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Loudoun County School Board, Finance and Operations Committee Meeting, Tuesday, May 21, 2024

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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/948942943?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:00] - Hello everyone, thank you for being here. I'd like to call to order this meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee, this May 21st meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee. My name is Arbun Estreffi and I'm the chair of this committee. I'm joined by Chair Mansfield and Mrs. Griffiths.

[00:00:16] Appreciate your patience. So why don't we just go ahead and get started. I see that we have public comment. So I'll just go ahead and read our public comment script. Thank you for engaging the school board through the public comment process, the school board welcomes comments from Vaughan County residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system.

[00:00:42] I see we have three speakers, so perfect. So we have a total of 10 minutes, so we'll give each speaker three minutes to speak. Based on the number of speakers, we will allot three minutes. Please be advised that the speakers who miss their time slot will not be called at a later time.

[00:01:01] All audience members shall maintain civility, decorum, respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times please remain seated unless arriving departing speaking at the podium or during break violations of civility decorum and respect include shouting heckling jeering applause or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa interrupting speakers attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair and

approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate disparage or distract a speaker staff member or or other meeting attendees.

[00:01:34] Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, defamation, profanity, and other like breaches of respect, nor may speakers target, criticize, or attack individual students and/or an individual division employees during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or any appropriate school official.

[00:01:53] School board requests that comments on an individual student or employee related matter not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements.

[00:02:09] Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in, on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point, limiting the number of attendees, and ending public comment for this meeting.

[00:02:25] With that, we'll call up the first public commenter, Midal Gandhi. Sorry? Maryam Aswarjani. Yes.

[00:02:45] I will do my very best to speak very quickly and within the three minutes. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Miriam S. Frajani. I'm an electrical engineer as well as a biomedical engineer.

[00:03:02] I have spent decades in the wireless field as an RF engineer, designing, building, and optimizing wireless cell sites. In fact, on several occasions, I have testified in court as an expert witness regarding electromagnetic radiation that's emitted from cell sites.

[00:03:18] I appear here before you today as a wireless expert and also as a mom of a rising ninth grader. Dominion high school I have three asks that I kindly request your consideration number one I kindly request that you postpone public hearings and decision about the Dominion cell site until the fall when the summer is over and parents are back this will allow better engagement from everyone also kindly ask that the feeder schools are notified about this like Horizon Seneca we

[00:03:57] understand that they were not notified regarding yesterday's meeting that we had also kindly ask that you consider that FCC regulations regarding electromagnetic radiation are from 1996 they are old much new frequency bands have been added these have not been studied and I can attest to the fact that there is inadequate amount of research done to ensure safety of exposure to our children. In fact, in '21, Environmental Health Trust won a

[00:04:33] lawsuit against FCC and the federal court ordered FCC to explain why in 1996 its IT exposure policy ignored scientific evidence showing harm from wireless radiation. The court requires FCC to come back and respond to how and why their 1996 regulations are false.

[00:05:00] With all these uncertainties, I kindly ask to consider an alternative solution, one that is a win-win for everybody. There is no coverage there. I get it, I'm a wireless engineer, but there is no reason to build it on Dominion.

[00:05:17] There are five cell sites within a .8 mile radius that are on commercial properties that can adequately cover coverage in the Seneca and Dominion. I am offering my services pro bono. I have a women-owned small business engineering firm that's registered in Loudoun County.

[00:05:35] I'm offering my services pro bono to Loudoun County Public School to work with the wireless carriers to design a solution that improves coverage and yet minimizes radiation to our students. Thank you very much.

[00:05:51] - Thank you very much. Next speaker will be Arman Mozahibi. Yeah, hello, and thank you for letting me talk, you know, for three minutes. I appreciate that. I'm the communications engineer also for 30 years, and I have been engaged on all kinds of building sites and, you know, working the frequencies and everything.

[00:06:17] And as of course, you know, Mariam was saying, I had a kid back in Dominion High School too, and I really don't like the exposure of the, you know, electromagnetic. after, you know, they're building this site and being too close to the kids.

[00:06:34] You know, it's like a few hundred feet and that's definitely is going to impact. There is so many studies and there is all lots of alternatives for, you know, just we looked at this site and the way that they're built, they're only covering the Route 7 and that's why, because all this traffic and everything and they're not, they can, you know, add additional antennas or everything in the existing sites to provide coverage Dominion High School but you know as you know we see that they're going to build this 150 foot tower and also as you know that the technology is you know going

[00:07:11] you know as from 4G we are going to 5G and 6G and the high band spectrum that's coming in and they're going to build on these sites it's going to be right now they are doing like a 24 to 35 gigahertz and in the very near future for the 6G that are going to up to 70 gigahertz, and if you all know, in 90 gigahertz, U.S. Air Force has a, you know, a weapon that is burning people.

[00:07:39] You know, they take it to the, you know, any area that they have a war, and they use that, you know, frequency and spectrum to just burn people to not being in that area. That shows that the way that we have, there is not much studies done in the, you know, higher band.

[00:07:57] But definitely all these rise in AT&T and T-Mobile, they have plans to go to 6G with the new spectrum that is coming in. And FCC also, they haven't done their job to, you know, provide anybody with this emission safety.

[00:08:12] And that's another problem that we don't know. And we don't know, you know, anything about this new spectrum that they're going to use. The high band is very dangerous, and they're not propagating more than a few feet. That means, you know, when they're putting this, they're making the maximum poverty, and that's going to be very dangerous for our kids.

[00:08:32] I know my time is limited. I don't want to go forward. There is lots of information that we can talk about, but my major point is going to be they can cover that area with the existing sites that they have. And, you know, that's the only thing.

[00:08:49] We know that, you know, as an RF engineer, I know that they can, you know, move their antennas, you know, toward the Dominion High School and the neighborhood and then make it happen. Thank you. That's it. Thank you very much. Next speaker is Mithal Gandhi. Thank you so much.

