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Loudoun County School Board, Specialized Programs & Centers Committee Meeting, Tuesday, October 1, 2024

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[00:00:03] Hey. Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to call this October 1st, 2024, a meeting of the Special Programs and Centers Committee to order. My name is Dr. Samara Rashid, and I am the chair of this committee. We appreciate your presence here today. And the purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the transportation update, the MATA program, a little bit of HRTD, DDI's role in special programs, and an AGLS update.

[00:00:28] Please be reminded that we have a hard stop at 4:30. But before we proceed, we value public input. If there's anyone from the public who wishes to address the committee, please fill out a speaker card at the registration table. And I see that no one has signed up, so we will move forward.

[00:00:46] We need to approve the minutes from our last meeting. Has everyone had a chance to review the minutes? Are there any corrections or additions? Okay. Great. So if there's no objections or corrections, I -- okay. I entertain a motion to approve the minutes from September 3rd, 2024.

[00:01:09] To approve the minutes from September 23rd, 2024, as stated. Thank you. Do I hear a second? Second. Okay. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed say nay. And the minutes have been approved. Okay.

[00:01:24] Let's begin by reviewing the agenda a little bit more specifically. Again we're going through a transportation update, that's what we'll be talking about, And the Monroe Advanced Technical Academy Program and Admissions Overview, as well as HRTD, Considerations for Special Programs.

[00:01:41] And again, DDI's role in Special Programs. And we will try, but Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies, AGLS. Are there any adjustments or additions to the agenda? If so, please raise your hand and state your proposed change.

[00:01:56] Okay. All right. So let's go ahead and then move on to our agenda items. The first item is transportation update. I'll turn it over to Mr. Sullivan to present. Thank you, Dr. Rashid.

[00:02:12] We are thankful for Mr. Scott Davies joining us to conclude the presentation. He began at last month's Special Programs Committee, so I'll turn it over to Mr. Davies. Good afternoon. I'll start and move quickly through the presentation since we covered most of this before.

[00:02:31] At the end of last year, we had a positive of seven drivers, a surplus of seven drivers, And due to a net loss of 17 drivers over the summer, as well as 19 routes that were added for special programs, as well as the 10 schools that, 10 elementary schools whose bell start time changed, that added 19 routes for a total swing of 36, which now leaves us with a shortage of 29 drivers.

[00:02:58] And for context, we, when I went back and looked at the data, we net gain approximately 15 drivers each year so between attrition and recruitment we generally add 15 drivers so it will take us approximately two years to get that 29 driver shortage down to back down to zero next slide the three options that we currently look at are residential stops that's primarily for the North Star School and ACL where we do a combination of direct busing as well as utilizing

[00:03:34] some middle school buses that connect to shuttles with primary road stops where we do not go in the neighborhoods we pick up along primary roads we we have not implemented that option yet and then hub stops which is product which is what we use predominantly for our special programs right now next slide right now we have uh 85 81 000 lcps students 75 of which are eligible for transportation and 65% of which actually ride.

[00:04:06] And that is constantly changing due to seasonal sports and especially as high schoolers start to drive and things like that. So routes are constantly changing. That may be some of the feedback you get from parents why routes are changing. That answers some of those questions.

[00:04:22] And we process approximately 10,000 route changes annually. So there's a lot going on in transportation just to constantly adjust and to maximize the utilization of our existing assets next slide this is shows you what we do for for academies the one on the right shows you what a direct busing route looks like quite a bit of spaghetti with a bus going into all these different neighborhoods that results in a very long route for the especially for those that are picked up first and sometimes that can delay the

[00:04:57] bus are getting to academies on time and then ultimately to North Star the other option is using a combination of middle school buses although middle schools are have our highest route ridership so sometimes those buses are full and that is not an option but where it is we utilize it and we combine that with a direct shuttle from the middle school to academies and North Star as well next slide our most efficient obviously is utilizing hub stops where we can pick up the largest number of students and with the shortest number of stops but it does require the students to get from wherever they live to the hub which

[00:05:36] sometimes can be a bit of a disadvantage for some students and here you can see the different routes that we provide and the different hub stops that we utilize for ROTC with ROTC relatively low number of students and they go to school we drop them off at 6:30 in the morning so it doesn't impact our available resources because of the timing.

[00:05:56] And timing for transportation is very critical. Next, IB, you can see the hub stops that we have assigned for both Heritage and Loudoun Valley. We utilize a total of six buses, three to each, each school with 160 students coming from out of zone.

