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Loudoun County School Board, Human Resources and Talent Development (HRTD) Committee Meeting, Thursday, September 26, 2024

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[00:00:59] Good afternoon. This is Dena Griffiths calling to order the HRTD committee meeting for today, September 26, 2024. We will begin with public comment, but I was just told there isn't any. So this meeting will be audio recorded and posted in Board Docs.

[00:01:15] I guess we will start with thank you for coming today. We are going to move on to number three, approval of the August 29, 2024 meeting draft minutes. Can I please have a motion to approve the August 29th meeting minutes?

[00:01:32] I make a motion to approve the August 29th, 2024, committee meeting minutes. So the motion has been made by Ms. Chandler. Is there any discussion? Any discussion?

[00:01:49] Okay. All those in favor, please raise your hands and say aye. All those opposed, raise and say aye. Aye. Aye. Okay. The motion passes unanimously, and I guess we will move on. Let's see here.

[00:02:04] We move on to item number 4.01. Ms. Bolin will be presenting. The floor is yours. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Griffiths. Tonight we bring before the committee the revised policy 7316 for a second review.

[00:02:23] As a reminder, policy 7316 relates to supplementary pay for coaches, co-curricular activities, and other stipends and is heavily guided by the VHSL. And I'd like to turn it over to HRTD Director Bob Phillips to highlight some of the changes and remind the committee.

[00:02:44] Thank you. The first reading last month provided no changes to the recommended draft. Public comment received centered around the process for adding or removing stipends and access to the buddy packet. Aligned with the regulation that will be removed, stipend positions will still need to be vetted by the school board as they were done in the past budget approval cycles due to the financial and staffing impacts that adding or removing stipends creates.

[00:03:12] In addition, the buddy packet is readily available on the classification and compensation webpage with its button or tab for employees and the public to access it readily or quickly. HRTD recommends no further changes to the proposed policy language.

[00:03:33] Thank you very much. Is there any discussion? No discussion. That's okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe I just heard you say that the buddy packet is available online?

[00:03:52] Correct. Okay, so that will be very helpful. The classification and compensation webpage. Oh, it's quite extensive. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:04:11] Any other discussion? If there's no discussion on this, I assume we'll move this to an info item to go to the board or consent. Did you want to say something, Ms. Duny?

[00:04:26] Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. I was going to make a motion for the committee to send the proposed revisions to policy 7316 to the full board as an information item.

[00:04:42] - Second. - Any more discussion about it? The motion has been made and seconded by Ms. Chandler. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. All those opposed? - Aye. - Aye, thank you.

[00:04:58] We will now move on to the next item, which is 4.02 and that is for policy 7630. Thank you. - Thank you again. So last month we reviewed policy 7630 tuition programs as an information item and as a reminder, this policy change is being prompted by the school board's approval, thank you so much, of our new tuition assistance program and the funding to support that.

[00:05:26] At the last meeting, the committee did ask us to bring the revised regulation for this policy and that is in the agenda as well. And I'm going to ask Mr. Bennett to go ahead and review those items.

[00:05:44] - All right, good evening. So I'm gonna focus most of my comments on the regulation because as Ms. Boland said, I believe Ms. Donahue, you had asked for us to bring this back. The regulation also speaks to some of the public comments that we received on it.

[00:06:00] So I think it actually addresses all of the public comments we received. So if you take a look at the regulation, the 7630 regulation, what you'll first notice we've done is provide definitions for both a tuition, what a tuition assistance means to us, as well as tuition reimbursement.

[00:06:17] That's our effort to let any reader know exactly what we're talking about with these two different programs. And what I want to do next is actually jump to lines 92 through 162. So 92 through 162 are what was in existence primarily related to tuition reimbursement in the original regulation.

[00:06:40] So I'm kind of having you start there because you can see what existed. It talks about the roles and responsibilities of both the employee asking for reimbursement as well as the roles and

responsibilities of us as the employer. So you can kind of see everything as laid out, who's eligible, who's not eligible.

[00:06:59] And then if you go back to lines 39 through 91, that mirrors that section but for tuition assistance. So it kind of lays out everyone's responsibilities, what are our responsibilities, what's the employees, who's eligible, and it kind of speaks through the different programs that way.

