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Loudoun County School Board, 4th Tuesday School Board Meeting, Tuesday, November 26, 2024

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[00:02:24] Good afternoon. I call it to order this November 26, 2024, Loudoun County School Board meeting. I've been notified that Dr. Deans would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting. Dr. Deans, would you please state your location and whether this is a personal or medical matter?

[00:02:49] I am in Goldsboro, North Carolina. I'm in a hotel office, and it is a personal matter. Is anyone present with you at this location? No. This will be Dr. Dean's first remote participation for this calendar year in a school board meeting using a personal exemption.

[00:03:14] Therefore, I'll entertain a motion that Dr. Dean's request to participate remotely be granted. Do I have a second? I have a second by Ms. LaBelle. Okay. And we will now go ahead and vote for Dr. Dean's.

[00:03:35] Clerk, would you please open the vote? Board members, would you please record your vote? Clerk, would you please close and display the vote?

[00:03:54] And that motion passes with Dr. Deans absent, Dr. Deans, Ms. Donahue, and Ms. Chernoff absent for the vote. And I also have another, I've also been informed that Ms. Chernoff would like to remotely participate in tonight's school board meeting.

[00:04:17] Ms. Chernoff, would you please state your location and whether this is a medical or personal matter? Good afternoon. I am in Cincinnati, Ohio at my in-law's house. This is a personal matter. I am alone in their home office. Other family are in the home, but they will not be in this room with me.

[00:04:38] Okay, so that answers the question. Anyone present with you at this location? This will be Ms. Chernoff's first remote participation for this calendar year in a school board meeting using a personal exemption. Therefore, I will entertain a motion that Ms. Chernoff's request to participate remotely be granted. Do I have a motion?

[00:04:55] Go ahead, Ms. LaBelle. I have a motion. Do I have a second? I have a second by Ms. Chandler. It's been properly moved and seconded, and we will go ahead and take a vote.

[00:05:15] Well, is there any discussion? I'm sorry. I forgot the discussion last time, but is there any discussion? Okay. Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote. Dr. Deans, would you please state your vote?

[00:05:36] Yes. Clerk, please close and display the vote. and that motion passes with Ms. Donahue and Ms. Chernoff absent for the vote. Welcome to the meeting both Dr. Deans and Ms. Chernoff. Okay so before we move on we will move on to item agenda item three approval of the consent agenda. Board members are there any changes to be made to the consent agenda? Seeing no changes before we vote on the consent agenda we have one proclamation

[00:06:16] proclamation to be read. This proclamation recognizes December 9th through 15th 2024 as Computer Science Education Week, which will be read by Dr. Rashid. Thank you, Chair. I'd like to thank Neil Slevin, Nick Grazida, and Michael Grubbs for helping me to put this proclamation for our Computer Science Education Week together.

[00:06:39] Whereas Computer Science Education Week highlights the crucial role that computer science plays in transforming our society and how computer science enables innovation and creates economic opportunities. And whereas the fields of computer science, including artificial intelligence, are technologies with the power to fundamentally transform nearly all sectors of the United States economy.

[00:07:01] And whereas the outlook for computer science jobs is bright, with over 500,000 over computing positions across the country, and whereas to build a workforce equipped to support our community, we must prepare citizens for the needs of an increasingly diverse business climate by providing them the skills and credentials that are needed in a high-demand technology business.

[00:07:24] And whereas Loudoun County Public Schools is proud of its legacy in adopting computer science, computational thinking, and coding as essential literacies for all students. And whereas Loudoun County has supported the integration of computer science into the K-8 core disciplines and expanded computer science pathways for secondary students, underscoring the inherent significance of computer science education.

[00:07:50] And whereas Loudoun County is developing a lab school with George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College to harness partnerships with industry, higher education, and K-12, with some models aimed at increasing exposure and experience in applied computer science outside of school walls. And whereas Loudoun County recognizes the regional partnerships expanded work-based learning, post secondary and secondary partnerships to expand professional development, high quality

instructional resources, and project-based learning opportunities for educators and students across the Commonwealth through multiple Loudoun

[00:08:28] Education Foundation grants and whereas the Loudoun County is committed to computer science education by providing students meaningful access to opportunities in computer science and students classrooms and schools are encouraged to celebrate computer science education week by coming together to explore career pathways in computer science related fields now therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board proclaims December 9th to December 15th, 2024 as Computer Science Education Week in Loudoun County, Virginia.

[00:09:01] Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Rashid. So I will entertain a motion to approve the consent agenda. Do I have a motion? Yes, Ms. LaBelle. I move that we approve this proclamation for Computer Science Week.

[00:09:22] The consent agenda. Oh, the consent agenda, yes. I move that we approve the consent agenda. - Thank you, Ms. LaVelle. - It's a proclamation. - Thank you, Ms. LaVelle. Do I have a second? - Second. - I have a second by Ms. Chandler. It's been properly moved and seconded.

[00:09:41] At this time, we'll go ahead and take a vote to approve the consent agenda. Clerk, would you please open the vote? Board members, would you please record your vote? Oh wait, open the vote. And Dr. Deans, would you please state your vote?

[00:09:59] - Yes. - Ms. Chernoff, would you please state your vote? - Yes. would you please close and display the vote and that motion passes with mrs griffiths abstaining from the vote and mrs donahue absent for the vote now we're going to go back to item two sorry about that and i thank my board members for reminding me um at this time we should start with disclosures and i will go ahead and start with the disclosures because we are

[00:10:36] talking budget items today as a member of the loudon county school board i make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member, I'm eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly

[00:11:14] objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years miss Chandler thank you madam chair as a member of the Loudoun County School Board and make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees specifically as a school board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the

[00:11:52] statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you miss Chandler mrs.

[00:12:10] Griffiths thank you madam chair as a member of the Loudoun County School board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees while in the excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which I am included. I can and will

[00:12:46] participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Thank you Mrs. Griffiths. Vice Chair Streffi. Thank you Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest

[00:13:25] may also be affected of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank You Vice Chair Struffy. Ms. Labelle. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and/or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school

[00:14:02] board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which i am included i can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you miss labelle miss shirnov thank you madam chair as a member of the lamb county school

[00:14:38] board i make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee.

[00:14:58] These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees well in the excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years.

[00:15:17] Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. Okay, and now we will move on to item four, our work session with 4.01, Department of Teaching and Learning, Understanding Generative Artificial Intelligence, presented by Mike Henrickson, our Instructional Technology Supervisor.

[00:16:02] Thank you, Chair Mansfield and members of the school board. We are excited this afternoon to present a work session on generative artificial intelligence.

[00:16:23] Today we plan to explore generative AI tools and work with you all through a few example prompts, how generative AI may be useful to you as school board members, which hopefully will give you an idea of what the implications could be at the school level.

[00:16:39] We will provide you an update on the ongoing work around generative AI between the departments of teaching and learning and the departments of digital innovation and then discuss at a high level current policy and guidance implications and next steps on where we're headed. Before we go into content, I just want to take a minute and introduce some of the folks at the table. We're very excited tonight to be joined by a few members of school staff, our IFTs, and they'll be working with us throughout the evening as we hope to make this a bit of an interactive work session and a little bit of hands-on. So if we could just go

[00:17:17] down the table. Kristen Senheimer. I work at Henrietta Lacks Elementary School. Corinne Brandstetter. I'm the IFT at Stonebridge High School. Adam Howes. I'm the IFT at Watson Mountain Middle School.

[00:17:42] Thank you for being here tonight. Can you go to the third slide? We have to advance to the next slide. So before we dive in, we do want to get you all to be thinking a little bit about generative AI, as this is a work session.

[00:18:15] So if you're willing to speak to us on the mic, or even if you just want to jot down some of your thinking, what is something that you already know about generative AI, maybe something you've heard that's happening within LCPS or just the topic in general?

[00:18:31] And then what is something related to generative AI that you want to learn more about? And hopefully we're hitting the mark on some of those things with our work session, but also inform future communication with the board. Board members, anyone want to go first? Well, I can tell you that I've used generative AI with my tutoring student in making some decodable books.

[00:18:57] He can just come up with a, you know, he says like Martians and snakes or something, and then he comes up with, then it helps, and I say we're working on AI and AY, and then it comes up with a story, and he thinks that's awesome.

[00:19:14] So that's one way that I know that people have used in my literacy and in tutoring. Anyone else? Madam. Dr. Deans?

[00:19:30] I just wanted to say that I got a personal lesson in generative AI. And after I left my personal lesson, I went home and developed an entire presentation that I have to give next week in my community.

[00:19:52] So I never knew it could do so much. And I just had the lesson, and I was able to use it immediately. Of course, there's more to learn, but I was able to use it immediately. I was excited. I created a PowerPoint presentation by using generative AI.

[00:20:16] Anybody else? Thank you, Dr. Dean. Nope. That's all you're going to get today. I appreciate it, and I appreciate Dr. Dean's excitement about the tool. So with that, Mike is going to go into a little bit about what is generative AI, so I'm going to turn it over to him.

[00:20:36] Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be here this evening to share a little bit about some of the work that we've been doing with generative AI and to give you guys some hands-on experience and see what that might mean for some of the work that we do here as a school division.

[00:20:52] So first, let's explore a little bit about what generative AI is. So generative AI is a subset of this larger field of artificial intelligence, and really it's a subset of a subset of a subset and this is a definition of generative AI that it's a tool that produces new content based on input and prompts provided by the user and it's a subset underneath a larger field of artificial intelligence. So artificial intelligence has been around for quite some time and as researchers and computer scientists have continued to refine

[00:21:29] and hone those different disciplines, now we're at the point where we have access to generative AI tools. So we're going to watch a very short video here that gives us a quick foundation in generative AI and a little bit about how it works.

[00:21:46] So as we're watching the video, I would just invite you to, as you're watching, look for something that affirms something that you already knew. Maybe it's one of those things that you were thinking about when Neil kicked off our presentation. And then maybe look for something that is new to you or challenges something that you thought that you knew about generative AI.

[00:22:04] And we'll watch this video and then we'll have a quick reflection. What exactly is generative AI? When new content is created by artificial intelligence, it's called generative AI.

[00:22:22] This could involve generating texts and images, as well as videos, music, or voices. To do this, you describe in a chat dialog box what you want the AI to create. This description is called a prompt. The generative AI tools provide answers to all sorts of questions, summarize complex information, and generate diverse ideas quickly. Depending on how they're used, they can create short stories, paintings, pieces of code, or even musical compositions. The foundation for this creation lies in large amounts of data that the AI system

[00:23:00] accesses to identify patterns and similarities. The content produced by the AI is new. It's often impressive and challenging to distinguish from things humans have made. Generative AI can also be misused. In so-called deep fakes, AI is utilised to produce images or videos that seem real.

[00:23:25] AI-generated texts are also tough to recognise as machine-made. Moreover, the AI can provide answers that sound correct but are actually incorrect this is called hallucinating the quality of what's created depends on both the quality of the data used and the quality of the prompts given to effectively utilize generative ai we need to learn how to guide the tools with meaningful prompts and use them thoughtfully generative ai holds immense potential and can help us in many ways, such as serving as a writing or learning partner. However, the

[00:24:05] AI should do the hard work, and humans should be responsible for the facts. Okay, so just a quick overview there, but some important big ideas to pull out of that video. One, that generative AI is built on these vast libraries of data, and so it's

[00:24:31] It's drawing its information from just immense amounts of data that the systems are using to generate these new responses, whether they're images or text-based or even audio or things like that. And those vast amounts of data that the tools are built on, really what it allows the tools to do is create incredibly precise predictions.

[00:25:02] Really, all these things are very, very complex prediction engines. So the things that come out of generative AI, the AI doesn't know what it's saying to you. It doesn't have any sort of cognition or recognition of the facts that it's sharing.

[00:25:18] It's simply using its data to predict what words would go along with or what response would go along with the prompt that you created. So we're going to shift now into some exploration with AI tools.

[00:25:37] And so here is our goal for this portion of our time together, is to provide a little bit of hands-on experience for you. If you haven't tried it before, you'll have a chance to try generative AI tonight. And we'll do a little bit of thinking around how this technology might support the work that we do as a school division, how it might support teachers and staff and the work that they're doing and how it might support students.

[00:26:02] So tonight we're going to be doing this with Microsoft Co-Pilot or Google Gemini. you can choose which tool you would like to use. If you have the presentation open, you can copy and paste the URL there. You can type the URLs into your web browser address bar.

[00:26:17] We're using these two tools because these are the two supported tools that we have available to staff in LCPS right now. And these tools offer some important data protections for us, meaning we have assurances from the vendor and agreements with the vendor in place that tell us what they will and won't do with the data that we share with the tools?

[00:26:40] Anything additional about that? - Oh, I would just add that, oops, sorry about that. Just that these are the two tools that all staff have access to. It's important to log in with your lcps.org account into these tools. If you use a personal account, you will not have the same protections as we do as an organization, so that's why we're stressing to use your lcps.org account.

[00:27:02] And then you'll be inside of our walled garden environment, which kind of provides that extra data protection versus just using free generative AI tools that are available on the internet. So that's why we're directing to these two. And we do have folks available here to help support as you guys are exploring some of these tools.

[00:27:23] If we need to come up on the dais and help support, help the login process or point out how to do certain tasks inside of the tool, answer questions, we can do that. But let's take a look at what our task is going to be. So we're going to start by logging into Copilot or Gemini. And we've got some example prompts for you on the next slide.

[00:27:40] And you can use one of those or you can create your own. And what we're going to start with is just asking the AI a question by using one of those prompts and review the response that we get from the AI. And then your last task is to ask a follow-up question, either one that you generate on your own or sometimes the interface will give you some suggestions of follow-up questions you might want to ask.

[00:28:01] You can take one of those suggestions. So here are the prompts that we suggest that you try. And we've got a couple of different examples from a couple of different lenses here. so as you're looking at the examples I want you to think about a couple of things one which of these might be interesting to you which one might you want to dig into a little bit and see what the response might be and also look and see how the prompt is is crafted what goes into or what can you learn from how a prompt is built based on the examples that we have here so let's take a few minutes to try that out and we have folks here to support but let's go

[00:28:39] into Copilot or Gemini and try asking a prompt.

[00:36:17] So it seems like we reached a good low. If you're continuing to work, continue to work. You're fine, Craig. Thank you. But in the interest of moving on with the session, any response from board members in terms of did the AI you use provide a useful response? Based on the response, what might you want to know more about or just generally your experience this evening? Any response or feedback?

