've had so many people that have influenced the pace of our meetings, how we structured them, how we came about it. And we really wanted to create something new. And that's specifically shown in our partnership with the division of DEIA. We really said, Dr. Ellis Williams, when I first met with her, was like, if you're ready to work, I'm ready to work too. And I was like, you better not say

[00:24:37] you're ready to work because you're going to be working. And she has challenged me as a leader. She has challenged MSAC to think outside the box. I don't think there's ever been a moment where I haven't said, can we do this? And the answer has been, we can try. And if it doesn't work, we'll try something else.

[00:24:54] And that has been our approach when we talk about creating new relationships. Like, let's try it. If it hasn't been done, let's try it. If it's been done before, okay. We brought something back that happened five or six years ago or a style of the meeting. And so we really wanted to change how people experienced MSAC and what was happening in our meetings and what was happening in our discussion. We really worked thanks to Truphelia's tireless efforts to grow our community engagement and outreach because I still operate four years after moving here like I just got here. I don't know anybody and Truphelia has, if she knew of

[00:25:29] a connection, if she knew of somebody who was an organizer, if she knew of an organization that had a program, she was tirelessly reaching out and reaching out to those communities and asking them And, you know, what, you know, can you come and talk with us or you can get, provide us information.

[00:25:45] That's why you always see posts from Truville. Yeah, I'm sharing this for your information. Like I heard about this program, this program, this opportunity. And because of her efforts to grow our community engagement, it's helped me get in touch with other organizations and do the same thing.

[00:26:01] And so when we bring that to you, it's because we really believe that this is a great opportunity or it's something you need to know about as a delegate that might benefit parents in your school. and family members and community as well. We worked, thanks to our wonderful communications chair, Sherry, we worked really hard to update that MSAC webpage because there was a lot of words on it.

[00:26:24] And I don't know if you ever looked at it and said, where am I ever going to find a resource? But Sherry took on that task. And when I say that she was just scraping things out, that's too many words. We don't need that. If we were like, can we put this on here? You don't want to say that much. Look, we don't need that. Let's whittle down these links.

[00:26:41] The resources have been updated and we're still working on updating those resources, but we really wanted to provide that information to you all and update the website. So if you said, "Just go visit the

website," it wouldn't be another, "I don't know where to find anything on here, I don't know what to do about this," and so we wanted to be mindful of making it user-friendly and easy to access because we're all busy and sometimes if I just want to know what is happening, I don't want to have to click 16 different links to start back where I was and still not have an answer. And we worked on Delegate Toolkit.

[00:27:13] It's still a work in progress because we want to kind of, we're changing it up, making it more streamlined because that's what we want to give to you going into the next year. So when you go out into the schools and you go out into your community, it's a simple thing that you can open up that's a file on your phone that you can save, or it's a simple one-page document that you have saved, a little infographic that says, these are the things you can do, these are your next steps, These are the basic things you can do as a delegate.

[00:27:39] And so we really try to move MSAC forward and move into this new season that we found ourselves in as an advisory committee because it feels like almost everything is new. We have a new superintendent. We have new divisions. We have new faces and leadership roles. And so we wanted to rise to that occasion as well.

[00:27:59] Where we are currently, we have had so many guest speakers and people that have come to speak with us. Some of the highlights have included having updates, in-depth updates from the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, because those updates have been really informative in helping us understand what's going on when it comes to protocols for racial slurs and hate speech, how the team, the DEIA team, goes out into the schools and the community, and what they're doing, and what's on top for them, and what their focus areas are.

[00:28:32] We had the ombuds, Ms. Carrie Williams, come and speak with us, and I think that that was really helpful as opposed to when she came the first year because now we understand what the ombuds does and we understand what her role is as a resource, and I feel more comfortable saying you should reach out to the ombuds and say, you could probably call her.

[00:28:48] I don't know what you're going to do, but, you know, just reach out to her. We had presentations from the Academy of Loudoun, CTE. A highlight for me this year was having our student affinity expo, And look, even though we had one table and one group represented, that student was remarkable.

[00:29:09] She was amazing. She was, I was over there hyping her up because she was like, I got into Howard. And I'm like, you know, that's not my child. But I was so ecstatic for her because you could just see the joy on her face. And when she talked about what her student union does and what they do at their school, it was awesome and amazing to hear.