[00:06:14] And again, those are probably the shortest, most direct routes that we can provide to support IB. Next slide. CAMSI started this year again six buses total and we can with we've been expanding the number you'll notice that there's a lot more hub stops that we've added for Briar Woods where we see that students are are starting to concentrate in an area we don't have a hub stop we will add a hub stop to an existing school whether it be an elementary or middle or high school we try to use our LCPS facilities as the hub stops and we can expand those as we

[00:06:52] need to next slide I added Thomas Jefferson this is for all of our students that go to TJ from across the county we have a total of 404 students that ride our buses we have eight buses that go and it's actually 50.5 students per bus so those buses are all packed and we have those identified hub stops that we utilize in each of the different areas of the county next slide this gives you a quick rundown of the costs both operating as well as the cost of the physical buses themselves that the cost of the buses come out of our CIP fund and then the

[00:07:30] operating is part of our operating budget and you can see what we have for each each of the different programs that we support right now as we look at future program growth and how do we intend to support that obviously the three options that we have are our hub stops which we believe are the most efficient primary road stops where the routes are still long but they're not going into every single neighborhood and then residential stops which are picking up on various and within various neighborhoods but do provide the longest routes and and longest rides for our students and excites and this gives you

[00:08:06] some examples of what those look like hub stops very short runs direct busing or direct runs from the hubs but again those students have to get to the hubs Next slide, option two, the primary road stops, slightly longer routes, but still longer routes, but not as long as going into each individual neighborhood.

[00:08:31] And next slide, and then the residential stops, those are the most convenient for students, but also the longest rides and ultimately results in the earliest pickup times for our students and the most potential for late arrivals at school.

[00:08:47] Next slide, and that's where I'll end. Any questions? I have some questions, but I wanted to defer to my colleagues. I'd like to open the floor for discussion. Members of the committee, do you have any questions or comments?

[00:09:08] Mr. Estreffi. Oh, sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. I -- could you go back to the second slide, I think it was, or -- okay, yeah, before that, right there.

[00:09:26] So I'm just trying to get some more information around the driver loss. So how are we accommodating for this driver shortage now, and what attributes the additional 19 route -- what do we

attribute to the additional 19 routes for special programs?

[00:09:48] So the net loss of 17 drivers, that's pretty standard. We lose a healthy group of drivers every year due to retirements and things of that nature. The 19 routes that were added, we had added buses, we had added one more bus for TJ.

[00:10:06] We added six buses for HAMSci, which started this year. We added, and then we had, I think the balance, we added the 12 additional buses were for the 10, as the result of the 10 schools moving from 7:30 to 7:45.

[00:10:21] - Okay, and then what percentage of special programs transportation are HubSpots, HubStop, sorry. - The majority, well, percentage wise across our entire system. - I'd say all three options, yeah.

[00:10:36] - Not that many, 'cause if you look at all of our stops for what I call our bread and butter mission every day of home to school, school to home, transportation, the amount of buses that we're dedicating just for special programs is fairly minimal.

[00:10:51] - Gross, man. - We have over 500 buses on the road every single day. And let's see, just gotta do that math. But less than 100 are dedicated to special programs. And those buses also serve some middle and elementary schools before they do the high school runs.

[00:11:10] And then the last question, how long would our, you know, longest route look like, how long would that be, the longest routes for special programs? Or what is the earliest, you know, pickup times?

[00:11:26] I can get that, let me do some research and get you an answer. Sure. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. LaBelle? i was wondering if any of these routes that we're talking about impact elementary schools that have they say they have later start times but now they have earlier bus pickup times is that impacting the elementary school routes at all uh i i think i know what you're talking about i have a parent that i've been working with out out west um and and the um that particular instance when we looked

[00:12:03] at at what occurred we had to we had to combine two routes because of the shortage that was created by moving the these the times for those ten schools that we had to combine two different routes onto a single bus and by adding those additional stops that made the route longer still under an hour but just barely under an hour and it ultimately pushed that that pickup time earlier so that was one of the unintended consequence unforeseen consequences of moving the the the start time for that for I think it was

[00:12:38] Colbert this 15 minutes later because we used to have buses from 7:30 school they would also serve in 8 o'clock school and now we don't have that flexibility is there any plan to remediate that by second semester possibly there's not much up more bus drivers yes but as I indicated we have a shortage right now of 29 it takes us a year to get to positive net gain 15 drivers and so I wouldn't want to make that kind of a promise that I don't believe we could fulfill thank you thank you and I have a question thanks for the

