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Loudoun County School Board, Finance & Operations Committee Meeting, Tuesday, November 19, 2024

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[00:00:04] - Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to Finance and Operations Committee. I'd like to call to order this November 19th meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee. My name is Arben Estreffi, and I am the chair of this committee.

[00:00:21] I'm joined by Mrs. Griffiths and Chair Mansfield, and we will just go ahead and get started and ask if there is any public comment. I see we have one speaker, and it is Ms. Liz Crotty, and we will just give speakers three minutes, And just remind everyone who is speaking in public comment the rules around decorum and respect and civility.

[00:00:46] I'll spare you from the entire script this time around. Yes. So anyway, I will leave it to you, Ms. Crotty. Thank you so much. I just wanted to come to talk today. I don't have anything scripted necessarily, but I wanted to talk about the importance of our playgrounds for our students who are in preschool, and particularly our special education preschool kids.

[00:01:14] I have two kids who went through early childhood special education. Both of them had developmental delays. I can tell you that, you know, they had their playground, not a playground. They had their play space in a courtyard that was muddy, where their friends, they sat out there and they would just dig worms.

[00:01:35] There wasn't a lot to do, if they could even get out there, because most of the time it was too muddy. There was, it was, you know, the playground equipment they did have, you sit at the top of the slide and your feet touch the bottom. There was nothing that was physically or cognitively stimulating about that space.

[00:01:54] And I want you guys to understand the real impact that not having appropriate playgrounds has on our students who are already identified as developmentally delayed. My son, he is six years old.

[00:02:11] He is still scared to go on playground equipment. It's really difficult. If he had been exposed to that every day where he was in something that challenged him and he had special educators to help him access that playground and facilitate those experiences, perhaps, you know, now we wouldn't be having the struggles that we're currently having.

[00:02:35] He still can barely write. He's six years old doing kindergarten for the second time, and he was not given appropriate learning spaces. A playground is a learning space, and I want you to understand that. My daughter, who has a cognitive disability but also has a physical disability, she can't write at all.

[00:02:56] These experiences, we take our kids to the playground, right, and we, you know, it's just some fun where you can let them all run and, you know, keep busy while mom has a moment to, like, chill out, right? But it's so much more than that. These are spaces where kids engage socially, where they challenge themselves physically and cognitively, and they learn how to cross their midline, and they learn how to climb up things and push themselves a little bit.

[00:03:26] We don't have that for our special education preschools, And it is so wrong that we provide that in our high school lab programs and we do not provide that to our special education students who are already behind, who are already struggling.

[00:03:42] They need it so badly and we are denying them that very fundamental necessity. So please, I just hate the thought that we have a policy that separates out one group of students from another.

[00:03:58] So if there's anything you can do to fix that, SEAC will appreciate it, thank you. - Thank you very much. Is there any other public comment for this afternoon? Seeing none, we'll move on to the approval of the meeting minutes.

[00:04:16] Committee members, hopefully you all had a chance to review the meeting minutes. Is there a motion to approve the meeting minutes? - I'll make a motion.

[00:04:32] - Ms. Griffiths has motion to approve the meeting minutes. Do I have a second? - I'll second. - Seconded by Chair Mansfield. We'll vote to approve the meeting minutes. All those in favor, aye. - Aye. - Aye. - That motion to approve the meeting minutes has been approved unanimously, and meeting minutes have now been approved.

[00:04:55] We'll move on to our action items. We have a bunch of items on our agenda. As usual, finance and operations is super exciting. We have our school-based copy paper initiative, and we have a bunch of really important information items as well. So onto our action items.

[00:05:11] We'll start with our only action item, 4.01, Business and Financial Services, FY25 Budget Transfer Request, School-Based Copy Paper Initiative. And we will start with a motion. Do I have a motion?

[00:05:27] - I'll make the motion. - Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. So I'll just repeat that motion. We have a motion that the Loudoun County School Board approves the transfer of \$1 million of projected personnel

savings to the Department of Support Services to fund the School-Based Copy Paper Initiative.

[00:05:44] Do I have a second? - A second. - Seconded by Chair Mansfield. Is there any discussion? And would staff like to weigh in at any point?

[00:05:59] - I can just probably summarize what was shared at the last meeting, which was that from the Business Financial Services Department, we see this as kind of what we would term as housekeeping, of aligning the budget dollars with the initiative that was to provide a copy paper to the schools, which I would also point out, which was really born out of the discussion when this committee began with its existing members at the beginning of this calendar year.