[00:29:27] And it was such an encouragement. And our hope is to continue having that Infinity Expo and maybe next year we can get some more groups in there and we can get it all together and we can have more students come and represent their groups and really rep what they do and speak for themselves because they're always the most powerful voices in the room when they stand up and they share with us.

[00:29:47] We also had our awesome training with Dr. Ryan Tyler. I don't know about you, but I was giddy when we got a book. I love books. So it was great to have that book and to read it. I've been reading it and digging through it and going back, and it is just such a really interesting work.

[00:30:06] I felt a little guilty because I was like, yeah, sometimes I can be judgy, but, you know, it's not my fault if they act like that. But I'm trying to be better. I'm trying to be better. but I really really did

appreciate the work and the effort that Dr. Tyler and Dr. Ellis Williams and her entire team did to bring us that training because we needed that and I was like I told Dr.

[00:30:27] Tyler my favorite thing was looking back and seeing everybody kind of looking like oh so we're learning tonight I'm like that's what this meeting is about we're learning so we can be prepared because when we go back to these schools and we talk about those racial slurs and hate speech we the executive board wanted to make sure you all are empowered you felt educated and you felt like I deserve to sit at this table and I can speak with some type of authority or speak confidently about these issues and I'm not just looking at a data set thinking okay I don't know what this means and so we were really proud of that and obviously we had our equity it was a

[00:31:02] wonderful event thank you all for coming I loved every second of being at Douglas I wish the sun was out that day because I think I would have gone to the park after the event was over just to walk around the campus. But we thank you all for joining us for that. Big, big highlight and a win for MSAC is we welcomed our first student delegates. And we are still getting students that are filling out the application wanting to become student delegates. So I'm hopeful for next year for us to see more delegates join us, student delegates as well, because it is awesome to hear

[00:31:38] their voices because they, they matter. The work that we're doing is for them and we owe it to them to listen because, you know, their voices and their experience are just as important as what we think they need. It's important for us to hear what they're, what they're working for. Um, we continue to submit feedback and comments on LCPS policy, focusing on clarity, the benefit of recommended changes, and the recommendations tied to MSAC focus areas and more. And we really do, um, still encourage you as delegates that when you get that email please comment on the policy even if you don't know what you're going to say read it because there have been a couple of policies in the last

[00:32:16] few weeks that I was really surprised when I had some strong opinions on those and I'm asking you know our policy lead I'm like okay is this a proper question to ask or should I be saying this or you know I've been known to say that really annoyed me and I have concerns but as a parent if I don't speak up and say okay yeah that sentence says a whole lot of stuff that maybe you're in not thinking it says, it doesn't change. And even if they don't change the policy, at least we lent our voice to the process. And so we still encourage you as delegates to submit your policy feedback when we send out those emails. And if you have questions, please ask us. We will gladly help you

[00:32:55] in any way we can or answer a question. Looking to next year, the goal, the evergreen goal is to still have an MSAC delegate in every school. I really believe that if we can get an MSAC delegate in every school that would be awesome i think to have this room filled with delegates will be an amazing thing um we want to see our msac delegates a big piece of feedback i have and that's why it's included in here was the msac delegates collaborating more with the school equity leads because you know our work is the same our purview is the same our goals

[00:33:33] um fairly certain are the same and so next year we want to work to build that partnership and create that that connection where we're all communicating and we're working together and partnering because i think it's important that if the equity lead knows who the msac delegate is that's information that can be shared back and forth and that's communication and a collaboration a partnership to do things at your school or even just saying hey let's both come to the meeting the msac meeting um next month you

know so we can both just hear this and we can have a discussion about it afterwards, so we really want to build that partnership and collaboration.

[00:34:09] We remain committed to addressing the increase of racial slurs and hate speech throughout the division. It hasn't slowed down, it doesn't stop, and it is still a prevalent problem and an issue and MSAC is still and remains in the place to be at the forefront of combating that issue and saying that I've said it before, that type of language has no place here.

[00:34:33] That type of speech has no place here, and I think it's important for MSAC to continue that work. We're still continuing our efforts in creating the MSAC Resource Handbook. Dr. Rashid, our school board liaison, she has graciously come on board and is helping me lead the charge on the handbook, and we're going to start working on that this summer.