[00:36:51] Madam Chair, may I speak? Vice Chair Struffy. I'm sorry, Dr. Deans, go ahead. One of the things that I would like to expand my learning on is how to input images into a PowerPoint.

[00:37:26] And that's something that I'll come back and have another lesson next week or next month. Vice Chair Struffy? For me, I just asked it to give me a month of class notes for eighth grade social studies based on Virginia Department of Education curriculum standards. And so it did that and then I kept prompting it to give me daily class notes for week one and then a detailed presentation outline for each day, which it did. And I think that if we had the right licensing it would give us, it could actually spit out the skeleton of PowerPoint presentation if we wanted to. So it's a wonderful starting point. And it even generated

[00:38:05] the the visuals for the presentations as well um so it's very neat anyone else no so while we have staff here from the buildings we did want to pause for a minute and ask this last question about how might tools like this support staff or students and their own experience within the building so would anyone from the ift team like to share what's happening with ai in schools so our teachers at watson all use driving questions to start their class so they are connecting

[00:38:45] the learning that's taking place in the classroom to the greater good. So they have used AI to take what they have, take the skills, take the Unix, take the concepts that they are teaching and develop those questions to boil those down into a sentence that they can continue to come back to and post in their room so that students know, hey, this is the greater good.

[00:39:07] This is why we are learning these skills and it's how it connects to the community outside of the classroom. So we've developed some prompts that really help streamline that process at the high school level i've seen a lot of teachers use it for many things one of the things that the world language teachers really enjoy doing is using it to create leveled readers so it can even create a leveled they can read create leveled readers in french it can create leveled readers in german so if you want something

[00:39:46] that it's a level one a level two and you can input student interest into it so it can say make it about soccer make it about marie antoinette whatever the kids are interested in a lot of our teachers are using it to create bulldogs doing different things like everybody loves to do that just like to generate images so like our debate team sponsors used it to create an image of two bulldogs at debate they're standing at podiums and wearing bow ties so we've

[00:40:20] had a lot of that and I think a lot of people are using it for image generation I had a special education teacher show me yesterday that she was using it to create images to help support her students thinking and learning so we have our dedication ceremony coming up for our school and the students are preschool to second grade and the school's Henrietta Lacks and so part of our process of that involving the kids and the dedication is having them learn about Henrietta Lacks

[00:40:58] and I'm not sure if you're aware but online there's not too much information that's age appropriate or academically appropriate for that young audience so what we did was we asked AI to create you know certain articles on certain lexile levels for the kids and asked it to omit certain things um and

then just kind of like compiled our own resources for them to use um and then i was working with a research group of kids making posters about hemorrhoidolax so i did a custom gem which is kind of like a like a mega prompt that you can like save um and so

[00:41:37] you can keep asking questions to that instead of typing all of the stuff many times like you know this needs to be appropriate for second grade this is what we're learning about um and so yeah the kids are really enjoying it um one of the kids is teaching us about cells and he's in second grade um and he had all these facts written down and um i noticed that he did not mention that cells were alive and i was like oh do you think that's an important fact to add on your on your paper and he said no um and i said oh okay why not and he said um well that would obviously freak the kindergartners out a lot so we should not we should not put that on the poster I was like oh

[00:42:16] you're right thank you for taking the audience into consideration all right well thank thank you for those examples and so now we're going to move on to sharing just a little bit about some of the work that we've been doing as a school division around generative artificial intelligence and these are some some examples that we'd like to share so we have been working with our instructional facilitators of technology team to help them, help prepare them to support teachers with using generative AI. We've heard some great examples of how those staff members are supporting teachers

[00:42:52] with their creative uses of generative AI. We're developing a cohort or assembling a cohort of high school teachers to act as AI innovators to help figure out exactly what this can look like in the classroom, how it can support instruction and create some great examples that we can take and use to support the learning of others.

[00:43:14] We have sessions that we have planned and more that we're continuing to plan that schools can take and use, for example, on some of those additional professional development days at the high school level or other professional learning opportunities that the schools might have that they can take and use some of these modules to learn a little bit more about generative artificial intelligence.

[00:43:33] And we've been collaborating with our peers in DDI to identify what additional tools might be needed for staff, And so we're standing up a smaller scale pilot of a teacher-specific AI tool to go along with Gemini and co-pilot just to see how those different tools work in context in the classroom and get feedback from teachers.

[00:43:56] We're also participating in a vast cohort with other Virginia divisions. We're partnered with Enrico and Winchester. So our three divisions are working through what this looks like internal to our divisions and sharing that back and forth. We're kind of ahead of the rest of the counties that are in the VAS 1.

[00:44:13] We're kind of in the VAS 2 cohort because we did a lot of this work in March, April, and May of this year to develop those guiding principles and the blogs that our instructional technology team developed, so all of those items that we've already kind of provided to our community. We're considering how we might evaluate tools for students with hands-on AI experience.

[00:44:32] This is a market that is shifting quickly with terms and conditions and features and functionality. So really making sure that we are protecting students and student data is kind of our number one goal in that environment. And so we're starting to see a little settle. We have, that's one of the reasons we do allow staff to access Copilot and Gemini with their LCPS accounts because we do have those

agreements in place that kind of protects that data. And then we're looking at what the connections between AI and our computer science SOLs and our digital learning SOLs to make

[00:45:03] sure we're not missing something and finally we are as you may be aware we are developing a draft policy through the curriculum and instruction committee we presented an initial draft policy at our november meeting a copy of that policy is in board docs with tonight's agenda item we are incorporating currently feedback from the committee on our first go at a policy some good feedback related to want to go a little bit deeper on staff and students guidance how does this align

[00:45:39] to academic dishonesty statements and the students rights and responsibilities so there are a number of things that we're working out when it comes to the feedback we plan on bringing it back to the cni meeting as an information item again before we send it out to the public for broader feedback to make sure that we're kind of at a place where the committee feels comfortable and we're anticipating that would be in january february depending on when we end up having our cni committee meetings in the new year but we're happy to receive feedback or thoughts from the full board on on that process as well so with that chair mansfield that is our content for tonight we're happy to

[00:46:18] answer questions from the division level but we're also very fortunate tonight to have school-based staff here as well so thank you for participating with us in this work session thank you mr slavin Board members, do you have any comments or questions? I'll start with Vice Chair Straffi.

[00:46:35] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so much for the presentation and for allowing us to be a little bit hands-on with the work session. So I appreciate all of the efforts in terms of using AI to kind of elevate and deepen the learning.

[00:46:52] I think that that is super important. And as we all know, so much of future careers and what jobs will look like will depend on success of our students will depend on their ability to utilize AI to do those jobs and so getting making sure that we you know get a get ahead of that curve is really important my question is more for mr. Smith I think what I'm curious about in addition to everything you all mentioned on the instructional side is have there been any initial discussions around training our own AI

[00:47:27] model for LCPS where folks can access a chat bot to have questions you know solved or you know I know federal and state agencies are really embracing this this idea that they're they would take one of the existing AIs and then train that model to have their own for you know for employees to access resources or you know potentially for in the K through 12 setting having families be able to ask questions or students engage with it at the school community level and have some

[00:48:02] questions resolved or report things I know this is a little bit more forward thinking but I just want to ask knowing that lots of federal agencies and state agencies are exploring that so yes it is something that we've had conversations about it's one of the reasons our initial AI workgroup included everyone from across the district we had 35 individuals there were school principals teachers as well as HR staff and business and finance staff and transportation staff and kind of everyone that these tools would impact because yes there's an instructional impact but there's also an operational efficiency impact and how we do business and how we answer questions or how we

[00:48:41] provide information so we are looking at tools we've had a couple that we have reviewed I would say we're still at a point where what does this look like from a cost perspective for us to do this from how many users we would have accessing it when we're at 100,000 users, 140,000 users with our

community and everyone. So yes, it's on the roadmap, but we're just trying to get to like, or when does it make sense for us to do that? And when are those tools going to be approachable from a K-12 organization? Can I mention something real quick though? To your question,

[00:49:19] Let's Talk on our division's website has a chat bot. So it's in kind of beta testing now, But I wanted you to know that so you can, you know, ask it questions about the school division and that kind of thing. So we are leveraging that. Thank you very much.

[00:49:36] And then the last thing I wanted to bring up, you mentioned that the floor is kind of shifting. Things are changing so fast in this space. One of the areas that I've been interested in is on the technology or software development side or even the cybersecurity side, all of the emerging technology areas.

[00:49:55] For example, Copilot has, you know, they have GitHub Copilot where now you're generating, you know, software developers are developing code in a totally different way and leveraging AI. Is that on the, have we talked about that as it relates to our computer science courses and programs?

[00:50:12] I know this is, again, a little bit, going a little bit too far ahead, but, you know, I can see it already that, you know, people are thinking about how we resource, you know, software developers in the future. And, you know, do we actually need the architects, you know, on all of these teams?

[00:50:32] Or can we bring people who can just leverage the AI to produce code or, you know, tackle some of these projects? And so I think that's an opportunity as well. I appreciate that comment. And I know, I believe Mr. Grazita is sitting behind me, our computer science supervisor. And he would say absolutely.

[00:50:49] This is something we're keeping our eye on when we think about pathways and curriculum. And these are the conversations that the computer science team are having with our computer science teachers. So happy to get a little bit more detail for you in terms of how we're approaching that. But I know that that is a part of the conversation.

[00:51:06] And we're also appreciative of the partnership with the computer science office on this conversation, particularly at the student level. Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:51:24] I just wanted to thank the team. It's weird being on this side of it virtually, but we did have the opportunity in committee to kind of run a similar exercise to sort of jumpstart this conversation. And I just really want to thank staff and especially Dr. Rashid and Dr. Deans for kind of joining me in this conversation that's been ongoing really throughout this entire year since we got on board throughout our committee work.

[00:51:50] Just seeing the importance of AI, understanding that it has arrived, that we definitely have some things to tackle in terms of how we use the tool, like Mr. Streffi said, to enrich and deepen the learning, but also how we hold people accountable to using it well and to using it ethically.

[00:52:08] And so those are some of the conversations that we have had in depth. So I won't take up too much time here, but on November 5th, we had those conversations in committee about the policy. And I would encourage people to go back and listen if they're interested in the direction that this is going. And I know at first staff shared, like, maybe we just start with the guidelines and see where that goes because things are changing so rapidly.

[00:52:31] But the committee really felt like because it is changing so rapidly that actually that supported the need for some guiding principles and underlining foundational things that regardless of where the

tool goes, that these are the things that we're going to adhere to. And I feel like we're in a really positive direction with getting there.

[00:52:50] So I'm looking forward to the ongoing discussion. And just to reiterate what Mr. Smith said, we were at the Virginia School Board Association conference last week and I attended a session on AI and I asked the group, like, where's everybody at with AI?

[00:53:06] And pretty sure we're one of the few, if only counties, districts, divisions that are in the draft policy phase. And that's a real tribute to the work that staff has done on the guiding principles, working with staff to really understand what is needed in our division.

[00:53:22] And so that was a really good feeling. I had a lot of people coming up to me afterwards asking if they could contact us and use us as a resource. So I just wanted to give that shout out. It's nice to have that encouragement at times. And so I just wanted to put that out there. So thanks again.

[00:53:38] And thanks to all the staff for being here and sharing about the kiddos. It's awesome. Thank you, Ms. Cherna. Dr. Deans. Madam Chair, thank you. Recently in the news, I think it was Marriott Hotel that laid off a group because of AI. I think as we develop it, we need to also keep a safeguard with our employees

[00:54:08] knowing that their positions may shift, but that they will not be some of those who AI would take their places. Thank you, Dr. Deans. Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm so curious about this and to echo Ms. Chernoff, thank you for the presentation. It's really fun to dig in and see how it works. I do have a few questions, Madam Chair, if that's all right. First off, how did LCPS come to choose these two, I guess, programs over the other ones that were mentioned

[00:54:48] in the generative AI guide and what is the difference between the two that we have a preference for and the other ones and in that same vein could you tell me a little bit more about the customer user agreements and legal protections that LCPS has put in place to ensure that we are protecting our staff and students? Sure so I'll take the majority of those questions So feel free to jump in.

[00:55:17] So we chose these two tools specifically because we have contractual agreements already in place with Google and Microsoft that govern our data usage. We actually delayed turning on Gemini until they integrated, because it was a standalone tool and then they integrated into their workspace. And Workspace for Education, at that point it came along with those data protections.

[00:55:36] There's age limit restrictions and all sorts of things that come along with that. So these were two tools that we were able to review. We looked at other tools. There's a lot of incubator startups. There's companies that are really trying to drive non-government and education markets.

[00:55:53] And they don't have user terms and conditions. 18 plus is like a no-go starter for us for a lot of tools. So we really wanted to lean into something that we could have those data protections in place. When you go to co-pilot, right up in the top, there's a shield and it says your data is protected. And the way that we like to look at that is it's like swimming with a lifeguard.

[00:56:11] Like you still shouldn't put PII in these tools. We include that as part of our FERPA training, but if you do, that's still within our walled garden, and we protect that environment, and that's part of our agreement. That data cannot be used to train a model, any of those type of things. If you go to a regularly available generative AI tool such as ChatGPT, we have no agreement in place with them.

[00:56:32] Data that's used as part of those searches can be used to feed the model, so that's kind of like swimming at your own risk versus our environment of swimming with that lifeguard on duty that kind of helps protect you. And that's really the way that we're looking at that. We still allow access to those tools because it's such an evolving market in what's available and when things are available and when they release things and what you're paying for versus what's free.

[00:56:54] I think I paid for ChatGPT for one month before the feature I was paying for was included for free the next month, so then I canceled my subscription. So it's just that's the type of evolution we're seeing, which is when we're looking in K-12 to really establish, like, okay, what are we professionally learning about? what does this look like in the classroom the consistency of these tools are what we've seen kind of be something that is reliable and that we can count upon and that we can we when things are released we have the ability to turn them on and off versus that just being a regularly available tool where they're just released and we don't have any any controls in place and I think that was most of your questions that's fantastic thank you for that

[00:57:33] information my next question is given that one of our primary tasks as a school division is to promote critical thinking and that AI draws on multiple sources, is it possible to prevent bias in information? And if so, how would that work? So any piece of information or any resource that we might use in the classroom is written from a particular point of view and

[00:58:07] and has perspective, and the vast amounts of data that the AI is trained on are all sources of information that are written from a particular perspective or a particular point of view, so I don't think it's ever gonna be at a place where the outputs of a generative AI tool would be completely free from bias or a particular perspective, a particular stance, and so part of our work is to educate people about what that means, and how do you critically evaluate the output from the AI,

[00:58:45] and bring that critical thinking to it, and making sure you're evaluating it through a different lens, rather than just taking it at face value. - I would add that we are aware of that, and that is being considered in the policy development.