[00:06:29] There were some really good questions about school supplies, facial tissue. Why are we asking parents for different things? And so we definitely took that to heart and have enacted where we provide facial tissue and we also provide schools the copy paper without them having to use their instructional allotments.

[00:06:46] In doing so, we need to align the budget and we've identified about approximately about a million dollars worth of projected personnel savings that we would move over into the support services department to pay for this initiative. And beyond that, I am available for any questions.

[00:07:07] Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. Board members, do we have any comments or questions? Seeing no questions, we will take this action item to a vote. All those in favor, aye.

[00:07:25] Aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously, and board members, would we like to move this as a consent item to the next school board meeting?

[00:07:45] So thumbs up? Yes. Moving on to our information items, we have 5.01, Business and Financial Services, R24252, Legionella Water Management Programs Renewal, presented by, I believe it's Ms. Filia, Director of Procurement Risk Management.

[00:08:09] Thank you. We have before you this evening, this is a renewal on our contract for the Legionella Water Management Program. The original contract was released on October 14, 2023. We issued requests for proposals, and the contract was awarded to Water Chemistry.

[00:08:29] So as I said, this is the first renewal option on this contract, and then it will exceed \$250,000. we bring it before you this evening for your approval to either move on as an action item at your next meeting or a consent item on the December 3rd meeting. Thank you very much. We'll open it up for any discussion or questions, board members. There are no questions or discussion on this item,

[00:08:57] so we'll move on and put this to consent in the next meeting. Moving on to 5.02, business and financial services revision of policy 6120 wellness and we will have this presented by Miss Mills director of school nutrition and I'll actually start us off on this policy thank you so just a quick kind of summary of where we're at this policy was brought to the Finance and Operations Committee as an

[00:09:35] information item on October 15th it returned as an action item on the 29th at which time there were several questions brought up. So in response to those questions, as well as just a quick summary, the USDA requires school divisions to have a wellness policy as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations 210.31.

[00:09:58] As such, LCPS has crafted its wellness policy to meet the requirements and recommendations outlined in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model local school wellness policy, which the USDA

provides as a resource model policy. This model policy identifies three main components, the required nutrition component, the recommended health and physical education component, and the recommended whole school, whole community, whole child component.

[00:10:26] Based on the questions that we have received, we do offer one change on line 209 of the Redline version that rewords the sentence about walking, biking, or entering to school to provide additional clarity. We also noticed on line 181 that we had missed a department reference and took this opportunity to change the position title and department reference so it is accurate.

[00:10:48] It was referencing business and financial services, and it's really HRTD now. Additionally, we've reviewed all the feedback to include feedback received from the SEAC committee that came in after the last F&O meeting. From this, we are supportive of making one of the SEAC-recommended changes to include the word ingredients of meals in the language on line, I think that was line 37.

[00:11:10] This is something that is already occurring. It is not reflected in the current red line policy, but is something we can add when this comes back as action. Finally, we also included in board docs two wellness policies, one from the Charlottesville Public Schools and another from the Richmond Public Schools, as additional examples of wellness policies that school divisions have adopted.

[00:11:33] I do have Ms. Mills, our school nutrition director here, along with Mr. John Lodi from Student Services to assist in any questions that you may have as you review this policy. Thank you very much, Ms. Willoughby. We'll open it up for any questions or discussion. Board members?

[00:11:49] Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. Per my changes, I don't really see a lot of SEAC implemented into the policy, so you're going to go back and put their recommendations in. You said you're just adding one thing.

[00:12:05] There was a lot of recommendations in there. I think one of them was diabetes, be sensitive to students that have diabetes. There are a lot of suggestions in there, I think, that need to be implemented as far as kids with disabilities.

[00:12:22] So, you know, I'm a no as far as until that's implemented. Also, I had asked for federal code, but I think you just said the wellness is a recommendation. So I'm a no to that as well, because I feel it should be a separate policy, and I'm not going on recommendations.

[00:12:43] It would have to be a mandate to be in this policy mixed with nutrition, or it's separate. So I stand with that per my email that I sent on Sunday, and I don't know if anybody else has any other questions. Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths.

[00:13:00] Any other comments or questions? Chair Mansfield. Hi. As a mother of a child who does have peanut allergies and all the rest of that, I do appreciate the SEAC recommendations on, I guess it would be line 23 on the red line where it says, and maybe you could help me understand if there's a problem putting this in or some thoughts about it, and known food allergies or sensitivities after cultural diversity.