[00:34:55] So even though it'll be summer break, don't be surprised if you might get an email asking for some volunteers who might be able to write a sentence or two or a small paragraph about what to do if you have a preschooler, a kindergartner, first, second, third grader. In this handbook, the focus of it is really what did I need to know as a parent when I first came to LCPS or what has helped me become a better advocate for my student in LCPS.

[00:35:19] And that's the goal of our handbook is that you can pick it up or you can open the webpage and you find helpful information for you as a parent, as a family member, as a community member as you advocate for your student. and we're going to continue to grow our community outreach and our engagement we want to make sure that we're reaching out to everyone and we're we're growing partnerships i already have several people reaching out asking you know how can they support him sack how can they come alongside and work with us and so we want to continue to grow that and that even goes to you as delegates please if you have a recommendation if you know of an organization if you know of anyone that you think

[00:35:59] this would be a great person to talk to or have come talk to us, or even if it's in a fireside chat, because you know I love those, we can have those meetings and just have those discussions, because we can't do this without the help of you, the MSAC delegate body, and we want to continue to do good things.

[00:36:16] And, oh, hey, that's the last one. Yay. But honestly, I just want to say that it's been a great year for MSAC, and I know it's looked a lot different. I know, I'm sure, sometimes they're like, Aaron, what in the world are you doing? I ask myself that at least three times a day.

[00:36:33] And I want you to know that we are really thinking about this, and I don't do this because I want to be famous, I want to be popular. I'd rather be sitting way back there with Dr. Tyler. That is my comfort zone. But I do this because my heart is in it, and I believe in this work.

[00:36:49] And one of the previous MSAC chairs said to me, this is heart work, and it takes every bit of my heart, And it takes every bit of me to think beyond, you know, what do I need for my kids, but to think beyond what, to think about what do we need for other kids. And, again, I'm excited because I have, in a partner in crime, if you will, in Liz, you know, understanding, like, where I am, where I'm coming from, because we kind of found ourselves in the same position.

[00:37:18] Suddenly, we're the chairs of these advisory committees. What next? And I do just want to piggyback off of what she said, that we both really enjoyed that conversation, and we're really serious about talking about that shared language, because oftentimes, like she said, they silo us.

[00:37:34] So we'll be talking equity, and they'll say, okay, well, SEAC means this, and MSAC means that, and we mean exactly the same thing. We're just talking about it from a different viewpoint, and we really do want to grow a partnership with SEAC. I know that we've worked alongside each other in the past, and we're in a great place where we get to form a new relationship, and we have great conversations.

[00:37:57] Every time I chat with Liz, she makes me think, and I always tell her that I'm so impressed with how cool and calm she is, and I feel like I'm a squirrel in traffic. That's me. But it is really important to us both that we work to build this partnership because we think there's so much room.

[00:38:16] and even with LEAF we think there's so much room for all of us to work together because if you can only imagine there's an issue and all three advisory committees are all aligned on the same message and we all walk in the building and the school board's like oh dear lord all of them are here I'm like yeah because we got a little bit to say and we have some concerns but we want to be able to help each other but even if it's not something that we're working together on we don't want to put ourselves in the position and say, well, that's not our fight. That's not our concern. We can still support SEAC. We can still support LEAF. If it's something

[00:38:51] they're passionate about, we can lend our support in numbers, in voices, in listening and learning what they're discussing and being informed about what's going on. And so we're really going to work together just to build that relationship and build that partnership and to create something really special that benefits all of the students in the division because, like she said to me, there are many parents in SEAC that are minority and minoritized and there are many delegates in MSAC that have children with special needs and we can work together because we often are after the same result,

[00:39:31] giving our children the best shot they have and the best possible education. And so going into next year, as I always say, I'm hopeful, I'm excited. I think that there is a great space for MSAC to continue to do great work and to continue to grow and continue to do great things.

[00:39:48] And, yeah, I think it's all good things. And so we had a fantastic year as MSAC, and we really appreciate all your support, and we really appreciate you turning up and showing up and offering your feedback. I take it seriously when you say in the middle of a meeting, Erin, I got a question.

[00:40:06] I'm like, oh no, I didn't mean for it to happen, but I will try to fix it. But I learn from those questions and I learn from those engagements and I take it seriously. I have notebooks of notes that I take and things that I remember that people have vocalized to me because I'm working to make sure that I at least keep that record so we know what people are concerned about.

