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Loudoun County School Board, Equity Committee Meeting, Thursday, September 5, 2024

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Place	Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length	1h 6m (video)
- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): https://player.vimeo.com/video/1006793522?rel=0 - BoardDocs (School Board): https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public	

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

[00:00:01] This one? Or this one? Sorry. Thank you.

[00:00:24] Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the first Equity Committee meeting for the 24-25 school year. I am so happy to have you back and ready to work.

[00:00:42] You even look eager to work. So welcome. So I called to order the September 5th meeting. And I am, of course, as you know, Dr. Linda Deans. And I am the chair of the Equity Committee from the school board.

[00:01:00] And I have my co-workers, two other school board members. Might you introduce yourselves? Dina Griffiths, Ashburn District. Hi, everyone.

[00:01:18] Arvind Astraifi, Sterling District. And, of course, we have members of the administrative team. And we have Dr. Spence and Dr. Ellis Williams. And then we have others. I'll let them introduce the others on their staff.

[00:01:35] Thank you. Good evening, everyone. Shaheed Mohammed, one of the supervisors, DEIA. Good evening, everyone. I'm Cynthia Lewis, one of the other supervisors in DEIA.

[00:01:52] Laura Freeman, a DEIA specialist. Okay, anyone else? We also have Dr. Ellis Williams, who is Assistant Superintendent in the DEIA Department.

[00:02:12] So we are so happy to have her as well as Dr. Spence here with us this evening. If you have your agendas, did you pick up your agendas from the back? If you have your agenda, our first item is...

[00:02:35] Okay. Our first item would be to, do I have a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting? You all received those earlier. Dina? I think we received an email that there was an addition that needed to be made to the minutes from Todd Ritchie. Did you receive that?

[00:03:04] An addition from? He said his statements were missing from the minutes, so we don't add statements from um committee members into the minutes is that correct i'm just trying to understand did we do we do that we can do that but we do we have the topic at hand um i think he

[00:03:39] sent that information earlier or yesterday i want to say um didn't get to me oh well uh todd ritchie he was missing uh his information was missing so he was just concerned okay so i don't know if we should approve it. We will table those minutes until our next meeting so we'll have two sets of

[00:04:06] minutes to approve for our next meeting.

[00:04:29] Okay next we will have the are there any announcements to the entire group. Okay we will start with new business which is item eight.

[00:04:58] One of the things that we realize is that the equity charter was created at a time in the past and was never made an official document. So one of the things that we are needing to do is to update the charter to reflect several changes, but one of which you are familiar with because last year we asked that you would remain committed members for another school term, remember? And so for that, of course, the board voted yes, but we also would need to do that officially and put it in the charter.

[00:05:36] So in order to do that, what we're going to do is ask for a subcommittee to work with us on updating the charter. On your tables, you have a QR code.

[00:05:53] If you would scan that QR code, we would ask that you would choose, not assign, but choose to become a member of the subcommittee that will update the equity charter.

[00:06:14] And what we're going to do is have you to scan the QR code, send in your name, and then we will make a decision as to how many people will be on that subcommittee. We will have a second subcommittee, let me give you both at the same time so that you will know that there are two that you can choose from, that will review policies.

[00:06:41] Each school year, well, every five years, policies are updated. all of our policies. We go through them, and the administration tells us which ones are due for this year. For an example, the policy on student grading is due next year, 26-27, but because there are multiple concerns, it has been pulled forward, and that policy has been addressed right now through the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. So that's an example of an updated policy.

[00:07:13] There will be policies that the administration will send to the Equity Committee for the Equity Committee to review and give feedback. You can give feedback on any because they are on the website, but there will be some specific to the Equity Committee.

[00:07:30] So we have one subcommittee who will update the charter for the committee, and then a second subcommittee that will review the policies that the administration sends to us for us to review.

[00:07:47] So you can choose which of those two. Now, in order to do that, we're going to have to have meetings between weeks and between. Okay? So if you choose to be on a subcommittee, please watch for your email that you've been selected, because if we have 10 people to sign up, a committee doesn't get a lot done with 10 people. We're going to look for five or six people, okay?

[00:08:15] So we will make that decision as to who will be on each of the two subcommittees, and then we will ask you what is a time that would be best for you to meet. Let me share with you a positive caveat in that in October, we won't have a group equity committee meeting because the first Thursday in October is a holiday, if you look on your calendar.

[00:08:43] So that means the two subcommittees, and I would meet with both of the subcommittees, that means that the two subcommittees would have two months to meet rather than just one. And what you would do is meet, make your recommendations, and bring your recommendations back to this larger group, and it's the larger group that would make the final decision.

[00:09:04] So it's not like you're a subcommittee and you would have to carry it through to approval. It will come back to this committee and then of course from this committee it will go to the full board the full school board so if you think that you have some minutes that you can serve on two subcommittees I would like for you to sign up by using the QR code and I will be in touch with you if you sign up or when you sign up we would like for you to sign up no later than Friday of next

[00:09:44] week, so that I will have time to take a look at it and then schedule the meeting for the subcommittees after we have all the names of the people who are willing to serve. Please be willing

[00:09:58] to serve. Okay. You have any questions about the creation of the two subcommittees? No? Okay. I do want to remind you, and if you, because I know some of you are friends and acquaintances and

[00:10:33] co-workers and other places, that in order to continue to be a member of this committee, the equity committee, there are some rules. And we gave those to you, and they should be in your notebook from last year. But if you are not able to attend an equity committee meeting, you are to notify us.

