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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, December 4, 2024

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[00:04:57] everyone if we can get to our seats and get signed in please thank you all so much for coming out on this bitterly cold evening it's nice and toasty in here there are cookies in the back some of them are homemade please go as you would like to and grab a cookie you can have cookies to start with you can have cookies at break and you can have cookies at the end if there's any left so by all means go get your little bit of sugar. Thank you Catherine. And then please scan

[00:05:31] the QR code and let us know that you are here. We have the role of SEAC and Virginia regulations all posted on our website. So if you would like to read more about our roles and responsibilities you may do so. I will quickly introduce people. My name is Liz Crotty. I am the SEAC chair. Tonight we are joined by our SEAC Vice Chair of Planning, Catherine Moran, our SEAC Vice Chair of Membership, Carla Sola, and our SEAC Vice Chair of Communications, Erin Rosalpo. And then we have our SEAC

[00:06:09] Secretary, Katie Rosenbrook, who is not with us this evening, our SEAC Past Chair, Sharon Trofe, who I believe will be joining us online. And we have our Director of Special Education, Dr. Paige Carter, doing a good job in getting some cookies. And our school board liaison, Carrie LaBelle, in the Santa hat, who is very festive, which I love.

[00:06:31] And then our school board liaison alternate is Melinda Mansfield. And we are going to start things off, as always, with me not forgetting it, with Parent Resource Services with Leanne Kidwell. Good evening, everyone.

[00:06:56] I'm Leanne Kidwell with Parent Resource Services. And it's a quick month this month. Tomorrow night, we have our suicide prevention. Dr. Heather Applegate will be presenting with Christy Smythe from George Mason University, and that's going to be at Independence High School.

[00:07:14] So hopefully you can brave the 15-degree weather tomorrow night and come out and visit us. It's going to be cold. And then next week, our always popular Kindergarten Connection. It's for parents whose children are in early childhood special education that are going to transition to kindergarten with an IEP.

[00:07:37] Always very popular, always very packed. That's a huge transition. So that is going to be here next Thursday night, actually in this room. And then happy winter break. We only have two and a half more weeks to go.

[00:07:53] And I kind of motivated for the snow tomorrow morning. And this is how to contact me. All right. do we have any public comment we're doing it a little early okay um no last minute public comments speak now forever hold your peace all right just as a reminder we use public comments to inform our work to advise the school board on special education needs you'll see in the annual report that I sent out

[00:08:29] earlier was that today or last night I'm not really sure but in it we have copies of all of our public comments they really do go into the work we do in our subcommittees and in terms of our recommendations that we then bring to the school board so we do appreciate getting public comment we are not doing a did you know that tonight so don't don't look at that we will defer that to another evening soon and now we will move to dr. Paige Carter for our office

[00:09:03] of special education update. Thank you. Good evening everybody. I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. It was nice to spend time with family. We're serving 10,275 students with disabilities. That is up somewhere around 60 over the course of the month since we last met. And I do want to, we were trending down a little bit this year, but it turns out we're

[00:09:32] not because we have 370 eligibilities scheduled for January. 370. And we normally have a, we call it a hit rate, an eligibility rate of about 80 percent, 80 to 85 percent. So that is going to be a significant increase. So I suspect our January number to our February number is going to be a big jump. But we are on track for and maybe even exceeding the prediction of where we would be by

[00:10:04] the end of the year. So I did want to point out our vacancies and I did teacher and TA and we are actually over last year down in all of the categories. We didn't, weren't unable to hire any TAs this month. We're holding steady, but I'm told there were interviews all over the place this week, so I guess the Thanksgiving holiday may have impacted that, so it is interesting,

[00:10:36] but I did want to, I think, here we go. Got extra slides in there. I did a comparison for last December to this December as well, just to kind of show you where we are. Teachers way down. TAs up a little bit over where we were last year for vacancies. But I put the red trend line in to just kind of show in an extreme way how much more we are filling our positions this year in special

[00:11:11] education for teachers. So I just wanted to celebrate that a little bit with you. Here is a breakdown of where our vacancies are right now. Not on the chart. We have two vacancies in speech language pathology right now. We had one retirement and one vacancy that we've had for a bit, but we've had interviews this week, so hopeful we'll be able to fill them quickly. But this is the spread across the different disability categories, the teachers that serve mainly those students, and this for the

[00:11:45] first time cross-categorical exceeds autism. We normally have a lot more vacancies in autism than we do cross gap so or at least this time last year we did so just to kind of let you know it is sort of a cross and isn't in any one area and to see that we only have one vacancy in ecse even though we added 12 programs is really significant all right so i wanted to share with you tonight we do a little talking about the staffing standards and i know those are published and out and i just

[00:12:18] just wanted to show you how we staff compared to the state maximums in cross-categorical. And cross-categorical is our term for students who are served in general education who spend more than 50% of their day out in general ed with their peers. So we call that cross-categorical.

[00:12:40] Across, if you are less than 50 percent in special education, the state gives you one point for that, and we are allowed to go up to 24 points per teacher in the state of Virginia.

[00:12:55] I was speaking to some colleagues just south of here from two different divisions, and they are having to pay teachers extra because they have gone beyond the 24 on their caseloads. So I only say that to celebrate how we have been able to maintain a staffing standard that is productive and, I believe, helpful to our students.

[00:13:25] And if you do a comparison of our scores with many divisions who do not follow such a staffing standard, and I'm not aware of another division that has a staffing standard as robust as ours. but if you look at the comparison in the performance of those students, there is a marked difference.

[00:13:44] So I wanted to point out where we were. But the other thing I wanted to point out was that often we talk about the staffing standard as a one to 10 ratio. And you can see currently as of today, and these numbers were actually pulled in November, but overall we are at a 10.9 students.

[00:14:07] average per cross-categorical teacher across the division, all levels combined, all special schools, everything. And then broken down by level, and I want to tell you an error on my chart because I did a couple of tweaks to my chart. Those are actually in reverse. Elementary is 1 to 10.2, middle is 1 to 11.5, and high school is 1 to 11.8 as of today. And I will switch that so it'll archive correctly. But, and so if you think about high school is at about 1 to 12 right

[00:14:46] now. But on average, we are very much more near our staffing standard of 1 to 10. And that's important because in a minute I'm going to talk about budget priorities oh it's right here okay so I'll come back to that but budget my budget priorities for this year because we are anticipating a gap in the budget that we'll need to as Dr. Spence works through the budget we'll we'll see how it all shakes out this is the time of year every year when we're kind of just crossing our fingers. We've submitted our requests for the different departments all over the county for what

[00:15:25] they need to be able and what they need and what they want for next year. And then as the budget numbers come in from the locality and also from the state, we're able then to determine how many of those things make the superintendent's budget for the year. So these are my top four things that I just wanted to share with you that I'm really hoping to get across the line. I asked for many, many more things

than four. Tedra can attest. Had to scroll a little bit across the spreadsheet with all my requests, but these were the four most important to me, and I wanted to share them

[00:16:01] with you. Stipends for elementary lead teachers. Other kinds of lead teachers at elementary get a stipend, but special education lead teachers do not, and when that came to my attention, that's inequity that we need to remedy. It was number one on my budget. And I am hoping, if nothing else, that gets across the line. The next thing is based on the staffing standard, so I'm pretty sure it will get across the line. We need 40 4-0 additional programs next year in order to meet the anticipated need for all of the categories that I had on the chart earlier. So I have asked for 40 additional programs.

[00:16:41] My 33 ask last year was unprecedented, and this year I'm asking for 40 in order to not start full. That would be great, right? But some of our programs, even with 40 additional, will start full. Now, what I need to tell you is a challenge that we're going to face, and I say we because I consider SEAC in it with me.

[00:17:02] Space is going to be an issue. 40 programs is a lot of places for which to find space. So I just wanted to give you a heads up on that. That will be a mountain we'll have to climb in one way or another. We did ask a member of SEAC today if their basement was available.

[00:17:19] So we are just in jest mostly. And then the next thing is I really want to maintain our staffing for cross-categorical and allow for growth, which would mean an increase in our teachers, even if we kept the status quo because of the rate at which we're growing.

[00:17:41] I told you how many eligibilities we have in January, so you can see how this all kinds of fits together. I want to at least maintain where we are today for next year, and I realize that that is not the 1 to 10 that we often talk about, but all year I've been talking to you about staffing at elementary at 1 to 10, 1 to 11 at middle, and 1 to 12 at high school, which is where we are holding and nearing a little higher than that.

[00:18:10] So it is really a priority to make sure that our learners have a really solid ratio so that they can continue to be successful and grow. And then the last thing is knowing that I will only get a certain number of cross-categorical positions, we're going to really focus on staffing, especially at the elementary level, a resource option for students who really don't need a program but they really aren't successful all the time in general education.

[00:18:44] Some kids might need a sensory break. That's more than just a quick trip to the sensory room. Some kids might need more explicit instruction than the traditional cross categorical setting can provide. This is a rung on the continuum that we have, especially for behavior and emotional related things at the middle and high school. It's called School Within a School, which is an odd name, but it basically is a resource program for students who require that kind of thing. We don't have that at elementary. So it's my hope that regardless of what our staffing allocation is,

[00:19:18] that we can really begin to creatively think about how we can solve some of the need for students who really don't fit. They're sort of in between those two rungs on our continuum. to sort of plug that hole.

[00:19:33] And so those are my budget priorities for this year and I wanted to share them with you because there is a lot of talk of budget going around and I hadn't really shared with you what my top priorities were. And so with that, Tedra Richardson.

[00:19:57] - Thank you, Paige. Good evening, everyone. I trust that everyone had a wonderful fall break. I have some updates from across the DSS. It was nice to be able to start our fall break off to a wonderful start.

[00:20:13] Members from our McKinney-Vento team along with principals and staff members from Forest Grove, Potomac Falls, Potomac Elementary, Farmwell Station, Frederick Douglas, and River Bend were able to partner with Bob Evans.

[00:20:28] They donated meals and so they were able to deliver Thanksgiving dinners to about 40 of our McKinney-Vento eligible families. So that was a great way to start the fall break. page did give you a pretty comprehensive update for FY26 budget planning. We have preliminary numbers in from the county. We don't know what to expect from the state yet. The governor doesn't advertise or talk about his budget until about December 19th or December 20th, so we'll know just before winter break what we're looking like at the state level as far as revenue transfer

[00:21:06] to our locality. And then our federal funding, of course, is dependent upon our child count, which we have shared is creeping up. So we will certainly keep you posted. But as a division, we remain focused on compensation to our exemplary staff, making sure that we can maintain.

[00:21:27] We know that we are facing a teacher shortage, so it is harder to get qualified staff. It's harder to keep even our provisionally licensed staff, right? Because you get into the work and you realize just how challenging it is.

[00:21:43] So we continue to work together. We stay focused. We get updates pretty regularly. I try to keep my team as updated as possible. And whenever we know something, we will make sure that we share it with SEAC, okay? Our student success talks.

[00:21:59] We had our first one last month at Lunsford Middle School, and it was well attended. It was very wonderful. We weren't quite sure, the rain was terrible, it was a cold, dreary night, but we had about 57 parents and students to come, and our student success talks are structured around a couple of different topics, so graduation, community outreach, assessment, mental health, and how to operate all of our LCPS platforms, like parent view, student view, how to get into Schoology and we had breakout sessions and so it was nice intimate conversations

[00:22:38] students were fabulous about asking questions it was awesome to be a part of that parents were a lot more comfortable as asking questions so I encourage you to come out to our second one we were just going to be at Trailside Middle School on December 17th it starts at 5:30 it'll be in the library there okay we We do have our seventh annual LCPS Mental Health and Wellness Conference coming up.

[00:23:06] That is a hyperlink, so if you click that, it'll take you to our information page. It is Saturday, January 25th from 8:30 to 2:30 at our 100th school, which is Watson Mountain Middle School, which is four levels.