[00:40:25] And so congratulations to NSAC. Yay us. We had a great year. I'm just gonna say it and um with that we're gonna go to the q a and the open forum you get asked questions um you know if you got some feedback if you got some suggestions that's what we have we are moving fast tonight y'all um so let's slow it down a little bit and have some questions and answers and go for it so anyone yes ma'am sorry where can where can we

[00:41:00] find the student delegate application that was rough i thought it was me i was like oh no So, yes, we have a student delegate application. I can, if they ask for an application or if there's a student looking to get an application, if you email me at msacchair at lcps.org, we will get you the link to the application.

[00:41:25] All you have to do is fill it out. Students, please make sure your parents know. Don't just fill out forms because I don't want somebody's mother or father or adult to get upset with me. But just please, you

know, fill out the application. It's open.

[00:41:41] We want to have student delegates, and we want to make sure that we grow them. Our hope is maybe as we continue with having student delegates, we will, you know, bring the age level down. I mean, I've got a 10-year-old that's already asking me when it's her turn, and I'm like, maybe in ninth grade.

[00:42:00] But we can get you the application as simple as doing that. something the plan is to work on is to create a system for just a training just to get the students together just from MSAC's end and say you know this is MSAC welcome you know these are our expectations make sure the parents know who the executive board is and points of contact but there have been wonderful opportunities for our student delegates to team up and work with the student equity ambassadors and train with them and that's been really awesome I've been excited to hear that so they just have to ask for an application and i'll get it to them and i can

[00:42:38] also put it on our social media i can recycle that post and put up in fresh one and put that out on our social media pages and they can just go to facebook or instagram twitter x whatever it is and um we'll get it to them that way as well yes ma'am um this is a question for liz thank you for being here with us so you mentioned you have 21 voting members on seac but you also have reps from all the schools so can you just talk about how you guys operate sure um so yeah we have 21 voting

[00:43:13] members um our representatives they we also try to get someone from every single school they they do not vote but i mean everyone is allowed like you to come to our meetings to participate the The people who are our PTA/PTO representatives, they get a little bit more information.

[00:43:35] So we make sure that they get direct notices of every subcommittee meeting, you know, different things that are coming to us from the school division where they want input from special education parents.

[00:43:50] They then take that back just like your MSAC delegates do to their school PTAs, PTOs. give them talking points to share out. So they do not vote officially on our recommendations that we put forward, but we absolutely treasure their input and they often will come to us with questions and serve as a vital source of information as well for us. Sorry, let me just clarify something. So are those voting members, could also be one of those parents? That's what I'm just trying to understand.

[00:44:27] Oh, yeah. No, a lot of us wear multiple hats and are not only a voting member but also a representative, a PTA, PTO representative for one or two schools. And how do you determine who's a voting member? Is that like they say, I want to be a voting member, they have training?

[00:44:44] We have an application process. We have requirements that you need to have attended at least two of our business meetings as well as one of our subcommittee meetings. You fill out an application, basically telling us a little bit more about yourself and what brought you to SEAC.

[00:45:01] And then our executive committee will go through applications and forward any applications that seem appropriate to the school board for them to vote on. Thank you. Sorry, I'm just curious how you guys operate.

[00:45:17] Sure. Yeah, no. Thank you. For clarification, the school board votes on the voting members?

[00:45:42] Yes, yeah, I think all of our advisory committee members are subject to school board approval. Generally, they just go on the consent agenda. I don't think it's something that's particularly controversial

that I know of, but they are subject to vote.

[00:45:58] You know, if someone, let's say, did have, a school board member did have a concern about one of the members we, the potential members we put forward, there could be, you know, a vote up and down. Okay, so in the spirit of like collaborating and how we can work together, and we've talked about both of our missions being about making it more inclusive for all children, what I

[00:46:32] have observed, we work in very close partnership with our SIAC parent rep, and, but it seems like she has her world of stuff and responsibilities, and we have our world of stuff and responsibilities and we have strong programs for all the things but we're not really having conversations on what we should do together and in a few instances I've seen like inclusive programs where we might be running a PTA sponsored event and we make sure that there is a

[00:47:08] sensory safe environment you know or you know so I've seen those types of things show up but it still seems very separate so just curious because i'm not in the field of special ed but i want my son and his peers to like embrace all the kids like what could we be doing that isn't like here's a separate space over here that's comfortable for you but it's more i don't know that's my question i'll take a stab at it um you know from a personal perspective i've got

[00:47:43] kids at the elementary school level and I was very active in our school PTO for a couple of years and those conversations have like you have to have the right people in the room when you are planning events when you are talking about what are our school events going to look like you know we had situations at our school where yeah there was a sensory room but it wasn't marked no one knew where it was and yes it was open to all students but maybe not everyone realized that or what were things about the way that event was run that unintentionally segregated our students?

