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Loudoun County School Board, Loudoun Education Alliance of Families (LEAF) Meeting, Monday, August 19, 2024

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 29m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1000749498?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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[00:00:06] test, test. We'll just get started in one more minute. We've got a couple more people arriving.

[00:01:52] Good evening, everybody. Thank you for joining us tonight. I'm Joan Sahlgren. I'm your staff liaison right now to the LEAF membership in the Loudoun Education Alliance of Families group.

[00:02:25] I'll be presiding over the meeting until we have our first election. We do a little housekeeping at this first meeting so welcome everybody you do you should see a full agenda that was published that you can pick up and be sure to fill out your attendance we've made it even easier this year you just do it on your phone so take a look at that QR code let us know that you're here there's a URL and a QR code on the table and in the evenings handout if you want to pick that up so I'll call the meeting to order welcome LEAF members to the August 2024 Loudon Education Alliance of Families meeting. The meeting will come to order. As we begin our

[00:03:02] agenda this evening seats are by planning district and clusters. I know we're kind of spread out tonight and that's because we do have plans for those very productive collaborative conversations that we usually have at these meetings. So be sure you've signed in. Look at the new attendance processes. As a reminder staff and officers do not share a list of contact information so feel free to share among yourselves

and make sure you know how to contact your fellow district members of leaf anyone attending who's not a school board member approved already you're just here for information you won't be able to vote leaf members are leaf meetings are open to

[00:03:38] the public loudoun county residents are welcome to attend the meeting bus must be refrain from interrupting the meeting agenda tonight's agenda includes election of officers bylaws and quorum policy review process information for the membership on their roles and responsibilities including the very important Virginia Freedom of Information Act that we cover in every organizational meeting. Do we have any members of the public who wish to make comments tonight?

[00:04:03] Seeing none, we'll move on. The minutes of the meeting for May 20th, 2024 are in board docs for your review linked on the LEAF website. And there are a few copies at your table To provide another opportunity for review, I don't know if you all have had a chance to glance over those minutes I'm happy to give you a minute or if you're ready I'm willing to accept a motion to accept the minutes from the May 20th 2024 meeting as submitted

[00:04:35] Thank you. We have a motion and a second all right all in favor of approving the minutes as submitted say aye all opposed Thank you. The minutes are approved. We'll move on to information items most important information item of all we're going to elect officers tonight it's our first order of business at this organizational meeting in the resources provided this evening you'll find a summary of the duties of each open office and before we move forward I'll give you a minute to look over those if

[00:05:11] you have not had a chance to already so we have five offices to fill tonight and for the first which our office open office of chair we have a single name submitted in advance Sherry Colby has submitted her name and I wonder if I could accept any other nominations for the floor from the floor for chair seeing none is there a

[00:05:44] second in favor of sherry colby as chair second that didn't take long all right um any discussion sherry would you like to speak to the motion or your position as chair you're welcome to yeah good evening good evening everyone thank you i was the chair last year of leaf i've been a part of leaf for since inception i am very excited to be the chair of this committee i think it's a productive committee that makes a lot of impact just a quick a little bit about myself i do have four children

[00:06:19] in lcps two in elementary and two in middle school my professional career is all in public education for the most part i was a elementary school teacher a reading specialist a literacy coach and then i've also worked for an educational consulting firm so i'm a huge advocate for public education and i'm just excited to see where we go this year as a committee so thank you for being here. Anyone who wants to be a part of the committee, I would really, I really appreciate it and I appreciate your time. So thank you. Thank you. Seeing no other nominations from the floor,

[00:06:59] may I hear an official motion that Ms. Sherry Colby be nominated to serve as chair of LEAF? All right. Is there a second? All in favor, say aye. All opposed? Congratulations. Ms. Colby, the floor is yours. Thank you, Joan and LEAF members. I will now continue with the selection of a set of elected officers to help fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the organization.

[00:07:35] We will be electing a vice chair of planning, a vice chair of membership, and a vice chair of communications. Just to give you an idea, I know everybody's really busy in terms of time commitment. If you're part of the committee, I put out about two weeks before each meeting, whether it be Zoom or a

Teams meeting, whatever is more convenient, a time that we can all collectively meet and I keep it at 30 minutes tops. I'm very like no more than 30 minutes because I really respect your time. So that is just one that's one piece of it and then there may be some ancillary

[00:08:10] things outside of that but not a huge lift but would really appreciate the help even though I know we're all very busy. So let's start with the electing the vice chair of planning. So as a parent advisory group to Loudoun County School Board is our goal to provide valuable parental perspective to school board and help communicate the school board's questions recommendations or decisions back to our communities i look forward to supporting this committee over the course of the school year and so we will now be taking nominations for the office of the vice chair of planning we ask that candidates who wish to nominate themselves be prepared to speak to

[00:08:49] your interests and qualifications and we will take nominations are there any members interested in serving as vice chair of planning crickets really i promise is it thank you karen you want want to come on up? Hi, my name is Karen Miller. I am a parent of a student at Heritage. He's in

[00:09:26] the pre-IB program. I've been a member of LEAF since its inception. I was the vice chair of communications the first year. I was not a board member last year. And so LEAF is just worth your time and commitment. We want to see all the schools have representation. We want to see all of the representatives that are representing schools feel as if their time is worthwhile.

