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Loudoun County School Board, School Board Retreat, Friday, January 24, 2025

Date	Friday, January 24, 2025
Place	Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length	4h 57m (video)
- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): https://player.vimeo.com/video/1050215892?rel=0 - BoardDocs (School Board): https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public	

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-11. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:54] - Okay, good morning. I call to order this January 22nd, 2025, Loudoun County Public Schools School Board Retreat. Welcome and welcome BSBA member, I guess, what, staff.

[00:01:17] Thank you for being with us today, I appreciate it. I guess we will just go ahead and start off. I think everybody's here. Lauren will be back, Ms. Chernoff will be back soon, sure her stuff is here okay so we're starting off with item 2.01 our VSBA training welcome okay I'm not not quite used to using the microphones and all the formalities so you know if I I'm talking and don't have my mic on please just yell at me and I will turn that on or I get too loud but it's so great to

[00:01:53] see everyone yes thank you I was I was a little loud there my name is Samantha Bosman I'm the deputy executive director with VSBA and I'm looking forward to working with you guys today I'll let Rodney introduce himself Rodney Jordan consultant support to VSBA and recovering school board member of 12 and a half years yes and Rodney we're so excited to have Rodney on our team he has done governance training with us for a number of years actually in his school board role and when he retired off the board if we want to call it that we

[00:02:28] scooped him up so we're really excited to have his input here so typically these sessions are a little more informal so are we okay with first name basis I can do last name if we want to please call me Sam Samantha is way too many syllables so please call me Sam this is really meant to be a conversation

and we're gonna have a lot of a lot of conversations today and so you'll hear us talk we have a PowerPoint we have all of the you know the information in front of you, but we want this to be a conversation. We want this to be valuable for you. We're here to talk about roles and responsibilities. We're here to talk about teamwork. We're here to talk about

[00:03:07] your norms and protocols, which you all have written in your policies, so we're going to reference those a little bit. We only have three hours with you, so we're going to do as much as we can in our three hours. Obviously, we'll take breaks, and then I know lunch will be delivered at some point, too. We'll do a working lunch if everyone is comfortable with that, but if you need to take a break, just get up and take a break. You know, we're adults here. Just please feel free to do that. And if multiples of you get up, then we'll just pause for a few minutes and go from there. Does that work for everybody? Good stuff. Okay. So as I said, we will talk a bit, but we're

[00:03:40] going to have you guys talk hopefully a lot more than we do. So be ready to jump in and go from there so um if i can advance who where am i pointing when i do this advancement it is on i have a laser pointer i'm so glad it didn't work for him also because i would have felt really silly

[00:04:20] if it didn't or if it did okay we do have a copyright notice it's a very quick it keeps our attorneys happy if there's something you see in this slideshow that you would like a copy of just let us know and chances are we have it published somewhere that we're happy to give it to you but we just like to have that there just to make everybody happy. Okay, excellence in the classroom begins with excellence in the boardroom. So actually, let me pause for a second. I want to have, since I know some of your faces and I don't know some of your faces, let's do a quick introduction if that's okay. Well, we introduced ourselves. So I will, Dina, would you like to

[00:04:56] start and we'll go around just who you are and a little bit, you know, about yourself or whatever you'd like to share. Whatever. And you guys have all been on the same at the same time, right? So that's redundant but whatever you want to share yeah okay wonderful so thank you okay some long

[00:05:32] timers here that's great awesome thank you hello i am linda deans and i represent the broad run district and i am have lived in loughton for 10 years i'm a transplant from north carolina in northern virginia for the purpose of being a grandparent oh i love it where in north carolina are you from? Goldsboro. Oh, I was born in Goldsboro. I love that. That's wonderful. Well, good.

[00:06:04] Welcome. Welcome up north, right? And I'm Melinda Mansfield. I am Dulles District. I guess I've lived there now for 22 years, maybe. So, and my children are older. And just a reminder, everybody, we need to turn on the microphones when we talk or else nobody can hear us. And also, these are the fun mics that if three of us have them on then the other then nobody else

[00:06:37] can turn them on oh okay so I just want a little housekeeping I'm just okay next good morning my name is Anne Donahue I am the at-large member so I was elected by the I represent the entire county as opposed to an individual district I've lived in the Leesburg area for just about 11 years now my spouse is a product of LCPS he graduated from Valley in 98 and as my many other family members who

[00:07:17] are also products of LCPS so they're they're local natives I'm a I'm a transplant from the Midwest and I have two kids who are in who are in my god second and fifth grade in LCPS and my sister-in-law has been a middle school teacher with LCPS for more than 20 years so those are my connections to the division I'm Arben Astrafti I represent the Sterling district on the school board I've been in the county

for about four years and in the DMV area almost 15 originally hail from New Jersey and I have a five-year-old who's going to

[00:07:53] enter into LCPS very soon so thank you good morning my name is Lauren Chernoff I'm the Leesburg representative I have two children in the system one is 11 and One is 13, so last year in elementary for our family, which is a big step.

[00:08:12] Prior to that, I attended the Ohio State University, which I've been dying to get on record to congratulate them because we are the national champions, so now I have it on record. I feel better now, but my connection to Loudoun is that I taught here.

[00:08:30] So I was a teacher for 17 years, 10 in Fairfax County, and then 7 here in Loudoun and literally left my school to come to the dais a little over a year ago. So that is my lens, mostly. So very exciting to be a part of this work. Are you teaching somewhere else now?

[00:08:47] I am not. This is my full-time gig, but I do try to spend as much time in our schools as I can. That's great. Awesome. Thank you. Thank you. Hi, I'm Samara. I represent Little River District, formerly known as Blue Ridge. I've lived in Loudoun County for 15 years, formerly from the north, New Jersey, and I am a practicing dentist for 20 years, and I'm a professor at Northern Virginia Community College full-time, so for me, this is part-time.

[00:09:19] I have two kids, two sons that go to middle school and high school, so pretty busy life, and yeah, just enjoy being with the kids. Thank you. I heard about five full-time jobs in your description. Thank you for doing that.

[00:09:38] Good morning. My name is Carrie LaBelle. I'm the Catocin representative on the school board. That's out west. I have lived in Loudoun County for 30 years. My grandchildren were all in Loudoun County Public Schools, graduated there, and now they've taken all my great-grandies away to move to other places.

[00:09:59] But I still have my husband, my horse, and my dog. I have been, as I said, 30 years in Loudoun County, but I am in my 52nd year of being a special educator. And where do you teach?

[00:10:16] I am retired. Oh, congratulations. I thought I was anyway until I ran for this position. Oh, no. And we'll talk more about that. All righty. Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, Sam and Rodney.

[00:10:32] Thanks for being here today in support of the school board and this retreat. I'm Mark Bergen, the incoming chief of staff. Um, I've been in Loudoun County for two weeks, so, uh, it's my 34th year in public education, and I'm very excited to be joining the team and, uh, learning more about, uh, the board members and how I can support them through the conversation in this retreat.

[00:10:56] So again, thanks for being here to facilitate. Hey, good morning. It's nice to see you both again. Aaron Spence, the superintendent of Loudoun County in my second year here and 14th year working with school boards as a superintendent.

[00:11:12] 14 that's a life that's a lifetime plus COVID that adds like another 20 years on to it too so well good stuff well thank you all for that I think we said a little bit about ourselves too I've been with the association since 2008 so I started as a meeting planner and kind of worked my way up and been doing governance training for probably 13 of those years so I tried to add up how many of these I've done and then I got depressed so I stopped thinking about it but every board is different and every team is different

and that's what keeps me going it's always very exciting and when you get one new member of the team it's a completely different

[00:11:50] team and you all came on all at the same time with a relatively new superintendent to your school division and then here we are so I'm just excited to get the chance to work with you it's you've hit a year right you've celebrated your year anniversary so you've got a year and a month or so under your belt so um so that this will be good because you'll have some life experiences to share about sometimes when we do this session let's say this was last year at this time and we do this session at you know nobody knows how to do anything so that's always a challenge so april were you going to say something no yeah okay you'd like we're just ready to go so

[00:12:28] one makes sense okay so excellence in the classroom begins with excellence in the boardroom this has been up here for a little while what do you think about this do you agree with this do you disagree what are what are your thoughts when you see when you see this phrase i know i'm taking you guys out of your comfort zones aren't i usually you're used to yeah just just jump in i think excellence in the board in the boardroom is when the members can accept each other and work together despite

[00:13:05] differences and that really comes you're saying that's how excellence is achieved in the boardroom by everyone working together, despite the differences. Okay, thank you.

[00:13:21] Who else? I'll add something. Surprise, surprise, Mara. This was a big reason why I ran for school board as an educator. I would maybe add that excellence in the classroom begins in the boardroom, but is most successful when we are connected to the people doing the work in our classrooms.

[00:13:44] That's something that I felt like was lacking in the past and, you know, is something that really drove me to, you know, say, hey, maybe I need to be one of those nine people if I want things to be more connected to the work. That doesn't necessarily mean you're going in the classroom and you're teaching or you're doing things like that.

[00:14:05] You're just aware of what's happening in the classroom as it comes. Okay. Who else? And you can disagree with this. I'm fine with that, too. Well, I would say I'm very aware of standing in almost as a role model.

[00:14:26] I understand that, I mean, I think having had the perspective of being a preschool teacher and a substitute and working with kids over the course of decades, that you really are modeling for them.

[00:14:43] And so I think it's one of those things where really having kids at the forefront and thinking about what's best for kids at all times and really having that be the center of the work leads to excellence. If I can add, I agree with all my colleagues.

[00:15:06] I also think it's one big circle. So excellence could begin with our graduates to see, as an example, what we did wrong and right. so based on what we did wrong or right we then circle back to the boardroom and then you know we come up with well this went wrong or that went wrong it's what we did right maybe we need to develop on that and then it starts with the boardroom and then so on and so forth it's interesting i did a training on what's today friday i did a training on tuesday and i had a board member say a very similar thing and i hadn't heard that for a long time they said well excellence starts at the boardroom with the role modeling and those kind of pieces but there's also excellence in

[00:15:44] the classroom that can trickle up to the boardroom and vice versa and so it's just a different perspective that i hadn't heard and i think that's what you're saying you know there's an evaluation i've actually got i think it's yes it is in the slideshow um that shows how how does governance work also as a cycle and where does that go so we'll i'm going to make sure that we get to that because it's very much what you described you see what happens where are you all as the governance team in that role and then what's your output and then what do we need to do to adjust and how does that work and where does the superintendent come in you're going to hear me say governance team

[00:16:19] that is the nine of you plus your superintendent so that's the 10 of you no offense dr bergen but that's the 10 of you at this table who are the governance team because it's very difficult to do your job without the superintendent and vice versa he can't do his job without the school board either so that's when you hear me say governance team that's what i'm i'm thinking of any other comments on this i think we also give the guidance like at the top you give the guidance for the rest of the um you know for the teachers for staff for cabinet and everything else at the board through

[00:16:55] your policies and things like that which you tend to focus on also excellence gives excellence in the classroom because you're giving better guidance and understanding um of you know like with our strategic plan and things like that you're organizing if you're not organized at the top then nothing's going to be organized at the bottom and i i'll agree with that very much so because it's you're setting the tone you're setting how or what what is the professionalism what is the um what is the tone you want to set for the rest of your school division and i know

[00:17:32] you guys are a large school division obviously so you have central office and then you have a few other layers and then you have student schools and then you have students everything like that but you're setting the tone here at the top the top the top right that's you guys and then when If you all are dysfunctional or if you all are working in crisis, how does that trickle to your staff, your central office staff?

[00:17:53] How does that trickle down to the building level, and then how does that get to the students? Yes, Ari. Yeah, I'll just say one final thing. I agree with all of that. I agree with the role modeling and the leadership. I think if there was a point, I would add to what was already said is what we choose to focus on substantively, how focused that is and how we prioritize, how focused that is on kids, families, and educators.

[00:18:14] Um, and really, um, I think a lot of us can agree that, um, you can spend your full, all of your time focused on school board, but what you spend your time on is really important as well. And that also is an example for the rest of the division.

[00:18:30] She turned to me cause she knows I, when, when, when we always, always involved in training like this is the school board member. And, uh, there's no question that, uh, what we focus on in the, in the boardroom, uh, cascades throughout the entire school division, the entire system.

[00:18:51] So I think you're right on point that part of this conversation and part of what you'll consider the rest of the day and consider the rest of your tenure here is where is the focus? Where is the focus? And how do you stay focused when individuals come to the microphone, when you're at the grocery store, when the newspaper or the news writes something that you don't like?

[00:19:14] How focused are you going to be able to be as a team and as a board on that main thing? And we'll talk about that some more as we go throughout the day. Rodney and I have even had conversations

around just how do we quantify what the board focuses on?

[00:19:31] Is it the time that you spend talking about students on the agenda? What does it look like? And it's just a really interesting thought. And I appreciate that students were brought out within the first 10 minutes of our conversation, right? I will not say students until you guys say students.

[00:19:49] And it's kind of a little quiz I do for school boards. And I've sat in one of these sessions, and it's taken four hours for the word students to come out. So then we had a deeper conversation around, well, why are you doing this? What is the purpose of that? Now, that board was in crisis. This was years and years ago. They were in crisis.

[00:20:05] They were dealing with some things. They literally were turned like this to each other and couldn't even look at each other. yeah adults elected officials doing you know acting this way but they had some things that they needed to work through and that's okay because they did and it worked out but there's some work you know work that needs to be done but the fact that students was mentioned so early in the conversation that that gives me hope and that gives me hope for today and for your your board because if you're not here for the students why are you here right I don't think it's the big paychecks you get don't ever add up your hourly you know your hourly rate because that's just

[00:20:41] depressing. So don't think about that either. You're here for the students and you're here to make a difference. And that's, and what does that look like and how do you do that? And that's what we're going to talk about too. So, okay. Make you talk again. What is one word to describe how you're showing up to the training today? And there's no right or wrong. You can say hungry or cold or whatever you want to say. So what is one word to describe how you're showing up today? So I'm going to start in the middle this time so and i'm going to start with you and then we'll kind of go this

[00:21:15] way and then come around tired that's fair absolutely no open open ready to learn i'm going to shorten that to ready curious curious april stole my word i was going to say curious

[00:21:39] open hyphen ears open ears listening friday sleepy we had an 8 30 meeting this morning oh man that's fair absolutely and it's so cold out right this is beach it well i will say i

[00:22:18] opened the window on my way here i was like what is what is this magic how do i get to open my window dr spent interested interested i love it all right thank you for that and there's a reason why i did that but we'll come back to it so all right so on the agenda i should have prefaced this if you're an agenda checker offer I'm sorry just turn your agenda over and we'll just you know we'll talk about it later so I am an agenda checker offer and the first few of these that I sat in I said this is driving me absolutely crazy but think about it this way we will get to the topics

[00:22:55] on here we'll talk through some things it's not going to be a linear or it may be I hope it's linear but if it's not we're going to get there because I want to lead you where the conversation leads you right so if you say it's 11 15 and we haven't talked about this slide yet and it is it's 11 23 so we're a little behind that but that's okay don't worry we're gonna get to it i promise so um so that's my caveat with with that but we want to make sure we get get to the topics but it might be a roundabout way that we get to them everybody comfortable with that i know whose agenda checker offers anyone yeah so just you can check you can doodle do whatever you want with it

[00:23:34] I won't look at it, I promise, but just be aware of that. Okay, so Foundations for Effective Collaboration. So we've got a question for you, and I'll let Rodney take this. Yeah, I just want to take us back

for a minute and kind of reset.

[00:23:51] We started off with a conversation of excellence in the classroom starts with excellence in the boardroom. I'd ask you to just give some thought for a minute. Why did the community even bother to create school systems?

[00:24:07] I mean, what's the purpose? Why do they exist? So if you could just take a moment, I think you have a pen and pad, just take a moment and in 10 words or less, why do school systems exist? Why does the Loudoun County school system, school division exist?

[00:24:26] 10 words or less. Yes, ma'am. Historically. Oh, no, I want you to write it down. I want you to write it down. 10 words or less. Then I'll, everybody take a moment and write it down and then I'll come right back to you. Ten words or less, why do school systems exist?

[00:24:47] Why do we even have Loudoun County Public School Division school system?

[00:25:16] Ten words or less, why do school systems exist?

[00:25:49] Okay, I was going to ask who would be the first to share, but Carrie, are you ready? Last word, okay, take your time. Like you, Sam, I really don't need a microphone, but, yeah, well, they're recording us, so that's why we have to have these on.