[00:59:01] I'd like to express appreciation to Dr. Ellis Williams early in the process asked questions about how are we thinking about mitigating bias and we're intentionally making connections to our existing resources. We do have a teaching sensitive and controversial curriculum standards that includes regulations around mitigating bias.

[00:59:20] So we're adding some language, we're making cross-referencing and so that'll inform us as we move forward with training and conversations with staff about the use of AI that we need to be mindful of that. So it is being thought of in the policy development. Thank you so much, both of you, for that information.

[00:59:37] That's very helpful. And it does reiterate how important our teachers are in the classroom to help really facilitate that process. And then I'll try to roll my last questions into one final set, I guess.

[00:59:53] But given that we're not yet ready to roll out AI for student use, what are the missing pieces? I mean, I've heard you mention several times the expense and the rapid nature of the development right now and how fast it's changing. But I'm just curious if there are specific missing pieces that are keeping us from offering this to students.

[01:00:16] And as of right now, what happens if a student opens Gemini on their computer? - So for students, generative AI tools are blocked on our network and on our devices. That doesn't mean they're not accessing it other ways, but as far as in classroom or on a Chromebook, they cannot access the tools at this point.

[01:00:36] Some of the driving reasons behind that really are terms and conditions and what's acceptable. Google just released Gemini updated terms and conditions. That was 13 plus instead of 18 plus. So now we're reviewing what that looks like and what that could look like in the classroom. But I think we're looking, right now we're piloting some tools that are really more scoped generative AI tools that provide specific, help me be a thought partner with me on this project that I'm working on versus just an open chat engine that allows them to do anything.

[01:01:03] So we're looking at kind of these like scoped that provide a little bit of like banks on the river so that when you're using the AI tool, it's more defined than just an open source AI that you can kind of type anything into. But it really, we're just starting to see the terms and conditions come to where they're actually support.

[01:01:22] And again, that would just be high school students at that point for the terms and conditions for these tools. So that may expand in the future, but we're really paying attention to that because that's where we get our student data protection. That's where COPPA and all of these other compliance that the vendors have to comply with come into play.

[01:01:41] So that's really where we're seeing the market. There is some companies that are releasing for K-12 for students, but it's not nearly the breadth of where the generative AI is at this point. Thank you. That's really helpful. Any other questions?

[01:01:58] No? It seems like we have no more questions. Thank you so much for your presentation. This is pretty exciting. I'm looking forward to playing a little bit more with it. And with that, we will move on to item 4.02, Department of Business and Financial Services, FY26, Preliminary Fiscal Forecast, presented by Sharon Willoughby, our Chief Financial Officer.

[01:02:32] Thank you, and good evening. In previous years, a preliminary fiscal forecast would be created in August to provide very high-level numbers for the upcoming budget that would be transmitted to the county to assist them in preparing their budget guidance.

[01:02:56] This year the budget, the process, I'm sorry, this year the process is pushed back. The county delayed developing their budget guidance to allow discussion regarding the personal property tax rate first. As a result, we have pushed back our fiscal forecast to allow for more timely information as well.

[01:03:15] That brings us to where we're at right now in November. We did receive preliminary budget guidance from the county earlier this month. that is incorporated in the FY26 fiscal forecast. On November 12th, the County Finance Committee met and heard county staff present four tax rate scenarios with the resulting 60% share that would come to LCPS.

[01:03:39] As shown on this slide, the first scenario reduces the current property rate to an equalized rate. The second scenario would reduce just the homeowner's property rate to equalize. The third scenario maintains the property rate but reduces the personal property rate. the fourth scenario maintains the current rates as they are. 60% of net local tax funding ranges from a very low \$54.4 million coming to LCPS

to a little over \$132 million. What was unique this year was county staff did not present a scenario that increased the tax rate. All scenarios were

[01:04:14] either to maintain or lower rates. The committee gave preliminary guidance that was a mix of what county staff provided and is shown on this slide. The real property rate is reduced 2 cents from the current rate of 0.865 to the equalized rate of 0.845. The general personal property rate for data centers as an example is maintained at \$4.15 and then the personal property rate for

[01:04:47] vehicles is reduced from \$4.15 to \$3.48. This scenario with the 60% share once again would yield \$100.4 million of additional revenues coming to LCPS. Since we did not prepare a fiscal forecast in August, we did advise county staff to use last year's fiscal forecast number that forecasted \$145 million in additional expenses. As we are deep in the budget process currently, we don't have an updated number at this time, but we are developing a budget that is focused

[01:05:24] on supporting students, staff, and the entire school system. Additionally, the budget is also focused on the school board priorities the lcps strategic plan and the superintendent's post-entry plan so based on those numbers of 145 million dollars of expenses 100.4 million of county funding a nominal amount of about 3.4 million of state revenue per the biennial state budget we would have a funding gap of about 41.2 million dollars again this is under that scenario however

[01:05:59] final county budget guidance will be provided on December 3rd and county staff has shared during their meetings that they expect county revenue projections to increase so we are cautiously optimistic that on December 3rd we will see a slight uptick in the amount of funding that would come to LCPS regardless of the amount of funding the county includes in its budget guidance it is expected that the FY26 superintendent estimate of needs will balance the expenditures to support school board priorities and the direction with available resources leaving no funding gap that

[01:06:35] is the takeaway message from this fiscal forecast for the school board and for the county board of supervisors is that the fy26 superintendents estimate of needs will meet the county's funding guidance leaving no gap this message is also included in the memo that was loaded up into board docs and has been shared with county staff to include in their calculations and also to share with their Board of Supervisors.

[01:07:01] For our next steps, we include waiting to see the numbers in the county's final budget guidance on December 3rd, as I mentioned earlier. Also, around December 15th, the governor will present any changes he has for the second year of the state biennium budget.

[01:07:19] We may see additional revenues allocated, but we may also see additional required expenditures. So final changes will be incorporated as we finalize preparing the FY26 superintendent estimate of needs. Then, as shown on this slide in the blue circle, is when we enter January and the superintendent will present his estimate of needs, the school board will hold multiple budget work sessions, we will have two public hearings, and ultimately the school board will adopt the FY26 budget.

[01:07:49] And that concludes my presentation on the FY26 preliminary forecast, and I'd be happy to take any questions. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. board members are there any questions i don't see any questions at this time thank you miss willoughby board members since we have it's 535 i think i'd like to go ahead and start with some information items starting with 13.01 office of the superintendent first quarter board forecast

[01:08:25] presented by dr daniel smith chief of staff office of superintendent good evening chair Mr. Mansfield, board members, Dr. Spence. I'm pleased to present you with the first quarter forecast of board topics tonight.

[01:08:42] This is an effort for us to bring to you topics that we've heard from the board and from staff to bring to you at upcoming board meetings. The first quarter is a little bit tricky because the board calendar is set at the January 7th organizational meeting, but these are the dates that we've projected moving into the first quarter.

[01:09:00] You'll note that at the top we show the updates from our advisory committees, which have been scheduled and we've been working with those folks in terms of the Gifted Advisory Committee in January, the Loudoun Education Alliance of Families, our LEAF update in February, LEF in February 25th.

[01:09:18] Then we also have March 11th, we'll have MSAC, and those are our advisory committee updates. A couple of the other big items to point out, you'll see that on January 14th, we have the FY26 Superintendent's Estimate of Needs. In the first meeting in February, we'll have a program evaluation update along with the second quarter financial projection.

[01:09:39] The second meeting in February on February 25th, we'll have an update on the instructional framework. We'll have an update on policy 50-30 on assessment and grading and the work that's taking place at the first meeting in March. And then at the last meeting in March, on March 25th, we'll have an update on family and engagement efforts along with restraint and seclusion.

[01:09:57] So that's what we've projected for the first quarter. Happy to answer any questions you might have. Board members, do you have any questions? Thank you, Dr. Smith. We will, I think we'll continue to move on to the 13. 02 Curriculum Instruction Committee Review of Policy 5130 Textbook Adoption presented by Ms. Lauren Chernoff, Chair of Curriculum and Instruction Committee.

[01:10:31] Thank you, Chair Mansfield. This policy was up for its five-year review. That's why it came to committee. The policy revisions and changes were made in the language for clarity and alignment with applicable LCPS policies in compliance with the Virginia Board of Education Regulations and Virginia Code.

[01:10:50] We first had this as an information item on October 2nd, and then it was posted for feedback. And we, this last meeting in November, were able to move it to the full board as an action item. We took a lot of time to look over the advisory committee comments, particularly from MSAC and SEAC.

[01:11:10] And I am happy to say that those were either included in the policy or are mostly being addressed in the regulation that is also being updated. And in particular, if you'll go to Section A1, I just wanted to draw attention to specifically our educators are going to be, when there's a textbook adoption, they're going to be the majority, hold a majority of that reviewer stakeholder group, since they're going to be the ones that have to learn about it and implement it.

[01:11:40] And that did come from the feedback. So I'm anxious to hear if there's questions and comments, and if there are, I'll probably pass it over to Mr. Slatton. Board members, do you have any questions? Yes, Mrs. Griffiths.

[01:11:55] Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a couple questions on how these textbooks fit into online. A parent submitted the following question, comment during public comment period. I know that many

classes have moved solely to virtual textbooks to replace traditional textbooks.

[01:12:15] I am troubled by this as my student has a challenging time finding the critical formulas while doing their homework. For example, a physics formula is presented in a class and then the student is expected to go home and do the homework. When my student is struggling with a concept, there is no easy place to return to find the formula presented in class.

[01:12:36] If they copied down a formula incorrectly or didn't understand correctly, they are unaware of where to go to find this information, other than via YouTube or Khan Academy, which can be a great resource, but shouldn't be any student's point of truth to find out how to do their homework?

[01:12:55] Would you be able to answer that for me? I did have another question, though. So first, we want to be responsive to the individual student. If there's a student need, we would support the school to find ways to make sure that they're getting the resource that they need.

[01:13:13] Generally, we are finding that most of the textbook materials that we are adopting have both physical and digital availability, and that's actually also having an impact on budget in terms of what we're purchasing. With the availability of digital resources and the proliferation of devices, in many cases we have moved to class sets of physical books, for example.

[01:13:41] All that being said, if a student has a need for a textbook or they request a textbook, that is something that we are able to work with schools to provide. We have one resource, K-8, that is completely online.

[01:13:58] That's Discovery Education. And with that, we work with schools to meet individual needs of students that need to access physical materials. But generally, there are both physical and digital versions, but it really depends on some of our more specific higher-level courses.

[01:14:15] We may be limited in our choice. Thank you, Mr. Slevin. And can I make a recommendation? Am I allowed to do that? Review the wording and include definitions for textbooks, resources, and text. Would you be able to do that as well?

[01:14:31] Is there a specific, are you on the redline copy or the? Actually, I don't have it in front of me. I'm just reading from my notes that I took. I'm making a recommendation because within this policy and its regulation textbook resources and texts are used when describing the material the textbook review committee members will review so if it's possible to just word it in such a way for textbooks resources and texts and I can send you that information yes if you send that to me we will take a look at it yeah thank you

[01:15:03] chair mansfield can I add one thing yes I'm sure I also and Mr. Sloven correct me if I'm wrong but I don't know if that question came from LEAF, but that topic did also come up in LEAF when we were talking about this policy and that you just asked about, Ms. Griffiths. And one of the things that the staff did share was the use of Schoology and how different textbooks with the different licenses that we have have the ability to post different things from the virtual textbooks onto their Schoology page as well so that they may have more specific references so they're not

[01:15:38] searching through endless virtual text. So I did want to add that, that I know that certain parents had worked with different staff members to communicate that they needed help finding where the different things were in the virtual textbook and that they were able to then post them on Schoology. So I

think that's another resource that we have when it comes to virtual text, but I echo what Mr. Slevin said as well in terms of making sure each individual student's needs are met.

[01:16:03] Thank you so much, Ms. Chernoff. Any other questions? No. Do we want to put this on for consent was that dr. Dean's thumbs up for like we'll move this on to consent for the December 10th school board meeting thank you okay and then let's see I think we should go ahead 15 minutes

[01:16:42] you think will be okay we'll go on to 13.03 human resources and talent development committee revisions to policy 7301 licensed staff ms griffis mrs griffis chair uh human resources and talent development committee will be presenting thank you madam chair yes um uh i believe ms boland will present but yes we a lot of these policies are pretty straightforward so 7301 um she will go over is she here i can't tell oh she is here okay uh we'll um discuss 7301 for licensed staff Thank you, Ms. Boland.

[01:17:21] No problem. Thanks, Mrs. Griffiths. So this evening, we are bringing forward policy 7301 as an information item. This policy governs and identifies the criteria for employing and paying licensed staff for the division in addition to the various ways to be licensed in the Commonwealth.

[01:17:44] The changes you see made to the redline version of the policy reflect updated language and from VDOE and the VSBA model policies. This includes adding the new local eligibility license option for prospective teachers as the most recent VDOE-approved manner to get a one-year provisional license, which can be found on lines 11 and 12 on the red line version.

[01:18:15] Additionally, since the reference code in the policy also now includes licensure renewal information, the former companion regulation will be struck and the information about licensure renewal will now be encompassed in the revised policy, which can be found in the last paragraph.

[01:18:35] And that's all I can answer. Any questions you may have? Board members, do you have any questions? Did SEAC, I do have a question, did SEAC weigh in on this at all?

[01:18:51] Do we know? the the comments I have included are from MSAC I don't have any additional feedback okay seeing that they are going to be meeting on December 4th if we could just wait on this one until the next meeting to put it to action okay and then let's see five we'll go again I'm sorry yeah so 13.04 human resources

[01:19:26] and talent development committee revisions to policy 7308 provision of professional references or assistance with mrs griffiths presenting thank you madam chair yes 70 policy 7308 again is a straightforward policy as discussed in our committee meeting it went over professional references for when employees want to move into another job or to call in for a specific reference So if you don't mind, Ms. Bullen, just discussing that briefly.