[00:23:21] So come out and enjoy that opportunity. It's a resource fair. We'll have food trucks. We'll have presentations. It's always a very nice time, and our January 2024, we had the highest attendance that we had ever had, so we are hoping to break that record in 2025, and as we head into the winter season, our social and emotional learning team has coordinated some winter connection activities that are focused on fun things that families can do over the winter break, so keep an eye out for that.

[00:23:57] they should be blasted out in our superintendent's news newsletter. And I just want to say thank you so much. SEAC has showed up at school board meetings, at committee meetings, at joint committee meetings, and your advocacy, your partnership, your dedication, and your collaboration has moved pretty big mountains this year.

[00:24:24] And so just want to say thank you in this season of celebration and gratitude. I'm very appreciative for you. Thank you. All right.

[00:24:40] And next we have Carrie. Do you want to give us an update? Still short, though.

[00:25:02] They took off another half inch. I'm four foot 11 now. Anyway, we are coming up into budget season, which is obviously all of our favorite season of the year.

[00:25:21] And we had a session on the capital project, and I am celebrating the fact that we are looking forward to having the playgrounds in the budget.

[00:25:39] Of course, we still have to pass the budget, but it made the line item, I'm pretty sure. and they're talking about a very very quick timeline uh hopefully getting um six more playgrounds this year and then 12 in the next two years with three next three years i don't count well i'm special ed i'm so sorry never got that math skill down straight um you should see my checkbook oh my god anyway uh we are going to have that moving forward on a fairly quick timeline

[00:26:14] We want to make sure that every school has an adaptive playground, and then we'll be going back and making sure that they have both one for three through five and preschool through two. So that's going forward. That's why I'm wearing my hat and celebrating the season.

[00:26:35] Thank you. It wasn't me. It's a group effort. You all were out there pushing for it so hard, and that made a big impression. I'm also pleased to say that we are looking forward that the transition center is something that is a line item in the budget, has about \$5 million attached to it, and we are moving forward with that, looking at different things for it, different possibilities.

[00:27:06] So keep it in your prayers this season, because we want to keep it right there on the budget and get it through and get it going. If it passes as the way we have it, we're hoping that it can open by 2027. So that's another quick timeline.

[00:27:25] No promises, but we're trying. So those are some wonderful thoughts to keep in your mind this holiday season. Thank you. There is so much to be so thankful for this season and this collaboration and the work that everyone has done from our school board members to our LCPS staff at all sorts of levels.

[00:27:56] And we had SLPs coming out to help us advocate. We've had teachers who completed surveys and gave us important information. Like, it really has. And we've got our parents who've come out. It's been such a group effort. So I just, you know, I'm so overwhelmed, truly, with everything that people have done, with the emails that have been sent.

[00:28:19] I'll get into that later, but I just could not say something. So Carla, would you like to give us our membership report? SEAC currently has 21 members, which is under our bylaws, the maximum amount.

[00:28:37] But we're still taking membership applications because there's always a possibility that a member will need to roll off during the year. So please keep the membership applications coming in. And we have 80 schools with PTA, PTO representatives.

[00:28:56] There are still 21 schools that do not have a representative, which means I don't have a designated person at those schools to send our newsletter and other very important information that we would like all of our families to have.

[00:29:13] So please make sure that your school has a CEAC, PTA or PTO rep. Thank you. Now we'll get into the Inclusive Playgrounds and Transition Center. So the capital budget is being voted on on Tuesday at 6.30 p.m. right here.

[00:29:35] So if you would like to come out and, you know, give a comment and keep the momentum going, we would very much appreciate it. You can also, I think it would be a nice time to also give some thank yous to our LCPS staff and our school board members as well for the incredible work they've done like truly they they had a budget that you know looked very nice and well thought out and then they made changes and completely retooled things to be able to make these playgrounds happen so that was the

[00:30:11] collaborative work of a lot of people and I I'm so personally grateful for them doing that and I I think it's going to make such an impact for all of our kids, those who actually need an inclusive playground and those who will benefit from being around all of our kids who may not have had the opportunities to use those playgrounds.

[00:30:32] So come and join us. We'll be here. I'm going to be running around because I've got a daughter and a chorus concert that night, but I'm going to be here as much as I can. So sign up. The link should open probably Sunday or so usually, Friday night.

[00:30:53] You can sign up and fill out a little Google form and just make sure you sign up before 12 o'clock on Tuesday 'cause that's when it gets cut off. If you can't make it, feel free to send an email saying thank you to everyone.

[00:31:08] And I just want to particularly give a big shout out to the kids who showed up and gave public comment. I mean, they were the all-stars. They have a way of advocating and saying things in a way that none of us can.

[00:31:27] We just, we can't do it. They were amazing. So I'm so appreciative. Thank you to all the children who came and made their voices heard. So going forward, after you have thanked our school board members, I think it would be good if we all, you know, when we have our meetings and we're talking with our teachers, It's good to ask about, what does recess look like for my child?

[00:31:55] Where are they spending it? How are things going? Because otherwise, you won't necessarily have insight into that. It's an important time of day, and I think it's something that we should, you know, pay a little bit more attention to and figure out, like, are there social difficulties happening?

[00:32:13] Is elopement a concern? Like, how can we partner with the school to make sure that this important time of the day is being used well um also for the for our pta pto reps now that we know you are going to get an inclusive playground it might be a good time to start fundraising for any additional equipment that you might want for your inclusive playground there's going to be a package and it's a very nice package but there i mean if you look at the catalog of playing ground equipment it is extensive and

[00:32:51] expensive and there may be things that you want for your particular school that you might want to start fundraising for now because they're you know thousands of dollars but the way the process works is if your PTA/PTO has money to put towards this playground that will be an extra thing that can be

built at your school so it might be good to start planning ahead and when your school does do these fundraising campaigns say well hey what about we just you know try to put this money towards the playground just a thought maybe you don't need that

[00:33:29] but if that is something that you're interested in it might be good to plan ahead how do you so I think the best way to work that was LCPS would be to go through your principal your principal should have the contact and they should be able to get through to Brian Stocks and his team to make sure that that money goes to where it needs to.

[00:34:04] Yes, sure, maybe we can work with Brian and Aaron and see if we can put together some information that could be shared.

[00:34:23] Yep, yeah, yeah, no, I think, right, if you want additional shade, if you want benches, if you want those kinds of things.

[00:34:44] I mean, the problem is that the price changes like every day, Every time we ask what an inclusive playground costs, it goes up \$50,000. So, yeah. So, you know, but maybe just to give some ballpark ideas so that they understand what that fundraising might look like.

[00:35:05] Yes.

[00:35:14] Yeah, so as part of the regulation, which we can definitely share out, it lists the specific type of equipment that is included in an inclusive playground. So that's already available. I mean, it's not pictures of it because they use a couple of different vendors for building the playgrounds, but they do list the type of equipment that will be included in each inclusive playground.

[00:35:37] Those are really good questions. Oh, I know. I'm so excited, too. Seriously, I just keep like sitting here like pinching myself. I can't believe it. So this is amazing. All right. And then next, the first movie recommendation from SEAC, I think, that I know of.

[00:35:56] But I watched the movie Out of My Mind, which is on Disney+, over the weekend, and it is so incredible. It's about a girl who has never been able to speak, and she's been in a special education environment, you know, her entire childhood, and is finally brought into an inclusive environment, it and then she's given a communication device and she can finally get her thoughts out and I'm not going to give any more because I don't want to give any spoilers but there are so many themes in

[00:36:35] this movie that are going to resonate so deeply with all of us as parents as educators like I feel like I could just watch this movie over and over again it's one of those that there's layers of the onion. But it's also a great movie to watch with your kids. My 10-year-old loved it. It's my 13-year-old's favorite book, and she also loved it. My parents loved it. It's just, it's one of those movies that everyone can set and enjoy. It talks about presuming potential, inclusion, barriers to get needed

[00:37:12] medical equipment. We've all had those frustrations working with insurance and the challenges we face as parents, normal adolescent struggles. But, you know, also there's so many different times in that movie where you see yourself and sometimes not in a good way. And you're like, ah. So it's, you laugh, you cry. It's definitely keep the tissues handy, but it's a fantastic movie, and I just, if there's any way that you can get a free run of Disney Plus or something like that, this movie,

[00:37:51] it's worth it to do that. It's really incredible, and I haven't read the book, but now I'm going to go buy the book. So there's three books.

[00:38:30] So yeah, that's my movie recommendation. I hope you'll all watch it, too, and then spread the word because you know we need other people to hear these messages too like we can't just keep them in our special education world it's important that everyone understands you know what these struggles are and can empathize a little bit more with our with our kids and with and with us too right um so anyway and now we'll move on to new business so we need to admit we've got a couple virtual attendees this evening.

[00:39:07] So, do I have a motion? All right. And Janaz seconds it. All right. All in favor? Raise your hand. Aye. All opposed?

[00:39:22] Abstain? All right. We have Kelly Ralston and Sharon Trofe who are now admitted to the meeting. Our first order of business is to approve the minutes from November. I will say that there, I think, a template from last year was used.

[00:39:37] Although there were some name updates that needed to be made, so I have already gone ahead and made those changes. But are there any further updates that need to be made to the minutes? If not, we will consider those minutes approved.

[00:39:55] Now we need to do our roll call for quorum. Beth Carlson. Liz Crotty. Here. Jennifer DiDonato. Kathy Fuligatti-Lambert. Marcia Kelly. Tom Ketchum.

[00:40:10] Shanaz Khan. Rosina Katak. Rosina Katak, Laura Colossi, Alicia McFadden, Craig Metz, Stephen Meyer, Catherine Moran, Sarah Plattenberg, Kelly Ralston, Erin Rizal-Poe, Catherine Rosenbrook is absent.

[00:40:39] I'm here. Sharon Trope. Here. Melissa Waugh, Takina Zarbouche. All right. So now we will move into our policy review. So, Melissa and Craig, do you guys want to come up and we'll have at it?

[00:40:56] We've only got two tonight, so it shouldn't be too bad, right? At least three, because we have the none. The which one? The no recommendations. Oh, the no recommendations. Let's get that out of the way. That's right, yes. So, we do have, I thought it was two policies.

[00:41:12] Yeah, I thought we had a few no recommendations. All right. So, there was a policy 7308, which is up here, which is provision of professional references or assistance that the policy and compliance subcommittee made no recommendations or concerns for that. And then the second one was policy 5150, which was adult education. And we did not have any recommendations or concerns for that one either. So is there a motion to accept that SEAC

[00:41:45] has no recommendations or concerns for those two policies? Is there? So there's a motion that we accept that SEAC has no recommendations or concerns for policy 5051 or policy 7308.

[00:42:09] Is there any discussion? All right. Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. Those opposed, no. Any abstentions? And Kelly Ralston? Aye. Sharon Trove? Aye. Okay. So that passes unanimously.

[00:42:35] All right. What's our next? 7301. Licensed staff. All right. So policy 7301 establishes general standards for licensure for staff employed by the school board and paid by public funds. So a summary of our recommendations to this policy is to add a definition of temporary when it comes to long-term substitutes. And specifically right now how that policy is worded, it says that in accordance with regulations prescribed to the board, a person not meeting

[00:43:09] the requirements for a license or provisional license issued by the board or for a one-year local eligibility license issued by a school board pursuant to Virginia Code may be employed and paid from public funds by a school board temporarily as a substitute teacher to meet an emergency. And so our concern was, well, what does temporarily mean? Is that a week? Is that six months? Is that two years? You know, how long are these technically unlicensed individuals managing these classrooms? So that was really our concern. Did you have a comment?