[00:13:18] presentations very helpful very detailed and I noticed on one of the slides where it says transportation costs I noticed that the buses to TJ and I think the capacity was mentioned one of the slides was that it was 30 students right am I correct that's capacity no the TJ buses are are fully they we have 50 students approximately assigned to each of those buses okay and what's is that the maximum that a bus

can take yeah I thought it was 30 because one of the slides said 30 well the capacity and utilization are different so but for for TJ those buses are every seat is full and it's usually two students to a seat

[00:13:56] and with 13 rows, 26 benches, that's 52 students that we could fit on that. And the timings aren't staggered, I'm assuming, because everyone's going to the same school, same grade. Okay, and the cost of the operation was, I think, the most expensive, which leads me to my other question, is AOL, North Star, and AEP, are those together at the top?

[00:14:23] Yes, they ride the same bus. Okay, okay. And I'm assuming that's due to the distance. that's why that the TJ cost was so high correct yes okay all right and that's it all right thank you so much oh yes mr. streffi I'm sorry as we look at expansion potential expansion of special programs whether it's IB or something else is there a way we can look at the cost of transportation for special programs compared to the overall bus transportation budget and just see the difference I know you mentioned it's a small portion just looking just just

[00:15:02] like to know the percentage and yeah so there's that we talk about like transportation being something complex whenever we add programming or we look at other you know ways of transporting students whether that's again IV program or something else if we expand those programs how do we plan for that from a budget perspective and then how much more complicated and this is something I know it's not a number but how much more complicated does it get when we expand pilot programs or we expand certain special programs and just trying to

[00:15:37] really understand as a board member right how to go about that how to really understand those implications and this is super helpful but maybe some more context even even in a side conversation would be helpful yes sir thank you for that comment I would just add in the development of special programs when proposing a new special program there are many conversations that occur between the division of academic programs and transportation and so when budgets are proposed we have we have been trying to be very collaborative understanding the full cost of a program not just the instructional side of the coin so when a

[00:16:17] new proposal is in a budget you should expect us to be able to talk about what the impact is going to be on transportation I understand you may be thinking more holistically but those conversations are happening between our departments thank you very much thank you so much and if there's no further comments we'll move on to the next agenda item which is Monroe advanced technical Academy program and admissions overview and I'll now turn it over to mr. Slevin thank you dr. Rashid I am thankful to have dr. Chanel pretty the principal of the academies allowed in joining us this afternoon to provide an

[00:16:53] overview of the matter program as well as our admissions coordinator mr. Joe livesley and Katie Clark our director of academic programs provide a high high level overview of the admissions procedure for the Monroe Advanced Technical Academy so with that I believe I am turning it over to Miss Clark to kick us off I think you went over the agenda so I'll go ahead and turn it straight over to dr. pretty to give the overview of Mata to kick us off this afternoon good afternoon the academies of Loudoun if we could pull up the slide

[00:17:30] deck the academies of Loudoun is one school community comprised of three curricular programs students apply for admissions and must be accepted through a competitive application process.

[00:17:59] Those who are admitted to the Academies of Loudoun, or ACL, will be concurrently enrolled between their home high school and the academies and will attend both schools on alternating days. Next slide.

[00:18:15] The mission of the Academies of Loudoun is to empower students to explore, research, collaborate, innovate, and to make meaningful contributions to the world in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. In the MATA program specifically, the STEM coursework is designed to provide students rigorous advanced technical coursework in career and technical education, as noted in the title that was selected by the previous school board for this program, Monroe Advanced Technical Academy.

[00:18:45] MATA is a Virginia Governor's STEM Academy. I'd like to go over the timeline because it's important to honor the traditions. C.S. Monroe Technology Center was established in 1977 and officially closed its doors in 2018.

[00:19:06] When Monroe, as it was fondly called, closed at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, there were about 555 students enrolled with many open seats that went unfilled each year. Every year since ACL has been open, we have worked to redesign and modernize the MATA course curriculum to make it more attractive to students and also to ensure that LCPS students are aware of the opportunities available to them which involves an extensive list of outreach activities. Since the

[00:19:41] official opening of ACL and MATA in 2018, enrollment in MATA classes has increased steadily until we have finally reached maximum enrollment which is 1,100 students and that happened in school year 22-23. So this is the third year in a row that every seat has been filled with waiting lists. So as you can see on the slide here, in June 2018, CS Monroe Technology Center officially closed. That building has now been remodeled into the North Star School.