[00:09:56] And so I am happy to step up and help lead the organization to make sure that happens. Also, full disclosure, I do work for LCPS. I'm an IT project manager, project management supervisor.

[00:10:18] Thank you, Karen. Are there any further nominations for Vice Chair of Planning? Seeing that there are no other nominations, the nominations are closed. Joan, do I nominate?

[00:10:39] Where'd you go? Sorry. I need a motion. Oh, yeah. Okay.

[00:10:55] All right. So may I have a motion to nominate Karen Miller as the Vice Chair of Planning? Can I have a second? Thank you. All in favor? All those opposed? Motion carried.

[00:11:13] Yay. Thank you, Karen. appreciate it. All right. So our newly elected vice chair of planning is Karen Miller. And now we will move on to electing the vice chair of membership. Now we will take nominations for the office of vice chair of membership. We ask that that candidates who wish to nominate themselves be prepared to speak to your interests and qualifications. We will take nominations from the floor. Are there any interested in serving as vice chair of membership? Thank you. I wish to submit my name, Bradley McKinney. Thank you, Bradley. Come on. You can come on up and

[00:11:50] and talk for a few minutes we're on a roll now that's good hi everybody I'm Bradley McKinney from Dulles South representing Little River Elementary I have a third grader and a kindergartner starting Thursday of course this is my second year on leave I voted against the reduction in quorum last year so this is me putting my money where my mouth is my my goal is to simply to put butts in seats my only skill perhaps my only skill in this world is chasing people down via email i feel like

[00:12:29] that's what i do for a living so that's what i intend to do with principals and pto presidents tactfully of course but hopefully to bring more of us here i believe in leaf i think it's a great thing and i think the more people here the better and more effective we can be for the county that's me are there any

other further nominations for vice chair of membership right seeing that that There are no other nominations.

[00:13:06] The nominations are closed. May I have a motion for Bradley McKinney as Vice Chair of Membership? Thank you. Do you have a second? Thank you. All in favor? All those opposed? All right.

[00:13:24] Motion carried. And our newly elected Vice Chair of Membership is Bradley McKinney. Thank you so much. We much appreciate it. All right, guys. We're almost there. Electing a Vice Chair of Communications. So we'll take nominations for the Office of Vice Chair of Communications.

[00:13:42] Do I have anyone interested? Yay, great, come on up.

[00:13:56] Hey, folks, my name is Dimitri Briskin. I have a starting first grader at Potomac Elementary. I'm also a project manager, and I also like to nag people to get stuff done.

[00:14:13] I do a lot of organization outside of work as well. I run rec leagues, or I've run rec leagues in the past for, you know, hundreds of people. I run a tournament for about 1,000 folks, so a lot of organization skills, a lot of nagging as well.

[00:14:29] I think it's a good way to get people, especially if you can be helpful about it. And, yeah, this is my first year on LEAF, but I'm really excited to be part of it and just to have a say kind of what's happening for our kids. Great. Are there any other members interested in serving as vice chair for communications?

[00:14:53] All right. Seeing no other nominations, the nominations are closed. Can I have a motion to accept Dimitri Briskin as the Vice Chair of Communications? Thank you. Second? All those in favor?

[00:15:10] All those opposed? All right. Thank you so much. We will now accept Dimitri Briskin as the Vice Chair of Communications. Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Looking forward to it. All right.

[00:15:25] We also have, this is a new role this year, a secretary. The main part of the secretary's role is taking the minutes. Right, Joan? That's coming over to us, right? So you'll be taking the minutes of the meetings that will then go out to our members, a few other responsibilities, but that's sort of like the main bulk of that role.

[00:15:51] Is there anybody interested in being the secretary? Nominations for the well and dry.

[00:16:10] We were on a roll. Hey, I'll take four out of five. Joan, can we, if we don't have anyone, disperse those responsibilities throughout our committee, or what are your thoughts on that?