[00:10:56] And you may notify Dr. Ellis Williams, her secretary, Helen Randolph, or my staff aide, or me. And the emails are lynda.deans at lcps.org or my staff aide.

[00:11:13] Okay, so we do want you to know that because we had some people last year who came to the first meeting and didn't return. And so when I called that school board member to replace their equity committee member, because every school board member gives us one, they were miffed as to what the reason was that I was calling.

[00:11:35] But I was calling because there were some who never showed up or came one time and didn't come back. If you miss a meeting and don't ask for your excuse, then after two meetings, you roll off the committee and we look for other members to serve.

[00:11:54] So we thought we would remind you of that. Do you have any questions related to that?

[00:12:11] Okay, then we'll go to 8.02 FOIA overview, and we are fortunate enough to have Ms. Janice Ewing.

[00:12:35] Okay, good afternoon. My name is Janice Ewing. I am Assistant Division Counsel, and I am here to give you all an overview on FOIA.

[00:12:52] So it's going to be exciting for the next 25, 30 minutes. So what is the Virginia Freedom of Information Act? Well, the Federal Freedom of Information Act was enacted about 1966, and then the one in Virginia was enacted in 1968.

[00:13:12] So FOIA has two major aims. Number one, free entry for citizens to all meetings of a public body. And two, access to all records that a public body holds. Those are the two main premises.

[00:13:29] So a guiding principle of FOIA is openness. It allows a light to be shed on. It's here for transparency and openness for the public. So the next question that also comes up is, well, what's a public body? And so the definition includes anyone designated by either the governing body or any designee of that governing body.

[00:13:52] So that means committees, subcommittees. That means you all, as the equity committee, are considered a public body. So what does that mean? The equity committee must comply with open meeting rules and records retention, FOIA as far as providing records to requesters, all of those meeting notice requirements.

[00:14:12] You all are going to be subject to those as well as the school board. So today we're going to go over a few things. We're going to have a high-level review. Please stop me if you have any questions at any time. So we're going to go over, number one, that training is required for all public officials.

[00:14:31] You'll get just a general understanding of FOIA's requirements for both meetings and whenever there's a request for records. You'll gain a general awareness about what we can assess for costs, what the process is when we receive a FOIA request.

[00:14:47] And you'll also be cognizant of the penalties because that would impact you all directly. Hopefully it won't because you all will not do anything well-for or knowing, but we need to make you aware of those. So FOIA has required training.

[00:15:05] It's my understanding that Dr. Ellis Williams has provided the actual FOIA state code. Please review that. You all must become aware of that information. And this basically kind of says that you all need to familiarize yourself and read them.

[00:15:22] If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to either the PIO, Dan Adams, or myself, Janice Ewing, and the Division Council Office, or even West as well. Okay, so meetings. is usually a big a big item so I'm going to kind of stop here and talk about what is a meeting so it's broadly construed in the Virginia code it's essentially anywhere that public business is being conducted it could be here it could be off-site the trigger is typically at least three members of a committee or

[00:15:58] subcommittee or public body that you are in an area where this is it's been designated to conduct public business and that you're actually discussing or transacting public business. So it doesn't actually have to be in the administrative building, it could definitely be off-site. Since the equity committee is a public body because you were created by the school board, if there's three or more members of your committee, you all get together, you all start talking about business of the committee, that could be construed as a meeting. So just go write down what meetings are. Again, three or more

[00:16:37] members. Two, if it's a quorum, that doesn't necessarily apply to you all, but it would apply to smaller committees. Again, discussing either school board or committee business. It also includes virtual and electronic meetings. Recently, General Assembly passed quite a bit of legislation in 2024 to create even

more requirements for electronic meetings. This includes notice requirements. You have to provide an avenue for the public to access the meeting. If your transmission goes down you have to have another live contact for the public to call so they can be back into the meeting. You must be provided with an

[00:17:14] avenue, the public must be provided with an avenue to comment either before or during the meeting. No more than two members can be in one remote location at one time and also there's new limits on how many electronic meetings can be held per year. For this committee the LCPS policy also doesn't kind of regulates how many meetings you can have electronically, but the code has changed from 25% to 50% of the calendar meetings or no more than two per calendar year, depending on how many times the committee or the body meets. Regarding meetings, a lot of times you can check all of the boxes. You can do your

[00:17:53] notice and you can make sure that you're not discussing any public business, but sometimes it comes down to public perception. What is the public seeing? They see three of you all. Oh, you are having a meeting that's in violation of FOIA. So a lot of times we suggest certain tips. So for example, when you're communicating, electronic communication also applies to meetings. So if you all were to communicate rapidly or what they say contemporaneous together, that could be construed as a meeting. So we recommend if committee members need to make, want to make an email to another

[00:18:28] member, you all should email each other individually and not as one big body. Because if there's a communication in a rapid succession that could be construed as a meeting. Also, we always recommend when in doubt, speak to someone orally. Call them on the phone. Why? Because not only could it be misconstrued as being a meeting if you're gathered together, but also for records. And we're going to talk about that in a few minutes when we go over records requests. So when in doubt, call someone, speak to someone in person. Have a one-on-one communication. Also, avoid before and after