[00:09:06] My name is Mithal Gandhi. I know it's a little hard. I wouldn't have named myself Mithal myself, but that's what happened in New Jersey 45 years ago. Ladies and gentlemen, I am here today to

talk about early bus times. I was here two weeks ago to talk about the same thing. I wasn't going to come today.

[00:09:23] but my fourth grader said, "Dad, you're not going?" And it's a tough issue. I am a dad, I'm also on the LEAF committee, serving as vice chair there. And Mr. Davies will remember us very well. Mr. Davies came to our meeting last year in 2023, and I had to refresh my memory a little bit, because this is not a new issue.

[00:09:42] This is something that's been going on. But LEAF had asked Mr. Davies specific questions, asking about testing performance of elementary students with earlier start times. Are car lines longer? what's the overall arrival dismissal times this year versus last year what's the metrics of this year versus last year's tardies and absences we asked him a bunch of questions before he came we're smart people we're not saying hey answer it on the fly do you know what was answered out of that nothing mr davies you'll remember that friends and you are neighbors i know dina very well i miss miss mansfield i had senator super munyan at my house on sunday morning he had so

[00:10:21] many great things to say about you. Big shoes to fill. And I trust you all to direct the staff. You have to direct the staff. Because what they do is they come up with these scenarios and then there's a lot of trust. But unfortunately you have to direct the staff. You need to direct Mr. Davies.

[00:10:38] You need to direct the COO that we cannot have the nation's earliest start times for elementary schools here. And I ask that you do that because when I was here two weeks ago I had no idea we were going to be talking about school name changes. I thought we talked about that a couple years ago, and I don't know if that was at the pleasure of the board or if it was a pleasure of the staff. But if it was at the pleasure of the staff, I'm wondering, why are we bringing this up again when we're not really focused on the low-hanging fruit that affects Loudouners every single day, that affects 31 elementary schools every single day? Those are the things

[00:11:14] that affect everyone. To bring up things that we've talked about a couple years ago, sure, you want to talk about it later that's fine but these are the metrics that affect moms dads voters and I ask the committee to direct the staff to have at least a 7 45 a.m. start time for next year and then have a gradually to get back to at least 8 a.m. we one last thing I'll just say I don't think it's well worth your time to talk about survey questions that that's that's an insult in my opinion. That's a staff issue. They're going to come up and these are the survey questions

[00:11:54] we want to do. You don't need to deal with that. Let staff deal with it. There's a lot of staff people around us. They're well paid, good people. Let them worry about that stuff. Please just give them that direction. Thank you so much for your service. Thank you very much. Thank you for all the public comment. We'll now move on to approving our meeting minutes. I trust that everybody's had a chance to review the minutes from the last meeting. Are there any comments or changes to the minutes? Seeing none, do I have a motion

[00:12:32] to approve the meeting minutes? I move to approve the meeting minutes from 5-7-24. Thank you. I have a motion. Do I have a second? Second. Seconded by Mrs. Griffiths. We'll go ahead and vote. All in favor, aye. Aye. So we have approved the meeting minutes unanimously, and now we'll move on to

[00:13:04] approval of the consent agenda. Are there any changes being proposed on the consent agenda? Seeing none, do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda? I move to approve the consent agenda.

Motion by Mrs. Griffiths. Do I have a second? I second. Seconded by Chair Mansfield.

[00:13:33] We'll go ahead and vote. All those in favor, aye. Aye. So we've approved the consent agenda unanimously and we'll move on to action items so the first or the only action item is support services school name review I'll go ahead and make a motion now and then we'll move on to the presenters I move that the Finance and Operations Committee recommend the Loudoun County School Board provide

[00:14:10] guidance on reviewing all school names in relation to the June 2020 initiated school board action and I'll just look for a second I second seconded by chair Mansfield and I will pass it on to miss Tate and dr. Ellis Williams thank you chair staffee we returned today after the information item last that your May 7th meeting this is follow-up to direction that the school board initiated discussions for the action plan to combat systemic racism back in

[00:14:46] June of 2020 and staff is returning seeking guidance from the board to move forward as mr. Lewis and dr. Ellis Williams spoke last week we undertook the review of all school names within Loudoun County that had not been reviewed in an initial naming process and that was to see if there were any schools named for Confederate leader or for the Confederate cause of which we found none determine which schools were named for individuals who lived in the 17th 18th or 19th centuries during the period of time where slavery was a fundamental part of the economic cultural and political systems of Virginia in

[00:15:22] northern Virginia and then to determine if there were any Loudoun County Schools named for individuals or movements that promoted or implemented racial segregation laws in Virginia during the eras of Jim Crow or massive resistance back in October of 20 the school board reviewed this with the black history committee and the black history committee in collaboration with the school board reviewed the names of the first two phases which involved 10 names and they reported back in april of 2022

[00:15:58] they're recommended for and did four identified groups i'm sorry that they recommended have further review and so the school board in um i'm looking to see in october of 2022 they did move forward with reviewing the school names in the first group which included Francis Hazel Reed and Mercer and staff held community meetings of which the representing school board members were in attendance so staff is just returning for guidance because in February of 23 the board paused on the review and said they would return in the fall last fall which we did not and so

[00:16:38] we're just seeking guidance to move forward with the name review and I can answer any questions I do know that miss Griffiths had asked a number of questions last week and we're working on compiling those and dr. Ellis Williams thank you very much is there any discussion thank you so much I do want

[00:17:13] to reiterate the questions that I did have and if you do have answers to those questions today I'd really appreciate it the cost the estimates for all the school suggested I understand that it cost over 1.5 million to change a mascot is that correct we are confirming that information and we will get that as soon as possible to the full board excuse me also history matters forgive me if I missed it how much have we paid history matters for these for this research