[00:16:35] Or can we revisit the next meeting, or is that too late, when we have more membership as well? All right, so maybe that's what we'll do. Okay, well, thank you, everyone. I really appreciate those of you who volunteered. Four out of five is amazing, and hopefully as we get more people, our membership person gets more people in here, maybe someone will be interested in taking some notes for us.

[00:16:58] thank you all I really appreciate it you're welcome to come up and sit here the new members but if you're more comfortable staying where you at I understand that as well so totally up to you all right so we will move on to our information items so before we do that I'm going to provide you just a brief membership update so today to date today we have 30 nominated members of the hundred schools and programs at LCPS so at your tables you'll find a list of schools in your respective districts. If you know anyone in the schools without a representative,

[00:17:34] we would really appreciate maybe reaching out to them to encourage them to connect with their school principal or their PTA, or they can also reach out to me as well. So, oh, you already passed them out. Oh my gosh, you're on topic. Okay. All right. So next, I would like to invite our school member liaison, Lauren Chernoff. She's going to say a few words. She is a wonderful collaborative team member and we're really excited to have her and so she's just going to give

[00:18:05] us a provide us with a little school board update all right guys how's everybody good summer welcome back I'm Lauren Chernoff I'm the Leesburg district representative but I am the assigned liaison for this committee at least till January when we switch things up again I too have been a part of this committee since its inception I started out as a parent representing Tolbert elementary and now I'm the school board liaison I have two kids one at Tolbert elementary it's her last year our last year of elementary in our house which is

[00:18:42] super sad and one at Harper Park Middle School I also worked as an LCPS educator before I was elected to the board so I want to welcome all of our new members and welcome back those of you returning thank you for coming back we're really glad you're here and we're really excited I feel like just last year was Sherry's leadership and we were starting to really get the wheels greased and get into a really good rhythm of how this is going to go and you know how this becomes really collaborative so I can't believe that we are back but we are back and I do want to thank all of you for stepping up into the leadership roles I

[00:19:20] am really really excited to work with some of you and get to know you and we are you know Dimitri like you said this is a great way for you to be engaged in what's happening with your kids in school you hit the nail on the head and that really is always my goal as a school board member is to make sure that you guys are engaged in those things my role in this committee though is to update you on the latest happenings of the whole school board as well as kind of give you a preview of what's coming up in committee I also lead the policy portion of the collaborative conversations that we have kind of helping you to deep dive into policy and solicit feedback that goes directly

[00:19:56] back to our school board members. We met last May, so I wanted to also give you an update of just some of the high-level things that happened across the board, although we were off for the month of July, so it was quiet and lovely. But in June, Superintendent Dr. Spence introduced his post-entry plan, which was really exciting for us as a school board. After a year of many listening sessions and establishing stakeholder feedback groups he put together a plan for action and I'm a planner so I was like when's the plan come when's the plan coming and now we have a plan and we sort of have a roadmap and those some will happen

[00:20:33] quickly some will take time to evolve but the plan is posted on the website and I would encourage you all to read it it's really thorough and I found it to be extremely reflective of the needs of LCPS and definitely gave me some next steps to work towards.

[00:20:49] We also, if you remember, if you were in LEAF, we passed the personal device use policy 8655, which we specifically did a deep dive on here and gave lots of feedback. And actually, there was a small group of moms that were like, having it in the backpack is not enough.

[00:21:04] It has to be set aside. And that went into the policy. So I don't know if it's a direct result, but that was definitely some feedback that we saw go into fruition. So excited to see how that will play out in our schools this year. And we appreciate you partnering with us to honor instructional time without devices.

[00:21:23] And then obviously we adopted the new calendar to accommodate the professional learning days. That was another topic of conversation in this committee. Lots of feedback received. So hopefully that that's more conducive to your routines and environments than the two-hour delay option.

[00:21:39] And lastly, I just wanted to give you an update on collective bargaining. the board last Tuesday this Tuesday this last Tuesday yes I'm in a time warp our last board meeting we passed the collective bargaining resolution with that decision an election will now be held to elect a union representative for Loudoun County Public School employees and I'm unaware of the timeline of that at this time but I will keep you posted on what that is I'll cover more specific topics that are happening in our committees as we discuss in our conversations later but i'm just really happy to be here and always available as a resource hopefully so thank

[00:22:18] you thank you miss sure enough really appreciate it all right next i'm really really excited to introduce mrs renee dawson she's coming on to work with us and i could not be happier some of our returning members might recognize her from a meeting or two last year when special programs visited the committee mrs renee dawson has been appointed as the director of family and community engagement, bringing with her over 25 years of experience and significant contributions to the division. Her career spans and roles as a dedicated