[00:07:19] I'm happy to field any questions you might have. Thank you. Any discussion? Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any questions. I just wanted to express my appreciation for putting the regulation forward for us to be able to review.

[00:07:37] I am aware that we have no or in the regulations and that you are not obligated to let us review your proposed revisions for the regulations, but I find it very helpful to help inform the policy decisions.

[00:07:56] So I just wanted to say thank you. Absolutely. And as I said earlier, it does address some of those comments. I think it really hits almost every one of the public comments we receive. So it's also helpful in that regard. I saw that. You're welcome. Thank you. And I am very excited about this program.

[00:08:13] It's a great idea. Thank you. Any other discussion? With that, it is on tonight's agenda as an action item. Can I get a motion to move it to the full board? I move that we move policy 7630 forward to the full board for consideration.

[00:08:34] Second. Thank you. We will go ahead and we will move this item, passes, and it will go on to the full board. Our next item is 5.01, policy 7322. Okay.

[00:08:50] So this is new this evening. We are bringing policy 7322, physical examination and DMV records required of bus drivers. For your review as an information item, I will be turning this over to Nicole Davis, HRTD director for support, as she oversees transportation in our office and worked heavily on this policy.

[00:09:15] Good evening and thank you. So one thing I did want to call out is for the title of this policy, there should be a correction where it states records required of bus drivers should be records required of CDL holders.

[00:09:32] It didn't come across in the changes, so I will update that if it is brought back for action next month, as well as Lines 1 through 9 should have also been stricken as they were incorporated directly into the policy itself. So again, I will update that. Lines 1 through 9 are an opening, which are relocated into the policy itself.

[00:09:52] Other than that, the main changes were really to align with updated regulations regarding FMCS and the DOL. well. We also incorporated language to include all employees rather than just bus drivers, as there are other employees that hold CDLs, such as our refuse operators.

[00:10:10] And are there any questions? Ms. Donoghue? Ms. Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just curious if this policy was up for its standard renewal, if that's the reason for the timing.

[00:10:36] And also, I was curious, it's kind of a lot of revisions. that that's bad but I was wondering if that was because of a change in Virginia code or for other other reasons behind the additions sure yes it was up for renewal and it is because of changes in code and just to clarify our current practices too since we have made some adjustments in the last few years those weren't captured within the policy itself and those are also going to be covered in 7324 which I will review next thank you and which which Virginia code

[00:11:14] sections are the ones that changed are they the ones referenced in the legal references on line 74 through 77 that is correct thank you any more discussion and with that this is on the agenda this can I just oh sure one thing I'm so sorry I just wanted to add to that that the changes are quite significant because it the last update just for reference was 2019 thank you and I took

[00:11:51] look at this and I'm fine with the changes I think they're needed they're much needed if this is a true real update here so with that being said this was an action item tonight and I'm gonna motion to information oh you don't need I'm oops you're right I thought I was in an action item it should go to action next time thank you and with that we can move on to the next item which is 5.0

[00:12:22] 70 policy 7324. Thank you. And again, this is a policy heavily influenced by code. So you will see some of those updates based on code. We are bringing forward revision to school board policy 7324, drug and alcohol testing for employees required to hold a commercial driver's license.

[00:12:47] The revisions recommended to this policy don't change the intent, and you will notice a significant number of changes because we are deleting the regulation and incorporating those changes within the policy directly.

[00:13:05] And to highlight those changes, I will again turn it over to Ms. Davis. Good evening again. So as Ms. Bolin stated and as previously reviewed in 73-22, a lot of these changes were heavily influenced by both the regulation changes and to incorporate some of the changes we have made in our procedures over the last several years.

[00:13:27] Additionally, previously we had a regulation that discussed the physical examinations required for bus drivers, and those are already outlined in the policy, so the regulation was duplicative of that information. And we also added procedural information so that employees were clear of what would happen if, in fact, they did test positive during any of the testing operations.