[00:43:46] SEAC has received many, you know, over the years, we've heard time and time again of situations where there was not a licensed teacher in a classroom. And unfortunately, this was often also a classroom for like a self-contained program that had a higher level of need and that that went on all year and so that's been a concern raised to us multiple times and this would be one of those places where we actually apply that to policy. And again just as Craig said you can see there that the concern is that in particular classrooms with students with severe disabilities

[00:44:22] are being staffed with besides these emergency teachers but also we have heard multiple reports about these again these classrooms often with non-verbal students that are being staffed with provisionally licensed staff and so we just want to emphasize the importance of appropriate training and licenses for our most vulnerable students okay so that that was it for those two yes go ahead the subs committee had discussed trying to actually like put in a specific recommendation of

[00:44:56] what to put and we decided that it's definitely a hard thing to define this particular temporary and this so we didn't want to recommend specific wording but but simply express the concern and kind of kick this back to the board and staff to come up with what that right balance is but nonetheless temporary could just mean anything and so we do need a little more clarity on that okay so those were the two recommendations if i can hear a motion from the floor to accept the two um well i think it's a concern concern yeah it was two concerns and one recommendation

[00:45:34] to policy 7301 all right and is there any discussion regarding policy 7301 okay hearing none all those in favor of accepting the two concerns and the one recommendation to policy 7301 licensed staff say aye aye those opposed any abstentions uh kelly ralston aye sharon trove aye okay so that

[00:46:13] passes unanimously. All right, and our last policy, yay, this is going so fast. Policy 8155, school assignment. Now, this policy is a little bit more confusing just in general. I mean, so I printed it out. You know, this is the policy. It's a thick one. It covers things, well, it's general standards for assigning students to a particular school. It also, But part of this includes the standards for special permission, which is a process a lot of you may be familiar with, where a student can be moved to a different school at parent

[00:46:52] request, as long as the requested school is not over-enrolled. So there's, so the only, it's really not even discretion. I mean, the only barrier, the way special permission has been designed as to whether the parent can make this request and have it granted is about the enrollment status of the target school that they want the student moved to that is a very powerful tool that families here in loudon county have that as far as i know and please correct me if i'm wrong everybody but i think we're the only district in the state that that has this nope there's others is it common

[00:47:29] it's not very common yeah so um so it is a unique um tool it's a unique um it's right um that loudon County has afforded to families in the district. So the recommendations that we're making primarily have to do with special permission, that section of policy 8155. First of all, one thing that we have gotten feedback from, from many people, about the special permission process is it's not very

[00:48:03] transparent. So especially with the changes that are being made in the policy this time around, It's really going to be a yes or no offer on, you know, either the school is over-enrolled or it's not. If it's not, granted. If it is, denied, right?

[00:48:20] I mean, very black and white kind of decision-making process with no appeal process involved. That's okay. But our concern was that could potentially lead to parents filing multiple times or trying to appeal to the school board or creating a lot more paperwork.

[00:48:36] And so we were trying to think creatively and outside of the box of, well, how can we streamline that process to ensure that the objectives, which is the ability of parents to have some control over which school their child is assigned to, that that's achieved, but in a more streamlined and efficient kind of process.

[00:48:57] So one of the recommendations that we had made is to make data on over-enrolled schools transparent to parents and in real time. So when they're deciding that, you know, for whatever reason, that they don't want their child in X school, they have the information they need to know, okay, I need to request Y school because, I just looked on the website and Z school is grayed out or it's got a red sign next to it or however we're notified. But somehow, so the parent knows when they're filling out that special

[00:49:34] permission form, don't ask for school Y, it's full or it's projected to be over-enrolled. So that kind of transparency we think will help, again, streamline the process by giving those parents more information in real time.

[00:49:51] There actually, and the good news is we found on the LCPS website there already is real-time enrollment data. So we're really not asking for a new wheel to be created. We're just asking for some tweaks to that wheel so that information can be provided to families in this context of projected over-enrollment or under-enrollment or whatever the case may be.

[00:50:15] So that was part of, so concern one and our recommendation one then was to make data, data on projected over-enrollment. available in real time to parents who are applying. Our second concern was that currently, we know, there's a significant number of appeals and applications that are being filed for special permission.

[00:50:34] And that does increase the burden on staff and those appeals going to the school board. It places a significant burden on school board members as well. So our thought was, if parents are given the option to request more than one school in their special permission application, for example in ranked choice order.

[00:50:55] That could minimize the number of appeals because obviously you have a better chance if A, you have transparency about enrollment and B, even if something changed in the process of submitting your application and when a decision is being made, at least you had a couple of fallback positions, then that increases the likelihood that it can be a thumbs up from the get-go and now we've minimized refiling over and over of these special permission applications or the appeals of those applications that got denied so our recommendation number two then is to allow parents a ranked choice system in preference order through the special permission application concern number

[00:51:33] three there we do fully understand that there's a desire to open the window for applications for special permission earlier in the school year and close it earlier in the school year. Currently, families have until June 30th to submit these applications for the next school year.

[00:51:51] So this is where your child will go to school or be assigned the next school year. The proposal is to move that, frame shift that forward, initially opening the window for certain categories in the beginning of January and then closing it on April 30th.

[00:52:09] So our concern, though, was, gosh, A lot of stuff can happen those last couple months of school. There are a myriad of reasons why parents choose to have their student move to a different school. But some of them can be for mental health reasons, for physical reasons, for social reasons, bullying.

[00:52:30] I mean, there's all kinds of things that can happen. There are changes within the family dynamics that makes that location unworkable for a family. A lot of things can happen in those last two months. And so we were just concerned that, well, and I didn't finish my thought on that one, we understand the reasoning for the frame shifting is so that all of these decisions for placement and staffing get made early enough so that the administrative staff have more time in the summer to hire the staff to fill these slots.

[00:53:03] That is a real issue because if all this is being pushed forward and they now have to hire people in August, well, the good ones are gone by August. We've minimized our pool of quality applicants at that point. So this is a valid concern.

[00:53:19] But we were thinking there might be things that can be done that achieves both objectives, that gives families more time to cover that year to utilize the special permission option, but also to try to wrap things up more quickly so that if the need for additional staff arises in the summer, we have more time to fill those slots.

[00:53:39] So here was the recommendation. In addition to the two recommendations we already made that we think will help streamline the process, cut down appeals, and therefore wrap it up sooner, and so we know what our staffing needs are, in addition to those two recommendations, we think an additional way to streamline and shorten the application and appeal process for special permission in general might include shortening the application review timeline that's at line 287 of the policy to 15 days from 30 days so this is the part where um you know the up or down yes no you know black

[00:54:16] white decision that just immediate process that's happening right now the staff have 30 days to complete that and our thought was if we're streamlining this and making it so much easier then maybe we could cut that to 15 days which then again shortens that how far we're stretching out into the summer to wrap it all up and then excuse me also limiting the time frame for a decision on an appeal to the director of student services or his or her designee we didn't specifically say this we just kind of hinted it at here in here but just throwing it out for anybody who's in here who's involved in this process we think it might be a good idea that right now the

[00:54:55] policy says it's the director of student services who has to do all these things but we might want indicate a designee could also do these things just throwing it out there the one thing we i forgot when i was drafting this up after thanksgiving that we had said in our committee was we also thought the june 30th date we often are done before june 30th so and that ending date of the school year changes every year it seems like so maybe instead of making it a june 30th deadline make it the end of the school year as the deadline that also will shorten some of the days that we

[00:55:30] would be stretching into the summer yes so the document that was emailed out did not capture this bit of what was discussed and voted on in the subcommittee the current draft that's in front of the

school board changes the end deadline for special permission from June 30th to April 30th. What that means is if something happens on May 1st, you've got to wait an entire year.

[00:55:57] And we are hoping that if we can pull in the appeals timelines, we can get to the same final decision date, but move the end of special permission date to the last day of school. So 15 days come off the end of June, 15 days off of the initial decision, 15 days off of the potential administrative appeal.

[00:56:16] That's a 45-day shortening of how long it could go at the end in order to address the staff and board's concern. But we can still better meet the needs of students with disabilities and with mental health concerns so we instead of having to lose that flexibility we can all kind of get more of what we want also as we talk about these appeals in the process opening the window earlier which the board also already I believe has a consensus that they want to do is naturally going to shift a lot of the volume of applications earlier in the year and so the staff is going to have information coming in sooner in order to get their projections more refined even

[00:56:56] If they don't have exact numbers at least the numbers are not going to move nearly as much even in a May/June time frame well when we do the motion let's just make sure it's clear then there's just no but but I did want to point out it was just literally just an editorial when we were typing this very late at night. I screwed it up. Sorry. Okay. All right. So that's recommendation number three. And then

[00:57:31] Actually we need to go ahead and vote on that, right? And then. Well, no. There would be. Do the amended one first. Why don't you go ahead and just discuss what this is. Okay. So again, holiday. I'm just going to blame it on Thanksgiving and Turkey Day. But there was another thing that came up.

[00:57:49] Liz and I were discussing this and making sure I wanted to make sure I remembered everything correctly and was getting in properly. And one thing we wanted to kind of clarify and make clear because, again, this is kind of a complicated policy, but there are other options besides special permission if something's going wrong, right? If there's a worst-case scenario or there's a mental health problem or there's a bullying problem or whatever, there is another provision within the policy itself, and it's called instructional suitability. That can happen at

[00:58:23] any time during the year. The difference, though, is whether the student is moved or not moved is at the full and complete discretion of the staff, right? So that's the difference. There is a difference. Special permission, it's up or down, yes or no, opening, not opening, doesn't matter if, you know, well, I don't really like that parent or, you know, I think the kids lie. I mean, there's no discretion other than enrollment, right? That's special permission. But there is another option it's just that one is subject to the discretion of the staff as to whether the student does or doesn't get well and just to be clear it's not the school level staff it's the

[00:58:59] department of student services thank you yes so um as Liz and I were kind of talking this through we felt like the policy wasn't really clear about that and so we wanted to put forward to the full because again that discussion happened after our policy and sub and compliance subcommittee meeting. But we thought it was really important because we wanted to introduce into this policy more clarity and more authority for the staff in making those decisions. So let's see. So what we

[00:59:37] had in here was there was a deletion in the policy of some language that we thought would actually be very helpful for families reading the policy. So what we're asking is that this deleted some additional language and that the deleted language be added to the paragraph related to instructional

suitability all right so it's not in the special permission section of the policy we're asking for changes to the instructional suitability process and specifically what we're asking at line 50 after the title paragraph b instructional suitability to add at any time a parent or

[01:00:16] legal guardian may request and so that puts anyone reading the policy on notice oh at any time the parent can request this because the way it's currently drafted that's unclear and the language later in the policy that got deleted is where that it says that right and so we want to make sure that is still captured within the policy that parents can avail themselves of this process as well as special permission and then we also wanted to excuse me to basically cut and paste that deleted language at the end of that paragraph for instructional suitability and add

[01:00:53] issues concerning student mental or physical health or that arise due to a significant life event may be addressed any time during the year and shall be allowed review by the appeals process captured in policy 2350. Policy 2350 is just a general policy stating how administrative decisions can be appealed to the school board, okay, in general. It's a general policy for appeals to the school board. That was the language that was deleted. We are proposing that it go back there.

[01:01:22] Then we also wanted to add an additional paragraph, excuse me, that reads, the director of student services or his or her designee have the discretion during a review of a special permission appeal to approve a request for reassignment per section B instructional suitability and or suggest other available options for school assignment to the family for their consideration.

[01:01:51] However, in the case of a student with disabilities who is denied special permission reassignment due to special education staffing limitations, the director of student services or his or her designee will reach out to the parents to provide other available options for school assignment for the parents to consider.

[01:02:09] And the reason that's important is while this real-time information we are suggesting be made available for transparency purposes in the special permission process, that's going to be a lot more complicated and may not even be possible for students who are in program classrooms, right?

[01:02:25] So it's going to be very, very difficult, possibly impossible, to make that transparent to parents. So what we're saying is, all right, if the parent, you know, Once, you know, the K-2 autism classroom at Legacy Elementary School, because they don't know what the enrollment is, that we build into the process the opportunity for the director of student services to provide other options based on the knowledge they have that the parent doesn't and doesn't have access to.

[01:02:58] Does that make sense? I know, but we talked about it. Does that make sense? Does that make sense? Okay. So an overarching... I know, this is a very complicated policy. Sorry. Kind of an overarching theme, though, is the system we have now, it's almost like this weird poker game. They do actually say, here's a few schools projected to be over-enrolled, but that's not the full list.