[00:13:30] So it would be qualified nutrition professionals shall provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and will make efforts to accommodate the cultural diversity and known food allergies or sensitivities of the student body in meal planning.

[00:13:47] Is there any heartburn of putting that in or reasons we couldn't? I appreciate the question. And I'll also take the opportunity to go through the other three. There were a total of four SEAC recommendations, and so we can address the other three.

[00:14:02] the rationale behind why we weren't supporting it at this time and i'll start us off and definitely ask miss mills to help out in terms of the recommendation one as it relates to the food allergies or sensitivities the the struggle that we had with this was there can be so many different types of allergies and sensitivities and even illnesses and this is really about the developing meal planning of the entire district and so we struggle to um to come up with a way to try to include that information in a policy that was really broad what i can share is that you know

[00:14:41] the school nutrition team there there are processes in place regarding allergies and food sensitivities so for example they already run a what i would just call a peanut free kitchen and then there's process through online as well as you know parents can reach out directly to school nutrition to address any allergies or food preferences so there's processes in place but we struggled to include this language as it relates to meal planning for the entire student body and so with that I don't know if there's anything else Ms Mills you'd want to add for this first one I just

[00:15:17] want to add that yes we absolutely are concerned about food allergies and food sensitivities but like Miss Willoughby said there are so many food related illnesses those are just two of many so in planning for the entire district we're not looking at what we might provide for the individual student and and where we have that information is in the health record that feeds our point-of-sale system so we actually have that information coming in to the register where the cashier is standing there and can look at the tray and know whether or not to let a child have a certain food or beverage

[00:15:57] based on the illnesses they may be suffering from. So we do honor that and do believe that that matters. But in menu planning for the entire district, we would not be looking at the exceptions, if that makes sense.

[00:16:14] We honor them as individual needs, but were all of the food-related illnesses there are a lot, it would be difficult to plan a menu and exclude those specific foods, if that makes sense. I guess I'm also looking at it as that there could be, so when you go to camps or whatever, and they have the foods there, and they say, does contain peanuts, does contain gluten, does contain all of that.

[00:16:44] Is that something that we do? Yes. On this? Yes. We used to do it through food cards that we attach to the service line. Now we do it through our menu boards, and we also have all of that information online for parents.

[00:16:59] And see, that's what I would think would be when you're thinking about meal planning, you were also thinking about, like, where that was. So I guess that's where I was coming from, thinking, oh, well, maybe we should think about the known food allergies and sensitivities, and that's not how you're contemplating that, I guess.

[00:17:18] Right. And again, we've got the nutrient standards that we have to aim for in the foods that we serve. So we're going to aim for that. And then if someone has an allergy or an insensitivity or, you know, a gluten issue or a carbohydrate issue, we would address that individually and still make sure that that student's menu or meal meets nutrient standards.

[00:17:40] So that's when it becomes individualized. Okay, I'm going to still think about that one. Okay, so could you say something about recommendation two and what the reasoning was behind that for SEAC? It was grade-level appropriate, the words medically aware and culturally responsive education materials will be provided.

[00:18:03] So, again, this is where we think that there are so many food-related illnesses, diabetes, gluten insensitivity, allergies, intolerances. Those are only a few of a very great number of food-related illnesses. So, again, we're thinking that in this educational material that we're providing, we're addressing and speaking to customs that relate to the featured menu item, songs, simple, very simple, like, fact sheets.

[00:18:35] So we're not developing, like, training material, and we're not writing these as educators. These are more informational, and so, again, we're not focusing on any individual food-related illnesses, which the two that were mentioned would be.

[00:18:53] So, again, trying to have a wider scope but not imply that anybody needs to know anything about the medical reasoning behind these food-related illnesses. And if I can just piggyback, Ms. Mills shared that she had met with student services to review this, and there was concern from them as well in terms of what that type of educational material would be.

[00:19:23] And so we had consensus from the other department as well of having concerns about including that phrase and then the expectation behind it. Okay, and so you took the third recommendation.

[00:19:40] And why not the last, because I know we've talked about this before, that we didn't want it to affect the community-based instruction activities. So the meal periods are protected by Virginia Code, so those activities wouldn't be allowed to take place because even though they are not fundraisers, I did talk to Paige, Dr. Paige, I'm trying to remember.