[00:13:50] So I'm available for questions. Any discussion? Ms. Chandler? Oh, Ms. Chandler first. Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that the clearinghouse is something that's separate outside of LCPS. I was hoping that you could tell us a little bit more about it.

[00:14:06] So I'm going to ask Gary Gearhart to come up. He is the subject matter expert in that area, and he's the supervisor that oversees this process. I apologize. I've been battling bronchitis. So if I start having a coughing fit, please. I am on antibiotics, though, I promise.

[00:14:22] So the clearinghouse is outside of LCPS, as you had mentioned. It is a federally regulated clearinghouse. It's a repository for all CDL holders for drug and alcohol-related concerns, violations, et cetera. If you're a CDL holder and you test positive for either alcohol or a controlled substance, your name goes into the clearinghouse.

[00:14:43] You are not allowed to operate a commercial motor vehicle until you are released out of that clearinghouse. It's very prescribed. Part of our pre-employment operation is if we find somebody with a CDL, we have to check the clearinghouse first before they can even operate a school bus or a commercial motor vehicle.

[00:15:00] So it's a very informative tool, but it is a requirement being an employer of CDL holders. Thank you so much. Thank you. Ms. Nellie, you had a question? Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had a question about the reference on line 22 of the red line version that says, under enforcement, any employee working

in a safety-sensitive capacity and or exercising their CDL license who violates this policy, other than employees with CDL licenses, who would this apply to?

[00:15:40] Gary, jump in if I misspeak. But essentially, we have employees who have CDLs, but maybe they're not a bus driver and they're not in that capacity. But in the event they are acting in a CDL capacity and are asked to move a bus or anything to that extent, where a CDL is required, this policy would be applicable to them.

[00:15:56] So why does it say working in a safety-sensitive capacity? Safety-sensitive means that they're actually performing the duties required of the commercial driver's license. So they are moving a bus, they're operating a bus, they're doing pre-checks of the bus.

[00:16:13] Not just those vehicles, but you also have maintenance employees that operate very large vehicles that are towing trailers behind them. And when they reach a certain weight capacity, they are then performing safety-sensitive functions. So it's to kind of cover all of our bases, if you will. But essentially, it's anybody operating with a CDL and operating a commercial motor vehicle for our employment or during their employment.

[00:16:37] They're covered under this policy. Okay. Thank you. That's very helpful. But it doesn't. So this policy would not apply to other LCPS employees who work in safety capacities? Correct. Because it's limited to CDL.

[00:16:52] Yes. Thank you. Is there any other discussion? And with that, that's an information item. So it would go to action for the board. And now we'll continue on to discussion items tonight.

[00:17:09] Human Resources, Talent Development Committee, Ambassador Teacher's presentation. Thank you, Ms. Griffiths. I'm extremely excited about this discussion item and to introduce the Ambassador Teachers Program.

[00:17:25] As you're aware, this is a new initiative for the 24-25 school year and in support of Goal 2 of our one LCPS 2027 strategic plan to cultivate high-performing teams of professionals committed to realizing our mission and goals, recognizing that this is a new program and this is the first year that LCPS is participating in such a program.

[00:17:47] There have been a number of questions. And since it is, we believe, a strong program that we hope to not only continue to grow and pivot and support, we wanted to share a little additional information with the committee this evening.

[00:18:08] So at this time, I'll turn it over to HRTD Director Bob Phillips, who is the individual that has been working most closely with this program. Thank you. Next slide, please. Thank you.

[00:18:25] So tonight I'm going to give you an overview of the Ambassador Teachers Program, talking to you about the background of why we've chosen to do this program, what we look for in terms of building a partnership with our supplying company, Participate Learning, talk a little bit about the candidate's journey from their home country to Loudoun County Public Schools, and then what it's like for them to work in Loudoun County Public Schools, including the supports that we are providing and continue to refine and provide to our ambassador teachers.

[00:18:58] Towards the end, we'll give an opportunity to ask some questions if you have any more questions. And here to help answer some of those questions would might be Paula Williams, who's the

principal of Moore Field Station, and John Tuck, who's the principal of Sully Elementary School, two of our 15 sites for ambassador teachers.