[01:20:00] Thank you. Absolutely. So as Mrs. Griffiths stated, we are bringing recommended changes to policy 7308, provision of professional references or assistance. And just to clarify, this policy does not require an employee to provide a professional reference.

[01:20:21] It's simply guidance in the event they choose to do so. The recommended changes are designed to simplify and realign the policy language, as well as clarify code requirements. You'll see a lot of areas where information looks struck, really was just moved around to better align flow and, again, to clarify language for the reader.

[01:20:49] I do want to point out that nothing in this policy, again, requires an employee to provide a reference and anytime an employee has a question related to a professional reference they can always reach out to HRTD thank you Ms. Poland board members do you have any questions seeing no questions do we won't put this on consent for the December 10th school board meeting okay and that looks like that will go on consent for the December 10th school board meeting we can just

[01:21:28] keep on going what about 13.05 legislative audit and policy committee revisions to policy 2440 order of business quorum rules voting presented by I guess dr. dr. dr. Smith or or mrs. Chandler you can start mr. okay thank you madam chair I'm happy to bring forward policy 2440 order of business quorum rules and voting this update is brought forward to ensure that we're in compliance with recent changes to the Virginia State Code and with that I'll

[01:22:04] pass it off to Dr. Smith. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. Yes, members of the board, this policy went through our Legislative Audit and Policy Committee did come out on a 3-0 vote. It is, as Ms. Chandler said, just to align with recent changes from this past General Assembly session and to align with state code. Board members, do you have any questions? Do you want to go ahead and put this one on consent? It looks like we'll go ahead and put this one on consent for the December 10th

[01:22:38] board meeting let's see and I think we'll and we'll go on to 13.06 Department of Teaching and Learning Agreement between FCPS LCPS and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology for SY 2025-2026 presented by Mr. Slevin. Thank you Chair Mansfield this information item is asking the board to review and recommend for signature the 2025-26 agreement with Fairfax

[01:23:15] County Public Schools to send LCPS high school students to Thomas Jefferson High School for science and technology for the 25-26 school year. As a reminder, the school board approved the continuation of the LCPS agreement with FCPS for the 25-26 school year on May 28th in order to notify Fairfax County by June 1st, the June 1st deadline. The attached is the tuition agreement between FCPS and LCPS for 25-26.

[01:23:42] It is due to Fairfax County by December 6th, but we have received a deadline extension to December 18th. So I'm happy to answer any questions or provide any clarification on any of that information.

[01:23:58] Board members, do you have any questions? Madam Chair, I have a question. Has there been any variation or drop or increase in the total number of LCPS students applying to go to TJ?

[01:24:24] The interest in Thomas Jefferson High School continues to be consistent. It is a high-demand opportunity that we have for our students. Next year, we, I'm sorry, the current school year enrollment is right around 400 at 397, and our enrollment has stayed consistent.

[01:24:52] Yes, Dr. Rashid? I was wondering if somebody can provide some information. There's a table here on page two in regards to transportation. And if they could just provide information regarding per pupil cost for transportation in parentheses, it's \$791.

[01:25:12] So my understanding is that that references transportation provided by Fairfax County Public Schools. And so it's less that amount when a district provides its own transportation. Okay. So if the transportation is provided by LCPS to an LCPS student, is that not applicable?

[01:25:38] Can you repeat the question, Dr. Rasheed? Sure, sure. There's a table on page two and it's in red parentheses and it kind of highlights the cost of transportation per student when transportation is not provided.

[01:26:00] So is it safe to say that the student has to pay that amount if they're out of the county? No, it is talking about cost to the district. And so since LCPS provides its own transportation, that \$791 per student is not included in our contract with FCPS because we provide our own transportation.

[01:26:27] Okay. And is there any information in this contract that lists anything about LCPS's transportation? I assume no, but I just wanted to double check. No, ma'am. Thank you. Do we know the cost difference between FCPS providing transportation and LCPS providing transportation?

[01:26:47] As I'm looking at this, it appears to be this is the cost per pupil for Thomas Jefferson High School, and that cost is calculated for the cost of transportation of Fairfax County public schools for a student in Fairfax.

[01:27:03] I don't think it's intended to give us a cost estimate for what it would cost to come to Loudoun County to pick up students, but I'm happy to get more verification on that and share that with you, Dr. Rasheed. But I think that's more of them calculating the cost of Fairfax County public schools, and they don't pass that cost on to Loudoun County.

[01:27:23] I mean, I think that would make more sense, except that it's in this contract, So it's kind of funny that it's there. So if you could get more information, that would be great. Okay, board members, it is 545.

[01:27:42] We have gone through all of our information items. I'm sorry, 555, sorry. And we're going to go ahead and break for dinner, and we will be back at 630. The board is now in recess.

[02:03:14] Good evening. The board is coming out of recess at this time. We will start and continue, actually, with the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, which is item 7. The Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem will be performed by the J. Michael Lunsford Middle School Violin Ensemble, which is a group of 6th to 8th grade students led by Adrian Caravan.

[02:03:41] These young violinists met after school twice to rehearse and memorize their parts for this special occasion. String students at JML are part of the Suzuki approach and method of learning. Musical ability is not an inborn talent, but an ability which can be developed.

[02:03:57] Any child who is properly trained can develop musical ability, just as all children develop the ability to speak their mother tongue. The potential of every child is unlimited. Shinichi Suzuki. And if everybody would stand for the pledge.

[02:06:59] We will continue with Agenda Item 8, Student Staff Recognitions, 8. 01, Highest Achievement Exemplar Award presented to Aldi High School. No, Aldi High School. Elementary School, right? Hamilton, Hillsborough, Lincoln, Loudoun Valley, Waterford, Woodgrove, and presented by Ray Mitchell, Chief of Schools. Good evening, Chair Mansfield, board members, and Dr. Spence.

[02:07:35] This evening, I will be recognizing seven schools that have achieved the 2024 Highest Achievement Exemplar Award. These schools are recognized for the following based upon the 2023-24 assessment data. Each of these schools has met the state benchmark in reading, math, and science. On state assessments is fully accredited and had all student groups within the school meeting state

benchmarks in reading and math based on the state assessments and demonstrated a chronic absenteeism rate of 15%

[02:08:13] or lower. For our two high schools, in addition to the aforementioned criteria, they also had to demonstrate a graduation and completion index of 88 points or higher and demonstrate a dropout rate of 6% or lower. On behalf of the Department of School Leadership, we would like to recognize the following schools and principals. When I call your name, please come forward to receive your award. Aldi Elementary, Principal Ashley Barkley, who could not be here this evening, but staff

[02:08:46] member Erica Meadows is present for ALDE. Hamilton Elementary Principal Kelly Meisensal, Hillsborough Charter School Principal Paul Vickers, Lincoln

[02:09:24] Elementary Principal Dave Michener, Waterford Elementary Principal Andrew Hieronymus, and our two high schools Loudoun Valley High School Principal Dr.

[02:09:46] Sue Ross and Woodgrove High School Principal Dr. Sam Shipp. Thank you and again please join me in congratulating these leaders and schools for the work that they do to support our students and for achieving the 2024 highest achievement exemplar

[02:10:14] award thank you okay we'll continue with our agenda with the item nine student school board

[02:12:43] representative comment with annabelle monte she is a proud senior at rockridge high school she currently serves as student council's executive president she previously served as sorry she previously served as the executive vice president and a class officer annabelle is the Chief Executive Officer of Rockridge Performing Arts, Rockridge's drama program, and finds a passion for performing on stage alongside technical production. Annabelle is excited to represent Rockridge this school year in hopes to uplift the voices of her student body.

[02:13:21] Thank you, Ms. Monte, for being here and for your comments. The floor is yours. Thank you so much. Good evening, everyone. My name is Annabelle Monte, and before I begin, I'd like to thank the members of the school board for giving me the opportunity to speak here tonight. I'd also like to thank my SCA advisors, Ms. Prince and Mr. Wallen, and our principal, Mr. Doolman, for allowing me to represent Rock Ridge and for their continued support. Rock Ridge is off to a strong start this year by celebrating our 10-year anniversary and a decade of rising, which to us means a decade of perpetuating respect, integrity, service, and empathy amongst all staff members

[02:13:59] and students. This theme is following us through all we do this year, including in outdoor extraterrestrial homecoming where over a thousand students attended. Rockridge has worked hard to bring back alumni to participate in our 10-year celebration, including inviting Rockridge grads Nick Gothard and Aloha Macassie to speak at our rededication ceremony this past September. Our students also continue to excel both academically and in extracurricular activities.

[02:14:24] Within academics, just this past week, our NHS chapter grew to hold over 160 members, with 100 new members inducted. Additionally, our students continue to succeed throughout all academics, with five students nominated for the 2024 National Merit Honors semi-finalists: Rishabh Goel, Apoorva Mindhadi, Rohan Mata, Yoshi Sarkar, and Krithi Sudigali. In athletics, our football team fought a hard season pulling out some major wins. In their final game, the team came back 13 points in under five minutes against Annandale, getting another win for the Rock. Football player Siddharth Konduri also broke four school records and

[02:15:03] Shomar Farrell broke the school record for single season rushing yards. Furthermore, many of our student-athletes have made first and second district teams, including four students in cheer and four students in volleyball. Phoenix athletes are now eagerly preparing for the upcoming winter sports season. In our fine arts department, Rockridge Performing Arts recently closed *The Prince of Egypt*, the national pilot production of the show with special licensing from MTI.

[02:15:28] Additionally, our chamber choir was honored by performing at the VMEA conference this past weekend. The Rockridge Marching Band has won first place in Class 4A seven different times, won Grand Championship overall three times, and were the Class 4A state champions.

[02:15:44] Rockridge DECA is currently preparing for districts and has been working hard on 30 different projects for competition at states. They are looking forward to connecting with and volunteering through charities such as Women's Giving Back and Laws. Additionally, as we approach Thanksgiving weekend, Rockridge FCCLA has promoted a food drive for non-perishable items to donate to Loud and Hunger Relief.

[02:16:05] Rockridge is proud to sponsor over 130 student clubs, including the Bollywood Dance Team, Miss Phoenix, a club working alongside our Women in Gender Studies class to organize our annual Rise 2 Summit this spring, and Phoenix Motorsports, where students are learning to utilize AutoCAD software and how to weld. It is our third year continuing to integrate clubs and activities into the school day once a week, giving students an opportunity to participate in an activity without the after-school time constraints. Finally, I would like to once again thank the school board for all that you do and continue to do for Loudoun County and for allowing me to speak tonight. I hope you all have a

[02:16:42] wonderful Thanksgiving weekend. Thank you, Ms. Montaigne. I hope you have a great Thanksgiving weekend yourself all right we will move on to item 10 which is superintendent's report and it will be presented by dr aaron spence thank you madam chair and members of the board it's my pleasure this evening to again share some good news from around our school division as we kick off our good news section of today's meeting i do want to share some good news for our colleague

[02:17:16] and friend dr daniel smith as many of you already know dr smith has been selected as the next superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools. Dr. Smith, we are incredibly proud of him as he prepares to step into this new role, and we're grateful for the lasting impact that he has made on LCPS. During a time of significant change, his leadership strengthened trust, enhanced stability, and helped solidify the progress that was already underway. Dr. Smith is taking with him 20 years of experience as an educator, principal, and administrator. He has served the LCPS community since 2022 when he was brought on as chief of staff and where he also served as acting superintendent

[02:17:55] in 2023. Before coming to Loudoun County, he served in Fairfax County Public Schools as the principal of Lake Braddock Secondary School, the largest school in the state of Virginia. And in 2021, he was recognized as the Virginia PTA Secondary Principal of the Year and the Fairfax County Public Schools Region 4 Outstanding Principal of the Year. I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Smith previously when he served as a principal in Virginia Beach City Public Schools and he also previously served as a principal in Page County. I know all of these experiences will serve him well as he takes on his new position and I also know that Stafford County Public Schools will be in good hands with Dr. Smith as their superintendent. We offer him our

[02:18:33] sincerest congratulations and best wishes and board members I want to note that this will be his last board meeting with us so I know you join me in extending our congratulations to him and our appreciation for his support and service to LCPS.

[02:18:54] As we move on to make this holiday season just a bit brighter, Good Shepherd of Northern Virginia, which is a local nonprofit, purchased meal from Bob Evans Restaurants for some of our LCPS students and their families who are homeless.

[02:19:10] Last night, the LCPS McKinney-Vento team and several principals and school staff delivered meals to families that accepted this offer. The LCPS McKinney-Vento program, which is based on the McKinney-Vento Act, guarantees school enrollment to any student that does not have a permanent place to live.

[02:19:27] The families receiving these meals express their thanks for the thoughtfulness and support from the community. We just want to note that we're grateful to Good Shepherd of Northern Virginia for providing this gift to our families, and we're grateful for the other services that the organization offers, specifically collaborating with the LCPS McKinney-Vento team to address students' housing needs through case consultation. Thanks again to them and also to our schools and staff for supporting these students. Next, and this is coming up, the Loudoun County High School cheer team will participate in the 98th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Planning to participate in the parade has been nearly a year in the making. Loudoun County High School Chair

[02:20:06] Coach Samantha Mancini submitted an audition video last November and learned that the team was selected in January. Since then, they have been sharing the good news about their selection, working to cover the cost of the trip, and practicing their routine. Performing the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and we're very excited that these students have this opportunity and wish them all the best.

[02:20:27] And by the way, you can tune in to NBC on Thanksgiving morning to watch the parade and see the LCHS cheer team in action. Next, we're pleased to note that LCPS has launched a new platform to share LCPS news, the LCPS Podcast.

[02:20:46] The first episode was posted last Thursday, and new episodes will be posted each Thursday after Thanksgiving. On the LCPS podcast, hosts will interview educators, students, administrators, and parents about current trends in education, news about what's happening in our schools, and information about our staff and students.