[00:20:10] Dr. Carter. Thank you, Dr. Carter. And she assured me this would not be a fundraiser. This was instructional. But the code still protects those times from before breakfast until the end of the breakfast period and then at the start to the end of lunch to preserve the fund, the school nutrition fund.

[00:20:33] So that's what we're saying in our response there, that we're honoring Virginia code to protect those periods. And then if the students sell, they absolutely can, but they have to honor the smart snack requirements. So that would guide the foods and beverages that they sold.

[00:20:50] So could there be any language there that says that the community-based instruction are instructional activities that do not come seeing chicken heads?

[00:21:06] Yeah, it is excluded because, again, it is selling food during the protected meal period. So even though it's not a fundraiser, it is still the act of the sale during that time period that would perhaps jeopardize the school nutrition fund.

[00:21:26] So that's why it's protected from all sales during those times. And I'll just simplify it. At the end of the day, we would be in violation of the Virginia Code if we were to put language in and allow this activity. So that's why, unfortunately, we cannot support the fourth clause or the fourth recommendation.

[00:21:47] Thanks. Sure. Yeah. Ms. Griffiths, you can go ahead. first. Thank you, Chair. I guess my question is, why can't you separate nutrition from wellness?

[00:22:06] That's one question. If you could just answer that for me, I'll have another one. But why can't you do that when it's not a mandate? As I stated at the beginning, I think LCPS has crafted its wellness policy to follow the model wellness policy. And so based on that and based on previous school board's support of the adoptive policy as it is, is why we continue to not support separating it. We would have concerns that if we carved it out, whereas it may not be a hard finding, it could still be something that would be identified during an audit that

[00:22:46] we didn't include. So we have made sure to include all the requirements, and we do have included the recommendations as supported by previous school boards and the division. I just really have a problem with SEL being mixed in with nutrition.

[00:23:05] So as it stands, I will never vote for this. But my other question was that you're in charge, you're responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy, a nutrition slash wellness policy?

[00:23:21] I would flip and say it's a wellness policy that has a nutrition required component and then two additional recommended components. We are the first to say it is a unique policy because there's even references to staff wellness, which is a little different for school nutrition and business and finance.

[00:23:43] However, this is what is being directed for us to administer. We have a staff person, a coordinator in the school nutrition office that works to oversee this program. They have liaisons across all the schools as well as partners within the division offices here to help administer oversight of the policy.

[00:24:08] But at the end of the day, there has to be one single department. And because it does fall under the purview of the USDA with the required nutrition component of the wellness policy is why we have the ownership.

[00:24:21] So, and just to kind of, I'll go back to the comments related to SEAC in a minute, but just to kind of give my thoughts around Ms. Scrippett's comments, while I do understand and respect kind of that approach of, you know, that idea of removing reference to wellness, where I kind of land on this is that, again, perhaps best practices aren't, the word best practices maybe aren't the most accurate,

[00:24:54] But I think the guidance coming out of USDA, my biggest worry of moving this away from a lot of the recommendations and the way other school boards are implementing this, and I've tried to do a little bit of my own research as well, is that we would kind of be going it alone, right?

[00:25:10] Like, we would be reinventing our own version of this, and we'd have to come up with other examples and seeing what are the best practices of going that direction. And I'm not opposed, obviously, to the wellness policy framing of this. I think it's just, again, a lot of thought has gone into this.

[00:25:29] And I do agree that although it wouldn't be a hard finding in an audit, it would be spotlighted for sure. If we were audited, why are you going away from these best practices or the guidance from all of these different institutions? So we would have to have an answer to that as well.

[00:25:49] And so I do support that direction while I very much respect Ms. Griffith's thoughts on this. On the topic of SEAC, I appreciate Ms. Griffiths and Chair Mansfield addressing each of the recommendations of SEAC because it seemed, at the face of it, very, very reasonable, and there are good reasons for those.

[00:26:11] Based on the information that you've shared, those reasons also seem, obviously, it's difficult not to conflict with code on this. and it seems like the solution is not going to be made in the policy itself but i'm looking forward to comments from cac responding to this information and seeing how that might

kind of land in the next meeting board members any other questions or comments okay seeing none we'll move on to item 5.03 and just letting everyone know that we do have a hard stop at 5 30 to switch the room

[00:26:48] revision of policy 6320 playgrounds and this is presented by mr stocks director of management and coordination. Hello. Thank you, Chair Shaffee. So we bring this item back to you for a second time as an information item. It includes our original staff recommended edits, as well as those that we've received through the community and advisory committee feedback period.