[00:19:16] So they will come up to the table if needed. Next slide, please. Why did we choose ambassador teachers? The start of the 23-24 school year saw a significant teacher shortage in Loudoun County Public Schools with over 30 elementary school teacher positions unfilled.

[00:19:35] This led to the unfortunate need to collapse classes, impacting both students and educators. Recruiting qualified teachers within the local pool has proven more and more challenging over the years, especially as we enter or pass the June 15th transfer deadline.

[00:19:51] To address this critical issue, LCPS started exploring the possibility of hiring ambassador teachers from the international market. This initiative aims to attract qualified educators from around the world to fill vacancies within the district. LCPS is already actively engaging with international teachers through our various recruitment channels, including LCPS-hosted job fairs. While international teachers offer a promising solution, it's important to note that LCPS would need to sponsor their visas, which can be a costly and labor-intensive endeavor for our organization.

[00:20:28] Next slide, please. As a result, LCPS conducted thorough research to identify potential partners for the Ambassador Teacher Program to provide visa sponsorship, reaching out to colleagues in Region 4 for additional insights.

[00:20:45] Prince William County has long-standing relationships with Participate Learning, utilizing nurse services for many years. Fairfax County in its second year of implementation. Based upon their feedback and evaluating other potential partners, LCPS carefully considered various factors, including the quality of candidates, the financial implications of the partnership, and the necessary support for both teachers and the district.

[00:21:11] After a comprehensive analysis, Participate Learning emerged as the most suitable partner aligning with LCPS's goals and priorities, targeting 40 ambassador teachers for the 24-25 school year. The benefits of Participate Learning and partnering with them offer several key advantages for LCPS.

[00:21:29] The organization itself provides highly qualified teachers with extensive experience, ensuring that classrooms are staffed with dedicated educators. All Participate Learning teachers are eligible for Virginia certification and have a minimum of three years of teaching experience.

[00:21:46] From a financial perspective, the partnership is cost-neutral for Loudon. While LCPS pays the teacher salary, Participate Learning assumes responsibility for their medical benefits and the visa sponsorship. This arrangement effectively offsets the cost that LCPS would occur if they employed traditional teachers.

[00:22:06] Moreover, the partnership fosters strong collaboration and communication between LCPS and Participate Learning. The local Participate Learning teaching and learning team play a vital role in providing additional support to both the teachers and administrators in our 15 schools.

[00:22:22] This team has already visited to connect with teachers and administrators, building strong working relationships and ensuring a smooth integration process. Next slide, please. The candidate's journey.

[00:22:40] LCPS leveraged Participate Learning's candidate portal to streamline the recruitment process for the ambassador teachers selected. This user-friendly platform facilitated the efficient vetting of nearly 100 prospective candidates by the recruiting team.

[00:22:55] Also, a survey was conducted among LCPS principals to assess their interest in participating in the pilot program. Based on the survey results and the identified staffing needs, the receiving schools were clustered into three regions, Sterling, Dulles, and Leesburg.

[00:23:14] To ensure the best possible match between candidates and schools, LCPS principals who opted in were then granted access to the candidate portal to interview and select the most suitable teachers for their respective schools. Additionally, Participate Learning is visited to host schools prior to the ambassador teachers coming to provide additional support and orientation, further enhancing the integration process.

[00:23:40] Next slide, please. Once the 40 ambassador teachers were selected for a specific school, they then initiated their visa application process with Participate Learning. This visa allows the ambassador teacher to work for LCPS for three years with an option to extend it two additional years for a total of five.

[00:24:05] Participate Learning and LCPS also collaborated to provide comprehensive support through transition webinars, helping teachers prepare to their move to the United States, including housing. LCPS also hosted dedicated webinars that address specific expectations and provide valuable information to the ambassador teachers, including those working with the Office of Special Education.

[00:24:31] To ensure a seamless transition, LCPS will leverage the collaborative efforts of various departments, such as LEF, the Community Outreach Office, Teaching and Learning, and substitutes. Community advisors, who are current LCPS employees for this year, played a crucial role in welcoming our new international teachers and providing guidance in Loudoun County, including transportation to get their Social Security cards.