[00:48:22] You know, are there things that we could be doing differently? We have on CAC's webpage guidelines for our PTA-PTO representatives to take to their schools that talk about some different things that they could do to make events more inclusive. But I would love if we could, you know, kind of revamp that, working with MSAC, come up with some common guidelines of, because I think school events are like a really tricky thing. Everyone has that wonderful intention of wanting to create an inclusive event. But if you don't have a child who might be impacted by that, even with those good intentions, you don't know what to think about. Or even if you do have

[00:49:00] a child with disabilities, well, you know your child's disabilities. You don't know everyone else's child who has disabilities. And so I think, and sometimes it can be hard to get all those different perspectives so if there are perhaps there could be an opportunity where we could work together to establish some better more comprehensive guidelines that would include all of our different communities to better help these school organizations that are trying to do these wonderful community events and Dr. Hart I don't know if you have some yeah I would I would

[00:49:36] just say one of the most important things we can do is debrief after an event to say what went what went really well for all students and what didn't go so well so who noticed who left early I wonder why who didn't access the sensory friendly or sensory safe space um who didn't come at all you know and process those things as a committee and as a team or if you hear that you know the elementary school down the road and around the corner had a really successful situation you know that cross communication can be really helpful too but I think the debrief to really ask

[00:50:12] and just call parents and say I've known you know you know Mrs. Smith who you know normally participates doesn't do these particular events with her child and just ask her what would make it easier for you to be able to attend to make it more inclusive but I think those debriefs are really important because we sort of celebrate our successes and move right along and then next year like what can we do better but the opportunity to gather that information had already passed so i think that that's one thing i would recommend and i think that would just be so helpful because

[00:50:48] i know in the past when if that's not a proactive thing that's being done with the debrief then it ends up looking like perhaps when a parent offers that information that it's criticism when it's really not it's meant to help expand um and so perhaps if we establish that kind of as a guideline to our schools I think that could be really powerful I love that I would just like to piggyback that um like at our school we have a big bingo event and they usually have it inside

[00:51:21] and when you talk about a thousand people families in that small cafeteria like sardines in a can like we um everybody was loving it and everybody in the PTO was just over the top about it was great it was great it was great and I just that was a lot of people in a small space and that was a lot of people in a small space and like I saw families of students with special needs out in the hallway you know I took my kids out in the hallway at least twice just to get fresh air and they were like oh really it wasn't fun I was like no it wasn't fun I'm like not when you're

[00:51:59] like in there and everybody's you know there are so many people and you're overwhelmed and I don't get sensory overload that often but because I said something it triggered the conversation to say okay what can we do better and I remember our principal at the time looking at me like okay if we host it outside will you come I said if you put it outside I'll be there and we changed it to outside like the parents got on board and it was just someone in the room like Liz said saying um we didn't experience it that way and like she said sometimes they take it as criticism because when you're all in on a successful event, you might not want to hear that every single family

[00:52:38] or every single person in that event experienced that overwhelmingly positive thing. But I do agree that as committees, we can talk about those guidelines because I, capital letters, a debrief would be great, like an honest conversation where we reach out and we say, how did you handle this?

[00:52:55] Or what was your experience with that? Because sometimes at events at my school, I'm like gravitating toward the families that are people of color because I feel underrepresented and you know we're usually piled together with our kids you know making the most of the event but everybody else is having a great time and I think that there's space for us to have that discussion about like how do we work together because that is an example of how our visions and our mission and our purpose align and we can partner on that saying hey you want to talk inclusivity let's make these events inclusive let's make sure that everybody feels represented and welcome there and so i think

[00:53:35] that that would be a great idea i was just going to add maybe even you know the old school suggestion box but having a qr code around the event that says do you have any suggestions for making this event better and then they can scan it because almost everybody's got a smartphone or something in their hand that a qr code would work for but that might be a way to gather information that didn't feel so survey like because i know we have surveyed i know i do survey fatigue um sometimes

[00:54:08] survey analysis fatigue dr tyler um but i think um i i do think that just providing a multiple for you know multiple ways to respond might be helpful and a parent who's really frustrated in the moment

might be willing to scan a qr code and say maybe you could have call the numbers over the loudspeaker and we'll be in a lot of different rooms or, you know, something like that.