[00:27:13] And we have received multiple recommendations through SEAC as well as MSAC. And we've accepted most all of the recommendations and provided the updated red line version for year all's review today. Thank you very much Mr. Stocks. Board members do we have any discussion or comments?

[00:27:42] Yes, Chair Mansfield. So for the public commenter today who was talking about the potential inequity of the policy do you have any thoughts about that at all?

[00:28:00] So this is interesting and we attempted to provide clarification to the language that was existing as per the recommendation to eliminate the language that stated in the case of those constructed as part of a regional elementary or high school based preschool program. To provide clarification the two to five playground equipment that's been installed in high schools is to support the CTE programs, the curriculum, the early childhood education program that students enroll in the class and then the class takes

[00:28:38] care and learns how to take care of the children with the equipment similarly to your your equipment in your culinary labs or others this is part of the construction new school construction ed specs that any high school constructed that has these programs this equipment is installed similarly to the other CTE programs or any other programs at different schools as part of the educational specifications so we were trying to attempt to clarify the language it's not specific to ECSE it's ECE through the CTE program I know it's

[00:29:15] a lot of acronyms but could you after this meeting would you mind sending me that the standards for the curriculum that shows that so we can we can get into that yeah um and we can provide you and then work with student services to our um cte themselves to provide their um role in that but in our construction specifications for new construction it's in the educational specifications for the school when it's constructed and then we life cycle manage it after it's been installed but yes we can provide you that information yeah some i

[00:29:49] guess it's code maybe or is it just uh suggestions or recommendations or or part of the curriculum you said so it would be an SOL of some sort I'm just looking for yes we'll clarify all that with with teaching and learning but it's my understanding that it's part of their curriculum instruction process and so that's just a component that we do from the construction side that's what Mr.

[00:30:12] Stocks was saying but we'll we'll get the requirement for that from the program folks that run the program so you can have that yeah because it kind of doesn't make any sense to not have inclusive playgrounds first at the elementary schools before the high schools for me I'm sorry Can you say that again?

[00:30:30] Does it make, we want these at the high school, we want these at the elementary schools first. Yeah, so I think what we've done is we've put it together, and Mr. Stocks will correct me if I'm wrong, and our program has been built at this point for the age of the system, so whichever the age of the playgrounds

have done, that's where we put them in the replacement system, but that's part of our program, not necessarily related to the language in this policy so I think what we're trying to do here is clarify that we are providing essentially right now we have direction to provide 5 through 12 the

[00:31:10] age group 5 to 12 it has a primary playground and we have some of the two to fives in the system and the only ones that were required as part of that curriculum I think were the ones at the high schools so some of the ones have been put in at the elementary schools have been put in by outside groups and not by as a part of our program so what we did on our playground replacement program was focused on the 5 to 12 first to make sure that every school had a age group 5 to 12 inclusive playground and then unless it was one of the high school programs and then we would go back and look

[00:31:46] for guidance from the school board on whether or not we want to include two to fives as a standard throughout the county I guess if we think about early intervention you do want to get things earlier so that they can learn how to play and learn how to use their arms and legs and that kind of thing and that's something that I'm a little concerned about if we don't provide that ability for them to do that and that access early then we're stunting their growth and their learning. Right so I think that's part of the dilemma we have right now we'd like to have two

[00:32:22] to fives and five to twelves all inclusive at every school and we're we gotta we need to get plan to get there and so that's why at this point we focus on the 5 to 12 at each of the elementary schools and then you know anything we have that what may be from an age perspective ready to be replaced for the end of life that we're going to go ahead and replace those and so you know if the board wanted to direct us to have 2 to 5 and 5 to 12 as a standard of every elementary school then we would need to hear that from the board and change this policy

[00:32:55] all together. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Chair Streffi. I know we're going to be going over the CIP program and renovations to all the schools. We sort of went through that a little bit already. Our schools need a lot of renovations. I brought up Guilford most recently that not a lot of work has been done to Guilford. So when it comes to the playgrounds, I think they're on that

[00:33:30] list too, as far as, I don't know, how many schools is it? If you can tell me the number real quick, elementary schools? 60 elementary schools. 60. Okay. So you're looking at, I don't know that all 60 had playgrounds replaced already, right? Correct. How many out of the 60 were replaced? So far, how many playgrounds are inclusive? Because we replace all the playgrounds through lifecycle management, but are inclusive, have been replaced with an inclusive playground.