[00:24:57] Participate Learning organized a multi-day onboarding event in Washington, D.C. to facilitate integration and networking among new teachers, including creating bank accounts with Apple Federal Credit Union. LCPS also hosted an in-person new hire day to welcome the new teachers, providing essential information and resources to ensure a successful start in their new roles.

[00:25:20] Most recently, on September 12th, LCPS again partnered with Apple Federal Credit Union and the Loudoun Education Foundation to host a loan interest night where 35 ambassador teachers attended to sign up for loans with Apple Federal Credit Union for transportation and personal expenses now that they have their social security cards.

[00:25:43] As of right now, the latest report from Participate Learning, all 40 of our ambassador teachers do have housing. 35 attended the bank event. Two have already secured transportation with loans from Apple Federal Credit Union, and others are in the process.

[00:26:05] Next slide, please. Finally, we'll talk about the comprehensive support that Loudoun County and Participate Learning has provided to our ambassador teachers. Although the teachers that we brought over were experienced, the mentoring and coaching office invited the ambassador teachers to participate side by side with other novice teachers in the beginning teachers institute, receiving essential training and support to prepare them for their new roles.

[00:26:33] To ensure personalized guidance at their schools, school-based mentors were assigned to offer ongoing support and guidance to the ambassador teachers. To further address potential connectivity challenges to getting internet at home, LCPS provided personal hotspots to ensure internet access for these teachers at home to continue work in collaboration with DDI.

[00:26:57] To further help to transition into meeting the high expectations of Loudoun County, the Mentoring and Coaching Office has created targeted best practices series tailored to the specific needs of our ambassador teachers. And finally, most recently, in collaboration with the Talent Development Department, two part-time instructional coaches have been at positions have been created to provide ongoing support, feedback, and professional development opportunities to these dedicated educators.

[00:27:26] The ambassador teachers will be evaluated through the same standards and processes as other LCPS teachers. As the year progresses, LCPS and HRTD will continue to monitor and assess the program, gather feedback, make adjustments as we look to expand the ambassador teacher program in future years.

[00:27:49] Next slide, please. And if you have any questions. Thank you. Any discussion? Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you so much for the presentation. This seems like a very innovative way to solve a problem that we really don't have many other workarounds for, and I'm just really pleased to see this innovation.

[00:28:13] Given that we have two principals who've had experience with the program so far, I would love to hear from the principals directly. I know it's early in the year, but I would love to hear how the experience is going. Hi, thank you so much.

[00:28:36] Again, my name is Paula Williams. I'm the proud principal of Moorfield Station Elementary School. I want to say thank you. Moorfield Elementary? Yes. I want to thank you for an opportunity to talk about the Participate Learning Program. At Moorfield Station, we have four teachers who are with us from Jamaica.

[00:28:55] They have varying ranges of experience, but I would say between 5 to 12 years of experience. And they have really integrated very nicely into our school. our staff has been very welcoming to them they are building strong relationships with their colleagues as well as our students and our community and it's been a delight to have them so it's been a positive positive program for us thus far so I'm the principal at Sully Elementary School in Sterling I will say I have hired four of them in my building all four of them are from

[00:29:30] the Philippines I do think it benefits them that they are coming from a similar circumstance I think it's helped them bond as a group. I also have several members on my staff who are from the Philippines who remember what it was like when they came. So they have solid connections within the building that have helped them kind of establish their self as they've made the transition.

[00:29:49] I hired four. I would have hired 20 if I had 20 openings. They have really come in with a positive mindset. They want to do well. They ask questions. They're open to feedback. And I feel that as the year goes with the amount of opportunity that both we can provide for them at a school level but also what they're getting through participate learning also what they're getting through the mentoring and coaching office I feel like they are going to be highly successful this year thank you so much for that madam chair if I may ask a follow-up thank you I would love to hear a little bit about the interview process I was very pleased to hear that you have the ability at the school level to

[00:30:27] participate in the interviews and I would love to know how many people you I mean approximately interviewed before you got to the point where you chose the right fit for your school so with regard to the participate learning teachers that we have with us right now three of the teachers I was able to use the portal where there was they had created videos they had already been vetted by variety of sources and so I work collectively with teachers at my school as well as my administrative team to consider our needs, our school community, and then utilize those videos to make selections.