[00:26:18] historically people realize that education was the key and that last word that i'm having trouble with was either survival or progress both of those things are important to people you know do we want to survive i have to know what to do to survive uh if i want to make progress i have to have education so it's sort of like survival slash progress there you go you got 10 words. All right, okay.

[00:26:53] Who would be next to share? Why do school systems exist? Yes, ma'am. To improve the lives of our community members. Who would be next? To provide an excellent foundation that empowers individuals to choose a life that suits them. Okay. Who would be next to share? Deans. To be fiscally responsible and allocate money where it needs to be for all of our students.

[00:27:26] As a sharecropper's daughter, my dad told me that education was the means of leaving the fields. And I still believe that. It is the means of making progress in today's American society.

[00:27:44] Yes, sir. Education is a fundamental right, and it's the most important public good. Dr. Spence, you have some thoughts why the school systems exist? Provide our children their best chance at a brighter future.

[00:28:08] Yes. To meet the diverse needs of our students so they succeed. Community development. Okay, so did everybody get a chance? Oh, I'm sorry. So throughout when I was growing up, it was always to educate the community so that we have productive citizens able to participate in society.

[00:28:36] So I heard words of power and survival, student advancement, some respects of community development. Why is it nobody said that school systems exist to build buildings or to wear uniforms or to hire teachers, even though all these things are important?

[00:29:04] Why is it that almost to a person, your focus on why the school system exists is to produce positive outcomes for students or positive outcomes for the community? Why is it that you didn't say some of these other things? Because all the other things are the scaffolding that we have to have in place to be able to improve the lives of our community And everything else that everyone said here why why they

think our schools are important Yes, so so as we as you move forward and as you give give thought and what I heard you say was about scaffolding

[00:29:43] I want you to be have the mindset and be thinking about you know, why are you here? You know, we started off with excellence in the boardroom and being able to cascade down to the to the classroom. And in the essence of all that conversation is there's the ends, which is the board you are be you are articulating.

[00:30:04] We want our students to be successful. We want our community to grow. We want our children to be college and career ready. All the things that you are describing are are those ends. And then when you talk about buildings and teachers and books and all the other things, those are inputs, those are means, those are the scaffolding upon which the system is built to allow those student outcomes to occur.

[00:30:32] And so it was mentioned earlier about focus. So part of what we will challenge you to do as board members to really think about that focus. What is it that you want for your students? And then how do you govern collectively with the superintendent to make sure that those outcomes are achieved?

[00:30:53] While on the other end, the superintendent has so much responsibility in terms of managing and making recommendations to you about those ends. So just something you can often think about when you're in the meeting and the lights are on and the heated conversation is happening is to take a moment, just kind of reflect, you know, why is it that this school system exists and why am I here?

[00:31:21] And what impact can I have on those things that you just said you want for your students and for your community? Any thoughts on that? Any reflections? Listening to everyone's comments or anything? I like the scaffolding.

[00:31:39] scaffolding example or analogy, too, because that's how you get there. That's how you build it. But what are you building? What is the purpose? One of the things that Samantha mentioned earlier about, forgive me for saying we, because I still consider myself a school board member, so to speak.

[00:31:58] She mentioned earlier about what is it that we spend our time on in board meetings. And so I was part of a research project a couple of years ago, and part of my task was to look at school board meetings all around the country and had a little chart and I would chronicle from the beginning of the meeting opening all the way to the end and even noting how much time was spent in closed session.

[00:32:26] And what the research revealed is even though we just had conversations about the school system existing to improve student outcomes and student achievement, that more times than not, school boards by and large spend our time in our meetings on operational matters.

[00:32:46] We are, you know, asking the superintendent about buildings. We're having conversations about salaries. We're having conversations around books and all these other inputs, all this scaffolding. But the research has shown is that at best, we might be spending 10% of our time focused on student achievement and student outcomes, even though if you go back to the original slide. What the board does, what the board gives its attention is what the superintendent is going to give his or her attention, and it's going to cascade all the way down throughout the system.

[00:33:24] So if the board is spending its time in meetings talking about student outcomes, how our students are doing, how are they progressing, asking questions, of course, of the superintendent of how the strategic initiatives that he is implementing are leading to the outcomes, Then we set that tone, but if

we spend our time on the operational matters and the inputs Then that student focus does have the opportunity to to get lost You can disagree with us, you know, we're okay with that, you know, we'll have a good conversation

[00:34:04] Yeah, I think that this particular board one of the things was a lot of us ran on student achievement and outcomes that were very important to us I know me for literacy and other things also safety and mental health and so while we might not be talking about those kinds of things in the board meetings I think our committees are also a part of where we're doing that that work about talking about data I mean we just put together a performance monitoring committee for something to specifically for looking at how we are going to be defining what student achievement is supposed to look

[00:34:41] you know should look like for our numbers I mean that's so I agree with you like it's at the forefront and wow a big division we still have to talk about like buildings to keep the kids safe and teacher salaries all the rest of that yeah and I should clarify it's not to say that those things aren't important because they are important I mean you have to be able to to monitor those things it's really about the the focus and just FYI so I I read and so I I looked at the different committees that you have and I saw that performance monitoring committee and I

[00:35:20] know you all are a large board of a large system and in different superintendents and different boards have different philosophies about you know committees but even as I was tracking that time I would it was also including time spent on on committees and so even as a committee that may be focused on student achievement being able to elevate that back to the board as a whole so it's not just a subset of you that are focused on that but the board and the governance team as a can always find the opportunity to give focus to student outcomes is good for you and it's also

[00:35:57] good for your community. I admit that oftentimes we had board meetings. I'm in Norfolk. We had board meetings on Wednesday night and Thursday morning it was the desperate school board members of Norfolk was the community conversation. And so what we did in the boardroom could either have that conversation be centered around whatever it was that the public may have been focused on at the microphone or whatever disagreements we may have had with one another.

[00:36:34] Or it could be focused on, hey, did you see the growth in third grade literacy that occurred that they were discussing at the school board meeting. Anything else?

[00:36:52] Everybody still feeling good? Okay. Okay. Yeah, but Anne. I had just one more thing to add. I think that what we as a board do is to focus on what the students want and need.

[00:37:11] Need is not enough. You have to look at what they want. What do they want to do with their lives? How do they want to learn it? We're talking UDL here, in case people don't know what UDL is, universal design for learning, how you get input, information into the child, how the child gives it back to you in the manner that is comfortable for them.

[00:37:36] So it has to be not how the teacher wants to teach, but how the child wants to learn. So a lot of that is very important, and I think that this board is looking at things like that. What do they want to be? How much education do they want? How much education do they need to go in the career path they want?

[00:37:54] What will that education look like? So all of that is part of things that we are starting to look at here. As the new board. And I think as Rodney mentioned, his experience in Norfolk, you know, the newspaper would often pick up on what everyone spoke about at public comment, right?

[00:38:16] Or what one little, you know, nugget happened. And typically when people come up for public comment, what kind of things are they commenting about? Are they mainly operational issues probably? Mainly classroom issues, building issues, things like that.

[00:38:35] Are they coming up? Well, I guess that's a loaded question given the past five years. But no, yeah, maybe not. Because policy, you know, policy is boring, right? You know, I mean, policy, A, B, whatever, whatever, I want to complain about that. Although you guys have a community that probably would complain about that, which is a good thing.

[00:38:51] I think that's a great thing. But policies are how you govern and how you do that. The operations pieces are typically what people pick up the phone and call you and try to talk to you about or complain about or make comments about.

[00:39:06] And they have absolutely every right to do that. their representative but then what do you do with that information once you get it and then we're going to talk about that for a long time too but there's so many things where i've boards that will say we want to spend time on on policy we want to spend time on this but we just keep pulling getting pulled down into the weeds of the day-to-day operations because that's what your constituents care about they care about the day they care about the experience their child had yesterday or something that happened on the bus or something you know something that happened like that and so much of that should and could and probably is funneled through your superintendent because he's focused on the operations all day every day he's

[00:39:45] got to pay attention to you guys from a governance standpoint for pieces of it right but so much of the day-to-day is is through him and those those kind of pieces so so sometimes it's not necessarily your fault if you own we're not passing blame it at any point but you are getting pulled down into the weeds because that's where your constituency brings you that's where the conversations are not necessarily at the policy level sometimes at the especially in recent years policy level has made a made a difference and that's okay too because it always should have been right when you have public comment we go to travel we well i go to school board means

[00:40:21] rodney lived 12 years of them so he doesn't have to go to too many more but go to school board means and you walk in and you say you know look at the agenda and kind of prepare and you see the audience full okay what's going on what's happening and usually it's a an athletics issue or it's a it's an operational piece right people come make their public comments say their piece and then they leave and then the board does their work and you're working on policy and you're working on budget you're working on those kind of things so a lot of times this is just what's interesting to people what's what do they want to know about um and you know so it's just there's

[00:40:59] no right or wrong it's just just how it is if you said here's our policy manual study it and let me know if you have any questions to to parents they'd say no thank you you know i'm not i have kids i have to raise you know i have things i need to do i want you to fix this issue that happened yesterday on my bus right so and i usually use transportation as an example i'm no no shade to our transportation people at all my husband's in logistics so i try to pick on my transportation people as much as possible so um so no shade to buses i rode the bus every day of my life of my school life so

[00:41:35] no shade at all i promise so someone was going to say something yeah go ahead lauren i just wanted to like kind of affirm what you're saying and piggyback one of the biggest questions i get from when i'm out in the community is like oh my gosh you must get the craziest emails and i don't really like 95

percent are exactly what you're saying it's people that have real concerns about their kids or in the community or it's snow delays or you know whatever it may be that impacts their life and you know for me what I've we've sort of had to learn really fast what where to

[00:42:10] get the work done and how and those avenues and and so much of it is operational and coming from being in the operations as an educator that was an adjustment for me was sort of learning how to funnel that to being on the school board and I think that one of the things that people don't understand about school board is that we do all the policy we do all of that and that's at a very high level but we also are sort of the conduit of getting people what they need and that goes to the superintendent and the people behind me um who support us as well so i but i also think

[00:42:46] there's a lot of value in getting those concerns and being the conduit because you learn what supports are in place for those people and it the trends start to rise and so you start to see what maybe there might be something, you know, back to Samara's point that we need to reflect on, that we need to do better on, or that's going really well, although we don't get as many of those emails, but occasionally. So I do think that both roles are super important, and it's finding that balance. Sometimes I like this, and not in a bad way, that the Titanic sunk, but Mr. Bergen, Dr. Bergen, and I had this conversation yesterday. It's like, it is sort of like moving the Titanic

[00:43:23] at times and avoiding those icebergs and really making sure that you are but to move it in order not to hit it you have to have the foresight which means you have to have all the knowledge and so that's one of the things over the last year that in the fire hose of this job that it has been has been a learning curve for me and I think for a lot of us is just how do we become better at having that foresight and knowing the lane to take that work in while still doing our primary job which is supporting our constituents and our students.

[00:43:54] And that's a great point. And you will be learning, whether you're on the board for four years, whether you're on the board for 12 or 20, you'll be learning every day. So if you didn't join this board to not learn anything new, I'm sorry. You know, it's the wrong place to be because you will be learning things every single day about your community, about the system, about how things work, and then even a little bit, hopefully, about yourselves.

[00:44:20] How do I internalize? How do I do things? what do I do? And that's what makes strong board members is the willingness and the openness to learn and adjust and to learn as a team. You know, again, you guys are learning all of this together, trying to figure it out together. And that's where you either hit the iceberg or you figure out the way around it. If I can add, I feel like I'm a vessel for my, you know, my constituents in my district. So I feel like I have to kind of convey their message and see what can come to fruition for their goals but at the same time mine's a little the opposite I do get you know

[00:44:58] great emails but I also get emails from not even my district that are a little challenging so you know a little bit on the opposite of what Ms. Chernoff said so it's I get things that are more you know this is you know I an intersection for example like there's a problem at an intersection or we just had snow days so why do we have a snow day here there or fencing why do we have fencing here and i'm like i don't know that school but i'm like okay i'll get back to you so it's a little bit i feel like uh on the contrary i feel like a little bit of a vessel to try to you know um help

[00:45:31] them out so that their concerns are addressed absolutely and you guys are and i when i hear everyone everyone introduced themselves by their district and that's okay you guys are large you cover

your one of your districts is probably the size of five school divisions you know from other different places but i'll give you this talk no matter how big or small the board is or the the area is once you're on the school board once you're on this board all 200 school how many schools do you guys have 102 all so all hundred of your school that's it you only have all hundred of

[00:46:09] your schools are all of your schools right they might come from where you are they might be from your area or whatnot that's how you got to your position and that's how communication works just because that's had to work because you guys are so large you need that communication structure and I'm not just picking on you because you said this I was going to say this at some point too every 102 of your schools are all your schools not just the 30 or 20 or however many you have in your area so that's just a way to look at things yes that's how you're going to get the communication and that's fine I'm not going to argue against that because you you all have to

[00:46:46] have some sort of funneling process because otherwise it would be a 10 times full-time job for all of you if you got every single conversation or complaint or whatever or not but I would encourage you when you're doing school visits when you're doing those types of things go outside of your just your district because you need to know what's happening across the entire county much easier for me to sit here and suggest that but I would just encourage you as you get get further along in your tenure get to know your schools obviously but get to know all of your schools all 102 of them so just just be cognizant of that as we as we go across yeah i'll just

[00:47:24] piggyback on that and say absolutely um when you when you take a vote you're not just voting for your individual district the vote that you take impacts the the system the system as a whole so I think that's important. The other piece I'll just add, even as we talk about receiving emails or individuals that may come to the microphone or speak to you in the grocery store, when you're out campaigning, you try to knock on all the different doors that you identified of the people that you wanted to reach.

[00:47:59] And the number of individuals that voted in the election as a whole, I'm sure far outnumbered the, you know, if you're somebody like me who would send an email as a before I got on the board it would send an email every day so you may have known me Rodney Jordan because I sent you emails all the time but my brother or my friend or my neighbor on the block who is just busy taking care of of his household you know working with his child at night that person counts too and so it's important you all really represent uh the community you represent division you represent the values you're listening

[00:48:38] to the community. And even as you come together as non-individuals, it's ultimately what you do as a whole and how you vote and how you decide the expectations and the goals that you have for the division as a whole is what you're able then to articulate to the superintendent of this is what the Loudoun County community, the system as a whole, wants and desires for children, not just my district, not just my block, not just my friends, but you are representing that

[00:49:13] community as a whole. And so again, it's something that you always have to try to keep in the forefront of your mind that the value, you know, we asked the question why the school system exists, well, why do school boards exist? So the school boards have individuals who are able now from whatever backgrounds, whatever geographic representation that you bring to the board,

[00:49:37] Now, those values, those experiences, those geographical places that you represent, you now and the system now has the benefit of you coming and bringing all that wisdom and knowledge and experience and intelligence and exposure together to now, I think you all have one LCPS, I think I saw, to

be that one because you are taking several and brought them together as one to advance the school division as a whole.

[00:50:06] As a school board member, I'm just curious, did you guys share your districts by any chance, or was it one district per school board member? I know you're a team overall, and we all are a team here too, but did you share your districts aside from the at-large member?

[00:50:24] So in my particular case, we had seven school board members. We had five smaller districts, and then the city divided in half what they call super wards. So I was a representative of the Super Board. They had half the city. I think you're elected at large. So I had half the city. There was another school board member that had half the city. The other five were from smaller districts.

[00:50:52] But, again, I always saw the representing the city as a whole. If a parent had a concern or if a student needed something to advance their learning, I didn't say, well, you know, you're in the north side of the city. That's not my district.

[00:51:08] Go talk to somebody else. You know, the community, in some respects, recognizes you as their representative from the district. But then again, they will want to feel that they can come to anybody to bring their successes or concerns or challenges forward.

[00:51:27] With our, I mean, I think, I believe you guys know about the layout of ours. I know you know we have an at-large and then we have each for our district. However, we do overlap a little bit with our districts. Some schools have four school board members listed on their website and some schools have like just two overall we definitely have the at-large which is Ms. Donahue as for every one of our schools she's very popular yeah she's very popular but sometimes it could be quite challenging because

[00:52:01] some constituents even the ones I get that well that reach out to me that although we are a team and we do share the concerns of our constituents to each other and we address all of them, sometimes the challenging part is the constituent doesn't know which board member is my primary representative.

[00:52:21] So let me give you an example. Let's say I don't like an intersection somewhere, somewhere. And it's someplace far away from me and I don't know the logistics of it. So although I would address that concern and I would maybe even pass it on or maybe involve or tag someone in a dialogue or in an email thread.