[02:21:02] The podcast is available on all major podcast platforms. See the website shown here for more details and for links to the broadcast. We look forward to hearing more news on this new platform. Next, the Woodgrove High School Environmental Science Program had students plant nearly 400 chestnut trees recently with the hope of helping to restore this native tree species. In the early to mid 1900s American chestnut trees were impacted by a fungus that decimated the trees which were one of the dominant tree types in the Eastern United States at that time. These trees planted by Woodgrove students are part of a research experiment coordinated by Woodgrove science teacher Scott Fortney with the support of the American Chestnut

[02:21:41] Foundation. Four varieties of chestnut trees were planted on a plot of land near Woodgrove High School and over the next several years Woodgrove students and staff from the American Chestnut

Foundation will track the tree's growth and their resistance to blight. This project, while providing hands-on engagement in science, also connected to what students are learning in class about the role of keystone species, the damage that invasive species can cause, genetics, and other basic scientific principles such as the scientific method and randomization. The students have reported that they have loved this hands-on project and look forward to documenting the results. We also want to note that Watson Mountain Middle School became

[02:22:19] LCPS is 100 school when it opened its doors this August and on Wednesday November 13th we celebrated LCPS's newest school with a dedication ceremony where we recognized the community that supported the education of the area's youth and previous generations. Descendants of the family who previously owned the land attended the dedication and Lily Jeffries who spoke on behalf of the Watson community presented Principal Lenny Compton with a photo of the original Baptist church which was situated on the site of the current school and which until 1945 housed a one-room schoolhouse for black students. Principal Compton in turn presented the Watson community with a framed

[02:22:54] display of both the original church and a recent photo of the middle school side by side. At present the Watson Mountain Middle School houses 546 graders and will expand next year to include seventh grade students. We want to congratulate Awalem Alex Tewald, a custodian at Little River elementary school for being selected as the november shine winner mr alex as he is called by the students and staff of little river was nominated for his help in smoothing the transition to school for a student who's new to the elementary school mr alex was nominated by kimberly dempsey assistant principal of little river shine which stands for spotlighting heroes in education is a

[02:23:33] joint lcps and loudon education foundation initiative to recognize lcps staff members who go above and beyond in support of our students and community members of the lcps community including other staff members, students, and parents are invited to nominate LCPS staff who shine, and these award recipients receive a gift coordinated by the Loudoun Education Foundation.

[02:23:55] We're also excited to note that LCPS recently offered high school students in grades 11 and 12 the chance to explore careers through its Jobs for a Day program on Monday, November the 11th. Nearly 600 students spent a day shadowing professionals in various fields to gain insights that will help support informed career choices, develop job-related skills, and connect academic learning to real-world applications.

[02:24:18] Job for a Day allows students to experience the tasks and responsibilities associated with careers that match their interests and aptitudes. By following professionals within a cluster, students build awareness of workplace roles, strengthen their decision-making skills, and frankly gain exposure to the dynamics of different occupations.

[02:24:36] Job for a Day offered a look at 177 career opportunities provided by 82 businesses and we especially want to thank the many businesses that offered our students this opportunity and then finally the empowered resource and learning conference held last saturday provided outreach and support to our english learner families nearly 200 families of english learner students attended the goal of this event was to connect families of english learner students with the resources and learning needed to support their students education more than 100 lcps team members and community partners provided guidance to our families during the resources fair and information sessions.

[02:25:14] And Madam Chair, that concludes my report. Thank you, Dr. Spence. Okay, and that will bring us to item 11, public comment. Thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment process.

[02:25:32] The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and believes that a strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system. Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Based on the number of speakers in the agenda this evening, All speakers have been allotted one minute each for public comment.

[02:25:51] Please be advised that speakers who have missed their time slot will not be called at a later time. All audience members shall maintain civility, decorum, and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times. Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break.

[02:26:11] Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting. Obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa. Interrupting speakers.

[02:26:28] Attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair. And approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other meeting attendees. Speakers should refrain from vulgarity, obscenities, defamation, profanity, or other like breaches of respect, nor may speakers target, criticize, or attack individual students and or individual division employees during public comment.

[02:26:56] As a reminder, School Board Policy 2520 states, speakers may not target, criticize, or attack individual students during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official.

[02:27:13] The school board requests that comments on an individual student or employee-related matter not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements. Speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board. Per LCPS Policy 2520, members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period.

[02:27:38] Violations of decorum or civility by meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee for the remainder of the meeting. Repeated or persistent violations of decorum of civility by the audience may result in, on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda, limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons, or the public comment period ending for the evening. Copies of materials for board members should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom before the start of the meeting.

[02:28:17] Please provide 12 copies of the materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through LCPS-TV on Comcast Channel 18 and Verizon Fios Channel 43. The live stream of the meeting may be viewed on the website.

[02:28:36] We look forward to hearing your comments. And before we start public comment, I do want to take a moment to clarify a few things. As is shared during the opening remarks prior to public comment,

speakers may not target, criticize, or attack individual students during public comment.

[02:28:52] Again, that prohibition is from school board policy 2520, participation by the public. The policy prohibits such conduct because it causes unnecessary delay or disruption to a meeting. Additionally, as is shared during the opening remarks prior to public comment, the school board requests that comments on an individual student or employee-related matter are not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements. As I explained at our last two or three meetings, speakers can personally identify a student without stating a student's name. That is, personally identifiable information is any

[02:29:32] information that a reasonable person can link together to pinpoint an individual student and where that individual student is known to others in their school and surrounding community based on the context that is shared. The school board welcomes you to share your concerns but asks that to the extent you have prepared remarks that target, criticize, or attack any individual students, you generalize such remarks to ensure compliance with board policy. If speakers fail to comply with board policy regarding public participation, you will receive a warning and a request to redirect or generalize your comments. Should you fail to redirect or generalize your comments after that

[02:30:11] warning, you may be asked to yield the microphone, at which time you should take your seat, and I will then call the next speaker. And we will now start with our virtual public comment. The first one is Daryl Conway, followed by Garrett Wilhelm. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. My name is Daryl Conway. Most importantly, I am a girl dad, but I'm also a 31 year certified athletic trainer. I currently work as the Executive Senior Associate Athletic

[02:30:48] director in charge of student-athlete health and welfare at the University of Michigan. I'm a governor's appointee to the Michigan Board of Athletic Training and a co-owner of sports medicine emergency management. Loudoun County is blessed to have some of the best athletic trainers in the country looking after and taking care of its student-athletes. In my professional opinion, the ability to continue this high standard going forward is hampered by the lack of two athletic trainers present and taking care of athletes at all times within every athletic training school. From a gender perspective, please consider that female athletes are going without adequate coverage on a daily basis at schools without two athletic trainers present due to

[02:31:28] the single athletic trainer being present at football or other high-risk sports. Please consider this request as a direct... Thank you. Garrett Wilhelm, followed by Brenda Bankston. We do not have a virtual participant by that name. Okay, Brenda Bankston, followed by Trufalia Parker. 2025 extremism is an assault on critical thinking and people. Recent texts targeted Black

[02:32:02] Americans and expanded to Latino and LGBTQ plus people. Attacks based on lies. Amanda Marcotte knows authoritarians are notoriously hostile to teaching kids intellectual autonomy, preferring children to exhibit mindless obedience.

[02:32:24] Oklahoma has forced prayer, and in Texas, Bible study replaces reading. Arizona vouchers bought ski lift passes, trampoline parts, and horse therapy instead of help for the disabled. By mandating faith or misusing taxpayer funds, Project 2025 is extremism.

[02:32:48] Please keep it out of Loudon. Thank you. Trufalia Parker, and then we'll start with our in-person speaker, starting with Ryan Young. We do not have a virtual speaker by that name. Thank you.

[02:33:09] We'll continue on with Ryan Young, followed by Ellen Petty. Good evening. My name is Ryan Young. I'm the athletic director at Broad Run High School.

[02:33:26] I have been there for 20 years. Tonight, I'm speaking on behalf of the need for a second athletic trainer. Two weeks ago, winter sports began. We had the end of fall sports wrapping up. In our training room at this time, we had 15 athletes, some getting ready for winter sports, some rehabbing from fall sports.

[02:33:47] At the time, we get a radio call from our assistant principal declaring a medical emergency, which our athletic trainer is the only medical professional in the building after hours. Immediately, she went, provided care, and everything was okay. The students in the training room were able to continue with the adult supervision of myself.

[02:34:06] At this time, it is very important with participation numbers growing at an exorbitant rate, it is necessary to have a second athletic trainer on hand at all high schools. Thank you. Thank you. Ellen Petty followed by Ellen Roberts.

[02:34:26] I'm actually Ellen Roberts. Ellen Petty is my maiden name, so somebody had registered for me, so I'm the same person.

[02:34:43] Again, my name is Ellen Roberts. I'm the head varsity coach, volleyball coach at Broad Run High School. I'm also a Broad Run alumni, also a student athlete collegially and in high school. I am also here to advocate for two athletic trainers in each high school.

[02:35:00] Example is there's a line every day at the athletic training office. Football players fill the room, while non-contact sports athletes need to schedule more advance to be seen before practice. so actually there could be a good 20 people outside the room and not just counting inside.

[02:35:22] We had an incident at a game warm-up while a player on the other team got hit in the face, the head, with a ball. The athletic trainer was outside during a concussion evaluation, returned to play. Thankfully, she was able to respond right away, but if the situation was worse, who knows what would have happened.

[02:35:42] Also, keep in mind the difference, distance between field. Thank you. Emily Jackson, followed by Dennis Nicholson. Hello, my name is Emily Jackson.

[02:36:03] I'm a substitute athletic trainer, and I'm also talking about the two athletic trainers for every high school. Currently, there are about 2,000 student athletes under the care of only one athletic trainer. There are no other medical providers on campus once the school bell rings until the late evenings.

[02:36:20] When I was at Tuscarora High School, I was over covering a main athletic trainer for multiple sports. Basketball, soccer, baseball, tennis match, you name it. I was going to be the only athletic trainer at the school. So my cell number was given to the basketball, the tennis, baseball coaches, and since I was stationed outside the soccer games.

[02:36:39] In the middle of the soccer game, I received a call from the tennis courts that there was an athlete hurt. And at the same time, then I was doing an evaluation, and I was also called on the radio that there was another athlete on the soccer team hurt.

[02:36:55] And it took me three minutes to get there, and if it was a serious injury, it would have been too long. So I'm advocating for another athletic trainer for the high schools. Thank you. Thank you. Dennis

Nicholson, followed by Peg Klein. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the need for two athletic trainers in our high schools.

[02:37:24] My children have been involved in multiple sports, so this is something very important to me. I'd like to share a quick story about the importance of having more than one trainer on staff. During a football game, there was a situation where my daughter was having an anaphylactic reaction to a bee sting, and there were also threats of a thunderstorm in the area.

[02:37:45] One of the trainers was monitoring the weather, so thankfully there was a second trainer there to jump into action. Had there not been two trainers on site, there could have been devastating results. With many students participating in school sports, trainers are spread thin, particularly when multiple games are being played and multiple practices are being held.

[02:38:04] I feel that the county could benefit from having multiple trainers on staff in schools to maintain a safe and healthy experience for all students competing with their teams. Thank you. Thank you. Let's see.

[02:38:21] Okay, so Peg Klein, followed by Chris Klein. I have spoken before this board regarding the need to prioritize funding and resources on academics rather than pet political projects.

[02:38:39] During our entire time as parents of an elementary special needs student, one board member has reached out to listen to our concerns and advocate for our daughter's need, Dena Griffiths. It is shameful that she has been subject to harassment and targeting of others simply because of politics.

[02:38:57] I've been a prosecutor for close to 20 years and firmly believe that this entire board, as elected representatives, be free from harassment and invasion of your personal space filming an individual in order to harass them or get them in a gotcha moment needs to stop it doesn't matter our community and certainly does not serve the needs of our children if you reward this harassing behavior by making an example of a board member i fear it'll continue only get worse from both political ends

[02:39:30] mrs griffiths thank you for all that you've done to support our daughter and lcps chris klein followed by Meredith Ray. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here to speak in support of Dena Griffiths. Ms. Griffiths and I have never met. I know her by following the school board meetings and I'm here to speak about her strong character. I find Ms. Griffiths to be a strong advocate for our children's educational needs. In my opinion, she is laser focused on the

[02:40:06] educational success and protection of our children. She is also focused on the proper use of taxpayer our funds to achieve our children's goals and courageously represents the viewpoints of thousands of parents. Her head and heart are in the right place for this educational system. I want to thank her for her dedication and service. I would also like to remind my fellow citizens that the school board meeting is the correct forum to discuss or disagree with policies of the board. Harassing or violating an individual's personal space to voice their opinion should not occur. Ms. Griffiths, I support you and appreciate your work here.

[02:40:44] Thank you. Meredith Ray, followed by Carolyn Barrett. Good evening. I'm on the Mercer Middle School Renaming Committee. I want to thank you for your commitment to this important process and share a few observations.

[02:41:05] Our committee's discussions have been challenging, but in my opinion, productive. I've worked hard to maintain order in our meetings, and I'm grateful for the efforts put into ensuring our safety in light of one of the school board members' alleged attempts to escalate to physical intimidation at the Frances Hazel Reed Committee meeting.

[02:41:22] However, this seems to be a pattern of traveling behavior, as I came to you in June to speak about her refusal to shake a graduate's hand because of a stole she chose to wear that was in support of Palestinians. It is really unacceptable behavior yet again, and I will probably be targeted for making this statement.

[02:41:39] I also want to take this time to highlight a historical note regarding the name Mercer. Our committee received minutes from a 2002 school board meeting where it was acknowledged at the previous school board in 1998 had specifically decided against naming a school after Margaret Mercer. Even though these issues were known to the 2002 board, they moved forward with the name Mercer Middle School. Thank you. Carolyn Barrett, followed by Buda Bibari.

[02:42:08] Good evening. As an LCPS parent, I was alarmed during a committee meeting, not due to a weaponized purse, that was another meeting, but to hear educators in our community using their individual ignorance to diminish the impact that these names carry. An educator's desire not to interrupt the integrity of her wardrobe and lanyard collection was on full display while she willfully dismissed the integrity of what actual inclusion, equity, compassion, and understanding in education looks like. The flippant way that educators we trust with our children believe that disrupting their

[02:42:48] comfort and bursting their bubble was much too high a price to pay was disgusting, disheartening, and dangerous. Frances Hazel Reid's UDC is guilty of collaborating with the Klan to reflate the narrative and craft cowards into crusaders. Being a founding member would make her a curator of hate and a cultivator of ideology that plagues our communities today.

[02:43:09] It was wrong then, and it's wrong now. Mercer's mission to provide public school to white students while hoping I'm sorry, your minute is over. Please yield the mic. Thank you. Buda Bibberi, followed by Kristen Washington. Good evening, board.