[01:03:20] So you apply to a school, then they tell you, oh, you're denied because it's over-enrolled, and then you appeal, and they say, well, tough, you know, you have noted the school board, and there's really no point along the way for a collaborative conversation about what problem are you trying to solve and where is their capacity, could we just solve it?

[01:03:38] And so, certainly, I think transparency and collaboration would just be a better system. And so, let's start working on putting that in. And I think that's consistent with both the staff and the board's stated

objectives. Oh, question. Here we go.

[01:04:02] Testing. I think I had a better issue. The important thing to remember about special permission especially is the mere volume of requests. And I do not know the number of requests every year. Tedra, you might. but so yeah you might want to come to a microphone but I'm I'm I'm all about collaboration and certainly transparency as well but I think when you're dealing with this level of volume there's I'm sure there's a way to do it but not in a way that would probably be to the level that you're

[01:04:37] talking about I'm concerned because of the volume and I just wanted to throw that out there because it's not 50 kids it's much more than that which I can't remember but Tedra will help us with that Yes, thank you. First and foremost, thank you so much for the attention that you have given to this policy. I can tell you that our Student Services Committee, and we're very fortunate to have Ms. LaBelle here because she sits on that committee, they reviewed this policy multiple times.

[01:05:07] So it was presented in August, giving an overview, and at that time, we had had 3,987 requests for special permission. It is important to understand that it's a core team of two professionals that manage the process in student services, and then an expanded team when you pull in special education, you pull me in on some of the cases, to really process what is in the best interest of students.

[01:05:40] We presented in August, September committee meeting. We had a special called work session in September as well. We met again in October and had another work session in October. And then that is when the committee made their final determination on some recommended changes to go to the full board at our November meeting.

[01:06:04] The committee was extremely thoughtful. They asked for data and more data and more data because they really wanted to make an informed decision. And so it's important to know that for Loudoun County, special permission started back in 1970, and it initially was on the basis of if you had changed residences, if you had an undue hardship.

[01:06:28] At that time, it was also based on race. Our current policy was last revised 2023. Our appeal timeline was adopted initially in 1978 and now we have policy 2350 which guides the appeal process for all school board matters which does give us the 30 days. So the 30 days is really needed given the fact that it's not quite as simple as a yes no our staff of two take the time to follow up with parents

[01:07:07] they call schools they call the current school they call the receiving school they're reaching out to other departments there's lots of communication between student services and the department of school leadership which oversees all of the levels trying to calculate capacity What is it looking like? What are you anticipating for general ed staffing? The pieces and parts don't ever stop moving. And so the committee was extremely thoughtful about what is in the best

[01:07:42] interest of all students. They also heard from multiple principals across the levels, and principals were really the ones able to tell and explain and describe the impact, From the impact to traffic patterns and how the flow and access to schools are impacted, the impact that they then see for students that have been on special permission and then have to go back to their home-zoned school, maybe for like middle school or high school, the social impacts of that.

[01:08:23] Principals, especially high school principals, were also able to speak to the impact of the Virginia High School League, and some families not being honest in their access to the special permission process. Moreover, principals really drove home the fact that as a division, we should care about all 100

schools. They're all amazing. They're all filled with professionals that care about children, and that's why we're here. Principals spoke about how they work to create

[01:08:58] and sustain community for their home zoned students and that's important to our principals it's important to our teachers we also discussed the differences between number of requests for general education students and students with disabilities for the last three years we've been averaging about 87% of the request coming in being general education requests and 13% being for students with disabilities.

[01:09:36] The approval and denial rates were commensurate for both populations, so there was no discrepancies there. We also went over with the committee what the excuses are, what are the exceptions that parents can enter.

[01:09:52] We will be revisiting that. This is a school board that is very passionate about supporting all 100 schools, the same. It was quite shocking, and I know that Ms. LaBelle can speak to this, one of the most alarming factors was we ran the data to say, okay, of the 3,987, how many really gave their home-zoned school a chance?

[01:10:21] The majority had not. And so that was pretty eye-opening for our board members to realize that a lot of our students in the special permission process have never even set foot at their home schools. So how do you know that that's not the right fit?

[01:10:39] Now, certainly, if it's truly child care or some other factor, that's considered. Absolutely. With regards to instructional suitability, that process, yes, can happen at any time. It is usually initiated by parents. So in looking at the recommendations, we appreciate that recommendation, adding that language so that it's clear. Absolutely. Absolutely. The extended timeline, it's nothing short of a nightmare, right? We had the school board hearing appeals

[01:11:16] after the school year started. There's impacts to staffing. There's impacts to course planning. There's impacts to overall schedules, to transportation routes. The impact, it has ripple effects and so that was one of the main points that principals were really please please stop the extended timeline we can't find staff communications have often gone out in july you

[01:11:52] know teachers and schools are sending out email blasts and welcoming families and but it's really the quality of professionals that we're able to secure to work with our students we did keep the timeline of special permissions for kindergarten being august 1st because that process is rolling um we were very thoughtful about calculating the grade capacity at elementary schools because it has to be by grade um the school board is knowledgeable of the fact that we will start

[01:12:28] with about 14 elementary schools that are over enrolled for for 2025-26 school year we have about four middle schools and about 12 high schools. We plan on putting that right out there, right off the bat. These schools are to capacity. We do have a plan to work with DDI to make sure that we're updating our projections so that it is real time. This will be the first time that

[01:13:02] we're doing that. This coming school year is also the first time for students that are currently on special permission they will roll over at the school that they're currently assigned to for special permission it used to be that the students would default back to their home schools which impacts the staffing for this school that they were special permission parents were reapplying the window is too long and we didn't have enough staff so now students are rolling over and we

[01:13:40] have clarified the language of the renewal process for families. The committee was presented with the current timeline and two additional timelines for consideration. One with the window opening for staff in January and to our community in February. The other with the window opening for staff in February and opening for our community in March. Mrs. LaBelle, is there anything that you want to

[01:14:09] add because you guys, you put in some work on this one for sure. Oh, I'm so sorry. Samara is not here to keep track of me. Thank you, Catherine. One of the things that really horrified me was when I was working on one of the appeals, a parent came in and we get all the information that they want to give us. Just like if you're doing a disciplinary appeal, we get all that information and we look

[01:14:47] it over ahead of time. And if we have questions, we write them down and mark them. In looking at her portfolio that she gave us of this information, her students, her children had never gone to their homeschool. And in fact, she chose different schools for them every year that were not her homeschool. Children need to grow up in their community. They need to know their neighbors.

[01:15:19] they need to have other children to play with this I couldn't cope with this really bothered me another thing that we haven't mentioned is the amount of growth going on in the county we have people moving in the realtor gives them a very nice little thing says oh this is the schools that your child will go to then when they get here near the end of July and are getting ready to go to school, and then they find out their child can't go to the new school, the school that they put in for, all of a sudden they're irate. We bought this house because this was the school. They told us

[01:15:58] this was, we can't come cope with this. They have to go to this school. I'm sorry, it's full. So, you know, by changing the timeline, some of the other things we were looking at was changing the enrollment or what we consider over enrolled backing that up because we had left space in the schools to make sure that if there were last-minute changes there might be enough room but we backed up the enrollment like it was 95 now it's 90 whatever it is and the other thing that we changed I can't remember

[01:16:38] there was something else it wasn't just a percentage of schools or something else we changed i know we we did make the recommendation of calculating capacity um at 90 instead of 95 yeah um let me see and there's absolutely no way to change that april 30th

[01:17:12] deadline to go a little bit into that fourth quarter but you're ending right at that third Not if we want to prioritize our schools, what it takes to be a building level administrator, what it takes to be a classroom teacher, a TA, your related services providers, what it takes to communicate to the volume of families that engage in this process.

[01:17:41] we need the time to make sure that our schools are staffed, that we have the right courses in place, that our instructional schedules are solid. Changing it to April 30th benefits everyone involved in this process. If there is someone that moves in after that date and for whatever reason they have a desire to go to another school, and if it is truly for a valid reason, there are other mechanisms that they can reach out to the division.

[01:18:17] Instructional suitability being one, but bear in mind, instructional suitability implies that you have engaged in instruction at your home school or a school, right? Something is not working there.

[01:18:33] That's when you initiate that process. We also have the ability to do an administrative placement, which could be for discipline or any other factors. so there are processes that are in place what happens if a parent has their child has quite a bit of mental health concerns what are the options there

instructional suitability goes under or an administrative placement thank you and if i may add when we discuss this in appeals we do look at

[01:19:08] mental health we do look at bullying and in making our appeals decisions at the board level those are some options that we look at as well so it's it's not just cut and dry we start with the cut and dry but then if it has to go further we take it further and we look at extenuating circumstances so that is important to know but like you've said it's not exactly transparent but then like we've said the numbers that we go through it's hard to make it all transparent

[01:19:43] there's so many different things flying around all at once. So with almost going on five percent basically of our student population asking for special permission with the rollover though what are we expecting that four thousand roughly four thousand number to drop to? Sure so I think with the rollover we've already captured the renewals that overall number of approximately

[01:20:17] 4,000 incorporates the renewals so we would still have to calculate those right knowing that right off the bat should the board take action and move forward on the policy we're starting with elementary schools closed for the very first time we've never done that before middle schools as well as high schools being off the table for consideration we do anticipate a drop in the number of applications have any idea then freedom for the last year how many of that 4,000 was new

[01:20:53] as opposed to where they were during renewals i'm not i think we did break it out that way let me find that chart like you said we asked for a lot of data yes oh yeah there was several meetings i'm thumbing through lots of powerpoint presentations and if i can't find it today we can certainly give

[01:21:27] it to you for sure and that one do you have another question while i'm looking i have actually a few questions one i want to thank you i think as it's coming my kids are in an over-enrolled school and there are significant number of kids on special permission in my school which now we have new kids coming who are moving into our school district and they can't go to our school so i appreciate that i think that's great i think the number of 3 900 is crazy like that when i hear this number and especially when you're talking about they haven't given that school district

[01:22:06] and they've they've never started there absurd to me like i i may be different in some of these people i think this policy is a bit too wide and offering too much but i get like there are some use cases there for that but i also do agree that this um you know the april 30th and i get why you're doing it when you're telling me all of these numbers i get why you have to cut it off sooner but the there are a lot of things that culminate right if you spend if you're actually in the school right not that I'm just gonna move into the school I'm gonna not even try there I'm

[01:22:41] just gonna request special permission but if you actually start in the school and you are in it with the teachers and you are in it with the kids and by the end of the year things are just right like now you've been in here for three quarters and things are not getting better right I feel like a lot of that does culminate at the end of the school year right when you are finally right you're not going to figure this out if I'm starting with my kid in special education I'm not going to know if everything's working great in the first quarter I might see some signs in the second quarter but you know I want to try to make it work in my home community right the third quarter things

[01:23:20] start going off the rail a bit but again I'm still going to try to work to make this a good environment it's really in that fourth quarter where I'm like listen I've tried an entire year and it is not

working right so I could see a lot especially for the cases not the ones that we're talking about that like you haven't tried or they're asking for crazy reasons but really the people I see that we're penalizing are the people the parents were trying to make it work and it's just not working and I get the instructional suitability and I love that permit you know because hopefully I've only met wonderful teachers in in Loudoun County, right? I think if we were trying to make it work, and it's not, for the

[01:24:00] most part, they're also like, yeah, this is not working, right? But that is just chancing it on the fact that you have those great teachers. So I would love to find ways, right? And I personally am in favor of restricting this permission a bit more to get rid of that stuff, to get rid of the things that they haven't tried or the things i've heard crazy stories like behind the scenes about why like absolutely absurd discriminatory things that i'm like absolutely no hard pass go away