[00:17:52] please again we are compiling that information for you and we will provide that as soon as possible okay so regarding my questions we don't really have the answers at this time so I ask that my colleagues just you know take this off action for now and make maybe make it an info item for the next

meeting if possible thank you thank you is there any other discussion I guess I would prefer to just keep it on action at this point in time and so it can be go

[00:18:31] gone to the full board as well thank you from my side I wasn't here in the last Finance and Operations Committee meeting so I will comment and just say that seeing all of the work that's been done already on studying kind of the name change direction for me I think that work has really just been done and I think that I would look to receive more guidance from the full board I will say

[00:19:04] that although I see all of the work really just being done and for us to really just decide on a direction I think that that that that's where I kind of I'm I'm landing at the moment I know that the process of proceeding with name changes so there's the there's the you know if we should do this the philosophy that the school board would agree on and do we move forward with these name changes based on what's been studied and based based on all the inputs that have been gathered for me that's that's a yes right it's it's getting it to the full board and getting that feedback and then the how

[00:19:44] and how we prioritize this seeing a lot of the questions from Mrs. Griffiths and seeing some of the input from other members of the community that's a that's a larger discussion is how and where where are those resources going to come from and how are we prioritizing assuming if correct me if I'm wrong this would come out of a capital budget the capital budget process how are we what's the timeline look like how many schools across what time period I think that given that the importance and significance this has for many in our community just being able to potentially say that that hey we believe that this

[00:20:22] is the right direction achieves a lot and then I think the how and how much it's going to cost and over what time period and how we then prioritize those projects is is another question I think we have to be careful and deliberate about and intentional about and I think I see them as two separate things and so that's a little bit about my kind of way of thinking about something as important and also as involved as this endeavor is going to be so any other

[00:20:57] discussion at the moment before we take it to a vote so mr. Strafi if I'm getting us correct you are proposing that this is just an opportunity to to continue with the work and the how this is directing staff to kind of continue with the work is that what I'm hearing from my side yes it's really taking what's all of the work that's been done I guess I'll just gonna restate it a little bit more clearly it's taking all the work that's been done and just basically getting feedback from the board as to hey we need to move forward

[00:21:32] on this and then separating that from how do we move forward on this what are the timelines what are the budget impacts and there's so many ideas that we could get on the how but I think that we will potentially muddle the discussion if we try to accomplish all of that in one shot and these are some some of the topics are potentially you know polarizing in the community and so as much as we clarity that we can bring to this discussion by separating those two I think that it'll be a little bit easier to kind of eat that elephant one one bite at a time I don't know if that helps

[00:22:08] it does thank you any other comments from board members or staff at the moment okay so um i will then um restate the uh the motion that i made and then if to scroll up a lot um so i'm making the motion that the finance and operations committee recommend that the loudon county school board

[00:22:44] provide guidance on reviewing all school names in relation to the june 2020 initiated school board action? I second. Seconded by Chair Mansfield. All those in favor? Aye. And that will go through

unanimously and then we'll move on to the information items for today. The first information item is business and financial services school-based allotments overview.

[00:23:22] This is presented by Mrs. Jones, Director of Budget and Financial Analytics. Just a second as we bring up the slides. There we go. Good afternoon committee members. During this committee's

[00:23:58] recent review of the Market Basket contract, you asked questions regarding the supports that are in place to provide for school-based needs. Our intent for this brief presentation is to provide you an overview of school-based allotments, share improvements we have and continue to make, and address questions that you may have.

[00:24:17] Recall from the school board's FY25 adopted budget that just over 90 percent of the \$1.8 billion in the school operating fund is for personnel costs. This leaves approximately 174 million for O&M and capital outlay expenditures to provide everything from textbooks to utilities. Within that amount, there's 8.4 million or approximately 4.8 percent that is specifically dedicated to what are called school-based allotments. School-based allotments are a standalone component of the school operating fund that are distributed directly to schools at the start of each fiscal year in order to meet the unique educational

[00:24:51] needs at each school. There are three categories of allotments, each with their own intended purpose and usage parameters instructional allotments are for the general educational needs of the school generally at the discretion of the principal this category of allotments provides for school-wide needs such as laminator supplies and professional development as well as teaching materials and specific curriculum supplies for art music counseling special education and others differentiated allotments are provided to schools to offset economic disadvantages affecting the student experience common uses are to cover the cost of

[00:25:28] field trips college application fees club dues class t-shirts and other student fees and charges that are allowable under policy 4020 as an aside it is important to note that schools have a number of supports available to address economic disadvantages that include differentiated allotments family liaison programs title one funding and extensions of the federal free and reduced meal program the third category of allotments is for teacher classroom supplies this was a school board initiative and priority added to fy 22 to defray out-of-pocket expenses our teachers face in setting up and maintaining their classrooms it specifically provides 250

[00:26:07] for any teacher that is new to lcps and 100 for returning teachers teachers can spend these dollars in coordination with their school's financial technician through a number of purchasing sources to procure the items needed for their specific classroom the entire allotment schedule for instructional differentiated and teacher classroom supply is found on page 52 of the fy25 superintendent's estimate of needs with the red text to the right of this slide showing the breakout of the total 8.4 million budgeted in fy25 similar to staffing standards the allotment schedule provides for transparency consistency and a base level of equity across all

[00:26:46] schools line items are advocated for by lcps departments who also provide guidance on the the intended use. In addition to this \$8.4 million of formal allotments, individual departments may also include funding in their core operating budgets to support specific school-based needs.

[00:27:04] In FY24, departments have distributed more than three-quarters of a million dollars year-to-date directly to schools. We estimate that FY25 will be roughly the same. In FY23, which is the last year

that we have full-year data for, more than \$5 million was spent directly on educational supplies at the discretion of school-based administrators and teachers.