[00:31:04] And then we also had the opportunity to engage in a virtual interview with another candidate and, again, included members of my administrative staff and members of that grade-level team that would be working with that teacher. And so in both instances, it was a great opportunity to find a good fit for our school.

[00:31:24] Did that answer your question? Absolutely. Okay, thank you. And for us, when we got the initial 40, they all came with their resumes and their videos. We put them into a spreadsheet. We had many staff members look at their videos, read their resumes, and we ranked the ones that we wanted to interview.

[00:31:43] We interviewed about eight in the first round of people that we interviewed, but we did that considering all 40 of them in the same way that we would if we had 40 applicants for any other job. We did do virtual interviews with all of them before hiring them. So we didn't hire anybody just from their video.

[00:31:59] We did interviews with eight candidates. From that, we selected four. One of them chose another school, so we went to our next, and we picked the next one that we felt like would be the best candidate for our school. So we do a process very similar to what we would do for any other candidate.

[00:32:16] The videos are nice to see. You get to see a little bit of their personality as opposed to just seeing their resumes, and that's what we looked for. We looked for teachers in their videos that highlighted the things they did with kids, that when we looked at their classrooms, we saw practices that we would want to see in our own building.

[00:32:33] And it really gave us a snapshot into who they were, even before we were able to meet them and interview them. Thank you so much to both of you for sharing your school's experiences with this process. It's very informative. Any more discussion? Ms. Donahue.

[00:32:49] Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you both for being here. I love hearing from LCPS employees, principals, teachers, school-based staff at all of these meetings, and I'm, when I learned about this program, I was very happy that we were trying it out, and it's really good to hear that the first year has, seems like it's going well, or has gone well, and I have, I have several questions, and I'm not sure who will be best positioned to answer them but um i was curious um first i guess do we con do we sign

[00:33:27] contracts with the teachers with the individual teachers or do we sign a contract with participate learning like i know you said we pay their salary but do we pay it to participate learning or do we pay it directly to the teacher so we have a um contractual agreement for with participate learning for the whole enchilada, or the 40 teachers, and then as we go through the vetting and selection process for the candidates, this year we chose 40, you know, in terms of our number, we then get a separate individual contract with that particular teacher.

[00:34:06] So they have a person in Participate Learning, her name's Danielle, who works on the contract side. And then as Mr. Tuck mentioned, they, some of these teachers got multiple offers for multiple schools, um, to, to choose from after being chosen by Loudon. And once they signed with Sully, then

Danielle would send us the contract with the teacher's name and the information about where they're going to be, because they can't, even though they get hired with an early intent from Loudoun, the visa law does not allow them to apply for a visa until they get their actual

[00:34:43] work address. And they can't put 21,000 education court down. They have to put Sully or Moorfield Station or Countryside or the other 15 schools. Okay. Thank you. And do we sign just a one-year contract per teacher? And if so, what happens if one of them wants to stay another year?

[00:35:07] So they are under what we call an annual contract for any brand-new teacher to Loudoun. So they'll be going through the evaluation process, as mentioned in the presentation, like any other teacher, where we get support provided from the school or the mentoring and coaching office if needed, if they're not being successful.

[00:35:29] And then their contract would be renewed, just like any other teacher. But they're under a limit because of the years and their visa. so they they can stay for three years and again they have to choose to return right some of them moved 8 000 miles from home i mean we had an unfortunate incident with one of them who as soon as she got here her mom back home passed away so she had to go back to kenya and grab her son because their school calendar is different than our school calendar so her son wasn't supposed to come over until november and she had to go so you know there's it they moved

[00:36:04] their whole life over so anyway um they're under an annual contract then after that they can choose to stay for an additional two years that's an opt-in through through the visa program but because they're not citizens of the united states they would stay under an annual contract and not get a continuing contract like another teacher who is a u.s citizen thank you uh and do they how do they find housing do we help them does um does the organization that we partner with help them it's it's mostly on participate learning they have people within the community who uh focus

[00:36:43] on housing um and and working with with the candidates early on once they get selected for loudon and sign that contract then they start giving them webinars about what's available These are the companies we've provided to participate, learning some of our employee benefits that we have partnerships with some apartment complexes.