[01:24:35] right like so i would love to be able to cut down on a lot of that in the back and forth you were talking about that it's not just a yes and no for a lot of them i'd like to make it a yes or no now you're out right like reduce what i really call it's like the crap of the thing right that way instead of that way maybe we could get a little bit longer maybe it's not the last day of the school period really if you're waiting to the last day maybe but like that gets a little bit later into the fourth quarter by prioritizing those cases that have some merit that aren't like and and that's where I'm not exactly sure how to do it maybe it's more automated yes or no

[01:25:14] for those unless you can prove something maybe it's um you know making a factor if they can for the last month if you've been in your home school district for that year that school year right and that way it's not everybody who can extend it but maybe it's only those who have been in their home school district that year who could then appeal in that last you know month and a half and that way I think that would drastically reduce the number but still afford those parents who have been sticking it out who have been trying to get through it and you know in their own community

[01:25:51] giving them still the option at the end of the year if it's really just not working you know and for me Jen like that's where the instructional suitability comes in right like that's for our parents who have like they have tried everything right and you're right like sometimes you just hit that fourth quarter and you're like I did everything it didn't work and I just think saying the end of the year it's it's just arbitrary like you can go through instructional suitability and that's even better because then you can have like the human discussion about what went wrong and you

[01:26:28] can talk about what's going to be a better fit for you where's going to be a better place like you're not going to know those things by looking at a drop down list right like you would be better off having that conversation with someone from the office of special education or the department of student services if it's a mental health issue I just don't I think that we're trying to make special permission do too much right do we know what what are the rates for the when a parent do you guys know tetra on like if they if parent brings an instructional suitability like request

[01:27:02] on a PO request whatever we call it do we know the rates of where that is approved and they're moved or versus they're not the ones that I have reviewed during my tenure um uh 100 percent have been improved oh well then forget my concerns you're good to go love you all i'm sorry i i want to jump in real quick on that this because this is important is 100 during your tenure tetra and i mean i don't think it's any surprise to anyone in this room the respect and joy and hope

[01:27:37] that you and dr carter have brought to us so don't ever leave us But I'm a lawyer, so I'm going to put my lawyer hat on and say, we don't draft policies for the best case scenario. And God, we have the best case scenario right now. But the problem is, I don't ever want this to happen, but if you were injured or someone offered Dr. Carter a million dollars a year to come and teach, she better leave because, I mean, that'd be crazy, right?

[01:28:16] But the point is, we may not have you guys forever. And again, this is why I try to make the point, and you can tell we have been debating this among ourselves a lot. We are not all in consensus on this, just so full transparency here.

[01:28:32] But my argument is because there is this distinction between, for me as, I think all you all know, a special education attorney, right? I work in districts all over Virginia, not just Loudoun County. But this is like the fallback self-help option for families when it has gone south, nobody's listening, nobody's doing anything about it.

[01:28:58] And this creates an opportunity for parents to put what they perceive as their child in a safer place, in a place where their child can be educated. And again, when I said that on-off, that's just level one of the review. I just want to be sure, Carrie, I'm clarifying what I meant, too, is I just meant that very first initial review is the up and down.

[01:29:18] But it takes out a lot of the discretion and, unfortunately, not with these people. But I've been in many, many situations where things get kind of toxic between the administrative staff and parents. Lots of blame to go around, but the point is it doesn't become about what's best for that student anymore.

[01:29:38] And a process like special permission gives, again, a self-help option to parents where they're not spending a million dollars on due process or having to go through complaints or having to battle it out with administrative staff who've been failing them, again, not these people, but other districts as well.

[01:29:59] and those administrative staff could end up here in a year, two years, I just want to be sure that this policy is protecting a very important process for parents as a last resort to be able to do what they think is best for their child when the administrative staff don't agree.

[01:30:17] And that's my big issue. And as long as we can still achieve that objective, I'm less concerned about the timeline. So I'll speak to this one from a personal standpoint. We did special permission for one of our kids many, many years ago.

[01:30:36] And in full transparency, when we were going through this process, it was for our second child. And we had been our homeschool at that point, including the time my oldest had been there for about four years. We saw a decline in the school. We saw a decline in the support.

[01:30:53] We saw a decline in the social dynamics of that school. It was after enduring, I think, for what was one of my kiddos' worst year, we finally came to the decision of making the special permission fourth quarter.

[01:31:11] And so the other piece to this, though, when we were looking at our options, is we did not know about the instructional suitability piece. That wasn't even transparent enough for us to locate.

[01:31:27] I think for me personally, that would have taken away the angst that families feel every year on that April 1 opening to reapply, to wonder, is my child going to have to go back into a situation that was not conducive to learning socially and emotionally? So I do appreciate the fact that we are presenting this with

more options, with more transparency for families. And I wholeheartedly agree that this process is terribly abused especially amongst athletics unfortunately

[01:32:05] I saw a whole bunch when my oldest was going through high school so I do agree that we need to make tweaks to this policy I think we do need to be more restrictive but again speaking personally I do see the benefits and the saving grace this provides to family but I do think it needs to be cleaned up a bit. When I listened to Ms. Richardson, when I listened to Ms. LaBelle and from some of the discussions and presentations to the school board, you know, I'm concerned that there was an

[01:32:42] overwhelming negativity in the arguments and the messages and the concerns, and there really wasn't enough treatment given to the cases where this does do good and where this provides a safety net for some situations that have really not gone right and allows the administrative staff or the school board to make it right, to keep that student in the system. And oftentimes that's the last stop on this train. For students with disabilities, it is often the next step that the student is withdrawn,

[01:33:20] unilaterally placed in a private day school, and you are sued for reimbursement. If a parent is willing to say, let's just try this other school, I think it's in everyone's best interest to see if we can find a way. And I'm sure, Ms. LaBelle, I'm sure that, I mean, we know from the numbers that the majority of the appeals that went to the school board were denied that you this school board members determined were not at the merit bar but there were a few I think a fundamental underlying concern here is it is it's this age-old problem that's why they pay you the big bucks on the

[01:33:55] school board and that is balancing it's balancing the needs of the many and balancing the needs of the few right and there's no right answer it is truly a balance and I think we all understand that That's really what's going on here.

[01:34:11] There's this, you know you have a good compromise sometime when everybody's pretty uncomfortable with it. But I really am concerned that there's just not a lot of discussion going on, not sufficient attention being paid to the good that this does. I also want to point out that over the years, I've watched really, really bad situations come up.

[01:34:31] And I've watched the school board members go, gee, there's nothing that we have the power to do. And if I watch, they create policies that tie their own hands and then say, we can't fix it. We would have, if we could have, this is one of the places that you actually personally can sit on a committee and fix these problems. But I do, I understand too, this must just take a ridiculous amount of your time. And so when we were looking at our proposals, we were trying to find a win-win

[01:35:06] approach. When I read the draft, what I saw, I mean, I don't think anybody is disagreeing with the concerns that the board has. We get it. But what I saw was, is that every approach to address those concerns was at the expense of taking away this tool. And we're looking for are there creative ways that we can still address the concerns, but we can do it without taking so much away from students and families who need it, even if, I agree, there's definitely a lot of cases that

[01:35:41] might not be the case. But for those students, this is an important tool. And I really do hope that you think through very, very, very carefully what happens to those students who now don't have this. I think that there is a misperception that the other systems like the IEP team and the instructional suitability always work. I appreciate the 100%. But I also, and I'll mirror what Melissa said, how many times have you in this room said, when Mary Kearney was here, dot, dot, dot. But then

[01:36:15] that changed. Right. And then we had a lot of situations that made it to the papers and made it to attorneys that could have been solved in a lot more amicable way. So I'd also like to point out that some of the things being proposed to be tried have been tried before, in fact.

[01:36:36] The timeline of June 30th was not always June 30th. I believe it used to be August 1st or so. I know it 'cause I've done it myself. Yeah, so the staff already proposed pulling that in because of these problems and that was the solution and now we're being proposed to pull it in again because of these problems, and that are the solution. I'm not a big fan of doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different outcome. I also wanted to observe that the complexity of processing the requests is a created problem also. This used to be completely school

[01:37:12] level capacity, thumbs up and thumbs down. But as previous student services administrator determined that they were going to add an additional restriction for special education students which is now turned into the capacity which seems to only be applied to special education students but when we're talking about how much work that is understand that even a few years ago that was not that was a recently created problem now whether we needed to do that or not i mean i i don't think it's an unreasonable thing but we didn't always used to do it that way and we got

[01:37:51] by and we didn't used to have the deadline even as far forward as June 30th and we got by and so I'm a little concerned about that I'm also concerned you know fundamentally a lot of this also has to do with how we project enrollments and how that turns into staffing on the ground and we've already heard remember the budget cycle last year remember how we had to do a major plus up to sped because they got the projection wrong and then that turned into staff we weren't going to be able to hire and I think there's a bigger conversation that does need to take place about

[01:38:29] how you know that statistical data turns into bodies on the ground and hiring plans because it seems like there's more work needed there and I understand you know we're just trying to get this done but maybe some of those problems are just they're an unhappy side effect of how we have chosen to do staffing assignments and how sensitive we have chosen to make that to these projections and if we did things a little different administratively wouldn't have some of the problems that we're then saying we have to solve this way? In answer to some of the things that

[01:39:03] you've gone over, I think a lot of the problem over the past few years has been due to growth. And what we expect to open with suddenly is a lot larger. Another problem that we're having, we were talking about enrollment a little bit ago, and it might look like a school is only 85% full but the special education population is up around 94 percent and so knowing that we can't hire more staff than we've already gotten the budget knowing that that's a limitation we have

[01:39:42] to make a decision about what we're going to do with the extra special ed students that are now asking to come into this school so I think that's why they separated out the two it looks like you've got a large portion of the school not being used, but the entire special ed portion is full.

[01:40:02] One of the things that we talked about and that I also found when I was working with appeals is that sometimes there is a program, there are special needs, as we know, for all our students that makes one program appropriate and another one, even though it might be the same classification of disability inappropriate okay so when we have no room in this one that would be perfect for a certain student and then one over here that is not appropriate and then

[01:40:41] another one maybe over here further away that has room not as perfect as this but closer than that one over there then we have to make that decision and we do that at appeals level that's the kind of thing that goes on there. We look at those kind of special appeals. Or if something happens over the summer, and we have a student scheduled to go someplace, not just special ed, but any student, but something happens over the summer that makes it inappropriate for the student to

[01:41:19] remain at that school. Might be bullying, sexual harassment, mental health issues, something that arises over the summer. You can always bring that up and it can go through the process and come to appeal. It's not like it's, it's, and it's not just because I'm on the appeals board because there are other people that are too. I'm not always the only one there, but you always have that option to go and have people listen at the appeals level. And certainly those are opportunities that you have. But I think the biggest problem that we've had trying to deal with special permissions

[01:41:57] is growth. And one of the things that we're looking at to try to cut down on the numbers, we had talked about, and I don't know how much of it we actually put into the policy, but putting checkboxes, you know, this is my student, here's where we are, here's where we want to go, and then you're supposed to, we talked about checkboxes, I don't know if it's just a box for explanation now, why I need this, yeah, why we need this particular change. And then the box go through a lot of the reasons that we ask, you know, why are people asking for these special

[01:42:35] permissions? And they have certain ones that they checked. Well, we eliminated some of them. If that's your reasoning for asking for special permission, like, oh, this one's five minutes closer to where I work, and yeah, we get some of that, we don't even put that on there. But if you want to explain that and why that's important, my child has seizures, stops breathing, and I need to be able to get to her quickly. There's a box there where you can write that in because then that is appropriate. But, you know, we're starting to look at things where people are, you know, using this

[01:43:14] as a convenience as opposed to an educational decision. This is, it's sort of like accommodations. This is not a buffet table of which schools you can have. What are the needs? And again, like I said, it's just like accommodations. You know, there has to be a real need that we can look at and say, you're right, this would be a better placement for your child. Yes, you need this special permission. So I think you can look at that and know that we have talked about it, and hopefully, if it's not clear in our policy, we can go through and look at again,

[01:43:53] what's one more work session after four of them? What the heck? Yeah. That was going to be my next question, and I think that would make a huge difference in the impact that you're seeing with 3,900-some applications.