[00:54:34] But I do think that giving the opportunity for the debrief after, but maybe suggestions right then and there. I wanted to make sure I understood the membership, the SEAC board, because in my head I think are there two tiers of your, like, your delegates?

[00:55:02] So, like, that 20, the group of 21, are those the individuals that, like, the PTA, There's that broader group that the PTA might submit, and then of that group, those individuals that would like to vote or have voting privileges, they apply, and then those names are submitted?

[00:55:27] So sometimes, not all of our PTA, PTO rep, not all of our SEAC members are also PTA, PTO rep. Some of them are not. Sometimes they're parents. Sometimes they're not parents. We try to get different areas of specialty in there to help us represent So I guess you could think of it a little bit like two tiers of membership in terms of Commitment, you know our our members are required to come to meetings that we have a pretty strict attendance policy The PTA PTO representatives

[00:56:03] We would like them to come but they could also watch our meetings after the fact they don't need to be there in person necessarily they their job is to be informed and to share our information back with their schools and to bring information to us should they have any and they can attend our subcommittee meetings they can provide input when we give policies you know policy recommendations they cannot vote on those recommendations you know that's That's the real distinction there.

[00:56:37] So it kind of is, in a way, like a membership. A lot of our PTA, PTO reps that we see coming frequently, I'll go to them afterwards, and I'm like, you're already coming to the meetings. You want to be a member? We want as many people involved as possible.

[00:56:57] We've been really fortunate this year. It used to be really hard to get a full membership. I'm not going to sugarcoat it, but we've been able to keep our roster pretty full this year, and hopefully going into next year, we'll be able to do the same.

[00:57:14] We continue to always take more applications. We are going to have some openings, so if anyone's interested and wants to be a part of two advisory committees, we would love to have you, but that's really how it works.

[00:57:31] Does that help clarify things? Yeah, and if I could add the strict attendance policy and things like that, I've been in a few school divisions that really struggled to even maintain a SEAC, and it's required by special ed regulations, so that makes us unique, and I say us, I'm not a voting member either, but I am the school division representative.

[00:57:54] I'm on the, you know, in this row when we have SEAC. So I do think that it's important to remember that distinction, that it's required in regulation when you think about that, because it does sound very stringent and almost like who would want to do that, right?

[00:58:10] But it is because they are reviewing policies with such, well, because they're required to, that it, that's part of the reason. But it, and their bylaws are pretty clear, but they can also always be changed.

[00:58:27] But there are, it's quite an extensive manual for how SEAC has to run from the state. And then there are individual bylaws that can be modified slightly. But so it, that makes a difference. Just want to plug as well, Erin mentioned some really awesome presentations that you guys have had this year.

[00:58:59] And we also do the same thing as part of our SEAC meetings. We usually start off with about, you know, maybe an hour or so presentation on a different topic that we think would be helpful and interesting to our families and help them become, you know, stronger advocates.

[00:59:16] We take a lot of feedback from our PTA, PTO reps, you know, what they're interested, what you want to hear from. And then we try to find people either within the school division or perhaps externally sometimes as well to come in and talk to us about, you know, things like executive functioning, transitioning, you know, from the different school levels, from elementary school to middle school to high school to beyond, you know.

[00:59:41] there are so many different touch points, kind of, that all of our kids are going through. And while they are obviously geared towards our students with disabilities, I think that most parents would find that they would learn a lot from those conversations.

[00:59:58] I know I learn a lot. As someone who does not have a disability, I'm like, the executive functioning, I was like, wow, yeah, no, that makes a lot of sense, and I could be doing this differently. So, you know, our whole meetings are recorded.

[01:00:13] They are available on our website. Anyone can access them at any time. So even if you can't make it to our first Wednesday of the month at 6 o'clock, you know, you can go back and watch them later, which I think is really important for people because a lot of our families are really busy, right?

[01:00:31] It's hard to get everyone in one place at one time. And so giving them that flexibility to be able to watch when they are able. We also, we have a QR code for questions that if you are watching from home, that you can submit some questions and we try to make it so it's a little bit more interactive.