[00:37:07] We have a recently retired Loudoun County administrator who became a realtor, and he connected with Loudoun Participate Learning to help fill the housing needs of some of our candidates or teachers from them. So it's a little bit of both, but that's really on them of where they want to live.

[00:37:29] And as Mr. Tuck mentioned already, we have 15 schools. Every school but one, 14 of the 15 schools has at least two ambassador teachers to have that built-in support. One school only ended up with one opening, so we kind of can only put one person there.

[00:37:47] So it is, you know, we try to make a best guess of where our needs are going to be as well as openings and attrition, looking at the attrition rate for some of the schools. And I think we did a pretty good job just for that one school. We ended up with one opening. So that's kind of what we do.

[00:38:03] But we, and again, hoping that we know the cost of living is high here and they're coming from other countries and many of them have roommates or are living together. I know we have four gentlemen from the Philippines who are living in a house in Sterling or a townhouse in Sterling that they're renting together.

[00:38:22] And we hope that would, and we got that, that was a lot of feedback that we got from Prince William, who is in like their 11th year in this program, and some of our colleagues in Fairfax who have just started. Are the teacher ambassadors, do they receive funds or budget to set up their classrooms?

[00:38:43] Yes, they do. Just like any other teacher, they have that. And I know some schools, promote Sully here, you know, Mr. Tuck ordered all the supplies ahead of time and had them waiting back. So that's a thing that we want to emphasize with our next group as we, you know, some of the lessons learned from us and going through the process, making sure they have their supplies.

[00:39:04] And if they're going to be teaching third grade, let the other third grade teachers order the supplies. So when they come to the United States, because they come at the end of July and they report in the beginning of August. So it's not a lot of time for them to settle in and get a place to live and all the other things that are happening in their lives and then start working.

[00:39:23] So we want to have that. And then LEF got them some gift cards through some community donations. So that was another way that got them some gift cards to Walmart, or Target, excuse me, with one of their goodie bags that we gave them when they came for their fingerprinting and badge photos here.

[00:39:42] I am the board liaison to LEF, and I'm always excited to hear new information that I didn't know before about the fantastic things that they do. If you'll indulge me, Mrs. Griffiths, I have one more.

[00:39:57] Thank you. If you'll indulge me, Mr. Phillips. So our contract with Participate Learning, is our contract with them a multi-year contract? And you mentioned that we're, I believe you said that we're contracted to get 40 teachers through them.

[00:40:13] But if we find that this program is extraordinarily successful and if we wanted to expand to a larger number of teachers through them before the end of our current contract, how would that work? Great. So it's a yearly contract that we would renew.

[00:40:31] with them and if we say no we don't want it we could just you know eliminate the contract i don't think that would be the right thing to do right because we do have the right now we only have 15 elementary vacancies compared to last year we had 35 so like the numbers are supporting that we need more teachers right especially at the elementary level so just so you know the ambassador teacher program through participate learning mostly serves elementary level they do have el teachers as well as world languages but no other content areas so for our first year we really focused on the

[00:41:08] elementary level again trying to get that bond between the the ambassador teachers at the schools now we ended up because of the pool there's a limited pool right there other countries are limited in terms of their teachers as well and getting them to make take that risk to come over So we did hire one EL teacher, and then the other thing that they helped supply us is the dual language immersion programs that we have at two schools.

[00:41:35] So we do have a DLI teacher from Chile working at Sanders Corner from Participate Learning. So they did help supply that piece for us, too. As you were talking, I was just about to ask that. Is this an avenue to potentially expand our dual language immersion programs?

[00:41:54] Potentially, right? So, again, those candidates are unicorns, right? And they're very challenging to get. We've already started talking with Participate Learning about what it would look like to bring

another 40 over next year, making small chunks.