[00:20:16] And in August 2018, we opened MATA at the Academies of Loudoun. Next slide. Currently, there are 26 pathways available in the MATA program. Here on this slide you can see that broken up into the full list of one-year pathways as well as two-year pathways. Please note that next year there will be 25 pathways as previously discussed in this meeting because this is the last year for CIED. Every pathway listed has multiple certifications or licenses for students

[00:20:53] And those pathways that are dual enrolled are noted in blue with the DE. Dual enrollment is offered through Northern Virginia Community College. Currently, an additional five of these pathways are under review in order to possibly be dual enrolled for next school year.

[00:21:15] A few examples to highlight. Biomedical technology and radiology technology are the only pathways available for high school students in the state of Virginia in those curricular areas. Auto service technology in MATA is the only pathway of its kind that offers 10 ASE certifications to students which means that students can leave high school as a master ACE technician. The one-year Cisco pathway that you see up there is dual enrolled with Northern Virginia Community College and upon

[00:21:53] successful completion will result in three high school credits 16 college credits and three industry credentials thank you Dr. pretty for that insightful overview of the exceptional opportunities that our students have through the MATA program now we will transition to discussion about the current admissions criteria and process for the MATA program it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Levesy our admissions and outreach coordinator who will guide

[00:22:30] us through the MATA admissions criteria and process. Thank You Ms. Clark the graphic that's displayed above is a is communicating the admission criteria the six admission criteria for our MATA program at the academies allowed we have six criteria that are used for the admission to MATA the criteria is as follows students the first first step is that they apply they have to submit an online application. In that online application, they are asked to construct and upload a professional

[00:23:08] resume, a career goal statement. They must be currently enrolled in Algebra 1 or higher math course at the time of application. They must have a PSAT score as part of their application because they apply using their student ID. That score automatically uploads into their application so they don't have to submit that to us. In addition to that, their entire high school transcript uploads into the online application so we can review it. And a counselor recommendation

[00:23:46] is requested. This is an automated process as well. As soon as they submit their online application, their high school counselor receives that recommendation and they have a timeline to complete that. So that is the admission criteria. I like the way it's displayed here in this graphic because all of those, all MATA applicants are evaluated based on the merits of the entirety of the published criteria. Next slide. So how do we make our decisions? The evaluation process for

[00:24:23] MATA applicants is as follows. And number one there, that's basically a repeat of the admission criteria. The Admissions and Outreach Office extracts and compiles applicant data from the online application portal following the winter admission cycle for current 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. A comprehensive profile is created for each MATA applicant, including the following information. Their enrollment in an eligible math class, their highest PSAT score, their academic

[00:24:57] record, including dual enrollment courses with required GPA and NVCC guidelines, their counselor recommendation, verifying on-time graduation requirements, their career goal statement, and their professional resume are all observed and reviewed by the admissions review panel.

[00:25:19] Applicants to the MATA program at the Academies of Loudoun are evaluated exclusively based on the criteria outlined in our published admissions criteria. No additional information beyond what is specified in these criteria is considered. The review process is managed by the admissions and outreach team. MATA applicants are offered their first, second, or third MATA pathway choices.

[00:25:46] Applicants who are not initially offered admission will be placed on a wait list for their first, second, and third MATA pathway choices. These wait-listed applicants will be considered for admission based on a thorough review of the published admission criteria. As seats become available from March until the first day of school applicants will be notified as suits seats become available if they if a seat opens all the way through that first week of school and that is the admission criteria and process for the Monroe Advanced Technical Academy thank you all right now we're gonna show a

[00:26:24] comparison chart so there was some feedback and some comments about the current admissions process for Mata so to address this we compared the missions criterias of various STEM academies across the state of Virginia. The chart provided highlights our analysis focusing on the following criteria: PSAT scores, writing assignments, grades, teacher recommendations, and whether they use a lottery or not. So as you can see here, this compares and

[00:26:54] MATA is listed up there towards the bottom as well for you to review. And that concludes our presentation. Be happy to take any questions or comments at at this time, or Mr. Sleman, go ahead.

[00:27:12] - So before turning it back to the committee for questions or comments, I would note this is in preparation to a deep dive in November for the actual admission results. There will be a breakdown across many different ways of slicing our data in terms of where students are being accepted from across the county, which middle schools, ethnicity, gender.

[00:27:34] Traditionally, the November Special Programs Committee meeting is where we took a real deep dive, And that is an opportunity for the community to give feedback to staff on the process, what we should be thinking about as a division moving forward with the admissions process for the various programs that we'll be presenting on.