[00:52:40] The challenging part is the person that reached out to the other school board member, to that main school board member that's not really knowing of that area, would find it a little challenging in a sense that, well, I don't know that area that well. I don't know the surroundings. I don't know the community in that area.

[00:52:58] However, I don't want to be labeled as I don't want to help. So that is some of the challenges that I don't speak from all my board members that I have at least and I've conveyed that to many of my colleagues here so you know that's why I asked that question if you guys shared and I'm glad to know that you had half the city you said half the county and the other which is pretty interesting yeah and I a couple of things one I appreciate you saying an I statement uh and I'll talk about that a little bit more in a moment but you know as as you were describing as I was listening to you describe the the situation that

[00:53:36] had part of what what we deal with as board members and is representing the community so there's thinking of your role as a board member from an owner's perspective so in essence you the the shareholders of loudon county have elected you to be their board you are there in the board role as a owner meaning that you are there to set the vision the values and the direction for the for the district, or you could get caught up in thinking as a customer. So if you have shares

[00:54:15] in McDonald's, when you go into McDonald's and you order food, or if you see that there's a problem, you're acting as a customer. What the challenge is, and what we often don't get focused on as board members, is our role as owner service. And so if you go to McDonald's and you seated, there is a problem in the bathroom, you don't necessarily go and immediately fix it.

[00:54:44] You pass it on to the manager, the person who's responsible. And I think part of what, as I've read through, and I'm sure we'll continue to talk about, is what does that look like for you? What does it look like for the superintendent? So as a board member, you are not trying to fix things that are really outside of your purview, but you are in a position to pass it on in whatever the communication process is for you to know that the concerns have been raised, have been passed on I think it was mentioned at the Titanic earlier, that the captain of the ship, who is your superintendent sitting here, that he's in a position to decide

[00:55:24] what to do based upon the information that's been provided so historically I think that here in Loudoun there has been a focus on territory kind of a thing Dulles, Algonquin, Ashburn, Broad Run, wherever, including also newsletters, like they only go to that district. You can put them on your Facebook page, but typically they only go to your district.

[00:55:58] So in looking at that more holistic view of a school board, and I guess this also comes into communications too, that I think, I guess we have coming up soon, maybe. communications, what happens when something comes to the full board? What happens when something comes from, like, the reason why we have the people on the website is because they have special permission to be there. And because they have special permission, the kids, the students have

[00:56:37] special permission to be there, then that school board member who is that district is put on that website. So it goes to where the child lives. Yes. And then if you live, if they live in the broad run district but they're in a school that's in the algonquin district then dr deans is on that school board yes on that's on that web page okay okay i know it seems a little nitty-gritty but sometimes yeah well that's unique too because it's because if i'm a parent and i don't know who what kids live out of district you know or any of that kind of stuff i'm going to see dr

[00:57:13] deans and miss chandler on it i'm probably going to call them both and it's like oh i don't you know that's that school's 50 miles from me I don't you know I don't that's not part that is an interesting I don't know that I've ever seen a school division put individual board members on a school website usually it links out to all school board members you know to all nine of you just because I live in Augusta County I've never served on the school board in Augusta County I am on a county commission we're chosen by our districts very similar to you guys we have seven districts but we only have five high schools and so this and then of course the feeder

[00:57:53] schools so each district kind of shared mine mine only has one high school but some will share high schools based on the population etc etc most people don't know what district they live in in Augusta County they don't they know what high school they go to but they don't know if they're in the Wayne or if

they're in the Beverly Manor if in there whatever so everyone is listed on everything and I guess it's pretty I mean we've got 11,000 students so it's a bigger school system not however not 100 however many you guys have 90,000 80,000 okay so you're eight times the size of Augusta but still the process if you have a concern you you let the whole school board know

[00:58:32] now with 80,000 that might not be possible but I do find it unique that if there's one child in that school then all of a sudden that means there's another school board member who's over over that school. So is there, and it's hard, no one's been here longer than three years, so I'm curious the history of that or why it was that way.

[00:58:56] Yes, Karen. One of the things that I was going to add, I don't have an answer to that because I've been here in the county for 30 years, and I don't know the answer. But what I do know that has gone on for a long time is that Eastern and Western Loudoun are very, very geographically different.

[00:59:19] I get letters from people complaining, why are we closing schools? The streets are cleared. And then I get letters from people saying, you're sending our kids to school. We have four-foot drifts. We can't keep the roads open all on the same day because geographically we get different weather.

[00:59:39] But one of the reasons that you see more than one person is not just because they have a special permission to go to a different school their name comes up and it's just automatically sent to them but a lot of our names are on different school sites because we share districts for example we have I'm from Western Loudoun there are three high schools in my district within the bounds yet some of the people that live in the southern portion

[01:00:16] of my district are technically living in an area and go to a high school that Sumera serves. And so Sumera and I share those high schools together where the children are.

[01:00:33] I share with Lauren because we have kids at middle school, not the elementary, but the middle school that are from both our districts because they line up right along Route 15, and that's where the people live. So a lot of the sharing comes because you live so closely that the district, the school district, overlaps, but the schools are not necessarily in your district, but your kids go there anyway. Yeah, and I think that's unique. So what if you have an elementary schooler and a middle schooler? Lauren, that's your story, right? So you might have some school board members for your elementary school and then different school board members for

[01:01:12] your middle school, right? Is that what I'm hearing? So we actually share them. They overlay, yeah. So So I don't know, it's just unique. I'm not here to tell you anything's wrong by any means. I'm just wondering about communication's sake, like communication. I mean, emails, we get a lot of emails, of course.

[01:01:31] And so who's going to be on point for those? So I have a question for you as I'm listening to you. So what I've heard you say is that there's websites and school websites, on the school websites board members names are listed there as a contact is that correct so would that be in the case why I mean what what is the board's

[01:02:05] role that if someone goes to five Dr. Spence used to be in Virginia Beach I grew up in Virginia Beach I went to Kingston Elementary School in Virginia Beach so what role would a board member have if if somebody went to the kingston elementary school website and had an issue that say needed to be dealt

with in the classroom or at the principal level or at the I don't know how the organizational structure is here in terms of deputy superintendents and

[01:02:38] so forth why is the school board members name or contact there and what is it as a school board member you feel that you are responsible or obligated to do because your name is on that individual school site I don't have an answer to your first question because I mean my name is on all the websites right because I'm the at-large but I've wondered the same thing because I agree with something you said earlier which is that yes we're not me my colleagues are elected from individual districts and so I understand

[01:03:18] prioritizing the needs of their district first but now that we're all on the board I view the responsibility of all of us is to represent all the students in the county wherever they are so I've also thought it's kind of curious that the schools put on their individual websites the names of the members who represent the districts from which their students come my children go to Lauren's my I live in Sumera's district but my children go to Lauren's a school in Lauren's

[01:03:53] district because the lines are weird um but i i mean generally when i uh you know i get questions from the community you know complaints you know raising of issues um i mean generally my i feel like my obligation is to do something to investigate it whether that's just sending it to the chief of staff and saying is staff aware that this situation is happening or you know reaching out to dr spence or a member of the cabinet to say, I've had a concern reported about X issue.

[01:04:27] I would like some more information about how do we handle these types of situations. And then depending on what information I get back kind of going from there, like would it be appropriate of me to have a conversation directly with the person who reached out to me or would it be more appropriate to say, have this conversation with your principal or have this conversation with someone else.

[01:04:48] But I, you know, I do view my, as we know, our job is not to deal with the day-to-day operations of the division, but I do think part of our job is understanding what's going on and to the extent that if our constituents are saying something isn't, something is happening in a school that is not in accordance with our policies and procedures, I do think it's our role to follow up on that and investigate if there's any validity to those complaints and then follow up appropriately.

[01:05:29] And I was going to say something and I trailed off, lost my train of thought. Anyway, thank you. I just wanted to ask Samantha, Dr. Spence, do you have any thought on this? Is there some particular operational or some value that you see in this particular piece?

[01:05:47] Well, I mean, I think in general, I think the board corporate is responsible for the entire division. And I think that any board member who is thinking about what's happening operationally across the division shouldn't be thinking about that kind of relegated to, you kind of said it earlier.

[01:06:07] I mean, this is my opinion. You shouldn't be thinking about that only relative to kind of their perspective and their experiences or their district or their neighbors, right? It's like, how does this impact all of the kids in the division? Sort of what Ms. LaBelle was talking about. She gets calls about how can we be going to school when we've got snow drifts when the decision is division-wide.

[01:06:27] Similarly, when Ashburn is calling and saying, why are we not going to school where there's no snow here? And so I think that's kind of just the classic example of understanding that it's a division

decision and the board is working for the division. But then also recognizing you want to be responsive to your constituents.

[01:06:45] And so then the transfer there as a part of the governing team is then we're open to making sure folks are aware both of the division level operational priorities and then also responding to their constituent concerns. Is there any reason why all, like there's only three school board members listed on a certain school's website?

[01:07:07] Is there any historical reason? Yeah, that has to be historical. That was not, that's something we inherited. Yeah, of course. And we haven't really discussed until now. Yeah. Did you have an at-large member? I was just curious. What was their role?

[01:07:24] So as a super ward, that was the closest to at-large that we had, half the city, versus we could have had seven individual districts. But the super ward overlapped. So we had seven. I was in super ward seven. And within super ward seven was all of ward three, all of ward four, and part of ward two.

[01:07:43] So I did have that that overlap. But I will tell you that anytime somebody would come to me and say my schools, I would say they're all my schools. And at one point, I think the the clerk or someone in the administration started listing the schools by by our district.

[01:08:07] And I objected and I said, if you're going to do that, then I want to make sure all the schools are listed. Because, again, I'm making decisions for every child, every school, impacting the division as a whole. And at least for me, I thought it was important to try to break down the silos that I know we had in our city where the west was one thing and the east side was another thing and it was always this constant thing.

[01:08:34] But again, if as the board member, if we're supposed to be systems thinkers, then I think we have also a responsibility to educate our community as to why it is, yes, you elected me from this particular district. I represent the district as a whole.

[01:08:52] And so it's not as simple as, well, you know, Rodney, you need to just take care of, you know, your district. Yes, I'm here. I'm representing you. I'm hearing. I'm listening to you. I'm representing what you're saying at the, what I hear from you and the values that you put forward at the table, but ultimately seven or nine or 13, whatever it is, we have to make decisions for the division as a, as a whole.

[01:09:20] I mean, I just see like, when I see us, I see us when, with these concepts and I appreciate that you shared that, but then I see it as, why don't we all be at large? Cause if, I mean, then why do we have districts? Then why do we vote? Wait, like, I mean, I like, you know, like everything just keeps, it just keeps coming. So I just don't understand it anymore.

[01:09:38] Like, I understand we're a team, and I understand we, you know, we acknowledge all the constituents, and we address their concerns. But in the end of the day, that causes a little bit of a confusion where you just heard from many of my members here that just said to you, you know, someone's getting accolades and someone else is not getting accolades.

[01:09:56] We're opening up a new school. You know, the principal there is like, which board member do I contact? I don't know. Again, I don't speak for everyone here. I'm speaking for myself, but I think I get affected a lot because I have 42 schools under my name, and that's a lot, and I'm no super or anything like that, so I just want to let you know that.

[01:10:18] I will say that's unique, not the ward system. That's not unique because a lot have that, and a lot of it comes into representation on making sure that the whole county is represented because if you did all at large, it might all come just from one area, you know, whatever.

[01:10:34] I mean, there's historical things about that. But there are some school divisions that everyone is at large or, you know, and that's just how it is. So I think a lot of it comes into play, especially with the high schools I see the most because it's you kind of have the ownership of the high school and the this and the that and the other.

[01:10:52] But right, 42, that's almost half of all of your school, all of your schools that your name is tied to. So I don't know, if I was making suggestions, you know, my suggestion would be, why isn't everyone not listed on every website or whatnot?

[01:11:08] And then you could always do a little link that says, wondering who your representative is, and then you can send them back to where they're voting, you know, who they vote for. Because you could argue that who they vote for is truly who their representative is, not necessarily where the school lies.

[01:11:25] So it's confusing. Yeah, I mean, if I was a parent, I'd be like, well, what? I live here, I vote here, I do this, and who am I supposed to call? But you want to be accessible, and you want to make sure that's available. April. I very much hear what you're saying, and I want to say yes, and.

[01:11:41] Yes, and. And when I think about my service to this community, I think about the 82,000 students, and I think they're all my students. They're all my kids. I'm thinking about it in those terms. But when it comes to accountability, right, I understand that I was elected to serve 55,000 people who live in Algonquian District.

[01:12:06] That's who I'm accountable to. And unlike Samara, I have 20 schools. That's just how it shakes out. But this is such a large area, and it is such a diverse community. And that's geographically diverse.

[01:12:24] It's ethnically diverse. It's religiously diverse. And our task here together is to look out for the needs of everyone. And in that sense, it's my responsibility to understand the perspectives of the people who live in my community and bring those to the table.

[01:12:41] But that's not to say that I'm not going to think about what's good for Loudoun as a whole. But it is important that we have the ability to take all of those divergent perspectives and bring it back and make, through this entity together, one LCPS.

[01:13:02] But it's really hard to consider, right? Like, from a logistics standpoint, it's not that helpful if somebody from Middleburg calls me. I live in the furthest, like, most eastern, northeastern part of the county, right? So it's just a – honestly, I think if we're committed to having that high-level viewpoint, having it broken down as it is, it's just logistics.

[01:13:30] It just helps people understand, right, who do they contact for service. And then it's just a matter of making sure that we're responsible to our community and can help them connect to the right pieces because we probably understand that better. I'm not sure that everybody who lives in Algonquian District knows they live in Algonquian District, right?

[01:13:49] but where do you vote okay this yeah okay that that's the district you're in you know that's how you do it all those links exist right yes it doesn't mean that's where your kids go to school so yeah and sometimes you knock on a door and then they say i vote there and you say yes you do surprise right like

see you in november i agree with april i i think as a means of just management it's super helpful and i do think this board does a good job i've heard multiple people say like the people in my district are feeling this way let's put that up against the bigger picture and i i do

[01:14:25] think this year i have heard that a lot um and logistically it is easy to manage and i think kind of going back to one of the things you said earlier is like people want to get dinner on the table they want to get their kids to school they want to make sure that you know they can pay for their groceries and do all the things and you know they're dealing with all the things so i think knowing who that one person is that is most centralized to them is actually more beneficial in that sense um and then it is our responsibility to carry that bigger lens that you know in some sense we are all at large i'm not trying to take your role believe me um but i i you know i think

[01:15:05] there is a balance there so when there is you get thrown into a sea of like here's all the school board members i i feel like that might distance us from our constituents in a sense just to play devil's advocate because we are elected by our districts and then even knowing who we are sometimes is a challenge so i would challenge that a bit and you know i think the communication piece is something we we should talk about more and and circle back on about who responds when and when and you know it's just it's a lot yeah so um regarding we were talking about the snow

[01:15:41] how one area uh was affected and another wasn't my area was not affected as much so we were looking at uh four days uh for the kids not doing any schoolwork so that was a real problem for the people in my area so um we're here uh the school board is here uh to you know to help in the facilitation of um certain issues where as far as you know maybe kids should have been doing school work from home in those four days we didn't know I guess we didn't know they'd be home at that that

[01:16:17] length of time but we are here to get those questions get those suggestions and for my particular area where I felt like I was involved and maybe I can share with the superintendent was we should have a backup plan in place where our kids are not missing out on education for four um because we didn't know exactly if kids were going to go back every day there was a question are they going back this area has ice my area had nothing you know so um it's a constant question and then we had the two-hour delays so when you have the two-hour delays you're also missing

[01:16:55] part of the school day as well so i think in as a school board member when i saw that um you know all that uh coming together with like four days off automatically i'm thinking my role is maybe make a suggestion we have a backup plan in place for our students if that happens in the future.

[01:17:13] I don't know if that's going to happen again. I hope it doesn't, but we should have backup plans. I mean, we were home for COVID for a long time, and kids were doing schoolwork from home, so there should be backup plans where kids could still get their assignments and continue to get their education. Thank you. And I think with that suggestion, I'm just asking, what did you do with that suggestion? Or will you just, is this the first time you've mentioned it? I've mentioned it to Superintendent Spence. Perfect. No, that's great. But now everybody knows it may come out in

[01:17:47] one of our digests, you know, that it went to, I was asking that question, but I do believe backup plans should be in place for not just snow, for any disaster that could happen. We could have hurricanes, you know, whatever it is, we should always have backup plans because now we have the technology to support it. So I'm only referencing this because my area wasn't as bad as Miss LaBelle's was. And I saw those emails where people were like, oh my gosh, the ice, the snow. And I'm like,

[01:18:23] uh-oh, you know, it's clear over here. I didn't, you know. So, and then I had parents in my area coming to me why aren't these kids back in school why is my son home for four days and he's not doing school work so there's you know even though it's a it's a huge area we are thinking about we should be thinking about the whole county in in regards to something a situation like that thank you i uh i i appreciate that and i've um you know i definitely heard you say about the the backup

[01:18:57] plan. One of the things that, um, as I'm, as I'm listening and pondering and I'm remembering me in your seat. And, uh, so one, one thing that popped into my head as we're having this conversation is how much the conversation is about managing versus governing. And I think that's something that, uh, we'll, you know, we'll continue to reinforce, you know, again, and you all have the responsibility and the opportunity to govern.