[01:44:15] And, you know, I mean, I will say I'm very torn about this one. I can't, I can't, I get what they're saying, and I don't know about this one. Right, and I do want to clarify one statement.

[01:44:31] There are no differences in how we navigate the process in calculating capacity or supporting special permission requests for students with disabilities and non-disabled students. The factor that impacts students with disabilities differently is the staffing standard.

[01:44:52] So our staffing standard for cross-categorical, as you know, is 1 to 10. Our programs are at a ratio of 1 to 6 or 1 to 8, depending on the level and need of in intensity. Most of our students in specialized programs are placed there, right?

[01:45:10] So I just wanted to make that very clear. No, because as a parent that chooses the special permission process, you're not entitled to transportation. And that's very clear in the policy.

[01:45:27] It's very clear on the webpage. Transportation is not a part of special permission. With instructional suitability placements and administrative placements, we do consider transportation. I think it's also important to know that the committee has asked for us to be tracking this data, because should the policy pass on Tuesday, we're going to be tracking the data differently and reporting it back to the Student Services Committee, because they do want to consider some additional revisions to the process. And Mr. Ketchum, to your question,

[01:46:07] we did not run the data that way, but we have it. So I'll send it to leadership tomorrow. Yes. Hi, I have a comment and a question. When you're talking about instructional suitability being an option, I think the bigger problem is that most of us parents don't know that that's an option we can ask for. And unless you are extremely lucky with your IEP team and honestly in families I know, no one has been in a situation where an IEP team has said, you know, you

[01:46:47] can ask for this. You know, we're given a book at the beginning and said these are your rights, right? But as a parent, we don't understand half of what's in there, right? My daughter was in third grade before a new principal came in and said your child should be in a contained classroom the school I was at didn't even have that I didn't even know that was an option because my small elementary school did not have those classrooms so how was I supposed to know I could ask for that you know so when you take away those options and limit that time frame for parents

[01:47:25] and just say, well, there's a backdoor way we can do this, you're putting the onus on us as parents when we don't have that knowledge base to know what to ask for. My other question was on the school assignments, and is there any tracking as to schools that people tend to move away from and why?

[01:47:54] and is that given feedback back as part of the administrator or the educator's review process? Being in a school that gets a lot of complaints and a lot of people opting out of my school, I wonder if that is tracked and if that's feedback that's given.

[01:48:17] Thank you for that question, and thank you for the feedback. So I'll start with the question. So yes, we do track the move-ins and outs, the requests in and outs. of schools and we run the percentages and we have that on an annual basis. Most of the information that we gather through the special permission process does not contain concerns, right? So it's not parents writing in that other box, this relationship has deteriorated, I can't work with this team anymore. That's not the type of data that we are seeing in our special

[01:48:54] permission portal. So when we are running that data, we can tell you that X percentage said it was for child care from this school to this school. We also, through this data digging process with our committee, have realized there's no clear sort of pattern. People aren't necessarily choosing to stay within their clusters or within their regions. And again, in the other section,

[01:49:25] which does allow you to type in your explanation, they're not indicating problems. No, that could be something that could be considered. It would trigger another process, right? And so the reason for instructional suitability, first and foremost, we have an obligation to make sure that we build the capacity of every school, every teacher, every TA, every related service provider, right?

[01:49:58] that that is that's why we're here we also understand that we're humans and sometimes we just don't jive right we just don't jive and we need a change we we value that while we're moving through whether it's special permission and you have an underlying factor or you trigger the instructional suitability process as a school division we still have an obligation we're going to take care of your child first right we're going to meet with you as a parent going to work with the school take care of the student first but then we also need to work with the school where

[01:50:37] you reported an identified problem because we need to learn lessons from our mistakes right we need to learn lessons from how people experience us we need to learn lessons when people give us feedback and so it is never just a okay we're going to solve your problem and not follow up with that school, oftentimes it triggers a division-wide response that typically is disseminated through our Office of Special Education to designees, to deans, to teachers through snippets, through

[01:51:16] cluster meetings with our supervisors, really making sure, hey guys, lesson learned this month, let's not do it again, right? That's really our obligation. So yes, we're here to take care of each and every student. But we also need to make sure that we're building the capacity of our staff members across this division while also taking care of your individual needs that might pop up. Tedra, you had said the instructional suitability doesn't require the transportation

[01:51:51] element? No, it does not. It doesn't require it. No, it does not. So perhaps one of the things could be that the instructional suitability policy portion of this is beefed up to include and codify essentially what's happened under your tenure or perhaps our recommendation should just change to a lifetime contract for you and we leave and we leave special permission to basically edge cases and and we really move the the cases that relate to special ed under instructional suitability and beef up that portion of the policy that is certainly something that we can take back

[01:52:28] to the committee again they have asked I believe Ms. LaBelle you guys wanted it to come back in either may or june for a status update um and certainly looking at okay what have been our lessons learned right what has worked wonderfully and what is uh we got that one wrong so let's make some tweaks um in going into the next round of what do we need to revise please know that staff did not want to tackle this policy. It was, let's just be clear. Our school board, they really wanted to dig into it, right? And they really wanted to make sure that they were being supportive

[01:53:08] of all schools equitably. And it did stem from, is it an equitable process for students with disabilities? And are we seeing a pattern of request out of Title I schools? Are we seeing a pattern of request out of schools with a certain demographic. And so I truly do applaud them for tackling this. Absolutely. And they've asked the hard questions. So I'm going to make one comment and then I'm going to, I think I'm going to propose an actual recommendation based on what I'm hearing,

[01:53:48] but I'm going to make a comment. I'm probably going to tee up Dr. Carter with this comment. To the extent that the reason that the student needs to be moved to a different school is because of the student's unique needs according to their disability, I believe that should be an IEP team discussion and perhaps discussed in the IEP.

[01:54:11] Now, I can tell you from my personal experience, I have been told multiple times by IEP teams, quote, we do not discuss school placement. Right. The IEP does not specify location, but yes, IEP teams can discuss the kind of program and the kind of needs that a student has.

[01:54:35] And to me, instructional suitability related to impact of disability does not belong in the special permission process. It belongs in my office. The principal, special ed supervisor, and then Nakia and I can support that.

[01:54:51] I really don't feel like the special permission process was ever intended or should be an IEP thing. So, yes, I agree with you. that's a special ed process situation and to the lady who spoke in the back about the process to me that very much if a student required a more restrictive placement that is very much an IEP team decision and and if that was a requirement I'm sorry that that did not occur in the IEP team but that is the place for it. So the recommendation and Ms. LaBelle I suppose I

[01:55:29] think this one's going to come both as no surprise and is going to be something you're going to agree with too, I would suggest that SEAC recommend that the school board, upon reconsideration of this policy, work with the community and the staff to develop a more detailed instructional suitability policy that captures some of these disability and mental health situations and make sure that we are communicating to the community the availability of this process.

[01:56:10] I'm sorry, Greg, you're going to be... But, I mean, I'm trying to capture... I think that there's a rough consensus forming here that there's this thing, it's called instructional suitability. Not a lot of people know about it. It could be a good tool, it could be a bad tool, but the policy is still kind of thin on details, and that that would be the sort of thing that would be good to come back to and we all work together on.

[01:56:33] Thank you for the recommendation. What I was busy writing when you started, and I had to pause there for a minute, is something that I'd like to talk with Dr. Richardson about. Is it possible that we can move, take the special ed placement out of our special permissions process and move it to put a place in the IEP where they can discuss the needs

[01:57:09] that could describe a good location for the student to be? And that should take care of that, if I'm not mistaken. So our policy 8155 school assignment does not indicate, specify anything about students with disabilities versus general education students.

[01:57:33] It just applies to all students. The IEP team should already be considering those factors, not necessarily name of school, right, but type of program.

[01:57:49] The least restrictive environment for this student based on impact of disability. Once you then, and it depends on who you have at the table, right? Because not everybody is going to know. You just saw that we're adding 40 more programs across the division for next year.

[01:58:08] So those things are going to be moving targets. It's going to take us some time to be able to say, here's where the programs are, right? But IEP teams should already be considering those things. We should be talking about our continuum of services across this division at every single meeting.

[01:58:29] And for some students, that means that we're breaking it out by content area. What does it need to look like and feel like, sound like for math versus reading versus recess? Those sorts of things should be happening. And so IEP teams can document that in special considerations.

[01:58:46] You can put it in your services and placement determination section, your least restrictive environment. You can also document it in the prior written notice. The process is repetitive for a reason, and so teams have the ability to document that in multiple places within the document.

[01:59:14] So they can record me. This is going to be gold, guys. Just wait. So the instructional suitability, is that appealable? Any administrative action is appealable.

[01:59:30] Correct. So then if we don't have, we're always going to have you, but if we don't, the parent can appeal it. And that's for theirs. So I like Craig's suggestion. I think making that instructional suitability more clear. I think when we talk about special permissions being open, we put in there that, hey, if your concern is over instructional suitability, you should be filing, right, like talking to whatever team in that process for raising that.

[01:59:57] that way to Aaron's point if you didn't know and you see this pop up and you're like oh crap I got it like I only have this time you read through that and you're like oh no no no my issue is on instruct I'll follow this other process but I think if we make that more clear then I don't really care what the time frame is for this special permissions thing I applaud you I guess for doing it I think it's cut down but I like I think that from a special education perspective I think that covers all my concerns.

[02:00:26] To Ms. LaBelle and Ms. Richardson, I agree with you. When a student has a unique need according to their disabilities that would affect what kind of school, naming particular schools, I understand, for various reasons is a bad place. But, like, for example, this student needs a school that is one floor.

[02:00:45] If that's a need, I can tell you from personal experience that IEP teams refuse to have that discussion. We are told we do not discuss that. And so that may be a staff training issue. I do want to pull a little bit of thread on the appeal real quick.

[02:01:02] Is instructional suitability appealable to an appeals committee of the school board? Ms. LaBella is nodding yes. Yes, it is. So the appeal rights work exactly the same way as special permission here. Correct. Okay.

[02:01:18] All right. So believe me, I hate to cut this off because I'm just like my heart is just so happy because this has been so I think very productive and so professional and look we don't all have to agree about every single thing to still care about each other and respect each other and and I mean at the end of the day we're all trying to make sure that our students with disabilities are being appropriately served we all are on the same team in that um so I love this process but tick tock tick tock it's eight o'clock and uh so I think uh yeah I mean well despite it being eight o'clock Does anyone have anything they absolutely will pass out and die

[02:01:58] if they don't have the opportunity to say it right now? Anyone? Anyone? Bueller? Okay. Sorry, guys. I mean, I do think this is very productive. But I'd like to entertain a motion. And I think because we have two amendments, I think we need to handle that separately.

[02:02:16] Until there's a motion on the floor, the motion can read the recommendations written and discussed. Once there's a motion on the floor, we have to amend it. okay yep okay second the motion is all right any discussion all in favor say aye aye opposed abstentions uh uh oh we also have kathy lambert what's your vote aye sharon trove point of order

[02:02:54] point of order okay the base motion needs a motion to adopt then we need to amend it we don't make a motion that's not the motion that's a different motion she made a motion to vote on it that's no no that's not what she said she her motion was that we we we vote on these concerns and recommendations

that's not a motion that's i think it is i think that is a motion and i i you'd be a motion motion to adopt hold on one second hold on one second hold on one second

[02:03:33] Carrie when we're sitting up there on the dais what we found out was you have a base motion You have discussion. Somebody wants to make some changes to it. So they make a second amendment and they have discussion. We've gone as far as four amendments up, so it gets very confusing.

[02:03:58] Then you work your way back down to the base motion. So if you were to make a motion to treat both of these policies as separate votes, then it would come down, you might say, you vote on that base motion. If everybody said, or a majority said, yes, let's treat them separately, then you come down to the base motion, and you say, well, let's vote, because the original base motion was to vote on all of them, that one, the ones who said, yes, let's treat them separately, would then say no, And that base motion would go away.