[00:27:28] For specific examples of what was purchased, we looked at receipts from the market basket contract whose renewal this committee recently reviewed and the school board ultimately approved. During FY23, just under \$1 million of supplies were purchased on this contract alone and included \$82,000 for markers, \$49,000 for painting supplies, and \$42,000 for pencils.

[00:27:50] Other purchases of allotments included professional development for teachers and school-based administrators and educational technology such as online instructional math and writing tools. While LCPS makes this school-based funding available, it is the unfortunate reality that it is not fully utilized.

[00:28:09] Excluding the COVID years when spending patterns were anomalous, an average of more than 91 percent of the instructional allotment was spent, approximately 56 percent of the differentiated allotment was used and about 75% of the teacher classroom supply allotment was utilized. It is important to note that staff actively encourages schools to fully spend their allotments each school year. Slide 8, which we'll cover in a few minutes, addresses recent efforts to increase utilization. We also acknowledge that there is a perception that teachers must rely on public support and

[00:28:48] donations. In order to quantify what this looks like, my team reviewed a representative sample of Amazon wish lists in February and March of this year covering 54 LCPS schools. This review included elementary, middle, and high schools, all geographic regions of the county, and both Title I and non-Title I schools. There were 618 school-based employees, mostly teachers, that requested an aggregate of nearly 5,200 items for \$276,000. Generally, consumables are the most commonly requested category of items at 38% of all requests compared to

[00:29:25] books, games, furniture, other classroom materials, electronics, and food. Specific items in this category of consumables include markers, pencils, papers, and tissues. However, the single most requested item, more than any single consumable category, are elementary school books, followed by classroom games and toys.

[00:29:46] Books and toys and games are almost 10% of all total requests. For context, this compares to pencils, the single most requested consumable on the Amazon which lists which comprise just 2.5 percent of total items requested to summarize a few points the school board's adopted budget includes significant school-based resources known as allotments to satisfy the unique educational needs of individual schools and communities schools have traditionally not fully utilized these allotments essentially leaving money on the table that could have potentially been used to address current needs and

[00:30:22] there is the reality that some teachers do still request public support for classroom supplies. Staff across all divisions have worked together to provide continuous improvements to the allotment process to address known and suspected challenges. While the slide lists some examples, it may be helpful to highlight the existence of multiple procurement opportunities and vendors that schools and teachers have access to, including school specialty, which is the market basket contract referenced earlier, Office Depot, Amazon, and others.

[00:30:51] Utilization of multiple communication channels, including principal updates, the superintendent's newsletter and regularly occurring financial technician forums to promote awareness

intended uses and best practices for allotments and a critical and annual review of the entire allotment framework to identify improvements to better meet emerging needs such as the school board's introduction of teacher classroom supply allotments in fy22 we believe that providing these school-based allotments provide a necessary framework to address the unique educational needs of our diverse school community we appreciate this committee taking the time to review and we look forward to your questions and

[00:31:28] support thank you thank you very much for bringing this back to committee and making this presentation I will see if we all have any questions or discussion this is Griffiths thank you chair strategy I do have some questions because I'm still getting emails you know asking me for donations to the schools so can you provide a breakdown of what percentage of the allotments are used per school per category instructional teacher supplies

[00:32:03] differentiated I would think that the principals can use these allotments to their discretion so you're saying that there's money left over because there's so many activities so many things going on I I just want to understand yes we can provide that list by school by category and yes it is traditional that there's usually several hundred thousand dollars left on the table at the end of each year division-wide why why are they asking parents to donate all the time I

[00:32:39] think that highlights the challenge that we discussed earlier and I think Mr. Jones kind of highlighted on on his last slide where we it is frustrating when we see these wish lists go out and then we see the several hundreds of thousands of dollars that are left on the table each year so I can't provide a distinct answer. There's a hundred, well, there's 98 schools today, there's 98 principals, and there's different needs, different communities, different ways of how they manage their funds. What we are

[00:33:15] doing, that Mr. Jones highlighted, is that we have really taken a more proactive approach in terms of providing reports, you know, discussing, engaging them in conversations, reminding them, hey, you know, things are busy during the year, we're approaching year-end, you've got money left over in your accounts. So it is a challenge and it's something that we continue to work on. If you have any specific examples regarding wish lists or what you're being asked to donate for with specific schools, sharing that information would be helpful for us to further our discussions with specific

[00:33:54] schools. I did a survey and as per the principal's discretion, it was school supplies, musical instruments lunch debt theater fine arts repairs and landscaping technology and end-of-the-year teacher and staff bonuses regarding theater you know they're charging tickets which for tickets which is fine but the theater itself you have to pay to have your child be in the show as well so you're

[00:34:33] paying for that you're paying for advertising in the playbills you're paying for all kinds of things so while I understand the tickets that's fine but the parents are being asked to pay for their kids and some parents have kids in several shows there's a lot going on so it ends up really adding up so I was hoping as far as principal discretion they would be able to help out the theater let's say or musical instruments from anything from that list that I gave you so if actually we had something by school like by category that would

[00:35:12] really help us I like to take the opportunity to also share and just remind out of the vast budget that you approved earlier this calendar year one of the new initiatives in there was a new school allotment to address exactly what you're describing and so we were aware that there were schools charging for you

know to participate in fine arts it could be participating in a club we were just kind of roughly describing as a pay-to-play and so what that new

[00:35:48] allotment was provided to the schools was to offset the need to charge students for that giving them a source of revenue to upstart a club or upstart you know upfront any costs associated with that so that new allotment that will go out to schools for this upcoming school year it's brand new so they'll be I'm sure there'll be some learning curves around it but the team has developed guidance that will go out with the allotment to help provide instructions of what the allotment is supposed to be used for is specifically to address what you're describing so that is one example where we are hearing

[00:36:27] you know where we heard something and we're trying to address it thank you no further questions thank you chair straffi um one thing that i hear a lot is printer paper from schools what is that process it's not exactly school supplies i know this sounds a little crazy but i hear a lot we don't have enough printer paper so that's why i'm when i'm seeing nods or what is that process um the distribution center fulfills all paper orders for the school district