[00:19:04] gatherings a lot of times we like to you know reflect and decompress and get together and talk about what happened try your best not to do that why because that can also be construed depending on how many of you all are together as a public meeting and trigger them trigger the requirements so to be clear you all just gathering together let's say you all have a function if it's a social gathering it's a graduation that itself does not create a meeting it's the purpose of which you are gathered together um so why is it important as to why it's a meeting you

[00:19:43] have a notice requirement and so that's usually the big thing we are required the foyer in general is a rule of threes three people three days notice a lot of times everything's going to be in threes so in order to have a meeting they require three working days notice so that does not of course include weekends so we have to be able to publish that and the clerk for the committee has made sure that this meeting is noticed and any other future meeting is noticed. However, we want to be careful when we have those impromptu or informal meetings because they also have to comply with this three-day notice requirement. And what's the purpose? So that the people know. They have time to know. They have

[00:20:21] time to prepare and to come and attend the public meeting. Also, any meeting that has an agenda, at least one copy has to be published for the public's consumption unless it's exempt. What is exempt, anything that would be discussed in a closed session. And there is this variety of topics that are permitted under FOIA to be a closed session. All public meeting materials must be made available at the same time that the documents are provided to the committee. So if you're compiling some materials for the committee, you cannot provide it to one member without

[00:20:58] providing it to all members and the public at the same time. And that applies to agenda meeting materials. So there are specific exemptions that would specifically apply to this committee. And of course, it's going to be personnel records, any information that's in an LCPS employee's personnel file, and Scholastic. So any student record, and that is a vast topic. So that's any email communication about a student, any instructional information, teacher's notes, Anything that would compile a part of a student record is part of that exemption, and it cannot

[00:21:36] be released to the public. So closed meetings, usually this is where things get a little contentious because the public doesn't always understand why you're going to a closed meeting or if it's an acceptable reason to go into a closed meeting.

[00:21:53] We don't expect that the equity committee is going to need to go into closed session all that often, but if you do, it's important that you notify the Office of Division Counsel so we can make sure that you have the right motions to go into closed session. You're required to, what they call, read into the record both the exemption that you're going in and then when you go into closed session, discuss only that information.

[00:22:21] And when you come out, you have to certify that only that information was discussed in closed meeting. So if it ever comes up, we would request that you all reach out to us, let us know, so we can prepare the adequate, any motions that you might need. So important points for closed meeting, there is no voting.

[00:22:41] No actual voting can occur in closed meeting. There can be discussions of an item, but any vote must happen in an open public meeting. Also, no recording devices, no recording either voice or video of closed session.

[00:22:58] However, it is important to note with open meetings, any person can come in here with a video camera and record it. They have a right to do that. Now, the committee can regulate how it occurs, making sure that it happens in open session and not closed session.

[00:23:15] But any member can come in and record this meeting. So it's just something to be aware of. The next topic has to do with remote participation. Again, this is another area where the General Assembly has been adding additional requirements as time moves on and as technology changes.

[00:23:37] The most important things about remote participation is that there must be a physical quorum of the majority of the body-- must be physically present. A committee member can request to participate remotely.

[00:23:53] And typically, there's two reasons why they would want to do so. One, due to a personal matter, and two, due to an absence due to disability or medical condition. In either case, they must notify the committee chair so that it can be a matter that is discussed amongst the committee.

[00:24:10] And the committee will have to approve by a majority vote that this member can vote electronically and that it must be recorded in the minutes of that committee meeting. Even if the committee disagrees, that has to be noted in the records for that meeting.

[00:24:26] There's also a restriction on the amount of times it is two per calendar year or 25% of the meetings that the committee has per calendar year. And that's only for the absence due to personal matter. If it is due to a disability or medical condition, there is no time limit on how many meetings that can be.

[00:24:50] Okay, FOIA requests. This takes up a lot of my time and a lot of staff's time. So what are public records? They are all records, no matter the format. So that's emails, text messages, post-it notes, pieces of paper.

[00:25:10] If you wrote it on a gum wrapper, that's considered a record. It has to do with LCPS business, committee business, or school board business, of course. So there's no obligation for any employee or committee member to create a record.

[00:25:26] It's all about what is available and what is in our custody at the time of the request. We can always provide information in a different way if it helps the request or it makes it easier for staff, but we never need to create a new record.

[00:25:43] Also, a lot of times we will receive requests for information. Someone's asking a lot of questions. And it's interesting because I just received an email from someone that was out of state and they said, "Well, it's Freedom of Information Act. What is the information? Like, why can't I ask a question?"

[00:25:59] And while it's in the name, you don't get that. You don't get answers to your questions unless we can respond to your question with a record. And if we can, we will provide that. So any record, um, and also the request does not have to be in a certain format.