[02:43:30] Good evening, board. Thank you for the time. I want to address two items this evening. One is for the school board to require HRTD and the school administration to create a policy on how and when HRTD uses administrative leave with pay, because without such a policy, HRTD will continue to abuse this process and cause harm to our teachers and staff and subject LCPS to lawsuits.

[02:43:56] The second issue I want to address is that when asked this board to sanction school board member Griffiths for creating a hostile environment in her role as a school board member first by rejecting a graduating students handshake and second by being physically assaultive at a physically attacking the attendee at one of the naming committee meetings these acts or attempts to bully and disenfranchise Loudoun County residents it must not be permitted to continue and have got to be addressed by this board we are very inclusive community we have continue to do so if we don't then that ends up doing is hurting the whole community kristin

[02:44:36] washington followed by sherry carmichael dr kelly sandman hurley said can you imagine a world where schools fought as hard for students with dyslexia as they do fighting against students with

dyslexia i am the parent of two dyslexic children my daughter is currently in sixth grade and she is failing English. I begged and pleaded with the school system since she was in third grade

[02:45:13] to help her. The only reason she's passing English right now is because they let her retake everything until she passes. Otherwise, her grade would be about a 20%. They told me when she was in third grade that they were sure that she got research-based, evidence-proven literacy program.

[02:45:34] That program was Lucy Calkins. That was 2022 when they told me that. In 2021, you all did an evaluation of that curriculum and it failed. I have been lied to and gaslit about her learning problems for three years. Thank you. Is that Sherry Carmichael? Followed by Caitlin Frazee.

[02:46:02] I'm here today to advocate for hiring two athletic trainers for our high schools. Key benefits of hiring two athletic trainers is increased safety and coverage with faster response times for injuries and better coverage during multiple sport practices and games, which will enhance injury prevention and monitoring.

[02:46:22] Also, the improved athlete-to-trainer ratio provides more personalized attention, more dedicated time for injury recovery and rehabilitation. It also helps to reduce the burnout by splitting responsibilities between the two trainers with continuous coverage during trainer absences for sick days and vacations.

[02:46:41] Better collaboration with coaches for athlete safety and health, as well as the shared administration tasks, ensuring compliance and reducing workload. Support for mental health and well-being, emotional and mental support for athletes, recovering from injuries, focus on mental health, awareness, and stress.

[02:47:00] reduction in summary the argument for hiring two athletic trainers rather than one centers around thank you thank you uh caitlin phrase followed by donna ooze hi i'm dr caitlin phrase and i am here today well thank you for letting me be here and um i'm here to talk about the inclusive playgrounds so um a couple things i want to talk about maybe expediting that from three to double basically so six years and then the second part of my comment is about considering students of all abilities so I've seen a lot in writing

[02:47:40] about including ramps for kids who are non-ambulatory who might need a wheelchair while they're on the playground but also other things to consider would be soft materials for example my son he has hypotonia he's more likely to fall soft stuff on the ground is really helpful and also of students who are ambulatory considering fences so that he's preschooler in ECSE in Loudoun County and he's going to go into an inclusive program in kindergarten. So that's why it's very important to me and so that all kids can be included in those playgrounds and thank you. Thank you. Donna Oates

[02:48:19] followed by Bobby Desai.

[02:48:36] Bobby Desai followed by Sheevan Fleet. Good evening. My name is Bobby Desai and this is my son, Ryan. He is 12 years old in seventh grade, and he has been at LCPS since he was two and a half in the ECSE program. And all that time, he has been exclusively wheelchair mobile. So for 10 years, he has had no access to a playground, which at the time didn't occur to me

[02:49:13] as being a problem because play, recess, that's considered extracurricular, right? But what I didn't realize was how much that would impact his development, his growth, and his maturity. When he's

on the playground, when other kids are on the playground, they have freedom to be themselves, to make friends, to socialize. My son didn't have that. He was never invited to birthday parties or play dates because nobody knew how to play with him. My son is smart, he's social, He's vocal, and he shines when he's on stage.

[02:49:49] But he has trouble making friends. Thank you. I'm sorry. Jeevon Fleet, followed by Lynn Davis. We just had a historic election.

[02:50:05] One of the things we can learn from this is that American people are sick and tired of woke ideology, DEI, CRT, transgenderism, porn books in school, and identity politics. And that's exactly what you have been pushing over the years.

[02:50:22] And we elect you to educate the kids and not to push your political ideology. And as a survivor of the communist China's cultural revolution, I know firsthand the danger of this toxic woke ideology.

[02:50:40] So the reason you want to push the committed so much to the changing school names is because you really want to erase history, cause division, and be politically correct. this must be stopped. Thank you. Thank you. Lynn Davis, followed by Robin Reeves-Burke.

[02:51:07] Dr. Spence, he talked about the gentleman who won the Shine Award. I read the story. I was incredibly touched by it. I really thought, you know, it's nice that he will know the impact he's had on students and the community as a whole. I say that because it stands in stark contrast to the actions of the Ashburn school board member, Deanna Griffiths.

[02:51:33] Since she has took her oath, Ms. Griffiths has made choices that have reflected hatred and disrespect for others. I had a lot of examples, but people have said them previously. She wouldn't shake the hand of a young girl at graduation.

[02:51:51] She has other members of her community who wear those. She represents everybody. I'm left to wonder, if a student had done the things that Deanna Griffiths had done, what would happen to them? I'm also left to wonder, if an immigrant custodian from Ethiopia can be kind, why can't...

[02:52:09] Thank you. Robin Reeves-Burp, followed by Helena Hussaini. My name is Robin Reeves-Burp, and I'm the Vice President and Chair of Education Committee for the NAACP Loudoun Branch.

[02:52:26] I am here in support of the proposed renaming of schools as part of our shared commitment to equity, justice, and inclusivity. The names of our schools matter. They reflect the value we uphold and their legacies we choose to honor. Francis Hazel Reed Elementary School for example is named after a founding member of the Percival chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization historically tied to glorifying the Confederacy, a regime that fought to preserve slavery. For many in our community this legacy is hurtful and inappropriate for schools serving a

[02:53:02] diverse student body. Similarly, Mercer Middle School's namesake, Charles Fenton Mercer, was a slave owner and a proponent of the colonization movement, which sought to resettle free blacks to Liberia rather than embrace their equality right here in America. These names do not reflect the principles of equity and inclusion. Thank you. Helena Hosseini, followed by Carrie Adams. Life and death those are the stakes when we nurse aid students at the monroe advanced technical

[02:53:41] academies of the academies of loudon do to complete our necessary hours at the nursing homes by changing matters admission process we are actively putting the residents lives into danger and

in turn our instructors licenses and their careers through a lottery process students are not chosen for merit efforts or hard work but instead sheer luck this will directly lead to to less curiosity and productivity in classrooms.

[02:54:05] Students who are passionate and genuinely want to learn will be distracted by those that only applied for the perks of the academies of Loudoun or just to get out of their homeschools. Inclusivity and taking into account students' disabilities and deferring circumstances is incredibly important, but it can still be done without reducing the prestige and academic integrity of MATA.

[02:54:24] These technical academies were made to help students better enter the workforce. However, these new policies create a false utopian ideal where luck and good vibes are the only thing that lands you a job. Thank you. Carrie Adams, followed by Chris Countryman.

[02:54:46] Hi, I'm Carrie Adams, mom to a full-time wheelchair-using first grader, here with a quick story about inclusive playgrounds and our need for them. On the first day of school this year, I picked up my son and eagerly asked, how was your day? I got an excited grate that quickly turned to a sad face when he added, except for when everyone left me behind at recess.

[02:55:07] With instant tears behind my sunglasses, I asked a few follow-up questions, only to realize the entire playground was inaccessible to him. He was left behind with only his sped aid to play with him. The rest of the car ride home was redirecting to focus on the positives of his day, trying to keep him excited about first grade.

[02:55:23] This is the kind of conversation that I and every other family of disabled children have on a regular basis. Conversations about our kids being left out and why they're different. Playtime at recess should not be a reason for this conversation. Our kids deserve access to play just like their able-bodied classmates.

[02:55:38] Our kids deserve to be included. Play is not a want in their early development. It's an imperative need. You all have the ability to make an impact on our kids' lives right now. Please increase the CAP funding to build 12 playgrounds a year to provide this accessibility. Thank you. Thank you. Chris Countryman, followed by Anisha Audi.

[02:56:00] Good evening. Tonight, I bring fabulous news. The collective bargaining agent election will begin next week. I will vote yes, not just for me, but for my coworkers. I will vote yes because teachers deserve planning time to actually plan.

[02:56:21] I will vote yes because one full-time job should be enough. I will vote yes because employees should not have to work unpaid overtime. I will vote yes because stipends in Jefferson contracts should be awarded consistently and fairly.

[02:56:37] I will vote yes because employees should not have to use sick days when a family member passes. I will vote yes because educators deserve better. And I will vote yes, because the families of educators deserve better.

[02:56:52] The future of education is counting on us. When educators are treated fairly, and as professionals, the students win. Thank you. Anisha Audi, followed by Eric Ricard.

[02:57:09] Hey, Eric Ricard, followed by Lavanya Joshi. Well, good evening.

[02:57:29] It's been a joy celebrating with you earlier. But there's some important business I'd like to talk to you about. to do with school board priorities you know i made this book here because i'll share it with you give it to any member that wants it but it basically says that in 2014 the loudon schools were ranked i think eighth in the in the state in 2000 uh current currently is ranked uh 20th so when we see when we look at the budget numbers in 2014 we had an amazingly large budget of 860

[02:58:07] million dollars. Today, it's 1.8 billion. Now, as a business owner who has managed billion-dollar projects, I know what it takes to manage it, and I would say to you, get focused on restoring Loudoun County to the top education program that it was. Pay attention to the special needs of our students. Restore our country back to where it was. Thank you. Lavanya Joshi, followed by Rithvik

[02:58:40] Amarangi. Good evening. My name is Lavanya Joshi, and I'm a senior in the Cisco Pathway at the of Loudoun. Through the MATA program I've developed valuable and specialized skills including troubleshooting and securing networks, concepts that go far beyond what is typically taught in a traditional high school setting. This program not only equips students with technical skills but it also prepares us to meet the demands of rapidly evolving workforce, ensuring that we contribute meaningfully to our industries and communities. The program's rigorous and industry focused approach has drawn the attention of companies like Mantec, who

[02:59:18] I believe was recently honored by LCPS as business partner of the year. These companies actively engage with our school because they recognize the high caliber of students being prepared for these critical fields. Because the lottery system is implemented in the MATA admissions process, it may dilute the quality of the students that are genuinely interested in these opportunities and want to pursue them. I respectfully urge you to reconsider the lottery system decision to preserve the integrity and reputation of the MATA Pathways. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you. Rithvik Amarangi, followed by Daniel

[02:59:55] Mayer. Good evening, members of the school board. My name is Rithvik Amaragani, a current student at the Academies of Loudoun in the Cybersecurity and Cisco Pathways. The recent shift to a lottery-based admission system for the MATA programs aims to promote inclusivity, but I believe it undermines the program's ability to identify and support passionate and prepared students. Previously, admissions required GPA, PSAT scores, council recommendations, career goal statements, and resumes. While these criteria had barriers, they allowed students to showcase their dedication and readiness. The new system, which only requires choosing a pathway from a drop-down list, removes the ability to differentiate students with genuine interest and preparation from those who may lack the commitment needed for these rigorous programs. As a student in the Cisco

[03:00:34] networking and cybersecurity pathways, I've experienced the demanding nature of these classes firsthand. Success requires passion and preparation, which are qualities that should be reflected in a MATA student. Instead of a full lottery, I suggest a balanced approach, removing GPA and test scores by keeping career goal statements and resumes to ensure applicants have genuine interest. Thank you for considering this perspective.

[03:00:52] Thank you. Daniel Mara followed by Abashis Surampali. Good evening. I'm a senior current senior rolled in the cybersecurity program at Monroe Advanced Technical Academy.

[03:01:09] This lottery change is going to have a negative impact on our performance of our CyberPatriot teams and other cybersecurity competitions, where teams have consistently gotten high rankings because

of students' demodication and opportunity to learn both Cisco and cybersecurity pathways. With this lottery system, we're going to leave out passionate and skilled kids that aren't randomly selected to return.

[03:01:30] ultimately leaving MATA to compete with inexperienced rookies every year. A lottery diminishes the purpose of MATA being considered a Selective Advanced Technical Academy if all you need to do is select apply. I'm also curious how your data is reviewed since the percentage of students with disabilities that are admitted to MATA has decreased over the last four years, but now the percentages are on par with the number of students in LCPS home high schools.

[03:01:53] There are less passionate students in MATA as part of this randomized selection progress. There is going to be an increase in wasted taxpayer dollars on resources, as well as certifications and training materials. Please consider a better approach. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:02:09] Vashish Surampali, followed by Alexander Kyle. Good evening. My name is Vashish Surampali, a senior in the cyber program at MADA.

[03:02:26] Having attended the academies for a year, I see the vast resources available here that significantly supports career building. However, success at the academies is greatly impacted by a student's genuine commitment to their career path. The idea of making the MADA admissions a lottery is shocking.

[03:02:44] Promata's programs thrive because of the qualitative review of student applications and ensures that students are not only interested, but also motivated to excel. Last year as a Cisco student, I was in a class with others passionate about networking and technology. We worked hard to pass the industry standard certifications we were required to take.