[00:22:56] teacher, assistant principal, and principal during which she championed innovation and education and community partnerships empowering students and families alike. Her leadership as an instructional leader promotes a robust learning environment with diverse opportunities in which every student is representative and has access to multiple pathways for post-secondary pursuits mrs dawson's recent tenure with lcps as director of teaching and learning and as a liaison to community partners was instrumental in forging connections between the school business partnership executive council career and technical education advisory committee and lcps schools she organized

[00:23:32] a vision-wide initiative such as the together and remembrance memorial day event and the first responders event both of which made a significant impact on the community additionally she actively supported initiatives such as job for a day capstone projects and dual enrollment opportunities thereby creating new avenues for students future success mrs dawson is deeply committed to family and community engagement and eagerly anticipates collaborating with stakeholders to build a vibrant and inclusive educational environment at lcps her leadership in the division of family and community engagement will continue to cultivate meaningful partnerships that empower students

[00:24:10] support families and strengthen the LCPS community. I look forward to the positive impact Ms. Dawson and her team will have on LEAF and its community outreach. So I'd like to introduce Ms. Dawson. So I have a 20-minute speech. I'm just kidding. It is wonderful to be here and I see a lot of wonderful familiar faces. I'm so incredibly excited for this position. I think it is one that is absolutely important and what was really great about this is as we were going through

[00:24:48] and our superintendent was going through the post-entry plan he looked at where he had existing resources and that was me in teaching and learning and working with community partnerships and families and students so that position was shifted and this is going to give me an opportunity to really think about how we can build some strong connections between families our parents our business and industry partners our schools and our division I think of this as you know when you talk about when you love what you do, you never work a day in your life. This is going to be this position

[00:25:23] for me. It is so incredibly important. When I think about my career that was mentioned in Loudoun County that spans over 20 years, I still have connections with my parents, with my students, with my family members, community and business partners. So that is what the division of family and community engagement is really going to be.

[00:25:44] I want to make sure that I share it is about building authentic home and school partnerships that are really meaningful relationships with our parents, all of you all, who are really our champions and our partners in the great work of supporting our kids.

[00:26:01] Adult caregivers, family members, students, staff, and community partners. And what is all of this for? It really is about creating strong personal and academic outcomes for students. That's what all of our work is centered on. So I'm excited.

[00:26:16] I'm honored. I'm blessed to be doing this work and to be connecting with each and every one of you. If you need anything, please reach out to me. And I can't wait to do this work together. Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Dawson.

[00:26:34] I'm really excited that you're going to be working with us. All right, so the next information item is the new members orientation, the bylaws and charter. Everyone has a copy of the bylaws in your note packet. As we hope many of you have reviewed the bylaws and the charter online, at this time we're going to give you about five minutes for members to review the information, details, and expectations of the committee.

[00:26:58] Then if there are any questions, we'll do a short Q&A and answer any questions you might have. A couple housekeeping items before you begin to review is, first, please review silently as everyone has learning and processing styles, so side conversations are a little bit distracting when reviewing. So we appreciate your flexibility. Secondly, if you're wondering about some specific areas that would be important to direct your attention to for this evening, I would suggest Article 2, Purpose, Article 4, Organization, Article 5, Responsibilities of LEAF Members, Article 6, Meetings, and Article 7, Quorum. Are there any questions before we begin? I'm going

[00:27:36] give you about five minutes just kind of digest all of that okay great Kim can we set a timer

[00:27:43] for four minutes and then I'll give you a one minute warning be about one more minute and then

[00:31:45] we'll do any questions that you may have all right are there any questions before about the bylaws

[00:32:42] or what something means or how something works that we can clarify okay great what page is that on okay under meetings okay oh yes I forgot there's mics at your table my that's my fault and you can push in the mics but I got it on but thank you I appreciate it we'll look at that and make that update thank you under meetings it's 2022 2023 he thinks that on the date any other

[00:33:19] questions yes go ahead it's under organization as well just okay it's under organization as well thank you make those updates okay so I'm just take a few moments to just discuss like what does it mean to be a member of LEAF this being our third year we're relatively new and it's taken us a little a little bit of time to find our footing but I think we're definitely moving along

[00:33:56] and heading in the right direction so as LEAF members it's our duty where our parent community is the heart of our alliance so when we at when we are actively intentionally engaged in two-way communication with our school communities it leads to better outcomes in this forum we have the opportunity to amplify the voices of our families. I know sometimes it's a struggle. Some things to start to think about is that a lot of us are, you know, will plug into our PTAs. Sometimes our PTA meetings aren't well attended. Just for example, on my end, I represent Sickland Creek Elementary School. So I go to the PTA meeting and I give them a board update, or I give them a leaf update,

[00:34:36] which comes directly from our notes from our meetings and then I'm still working on ways to how do I garner that feedback from our families to then bring here because we are their representative so we're really open to ideas things that might be already working for you if you're a past member but just trying to figure out those ways how do we really get that two-way communication going and getting that feedback from our families in our communities so that we can be their voice for them so just a few things is how can we facilitate open and effective communication, ensuring that our parents' concerns, suggestions, and questions are not only heard but acted upon.