[00:27:53] So that will include the academies allowed and as well as our other special programs, such as IB, HAMSci, and JRTC. So I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much for this great presentation. I appreciate it. Brought a lot of things to light. So I'd like to open the floor for discussion.

[00:28:11] I do have questions, but I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues, members of the committee. Do you have any questions or comments? Yes, Mr. Estreffi. I just want a question around the counselor recommendation. Just curious, what is the guidance or the criteria by which the counselors, they can see, obviously, the application, and what's the criteria that they would recommend or not recommend the student?

[00:28:37] So I'll start, and then if Ms. Clark or Joe have anything to add, the counselor is key in determining whether or not the student is on track for graduation obviously with a specialized program such as mata there may be some compromises that a student needs to make when selecting course pathways and so counselor can weigh in and say yes the student can divert from a traditional pathway and still be on time on track to graduate so i don't know if you would add anything to that counselors also provide a very important narrative they know the students they have the relationship with the students so that is instrumental to

[00:29:17] the panel review to read that to read that narrative from the counselor it's very helpful thank you yes I was wondering you say that students that are chosen they they will be offered one of their three choices if they choose it they don't get the choice that was their first choice on that list they have the option to say no correct that's correct they can decline that offer or some of them will send us an email and say I will take my second or third offer but if

[00:29:56] you can keep me on the waitlist for my first choice I would appreciate it so we do do that for applicants if they so noted and if they choose no I'm not going to come then that immediately would go over to the those on the waitlist correct that's correct thank you thank you I had a question. In this comparison chart, which was, I think, the second-to-last chart, I noticed that of these academies, of the programs listed, that with the MATA, the PSAT is the only one that is required.

[00:30:32] I'm not too sure about the governor's school. That's pretty much unknown. Is there a reason why, if you can clarify, I bring about to light, why PSAT is required for the MATA? Is there a reason? Is this something new? I'll start again and then ask if the team would like to add anything in terms of historical context.

[00:30:53] But as Dr. Pretty pointed out, many of the pathways at MADAA have dual enrollment credentials. And there has been work to add to the level of rigor to some of the courses and continue to

expand dual enrollment opportunity to our students at the academies, which is a popular option for our students.

[00:31:12] The PSAT gives some additional information in terms of college readiness. It's one of the criteria that the Northern Virginia Community College outlines in their MOU, Atlanta County Public Schools, in terms of access. But like I said, it's one of multiple.

[00:31:29] And so it is a data point that has been used traditionally over the past number of years for all the programs across MATA, even the ones without dual enrollment courses. Ms. Clark, I don't know if you have more context. And just to add to what Mr. Slevin said, I'm not involved in admissions anymore, I do have the historical perspective it used it is used because it replaced an additional assessment that had to be administered for the dual enrollment pathways and so since students in LCPS were already taking it it was something

[00:32:06] that was used in order to help students qualify without having to take an additional assessment okay thank you also students with disabilities who don't need to graduate on time is that also considered in these programs So we have a good working relationship with the transition specialists at the high schools.

[00:32:31] And if a student has an IEP and is coming back beyond their four years, they cannot have earned a standard diploma going into their fifth year.

[00:32:49] They have to still be taking a full-time schedule in order to be able to attend the academies of Loudoun beyond their senior year and do all the programs require algebra is it is it Algebra 1 rather or is it just one or the other specific Algebra 1 is required for the MATA program as is the case for AOS and AT students who are enrolled in Algebra 1 in two parts students who are in Part B can apply and those students are usually in 10th grade so they can apply okay and then when counselors give

[00:33:25] information regarding like I guess the six criteria that you had presented do they specify that grades and PSATs are taken it taken at hand or considered strongly they that's all gathered by the admissions review panel and we cover that information the counselors don't mention any information about PSAT they have a survey that they fill out and do they recommend or do not recommend a student along with their narrative okay and with the I don't know if you guys know this but with the comparison chart when it comes to algebra one do the

[00:34:05] others required also the other programs requires that does anybody know that that's required during our research we we do not have that information but we could absolutely go back to the individuals that we talked to from each of these locations to ask that question yes mr. Bell when we look at the requirements that you have listed for us are they weighted in other words does grades count more than you're you know one particular area counselors or

[00:34:39] whatever all applicants are evaluated based upon the entire the merits of the entirety of the admission criteria no no aspect of it outweighs the other it is a true holistic evaluation of the application thank you the something to keep in mind with the comparison chart is that it's not apples to apples. MATA really is a unique program. Those are high school programs that offer one credit CTE courses to students. MATA is a deep dive. It is 50% of their high