[00:26:17] LCPS does have an electronic system where gov QA where people, where people can put in their requests and it's processed. But even if someone calls, um, someone or they send an email, it doesn't matter the method in which they communicate their request. Once we receive a request, we have five working days. Working days are days that the administrative building is open. So the first day we receive a request is day zero. The next day, the next working day, starts day one. That starts five. Also, the request must have certain requirements. We must be able to figure out

[00:26:55] what they're asking. And if we can't, we will send out a clarification and ask for that. So for example, if they ask for every email the equity committee has ever sent, that's huge. So a lot of times our PI will reach out to a requester and say, do you really want that? I mean, is there a timeline? Are there certain email addresses that you want to target? And that's important because of costs. And I'm going to get into that in a little bit. But the larger the volume, the longer the time for both the employees to pull the records and for legal to review and make any necessary redactions and to provide the information. So a lot of times it's also helpful to the

[00:27:35] requester if we can narrow it down, help them narrow down their request. So let's say something is very complicated or is going to require lots of departments, we can invoke a seven-day working extension after that five-day period. But after that's up, that's it. Records have to be provided to that requester. A lot of times, if it's something like recently we received nine requests on one day from one person, so that's a good opportunity to reach out and say, hey, this is this is quite a large volume would you be willing to extend it to X amount of

[00:28:10] days or 20 or 30 it's all the four year council allows or courts allow for us to negotiate a timeline that's even beyond the five plus seven day extension so redactions that's usually important and kind of where I feel like I have a large role so whenever we are required to provide a document four year council has interpreted in the general assembly has interpreted us to require the most amount of records as possible and be as open as possible so unless 90% of a

[00:28:50] document is basically exempt or like for example a student record then we're going to provide the document we just have to redact anything that's not permitted to be released so for example if we receive an email from an outside can just a citizen they're asking about what day is a meeting if we release that we would do a redaction for the contact information because citizens contact information can be withheld under as an exemption. Same with employee. If someone is spouting off, I don't like this employee and they've done this, this, that, and the third. On a FOIA, when we

[00:29:25] release the document, we would redact anything that would be construed as personnel, part of their personnel file. Same with student records. So some of the major ones that we will always look, we look for all of the ones that we can possibly find, but the major ones are personnel, scholastic, attorney work product and security or safety plan. So it's important to know what your role is because as committee members you all are public officials and you may receive requests. So as soon as you receive a request even if you're not sure, they don't invoke the word FOIA, they don't say the FOIA, they don't even use

[00:30:04] the term. If they're asking for something, a question of either even if it's information, notify the FOIA officer which is slash PIO which is Dan Adams immediately timing is always of the essence because the day they send it to you starts that clock and we are on a time you know crunch from that period so it's really important to not ignore any emails or any other communications you receive requesting information also please you know cooperate with the PO and they're asking for text messages now text messages are important because if

[00:30:44] If you have an LCPS phone, you definitely have to provide any text messages if they're requested. But if you have a personal phone and you're using it to conduct committee business, you also need to provide those records to us if they were requested.

[00:31:01] We will ask you, and it's because you are the custodian of that record, we hope that you will be transparent and provide them. But it's up to you since you're the one that owns that device. Same with emails. If you have an LCPS email address, that will be pulled by DDI.

[00:31:18] But if you are conducting business on your personal, we would ask you to search your own Gmail or AOL or whatever account you have to pull those emails that are responsive. Any emails will go through the Office of Division Counsel for review and redactions before they are submitted to the requester.

[00:31:37] Costs. So, yes, LCPS will require requesters to pay costs in certain circumstances. Generally not for student records, but a lot of times we will get requests for contracts or for building mold testing numbers or for anything under the sun.

[00:31:59] And so depending on what the time that takes to compile that information, there will be a cost that is assessed along with it. So generally we use a rate of \$23.55, the lowest kind of permitted rate that we can use based on our current pay scale.

[00:32:18] Often, requesters will say, hey, can you let me know how much that costs? And we will oblige. We will ask whenever we're working with the department or even the committee, how long did it take you to sit there and pull those records? How long did it take you to review that information? And we'll use that with that rate to provide an estimate to the requester.

[00:32:36] If a charge is more than \$200, we have a right to request a deposit from the requester and require them to pay it before we move forward with processing the documents. Even if it's below \$200,000,

they will receive an invoice.

[00:32:52] If a requester receives the documents and never pays their invoice, the next time they request records, they will not be able to obtain them until they pay LCPS for any fees that we are due. So penalties.

[00:33:10] These apply to you all as public officials. Any public official can be found personally liable if you willfully or knowingly violate FOIA. So you willingly or knowingly withhold records or participate in a meeting that was not noticed correctly or that wasn't, if you went into closed session and you did not read into the record or certify.

[00:33:36] The penalties are civil. They are between \$500,000 and \$2,000, and we do not receive the money. It goes into the Virginia Literacy Fund. And then the second violation could be \$2,000 to \$5,000. There's also a specific penalty for closed meeting, and that is up to \$1,000.

[00:33:58] So generally, courts look to two sources when they're making determinations on FOIA. They look at Attorney General's opinions, and they also look at the FOIA counsel, which we're going to talk about in one minute. Right now, each court kind of makes determinations as they see fit.

[00:34:16] If we get something from the circuit court, we can always appeal it higher and get another determination. Oh, but I want to mention the LCPS also in any court case could be subject to the requester's attorney's fee.

[00:34:32] So it's really, really important that we comply. Even if you're not hit personally, the district could definitely be hit paying a requester's attorney's fees. Okay, so context for FOIA questions along with Division Counsel Office.