[03:03:03] I would like to advocate for MAT admissions to keep resumes and cover letters as a part of a selective process. I highly urge that the board carefully re-examine this decision to change the submission process and hopefully revert it thank you alexander kyle followed by shahir gazenfer good evening my name is alexander kyle and i am a senior and student in the cisco program at the academies of loudon after listening to the school board decision about the change in the academies

[03:03:42] of loudon admission criteria to a lottery i've been very disappointed the previous selection process was flawed but it is far superior to all proposed options i am a student in cisco who applied several times to the MATA program. It took me four separate applications to get into the school. Each time that I applied and the days spent on improving my applications would not be something that a future student would learn with the current lottery system. Students with the new lottery system will be no longer be able to go through the process of revisions and improvement to their applications. Despite the negative 6% drop represented in students with

[03:04:21] disabilities in the MATA programs. If you strictly look at the most recent year, the numbers were still on par for the percentage of students enrolled with disabilities at home schools. Thank you. Thank you. Shahir Ghazanfar followed by Adit Gupta. Good evening. My name is Shahir Ghazanfar. I'm currently a student at the Academies of Loudoun. As others before me have stated, the current lottery system is unfair and has significant unintended consequences. For every student that benefits from the lottery systems as intended, another student is denied the opportunity to

[03:05:00] prepare for a career they are truly passionate about. Because of this, my peers and I strongly believe that the admissions process should incorporate a more merit-based approach rather than solely

relying on an ambiguous lottery. This change would help LCPS provide underrepresented and disadvantaged students with a fair chance without leaving admissions entirely to luck. For example, reinstating the career goal statement would allow the admissions committee to gauge a student's actual interest and passion for this chosen pathway. Ultimately, blindly accepting students without considering their merit and the reasons for applying to these pathways will undermine LCPS's goals of creating a fair and an engaging learning environment. Whatever admissions process

[03:05:38] is implemented, it is essential that the community is involved in shaping that process. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Adit Gupta, followed by Daniel Siddiqui. Good evening, members of the school board. My name is Adit Gupta, and I'm a student in the MATA Cybersecurity Program at Academies of Loudoun. I'm here tonight to address a critical issue, the decision to make MATA admissions lottery system. The Academies of Loudoun has built a reputation for excellence by providing specialized programs like MATA that prepare students for real-world opportunities. One prime

[03:06:16] example is a ManSec internship, a prestigious program that recruits directly from the academies. Companies like MATA seek out academy students because they know they're working with highly motivated students and qualified individuals who've earned their place through a rigorous and merit-based process. This is not just an internship, it's a direct pipeline to careers and cutting-edge industries. However, if MATA admissions were to become a lottery, it would undermine the qualities that make this program and its students stand out.

[03:06:42] Random selection disregards merit, preparation, and passion. This sentiment isn't just mine. An organized petition opposed the lottery system collected 568 signatures from the community of Loudoun. These signatures represent a unified voice and a collective belief in maintaining the integrity of the program. Thank you. Thank you. Daniel Siddiqui, followed by Nathan Kugler.

[03:07:11] Good evening. My name is Daniel, and I'm a junior at Light Ridge High School and run the cybersecurity pathway at MADA. Tonight, my peers have shared how the new lottery-based admissions system jeopardizes the foundation of MADA's prestigious programs. What makes MADA exceptional is its ability to foster passion, excellence, and purpose among students deeply committed to their learning and future careers. While not perfect, the previous merit-based system allowed applicants to showcase their genuine interest and readiness, ensuring students enter MADA prepared to embrace its challenges. In contrast, the lottery system reduces applicants to just numbers, stripping away the individuality and drive that are key to the success of students in MATA Pathways.

[03:07:43] I propose an alternative admissions process that balances inclusivity and merit by retaining criteria like resumes and career statements, while lowering or removing barriers like PSAT scores or GPA requirements. This would ensure opportunities for deserving students while preserving the standards that supply our community with the best and brightest future. Thank you.

[03:08:00] Thank you. Nathan Kugler, followed by Thomas Wiest. Good evening. My name is Nathan Kugler, and I'm currently a junior attending the Cisco program at MATA.

[03:08:16] On behalf of many students, teachers, and parents, we were shocked by the sudden announcement of the drastic changes to the admissions process. The existing selection committee process, which has been done for the past six years at MATA, and through 40 years at the old Monroe Technical Academy, provided a way for students to have a fair chance to attend this fantastic program on a basis of merit and passion, rather than just by pure chance.

[03:08:39] What alarms the majority of us is that the major shift towards the lottery system was implemented without any major chance for feedback from MATA stakeholders. On behalf of all my peers, we find it unprofessional that no feedback was collected from the community, and we implore the LCPS school board to gather community feedback so we can create a more Barrett-based admissions process that still allows LCPS to meet its admission statistics goals and acquire talent in their programs. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Thomas Weiss, followed by Venkade Mandava.

[03:09:14] Hello, my name is Thomas Weiss. I'm a former student who attended the Monroe Advanced Technical Academy from 2021 to 2023, both in Cisco and in cybersecurity. I got diagnosed with autism from a very young age and spent my entire time through LCPS and e-academy with an IEP. I would like to state my opposition to the lottery mission system being instituted. Removing all merit from the admission system is a step too far and opens the door for the passionate and dedicated to be replaced with the uninterested and undedicated, almost certainly leading to more people dropping

[03:09:53] the course or not passing the very difficult certification test. In addition, I worry about the reputational damage this will cause to both programs. While there, we got access to many internship opportunities which many people from the class took advantage of but with this system why would companies spend time and money to hire random selection of students they won't for these two reasons and many others the students have mentioned I urge you to reconsider this change thank you for hearing my concerns. Thank you. Benkeo Mandava followed by Abner

[03:10:24] Ranjit Samuwal. Good evening everyone my name is Benkeo Mandava and I'm a senior at Lairish High School currently attending math and cyber security after completing math and cisco last year. MATA is more than just a program. It's a place for passionate students to prepare for a career that's true, hands-on learning, and real-world opportunities. But the proposed lottery system threatens that. Choosing future EMTs or cybersecurity professionals randomly, like picking names out of a hat, undermines the passion and dedication that makes MATA successful. These are people in our community directly affecting us. Definitely, I don't feel like it's just for the board to suspend its rules of operations and take immediate action on this issue. By doing so, the community's input

[03:11:04] cannot be taken into consideration. I believe there should be reconsideration affecting next year's admission process. MATA drives because students choose to be here, bringing commitment and focus. Lottery risks lowering the quality of education opportunities for everyone. That's particular what makes MATA exceptional. Thank you for your time and dedication. Thank you.

[03:11:22] Avner Ranjith Samuel, followed by Liz Crotty. Good evening. My name is Avner and I'm a senior in the Cisco program at MATA. I'm deeply concerned about replacing MATA's merit-based admissions with the lottery system. While inclusivity is important, this decision lacks sufficient research and transparency. For example, data highlights a drop in the percentage of admitted students with disabilities from 18.1% to 9.3%, but ignores key context. The actual number

[03:11:57] of these students has stayed steady at around 208, despite a larger applicant pool. This crucial context was either overlooked or ignored, making it unacceptable to dismantle a system that's consistently balanced access and rigor based on such incomplete analysis. Additionally, where teachers, parents, and students meaningfully included in the conversation, a system with years of merit-based success shouldn't be abandoned without exploring revisions that address equity concerns while preserving academic

excellence. I urge the board to pause, engage the community, and consider alternatives. Let's revise, not replace what has worked for many. Thank you for

[03:12:35] listening. Thank you. Liz Crotty, followed by Erin Kunkel. Good evening. These are quotes from the SEAC teacher survey on playgrounds. The only space we have for our ECSE students is in the courtyard. No equipment was provided to us. We had to obtain equipment and toys ourselves. Many of my students have sensory needs that could be met if we had climbing equipment. Last year I had a student in a wheelchair and we worked hard to adapt a few items so that she could use them.

[03:13:10] She was able to roll a ball down a ramp and a peer would get it and bring it back to her. It was hard to push her wheelchair across the grass. Sometimes we brought a blanket out and she sat on it with some friends. It took me almost three years to get a playground at my school. If it were not for this fundraiser, my students would not have a playground.

[03:13:29] Playgrounds should be a standard practice to have in place in all elementary schools. Once we finally had a playground at our ECSE space, I saw significant change in social skills as the students took turns going through the tunnels and looking out of the holes to say hello to peers. Thank you so much. Thank you. Erin Kunkel followed by Abram Ibrahim. Good evening. My name is Erin Kunkel and I am the chair of MSAC. I am here tonight to reaffirm MSAC's support for the ongoing

[03:14:07] work of the school renaming process and to highlight its importance to our community. The names of our schools should reflect equity, inclusivity, and respect, values that uplift and unite our LCPS community. Renaming schools is not about erasing history, but rather about creating an environment where every student can take pride in the spaces where they grow and learn.

[03:14:27] We recognize that this work is not easy. However, the need for this process and its completion is clear. As a community, we cannot relinquish responsibility to ensure our schools represent the progress that we aspire to for our children. This is work that matters deeply, not only to those most directly impacted, but to the entirety of the LCPS community. We hope that we continue to trust this board to continue moving forward with integrity and focus, despite the challenges and conversations that come with this important work. Thank you for your time and your commitment

[03:14:59] to serving all students. Thank you. Abraham Ebrahim and Dhruv Pesal.

[03:15:19] Good evening. My name is Abraham, and I'm a senior in Mattis Cybersecurity Pathway. I love the Academies of Loudoun. A step magnet school brimming with passion and intelligence, ACL prides itself on the caliber of student it produces, as well as its incredible academic opportunities. MATA in particular is known for its hands-on approach to learning. For example, in my cyber security class, we compete in CyberPatriot, a realistic youth cyber defense competition sponsored by the Air Force Association. Having competed in CyberPatriot at both my home school and ACL, I've seen how MATA's selective admissions process ensures passionate and dedicated students contributing to its exceptional performance in competitions like CyberPatriot, HOSA, and SkillsUSA.

[03:15:57] Our students' performance in these events showcased the high achievement levels and dedication of the students in the MATA programs and has helped build a reputation for excellence. Shifting to a lottery-based admission system undermines MATA's commitment to career readiness as well as its extracurricular excellence. This changed his status as a premier educational institution and should be reverted.

[03:16:19] Thank you. Drew Pissot, followed by Jeremy Staples.

[03:16:33] Good evening, members of the school board. My name is Drew Passall, and I'm a senior at Freedom High School and currently attending the Cisco Pathway in MATA. Tonight, you've heard from a diverse group of students who are deeply passionate about MATA and the opportunities it provides. We've highlighted how the new lottery-based admission system risks undermining the program's purpose, reputation, and success.

[03:16:52] MATA's strength lies in its rigorous merit-based process that ensures students are prepared, passionate, and committed to excelling in these pathways. This lottery system reduces students to mere numbers, jeopardizing industry partnerships, extracurricular excellence, and the program's culture of dedication and hard work.

[03:17:09] While we agree inclusivity is important, there are better ways to achieve it, such as reducing GPA and test score requirements or reinstating vision statements and resumes to balance accessibility and merit. We urge the board to reconsider this decision, gather meaningful input from the community, and adopt a process that preserves the standards that make MATA exceptional.

[03:17:28] Together, we can protect the program's legacy and ensure it continues to serve the students who value it most. Thank you. Thank you. Jeremy Staples followed by Mateus Antansana. Hello distinguished staff and school board members. My name is Mr. Staples, an instructor to many of the passionate MATA students and alumni that you have heard from tonight. As a teacher at MATA and Monroe Tech since 2014, I will attest that the most successful and career-focused students in my class do not always have the highest GPAs and PSAT scores. However, I will echo the sentiment that these

[03:18:07] students have urged you to consider. MATA Cybersecurity DE is taught all day, every other day, 310 minutes each day, MATA cybersecurity students are dual enrolled in five college courses on top of the four courses that they're enrolled in at their home schools. Students are also required to take industry standard A-plus and security-plus certification exams through the use of Perkins funding.

[03:18:27] I believe the move to a lottery system may enroll students that are ill-prepared for the accelerated pace and academic rigor of a MATA cyber and lack dedication to a career in cybersecurity. While I do support the admissions process that focuses on less academic achievement, we must retain a means of assessing applicant career goals and passion for the field.

[03:18:48] Rather than simply washing our hands of the process, please consider awarding students that have exhibited exceptional... Thank you. Please yield the mic. Thank you. Mateus Atizana, followed by Swarna, and I can't tell if this is a U or a V.

[03:19:09] Yula Ganagathan, I guess. I'm not a junior in Marasisco. I would like to state my displeasure for the decision to move to a lottery system For its potential negative effects on qualified students, as previously stated, its failure to address the problem at hand. A lottery system would completely ignore not only the issue of diversity in the academies, it also removes any way to gauge whether a student is considering their pathway as a legitimate career.

[03:19:35] It also follows the better requirements needed for entry to the lottery are exceptionally easy to meet and do not reflect the academic rigor of matter. Nor do they require any qualifications that show a student's continued interest in the subject. The Solari system may also cause the opposite of what was intended, as it cannot be selective of merit or diversity due to its random nature.

[03:19:57] Finally, I'd like to state my disappointment in the board, which is voting on a measure based on flawed statistics, and neither did the necessary amount of research to find a more effective solution or consultation with stakeholders before this decision was reached. Thank you. Have a good night.

[03:20:13] Thank you. Swarna Yulaganathan, followed by Abirami Rabakumar. Good evening. I'm here. I'm Swarna Lata. I'm here to advocate for my daughter, Abirami.

[03:20:36] Good evening. My name is Abirami Rabakumar, and I'm a freshman at Briarwoods High School. Last year, I applied to the Health and Medical Sciences Program. The reason I applied for this course was because of my passion in the medical field. Unfortunately, I wasn't granted admissions in terms of the lottery system.

[03:20:53] This year, I applied to the HAMSci program in MATA, offered at the Academies of Loudoun, but I'm disappointed that the school board has opted to a lottery system to grant admissions, which puts me and many other students at a loss in terms of admission to MATA. The prior MATA admission process judged based on capability, work ethics, and academic success.

[03:21:14] Now, we're chosen solely based on a string of numbers assigned to us. Thank you. And with that, I think that is the end of public comment for tonight. We thank you for coming out today and providing your public comment.

[03:21:33] Board members, at this time, we will take a short recess, and we will reconvene at 8 o'clock. The board is now in recess.

[03:32:57] All right, the board is back from recess, and we will continue with item 12 and our action item, starting with uh 12.01 uh finance and operations committee revision of policy 4180 commercial promotional and corporate sponsorships and partnerships formerly policy 864 mr vice chair streife do you have a motion yes thank you madam chair i move that the loudon county school board approve staff's recommended updates to policy 4180 commercial promotional and corporate sponsorships and partnerships i have a motion by vice chair streife do i have a second

[03:33:35] have a second by dr. Rashid it's been properly moved and seconded is there any discussion yes mrs. Griffiths thank you madam chair regarding 4180 and I'm not sure who can answer this for me I just wanted to get some examples of educational partnerships and edge educational partnerships and sponsorships as to why there were so many revisions to this policy can somebody tell me what spurred this on just a quick question who would that be

[03:34:07] as far as this policy i can start the policy was due for revision and i'm trying to find when the last date that it had been updated but it was due for revision in terms of the redlining as part of our review we just saw the opportunity to provide additional clarification to provide better definitions. We noticed that we were missing additional information regarding who can enter

[03:34:46] into the sponsorships or partnerships. And so we introduced or made more clear a tier break of 5,000 so that anything less than 5,000, the principal had the authority. Anything over 5,000 would be the superintendent or a cabinet member. And then in terms of the I think as we had discussed in the finance and operations committee, this was in working in collaboration with division council's office in terms of providing the additional, well, exactly what it's called, requirements.