[00:34:03] We have 18 elementary schools with 5 to 12-year-old inclusive playgrounds. You said old inclusive? Age, no. Oh, age, age. Oh, okay. Years old. Okay. I mean, I just feel like we have a lot of renovations to do with a lot of our schools.

[00:34:21] You know, and I bring up Guilford and Sully, that they feel like if the renovations aren't done, you're going to have to tear down the school and rebuild. So that's a concern for me. but also the playgrounds are a concern if parents are coming back and saying they're falling apart and they're not up to par. So that's something else that I think should be moved up if that's the case. I have said previously, maybe the playgrounds should be a case-by-case basis.

[00:34:52] I think taking a look at the schools to see what renovations they need is very important because you need to have this school functioning on the inside. But at the same time, the ones that need

the most renovations probably have the oldest playgrounds so it should be you know it should be all of it is what i'm saying but um i think we need to to dive further into that um to see i mean i know you have a list of how old these playgrounds are and so on but i think we need to dive further into if you're doing renovations at a school i assume somebody's going out there and

[00:35:27] checking the playgrounds to see if they're up to par and they're safe for children but also for the children but also um when you're looking at the equipment taking into account i mean like for those schools i mentioned they probably need new playgrounds if they weren't replaced correct um we actually inspect all of our playgrounds annually and anything that is broken should be replaced or repaired everything should be safe and should always be operable and functioning if we did have a playground that was not scheduled to be replaced reach end of life

[00:36:01] early we would plan for that accordingly as kind of an emergency procurement but we would not leave a playground in disrepair or in an unsafe condition that we're aware of on school property it the the we'll discuss this tonight through the cip process but the replacement cycle for the playgrounds and life cycle management is based on their life cycle and stacked by the age of the playground so if a younger playground becomes damaged or is dangerous or is in disrepair we would absolutely address that out of cycle but the the life cycle management is built through the

[00:36:40] cip and cap to replace playgrounds as they reach end of life um i look forward to discussing it further so thank you for that thank you yeah um i'll just add one or two comments i definitely can't disagree with uh the spirit of what mrs anything that ms griffiths mentioned right it's how do we as a school board begin to then weigh in on what our philosophy is around that existing process?

[00:37:07] And I know, like, for example, Guilford Elementary has a brand new playground, right? But we've talked about, yeah, is that correct? I just want to misspeak and keep talking while you look.

[00:37:29] Guilford does not appear to have an inclusive playground yet. That doesn't mean it wasn't one of the newer playgrounds that was prior to us making inclusive our standard. That kind of feeds into what I wanted to mention is I think what we're really beginning to look at as a board, and I don't want to overreach and assume anything over the other board members, but it sounds like the direction that we're going in terms of inclusive playgrounds leads me to looking at CX recommendation three and just kind of wanting to get some thoughts around that language, seeing that there's been a lot of good energy from the board around inclusive playgrounds

[00:38:07] and whether we, you know, adding that type of wording around the philosophy of how we see our inclusive playground experiences and what they should do for all children and putting that philosophy inside the policy and how you all are looking at that.

[00:38:25] I'm looking at recommendation three, sorry.

[00:38:48] - I'm sorry, was there a question? - It was a question, sorry. I was looking at recommendation three and just seeing, in SEAC's recommendations and seeing if there was any comment. - Yeah, we took SEAC's recommendation - And just wordsmithed it a little bit to use some terms that we were familiar with through the U.S. Access Board and things.

[00:39:06] But it should, oh I'm sorry, from lines 67 through 72 of the red line, it should incorporate the intent of the recommendation. - I see some of the recommendation. Yeah, I definitely see the update.

[00:39:22] Okay, awesome. And then on the topic of kind of the older buildings, I think Sully's on the list, right, in terms of the priority list right now, Mr. Lewis, and we can talk maybe more in the CIP session around the needs of the schools and how things are scheduled out now and where we see that conversation around older schools going and how we're pivoting in this CIP around maybe changes in our methodology of decision-making for addressing older schools.

[00:39:58] That's kind of what I'm curious about for the next session. Yes, sir. So we're happy to talk about that. It's not in the slide deck, so you may need to remind me later, and I'll try to remember to bring that up. We did touch on it at the last meeting, but I'll pull those up so we can share where that list is.