[01:19:30] You're obviously representing, you're elected to represent your districts. What it means to serve that from a, forgive me for saying it this way, from a politician's perspective is very different. When we manage our campaigns and we're providing constituent services, can be very different than when we're governing as a team as a whole and you have a superintendent and all these wonderful qualified staff people that I bet probably have three or four different systems.

[01:20:06] So that governance piece is something that I know I was always challenged with, and it just has to be something that you practice and really have these conversations about what makes sense for this board and this superintendent that allows you all to govern in the way that you want to govern for your for the outcomes that you talked about earlier and for the superintendent to be able to manage what he feels he should be able to manage based upon the goals that you've set but that communication is important because there could be things that

[01:20:43] are brought forward that that that have not been considered um the other thing i just wanted to mention so one of the things i in some of the consulting i'm doing with the vsba i'm looking at all the district data, you know, across the Commonwealth. Dr. Spence used to serve on a task force that I supported with the VSBA. And we would look at all this different data.

[01:21:12] And when I was looking at some of the Loudoun County data, I was fascinated by at least the way it was reported. When you look at the so-called racial gap in reading, how you all were very much at the top of the of the commonwealth in terms of the uh how small your your racial gap was then when i looked at the by uh poverty or by student economic status the gap was was much

[01:21:51] larger and so as we're as we talk about what is it that you want for for students i don't know if you if if that's something that that that you all would give focus and attention to where you would be able to say express that this is an area that you feel in terms of your student outcomes you want to address and then in doing so you are sharing with the superintendent that's what your collective will is and now that superintendent and your superintendent is in a position to come

[01:22:25] back to you and say here's the plan for doing that over the next three to five years and then the conversation, as I mentioned earlier about what we spend our time on, then all this conversation that we're having, which is good and important conversation, could be about how are we dealing with closing these gaps that we have as a system or even down to your district, which can be at a governance place.

[01:22:55] And I just think that's the constant pull that we deal with, being able to communicate back to our constituents how we're governing versus, at least what I used to do, want to be the hero and say to the

constituent, oh, yeah, I can go fix it. But if I can't fix it, school board, individual school board members can't fix it. And so we are, you know, there's this common pretending that is easy for us to do into because everybody wants to look good. And so we have to

[01:23:30] constantly be able to remind ourselves that we can focus on I can focus on me and so I can look good because I got Miss Jones problem solved or I can truly have you know system-wide impact to say that as a result of us working together as a team and set a goal to focus on our advanced placement whatever it is that we say that we value or the community values or wants for our students that that's where we can have have have real impact so I just wanted to raise that because it's going to be easy to constantly get into the conversation around how we are oriented around

[01:24:08] I'm going to manage and fix it. Nobody runs for the school board, and we all have egos. We all have egos, and we always feel that we go out and knock on doors and say, I'm going to fix a problem. But then when we get here, we have to be able to shift to I'm one of nine, I'm governing as a whole, and I'm going to govern it at that systems level. Rodney, I think something that's hard for, You know, we want to, like you said, people want to fix it, but it does take three to five years to see any progress of any sort from something that you've put into place.

[01:24:44] And that's a hard, some of us won't even be here five, you know, five, six years away. You know, it's a hard thing to put something in place now to predict that it, to make it go forward later. Absolutely.

[01:24:59] So let's do a quick break for lunch. Lunch is here, but I want to keep this conversation going, and I want to make sure that we talk about, get some kind of finality. We're not going to make any decisions here. You know, you're not voting on anything, but if we want to talk about the communication, we'll continue to talk about communication throughout the rest of the time, but if there's a question listed on the website, whatever you guys want to do, that way we have some opinions on that.

[01:25:25] So lunch is here. I'm not sure where here is, but it's here. You guys probably know better than we do, so go ahead and break for lunch. Let's take about a 10-minute off-mic break, you know, just to step away, and then we'll come back, and then you guys can continue eating.

[01:25:38] while we continue talking does that work for everybody okay yeah okay perfect all right

[01:41:00] another minute or two and then we'll come back and and get started again you guys you guys are talking about stanton that's that's my town they're talking about stanton trying to listen

[01:41:35] see if they're saying anything bad wait who no who dwight oh fudruckers We don't have a Fudruckers.

[01:41:53] Like the burger place? No, I wish. Fredericksburg used to have a Fudruckers when I was in college. Carrie, do you have family in Stanton?

[01:42:09] Do you have family in Stanton or are you just talking about? Oh, food in Stanton, yes. Oh, I didn't realize that. Okay. I still live in Augusta County. Okay, is everybody back?

[01:42:29] Oh, we've lost. He may have just stepped out for a second. So I'm going to put this on the board and then we'll start officially when when Arvin gets back so what are three roles so we've talked about a lot of these we've talked about roles and responsibilities we've talked about communicate you know we talked about a lot of these things through the conversation but I want to go through get through a few of these pieces what is the difference between the board's role and the superintendent's role and then if you can if

you if you would like to kind of classify it if you will what are three responsibilities of the school board and then three distinct

[01:43:04] responsibilities of the superintendents we all know superintendents operations that was an easy one yeah of the superintendent so let's break that down into three things so you've got oversight and you've got operations right so that's that answers the first question what are those three main responsibilities of the board and there's actually a fourth and i'm going to see who gets extra credit

[01:43:41] to find the fourth so what are what's one one main responsibility big buckets yeah go ahead care policymaking policymaking bingo i think i heard the other one over here somebody said something or did you say policy okay policy's good what else holding that guy accountable yep we call that retention of the superintendent but retaining hiring evaluating all of those pieces

[01:44:17] right did we say budget budget there we go and i hadn't heard that one yet that's kind of a big one right so and then what's my extra credit fourth one I think we're supposed to also do it for ourselves too the evaluation of ourselves as well about yep that's well that's one of those kind of best practices you don't have to do that by law but there are a number of boards that do choose to do a self-evaluation absolutely what's my extra credit number four what was it Rodney's

[01:44:51] mentioned it a couple times because he would argue that that's number one the make achievement of the students student achievement well yeah that's that's you're right safety how about instructional oversight instructional oversight that's that usually falls under policy because you all set the instructional policies and then the superintendent oversees that the policies and the academics are taking care of but I'm I'm looking at the board looking at metrics and saying this is up to par this is not do something we need to do something data

[01:45:28] Data-driven decision-making, that was all of the buzzwords a few years ago. That's a piece, I think that falls under, I mean, really it falls under policy, too, because what are your policies that come in, too? So that's kind of how you get there, but what are some bigger pieces?

[01:45:46] And actually, that could fall under the words I'm looking forward to. Strategic vision? Yes, strategic planning, vision, mission, goals, those pieces. If one of your goals is to have strong student achievement, how do you do that?

[01:46:01] You look at the data, right? So that kind of gets into the how. So, yeah, so you guys are setting that big picture strategic planning of the school division. You all say, and I use this as an example. I used to use, sometimes my examples put my foot in my mouth because it's an issue, you know.

[01:46:18] And so I've tried to find an example that's universally not offensive. So I've stuck with building a rocket ship. Does that offend anyone? Let me just check. Okay. All right. So if the school division, if nine of you decided you wanted Loudoun County Schools to build a rocket ship, could you do it?

[01:46:38] If nine of you voted and said, we want to build a rocket ship. Yes. Right? You all are setting the vision. If we pass that policy and we. Yeah. If we don't have the money, if we don't have the money, it's highly unlikely. But you could pull the money from other places. You all, the nine of you could make the decision to build a rocket ship and then the superintendent.

[01:46:57] He has to figure out how to do it. Yeah, he's got to figure out how to do it, right? And then where are we going to get the money? What's going to happen? You deal with the community ramifications. But if

the nine of you said, I want to build a rocket ship, it could get done. I'm not saying it will be, but you all set that vision and mission. And if you say this is the vision of Loudoun County Schools is to build a rocket ship, that's up to you guys to make that decision.

[01:47:18] Maybe we can cost that out in our budget packet. Yeah, yeah. I mean, you would do all the things. You'd have to hire staff who are familiar with building rocket ships. You know, there's different pieces, but if you guys wanted to do that, you could. I am not here saying that you should. Please don't. But I usually use examples that everyone gets upset about.

[01:47:36] So let's stick with that. So if your vision is to build a rocket ship, you all then put into place the budget piece. You put in the policies around the rocket ship. Who's, you know, where, how is it going to be built, et cetera, et cetera. Then you hire someone. Maybe it's a superintendent. Maybe it's a rocket scientist, you know, to do that.

[01:47:54] And how does that get done? You all set that vision. You set that where do you want to go, where do you want to be? And then all of the other ways of how you get there comes up with that's that you're reviewing data, you're doing this, you're doing that, et cetera, et cetera. And then the superintendent does the operations.

[01:48:11] So he does everything else, right? He makes sure he deals with the day-to-day. He's working with his central office staff. He's working with the principals. You know, he's handling all of those pieces. How many employees does the school board have?

[01:48:27] One. And who's that? Superintendent. I heard a but. But we also have the ombudsman, the auditor, and Mr. Allen over there.

[01:48:43] Okay, awesome. So typically you have the one, you have the superintendent, and then you guys, I know, and some will argue and say, well, we also hire the school board attorney. Some school boards, the clerk reports directly to the school board. It's all a little different, but typically it's you have the one, you have the superintendent, and then he has everyone else that falls under him, right?

[01:49:05] And so when we think about, we haven't really talked about power and authority at all, and I don't know that we're going to get to it. When you think about giving direction or asking questions or making comments or doing all of those pieces, those should be going through your superintendent.

[01:49:21] I realize you have a chief of staff also who does a lot of board stuff too, but it's ultimately, he reports, who does your chief of staff report to? Superintendent. So ultimately everything's going to the superintendent. The superintendent has just said, hey, work with the chief of staff on this.

[01:49:37] Or, hey, work with the clerk on this, et cetera, et cetera. But all of that's coming through the superintendent. And then here are the four just to prove to you I didn't just make them up. So you're doing the planning. You're doing the goal setting. I actually, at Rodney's request, I moved that one to the top for the slideshow.

[01:49:55] You're approving those. You want to build a rocket ship. Here you go. Here's our rocket ship. You all set the policies around that. You designate who your CEO is, who your superintendent is. You recruit, hire, evaluate, et cetera, for your superintendent, and then you, of course, approve and adopt the budget.

[01:50:14] Those are the big bucket pieces that you do. How do you do these? There's a lot of other steps that get there, and I think I took that slide out for a base of time. Oh, my goodness. There we go. But how do you do that?

[01:50:29] You're reviewing the data. You're talking with your constituents. You're gathering information. You're attending school board meetings. You're reading up on information, et cetera, et cetera. you're doing all those things I've had some people look at it and say that's all we do well if this is all you do you're pretty busy right if this is all you're focused on that can take up 10 times the time that you know really really you have to dedicate to this group any questions or thoughts on these kind of basic basic roles if you will roles and duties one thing I always say is it's

[01:51:08] when you get kind of to the nitty gritty on is this a board role is this a superintendent's role think about are you paying someone in the school division to do this job that you're about to do are you paying someone in the school division to mow the lawn at the elementary school and you're about to go get your mower out and go mow the lawn at the elementary school it's taxpayer money so we all pay for it okay sure so the school absolutely but the school division has someone on payroll who's doing that right so then the board really should not be doing that because

[01:51:44] there's someone else who's been hired to do that job does that make sense so if if you say i want to see this is where my examples get me in trouble um let's say you want to investigate the route of a school bus is there a transportation person over there that i'm picking on yes where oh thank you thank you for the work that you do so let's say if I a parent calls me and I had a school board member argue with me about this on last week so please I'm ready if someone says hey my kid's bus

[01:52:22] route just doesn't make sense they're making 20 circles whatever whatever and I'm a school board member and I go out and follow that bus to see what the route is doing right should I be doing that. No. What should I be doing with that information? Contacting your transportation guy who's going to probably, he can look it out on the map or he might go and follow the bus. Maybe the driver missed a turn 10 days in a row or so. You know, who knows what happened. But you're right. It's not you that are following the bus. It's he and his staff that are trying to figure out how to do that. And I had a board member sit right, not here, but wherever we were. And she

[01:52:59] said, no, I go out and follow the bus. I said, no, don't do that. You know, there are many reasons why but you have someone who can do that or who should be doing that for you now if you find that all the bus routes everyone makes 10,000 circles maybe that's a common issue like you said earlier maybe that is a common issue maybe something's happening and maybe that does need to be brought to the broader attention who set up these bus routes what's going on you know what's happening right and that's where having that that ear of your constituency is important because if you start to see trends across your area, across the district, then that does become an issue. That is

[01:53:39] a bigger thing that might come in front of the board. But if it's a one-off and you've got something, you're not the one out there investigating it, doing the work for it. You've got staff who are there that can do that for you. Does that make sense? And again, thank you for the opportunity to pick on the bus routes because they're hard. I listen to my husband on his phone calls. I'm like, what how do you do like i don't understand any of these words you're using so it's important work but it's also something that affects most of your kids right when they ride the bus and that that's a big piece so there's another way to look at this the macro versus the micro who's the macro in this

[01:54:18] relationship the board which means the superintendent's the micro right so the board's looking at the policy the goals the board's looking at accountability the board is the community leader you guys are an extra nine set of eyes and ears for your superintendent out in the community The superintendent is coming up.

[01:54:36] He's overseeing the staff. He's dealing with the operations. He's that educational leader. And I appreciate those of you who had said, hey, I'm an educator. I've done this, I've done that, and I've done that. That's wonderful. But when you get on this board, you're no longer, you know, you have that background, but you're not that educational leader.

[01:54:54] You are in the governance role. And a lot of times for my educators, that's hard. Lauren, I think you shared that earlier, and thank you for sharing that, because you're so used to being in the day-to-day. You're so used to having a parent call you and you can fix their problem right away because you're the teacher, you know, or you're the principal or you're the special ed teacher or whatever.

[01:55:13] You can fix that. But at this level, you've got to bring yourself up to that governance role and then let somebody else take care of it. And I would also say no matter what you do, if you're an accountant, if you're a dentist, if you're, you know, you're not out there giving dental advice to your, you know, your staff and students, right?

[01:55:33] Now if you're doing a volunteer work, you know, go for it. But think about what you do as your day-to-day work is not your job on this board. And I say that because I've had a board member, this was a few years ago, who was an attorney.

[01:55:48] Is anyone an attorney on this board? So I'm happy that I don't see any law books at your seat, right? Because there was a school board member that's, I know, they don't even publish the big ones anymore, do they? We used to get them in our office.

[01:56:04] Anyway, they would bring that big LexisNexis Virginia school law book, and that board member thought they were meant to be the attorney for the board. And I know on some nonprofit boards, they do try to hire an accountant, an attorney, and a whatever, whatever.

[01:56:21] But on this school board, that's not how that works. You have a board attorney to do the attorney work. You have someone to do your accountant work. Yes, you're going to bring your background, and Ann's probably going to, you know, Her ears are going to get up a little bit if you all start talking about lawsuits and start talking about other things, because that's the world in which she lives.

[01:56:38] But she's not your board's representative. She's not your board's attorney. She just happens to be an attorney while she's on this board, right? Any comments or questions or thoughts around that? And I think, Lauren, I may have asked you if you were a current educator, you know, if you were working somewhere else, because when you are in a system, like let's say you went and you were working in Fairfax, you're living here, you're on the board.

[01:57:06] That makes it even harder to delineate because you're seeing the things and your real timing. Oh, we just had to deal with this in my school. Is this going to come up in Loudoun? How does this work? You know, so it's even harder to make that separation.

[01:57:22] So, yes, please. I'm so glad you're pointing all of this out because we had a previous board member when we did training. He discussed, he was in business and he did say that a lot of the

disagreements you would have on this school board is you have the business people and you have the educators.