[00:37:04] so we've met we never have not fulfilled an order if we had specific examples of where this is occurring we could look into it but it may be similar to the allotments where if there's a large consumption of paper at a particular site the school administrator may be trying to manage that but we provide all paper oh so it's a merely the principal can say may I have some more paper please. I'm sorry. There's a process. There's a work order process to have to place an order for

[00:37:43] paper and then have it delivered. And we do all of that distribution annually throughout the entire course of the year. Okay. Is there a way that some of these, to Mrs. Griffith's point of, well, and to Ms. Willoughby's, that there is, there are funds available. Is there any appetite for maybe putting how much funds like how much the the schools have and and how much they are not using or using on our website or something I don't I don't want to call

[00:38:21] people out but at the same time I want parents to know that there are funds there that are available so I don't know if we publish up publicly right now but I do know that that report goes out on a regular basis to schools and it's an automated report that goes directly to principals and I believe financial technicians that chose exactly where they are in each category of spending throughout the year is that something that could be given to to PTAs or PTOs or anything without a FOIA request I think that's something we would want to

[00:38:56] discuss I would want to try to work with schools more internally versus trying to perhaps pressure them in a way I think the more efforts we we do and again just the reporting the discussions even bringing back hey we we did a presentation to fno committee they're really interested in this they're really paying attention we really you know your school's going to pop on a report potentially and you're going to be asked why haven't you spent your funds i think that i would rather or i would recommend to start with that um and then if we still continue

[00:39:36] to see let's say next year or as we move through next year that there's money not being spent in a manner that we would expect, then absolutely we could -- I would absolutely be open to other avenues. That's fair. Thank you.

[00:39:54] Thank you. Two comments. One question, actually. Just for clarity, just to call it out, what happens to the unspent funds in the next year? So the \$20 million that we projected out of the quarter

three financial projection, that is what we're talking about for year-end funds, and then we've made a recommendation we've been talking about that's about 10 million of spending that this so let's say that there's a million dollars falling out of allotments 1 million of

[00:40:30] that 20 million is coming from here so it falls to fund balance understood and so how do we evaluate every year what the schools will get in those allotments or reevaluate rather what does that needs assessment based on and it's based on those those ratios differentiated those ratios right right so the as part the budget process we look at the allotments and so as mr. Jones said one of the changes with the instructional allotments was reviewing and identifying that we needed to provide some additional flexibility and more

[00:41:06] discretion with the principals in terms of the differentiated I believe over the years we've made some minor tweaks to that looking at the usage as well as is it capturing you know the the student population that we expect and then the teacher allotment is relatively new and similarly of reviewing and that I think is more about communication with the the schools because I think that's the one that we absolutely would expect to be fully spent the only instance would be

[00:41:41] if if you know we allocate a certain dollar amount per FTE and if there's a vacancy that sits there all year then of course there would be some savings but it shouldn't be to the to the amount that we're saying okay that helps I mean I just based on the presentation I really like how well thought out the different uses of these allotment funds you know and how they're available to the schools I think for me and I think this is shared is just still try even with the the challenges slide it's still trying to reconcile where the gap is is

[00:42:16] it an administrative barrier or a process barrier is there more that we can do, as you said, proactively to then go to the schools and ask them to do their own needs assessments. So I'd hate to do anything that smells top-down, but if we could really try to discover where the process is, if folks just don't know that they can request or they're not being encouraged to do so in all cases, where those barriers are, I'd just really just love to get some more information on how we can reconcile the issues of

[00:42:54] maybe some teachers not you know having these wish lists which is fine and but but these allotments not being used and is there really a need so that's just my two cents any other discussion or questions thank you chair straffi as far as these allotments not being used when we do get the data from the schools and And the categories that are, you know, as far as the money that's not being used.

[00:43:24] If we have the data of a couple of years, let's say, that'll tell us, okay, this particular school does not need this money for, it might be musical instruments. So maybe they get less next year.

[00:43:41] And then the money can go to teachers or bonuses or whatever. But I just want to point out, like in government, you get a budget every year, and if you don't use all that money, by the end, you lose it.

[00:43:59] So everywhere I've ever worked, they go out of their way to spend every last dime. So if we do the research or have the data on what the schools are spending the money on, that will give us an idea.

[00:44:14] so I look forward to that. Thank you so much. Thank you very much. With that, we'll move on to the next information item, and that is business and financial services state cost per pupil for tuition purposes. Good afternoon. The school board establishes two tuition rates for non-resident students based on the adopted budget each year. The first is for out-of-state students and is equal to the total per capita cost of education exclusive of capital outlay and debt service.

[00:44:50] The second is for in-state out-of-county students and is for the local share of revenue contributing to the same total per capita cost of education, exclusive of capital outlay and debt service. Based on the FY25 adopted budget, the proposed tuition rates for school year 2024 through 2025 are \$22,679 for out-of-state students and \$15,718 for in-state out-of-county students.

[00:45:22] We are glad to answer any questions you may have, and based on your guidance, and unless otherwise directed, staff will bring this back as either a consent item or an action item at the June 4th F&O Committee meeting. Thank you.

[00:45:39] Thank you very much. Any questions or discussion? No discussion from me. These are based on policy 4010, and so the tuition rates would be approved based on that policy, so no questions from me. Thank you.