[00:40:14] I think as we look at the priorities, and I'll remind you again, but as we look at the priorities, really, like, how is our mindset or our decision-making shifting, and how do we look at that in the current CIP proposal?

[00:40:30] That's all. Yeah, Chair Mansfield. And I would really like where it is that the CTE for early childhood education, where we need that playground for them at the high schools as opposed to the special education kids and the kids who are in special education in the elementary schools, which is going to be, I guess, on the red line, 49 through 52, those lines.

[00:41:02] So I'm looking forward to that information. Board members, any other questions or discussion? Yes. Last one. Thank you, Chair Streffi. Just clarify for me again. Are you saying that if a high school has the CTE program and it's newly adopted, you have to go in and put a playground?

[00:41:26] Is that what you were saying? Or I'm just trying to understand. If you could just clarify for me. Sure. Each of the high schools have that program. and so all of our high schools right now have a two to five year old playground that was put in either when the building was constructed or after the fact at some point and so those those playgrounds have been put on the list of replacement because of their age just so they've all been put in that age order as Mr. Stocks explained earlier so each one of them should have had one of those and you'll see on the list tonight some of those that we're we're talking about replacing our high schools would indicate that those have come up

[00:42:02] in that age order list. - Okay, so with that, we'll move on to the next information item, 5.01, support services, US Environmental Protection Agency, Clean School Bus Grant Program, round four.

[00:42:23] And this is presented by Mr. Davies, director of transportation. - Good evening. This is to, we're requesting authorization to apply for the latest round of EPA Clean School Bus Program grant funds.

[00:42:44] With this application, we would pursue the purchase of 15 new propane buses. If you recall, we previously, in the last round, which was round three, we applied for and received grant funding for 10 electric buses plus 15 propane buses.

[00:43:01] Those propane buses are expected by the end of this year, calendar year and the electric buses are expected towards the end of the school year and we currently have 21 electric buses currently in service uh at the end of once all the existing outstanding orders are received we'll have approximately uh 31 electric buses and 15 propane with this or if we're successful with this grant application we would uh once these buses are received we would have uh an even number of uh electric buses and propane buses that would give us a solid foundation

[00:43:40] for uh comparison as we move forward um and you can see in the item here our cip funding for fy26 right now is 10.28 million plus and that's that gives you an itemized list of the buses that we would that we are recommending for purchase uh this it's important because i understand there's There's still a lot of flux with our CIP budget.

[00:44:08] This is contingent upon us receiving funding through the CIP program for our purchase. So that's because of the timing and the due date for the application, which is January 9th, which is why we're bringing this forward now. Thank you, Mr. Davies.

[00:44:25] So my first question is, and thank you for that last point as well. My question is, how much of what we are trying to fund is supplemented by this grant?

[00:44:41] I'm trying to understand that. The cost differential, the EPA share is about \$25,000 to \$35,000 per bus. The difference between a diesel and a propane bus cost-wise is about \$10,000.

[00:45:00] So we actually save money on our CIP through the grant by getting the full grant amount per bus. Okay, got it. I still didn't quite understand.

[00:45:16] I guess I didn't understand the answer. So I'm just trying to figure out, in terms of all of the grant funding that we are asking for or applying for, how much of a dent is that into the program that we're trying to fund? This more than covers the additional cost.

[00:45:35] Awesome, okay. That was your answer, okay. The cost premium is \$10,000, but the grant provides \$25,000 to \$35,000. Okay, thank you. Any other questions or discussion? Yes, Ms. Griffiths. Thank you, Chair Streffi. I think propane buses are better than electric, but I have a couple questions, so forgive me.

[00:45:57] Can you give me the pros and cons for gas, diesel, versus propane? That's question number one. I'll let you answer. Versus an electric bus, but if you can... Well, for propane, in terms of the cons, there's three major manufacturers of school buses in the United States, Thomas International and Bluebird.

[00:46:23] Right now, Bluebird is the only one that is manufacturing propane buses. The other two have moved towards electric. So that presents a risk. And Bluebird doesn't have a... right now we've been pressuring them to set up a facility but they do not have a local facility for warranty service and things like that so that that does present a risk i do think mr griffith i want to just share here that part of what we're doing is we're adding more propane buses and if you recall this is a part of a pilot program for us to do exactly what you

[00:47:03] just asked so we're trying to get some repetitive samples of the electric the propane the diesel And make sure that we have all the information so that when the pilot is done, we're going to come to the board and say, maybe we stick with diesel, maybe we stick with electric or propane. But so what Mr. Davies is sharing is some of the things we know to this point.