[00:34:49] we have our Dan Adams I've mentioned him several times also the Virginia FOIA Advisory Council and I kind of want to mention who they are and what they do so initially it was the Attorney General that would opine on all FOIA regulations and eventually the General Assembly decided to create the Virginia Freedom of Information Act Advisory Council and so they're a state agency and their purpose is to respond interpret and opine on the Freedom of Information Act. They only opine based on the information that's provided to them.

[00:35:23] So a requester can email them say I was aggrieved by LCPS and I demand these records and this is what happened and it could be true it could not be true but they opine based on the set of information they receive. Their opinions are persuasive in court or can be persuasive in court but they do not kind of trigger a right to sue the way some other like EEOC or other agencies do.

[00:35:48] they just opine and give an opinion. So I think that might be it. Oh, let's talk about some key takeaways. So avoid whenever you can. Avoid inadvertent meetings. I've kind of discussed that multiple times, but it comes up. In 2023, there was a very huge case out of Prince William County that involved a couple of Board of Supervisors members who went to a police advisory committee meeting and it was construed as an unlawful meeting and so a lot of times the General Assembly has since created legislation to allow for committee

[00:36:28] members and school board members to attend not other public meetings but it is something that comes up often also understand that emails are public or public business they're going to be open so even if you're just writing a friend that's going to get swept up in any requests for an email so it's really important to be cognizant when you're using your LCPS email or even when you're discussing committee

business. We always recommend adding a tagline at the end of your email that says this email is subject to FOIA so that not only you understand that, but the person that you are discussing any business with understands that as well because it applies to members

[00:37:05] of the public when we receive their emails. So I think that's it. And you all have been very quiet. So I will open the floor if anybody has any questions. Yes, Dr. Dean. Yes. Yes.

[00:37:31] for you. For the two subcommittee meetings, would they be under the auspices of FOI?

[00:37:47] Yes, committees and subcommittees. Okay, so should we consider, even though we're having them here in the building, should we also consider recording them so that they would be a part of public record? Yes, you can. Recording is not required, but you must have minutes, so, but you can kind to satisfy that by having a recording. Okay. Thank you. Thanks. In addition to that question, would we, for the subcommittees, we would also have to give three days notice? Yes. Is that right?

[00:38:21] And the agenda? Okay. Yes. Any more? Okay. Well, thank you all. And I appreciate you all giving me time to go over for you. And if you all think of anything in the meantime, feel free to contact

[00:38:39] me or email me if you have any questions.

[00:39:19] Good evening. My name is Daniel Smith. I serve as the chief of staff here in LCPS, and I'm coming tonight to talk to you a little bit about our policy review process. So I do have some slides. We do have some handouts for you. I think you actually might have the handout. Everyone has one? Okay, but I'll refer to that as a part of this.

[00:39:40] So just wanted to come and talk a little bit about the policy review process. You are a key stakeholder group for us in terms of giving feedback on policies, and so just wanted to take a little bit of time to talk about our policy review process, what policies we are anticipating to review, the work that we've done thus far to share some of that information, and how that process works. So we do have policies and regulations in LCPS. They are all found in board docs.

[00:40:09] And so all of our policies are by chapter in board docs. And I'll share a little bit, I'll share a screenshot of where you can see some of those there. And so you do have this one pager and this is just a really a quick one pager to give you an overview of the process some of the things we'll talk about tonight but i did just want to point to one piece as you're looking at this so i'm going to click into this real quick oops all right so in this document down in the bottom right hand corner it has a link to our policy and regulations page and so this is our

[00:40:43] kind of home page for policies and regulations and lcps here you will see the policies that are currently up for review that we're accepting uh public feedback on at this moment so you'll see here they are uh you said of a number of policies here one on homebound instruction um one on tuition programs and so we post them here on the public site to give feedback um and so you if you can also see some of where we have them by chapter you can drill down into these policies if you wanted to see what are some of the policies in the chapter 1000 section

[00:41:17] and so you could click on on those and those will link you to board docs one of the the key pieces that i'm going to reference here and i'm not quite there yet but i'll just go and share you now these were policies that up for potential review and so these we've gone through all of our policies that we've had we have um and we've taken a look what policies do we think are coming up in the coming year because

we understand as a committee it can be tough to say well we've got all these different policies which ones should we focus our attention on and so we have done the leg work to really identify what are those policies we are anticipating coming up for review in the coming

[00:41:54] year and when you click into this you will see we've we have the same list but we've organized it in three different ways to hopefully make it user-friendly so one we've organized the list by chapter so which policies do we think are coming up in each chapter two which policies are coming up which within each standing committee of the school board so which policies are going to do we anticipate are coming up in student services versus which are coming up in legislative audit and policy committee and then we've organized them by the projected season and so one of the things that you'll see on the list and I'll I'll click in on the list here projected season you'll

[00:42:31] see is that we've tried to also project when do we think this policy is going to come up And so we're making our best guess since we've put either fall, winter 24, 25, or spring 25. And I say it's our best guess because the school board committee chair sets the agenda for committees.

[00:42:52] And so as staff, we're not authorized to set those agendas, but we have work to think when do we think they are coming up. And that's also the reason why we put the word potential review. We are anticipating these policies are coming up for one reason or another. which I'll talk about in just a second. But this is the season that we believe they're coming up.