[00:42:10] We don't want to bite off more than we can chew in terms of the support and the levels and the schools and the openings that we have and our attrition rates. So that's kind of in the works already. And then they would give us, you know, based upon the costs.

[00:42:26] So we give them, as I mentioned in the presentation, we don't pay their benefits, participate learning, because they're international people coming over. They have a contract for the benefits, so they provide the benefits. So they take that out of the cost and we just pay the salary.

[00:42:44] And then those costs are looked at every year based upon what our benefits team can provide to participate learning for what it would cost to be a benefited employee with Loudon. Fantastic. I have run out of questions, but thank you so much for all of that information.

[00:43:02] Thank you so much. Um, as far as finding these teachers and, and getting them to come over, um, do they want to bring their whole family or it's just, it's just them you're bringing, you're not responsible for the whole family. You're just, we're not responsible for a whole family. No, but some have, well, I mean, I'm thinking you're bringing them from another country here. So they're leaving everything there. So somebody brought their son, right? Correct. And some brought over their own. And I think you have one at okay yeah i'd like to add that one of our teachers from participate learning

[00:43:36] has a daughter who's a student in my third grade and it's it is delightful to see her as a part of our school community you know she's there as any other staff child sometimes we see her before school or after school she's happy she's thriving so um that's just one out of four but there are occasions where that happens and it's really an extension of getting to know that teacher and i like it even broadens our connection because that her daughter is there and is happy it makes her even even more of a part of our school community um and are we looking at every subject or just

[00:44:14] you mentioned specific subjects yeah the participate learning only provides elementary england el world languages and then the um dli is a separate program so they've got a bucket a big bucket for those three the first three that I mentioned and then DLI which is again unicorns they have a much smaller bucket for those so we've already started talking to them about potentially another DLI candidate as are we keep on adding another grade level of DLI in both Sanders Corner and Potomac Elementary you know it's funny I think of exchange students how exciting it is

[00:44:53] for you know to bring an exchange student from another country or we go over there. We go to other countries and so on. So I don't look at this as like really permanent. I feel like it's sort of temporary per the contract, the annual contract. But what I did want to ask was if you could supply the full board with a copy of the contract and a list of the schools and the subjects that you mentioned, just so we could see exactly the schools that are

[00:45:23] participating um and just get some more information if that's okay yeah so we can absolutely supply a full list of the schools when we provide an update on this committee too i think we'd have to work with mrs willoughby we do not we don't house the contracts they come out of uh procurement so we that would that would take a little bit more effort i would really appreciate that i'm sure the full board would love to see it. Did you have any other? Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:46:00] Just as a follow-up, I looked a little bit at some of the different visa types that teachers tend to come over to the United States on. Is it accurate that they come on a J-1 non-immigrant cultural exchange

visa? J-1, correct. Yes, that is correct. And then if after five years they can extend it, they would have to get their own visa sponsorship and everything if they wanted to stay beyond the five years. Participate Learning again gives them that option after three and then it's up to them, the candidate themselves, to secure that other sponsorship for the staying beyond there. Well, thank you so

[00:46:39] much for that clarification. Any other discussion? Ms. Donahue? Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. I noticed that it looked like Mr. Tuck wanted to, or maybe had something else to say. I was wondering if we could hear his comment. Yeah, when speaking about their families of Air Force, one of them doesn't have a family, he's just by himself. One brought their daughter. Another one plans to move her kids here in the future. So her and her husband came over. The daughter didn't come with them, but their goal is to get her here eventually. So I

[00:47:16] think everybody has their own path as to what they feel like is the best for them, and it really depends on what kind of family support they have in their own country if they feel like they can do that. But I think we see a wide range of options. I'll also say the Special Permission Office did a great job of, because they came and got hired so late, if their choice was for their kid to attend their school to do everything they could do to make sure that they could attend at the school where they were at, which I think is beneficial for the parent, but it's also beneficial for the child to be in a school where they know they're accepted. Thank you. Any other discussion?

[00:47:54] And with that, I guess we'll move on to new business. Any new business? Okay. I guess we will adjourn for today. And thank you. And did you want to say something? No, ma'am. Thank you so much.

[00:48:09] Thank you. All right.



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