[03:35:22] What I would kind of call as some of the fine print of contracts, making sure that we had language in there that was protecting the school board and the school division. Okay, thank you. Any other discussion?

[03:35:40] Seeing no more discussion, we'll go ahead and move forward to the vote. Clerk, would you please open the vote? board members please record your vote Dr. Deans would you please state your vote yes Ms. Chernoff would you please state your vote

[03:36:05] yes clerk would you please close and display the vote and that motion passes eight with Ms. Griffiths in opposition all right we'll move on to item 12.02 from the student behavior and accountability committee revisions to Policy 8650, Student Technology, Acceptable Responsible Use, presented.

[03:36:41] Well, Ms. LaBelle, do you have a motion? See, you're falling behind on me.

[03:36:57] I move that the board accept the motion is listed in the clear copy of Policy 8650, Student Technology, Acceptable and Responsible Use. I have a motion by Ms. LaBelle. Do I have a second?

[03:37:15] I have a second by Vice Chair Struffy. I would like to have some discussion, and I have an amendment to propose to the item. I want to make the wording clear that in some instances it is a right, especially for our students with disabilities.

[03:37:35] And in the policy, it actually has, I think it's line 15 on the red line. It says, use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right. We're doing so would not be contrary to the applicable laws. And I know it has laws there, but I'd like to make it a little bit more clear and insert, including Section 504, IDEA, and ADA.

[03:37:59] So that's my motion. Do I have a second? Second. I have a second by Ms. Donahue. Is there any discussion? Yes. Yes, ma'am. We worked very hard to carve out a position for all our special ed students to make sure that they had access to any of the devices, medical, alternate computers, wristbands, whatever they needed to be able to use this.

[03:38:30] I would like to hear from Mr. Smith and let him present the document to you. - Mr. Smith. - All right, thank you. We're here tonight to talk about policy 8650, student technology acceptable use policy.

[03:38:48] The major changes in this policy were to align with 8655, as that is a new policy that just came into existence regarding student personal device usage. And in that policy, I believe we have a lot of that embedded language that was just discussed.

[03:39:05] So this policy, staff finds no issues with changing applicable laws to the chair's motion. So that would just be in alignment with what I think the intention of the policy is in the first place, and if that helps clarify, more than supportive of that. - Again, it is cross referenced in 8655 down at the bottom.

[03:39:25] It's been added in the red line copy. I think I just was thinking that I just wanted to be a little bit more clear that that's what we were talking about. I know it says applicable laws, but I just wanted to make sure that we had Section 504 IDEA and ADA in there.

[03:39:43] Yes, Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to piggyback on the concerns that you raised because I have had some conversations with some parents in our community who have informed me that their children, their students in our schools, have previously had some kind of setup where they were either using their own devices in the school or in their home for virtual learning and recently have been told that they can no longer do that.

[03:40:16] In some cases, these are necessary because of medical issues, such as a vision problem, And in other cases, it's a different issue related to a 504 or an IEP. And I had similar concerns about the wording in the current proposal and whether it is sufficiently clear that our students, if they need access to technology to support their education with us beyond what is the standard that we provide here to all of our students, that they will be able to obtain that and that they can provide their own if that is what they choose to do.

[03:40:56] And one of my concerns about that was while I support adding specific language referencing ADA, IDEA, and 504, IDEA and 504, I did have some concern based on what one parent said to me that he was told, His student had never had a 504, but was recently told that they could no longer use their own device unless they obtained that accommodation written out in a 504.

[03:41:28] Where did they get this information? Because this policy hasn't been revised, changed, or brought forward yet. Go ahead, Ms. Donahue. Well, this is what the parents were told by the school-based leadership at their children's schools.

[03:41:55] And it was timing-wise, it fell after the cell phone policy was approved and prior to the proposed revisions in this. So I'm not saying that I understand 100% where this fits in between these two policies, but as Mr. Smith himself noted, they are related.

[03:42:24] And as you noted, Ms. LaBelle, they are related, they are connected. And what I don't want to have happen is an interpretation of either or both of these policies that causes any additional barriers for our students. Okay, that might be a separate motion after, if you're thinking about what, are you thinking about making a motion?

[03:42:51] Perhaps, but I was also commenting on my support for yours, Madam Chair. Okay, thank you. I think any other, I think I saw Ms. Chernoff and Dr. Deans. Ms. Chernoff, did you want to say no? Dr. Deans?

[03:43:07] I think when we say applicable laws, it involves all of those that you enumerated. And I think that what needs to be done is to hold the administration accountable for adhering to the applicable laws rather than redoing a policy.

[03:43:32] Those are my thoughts. Applicable laws include all of those with children with disabilities. Okay. Any other discussion on this motion, on the amendment that I proposed? No? Yes, Mrs. Griffiths.

[03:43:51] Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm wondering if this should go back to implement more of CIAC's suggestions. Just a thought. That would be a third motion. So if we could vote on this, and then if you would like to make that motion, You can make that motion, and then we'll go to the base motion.

[03:44:15] I think I did that right. Yes. Sorry, Madam Chair, could you please read again your proposed amendment? Yes, ma'am. On line 15, on the red line, it would read, Use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right.

[03:44:33] Where doing so would not be contrary to applicable laws, including Section 504, IDEA, and ADA.

[03:44:49] So let's go ahead and seeing no more discussion. Clerk, would you please open the vote for that amendment? Board members, please record your vote. Dr. Deans, would you please state your vote?

[03:45:04] No. Ms. Chernoff, would you please state your vote? Yes. Clerk, would you please close and display the vote? And that motion passes with...

[03:45:23] Am I not allowed to vote? Yes, she said no. Carrie, Ms. LaBelle, did you not have that vote? It's voted up there. Yeah, I know.

[03:45:39] Oh, okay. My thought was, if we're just adding a specific reference to IDEA and 504, if it makes parents comfortable, that's fine. We never intended to cut that part out.

[03:45:55] So that motion passes 8-1 with Dr. Deans in opposition. And then we can go back, unless we have another motion, we'll go back to the base motion. Yes, Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[03:46:11] I would move to restore the section, including the bring your own technology language that is cut out on the red line. I have a motion by Mrs. Donahue to add back in the, what is it, line 77 through 84 on the red line.

[03:46:41] So I apologize, Madam Chair, because my computer just restarted itself a few minutes ago and closed all my windows. So I no longer have it in front of me. I think it's line 77 through 84.

[03:47:00] I have a motion by Ms. Donahue. Do I have a second? I have a second by Vice Chair Struffy. Is there any discussion? Madam Chair, can I ask a question?

[03:47:18] Could you explain how we came about with Bring Your Own Technology? Because I remember having a discussion about that in the meeting. Sure. The use of Bring Your Own Technology, or BYOT, is completely covered in 8655.

[03:47:35] student use of personal devices, this language is actually in contradiction to that policy, which is why it is being removed. So to restore this language would negate some of the language in 8655. So just to be mindful of that, they're in conflict currently. Thank you, Mr. Slevin.

[03:47:57] I'm sorry, Smith, I did it again. Yes, Ms. Donahue. Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could just ask Mr. Smith a brief follow-up. What language in 8655 are you referring to as covering the bring your own technology bring your own technology is any technology a student would bring to school so that is pretty much the purpose of 8655 student personal device usage which includes a lot of those technologies this policy as written would allow for those devices to be permitted that policy specifically states by level where devices can and can't be used and assigns administration and other different roles and responsibilities as part of that policy

[03:48:35] so this policy as written here would allow a device to come in without any any rules or boundaries that are established as part of that other policy. Sorry, if I could ask one more follow-up, Madam Chair. Thank you. So, I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, is there a section or specific lines of 8,655 that explicitly permits students to bring their own technology to use when it is necessary for them to access their education?

[03:49:21] Sure. So, policy 8,655, student personal device usage. Section A, student personal device use, number two. Student personal technology devices may only be used in designated locations and at designated times as further set forth in section B below. Cell phones and earbuds must be silenced and put away during instructional periods unless a special circumstance exists and there is a documented accommodation.

[03:49:43] Smartwatches are allowed but must not interfere with instructions. Students may be asked to remove their smartwatch for tests unless a specific documented accommodation exists. If any device becomes a disruption during instruction, Disciplined practices will be enforced. And then there are a provision at the end.

[03:50:00] Exceptions, so section D exceptions. Unless otherwise required to access instruction, students may not use devices in classrooms except when explicitly allowed by their classroom teacher. Parents, guardians, multi-disciplinary team members, including 504 teams and individualized education plan teams for other persons with knowledge of students who require access to personally owned devices as an accommodation shall request such accommodations their respective teams thank you mr smith madam chair i i still have a concern but i i think i'm

[03:50:36] convinced that the way to potentially address the concern that i have is would be specifically looking at 8655 and for that reason i withdraw my motion okay your uh your motion is withdrawn um is there mr allen if someone withdraws their motion they can just withdraw their motion there's is nothing to vote on there's nothing else to do that's correct okay thank you um any other discussion for the base motion no okay we will now vote on the base motion as amended oh actually

[03:51:14] miss miss Chernoff did you have a question or comment no I was just going to reiterate that 8655 was where that byot was referenced that's all thank you though sorry no worries um miss mrs griffiths did you have a motion to refer it back um only that um if there's still questions to maybe send it back to committee and take a look at it again um that was my motion i didn't

[03:51:45] know if anybody else would want to do that okay so miss uh mrs griffiths has a motion to send it back do i have a second second i'll have a second by ms donoghue um and so we'll go ahead and vote on sending the motion back clerk would you please open the vote oh is there any discussion i forgot the discussion part when we get through all these amendments and all this other stuff sometimes i

[03:52:17] forget about discussions is there any discussion about this about mrs griffiths no okay we'll go ahead and this is to send it back to committee yes ma'am uh mrs dr deans what is your vote no Ms. Chernoff? No. Okay, clerk, please close and display the vote. That motion does not pass

[03:52:52] with Dr. Deans, Ms. Chandler, Ms. Bansfield, Mr. Estraffi, Ms. Donahue, Ms. Chernoff, and Dr. Rashid, and Ms. LaBelle in opposition. All right, I think that, oh, I need to go back to the base vote, sorry, base motion. All right, so this is the base motion as amended. Is there any discussion?

[03:53:16] okay so um we will go ahead and clerk will you please open the vote board members please record your vote dr deans would you please state your vote yes miss shiranoff would you please state your vote yes clerk would you please close and display the vote that motion passes unanimously

[03:53:53] all right and we have done all of our information items and so we will move to item 14 closed session. Vice-Chair Straffi, do you have a motion? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the Loudoun County School Board recess this public meeting and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia for the following: discussion and consideration of the performance of a specific public employee as authorized by section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia; discussion and

[03:54:30] consideration of the performance of a specific public officer as authorized by 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia and discussion and consideration of the appointment of a specific public employee as authorized by 2.2-3711A1 of the Code of Virginia. I have a motion by Vice Chair Struffy. Do I have a second?

[03:54:49] Second. I have a second by Ms. Donahue. Is there any discussion? Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank You Madam Chair. I'd like to amend the motion on the floor and pull the second item this discussion in consideration of the performance of a specific public employee from the proposed closed meeting motion to a specific topic if we could discuss it in an open forum the other two topics can proceed in the closed meeting thank you there's a motion on the chair on the floor by um by uh miss mrs griffiths mrs griffiths could you restate

[03:55:28] your motion one more time i would like to amend the motion on the floor and pull the second item discussion and consideration of the performance of a specific public officer from the proposed closed meeting motion so that the specific topic could be discussed in an open forum the other two topics can proceed in closed in a closed meeting thank you i have a motion by mrs griffiths do i have a second second i have a second by mrs donahue is there any discussion

[03:56:00] seeing no discussion we'll go ahead and take a vote um on the on mrs griffith's uh amendment clerk would you please open the vote board members please record your vote dr deans would you please state your vote no miss shurnoff would you please state your vote yes clerk would you please close

[03:56:35] and display the vote and that motion does not pass with uh dr deans miss chandler miss mansfield Mr. Estruffy, Ms. Donahue, Dr. Rasheed, and Ms. LaBelle in opposition. We go back to the base motion. So is there any discussion on the base motion? Seeing no discussion, clerk, would you

[03:57:07] please open the vote? Board members, would you please cord your vote? Okay, this ain't working. Okay. Dr. Deans, would you please state your vote? Yes. Ms. Chernoff, would you please state

[03:57:43] your vote. I abstain. Abstain. Clerk, would you please close and display the vote? That motion passes seven to one with Ms. Griffiths in opposition and Ms. Chernoff abstaining for the vote. The board is

[03:58:10] now in closed session.

[06:22:18] Okay, the board is now coming out of closed. Vice Chair Streffi, do you have a motion? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the closed meeting be adjourned, that the Loudoun County School Board reconvene its public meeting, and that the minutes of the public meeting reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed meeting I have it okay who seconded it Ms. Donahue Ms. Donahue seconded that motion is there any discussion no we'll

[06:22:54] go ahead and vote clerk please open the vote board members please record your vote dr. Deans will you please state your vote yes miss Chernoff will you please state your vote I abstain clerk will you please close and display the vote. That motion passes with Ms. Chernoff abstaining for the vote.

[06:23:31] Vice Chair Streffi, do you have another motion? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting, whereas Loudoun County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and whereas 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law. Now therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully

[06:24:08] exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered by the Loudoun County school board i have a motion by vice chair struffy do you have a second i have a second by miss chandler um is there any discussion seeing none we'll go ahead and take the electronic vote clerk please open the vote board members please record your vote dr deans will you please state

[06:24:44] your vote yes ms shiranoff will you please state your vote uh yes would you go um clerk please close and display the vote that motion passes unanimously with ms shiranoff abstaining for the vote um okay we will move to item 15 board members do you want to have comments and committee reports

[06:25:15] or do you want to move that uh just email later thumbs up for uh moving on okay that's i think unanimous okay uh is there any new business item 16 seeing no new business um the november 26 2024 for Loudoun County School Board meeting is now adjourned.

[06:25:45] Please drive safely home.



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