[01:57:45] It's completely different worlds, two different worlds. So the fact that you're bringing that up and making that point is the point I would like to make, that some of us are educators and some of us are not. So we operate in a different way.

[01:58:01] and and that needs to uh be understood um so thank you so much and if you have any more to add to that piece why there might not be a full collaboration because there's a different thought process that would be great thank you and I think I would take that even a step further not necessarily your profession you know but just who you are you know I know some business people who are totally different personalities and totally different skill sets and educators and like you know vice versa this is the world of education and so we find ourselves using acronyms and I think

[01:58:37] Carrie used an acronym earlier and I didn't know what it was so I'm I'm happy that you shared it because I just was going to smile and nod because I had no idea what you were saying so in the world of education and the world of business any world I'm sure dentists have their own acronyms you know when you're in the world that we're in you want to make sure that it's accessible to everyone you want to make sure that if and this is often a challenge with your superintendent and staff because they can talk acronyms all day in their offices right but when they come to the board they really shouldn't be using those acronyms unless they've taught you what the acronyms are

[01:59:12] sols everybody knows what sol stands for although when my dad heard the words sol when they came out that meant a lot different you know 20 years ago then or however many years it was when sols came out um but that we that was kind of a joke in my family um he was like you're taken what that's not what we you know that's not what I call it anyway so there's some acronyms that have been generally accessible but you're right there's different people think different ways but the the role of this the 10 of you is to bridge those gaps and to really find a common language between you all

[01:59:47] and I would just caution and I'm sure your superintendent and his staff have been told you know don't use all these educational acronyms we've got to get you know we've got to just lay it out lay it out in layman's terms and that's not saying that you're not capable of learning the acronyms but think about it you also have your audience who comes you have your parents you have your students who are in the room you want to make sure that the information the conversations that you're having are accessible to anyone who's listening yes but I do think that

[02:00:20] our experiences um can help uh not just on the board but um my grandbabies are down in fairfax and i talk to the to the teaching and learning people we don't do that do we because um her advanced geometry is taught totally online and with math you got to turn those angles to figure it out and Mr. Slevin was very happy for me to talk with him so they are very receptive in

[02:01:00] listening to that background information that we come up with absolutely and that makes us smile and your experiences matter so much because your experiences are who you are what you're living and what your grandbabies are living is who you are especially moving here all the way from Goldsboro to do that you know that's who you are and that's your experience and as a teacher we taught this way in Fairfax, we teach this way in Loudon, it's different, you know, and that's the benefit of having 131 different school divisions, that they are different, you know, there should be some similarities, but there's a lot of

differences, but what you come as a business person, what you come as an accountant, what you come as a dentist, what you come in as a retired special

[02:01:40] ed teacher, what you come in as a lawyer, that matters, and that's who you are, and that shapes your values, that shapes your experience, that shapes your expertise, and that also probably shapes your interests on the board too because you might perk up if something else is happening you know if anyone's really big into like cte or really big into band you know i was a band dork you know and i loved it it was wonderful and so anytime i hear someone talk about band i'm gonna okay i'm gonna sit up a little straighter and make sure oh you know and you know that language but you're passionate about different things because of who you are and there's nothing wrong with that nothing wrong with that at all but it's appreciating and understanding each other's

[02:02:19] passions that takes you to that next level that takes you to that we're not just nine people we're not just 10 people we're now a governance team where we can understand where each other comes from and that takes time you guys have been together 13 months it takes some time but it takes deliberate time and doing things like this doing things that you can really kind of break down and get to know each other a little bit can only help hopefully any thoughts yes you mentioned getting to know each other but um we're kind of staggered in in when our terms end and begin

[02:02:56] so you had mentioned i think a year a little over a year that it may even take even longer to get to know each other sometimes that can be challenging because by the time you get to know each other you know then you have to rerun i guess or hopefully you win and you you know you go on your next term it's hard and it's you guys all come up at once right oh this was the first oh Oh, okay. And I'm okay with that because all at once is hard, but they're staggered. I have a couple of school boards in the state based on how it's staggered every single year, they could have

[02:03:32] a new board member. And that's, that is a challenge. And, and that, that's not to say that they will, but if somebody decides not to run or if they don't get elected every single year, they could have a new board member. Think how that superintendent feels, you know, that's, that's a challenge so you're right and and also the the act of what you do you have to do in public you know it's hard to have let me tell you about my childhood you know when you've got 40 people watching you know but it's it's that not I'm acknowledging the challenge of it but also saying

[02:04:03] it's not impossible too so yeah another challenge is the fact that our terms run January to December and school divisions have school terms, September to June or August to June.

[02:04:20] And I think that that's a mismatch as well in terms of trying to get things passed that will impact the kids. By the time you get it through in January, school is out in June, you can't get back to it until August.

[02:04:37] And I think that that's another mismatch. And that adds to that three to five years that it takes to really get anything done or to see the fruits of your labor, if you will, because everything takes time. And, I mean, I know many of you are probably familiar with how, you know, government work, you know, because it just takes time to do anything, right?

[02:04:58] And it's always interesting when there's members of a board who are maybe their own business owner or they can make their own decisions and they don't have to go to a board or they don't have to wait

for the government or they don't have to do all that. They're used to getting things done tomorrow and seeing the results the next day.

[02:05:13] And then when you get on that school board, that's not how it works. You know, you might want to get it done. The superintendent might want to get it done. The world might want to get it done, but it's just going to take time. And that's frustrating. I mean, I don't know any other way to describe it. It's frustrating. So, because you, I mean, Rodney was so gung-ho when he was a brand new boy.

[02:05:31] I remember he came on ready to change the world, ready to make all the things happen. And then guess what? Had to wait a little while. You want me to chime in? I mean, you can defend yourself if you'd like to. No, I'm good. You don't have to. No, it's real.

[02:05:48] But I do think it goes back to, you know, again, when you consider the, you know, systems thinking and the strategic plan and goals, you know, Samantha was teasing why I keep saying the goals is, to me, is probably the most important thing that a school board does in representing the community.

[02:06:12] Because at the board level here, you're setting the ends. So those goals that are up there, what is the results? What is it that you want representing the community for the students to know and to be able to do? And ideally, when the board has established those goals and the superintendent has helped to frame a strategic plan around accomplishing those goals, Then in an idealistic world, those goals survive board turnover.

[02:06:47] They survive superintendent turnover because it's about the vision that the community wants. You're representing that vision. Clearly, any time there's a new board member that comes on, there's always work that needs to be done and onboarding.

[02:07:05] But hopefully, as you are able to define these outcomes that you want for students and you have community buy-in and support and you have that strategic plan, again, now you all are in that position to monitor that progress.

[02:07:20] I saw that you recently had a budget presentation. All of us, you know, this time you're going through budget presentations. So the superintendent is aligning these recommendations, I believe, around the strategic plans and the goals that you've set.

[02:07:38] And so when you are evaluating the recommendations that come forward, you have the opportunity as a board member and as a board as a whole to have an understanding of what are the resources that the superintendent is recommending that he needs in order to accomplish these goals that you have established over this three to five year period of time.

[02:08:01] And I think there's so much power and value that I think as school board members we miss when it comes to nine people coming together and setting a goal and saying we want to be the best literate school division in the Commonwealth and then being able to approve recommendations that come from the superintendent to achieve that.

[02:08:27] Because the superintendent could easily come and say, if we want to be the most literate school division in the Commonwealth, then in order for us to get there, there may be other things that become less priority. And that's that opportunity that the board really has the power to set in terms of those goals and those ends.

[02:08:53] So this slide is often the one that everyone says, can you send me a copy of that? So no pressure. But this really gets down to what does the board do? What does the superintendent do? What does it look like in action? So the board, like Rodney said, is focused on the ends, the results.

[02:09:12] The questions that you guys are asking, why are we doing this? What are we doing? How much? How much is it going to cost, right? Those are the big three that you're thinking through. You have the vision. You're setting the vision. You're setting the mission. You're setting the goals. You approve and set the policies.

[02:09:28] I mean, you set the policies. You monitor, are things being done the way they're supposed to be done? Are things on plan, like you had mentioned earlier? And you're making the vote. How are you doing that? You're voting. Superintendent on his side, he's the focus on the means and the methods.

[02:09:45] The questions he's answering to you or asking his staff, how are we doing this? When are we doing it? Where is it going to be at all the high schools? Is it just the elementary school? Is it just this area? Who's going to be doing it? Is it the principals? Is it this type of teacher?

[02:10:01] Who is doing it? He's answering all of those questions. He comes up with the objectives, how to get the things done based on what you've set. He's coming up with those action plans that are goal-oriented, focused on your strategic plan. He comes up with those regulations that are tied to your policies, right?

[02:10:19] You'll see, you know, you have regulations in your policy, and they might be in your policy manual, But those regs are typically things that your superintendent has come up with. He's going to come up with the procedures. He or his staff are going to come up with the procedures, make sure things are being followed.

[02:10:34] He's going to implement what you all enact in policy. He's also going to make recommendations to you. I'm sure you've had plenty of times that you ask, well, superintendent, what is your recommendation on this issue? Or what is your expert opinion on this?

[02:10:50] What do you think we should do? That doesn't mean you have to follow it, right? But you're asking him for his expert opinion because he's your educational leader. What is your recommendation? And you all vote. Do you vote for his recommendation? Do you vote against it? What do you do, you know? And how does that work and what does that balance?

[02:11:07] Because ultimately, he answers to the nine of you. And that's also an important delineation. He answers to the board as a whole. He doesn't answer to individual board members. As humans, he has nine bosses. But really, he has one boss, and that's the board as a whole.

[02:11:23] If five of you vote for five, yeah, five of you vote for it, that's how he answers. That's where he gets his marching orders. And that's unique, too. You know, and that's where we get into the power and authority piece. We're not going to have too much time to cover that. But as a single board member, what kind of power do you have?

[02:11:42] Or do you have any as a single board member? Anybody? Yeah? Do you think you have some power yet? Not much. Not much? Nope. Okay. Your vote? You have your vote.

[02:11:58] You have your vote? platform to ask questions you have your platform to make sure that issues are being presented to the community to relay feedback from the community back to the staff i might not

be able to change the outcome you know my vote might not be able to change the outcome of a policy determination but i can i hope my intention is and i hope that i am able to use my position to at least add to filling out the conversation and make sure that viewpoints are being heard and considered and as Lauren likes to say, tightening up

[02:12:38] the language in some of our policies to make sure that they're saying what we want them to say. Absolutely. So you as an individual have, you know, you're bringing all of this to the table but as an individual, you're one, you can't just come in and say this is going to happen, right? You've got to convince four other people. So the power lies in the board as a whole, right?

[02:12:59] But what does the community think? The community thinks you walk into a building, you are the end-all, be-all. You are the school board member. You have all the power in the world, right? And that's not necessarily something you've asked for. It's just what is perceived.

[02:13:15] Oh, the school board chair is here. I need to sit up a little straighter. I need to make sure my desk is clean. I need to do all these things. And it's, you know, but they think that. It's like if your boss's boss comes into your workplace, you're probably gonna make sure you're you know you're you're sitting a little straighter and your stuff's off the floor you know and all those kind of things that's just human nature and so when you all go into a building or when you do you know you make a comment to a principal you say something just know that that is in it is inferred that it's oh it's a school board member

[02:13:51] asking me to do this or it's a school board member saying this when really it's just melinda the you You know, the mom or the aunt or the whatever, but it's still school board member or school board chair who's saying this or asking this or whatnot. Has anyone been in a situation where you've had or feel comfortable sharing an experience where maybe someone's given you a little more kind of power than you really anticipated them giving you?

[02:14:18] Yes, go ahead. I wouldn't say power, but one of my children is a special needs student, and there was one occasion where last fall one of the teachers at school reported an incident to me and actually asked over email, like, how do you think we should handle this?

[02:14:44] And I was thinking, like, I don't understand, like, handle this the way that you would for any other student in this situation. Like, I don't know that, I don't know, I have no reason to think that they were, that they asked me that question because of my position as a board member, although they know that I'm a board member.

[02:15:03] But this, our kid's school has always been really wonderful about working with us on our student special need issues and supports. But I have the, like, worry in the back of my head, like, don't treat me differently.

[02:15:19] I'm here in my mom hat. I'm not here as a board member. Absolutely. And you can say that all day every day, but you're still a board member. You're still mom. You're never going to take that hat off, but you're also still a board member. But just the fact that it kind of gave you pause and said, oh, no, you know, that's a good thing.

[02:15:37] Just be conscious of that. Be conscious of when you post on social media, when you do whatever, it's you as a board member being perceived or you as a representative of the board, not just you, April, the whatever, you know, the sports fan or the this, bless you, or whatever.

[02:15:57] Anything that you post or say or do is also you as a board member. Yes. I think before I was elected, I did a lot of literacy advocacy, and I also worked with people for IEP kinds of things.

[02:16:13] And so now people think that they can call me and say, why don't you come into my IEP with me so you can tell them what to do? And I'm like, no, thank you, because it's not my role. But they do perceive that I could go into an IEP meeting and get something done.

[02:16:31] Well, that's not how it works. and what would happen if you went into that IEP meeting I'd get a call from Dr. Spence yeah and what would he say Dr. Spence what would you say what would you say can we talk about your role as a board member and that's important because especially with a relationship with staff and and Dr. Spence you're welcome to jump in on this and because I know you've dealt with it in many different pieces in many different places but the anytime that you're in a room with staff

[02:17:06] whether you're a parent whether you're an advocate whatever you are you're still the board and that still it holds different weight and anything that you say that the staff could say oh the board member asked me to do this I'm going to drop everything that I'm doing right now and go do this and that not may not have been your intention at all but that's what they're going to do right Now, hopefully they're going to call Dr. Spence and say, hey, I have a board member in my office.

[02:17:34] How do you want me to handle this? You know, or whatnot. But just be aware that anything that you say can be perceived. Yeah, go ahead, Rodney. No, I was just going to say that the other practical reality of it is that, you know, we talked about earlier that part of the role is holding the superintendent accountable.

[02:17:54] Well, if the board member is in the middle of the things that are on the superintendent's plate or responsibility, how does the board then hold the superintendent accountable? So if you're in an IAP meeting and there's certain laws and regulations and things that have to be followed, and as a board member you're in the middle of it or fixing a problem, then how then does the board hold the administration accountable once the board as individual board member or board as a whole has intervened in the responsibilities that fall with the superintendent?

[02:18:30] And you may not think about it much until superintendent evaluation comes, and then all of a sudden the board wants to try to hold the superintendent accountable. And the superintendent said, well, I tried to do this, but you did this, you did that, you did this, you did that, you did that.

[02:18:45] So that accountability and understanding the role and trying to make sure that we have norms and protocols and expectations and communications around what's board work versus what superintendent work is important.

[02:19:01] because ultimately the cost is not to me and the cost is not to the superintendent. The cost is to the student. Yes. The cost is, no, the cost is, as a matter of fact, we're going to talk about that a little bit.

[02:19:18] There's, you know, it's a mantra out there that, you know, student outcomes don't change until adult behaviors change. And the behavior change starts with me as a board member. And so if my behavior is such that I am being involved with operations or that I am being involved with being a lone ranger or the hero or the fix-it person that I talked about earlier, it might make me feel good, and it might make me look good in the eyes of the public, but ultimately it's the student that pays that cost.

[02:19:57] And I think it's important sometimes that we, as I said earlier, are focused on what is the cost to students when our behavior as adults gets in the way of the division achieving the strategic objectives that we've set forward for the division to achieve.

[02:20:18] So 12 and a half years later, still talking about it. Still talking about it. I promised you I'd show you this clock because it's that cyclical nature that we talked about earlier. So the school board is adopting the vision.

[02:20:33] So look at midnight or noon or whatever time it is. You're adopting the vision and goals, right? You're setting. You want to build a rocket ship. You're going to build that. Here's your rocket ship. You're going to adopt your policies surrounding that. Then in comes the superintendent. He and his staff are developing the plans and the regulations and setting those into play.

[02:20:51] He's implementing the operations that are, again, tied to where you want to go. He's evaluating the progress. He's taking a look at the data first before he gives it to you so he has an understanding of where are we here, where are we here, what can we do here, what are some interventions we can do, et cetera, et cetera.