[00:43:12] And so, as I know, you're starting a subcommittee to take a look at policies. If I were, if I had a recommendation to that committee, I would say I would take a look at the fall 2024 first, right, and see which ones do you think you're going to have the most impact or do you think that you can provide the most feedback around, which ones are most important to you. That's a place where I would start because those will be coming up here very soon. And so we've tried to organize them again to make sure that they are to try to make them accessible to you so you can you can take a look at those policies. And so that's available publicly. We also share them with you and with

[00:43:47] all of our advisory committees in terms of those policies. So let me talk a little bit about process. Can I come back? Let me go through and then I'm happy to. So the reasons we take a look at policies. First, it's by Virginia Code. So Virginia Code requires that we review policies every five years. So we know where all of our policies are in terms of the last time they were reviewed. And so that's one of the ways that we start this list of which policies are coming up this year and that which policies this comes up for their five-year review. And so that's why a number of our policies will come up for review is because of the five-year review. We also want to

[00:44:26] make sure that we are providing those timely updates so as we have updates in terms of our board is making changes or they want to make updates that that is taking place within our policy process and then another goal of our process is that we want to have a very open and transparent process in terms of our policy I will tell you I've served in a couple different school divisions and this is an LCPS I'm very proud that we put our policy review page on our front page of our website and it is open for public feedback um that doesn't happen everywhere i'll just share and so um and so we try to beat it out there we try to make sure for everyone knows they have an

[00:45:05] opportunity for review we try to put it in our newsletters and let the public know here's where the policies are coming up and and i'll say even when the feedback comes in we take a look at that feedback and when that goes to a school board committee that is put up there in board docs unredacted

for folks to be able to see for our board members to see that feedback as they're considering the policy. So that's a part of the process there. So just a quick overview of our process as we are looking at to start the process to take a look at our policies. We do work with the Virginia School Boards Association. They have a bank of templates. So every time, so for example

[00:45:44] this past summer I got a list of templates from them that said here's all the legislative changes that took place in the General Assembly and here's the changes we would recommend you take a look at the upcoming year to comply with code changes and so we do take a look at their templates as a part of our process if it's applicable sometimes they don't have a template for a particular policy that we're working on because it's more specific to lcps or lcps has chosen to have a policy where there might not be a statewide template once that policy has been developed that i'm sorry that that draft policy staff work on it for a little while it goes through a couple of different iterations

[00:46:23] then it goes to a primary committee for review. And so when I say primary committee, that is one of our eight standing committees that we have. And so we have eight standing committees that are actually established by policy 2310. Those eight standing committees review policy, and so it goes to one of those standing committees. It's rare, but it can happen that one standing committee says, we want to review this, but we also want to send it to another committee to review. So it could go to another standing committee but it usually stays in one standing committee for information once that standing committee works with that policy and they feel comfortable with it to put

[00:47:01] it out for review they do that and so sometimes it takes one meeting and they say it looks good we're good to go sometimes it takes multiple meetings of that standing committee and then the the members of that committee say we'll bring it back for action next time so in that month time span between the two committee meetings, we do put that out for feedback. We send specific emails to each of our advisory committees asking for feedback, and then we post it publicly for that feedback. We usually give 10 to 14 days for feedback, and the reason for that is we give about

[00:47:36] that two weeks because then we take the third week, we have to process that feedback, and as you know, then we've got to develop and post an agenda within the fourth week so it does give us some time to be able to collect that feedback review the feedback make any suggested changes and then bring it back so then it comes back to the primary committee for action that committee will work with it at that time again sometimes it's one meeting sometimes it's multiple and then they usually send it to the full school board for information and then hopefully action to finalize that policy

[00:48:10] Once the policy is finalized, we do update board docs and our website to make sure that everything has been updated there. And so the entire process usually takes about four months. And so just understand there in terms of the work the staff does, the primary committees only meet once a month usually.

[00:48:29] And so if you think about the primary committee meeting one month and then meeting a second month and then the full school board meets twice a month usually. And so that's three months right there. And so it does take some time. And as I shared, sometimes it doesn't move that quickly in terms of a committee meeting or we've got a policy right now that's been back and forth between the full board and a committee two or three times, I think, now that it's gone back and forth.

[00:48:53] And so we do have iterations of this process. And so that is our policy review process. I wanted to highlight the advisory and select committees. And so they are noted here. So these are the folks that we

will send out those policies to to say, hey, these are up for review.

[00:49:10] if you'd like to give feedback i do want to share that these commit these advisory and select committees each take a probably a little bit different approach in terms of how they give feedback and so i know i believe that's something you're discussing how you want to give feedback some folks will just say we're going to send it out to all our members and then anyone can give give feedback on the on the public site on our public site we do have where you can designate if you are a member of an advisory or select committee and what that is so we can we can recognize you some folks will say you know what we want to have a separate subcommittee that looks

[00:49:46] at policies and we want to make a recommendation as a group and so for example SEAC they have a separate subcommittee that meets outside of their their committee meetings they then look at the the policies they come with recommendations and they actually bring that back to the next SEAC meeting they present it they review it and they vote on it as a committee before presenting it um that requires you to it it requires some advanced planning if you think about the the frequency of those meetings to stay ahead of those that feedback so we can get it to the committee in a timely manner um but that is their process uh there's other folks i will say that have a