[00:45:57] Oh, thumbs up for consent. Yes. consent for consent next information item is 6.03 support services school start times community feedback survey and proposed bell changes for school year 2024 and 2025 good evening we come back to you the fno committee to present some proposed bell changes for next year as well as

[00:46:32] the survey that we intend to send out and this is in response to the april 9th information item that was presented to the school board and our last finance and operations committee meeting as well so we are proposing minimal bell changes for next year with the transportation team looked at three different scenarios with a focus on those schools that had the earliest pickup times and we looked at those schools that had pickup times earlier than 6 30 earlier than 6 40 and

[00:47:07] then we also looked at establishing a third standard bell time right now we have two standard bell times for elementary 7:30 and 8:00. And also as each of these we wanted to understand the in the resource impact that would be required if we made these any one of these scenario changes but we also wanted to understand make sure we understood the resource impacts that we already have accounted for for next year including health and medical sciences program that's being stood up next year that is going to require nine drivers uh additional stops for the international

[00:47:46] baccalaureate program that will require two additional drivers uh enrollment growth at thomas jefferson high school that will require one more driver and right now we are projecting about 10 retirements and resignations at the end of this school year that will also be another 10 drivers so total about 22 drivers with no consideration of any proposed bell changes So as I indicated, we looked at three different scenarios.

[00:48:13] The first scenario we looked at was ensuring that no general education student would be picked up within zone before 6.30 a.m. And these were the schools that were identified, Aldi, Banneker, Kenneth Colbert, Lovettsville, Mountain View, and Round Hill.

[00:48:31] Each of those schools currently have students that are picked up before 6.30. And if we were to adjust those pickup times, we would need to move the bell time for those schools to the times indicated here. So Aldi would move from 7.30 to 7.35, Banneker, again, five minutes to 7.35, Kenneth Culbert to 7.40, Lovett'sville to 7.35, Mountain View to 7.45, and Round Hill to 7.40.

[00:48:55] And that adjustment would require two additional drivers. Scenario two looked at moving our pickup times to no earlier than 6:40 for in-zone general education students. And that would require, that identified 10 schools that were affected and would require eight additional drivers.

[00:49:19] And you can see here, Aldi, Banneker, Catoctin, Francis Hazel Reed, Kenneth Culbert, Lovettsville, Mountain View, Round Hill, Sicklin Creek, and Waterford will all have their times moved between 5 and 25 minutes from the current 7:30 bell time in scenario 3 took those 10 identified schools and just move them to 7:45 so we established for those schools that had the earliest pickup time we moved them to 7:45 that would require seven additional drivers and we would

[00:49:53] still have four schools Kenneth Colbert Mountain View Roundhill would still have their their pickup times earlier than 6:40 but not before 6:30 and that's using today's today's information again this is subject to change if we have additional enrollment change major enrollment changes for next year because especially in the rural rural locations so our in our plan staff rec we're planning on implementing scenario three to establish that that we thought that

[00:50:29] having multiple additional bell times would be confusing so establishing that third standard bell time of 7 45 and moving those 10 schools with the earliest pickup times to that third standard bell time was the best scenario it would require seven additional drivers on top of the 22 that we identified previously and our plan is to the principals have been notified of that plan and our plan is to start making notifications to the community and families um and also then

[00:51:06] develop bus route changes for those those 10 schools thank you for presenting this mr davies um do we have any questions or discussion thank you chair traffi um you said nine buses for hampsi hampsi program that's correct yes okay so there are 18 middle schools so um why is there only nine buses you're not picking up at every middle school so where are there specific pickups yes ma'am that we have a number of hub stops that have been identified and and each bus will will pick up it

[00:51:44] at more than one hub stop and we've planned the routes based on the geographic location and we try to create as many hub stops as possible to improve accessibility including uh not only middle schools but we have hub stops at high schools and and elementary schools and that's in the afternoon that's uh more of an afternoon program or no morning and afternoon morning and afternoon those students come from all over the county to the the two site locations uh tuscarora and briar woods for health and medical sciences i'm just trying to figure out how we can adjust

[00:52:21] these times i mean i saw that you have there's a lot of schools missing obviously i'm just trying to figure out with the with the bus situation how we can fix these times um i think is it because we're short on bus drivers as well i mean you might have said that previously um is that the issue well our our focus is on customer service and trying to meet the needs of the community and obviously the the community has voiced concerns over the earliest pickup times or the early pickup times that we have for our 730 schools

[00:52:57] so that was the focus of our of our of our effort in this regard was trying to move those early pick up times as late as possible um and again with the lowest impact on our resources as possible um and that that's how we came up with scenario three chairman thank you chair streffi so this could be done by the fall yes because initially we were told that nothing really could be done until

[00:53:31] like for a year or so but this could be one stepping stone towards even later maybe again as the the more we compress the transportation time frame the more resources are required and given with our recruiting challenges that we have with bus drivers then there's impacts that that mr. Lewis had mentioned before regarding on-time performance availability of buses for field trips and things of that nature so the more we compress things and it also has an

[00:54:07] impact on driver pay because the buses that serve these ten schools those drivers will now start their day 15 minutes later and so that's and they're paid by the hour so that will have an impact on their on their pay as well so we got we want to be careful about that so so I think I think my question is similar to chairman's fields is that this would be kind of the this is the scenario that you all are landing on to have the maximum amount of impact and

[00:54:46] value to um the early start schedules um given the resources in the time frame that we have for calendar for for school year 24 and 25 yes sir yes sir this we felt was most achievable to address some of the concerns that have been expressed by the community while minimizing the impact on resources and then the discussion around the future school years and the entire discussion around early start times and staggered schedules um is something still that would be would continue to be presented and recommended recommendations brought forth through committee um and to the

[00:55:24] full board but that this is really what we could kind of um respond to in terms of community and uh in the division as it stands right now yes sir and our um we have a few more slides to present as well okay um but i wanted to um as we presented at the last uh finance and operations committee meeting we laid out a timeline for this plan now this was what we called the low-hanging fruit what we could achieve immediately uh we are engaging two two different vendors to look at two different consultants to look at um our bell times holistically across the division

[00:56:02] uh and what we could do uh and the resources require the needs assessment that was referenced by the board and so we are still pursuing that we also our first step in that is to put out a survey and I will turn it over to mr. Waylock to discuss and walk us through the survey questions yes good evening thank you for the opportunity to sit here and speak with you in looking at the survey just trying to fill the questions that were asked to get an understanding of the overall division related to the sequence in which school should start as well as some of the impacts of the current start times

[00:56:40] on different families and looking at prioritization of what is most important in considering the start times. We developed this really short, fairly simple survey to go out to families and staff members. The one thing I'll point out is the logistical challenges having one family -- one survey per person who receives it when you have multiple children.