[00:35:13] One great thing that we moved forward to were these collective conversations -- I'm sorry, collaborative conversations. Last year we changed the format of our meetings. Looking at policy, having an actual rotation where Ms. Chernoff shares with us about policy, we garner your feedback, and we put it right into the feedback form right there.

[00:35:32] So you don't have to, like, you know, you leave the meeting. You always have the opportunity to provide feedback, but you're very busy and think about, "Oh, I've got to get on the computer and put my feedback in." This gives us the opportunity to put that feedback in directly, and so we felt like that was a real push in the right direction. Some other things to think about is how can our communication efforts also serve as advocacy for the community's interest in securing improved resources, support services, and policies that benefit our families?

[00:35:57] And then how can we influence decisions that affect various areas of our organization while aligning the needs and values of our community? So just taking some time to think about that, because we will come back to that, especially like, I think we have really great attendance for this meeting, it being that the school year hasn't started yet, but hopefully we'll continue to get more membership, and then we can start discussing how are we really reaching our communities and trying to get their feedback.

[00:36:21] So just a few things to think about. All right, so our next activity are the collaborative conversations that I was just speaking about. The format adjustment in these conversations are the result of member feedback. So we are constantly wanting your feedback so that we can make changes and adjust so that we're meeting your needs.

[00:36:41] So tonight we are sitting, according to planning district groups, Ms. Chernoff, Mrs. Dawson and Joan and our public information officer, Dan Adams, will rotate among the groups. So Ms. Chernoff is going to provide a school board update and discuss policy reviews that members engage in during the meetings.

[00:37:01] Mr. Adams is going to discuss FOIA and the new misinformation, disinformation webpages. And Joan will provide an introduction to working agreements, a discussion that will continue next month, followed by Mrs. Dawson, who will have the opportunity to briefly share the plans of the Office of Family and Community Engagement.

[00:37:19] So our groups will converse, ask questions, offer feedback, and connect. The staff will start conversations with one group, and then they will rotate so you don't have to move. And that will be every 15 minutes. We will provide a three-minute wrap-up warning, and then a one-minute warning, and then our presenters will be prompted to shift so that we stay on schedule and respect everyone's time.

[00:37:41] Are there any questions before we get started? All right, great. We will get started. Oh, go ahead. Sorry. Sure, sure. All right. Great.

[00:37:57] All right, let's get started.

[00:44:30] All right, if we could finish up this rotation and our presenters will move on to the next crew.

[00:54:23] Thank you.

[01:09:48] We have about three minutes for this rotation. Three more minutes.

[01:12:14] All right. It's time to wrap up this rotation, and we'll move on to our last and final rotation. Thank you.

[01:25:17] So we have one more minute to wrap up. Sorry to cut this a little bit short, but one more minute.

[01:26:47] All right, I hate to cut everybody short, but I want to be respectful of time. I know we've got great conversations going on, but it is 7 o'clock. I just have a few housekeeping items to talk about. Thank you so much to our speakers that came tonight. Let's give them a round of applause. I appreciate your time.

[01:27:05] I just thought the conversations were great, lots of good questions. Just a couple of things between now and the next meeting, some things to think about that I'm hoping you can come back with is think about, like, what is the best way to share your information? We talked a little bit in this group about email.

[01:27:21] I know if you were last year, you probably already have an email set up. But most people have a general leaf email so that if a new representative comes in, it rolls over to the next one. Actually, my PTA president set one up for me, but we can talk a little bit about that next time. What are possible ways to share your emails that you receive about policies that you review?

[01:27:41] How can you determine what's important in your communities, including their questions, needs, and suggestions? So if you can think about those things, about how we can really get that feedback, and we can talk about that next time, if that sounds good. Are there any questions or new business before we adjourn for next time?

[01:28:00] If the newly elected officers would just meet up here for like five minutes, we'll exchange information so that I can send out an email. Thank you all for coming tonight. I know it's a busy time of year. Yay, first day of school is coming soon. But anyways, our next meeting is here September 16th in this room.

[01:28:19] And again, I appreciate your time. Thank you, and I hope you have a great evening, and we're adjourned until next time. Thank you.



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