[00:47:22] But once we get these buses in service for a period of time that we know that we have a good, you know, good share of what they're going to be from a maintenance perspective, what they're going to be from cost perspective, Then we can come to the board with a report and say, we've done the pilot, this is what we recommended, and here are the pros and cons of each one.

[00:47:41] So if that helps any, we're not quite ready to share all that, but that's what we'll be trying to get there in the next probably year to year and a half once we get these buses in service and get a real good history from them. Well, that was my next question because I'd be looking at cost analysis for maintenance efficiency, true environmental impact, and batteries, you know, how are we disposing of the batteries?

[00:48:07] So I appreciate that. So you kind of answered my next question that you're going to be working on that. And real quick, Riverside High School got a new chiller. What funds did that come from to replace that chiller? That's the next item, and I'll be happy to go through all the details of that.

[00:48:28] Okay, all right, great. Thank you so much. All right. Not to assume. Any other questions or discussion? Seeing none, we'll move on to 5.05, Support Services, Change in Scope of Capital Asset Preservation Program, CAP Project. And I will say that we are doing wonderful with timing.

[00:48:46] I don't want to jinx it. So this is presented by William Mohed, Director of Facilities Operations. I'm going to take the lead. Mr. Wohitz is here to ask us, answer questions from a technical perspective. So I wanted to share with this to the question you just asked Mrs. Griffith is, if you recall, and this is timing, well timed with the evaluation of our FY26 CIP, but each year the capital budget is done in three increments, and we have just regular CIP projects which are done with individual bond sales from the county, and they're listed individually when we do that.

[00:49:22] But the CAP, the Capital Asset Preservation Plan, and the CRA, the Capital Renewal and Alteration Program, those are two individual projects that contain multiple projects in them. So the CAP has probably hundreds of projects, from chillers to windows to paving to painting.

[00:49:41] All those types of things are included in the CAP, and those are identified individually in the CIP book. But because the cap is provided to us with one lump sum, then there is flexibility allowed to be able to move money from one project to the next.

[00:49:57] And so in this particular case, that's exactly what we're doing. We're being as transparent as possible, coming to the board to say this flexibility is here and this is how we plan to use it. And the example we've given in there, there are some roofing projects that we've done this year that have come in under budget, which has allowed some additional funding that we believe is enough to fund the chiller.

[00:50:17] The problem we have is this chiller is failing at an early age before its end of life. And those are the things we've been talking to the board about is we cannot afford a catastrophic failure. But on numerous occasions, this chiller has caused us trouble and has just not been reliable. We have a lemon.

[00:50:34] And so what we've done is we've limped along and repaired it and repaired it and repaired it. And we've come across where we believe we've saved enough money with these roofing projects that we can take this chiller out and replace it with one that we can rely on. So what we're doing in this area is showing you in public transparency how we plan to move that money in there.

[00:50:57] And so what we're saying to you here is we want your permission to be able to do that. And so any time we move money within those projects like that, we come to this committee and say that's what we're planning to do so that it's on record and everyone sees how we're managing those funds. I really appreciate that, Mr. Lewis.

[00:51:15] Don't want to speak for anybody, but I think this is like one of the items we love to see in F&O committee, right? Making sure that we're able to pivot to get schools what they need. So that's just my piece. Anyone else have any comments or questions? Seeing no other comments or questions, we'll move on to new business.

[00:51:37] Is there any new business? Seeing no new business. Chair Streffi, can I ask one quick clarifying question? On the information items, we have 5.01 was coming back for consent. And if we could get direction for 5.02, 3, and 4, if they were action or consent.

[00:51:57] I believe wellness is probably action. Action, yeah, action for 2 and 3 is my sense. I would want them to action as well. And then for board members, this is for the Clean School Bus Grant Program.

[00:52:17] Are we okay to send this forward to consent so that the team can meet their grant deadline? thumbs up thumbs up so that'll go thank you so much uh the last one is just information right all right any other comments or questions so we'll move on to new business any new business no new business um we'll go ahead and adjourn this november 19th finance and operations committee meeting thank you all very much and see you soon



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