[00:57:03] So, in this case, we focused on please take the survey for some questions from the perspective of your youngest child. And that'll allow us to really focus in on where that is. We can also aggregate that up to cluster and then also identify the schools that have the earlier start time to be able to disaggregate the data and draw comparisons from that.

[00:57:23] So we want to present the survey here just to ensure that it met the needs that you were looking for, the goals that you were looking to achieve before it went out. Just because we are getting short on school year and wanted to see if there's any feedback. But before we go into that, I'll talk about some of the logistics associated with it.

[00:57:40] Once the survey is finalized, we will actually send it to be translated. We translate it into our top five languages other than English that are spoken in the division. We will launch the survey out. For families, we send it to the first two contacts for every child in ParentVUE. And then throughout the survey window, we will be sending reminders to non-participants.

[00:57:59] We usually send about two or three over a two-week period of time. One of the questions that came up last week was about being able to send it out rising kindergartners we do have a list of roughly 3,000 pre rising kindergartners who have already registered for next school year so we can pull email addresses from that as well to be able to include them in the survey distribution so I'll open the floor for any questions or any feedback on the content in terms of we can present to you the questions just so you in case you have any additional points so basically select the child for the

[00:58:35] youngest selects a school for youngest child we look at an overall satisfaction with the current bell times we ask in terms of how your youngest child will get to school next year during the student but to school next year there's a follow-up question to that about if you are walking or getting a private vehicle if they if you live within the walk zone for that school in terms of the other next questions about likelihood to change a school your transportation style to change if school start times were changed and then we have these questions here about basically what are the impacts that the

[00:59:11] current school child school times start times may have on you go to the next one you have to answer that one sorry here we ask the sequence and this goes back to some of the feedback we got during the board meeting on April 9th as far as what preference for sequencing of a school should open first when you scroll down there's a question about combining elementary middle school students on the bus minimizes loads necessarily some routes and then the final question here

[00:59:51] speaks to some of the other concepts that we spoke about health and sleep after-school activities childcare and having parents prioritize their top five in order of preference to really understand and on the priorities overall and then like I said earlier we can disaggregate by different subgroups as well to see what the differences are across the division we also have a separate survey for staff the questions are very similar in this one the one difference is basically you know what your work location is and impact I believe on the staff member if this if the school start times were changed

[01:00:28] satisfaction asking if they have a child that is in a LCPS school I'm glad to the next one and their overall satisfaction with it as well again we ask for the order of preference and then the prioritization question that I mentioned earlier about the different concepts so very similar question we also this is again based on the April 9th feedback asked about interest in becoming a bus driver as a secondary assignment to their primary roles and again this was just based on the discussion during the April 9th board

[01:01:01] meeting any additional questions or discussion thank you chair Struffy I'm just curious to know are we if we're really struggling with bus drivers are Are we able to go to a private company?

[01:01:23] Is that against regulation? Are we able to use, like, I don't know, chariots for hire for some areas where, I mean, the kids are just going to school way too early and, you know, we have to do the staggered. Is it possible to go outside?

[01:01:40] I'm just curious. So we do use some of our, we do use private companies for some of our students that live in remote areas primarily special needs students or students that are our our McKinney-Vento students they receive transportation that we either provide organically through our own resources or through a third party however the majority of like there are some districts that that contact out their transportation to a firm that operates then maintains the buses we have our

[01:02:16] model is is all in-house and having a third party operate they would be pulling from the same driver labor pool that we that we draw from and they generally pay less than what we offer we we have the

best compensation and benefits in the region both private and public I did not know that I thought chariots for hire maybe they were paying a little bit more so that's why I was curious thank you first of all if I didn't thank you for this thank you for putting this together

[01:02:54] I appreciate it I guess this might seem a no-brainer but can a teacher also if she has a student also fill out as a parent and as an employee yes that question is yes it's very difficult to separate the two we ask them to take it from the lens of what their role is in that time the questions are different there are more questions on the parent survey than on the teacher survey but But yes, and we will also present them separately.

[01:03:24] We won't combine the data into one bucket. We'll have the staff member data, and we'll have the parent/guardian data side by side, as opposed to lumping them all into one bucket. Thank you for that.

[01:03:41] Don't know if these were all the questions, but are there any questions that are not related to the parent's trial, but to the parent themselves? Any demographic or other information that we collect?

[01:03:56] We actually do not have any other demographic questions on the survey, other than what is the school. We can certainly add some to the end of the survey, if that would be your preference. - You know, there are trade-offs to making this longer. - Yeah.

[01:04:11] - But just thinking, I don't have anything specific, just wondering. I think from my perspective, I think the issue of bus driver recruitment deserves its own more focused conversation, maybe with potentially more folks in the room.

[01:04:29] I don't know if HR would be a possibility, and really just digging into that as a topic on its own, even if only just for my or other board members' information and knowledge as to what specifically have been the challenges and where we are competitive and just kind of the lay of the land when it comes to trying to recruit bus drivers, because that seems to be the choke point is to any potential solution that we have or community feedback or whatever that is, that is really the bottom line

[01:05:08] is how we can address that question or that's one of the primary issues. So for me, I think having a more focused discussion on bus driver recruitment and just getting some more historical context, but also seeing what is currently being done and what's being proposed for the future in terms of recruitment, that would really help me.