[00:50:25] separate uh policy committee they review it they submit feedback without coming back to the full group and then they also send it out to all their members so it's a kind of a hybrid of the two examples that I just shared so there's no requirement that you do it one way or the other it's really going to be really what what you feel like is going to be most beneficial and impactful there's probably pros and cons to all of those I do appreciate those that actually get a smaller group together actually review some of it and get some feedback to submit that's helpful whether it needs to come back to the full group for a vote or all of that some of those logistics I think is

[00:51:02] kind of going to be up to you to to work out and figure out but we're happy to support you in any way that you choose to move forward with that. I've already shared you through the public site I shared with you that the three ways we've broken it down this year we are anticipating we have 64 policies in total that we've identified that we believe are coming up for review this year whether it's because of the five-year review process there's been some changes in virginia code that requires us to make a change so that's some of the reasons for the change there's been some that have a board of ed model policy change that we're required to take a look at and there's been some frankly that board members have told us that we we want to bring

[00:51:42] this up as a board member we're anticipating bringing this up so we've added it to the list we've said we know one or more board members want to bring this up so we're going to go ahead and add it to the list of ones that we think that are coming up to review just so everybody's aware of this is ones we think that that'll be coming up within the next within this year that's my email address hope casterly is my executive assistant she really keeps me straight and helps with all the policies and make sure that we have everything that we need helps to post things to board docs she also serves as a deputy clerk to the board so helps out in that way as well so i wanted to make sure sometimes i'm not as quickly accessible and she is she is and so she can help

[00:52:18] with any policy related questions um so that's what i have but i thought they're the right there may be some questions, and I'm happy to, if we have a few minutes for questions, Dr. Deans, Dr. Ellis Williams, is that okay? So if there's any questions or things that I can help with, happy to do so. Yes, sir. So

I'll give you one here. You had mentioned in sort of the anticipated calendar you labeled fall, winter, and spring, but we do have policies that come up for review during the summer as well for public comment. And so, of course, this particular committee, other committees

[00:52:57] don't necessarily meet during those months what is the process to make sure that those don't just sort of get lost in all of the busyness of summer thank you for that question so we when we say spring we go through I mean I guess June is technically spring we have so we go through spring with with June and then we pick up with fall and all in August we have one meeting in August and so that's how we've kind of split those two instead of having us having a separate summer i will tell you especially when a five-year review is up when it says hey we've got the five-year review that's going to be due in june you know we ask our our committees and our staff to start

[00:53:36] working on those in january because we know it's a four-month process things can't happen and so we would actually put something that's due in june we'd probably put it in the winter saying that that's when the public so we're trying to trying to communicate when can you expect to be able to give feedback and so that's going to probably be more in the winter time frame in order to where a policy be finalized in the summer and so and so that's kind of how we've tried to split some of those and truly just tried to identify what's going to be taking place at that time we do have so i'll go back i'll also say some of the committees um have have worked on how to meet over the summer and how to check in you know especially with the subcommittee piece how to make sure we

[00:54:15] give that feedback and i they usually check in some of them have checked in with me said you know in april may hey do you anticipate some others coming up and i'll be honest i do my best but there's times when things come up in a June meeting and I'm like, I didn't realize we were bringing, I didn't realize that policy was coming up. And so I do my best to try to project and tell them, hey, here's what's coming up. Here's what we think's going to be going to be taking place.

[00:54:38] And I'm happy to do that. That's good. Okay. Yes, ma'am. Could you, it's two parts. So could you clarify what your, your office's role is in this process? Like I understand it submitted special committee advisory committee, community feedback, then it goes back and then full board. Then the second thing is could you go a little more in depth about what happens with the feedback so is there follow-up to whoever the committee the selective revisory committee or community

[00:55:16] feedback regarding how their feedback was considered if it was taken up if it wasn't why because I mean understanding you can't take up everyone's feedback for various reasons absolutely thank you um so my office's role in the policy review process is really just for so it's probably two different roles one overall with policy i work to make sure we stay in compliance and so it is i my office has the spreadsheet of all the policies in terms of the five-year review and where we are and what's taking place there and so my office also also helped to coordinate to talk with board

[00:55:54] members and with staff around policies that we think are coming up so we tried to just coordinate that process my office also works to help to help to support the feedback process so while some of that when that initial gets posted my office does it and then they work with other offices to be able to pull the feedback once it's done and then really if there's any questions about the process we work with any questions that might come up around the process just generally around because most of the policies will live within one committee or more. So for example, if they're in student services, Ms. Tedra Richardson and her team in student support services would be the ones

[00:56:34] that would be working with that policy. So we just support them as things come up there. The other role that just my office has is I'm the staff liaison to the legislative audit and policy committee. And so I do have a role within that to specifically kind of own policies, if you will, to be able to shepherd them through specifically in working with the committee chair for LA&P committee. So that's my other role with that, with my office with that. And then in terms of the feedback. So once the feedback is done, we pull it. The staff liaison, so if it's me with LA&P,

[00:57:10] I would take a look at that feedback to see where it is. And then I would review each piece and kind of really just make a determination as staff, are we going to recommend that we're going to accept this feedback and we're going to make a change in the policy? And so what we would do is normally we come with a red line to the policy.

[00:57:28] So normally then I would probably make a purple line to say in between the information and action based on feedback, we're now going to recommend this was a great suggestion. We're going to actually make a purple line to show this is the suggestion we accepted. If we then say, no, we don't accept the suggestion for whatever reason, We would I would have that and I would be prepared to share that at the committee meeting when it comes back up.