[02:04:38] And then you could bring up the two other policies. Now let's vote on 8155. And I know. Thank you, Carrie. Okay, so what I'm hearing. Actually, I did know a lot about Robert's rules before we get there.

[02:04:56] But so you would vote. To adopt the recommendations and concerns proposed by. He's already made that motion, correct? And comply. Right, right. My concern was you have to start with a motion to take an action or a motion to adopt something.

[02:05:14] She did a motion that was the procedure for the things. Well, didn't you make a motion first? No. She did, but the motion I don't think was a properly formed. It wasn't in the form of a motion. Okay, you made the first one. You need a motion to adopt something. All right, let's clarify.

[02:05:31] I'll be Wes. What can I say? And Steve seconds. Okay. Then you have discussion. All right, so now we open it up for discussion. Is there any discussion about amendments or procedural items?

[02:05:49] Adopt the recommendations of the Policy and Compliance Subcommittee for Policy 8155. I just did. That's what she said. So now, motion to amend, you have the one that you... But there was one that was emailed out that has to be amended in.

[02:06:04] Yes. Correct. All right. Or you can go... Part of discussion, you can make a motion procedurally to say, would like to vote on each of those recommendations and concerns individually correct so is there any discussion it's hearing no discussion all those in favor say aye aye opposed abstentions all right

[02:06:37] and do we need to admit Kathy Lambert already have a thing on them everybody has all right sorry Kathy you're not going to be able to vote on this one because you've not been admitted yet so we have to vote on her procedural motion correct what problem are you trying to solve here

[02:07:05] it's fine okay all right so uh it has been moved seconded and approved unanimously that we take each of the concerns and recommendations and vote on them individually all right so now we're back to our base motion okay Sharon what is your vote on separating the questions yes i agree Kelly

[02:07:43] Ralston what is your vote yes i agree too okay so it's unanimous all right now we go back to the motion and we will be procedurally voting on them point by point alright is there any more discussion on the base motion that's what would include motions

[02:08:00] to amend emotions to amend sorry no it's going backwards you're doing this backwards I'll just be quiet recommend concerning recommendation number four

[02:08:36] okay I make a motion to amend recommendation number four to add end of the school year to add because all of this we have to add to add recommendation and concern number four to add recommendation and concern number four is there a second okay any discussion you're confused okay recommendation is concern number four and recommendation number four that was the part about moving the deleted language and adding some additional language to part new

[02:09:09] section B instructional suitability which section I know it's getting a little cray-cray okay um but right now what we're doing is we are voting on whether or not to amend uh the recommendations to add concern number four and recommendation number four which were printed on your policy packet as amendments we wanted to make all right so if there's no discussion on that all those in favor say aye aye opposed uh abstentions sharon aye kelly ralston

[02:09:45] aye okay and there was one more amendment uh while now we're going back to discussion on the base right so motion to amend with the current discussion that we just had on and i can read yeah go ahead if it helps i can read so basically what we're saying was to recommend it's just a recommendation um that the school board work with the community and staff to work on a more detailed policy that addresses the needs of students with disabilities and then inform the community of this

[02:10:20] new policy yep for two okay second any discussion on this motion to amend and add this recommendation hearing none all those in favor say aye aye those opposed those abstentions Sharon Trofe aye Kelly Ralston aye okay so we made those two amendments just to clarify where we are to the base motion which was the original recommendations and concerns one through three so now

[02:10:53] we're back to that we have procedurally agreed to vote on them one at a time so we go back all right any further discussion about this process okay hearing none for okay yep concern number one if applications for special permission to attend a school that is over enrolled will automatically be rejected with no right of appeal as reflected at lines 117 through 119 then there should be transparency for parents on which schools are projected to be over enrolled so they can make

[02:11:30] an informed decision about which schools to apply to that's concern number one any discussion all those in favor say aye aye opposed abstentions Sharon Trofe aye Kelly Ralston aye concern one is adopted unanimously recommendation number one make data on projected over enrollment of schools available in real time to parents who are applying for special permission some options include but are not limited to using the real-time enrollment data on the existing student enrollment website to create a heat map such as the one publicly presented already to the school board or a red yellow green indicator

[02:12:08] of over enrollment for each school red meaning the school is projected to be over enrolled for next year yellow it might be green that is unlikely to be over enrolled or some combination of both ideas that's recommendation number one any discussion note that's recommendation number one any discussion all those in favor of adopting recommendation number one say aye aye those opposed abstentions Sharon Trofe aye Kelly Ralston aye and recommendation one is adopted unanimously concern number two there are currently

[02:12:43] a significant number of appeals and applications being filed for special permission if parents are given the option to request more than one school in their special permission application in ranked choice order that could minimize the number of appeals and refiled applications due to denials any discussion on concern two all those in favor say aye aye those opposed any abstentions opposed or abstention one abstention to concern number two uh Sharon Trofe aye Kelly Ralston

[02:13:16] aye okay concern number two passes um that's all I said passes all right recommendation number two allow parents the option to list up to three school choices in preference order if the first choice is over enrolled the staff will then proceed to the parent's second or third choice if necessary allowing these options to be considered up front and the process should decrease the number of denials and subsequent appeals or refiled applications for special permission any discussion on recommendation number two all those in favor of adopting it say aye

[02:13:51] Aye. Opposed? One in opposition. Any abstentions? Sharon Trofe. Aye. Kelly Ralston. Aye. Recommendation two passes. Concern three. While we understand the desire to open the window for applications for special permission earlier in the school year to ensure applications and appeals are processed early enough to facilitate school staffing earlier in the summer, we are concerned that by closing the window for applications on April 30 as proposed at lines 249, 256, 295, 320, and 324, instead of at the end of the school

[02:14:29] year, students who may experience issues regarding physical, mental health, bullying, major life changes, or other significant issues in the last few months of the school year may have to wait more than one year before those issues could be resolved by moving to a different school through special permission. Any discussion on Concern 3? All those in favor of adopting Concern 3 say aye.

[02:14:50] those opposed yeah account all those raise your hand to adopt concern three say raise your hand and say I count please you want me to they're counting one two three four five six hands raised Sharon Trove oh good point so let's try it again only SEAC members we're going to take a count all those in favor of adopting concern number three raise your hand so we have one two three four five

[02:15:27] Sharon Trofe? Aye. Kelly Ralston? Aye. I had Craig I didn't look okay okay okay any

[02:15:51] nays raise your hand please so if one two three four five six that are nay and already took their vote so the Craig and back behind you and then Sharon and No, sorry, Kelly, were yes.

[02:16:29] I already asked them. I jumped ahead, sorry. They were both yes. So that was seven yeses. And then abstentions? Any abstentions? One, two, three abstentions. All right, so I believe that was seven yeas, six nay, three abstentions.

[02:16:53] Yeah, so the motion passes barely. Okay, recommendation number three. In addition to recommendations one and two above that we believe can streamline and shorten the application and appeal process for special permission in general, additional solutions might include shortening the application review timeline at line 287 to 15 days from 30 days and limiting the time frame for a decision on an appeal to the director of student services or his or her designee to 15 days.

[02:17:24] uh the subcommittee and okay and then we also as a subcommittee had voted to include that we change it from June 30th to the end of the school year that's part of recommendation three any discussion on recommendation three all those in favor who are SEAC members raise your hand please okay that's

[02:17:54] six um for the nays raise your hand please that's one two three four five six seven eight nine okay and for abstentions one um Sharon Trove your vote I'm gonna abstain Kelly Ralston same I'll abstain abstain okay so I think the nays have it is that right okay so recommendation three

[02:18:27] is not adopted all right and then the new amendment uh concern four the information deleted at lines 304 to 312 which inform parents that they may request reassignment to a different school per new section b instructional suitability at any time during the year should be moved to new section b instructional suitability in addition in an effort to minimize the number of special permission appeals to the school board the director of student services or his or her designee should be given the discretion during a review of a special permission appeal to approve a request

[02:19:03] for reassignment per new section b instructional suitability and or suggest other available options for school assignment to the family for their consideration. However, in the case of a student with disabilities who is denied special permission reassignment due to special education staffing limitations, the director of student services or his or her designee would affirmatively reach out to the parents to provide other available options for school assignment for the parents to consider to increase the transparency of this process for students with disabilities since data on over-enrollment status of special

[02:19:39] education classrooms is not available to the public any discussion on concern four okay this is the text that was emailed where it says after the subcommittee voted there was a discussion and a who proposed this who's owning this well listen i want it yeah we found an issue this is effectively a floor amendment reading concern three where we were confused about it

[02:20:16] And we were like, well, we can just eliminate that concern by clarifying this language here. So that's the genesis. Yep. Right. There's a concern five that is that other piece. And that was me trying to capture what I think we were heading towards as a consensus in the discussion.

[02:20:34] Okay. There's more discussion. Tom? Just a question on that, because in the first part of that, it seemed to indicate that instructional suitability was basically sort of under a form of special permission. but that's not really the case, right? So I think the language there is troublesome a little bit.

[02:20:53] Instructional suitability is part of school assignment. It is separate and apart from special permission. Right, so if you read that first sentence again. Let me read it again because it says nothing about special permission in the first sentence. I thought the word special permission appeared in the first couple sentences. So the first sentence says, the information deleted at lines 304 to 312, which informed parents that they may request reassignment to a different school per new Section B instructional suitability at any time during the year should be moved to new Section B instructional suitability.

[02:21:23] So they deleted that language. We're saying put it back. Okay, so there's a part there, though, about then the Office of Student Services and something about under special permission. Yes, the next sentence, in addition, in an effort to minimize the number of special permission appeals to the school board, the director of student services or his or her designee should be given the discretion during a review of a special permission appeal to approve a request for reassignment instead through this new section b instructional suitability that's one option we want to give them the discretion to do or the discretion to be able

[02:21:59] to provide alternative options to that family now this applies to everybody gen ed special ed everybody and it's just giving them the authority or the discretion to be able to do those things to resolve the issue before it goes to the school board. So it gives them the authority to convert a special permission to an instructional suitability, right?

[02:22:20] I think what we are saying is that they may ask if they can. Is that how it's worded? It's not worded. No. We are just giving them the discretion to be able to do the right thing for the kids here. That's it. Doesn't it say they can convert the special permission into an instructional suitability?

[02:22:38] We do not say anything about convert. keep in mind the staff have the discretion with or without parent request and just look at it and still to give like we we still got things to do so we really we can't be nitpicking this so yeah let's let's do it or let's not please special permissions right aren't those separate

[02:23:11] things we just put them in one concern right but that i guess so at this point we're if you don't agree with the entire concern vote no or abstain okay i mean we just cannot redo this we could take a quick motion to amend to split those two parts no we don't have to this is just new because this wasn't part of our discussion or we can just say we printed it and it was emailed out to everybody i know but this is the first discussion it's not completely new we printed this and emailed it out to everybody in advance you can do a motion to separate the two as an amendment if you wish or

[02:23:46] we can just say it is a concern, Ms. Lavelle is hearing the discussion, I think we can work it out. Yeah, and please keep in mind, we're not the school board, right? All we're doing is making recommendations that they can accept or reject, all right? So we aren't making the final decision on what happens with this policy. We are making recommendations. That's it. I need to add, I'm not even the chair of the committee, so, you know, I can do the behavior stuff, but this one is a different person with the chair i'm just a member is there any other discussion of concern four

[02:24:21] hearing no further discussion yeah if you're going to make a motion you make it during discussion okay if there's no further discussion um all those in favor of adopting concern four as written please raise your hand uh count is one two three four five six seven eight nine ten eleven twelve uh those opposed raise your hand count is uh one abstaining is two all right and Sharon Trove

[02:24:58] yeah uh Kelly Ralston aye okay so um the uh right but first of all concern four does pass this is adopted all right and then we have um there was a motion from the floor to adopt an additional recommendation that the school board work it's a recommendation that the school board work with the committee, sorry, the community and staff to work on a more detailed policy that addresses needs of students with disabilities and inform the community of this policy.