[01:05:28] And I think just in general, comments around the scenario three seems to be out of all three scenarios seems to be the most involved and it's good to see that we're really trying to maximize the impact or the benefit to the community as soon as we can without waiting for that longer more involved conversation around early start times and so doing as much as we can now having received all of that input from the community I think is a good thing right and it's something that we see and appreciate that being said I think there is I don't want to assume too much from

[01:06:07] the rest of the board members but I think that there is a general energy behind not having the earliest start times in our region or in the country and so I think having these more focused discussions may get us there faster so that's that's all I can comment for now any other questions or comments yes thank you chair Strafi I like some of the suggestions maybe combining you might have younger students with older students going to the same going the

[01:06:42] same direction like for example Trailside has Newton Lee behind if the schools are close together I know Tolbert and Harper Parker right next to each other combining the buses is a great idea that might work as well and I suggested last time maybe you cut down some locations for TJ.

[01:07:05] I don't know. How many did you have for TJ already? Currently we have eight buses that go there. Eight, okay. So maybe cutting down the locations to six, whatever you can do. Maybe you've thought of this already. It's the volume of students, not the locations.

[01:07:23] So each of our buses is full. Oh, okay, okay. Yeah, I'm guessing you might have thought of these things already, but I'm just throwing it out there. I like the suggestion of combining students. Thank you. - Any other discussion?

[01:07:39] So let's go ahead and move on. Thank you very much. We will move on to 6.04, Support Services, Revision of Policy 6350, Wireless Network Facility Colocation. - Thank you very much, Chair.

[01:07:55] So I bring this policy back before you guys today. We reviewed it in the last Finance and Operations Committee, and there were some questions, And I was tasked with going back and working with the Division Council's office to refine some language in Section C of the redlined policy.

[01:08:15] Basically summarizing, there's circumstances where the superintendent may bring forward cellular tower proposals that don't maybe meet every criteria above. And this was given the superintendent the discretion to bring those forward, not to approve the towers, but rather bring those forward for consideration for the school board.

[01:08:37] So in consultation with the division council office, the blue font language has been added to try to tighten that subsection up a little bit to be clear that it's not the superintending approving a tower site, rather is the school board's discretion.

[01:08:53] It's the staff and superintendent that bring the proposals forward. - Thank you very much. Questions, discussion, Chairman. - How many do we have on our school properties at this time? Currently, there are two on LCPS property, one at Rockridge High School and one located at Mickey Gordon Park, which is not a school site, but we do own the property, and Parks and Rec runs the park, and there is a third located at Woodgrove High School, which is a school site, however, it is owned by the County of Loudoun.

[01:09:27] Okay, so I would like on, I guess, line 42, I mean, I understand we have a policy already and we're trying to make it a little tighter so one of the things that I would like to make sure is that when it says may recommend the approval of facilities that do not satisfy any or all of those factors I want to make an exception for a three the site selection will include the health safety and security considerations for students staff in their surrounding community I

[01:10:07] don't want that I I don't want that to be something that we one of those factors that we don't have to satisfy I want to be able to satisfy that understand completely thank you so if we add language to say something to the effect of not including item 2 in that subsection a 3 a 3 a 3 I'm sorry we can ask counsel I think she's behind um they're just asking if we can add language to not it or to not omit that should a special circumstance arise for

[01:10:45] the superintendent okay so what language can we put their language that we can add to the section can say this I'm reading from section C 40 the superintendent or designee must consider each of

the factors in section a reviewing the approval of such mobile and land-based network facilities on

[01:11:22] LCPS property but may recommend the approval facilities that do not satisfy any of these factors with exception for facilities that do not conform with section a3 if the superintendent or doesn't need determines of the benefits LCPS outweighs the factor thank you could you send that language yes of

[01:11:44] course the other questions or concerns I would ask one clarifying question if if that satisfies that request from this committee we are we will now before bringing it back to the committee we will send it out for community feedback and the various subcommittees that it may impact for feedback for community

[01:12:20] feedback if this language is satisfactory do we have the direction to go ahead and proceed with the community feedback portion you want to do a quick thumbs up so this is just the policy the policy food we would add this wording um and then it would be sent out to you know as with this change will be sent out to for community feedback chair straffi kind of in the same vein i know that we have two other items that are coming that the um

[01:12:56] oh there are a lot of papers here um so i want to the the next two information items i don't want to want them to I don't want to talk about them today until we get this policy in place until revisions until the revisions and this policy are finalized yes how does staff or the committee other committee members feel about that we

[01:13:32] will do is the as the committee wishes so I don't know the exact rules of procedure others may know better but it would be basically tabling these items until the policy is revised to satisfactory to come out of committee to full board at least or if you would want to go further until the policy is adopted I would prefer until the policy is adopted but that's just one board member we got two others any other discussion or thoughts on that or

[01:14:07] anything else I'm also in agreement I think that we can table the two information items until we have a finalized revised policy and then we also so that we also have community input from that as well.

[01:14:26] Chair Struffy, I would like, so if it's, I know these are information items and we might have to suspend the rules to be able to motion to table these items one by one. Oh, understood. Okay. So I would like to make a motion to suspend the rules.

[01:14:43] Okay. Motion has been made to suspend the rules. I don't have to suspend the rules. No, we can just make a motion. Okay, sorry. Okay. I would like to make a motion to suspend item 6.05 and table it, to table the item until the policy is adopted by the school board.

[01:15:08] So we have a motion. Do I have a second? I second. Seconded by Mrs. Griffiths. All those in favor, aye? Aye. so okay so we will entertain the motion I would like to make a motion for item 6.06 to table the item 6.06 until we have adopted the policy 6350 I second this is Griffiths has seconded it take a vote all those in favor aye aye aye so both of those motions passed unanimously we'll go ahead

[01:15:47] and table these two information items pending a final policy 6350 with revisions. That having been done, we are done with our information items. Is there any new business? Seeing no new business, this May 21st meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee is now adjourned.

[01:16:12] Thank you.



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