[00:35:15] school experience each year that they are with us. Every year it's three credits and in in a two-year pathway it's over a thousand hours of instruction. A one credit class is a hundred and forty hours in a high school so that's what you're comparing there as four schools that offer one-credit CTE classes for 140

hours whereas one MATA class is 520 hours so it is a little bit complex to compare okay thank you also I think Mr. Seven you had mentioned a deep dive in November does that mean that the admissions for this year could change

[00:35:53] based on that so we we are consistent staff is consistently looking at admissions procedures and taking a look at our numbers there may be recommendations that could be made by staff as part of a presentation to the board I think what's important to note is that part of the purpose of this committee is to provide insight on the philosophy and purpose of some of these programs while many of them have had long long established are their needs within the community that are that are continuing to be met or their new are

[00:36:30] there new perspectives that need to be given and so if there's feedback on the admissions process that's something that staff could definitely take from the committee as we're preparing the presentation for November thank you and I just want it's more of a comment I understand that Matt is very advanced but my concern is more for the career minded programs that we had it listed I think it was on the pathway slide with a whole slew of variety of I guess of a different academic setting. We talked about it. Oh, we talked about automotive and stuff like that.

[00:37:07] So that's my biggest concern is for those students, and I really want them to bring their goals to fruition. But if it's so advanced, it's those areas that I'm most concerned for. Any other questions from my colleagues? Great. Thank you so much. All right. So since there's no further comments, we'll move on to the next agenda item which is HRTD consideration for special programs and I'll turn

[00:37:41] it over to Mr. Slevin or Ms. Boland I'm not sure there's a couple of names here or Phillips Mr. Phillips we are thankful to have our colleagues in HRTD joining us this afternoon the presentation will be led by Mr. Bob Phillips HRTD director and Karen O'Neill our HRTD supervisor so I'll let them kick it off while I get the presentation set up thank you tonight or this afternoon we're going to give you some considerations to think about and

[00:38:20] ponder as you as they related to HRTD recruitment and staffing for special programs we're going to present a high-level overview our recruiting and staffing for the 24/25 school year and review our experiences our lessons learned through the DLI special program lens as well as offer other perspectives to consider when starting or expanding special programs. Good afternoon I'm Karen O'Neill I'm the supervisor of recruitment for Loudoun County. As you can see from our high-level overview our recruitment efforts have included

[00:38:59] extensive outreach at a significant number of college and university career fairs as well as hosting LCPS recruitment events. We've continued our focus on growing our own through the teacher cadet letter of intent program as well as the JMU Grow Your Own partnership, providing alternative pathways to licensure and recruitment incentives.

[00:39:19] Additionally, we've placed emphasis on expanding partnerships, offering more alternate pathways to licensure, and implementing a sign-on bonus initiative to attract top talent and showcase LCPS as an employer of choice. Next slide. 86% of all school districts across the country, according to the latest Department of Education statistics, struggle to fill vacancies. For 2023-24 for LCPS, our average fill rate was 97.65.

[00:39:55] You can see from this slide that we are already above that from our last staffing report, which comes out Wednesday, for licensed staff with a fill rate of 98.67%. Although we do have a high fill rate, we are still having challenges with staffing traditional positions as well as those when we apply these to specialized positions which prevent more and more challenges when we talk about special programs the four certification areas listed on this slide from our last current vacancy list account for 70% of all of our staffing vacancies that are currently open next

[00:40:35] slide please as mentioned we've learned some many valuable lessons through our DLI program which we know started two years ago in two of our elementary schools. One of the things that we need to consider when we talk about future iterations of special programs or expansions of our current ones is our advertising. For the DLI program, when we were in its first initial implementation, we had to wait until April of 2023 after the final budget and its reconciliation to go forward with the posting. When you're talking about looking for

[00:41:14] teacher candidates in a teacher shortage environment April is quite challenged quite challenging and we are our pools are significantly reduced at that time in addition to that when we're creating special programs the job descriptions that we have listed for our teacher candidates need to be as diverse and inclusive as possible our lesson learned that our original intent for our dual language job description was too restrictive in terms of the language proficiency requirement for that position so one of the things that we've started to consider and and when we presented to the board last the last

[00:41:53] board talked about using anticipated vacancy postings once we know we have a commitment to that special program so we can start building up the pool of qualified applicants as quickly and as early as possible and then once again creating those postings or job descriptions that are most inclusive next slide please to support the success of the dual language immersion program we implemented various recruitment strategies this includes advertising on various job boards sourcing candidates via LinkedIn and updating the job