[02:25:33] All right. Any discussion on the amended edition of this recommendation, which will be number five? Okay. Seeing no discussion, all those in favor of adopting recommendation five, raise your hand. The count is one, two, three, four, five, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

[02:25:52] Those opposed, raise your hand. Those abstaining? Oh, no. we didn't oh my god um okay so we have one abstaining hold on and then sharon trove aye kelly ralston aye okay adopting the amended recommendation five has um passed and it is adopted and actually uh yeah liz is exactly right we did not adopt record or we didn't vote on

[02:26:25] recommendation four um recommendation four is where we are amending the instructional suitability paragraph. We're adding at any time a parent or legal guardian may request and then the rest of the paragraph and then we are cutting and pasting the deleted text at the end of that paragraph for instructional suitability to add and issues concerning student mental or physical health or that arise due to

a significant life event may be addressed anytime during the year and shall be allowed review by the appeals process captured in policy 2350. And then we also recommended that we

[02:27:01] add a new paragraph that the director of student services or his or her designee have the discretion during a review of a special permission appeal to approve a request for reassignment per section b instructional suitability and or suggest other available options for school assignment to the family for their consideration however in the case of a student with disabilities who has denied special permission reassignment due to special education staffing limitations the director of student services or his or her designee will reach out to the parents to provide other available options for school assignment for the parents to consider. So those are the recommendations

[02:27:35] in number four. Is there any discussion of recommendation four? We didn't. That was the concern. And that answered the question that you had. There's a bunch of maze there. It doesn't seem like it's a necessarily a hijack or a mandatory. Correct. It's discretionary authority.

[02:27:59] All right, hearing more discussion then, all those in favor of adopting recommendation four, raise your hand. Count is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Those opposed, raise your hand. One.

[02:28:16] Okay, abstentions. One. One, abstention. And Sharon Trofe? Aye. Kelly Ralston? Aye. Okay, and so adopting of recommendation four is passed.

[02:28:33] That's it. Thank you, guys. a lot of hard work but that was great okay thank you all right reports and updates we had a literacy and math work session today next one's in February please join us all right we're gonna send out we we're gonna put together some some summaries for everybody please join us December 17th if you enjoyed this

[02:29:08] you'll love the policy committee transition work session is also on December 17th so you can have a really jam-packed SEAC day please join us awards planning will be scheduling shortly we are going to be meeting this evening tonight after this meeting at Clyde's open to the public feel free to join and eat with us or not representative reports also sorry another

[02:29:46] time annual report okay so I did if you scan the QR code you can also access our annual report and our survey data if you'd like to read through that in more detail because I'm gonna give you the highlights tonight guys this is what I presented to the school board and so also if maybe you want a slightly longer version you can go into board docs and you can watch the the 4:30 work session the most popular time on what was that I think November 9th maybe so we have 21

[02:30:25] voting members we have already gone over our representatives you guys know about our subcommittees that work very very hard and we appreciate all your work we have provided feedback on nine policies so far this year we're going to add another couple tonight and our SEAC awards are our favorite as we all know and we honored 118 people last year and I'm sure we will honor another wonderful group this next year I've already said a lot of wonderful things about Dr. Carter and Miss Nikia Purnell and Miss Tedra Richardson we love them all we love all

[02:31:02] All of our Office of Special Education staff, Ms. Kristen Lovell, Dr. Kim Jones. Seriously, none of this would happen. We all know this without the people in the Office of Special Ed supporting us. So thank you all so much and for bearing with us at these riveting meetings.

[02:31:22] And also a big thank you to Ms. Carrie Lavelle and the entire school board who we know has been very supportive of all of us and our initiatives. Okay, so the SEAC survey, we had high overall satisfaction with special education services.

[02:31:39] The average was 78%, and it ranged based on service from 69% to 86%. Academic instruction was also incredibly high at 81% to 90%. Most related services were up there in high overall satisfaction, including adapted PE, Music therapy, speech, physical, auditory therapies, assistive technology.

[02:32:06] Those ranged from 80 to 95%. And the other thing that was interesting about this year's survey is normally we have discrepancies between the different regions within Loudoun County. And this year, that was no longer present, which would suggest that there's been some improvements in consistency, which is a really big win.

[02:32:31] Like, that's been a huge issue for SEAC over the years. So having some data that supports that is really fantastic and something to be celebrated. The areas of need, increasing meaningful inclusion in the classroom and school events.

[02:32:48] We know that a lot of our kids have trouble sometimes accessing these school events. And so these are things that we need to work out at the school levels to make sure that all of our kids are getting those meaningful inclusion, both in the classroom and everywhere within the school.

[02:33:08] Transition out of high school remains a big concern, but we are making some progress there, which is really exciting. More consistency and collaboration among teachers, and obviously we're not just talking about our special educators. It's getting our general educators on board as well.

[02:33:27] In general, people requested more knowledgeable teachers, TAs, support personnel, and I know that we've got initiatives going to do a lot more personal development days within the Office of Special Education, and so hopefully we'll start to see a really big impact with that.

[02:33:46] Parents want to be part of the collaboration, have more communication, and need access to internal and external resources, and I don't think that comes as a surprise to anyone in this room. I think we all kind of live that and understand how important that collaboration is, and so we need to figure out how we can increase that for everybody.

[02:34:11] Multiple emotional and intellectual disabilities needed more attention. often came out in the lowest levels of satisfaction and so that's something that we need to kind of explore why that is you know what's going on where they there were things such as they didn't feel like their teachers were as knowledgeable they didn't feel that they were included as well so there's definitely those more severe disabilities probably need to be kind of looked at what we can do to fix that and that's something we need to talk about in our subcommittees.

[02:34:50] So the SEAC recommendations that I shared with the school board, most of these were all things that we've been talking about for years, they're not particularly new. We support Dr. Carter's recommendation for supporting our staffing from identified student and teacher needs and providing that plus one resource to each elementary school, improve secondary instruction for students with disabilities by focusing on effective co-teaching models and how to incorporate tier one supports, fund the continuum of special education with

[02:35:27] options such as virtual schooling, K through 12, and a separate day program for students who need a higher level of behavioral supports in an alternative setting. And I hate to put another million dollar kind of request. But this really has been an area of need for a very long time.

[02:35:44] And so that is something that we need to be advocating for those students to get them the setting that they require. Prioritize in-person special education training for our paraprofessionals. I think we all know how incredibly important our paraprofessionals are.

[02:36:02] They do a lot of the work and we need to make sure that they are as knowledgeable as possible to provide that consistency and continuity for our kids. Create a peer group credit bearing elective across all secondary schools.

[02:36:18] Students that participate in the peer groups course would partner with students with disabilities to enable them to participate in more general education environments like after school activities, lunch, study halls, academic environments, elective courses to facilitate more of that meaningful inclusion and this was a recommendation that had come out of our meaningful inclusion subcommittee last year for transition we support a transition center and we're getting one it seems like knock on wood vocational evaluators we've had a lot of conversations in the transition sub committee about how important it is not just to have a center but we need to

[02:36:56] have people who can like take a look at our kids and figure out well what can they do, what do they struggle with, what possible careers are going to be a good fit for them. So that is a critical piece that we are supporting as part of this initiative to boost up our transition services is to get some people in those roles that are highly qualified.

[02:37:23] We want to create pathways for students with disabilities in all CTE offerings. It seems like we are making some headway there. We've got some administration who is very supportive of that, but it's more than just saying that we're supportive.

[02:37:39] It's going to be a real culture shift, and so we're going to need to figure out the best ways that we can make sure that our kids really do have access because the transition center is not a band-aid for all of our students. There are other students who need other pathways, and maybe it'll be in conjunction, maybe it'll be separate, but we've got a lot of students with a lot of different needs.

[02:38:01] So we want to make sure that we've got a full spectrum of options. Community based instruction framework with funding to elementary and middle schools. We really want our kids to be building up these transition, these skills, these life skills before they hit high school.

[02:38:17] They need to start them in elementary school and middle school so that we're not doing kind of remedial training once they hit high school or postgraduate time. Additional transition teachers to increase interaction and support. And I think what we've heard a lot is, especially at the middle school level, these kids are not getting much of a transition.

[02:38:37] It's supposed to start in their IEP when they're 14, and it's just not really happening because these transition teachers are stretched very, very thin. So that is an identified need as well. For accessibility, inclusive playgrounds. I think it sounds like we're going to also be able to check that one off, which is awesome.

[02:38:56] This slide will be a little less crowded. all students have access to school grounds for recess and physical education also I think there's some training that needs to occur at the schools to make sure that this actually does happen but we now have the fences in place and so it should be occurring utilize the instructional framework to provide training to all general education teachers on how to design lessons and learning in ways that harness the unique strengths and needs of all students this is language that's lifted from the instructional framework and it speaks so nicely to what we want out of meaningful inclusion.

[02:39:33] We don't want our special educators to be having to do 90% of the lift to get our kids included in the classroom. The general education teacher can learn skills that will make it so that there is less modification necessary to make sure that all of our learners are included.

[02:39:52] teachers of existing accessible instructional materials and encouraged usage. We actually have a lot of accessible materials here in LCPS but oftentimes our teachers are going out and they're buying things they're from like Teachers Pay Teachers that are really cute and fun and easy to use but they're not accessible and so then we now have an accessibility problem that our special educators have to solve. Again, like we need to figure out how we can decrease that workload for our special educators who are giving it their 150% and they shouldn't have to be. Like

[02:40:31] we should just be starting with the accessible materials to begin with. Utilize, oh sorry, where am I? Inform teachers, sorry, I'm tired. Regular training and coaching to teachers, teacher assistants, parents and students on Tier 1 accessibility tools and AAC devices.

[02:40:52] How many times are our kids given access to different Tier 1 accessibility tools and nobody knows how to use them? The teachers don't know how to use them, the parents don't know how to use them, the student may have gotten a training on them but no one ever reinforced it with them and so they don't end up using it when it could have been so helpful for them.

[02:41:11] And it's the same thing with AAC devices. We've got these great devices that are capable of so much, and go watch out of my mind, but if we aren't making sure that everyone around them also understands how to use them, they're just going to turn into bricks, like expensive bricks, and we need to make sure that they're being used to their full potential.

[02:41:32] Literacy and math instruction. Clearly define the implementation of policy 5350, parent notification and assessment, and define and communicate to parents' remediation framework for students who are not meeting benchmarks and the curriculum instruction committee is going to be looking at this sometime in the new year so we will have an opportunity to provide feedback and I'm sure we will have a lot to share with them on that improve access to literacy services at high school level for those who do not meet literacy screening expectations high school has been a really tricky area for us and we talk about that a lot in the literacy and math subcommittee so

[02:42:12] we were making great headway in elementary school we're starting to address middle school but high schools a definite area of need follow evidence based literacy practices in all program classes and this is it's tricky that's it's definitely we're trying to figure it out and there's still more work that we need to do to figure out the best way forward it's it's not simple for preschool develop comprehensive developmental monitoring tool that includes pre-academic standards and a report and reports progress at least

[02:42:47] three times a year to parents and that came out as a really big need last year because parents simply they get their progress report but that doesn't give you a comprehensive look at your child's needs and or you know strengths even and so we want to when you go out into a private preschool you get those really long sheets with all that stuff and we just want to make sure that all of our parents are getting that so that they understand where their child has strengths where they have needs outside of just the normal things that we look at in an IEP and that's the end of that presentation and please come join us

[02:43:26] January 8th and February 12th I hope everyone has a wonderful restful winter break and gets to spend lots of time with their family thank you all so much for coming out tonight and for your collaboration and ideas.

[02:43:45] It truly, it makes SEAC the powerhouse that it is. So if you have any questions on any of this, feel free to reach out to me anytime. And if not, have a wonderful break. Happy New Year and we'll see you soon. Or come join us at Clyde's and see us really soon.

[02:44:02] Okay, bye.



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