[01:00:52] It's obviously not the full experience, being in person is the best. But, you know, we try to make it so that if you are watching, you do have a question, you can still participate with us.

[01:01:18] hate microphones um well i'm i'm actually a member of seac and one of the subcommittees that i i sit on is transition and i was really impressed to see that you'd had presentations and it sounds like a good working relationship with cte and academies of loudon and i feel like this year it was almost like we had a light bulb go off like gee our students want access

[01:01:48] To all these great things that LCPS offers, but we're not sure that they're getting equitable access. So I'd be really interested in following up or seeing how you guys have formed those relationships so that we can do the same thing or do it together.

[01:02:19] I like the idea of doing it together because I think sometimes we get the same presentation when they come in and something we've been discussing is having when the presentations come to us, making sure that they're meaningful because we have genuine questions about the programs. It's great to hear this is the opportunity through CTE and Academies of Loudoun, but sometimes I tend to be that nosy parent. I'm like, okay, well, what's the application process?

[01:02:48] you know, how many students are you admitting? What can I do to make sure that my student's application is spot on? Like, how can I, what is the best way that I can get, you know, I can do to support my students and, you know, my children? And I think that that's really great. I know that for MSAC, we're kind of on the calendar for them, like, beginning of the school year. I know I'll probably get an email from

Academies Allowed and CTE saying we're going to come in something, but we know somebody. We will call. I have the information for their outreach, the head of

[01:03:24] their outreach, Mr. Livesy, and I would be more than happy to share that with Liz and put her in touch with him and just say, hey, come talk to us. We want those programs because I know that that's something that Liz and I talked about when we met a couple weeks ago is that how can we take these presentations from Jess, here's the information, but take them up to the next level where we all leave feeling like we've learned something but we can take it back to our schools as well and share with parents and share with our subcommittees and, you know, in our different areas in our life that feels like it's meaningful and it's not just you can apply to Academies Floughton,

[01:04:02] this is the window to apply, you know, what do you know about that? I don't know, you know. And so I think that that's a really important thing and I do like the idea of us doing it together and maybe having that conversation where maybe we can nudge a little and say, hey, you know, how do we make sure that this information is getting out to everyone? Because I think something that's kind of coming to light for me tonight is, you know, how can we make sure we're being more inclusive and not just thinking, you know, in our presentations, just MSAC, but thinking about SEAC and thinking about LEAF and thinking about inclusivity that includes all of us and making sure that

[01:04:40] it's to the benefit of all of us. And if we can work together to improve that, I think that that would be a wonderful thing and a wonderful place to start. And we really, as SEAC, had kind of a light bulb moment this year, I'd say, in that, you know, we've always been in kind of our comfy, cozy home with the Office of Special Education. And anytime we had a problem or there was an issue, we'd go to Paige or someone else there. And we kind of started to realize, like, wait a second, like there are all these other departments and people within LCPS who can help us

[01:05:17] and who can provide answers and that we need to get to know, we need to understand what they're doing, they need to understand what we're doing and what our concerns are because, you know, and I think that that's one of those areas where if as advisory groups we can really work together to expand our networks to capitalize on those relationships um you know so that we're making the best use of everyone's time um and coming in there you know with cohesive asks and things like that um i think that that would be really helpful because when we stay in our little corners that's

[01:05:56] all we can really affect right so that's why we have to get outside of there outside of our comfort zones as much as I love Dr. Carter, you know, but to really, you know, meet other people and get to know them and understand where they're coming from. It's, it's, it's been much more effective for us. Okay. I'm going to try it this way. Anybody got a suggestion they'd like to share

[01:06:35] a thought, an idea, something, anything? This is just whoever, I can't remember. I think you said is about the QR code to ask questions for SEAC.

[01:06:53] I think that would be a wonderful thing that maybe we could look into exploring for MSAC. I know at times I've been at home with my children because something would happen and my husband couldn't get home or whatever. And I missed like the wonderful education night and I was so mad. I think I was texting Neenu from home like, oh, I see you guys on camera, you know, just wanting to be a part of it.

[01:07:13] So I don't know if we have the manpower to do that, but I think that would be a nice suggestion for us and a good way to engage the community as well. So thank you for sharing that, Liz. Sure. And, you

know, it's just a QR code that goes to a Google survey where you can just write in the question, and then we have our vice chair of communications who has the Google form pulled up in front of her, and it just comes right to her, and then we, you know, say, we have a question from online.