[00:42:30] description as mr. Phillips mentioned on our LCPS site with refined language proficiency criteria additionally we partnered with participate learning to provide to provide DLI teacher solutions and leveraged our talent ed applicant system for engaging additional applicants moving forward we're exploring enhance enhancements to our recruitment efforts by increasing partnerships with staffing agencies offering tuition assistance and signing bonuses and providing targeted professional development opportunities for DLI teachers we aim to attract and retain highly qualified educators to the Loudoun County Public

[00:43:08] schools community budget implications we know for special programs as we talked about already in the transportation and in other aspects of this meeting are something that need to be highly considered HRTD wants to emphasize the importance of having a clear committed budget to ensure financial stability and effective staffing for any special program whether it's an expansion or a creation of a new one tied to that commitment we can then post the anticipated vacancies as early as possible and continue to provide support

[00:43:45] and recruitment efforts all the way through reconciliation. Next slide please. So as a special programs continue to expand and students progress through them it is essential to assess the necessary teacher numbers and certifications for the emerging positions. Evaluating the teacher pipeline will help identify potential recruitment needs and to ensure a a sustainable supply of qualified educators.

Additionally, the growth of special programs will likely have budgetary implications requiring careful consideration for future staffing

[00:44:22] allocations and recruitment. Finally, we need to recognize the impact of the integrity of these special program classes during potential teacher absences in these classrooms because backfilling a highly qualified and specialized teacher with a highly qualified substitute will be equally, if not more, challenging.

[00:44:47] Happy to take any questions. Thank you for that excellent presentation. I'm going to open the floor for my colleagues, members of the committee. Do you have any questions or comments? So then if there's no further comments, we'll move on to the next agenda item, which is DDI's role in special programs.

[00:45:15] and I will now turn it over to Mr. Aaron Smith. Welcome. Well, Mr.

[00:45:33] Slevin gets the presentation pulled up here. Thank you for the opportunity to come and present about DDI's role in special programs. We are a support organization. Our goal is to make sure these programs are successful and just make sure that all aspects of that is seen and what is needed to support those programs.

[00:45:49] So happy to be here to highlight some of those things today. So we're going to go through a couple different types of things that we provide, that supports we provide. The first one I think everyone knows devices and equipment DDI procures devices but really understanding that these special programs have special needs special things equipment that we have never supported before and that we've never purchased before and that it's not a single time purchase so everything that's deployed must have a refresh cycle a maintenance with it so we need to make sure that all those are wrapped in so when there's a year one cost we're looking at two three four five and then when we need to buy another one and what

[00:46:27] kind of needs to look like to project that out. So every piece of equipment, that's pretty much how we view that. And then a lot of requests in these programs require more compute power than what we provide a standard student in like a Chromebook. So these devices can cost, they're significantly more expensive. So when you're talking \$1,500 or \$2,000 more for a device for a student and you have 100 students, we're looking at a \$200,000 budget initiative. So that's where we're kind of looking about how we can best tie that those supports together so we're real good at getting devices we just want to make sure that we're planning for how we're going to implement them at the beginning and then that life cycle to

[00:47:06] have how they're going to exist in perpetuity throughout the existence of the program on the next slide and this is something the team has put a lot of effort into is what these registration and application processes so you heard academies of loud and reference they have an application process that process open in August for students to apply for the 25 26 school year so you're talking a year ahead of before those students will be enrolled and so when we're making changes to that process we really need to start 18 months before they will be enrolled to implement those changes and have time to design that those changes so just from a timeline perspective it's important to keep in

[00:47:43] mind a decision made in May camp we won't have time to implement that by the August time frame for that school year also the benefit of a student opportunities portal is it's kind of like a one-stop shop for students to go and apply so we've been working whether it's AMSI or it's the JROTC program or it's ACL to kind of build a consistent platform that students go to so they don't need to know we don't want the

barrier to be finding the application and figuring out how to apply and then also all these systems they do have customized workflows built behind them such as you heard like emailing counselors to automatically know that they need to fill out a recommendation

[00:48:20] Recommendation or pulling in PSAT score so someone doesn't have to enter that information because we already have those things So not only does this streamline the application process It makes it more consistent and it makes it easier for students and parents to know exactly where to go to find these things So the so the highlight here is that that is an in-house developed application. So those changes are Can be timely to make it's not an off-the-shelf and all of these things are very customized to the needs of these programs Because they all have different application criteria, right?