[02:21:08] So he's evaluating that. he presents to you the the progress so you all are evaluating the outcomes based on what he's presented to you this is where we are this is where we've been this is what last year's data looks like this is what this year's etc etc you're evaluating that are you happy with that outcome are you okay with that or do we need to go back to the beginning like i think i forget if it was carrie or sumer who had asked who had talked about kind of a cyclical cycle around this so you're evaluating those outcomes. Is that what you wanted to happen? Was a rocket ship the best use

[02:21:43] of public funds, right? Did we want to do this? Was this a good idea? Then you're adopting your vision and goals. That doesn't mean you have to re-adopt it every single time, but you might be changing your priorities or adjusting where you want to go based on the data, based on the information that's been given to you. And then guess what? We start it all over again. There's another piece of this chart that I like, that dotted line in the middle. Why do you think it's dotted surprise it's not blurry yeah or wavy or something right there are times that the

[02:22:22] superintendent's going to come into your governance role and there are more times that you guys are going to go into his operations role and this is just showing you that there's the acknowledgement that you might get into operations a little bit and superintendent might get into the board authority for a little bit but you've got to feel comfortable enough to kind of get yourself back get yourself back up is what we say you know back up to the governance level versus the operations level and like we talked about earlier people are going to pull you into the operations all day every day be there for a second pass that information on to the superintendent and then

[02:22:59] get back up into your governance role does that make sense this is just another way to look at this chart one thing i forgot to mention on this chart up at the top relationship of trust you have to have trust to make any of this work anything that we've been talking about today we can sit here and sing kumbaya and do all the things that we want but if you don't have trust it's not going to work right and the trust lies within the board so the board needs to trust each other the board needs to trust the superintendent and the superintendent needs to trust the board and if i could snap my fingers and make trust happen i would not be here right now i would be somewhere

[02:23:38] else i'd probably have my own rocket ship on some other country because trust is hard trust takes work trust is easy to break hard to repair all of the things i could talk for hours and hours on trust and we don't have hours and hours but i just want to put it in the atmosphere put it out there that trust needs to happen in order for these relationships any relationship that you have trust needs to happen yes so if trust is broken what are some of your strategies to bring it back communication because typically trust is broken through communication or lack of communication

[02:24:16] right i think it depends on how is trust broken what happened when was trust broken what happened to make it break how do you repair it you communicate use go ahead so does vsba have any ombudsman or something like that because between two board members sometimes it's hard to um communicate and there's not really support because everybody else kind of works for you.

[02:24:40] Is there some ombudsman or something at VSBA or something that you've got to be even looked at because sometimes there are things that happen. Like a mediator type thing. We don't have, from a staff standpoint, we do not have that. You do some at times provide mentors. Absolutely.

[02:24:59] I mean, you can call if there's concerns. One of the slides that we that we went past and I asked Sam to go past it said on it excuse me I am the genesis of for transformation and what that is really getting at is that oftentimes in the boardroom and we have disputes or disagreements or trust gets broken there's this common pretending that is that they're the problem right so if only they would do this if only she would do that if only he would

[02:25:36] do that, everything would be fine. Rarely do we actually take the opportunity to examine my behavior. What is my role? And so this concept of I am the genesis for transformation tries to put accountability back on examining my own behavior first. And then once I'm able to examine my own behavior and my role in a situation, it can open the door up to having a conversation with, you know, with your peers and your colleague. And it also goes back to

[02:26:14] what we started with in terms of what's the issue? Is it an issue that's based upon improving things for students? Or is it really an issue about my ego being hurt, my feelings being hurt. You did this to me. You did that to her. And I go back to the research that I cited earlier, that as board members, we tend to spend more time, and frankly,

[02:26:50] oftentimes the superintendent ends up spending more time mediating adult behavior. And we said the purpose for the school system is to improve things for students. Yet as adults, we are sucking up all this time and all this resources to the detriment, potentially to the detriment of our students.

[02:27:15] And so there's a process where you can, you know, identify behaviors. There's an exercise that I use sometimes and literally have board members write a letter, write three different letters.

[02:27:34] And the letter will say, for example, my behavior at this important time was X. The benefit to me in behaving that way was Y.

[02:27:50] The cost to students was X. And actually have board members write those letters and share it with each other to kind of open up that conversation and dialogue around what is it about my behavior? What adult behavior change do I need to make in order for my students to benefit?

[02:28:13] And so I think that's that whole, it says up there, focused mindset. That's part of that whole mindset that we have to practice and continue to remind ourselves we are here to benefit students. And

every minute and every hour, every fraction, whatever you want to use of time that we are in the boardroom dealing with our personal conflicts is really time and a distraction away from students.

[02:28:46] And for me, when it got put to me in that way, it just put a whole different framing on it. Because if I say I'm here to improve things for students and to see things grow for my community and for students to prosper, then how selfish am I going to be to suck up the superintendent's time and the staff time and the board time, dealing with my conflicts with myself or with another board member when we could be focused on, as I mentioned earlier, closing the gap or excelling with the number of students that we have

[02:29:26] are scoring an advanced proficiency on a math test. So student outcomes don't change until adult behaviors change and the change starts with me. Let that resonate in the room for a little bit.

[02:29:46] anyone have any comments questions thoughts yes I one of the things that I wanted to kind of mention around this topic of trust is like sometimes I think about what is the currency of trust like what what tools can we use to build trust and I found and just thinking all the diverse perspectives on our board one of the things that has been so beneficial to me is that that power of inquiry and so if I'm lot you know advocating for something we're in our budget season, right, and I've identified what I think is a need or a gap that I would like to support, I've had other board members come up to me and say, hey, Arben, I see you're

[02:30:25] advocating for this, but I have questions, and, you know, what evidence do you have that this is a gap, or have you thought about this, and have you, you know, have we identified this need because we were behind in our neighboring divisions, and that power of inquiry that is non-judgmental and just the just the rigor of our ideas and the conversation that we develop I think is the most powerful kind of way to build trust at least I found that to be super helpful in difficult conversations around budget and such that's great input and I that's that's thank you

[02:31:03] for sharing that and I think everyone could hopefully so let's how much time do we have oh again i could spend all day on trust and and and melinda you asked about what does vsba have we have this training too you know where we can dig down and we can do trust like all day and we also have a session in march or april that just talks about trust as an all-day workshop that we just just dig in and how do you build trust how how is it broken what are the pillars of trust from a philosophical standpoint but then also from a how do I do it how do I ask these good

[02:31:41] questions and then make sure that the questions are accepted too you know because you also have to be open to having that conversation and because if somebody puts a wall up and says why are you questioning me this that's not going to help you build anything but if you're open and you say please come I'd like the opportunity to share with you my thoughts that's how you build you know that's that that two-way communication that two-way piece so i want let's let's just write down really really fast what helps build trust in your mind what helps build trust so just

[02:32:12] jot down a word or of an action or something what helps build trust and i'm going to try to not get on the trust soapbox but it's it's important it's a very important skill and a very important tool to have? April, you've got yours.

[02:32:33] Go ahead. Being willing to listen and being open to absorbing new ideas. Dina? Not to piggyback off April again, but it is open. That's the word I would say. Thank you.

[02:32:56] I think it involves communication and collaboration and the rules around school boards where they can't get together more than two and the rules around you can't do this and you can't do that. I mean, if we could caucus or if we could do something collaborative, trust could be built faster. Not that it isn't being built, but it takes longer to build it since there are so many rules around it. We have a rule that if we get an email and it

[02:33:30] has all of our names on it, only the chairperson can respond to that email. That really concerns me that she's answering for me and so I think that some of those rules that are so restricted interfere in the building of trust and that's fair because the nature of the board and I think Samara you were mentioning this a little earlier the nature of the work of the board because you have turnover because you have this because you have that it's hard to build that team and it's hard to build that trust and the laws around it are absolutely a barrier they exist for a reason

[02:34:05] obviously but that doesn't make it any easier so thank you for thank you for saying that now for me it's finding humanity because you think of a person as a person even though you disagree you're still coming together as a person if that makes i literally stopped at this coffee shop because it was called the human being and i'm like how cool so i'm not advocating for that i mean it was it was fine but i was like this it's the human aspect that you have to have and you have to be cognizant of when you're when you're in heated debates and when you're in conversations and when

[02:34:45] you're you're you guys deal with some tough stuff i mean you're dealing with hard issues but there's a human right next to you also who's going through that same thing and how does that work and what what happens and how does you know that's it absolutely thank you for sharing that because that's a that's a huge that's a huge piece because if you don't think that the person sitting to next next to you deserves trust you're not you're not gonna give it go ahead um so i guess

[02:35:18] what i thought was helpful um with along the lines of what you and some of the others have just said was at the at the beginning because we all came in together and we had this opportunity to go through orientation together after we were elected before we got sworn in so we could have conversations with each other and we were all coming into this on sort of an even playing field because we none of us had ever run for office before or been on a school board before um i felt like that opportunity

[02:35:56] to coming in on a similar level and having the opportunity to be learning together which i think makes all of us slightly vulnerable to be honest about you know if if we are being honest about i i have no idea what I'm doing.

[02:36:16] I had no idea what I was doing, you know, going into orientation. That and having the opportunity to talk to each other as individuals in a less charged space. So we're no longer in the heat of an adversarial campaign.

[02:36:34] And we're not yet to the point where we have to start making policy decisions where we're going to disagree with each other. having that opportunity to just have conversations with each other as people and get to know a little bit about each other as people not just as a political opponent or You know, whatever you want to call it on the dais But as individuals, I think that that helped a lot I do that's but I Melinda alluded to this earlier. I I do think there's I think the question of building trust in the first instance is

[02:37:10] is a separate question from how do you rebuild trust when there has been a breakdown? And I will say I came into this, you know, being very optimistic about wanting to and being dedicated to keeping an open mind and wanting to have a good working relationship with everyone.

[02:37:30] And I believe everyone here said that, and I believe that we meant it. But coming into it with that attitude and knowing that we all were coming into it with that attitude, It was easier for me, not speaking for anyone else, but easier for me to allow trust to be built at the first step.

[02:37:51] But then if something happens, how do we repair it? I don't know. Thank you for that. And I think, again, I don't want to get on this soapbox, but people come to the table with different philosophies on trust also.

[02:38:07] I don't know Rodney. I've never met Rodney before. But I'm going to trust him until he proves me otherwise. Or I've never met Rodney before. I'm not going to trust him for a second until he earns my trust. There's nothing wrong with either of those philosophies, but acknowledging that different people come to the table with different philosophies just on the basis of trust, then that's hard. You know, that's a, that's a challenge to work through. And then how do you do that?

[02:38:31] And how, how can we build it that the ideas you all have said are perfect ways to do that, but what does that look like in action? And then, so that, that is, that is, that's hard. And then, but also acknowledging the fact that different people come to the table with different ideas on trust, just trust in general, is also something you've got to kind of wrap your mind around as you're building that team.

[02:38:54] So thank you for sharing that, Arvind. Another thing I'll add is that I would say empathy is something fundamental to trust, and it kind of relates to this openness, but a lot of folks think that empathy is just kindness, right?

[02:39:09] And so empathy is actually just being able to take someone's perspective and really try and understand it, even though you might disagree. And so I think that that is super important because it shows that you're listening with both ears.

[02:39:26] And then at the end of the day, you can still disagree. And then also abstracting those arguments or those disagreements from the person and just focusing on debating the ideas instead, I think is another important piece to maintaining and building trust.

[02:39:43] Thank you for that. Focus on the behavior, not the person, and that helps that human element. That helps all of the other pieces, too. So thanks for adding that in. Lauren. Thanks. For me, it's about relationships, and I know Dr. Dean's kind of hit on some of the hindrances that we've had, so it does take a little bit more work, I think, for us on the school board with each other, but I'm going to add the word authentic relationships.

[02:40:11] I think it's about coming with your guard down, being vulnerable, which requires trust, which is sort of ironic. But, you know, for us, too, I think there's an added layer for us with trust because we came into a system where the trust in this district was completely shattered, in my opinion.

[02:40:30] And so we're kind of playing catch up in that way, too, sort of being accountable for those things before in some weird way and also trying to forge forward together. And so I think that for me, my approach has been to just dwell in time and space with people and really try to understand who they are in a relationship sense.

[02:40:52] And I am loving this student achievement lens, like so much. Keep saying it over and over again, outcome. Sometimes I say I feel like I'm beating a dead horse, but I think it's worth it. And so something I'm kind of noodling on as you keep bringing that up is that one thing that I found when I was teaching was we found common ground really fast because we were in the trenches together and we just love kids and we love serving children and meeting their needs and so that's very unifying and I know that we all believe that here too we we love the kids of this county we believe in them and so I think that that's the common thread that maybe we could all

[02:41:31] reach even though we do have a lot of disagreements and we do have a lot of differences in different hills that we're willing to die on and so that that would be sort of my tidbit there is just for for us to find that common ground and to always bring that question back you know what did this do for kids how did this move the needle for kids you know how did this benefit the students of Loudoun County I love that so I just really appreciate that that perspective and and I'm going to be you know challenging us maybe to keep that as our bottom line and finding common ground is such a good way to build and rebuild trust to let's all right we've had these disagreements

[02:42:09] we've had these issues happen why are we here what's the focus of why we're here and if the answer for every single person is students that gives you a direction to go and that gives you and even put it on the dais put it somewhere you know somewhere where you can see it and remember it how does this impact students what did this do for students how did this move the needle forward to just keep you because you're going to get in debate especially budget season you're going to get into numbers you're going to get into all of the things and you've got to take a step back and say how is this impacting the students and write a little note for yourself and put it up there at

[02:42:45] your seat and if you guys if the nine of you can come together and you're going to disagree on ways to get there but if you agree that the reason why you're getting there is because of the students that'll help rebuild whatever has been broken or build things that haven't been built yet thanks for that yeah Rodney will keep saying it forever and I appreciate that and I absolutely love it so Samira I agree with all my colleagues I also think that there's focus again you know we always have to go back to that focus as to why we're here um and if we keep going back to that

[02:43:21] we can always say to ourselves and even if we don't see eye to eye to each of us we can always say you know we agree to disagree and every time we say we agree to disagree we can have less um any type of bickering or and then we don't have to be as combative you know we can just agree to disagree. One of the factors that I noticed that kind of helps us or makes us rather deviate from this trust are certain things like, I mean, we're here to help our students, but there's an attachment to that. And that's some constituents that are a little divisive or a little different, so to say.

[02:43:55] And what happens is there's this certain dialogue that they bring to the table and it creates this loss of trust amongst us for who said what to who and then we also have media and the media which comes to every uh board meeting or just in general um it'll be something that something will be said in an article or a video or whatever and it makes the other board members say well what did that person say to this reporter or this journalist meanwhile that board member never said anything but it was just a play of words and then it created this you know lack of trust among the

[02:44:35] board members so those are sometimes factors that are outside of us as a group that causes that loss of trust amongst each other and that's very difficult even with the superintendent the cabinet

whatever and that for me can sometimes be difficult because then you're like should I go back to that same board member and say well why did you say such and such a thing you're like I never said anything and they're like oh we got played or something like that it's one of those and that goes back to dr dean's point of there's so many pieces of the board as a whole that that makes it hard that just adds as a barrier to it but you're right and it could be something that

[02:45:13] was never said it was something that was assumed it was something that somebody took the wrong way it's like the game of telephone you guys remember playing that in school you know and the message changes the whole way through sometimes intentionally sometimes not but that's where I think that openness to to come and inquire like Arben said that to inquire about did you say this is this really what you meant is this you know whatever but that takes and somebody said it earlier that takes trust to just have that conversation too so it's kind of a it takes trust to build trust or it takes trust to make trust but um but that's that's an excellent point

[02:45:50] Because people are going to, people in general are going to be fighting you as a board just because you're the board. It doesn't matter who you are as a person or who, just because you're the board. Oh, cool. We got nine new people we can yell at, you know. And they're going to try to pull you apart.

[02:46:08] But it's up to you all how you respond to that. Do you let them pull you apart? Or do you say, we know why we're here. We know our purpose. We're going to come together and work together as a team. Thank you for that. Carrie. What is trust? Back to what builds trust. I told you I was sleepy today. Okay. Thank you.

[02:46:36] I think trust begins with a willingness to obtain knowledge of the person that you're interacting with. If I know a little bit about you, it might tell you, tell me where you're coming from and indicate why you're feeling that way. And I think you keep building on that. You know a little more, you understand a little more. And it has to be a shared back and forth between people.

[02:47:06] But I think it's very important to understand where they're coming from. That could explain why they're thinking that way. And then it makes it easier for me to respond to gain that trust. I know we all have different backgrounds. And I love the fact that we have so many different backgrounds, because that makes different focus on a problem. And you see it, and if we share it, then we see where everybody's coming from. But we have to trust one another to believe that we are willing to listen, we are willing to understand, and we're still willing to work together, even if

[02:47:46] it doesn't go our way. So I think the fact that you will, after a decision's made, continue to work in the same manner builds that trust. We know we can always bring our real thoughts to the table because people are willing to listen.