[00:57:53] For whatever reason, there could be something that says, well, it doesn't really apply to this policy or that would violate code, those types of things. So I as staff would be able to present be able to present any any of the thoughts on the feedback, because when it goes to the full board or to the start of the committee at the next meeting, we post that feedback unredacted.

[00:58:14] So our board members on that committee can see each of the pieces of feedback. And then if they have questions about it or if they would like to make some changes, that would be their opportunity to make some changes. But then they can also ask staff to detail, you know, well, I see this piece of feedback here. What did you do with that?

[00:58:30] We don't follow up with individuals on the feedback for a couple of reasons. One, we don't necessarily collect e-mail addresses and contact information to reach back out. We have not done that. And then, two, there are some policies that we get a substantial amount of feedback.

[00:58:49] And I think just realistically, we probably can't reach back out to every single person, especially if they want to kind of go back and forth. And so that's been our process is that we take the feedback, we present it to the committee, the three members, the school board members for them to review.

[00:59:05] We were posted unredacted. And then when that goes to the full board, that feedback follows with it to the full board and board docs and is posted as unredacted feedback there as well. Yes, sir. Thank you.

[00:59:22] Thanks. Can you sort of differentiate between those two green boxes? I think the way I look at it, I can sit on my couch and provide feedback in that box on the green box on the right. Yep. Or I can come here and provide feedback on the green box on the left.

[00:59:39] And I wonder, is there any greater impact to the feedback that's provided from these committees? Or am I just as well served sitting on my couch providing feedback from there? So I'll share from a staff perspective, but a lot of that probably is going to be a board member's perspective and how they take that feedback.

[00:59:58] The reason that I broke them into two separate boxes is because we send specific invitations for feedback to our advisory and select committee. So we send specific invitations to them on every policy that comes up. And you can note in the feedback form if you're a member of the advisory or select committee.

[01:00:16] The public feedback, we post it. We try to include it in a newsletter, but that's the extent of that there. So that's why I kind of separated the two. But I would defer to Dr. Deans, Mr. Estreffi, in terms of how you receive that feedback and if it's different, whether it's coming from just a member of the public or from an actual committee.

[01:00:36] I mean, just to add to the comments. So it's actually, there's actually three inputs that I've seen. It's the advisory and select committee feedback, which does have its own weight.

[01:00:52] I wouldn't say one over the other because you're actually, each of these committees are made up of certain stakeholders that represent whatever diversity within the community or stakeholders. I'll say that. And then public feedback, people that are choosing to reply directly to that policy.

[01:01:09] And then we also get constituent outreach related to those specific policies. And so sometimes those inputs build up and there are other stakeholders in the community that reach out directly to school board members. And so we get, depending on the policy, we may get a lot of outreach in all three of those buckets.

[01:01:33] And I think that we try to, speaking for myself, try to measure and weigh all the different ideas that exist. And even within one, I've seen even within one committee, you have some comments that contradict each other from the same committee.

[01:01:48] And so you have to consider that as well. And there are different, you know, there's diversity of thought even within one committee. So I think that's all really healthy. And I'd like to add that we also get feedback from other board members. If I'm on a committee, then other board members will give feedback on the policies that we're reviewing and curriculum and instruction or equity or any committee so we also receive those

[01:02:19] with the same level or equal equally as important as those from the public so okay i'm so sorry i work in policy so please let me know if this next question is um two in the weeds so is this the same process or do you follow a similar process for if you're reviewing kind of regulations like is there a required timeline to review those because they're not necessarily the same thing as policy or is no timeline for regulations and then you just every five years policy and if

[01:02:55] there is a related regulation then you revisit that regulation yep that's right so it's really the second there's no timeline on regulations they're updated or reviewed when policies are reviewed I mean those are they're really just uh they're how the the policy is operationalized so how do we put that policy into into place is really that regulations a lot of them really specify processes that we have in place and some of that. So I want to be cognizant of the time.

[01:03:21] I appreciate you allowing me to come. I wanted to highlight my email is here. If you need anything, I'll stick around if there's individual questions. And I'm happy to support you in any way that I can at any time. All right, Dr. Deans. If there is, since there were no other questions for Dr. Smith, do I hear a motion for adjourn, to adjourn? Dr. Deans, I motion to adjourn.

[01:04:00] I thank you. But I do want to point out that our next meeting is November 7th. Will you write that down? November 7th, so that you can clear your calendars to be with us, because the subcommittees will probably have some feedback or something to share with you. Also, if you are associates or acquaintances of other committee members, tell them that on November 7th, we'll probably have something to vote on so we need a quorum so will you please share that with other members that you

[01:04:38] may have some association with and will you yourself please come back on November 7th and we will be in touch next week with those individuals who signed up for the subcommittees we will be in touch with you to indicate which committee you have signed up for and which committee you have been selected for and again we want to keep those subcommittees small enough that we can be productive in our meetings so we are adjourned at 6 35 oh i'm sorry just a quick

[01:05:18] question on on the uh the sign up you could only select one or the other um is it possible to get like a first choice second choice or sure just hit it again okay why don't you just write it besides your name, this is my first choice. Will do. Thank you. And we will honor that.

[01:05:42] Okay. This meeting is adjourned at 635. Thank you so much for coming.



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