[00:48:50] The next item to highlight is software and systems. I think, you know, we bring in a new program. It's definitely going to need new software, new systems, new services. And we have processes in place to implement those.

[00:49:06] We just want to ensure we have enough time to fulfill, to follow those processes, right? So we do something called onboard, which is an internal term for us, where we take that and we review every single piece of software for data privacy, usability, accessibility, overall security of systems.

[00:49:21] and when we get into these special programs sometimes we get into unique situations where they're designed for they have terms and conditions for things that are 18 plus at a college level they don't have to worry about the same age restrictions that we have so it really is aligning the resource with the level of student that we're looking at and sometimes we do have to say no because terms and conditions won't allow us to allow students to have access to that content based off of those terms and conditions we also review every single piece of software to make sure we can roster them I'll go back one more sorry to make sure we can roster them and have single sign-on it's important that the lift is as easy as possible for school staff when we get into these so we want

[00:50:00] to make sure that we have class class rosters built for these that we can auto load those into these applications so we know which teachers so all of that is automated and set up on the back end to really reduce the burden at the school level and then consolidated accounts and password just helps students get in so if we can embed that single sign-on put it in LCPS go make it single click for students it just helps them get to the to that starting line quicker when they get into that classroom now on the next slide and so the other way that we support is with data and interfaces so you heard a lot about how we're pulling data and looking at different things so we support one-off

[00:50:39] processes to ensure the data is accurate we synchronize them across multiple systems we really want to have source of truth data embedded in all of these systems which is why when we have consistent registration application processes consistent collection of PSAT information versus having a student enter that or have a school enter that let's pull it from known source of truth data let's publish that and that really helps us make sure that we have the accuracy that we need when we're doing when teams are looking at these and then we have to implement you know it's not as simple as just saying we're doing IB for example we have to do there's a whole new grading and diploma tracking and there's new course codes there's new standards to tie to those course codes and so a lot of that takes time to do that mapping so that we can when a

[00:51:19] student gets a report card that's kind of like the end goal there's a lot of work that goes in to make sure that all of those data elements are tied to that appropriately and so the team support all of that

to make sure that that is accurate across the organization so those that's just a real high level I know we have a 4:30 so just turned through but happy to take any questions about any of that so thank you for the chance to present okay thank you so much Mr. Smith that was very helpful I'd like to open the floor for discussion among my among my colleagues members of the committee do you have any questions or comments yes Miss LaBelle you were talking about customization of some of

[00:51:56] the applications and the other components of the system who does the customization do we buy a system and then customize it do we customize it ourselves how does that work it's a completely in-house developed system so we did go out to see if there was something on the shelf that could do that there's the processes are so customized that we ended up developing our own student opportunities portal but we're using a low code solution so some of those pieces are the same and so we can pull those out kind of like a puzzle piece and we can say that's needed for this registration process that's also included here so it does save us time to deliver but there still is a lot of

[00:52:33] customization and we work with those special programs business owners who know what is actually needed for what type of data they want to look at when students apply for those things and then we build those customized registration but it's our my team does those that is totally impressive thank you so much any other comments all right dr. sheet I just recognizing Erin's presentation and Bob's presentation and transportation earlier just thinking about special programs holistically as well why we invited these departments to present to

[00:53:09] the committee we talked at the special programs work session around scope location and budget and the scope is far beyond just the instructional demands of a program and a good idea and so I just really appreciate my colleagues coming in trying to give a kind of a wider view of what we're trying to accomplish when we're building out so we have a shared vision for building out opportunities for our students but we need to be really strategic and mindful in terms of making sure that they're successful and I would really point to the that whole idea of sustainability like thinking about the comments from

[00:53:45] HR around are we going to find teachers actually staff this really great idea that we have So I just think these presentations really illiterate that that notion as we move forward So I'm happy to take questions about that any other questions comments from my colleagues. Okay, great All right. Thank you so much. Mr. Smith. Mr. Seven and if there's no other comments We can move on for any new business. So do do we want to defer the last agenda item? Oh, yes Yes, yes, my apologies, yes, because I had that on parentheses.

[00:54:21] So I guess we will put off Information Item 4.05, I believe the AGLS update to the next meeting. And so that information is there available for you to review, but we'll do a more thorough review of that in our November meeting.

[00:54:37] So thank you to the staff who are here. Thank you so much. All right, so our next meeting is scheduled for November 5th at 3:30, go ahead and mark your calendars because we know this is what you live for if there's no further business I entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting okay all those in favor say aye the meeting is adjourned thank you for coming



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