[02:48:04] I'd also want Rodney to repeat the thing that he talked about, adult behavior affects student outcomes. I think that should be a bumper sticker. Actually, there is one. But one of the things I would, because I know time is short, You know, again, even in this conversation and I've been in your seats, I'm talking to myself as I'm speaking to you.

[02:48:31] You know, I mentioned earlier about this kind of common pretending that, you know, if only they would do something, then everything would be OK or trust could be rebuilt. You know, this weekend is playoff games, NFL playoff games this weekend.

[02:48:53] effective coaches, win or lose, at the end of the game, they play back the video of the game. Why do effective coaches do that? Why do effective coaches play back the videotape of the game, win or lose?

[02:49:15] Well, it's a training thing they call. I mean, even my son does it for his eSports. They call them video, they call it VOD reviews, video reviews, so that they can see the techniques, the strategies, what they could have done better, because when you're in the middle of it, You can't see it. Techniques, strategies, yes.

[02:49:34] And a more objective view when you're watching it outside as opposed to when you're inside of it. Because even when you win, there are almost always other things that you could have done better and differently.

[02:49:55] Certainly, and if you lose, it might not be because you did anything wrong. And you need to be able to step back and have some self-reflection and consider what you could have done, you know, better or differently in the situation.

[02:50:11] Sorry to say that you can go back and review the tape. It doesn't necessarily have any judgment attached to it. Oh, I would have judgment for myself. For yourself, but I just mean in terms of right and wrong. I never go back and look at my, I've done so many appellate oral arguments and most of them are video recorded and I never go back and look at them because I don't really want to see where I screwed up.

[02:50:36] Because that's all I will see. If you watch the playoff games, you know, you're paying attention to the score, right? So, you know, I'm a Cowboy fan, but let's say the commanders are up by 25 points in the first half.

[02:50:53] Then at the halftime, the Philadelphia coach is going to be making adjustments, right, based upon what the data has shared.

[02:51:05] And so part of what our own reflection, if you as an individual board member, you know, think in your own mind, you know, replay the videotape of my behavior and examining that videotape and thinking about what was it about my behavior that may have made it more difficult for my children to be successful or for the school division to achieve its goals.

[02:51:36] It's not necessarily a judgment, but we're often not present to the behaviors. We have empathy. We are with each other. We don't necessarily know how we are being perceived, and we're not always present to our behaviors.

[02:51:55] But being able to go back at the end of each meeting or at the end of each interaction and just kind of replaying that videotape, because if I'm the genesis of transformation, it's not about what I can have Carrie do differently.

[02:52:13] It's about me examining my patterns of behavior and what I can do differently because ultimately I'm going to be the genesis of transformation, not they or someone else. And that's the difference, I think, between watching sports as a fan versus when you're doing an activity in the moment.

[02:52:31] You know, when I when I was doing those oral arguments all the time, I five minutes later, I wouldn't remember what I said necessarily because I was too focused on what was happening in the moment to be committing it to memory for later. If that makes sense. And I'll give you one of the tidbits since I am a cowboy fan.

[02:52:53] that's okay. The board is the owner, right? So you can be Jerry Jones and you can micromanage the coach or you can be some of these four teams that are getting ready to vie for the Super Bowl where you never really see the owner. The owner has set the goals and expectations and the owner has turned it over to the coach. And so the coach slash superintendent is the one that's making the halftime adjustments the coach is the one that's talking in the quarterback's microphone calling

[02:53:32] calling the plays but everybody knows what the score is because the scoreboard is there so if as a board you've set the the goal that you're going to score 40 points that your students going to score 40 points you get to monitor that that progress you get to have a conversation with the coach whether or not the team is winning or whether or not the team is is not winning but it's important that the coach is the one that's making the adjustments and calling the plays and I think sometimes that trust and other things come about because you have nine or seven people

[02:54:09] all trying to be the coach when really the power of the board is you're the owner you selected the GM you selected the coach you set the goals you said for the for the coach we started off we were oh and 17 and we want to make the Super Bowl in five years you have set the goals and expectations and now you have the opportunity through your behavior to support the coach in achieving their goals or to make adjustments because you are constantly monitoring the progress of the team.

[02:54:38] Well, what I was going to say, watching the videos will show you how you behaved, not just how you behaved, but all the subtle visual and tonal clues that shows what you're doing, what you're saying, and why, and I personally would have used being a racehorse owner and not

[02:55:11] a football owner, but that's just me. I can work with that. I might, in raising racehorses, and I have done this, had a, had a cult that was fine, came from great pedigree, and you do things when they're very young, and you raise them, and then they get to a certain level, and you start turning them over to a trainer now i have raised that cult that is my cult and our goal is to get not just to the kentucky derby but we're not only just going to win the you know the trifecta but we are

[02:55:47] going to be horse of the year da da da da da okay great i've chosen the trainer now it's my job to sit back and watch the training progress and he's got people that are working in the stables people that are working a jockey a training jockey a professional rider and I look at that horse and if I start looking at him and say well you can't do that he doesn't like that kind of feed and you're telling it to the person who's doing the feeding instead of mentioning it to the trainer

[02:56:20] who is now responsible for doing that that's what I see us doing is breaking trust I've told that trainer don't trust me and you can see it if you're watching a video like you're saying with the football team or even if we watch ourselves after a board meeting that's been recorded we start to see what kind of signals we're giving off and that's important to know let's keep your horse training analogy so i like it yes so if you and it's a new language for me so i'm going to try

[02:56:54] so if you are telling the person who's doing the feeding that you don't like that feed what's that equivalent for you guys as a board member what what would be the equivalent so it would be as if a board member is telling who that they don't like something if i start going around to different people in yes or the administrative part yep and giving them direction yes that is contractory to contrary to what they are expected to do from our superintendent absolutely thank you and i love that analogy because that's a perfect because probably that person's going to pause and say do i need to

[02:57:33] switch the feed what am i going to do where am i you know i need to buy a new feed what do i need to do and that's a perfect example of a board member going around the responsibilities and giving direction to a staff member a teacher a central office or whatever outside of who the trainer, the trainer would do that. So thank you for, I'm going to add that into my memory because that's a really good example of that. Thank you for sharing that. Dr. Spence, were you going to say something? You looks like you were like ready to jump in on the horse. All right. Horses,

[02:58:06] they need to be respected, right? So, okay. We have two minutes left with you. I want to give you something because I've printed it, and I'm not going to do anything with it when I go back to the office, so that way you all have it.

[02:58:27] It is something your staff have pulled together as, so we had planned to talk about norms and protocols, but we ran out of time, but I do think this is something you guys should certainly take a look at. And what was pulled together by your staff are some of your policies that are basically norms and protocols.

[02:58:47] So you have a policy that talks about norms and protocols, but then you have some other policies that are specific about community involvement, communication, board staff communication, written comments. So you have a lot of information in your policy on how you do what you do.

[02:59:04] So since we pulled these and printed them, they're here for you to look through, review. One thing that's important about your policies, they are yours. They are yours to change, edit, make adjustments to. As a first-year board, that's hard to do because you're just trying to figure out where the lights are, right?

[02:59:23] But as a second-year board, I encourage you to take some time to look through these. It looks like some of these revisions were back in 21. There were a few that are even older than that. Just because you review it doesn't mean you have to change it. You know, it might be perfectly written as it is from the version that was confirmed in 21.

[02:59:43] but i would encourage all of you to read these very closely because these impact you what you do the relationship you have with each other the relationship you have with the superintendent how you get the things done that you do and if you choose to change them you have that right and you have that ability to do that but of course that would take take a policy change you know but you you have steps in process to do that so um because we've run out of time we're not going to go through each of these obviously but here's here's the packet for you encourage you to take a look at them and look at them very closely not that you haven't already but because these are

[03:00:22] specific to what you do as an individual and what you do as a team does that make sense everybody clear on that so we're happy to work with you on this I just I know you guys have things after us and I don't want to push us any longer so were there any norms and protocols or anything in this Is there anything that you really wanted to make sure we talked about today that we can talk about in the next 30 seconds?

[03:00:51] Okay, so this will be some kind of homework for you guys. Take a look at it. Yes. I'm sorry. I was in the ladies room. That's okay. So this particular policy is about the norms as far as the school board goes, decorum, conflicts of interest.

[03:01:11] I have had many concerns in those areas. I don't know if you're here to answer those questions today. We're already one minute over, and I know you guys have things to do after us.

[03:01:27] So this was kind of passed out because we had them with me, and I wanted to make sure that you guys got them. And the instruction, if you will, was given, look at these if you have a conversation or if you want to edit and change, update these, then that would be a conversation the board would need to have.

[03:01:45] In a perfect world, I could have three more hours to work on these with you. That's not a perfect, you know, I don't have that with you. But that doesn't mean we can't do it again. So if you guys are willing and interested in doing something like this again, maybe with a little more time, we can dig deep, very deep into these norms and protocols pieces.

[03:02:05] I'll take a business card. Okay, absolutely. I have them. Okay. And I'm sorry we ran out. I hope the conversation was valuable today that we've had. Again, we can have five days. These clocks are right, right?

[03:02:21] I'm not totally off? Okay, darn it. So maybe they were an hour behind and I can get another hour's worth of stuff in. But we do have kind of a wrap-up question for you that you answered earlier. That's why I said let's take a look at it.

[03:02:37] So what is one word, and I'm ending very quickly, and I hate ending quickly. It's like Hallmark movies. they end way too fast after the, you know, you know what's happening. So what's one word to describe how you're leaving the training today? And that's it. Just one, just one word or an, or a couple of words if you want to. Yes, ma'am. My word is introspective. I have lots to think about. Okay. I was going to say contemplative. I think that's exactly right. I'll then say

[03:03:09] reflective. Refocused on student outcomes. I would say profound. More than one word for me, a lot to think about. Okay. It's fair. Mine's continuance. Say that again. Continuance.

[03:03:35] Continuance. Thank you. Okay. A beginning platform to share the nuances of the work of the board. Absolutely. I'm going to shorten that, shorten that to nuances, but we know what you mean. Anyone else not share a word? Dr. Spence. Dr. Spence. One, two. I think I would lean into

[03:04:07] the reflective. Reflective. That gives me nine. One person didn't share a word. Thank you, Lauren. I was a teacher.

[03:04:24] I will remind you. Right? Please answer. And we're not here to make your jobs harder, but we are here to challenge you a little bit.

[03:04:45] Because it is, you all are doing a lot. The work in front of you is a lot. You know, you're one year in of a four-year term, right? Or do some of you have shortened terms because of the staggered? Oh, man. Wow.

[03:05:01] All right. Well, for however long your term is, you're here for it, right? and so that doesn't mean you have to run oh no ah okay well hopefully you'll all come back and we can have this conversation again you know keep building your team um but i do think it's it's work it's hard work we used to have a slide that says it's hard work but it's heart work you have to have your heart in it and i i heard many actually i think all of you have said the word students today which is is something to grasp onto and just know that you're you're here for

[03:05:37] the hopefully you're here for the student the reason why for the students if not rodney's going to say it 10 more times as we're walking out the door and he should and all of us in this room should so i just challenge you to keep keep students at the forefront of the work that you're doing know it's going to be hard no you're not going to agree all the time and that's not we We realize that, and if you did, we'd have other conversations that we need to have.

[03:06:01] But just know that as you continue to work to build your team, build your governance team, and get to know each other, we're here for you. VSBA is here for you. If you want to do something like this again, we're happy to do it with you again and to dig a little deeper and to help build and keep moving forward.

[03:06:19] So thank you all for the opportunity to work with you, and I think it's been a good day, and hopefully you guys have some of the similar thoughts. Rodney, any closing thoughts? To have the winning horse, it takes practice. So this was just one session.

[03:06:35] Take the opportunity to practice. Madam Chair, anything you want to? I just want to say thank you to Sam and Rodney for coming all the way here. And you gave us a lot to think about. And I look forward to more conversations.

[03:06:55] Thank you.

[03:07:05] Madam Chair, did you want to do a quick agenda reminder about the break? Is my mouth full of cookie? I'm sorry. I just want to make sure four people stood up. Get out of our roll. That's totally fair. Thank you, Mrs. Chernow. All right.

[03:07:21] We'll come back at 2.30 for our next presentation. You know what? Who's presenting? It's the DEIA department.

[03:07:39] We're on break, but I wanted to say who is presenting. I don't have it down here. Okay. All right. Y'all know we're on break. We're on break until 2.30.

[03:30:13] He knocked something out of the doctor's hand. She told the anesthesia I was there.

[03:30:31] Well, welcome back from our break. At this point, we are moving on to our culturally responsive instruction in the classroom presented by Mr. Muhammad and Ms. Lewis.

[03:30:55] And if board members remember, we asked them to come to our meeting to help educate us a little bit about that standard. Before we get to it, I just wanted to tell school board members, we have a school board joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors for our budget presentation.

[03:31:22] And that will be February 13th at 5 p.m. here in this boardroom. So I just wanted to put that on your radar. Okay, Mr. Muhammad and Mrs. Lewis, it's all yours. I'm about to switch back and forth.

[03:31:40] Well, good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Dr. Spence, Madam Chair Mansfield, and distinguished board members for this opportunity. My name is Shahid Muhammad. I'm the director in the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. And I am joined by my incredible colleague. I'll let her introduce.

[03:31:58] Thank you, Mr. Muhammad. I'm Cynthia Lewis, and I'm the supervisor within the division. And we are super pleased to share information on culturally responsive instruction in the classroom. Our

presentation is around 30 minutes in length, and there'll be time for some questions, if there are any, and maybe give you some time back to your agenda.

[03:32:19] I know you had a long day today, so thank you. So first off, this work that we engage in is aligned to the goals of the Strategic Plan for Excellence. And as we move through the presentation, you will specifically see connections.

[03:32:36] All the lines of effort from the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility are entrenched in the success of our students, the support of our for our staff, parents, and families. Our goals for today are to deepen understanding of culturally responsive instruction, learn how the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility provide learning and support for LCPS staff around culturally responsive instruction, and explore some strategies for culturally responsive instruction.

[03:33:14] So the Code of Virginia, as you all know, requires that evaluations be consistent with the standards. All school divisions in the state require their teachers and administrators to be evaluated annually on how well we provide culturally responsive instruction and equitable practices to our students.

[03:33:32] Teachers and administrators have been evaluated on performance standard six since the 2022-2023 school year. And this performance standard is for teachers that we have on the screen for you to read. the teacher demonstrates a commitment to equity and provides instruction and classroom strategies that result in culturally inclusive and responsive learning environments and achievement for all students.

[03:34:02] The importance of standard six can also be understood further by some of our school division perception data. This data that is on the screen is from 2024 climate survey, and the group surveyed were 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

[03:34:20] The data shows that students with different backgrounds have differing perceptions on how well things they learn in school reflect different cultures, races, and identities, as well as how students treat others with respect, regardless of race and other differences.

[03:34:40] It exemplifies the point that learning conditions and rigorous instruction are levers that promote high student engagement and academic success. And we'll give you a minute just to look over that data.

[03:35:24] Okay, so I'm going to start to talk about culturally responsive instruction and what exactly that means. This is the definition that we use in LCPS, and we believe that culturally responsive instruction is foundational to all student learning. The definition reads, a student-centered approach to instruction that respects and affirms all student cultures.

[03:35:46] It is sustained through reflective and inclusive practices, high expectations, and rigor for each and every student. It addresses opportunity gaps, fosters relationships, and increases level of engagement, complexity, and relevance of learning for students.

[03:36:02] Teachers implement culturally responsive instruction through their consistent approach to student engagement and commitment to equitable instructional practices. So this is a very wordy definition, so we wanted to focus on some of the most important ideas that you see there.

[03:36:20] Again, this is an approach that is student-centered and that it affirms students. It's inclusive of all of the students in the classroom, holding high expectations for each and every student, rigor,

addressing opportunity gaps, building strong relationships, and is intentional with increasing student engagement and the complexity and relevance of the lesson.

[03:36:43] So this isn't a set lesson plan. This is really an approach to instruction that improves connection and engagement for teachers. I'm going to give you an opportunity to talk with each other about these three ideas, about all of these ideas.

[03:37:04] So in reviewing these concepts, I would like to think about a time when you've had a positive experience with any of these. This can be in a classroom setting that you had as a student or even observed, and it doesn't have to be in a classroom setting.

[03:37:22] When you think of an example, you can share with someone who's right next to you. You might have to scooch in a little bit. and next I'll ask if someone would like to volunteer a story. These are the types of activities that we have teachers engage with when we do training around culturally responsive

[03:37:40] instruction. So at this time just share a story with the person immediately next to you. I'm going

[03:41:40] to ask you to finish up your thought in the next 30 seconds.