[01:07:42] So it works pretty well. As long as I put in the right QR code, I will admit I've messed that up a couple times. I know y'all are going to get tired of me.

[01:07:57] I'm just trying really hard at this point. Anything else? I will say this. There's a lot of space for us to work together, and there's a lot of room for us to grow. And I think that the more the advisory committees can team up and just, you know, again, come out of our individual little boxes, because it's easy to, again, for us to stay in those boxes, but I think it's also easy for people on the outside of the work we're doing to pigeonhole us because it's easy for people to say, oh, MSAC only handles this, so they're not going to worry about that, or SEAC only does this, or LEAF only does that.

[01:08:37] But understanding that we work together and that we're aligned in so many ways. And again, going back to that common language that just because we as MSAC say equity doesn't mean we're completely in the opposite direction of where SEAC is.

[01:08:57] And I think that if we can work to build, you know, to create systems that are more inclusive and to support systems that are more inclusive and to encourage, you know, inclusivity and to help people have access to information and students have access to programs, which is ultimately our main goal, I think it would be a great place and a great space for us to work out.

[01:09:21] How about this last call for questions, comments, concerns, feedback? So I'm going to turn it over to our wonderful communications chair for MSAC announcements.

[01:09:45] Okay, good evening, everyone. I will make this fairly quick, but this is exciting news regarding the nominations for MSAC chair and MSAC vice chair due to only receiving one nomination for chair for Miss Erin Conkle and won nomination for Vice Chair for Ms. Trufilia Parker. A vote for the chair and vice chair positions are not needed. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we announce the

[01:10:22] continuation of Erin and Trufilia Parker. So we extend our congratulations, express our sincere appreciation to the both of you uh for your dedication and commitment to the roles and we also this is not a shameless plug have two positions open for msac msac secretary and msac membership so if you are interested in those positions please send your inquiry to the chair

[01:10:58] or vice chair email outcounts and that wraps it up for me so thank you so much and thank you all this has been an amazing year i can't believe this is our last msac meeting for this year and i look forward to september um y'all we went really fast tonight um i guess it's kind of the pace it's the end of the school year so everything is going by lightning quick um but um yes if anybody has

[01:11:37] anything else they'd like to share or say. I'm going to say congratulations. That was really awkward, really weird for me. But I am just going to say thank you. Again, thank you to our student delegates for stepping up. And I get to say now, I can't wait to work with you next year.

[01:12:10] all of the delegates thank you for your support thank you for your encouragement thank you for keeping it real with me when you felt like you needed to keep it real with me thank you for encouraging me you may not have known that I needed a little bit of encouragement but I did I would like to thank Dr. Tyler for his support and teaching us how to be data savvy we look forward to dialing back

into that conversation again next year we always appreciate your support and your help, Dr. Tyler. I go without saying, extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Ellis Williams.

[01:12:43] She has been an amazing support for MSAC, and half of the reason why we are at the level we are and we are in the position we are in is because she said, if you're ready, I'm ready, and we'll get this done, and she leads tirelessly. She is about this work. She is about equity. She lives it. She breathes it. I have learned so much for her, so I thank you for your mentorship i thank you for your support i thank you for your encouragement um i will thank my family because my kids show up every third wednesday and they are rock stars

[01:13:18] they if you have enjoyed a cup of tea that was my son declan the setup the presentations are all my daughter alia and my little naima buzzing around here like a little helper this evening she was pretending to be MSAC chair and I'm like sit down you got like 15 years but they they my kids have shown up and um it's a family affair so next year if you want to bring your kids please bring your kids they're welcome to help up set up learn um join us have fun thank you to my husband for his support I'm sure I get on his nerves sometimes when he's like what and I'm just like

[01:13:55] and then he's like okay well how do we solve this problem or in this case sometimes it's like okay Mr. You're in law school. Explain this to me. I don't understand this. So we don't do this without support of our families. And so, and that goes the same for Trufilia's family. Her sons have come in and done some heavy lifting and every time they help, I'm always so grateful. So we really do want you to know we don't do this alone. We do this with our hearts and we believe in the work we're doing. So with that, have a wonderful summer. We'll see y'all next year. And thank you.



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