[03:42:37] Okay if you could finish up your stories. I saw some laughter, lots of animated movement. Is there somebody who would like to share one of those stories that kind of comes from those components of culturally responsive instruction yes please I was just voluntold by the vice chair so that's the best way to share was when you're voluntold so I um as someone who didn't speak English properly in kindergarten right I had faced a lot of issues and it wasn't until a teacher came along I think it was in third or fourth grade that kind of got me out of my shell was interested in my background and helped me to

[03:43:15] feel kind of on the same level with my peers. And I took that example and then I compared it to one of the schools that I visited recently. I was, I got to sit in on a special ed inclusion kindergarten class and I was, one of the teachers introduced me, they were doing centers. And so I sat at the different tables and engaged with the children. And I was introduced to one student who had just arrived to the U.S. probably a few months before and was still trying to learn English.

[03:43:46] and I saw him and he was so engaged I mean he didn't speak that much English but he was pointing at the exercises and saying all the words in Spanish and yes of course the teacher was trying to say the words with him and yes and this is the English version but he had so much confidence and he was so engaged despite so I was comparing that student to what you know the experiences that I had were totally opposite and just thinking of some of these tool sets that our teachers have to be able to utilize to like ignite the learning in some of these kids it was so inspiring so thank you

[03:44:22] thank you for sharing that it's really important to be increasing that engagement and affirming that student letting our language learners know that they can that they're included in the regular activities of the classroom so that's a perfect example when we when we talk about that approach of really seeing our students assets and including them building them up and really bringing them into the learner. We want that for each and every student in all of the classrooms. Thank you for sharing. So this approach that you've been talking about has been found through Dr. John Hattie's research to have positive impacts for student learning. Dr. Hattie is

[03:45:02] a New Zealand educator and academic. His research on factors related to student achievement calculate the effect size of factors and influences such as strategies and teacher approaches on student learning. So an effect size of 0.40 or higher is within the zone of desired effects, which represents a growth of one year within one year of schooling. So anything above 0.40 would have an even greater positive impact on student learning. And you can see

[03:45:35] on the visual that that includes several aspects of the culturally responsive approach. So in our aim to ensure that students are seen and heard and known and loved. Culturally responsive instruction empowers students and teachers, it expands pathways to deeper learning, it engages and connects students to their learning, it creates a welcoming and affirming environment and makes instruction more efficient and

[03:46:08] effective. So the student culture student learning connection really acknowledges and represents and honors supporting student cultures and how that sustains a welcoming, inclusive, and affirming learning environment where students' interests, cultures, and experiences become connected to the learning where they thrive. All student cultures and backgrounds are assets, and we make sure that that is something that we keep on top in every professional learning experience that we deliver, that a student's culture and background are assets.

[03:46:48] And there are also pathways for deeper learning experiences. So connecting to student culture demonstrates cultural competence and culturally responsive practices. It develops a positive identity, building relationships, and building a sense of belonging that students need.

[03:47:08] Creating a pathway to deeper learning, critical thinking, and higher level thinking. And it builds a foundation for social and emotional learning that helps teachers strengthen their relationships with students so that they demonstrate that they know who their students are.

[03:47:31] Developing an approach toward this requires reflection. And as you all know, and we heard from some of the experiences that you all have engaged in today, is that reflection is key. Reflective questions for culturally responsive teachers is something that we, early on, began providing professional learning on.

[03:47:50] An example of some guidance for teachers are we ask teachers to be reflective in their practices. Reflection questions for culturally responsive teachers helps guide their thinking and strengthen their practices. So we're going to read these four that we have listed on the page.

[03:48:08] How do I ensure students have input and can connect to the learning experiences, materials, and activities? So how do I make sure that my instruction is engaging? How do I draw them in? And how do I get students to have a voice in what they're learning?

[03:48:27] How will I prioritize time for activities aimed at knowing my students and students knowing each other? How will I use that knowledge in my instruction and interactions with students? And this goes into the planning. When teachers are in planning and in POCs, they talk about the things that they know their students are interested in and that they have an ability to connect to, and they make sure that that is embedded in their instruction and their interactions.

[03:48:55] How do I address practices and norms that disadvantage student groups? And teachers proactively thinking about how maybe they group students for learning, or homework assignments, the student response calling patterns that they engage in, and family and engagement styles.

[03:49:13] All these things are important to make sure that we are elevating and uplifting all students in the classroom. And lastly, how do I build students' confidence in their ability to engage in rigorous learning? Building the self-efficacy of students makes it easier to teach them, and it catapults students to greater levels of engagement.

[03:49:34] So these are some reflective questions that we ask teachers to think about on a regular basis when it comes to culturally responsive instruction. So next we're going to talk about how the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility has provided learning opportunities and support for culturally responsive instruction through professional development, through curriculum support, and through leadership support.

[03:50:04] First, I wanted to give you some examples of the learning that we provided to staff. So what are some of those examples of learning and discussion around culturally responsive instruction? So this is an example of some early learning that we covered in 2023.

[03:50:24] All staff participated in this learning that was facilitated at their home school by a team of three, the special education professional, a language learner teacher, and the equity lead. This session was focused around access, opportunity, and knowledge as a means for designing equitable instruction.

[03:50:46] So our goal was to build understanding of the role that access, opportunity, and knowledge play in student learning. So we think about access as equitable access to high-quality instruction and inclusive resources to support students in connecting to the learning and demonstrating their skills. Opportunities are when we're providing opportunities for students to engage in relevant learning experiences, critical thinking, and student-centered instruction. This results in multiple pathways to success. And knowledge. We want our students to have knowledge of their individual strengths, their identities, and interests. This empowers students to share their

[03:51:25] voices, collaborate with others, and engage in deeper learning so that each and every student can reach their full potential. So teachers were provided with strategies for making quality instruction accessible for all students, infusing daily instruction with those opportunities for students to engage in relevant learning experiences, authentic learning experiences that build knowledge that empowers our students. Another example of professional learning for teachers was around student learning communities.

[03:52:01] This session provided strategies for teachers to build a learning environment where academic safety, belonging, and trust is the foundation. A student learning community is one where the inclusion is visible. The students can see it, they can feel that they're a part of the learning and of the community.

[03:52:20] Engagement in deeper learning is evident and where students see themselves as valued contributors. So some examples that teachers might use to build this are getting to know you activities, morning meetings, having class norms and routines, so students know what to expect, teaching students about growth mindset, celebrating perseverance, celebrations of any kind, teachers sharing their own mistakes, so students can see how to handle that, intentional team building, and anytime students are able to share out about themselves and who they are.

[03:52:59] Another session that was provided was around holding high expectations. When teachers hold high expectations is truly the belief that each student can achieve through deeper learning and academic rigor. This approach builds students' self-esteem and confidence.

[03:53:16] It builds student ownership of their learning and educational results. A classroom culture of high expectations for all allows students to see each other as capable learners. So what this is about is about providing cognitive demand and high support to all learners so that every student in our classrooms is engaged in meaningful and complex intellectual work.

[03:53:40] We typically provide students meaningful, relevant, and challenging tasks, but this isn't a sink or swim approach. We provide that high challenge with high support. Support can include student choice, the teacher providing models, the use of rubrics so students know what the expectations are, high quality scaffolds, which is supports for students that require it.

[03:54:05] So a scaffold could be something like a graphic organizer, visuals, the use of sentence stems to support learners, frequent checkpoints for understanding, peer-to-peer feedback, and collaboration with each other. Now we'll talk a little bit about curriculum support and how does the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility support teaching and learning to build and implement a more inclusive curriculum.

[03:54:35] I first want to say thank you to Mr. Slevin for his ongoing collaboration and advocacy for the work that we're doing with offices in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The information that I'm going to share highlights some work with the math office, elementary reading and writing, social science and global studies, and the science office.

[03:54:58] So here are five tenets of culturally responsive instruction and what they look like in mathematics. student culture and identity, learning environment and community, asset-based approach coupled with high expectations, and storify and gamify.

[03:55:15] And one of the main ways that new learning is developed is when it's linked to prior knowledge. Connecting to student culture and identity can engage students and support their learning in ways that's relevant to who they are and what they know. And some examples in mathematics are using sentence stems, using guided notes or fill-in-the-blank sentences before the lesson for students to make predictions about what they're about to learn, providing a word splash of pictures and vocabulary words for students to make connections to what they already know.

[03:55:49] A welcoming, inclusive, and affirming learning environment can be fostered in mathematics in the same ways that it can be done in all subject areas and grade levels. An example specific to mathematics is creating a real-world context around mathematics curriculum that are relevant to student culture, i.e. their school interests, their school themselves, people, music, family members, friends, food, technology, etc.

[03:56:16] Also, using vertical non-permanent surfaces like whiteboards and word walls for students to collaborate, try out new methods, make sure that they have the opportunity to learn from mistakes in a low-stake environment.

[03:56:31] And also random flexible groupings allows students to work in a variety of groups and scaffolding collaboration with a connection or activating activity for students in new groups gets those students talking, feeling comfortable around others, sharing, and more engaged with each other.

[03:56:51] The asset-based approach and high expectations go hand in hand. Both are focused on teacher belief and student success with a high level of support. Some examples of supports and scaffolds in math

or in any other subject we've talked about. Number sense routines can be adapted so that students design or facilitate the routine.

[03:57:12] Breaking content into chunks or incorporating visuals, images, or examples. And lastly, people think and learn in stories, and that's what Storify and Gamify represent. People are also engaged and motivated through games.

[03:57:28] We do know that some students are very motivated by competition, but some aren't. So giving those practices and making sure that we're providing opportunities for students to engage in ways that they learn best is part of culturally responsive instruction.

[03:57:44] All of these tenets of culturally responsive instruction are not topic dependent. Culturally responsiveness is responding to people's culture and who they are, no matter what topic is being taught. Teachers are always responding to students and their unique identities, cultures, and strengths.

[03:58:03] And all teaching should strive to be as culturally responsive as possible. In working with the Elementary Reading and Writing Office, through continued collaboration and partnership with reading and writing, we are building capacity in culturally responsive instruction with a diverse and inclusive resource with the Holton-Mifflin-Harcourt curriculum.

[03:58:28] Understanding how different cultures are represented in literature provides an understanding of culture and provides a skill set for teachers to connect students to their learning, create student engagement with deeper learning. Now, we have talked about cultural humility as a practice with teachers and administrators.

[03:58:47] And on this slide are some exploring culture myths. This helps with the idea of self-awareness, focus on others and outcomes, and a commitment to equity in learning. It is a learner stance where we all recognize that we cannot know about each and every culture, but that we understand its impact in learning and interacting with students and their families.

[03:59:12] In these conversations, it's important to dispel some myths about culture that we encounter in our work. Some of them I would highlight from the screen are that people can only belong to one culture, or that culture is equivalent to race and ethnicity.

[03:59:30] And lastly, the goal is to learn about every aspect of every culture. These are myths that we like to explore. One important note that's not a myth is that people and culture are always changing, so everyone is always learning.

[03:59:50] In working with social sciences and global studies, we provide learning to build capacity in understanding the importance of student engagement throughout the classroom instructional culture, which lends itself to the creation and sustainability of equitable school culture. Some of the strategies are student identity, student stories, and reflection.

[04:00:10] Storytelling is a core culturally responsive practice and valuable in all content areas because our brains think and learn in stories. And thank you board member Streffy for sharing a story earlier today, appreciate you. Technology can be used to enhance sharing, connecting, and learning.

[04:00:26] So how does our division work to build capacity of leadership to create culturally responsive environments? We work with the Department of School Leadership to provide learning opportunities for building leaders and for those who aspire to be building leaders.

[04:00:47] So the administrators in our buildings are responsible for developing a welcoming and inclusive and affirming school environment and sustaining that culture. In this session, we discuss the dimensions of belonging for both students and staff. So in a session like this, we would ask those administrators to reflect in order to connect to the student or staff experience.

[04:01:10] So we might ask administrators to think about when do they feel seen? Is it because they were welcomed with warmth and friendliness? Are they able to show up authentically as their whole selves? They might think about how do you know you are valued?

[04:01:27] Is it when you, they might say, it's when I'm heard or I feel trusted. They would think about when and why are you needed, and also thinking about when and how they feel accepted. So this self-reflection, which we've talked about being so important for being culturally responsive, can really help them to think about the student experience when they're designing an inclusive environment.

[04:01:52] In this session, building leaders discuss creating the conditions for inclusion, how practices, language, and culturally responsive approaches help create a sense of belonging for students. So inclusion is intentionally created through learning and guidance, and it is supported by the curriculum.

[04:02:14] We recently provided a session for building leaders on what to look for when observing Standard 6. A few examples that they're looking for in the classroom are that teachers are ensuring equitable participation, that there are routines and norms in place for discussions, That there's evidence that instruction is informed by review of student progress and students' performance data to address learning gaps.

[04:02:43] Another session for building leaders focused on connecting their own values and beliefs to action and implementation when leading with cultural humility. So curricular examples, what does culturally responsive instruction look like in the classroom?

[04:03:07] We're going to talk about what this can look like through the lens of the subject area. But you will see the themes of connecting to student culture and identity, diversity of representation, building a safe, affirming learning community within the classroom, and setting high expectations for all students in the examples that we provide.

[04:03:24] When providing learning with teachers, they actually learn the strategies as if they were students in order to learn how to implement them when they are in the classroom. We mentioned this earlier as one of the strategies of a word splash, so activating prior knowledge.

[04:03:42] In this example, we can tap into students' cultural knowledge and prime them for rigorous learning. We affirm students' prior knowledge, demonstrating our belief that they have the capacity to take on more knowledge. This is a strategy for holding high expectations.

[04:04:00] This is an example from an English and language arts setting. An I am poem is a type of personal poem in which the student describes themselves through a series of prompts. So writing and sharing these are a wonderful way for the student to share parts of their identity, express themselves, and feel known and seen and respected, and also for the teacher to get to know the student.

[04:04:23] This can build a learning community, so this is another example of that strategy. And it's also a wonderful way for students to get to know each other. The next example is for a science setting.

[04:04:41] So in this activity, students draw their idea of a scientist doing science. The exercise surfaces students' prior understanding about science and what scientists do. It serves as a launching point for discovering that students, in fact, themselves can be scientists, helping them to see themselves in this role in the classroom and perhaps in the future.

[04:05:05] It can also show teachers what the students find interesting about science and what activities that they'd like to engage in during the learning. And in social science and global studies, one example of a strategy is the graffiti wall, where students record their comments and questions about a topic, hear each other's ideas and perspectives, process new or sensitive material, and organize, categorize, summarize, and discuss ideas and thoughts.

[04:05:36] So, graffiti boards are a shared writing space. Students record their comments and questions. The purpose of this strategy is to help students hear each other's ideas. Some benefits of this strategy include that it can be implemented in five to ten minutes.

[04:05:52] It provides a way for less engaged or shy students to engage in the conversation. And it creates a record of students' ideas and questions that can be referred to at a later point. It gives students space and time to process emotional material.

[04:06:07] You can use the graffiti board strategy as a preview activity by introducing a new topic and helping students to organize any existing knowledge about that topic. You can also use the strategy to prepare for a class discussion or writing assignment about a text by asking students to share their reactions to the text on the graffiti board.

[04:06:32] We will finish on this quote, "Cultural responsiveness is responding to people's culture and who they are. No matter what topic is being taught, teachers are always responding to students and their unique identities and cultures. All teachings should strive to be as culturally responsive as possible.

[04:06:53] So going back as a check-in to the goals of our presentation, we hope that it met the goals that we outlined in deepening your understanding of culturally responsive instruction, learning how the Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility provide learning and support for LCPS staff around this topic, and exploring strategies for culturally responsive of instruction. Thank you for providing this time, and if you have any questions, I can answer them for you.

[04:07:23] Thank you very much, Mr. Muhammad and Ms. Lewis. Board members, do you have any questions or thoughts? No? Yes. Ms. Chandler.

[04:07:42] Thank you so much for your presentation. I really, in sort of reflecting on it, find it to be so welcoming, and the words that stood out to me the most were belonging and humility, and I think it's one of those things. We have a great responsibility to serve the children who are here in our division and to meet them where they are and to understand them so that we can figure out the way to reach them and give them the best opportunity for their outcomes that we possibly

[04:08:17] can. And I just, I really appreciate the ability to see some of the actual lessons that you're using and the I am poem is something that's been like it's my senior did it in elementary school and it's one of my favorite things that we saved so thank you I really appreciated it yes Mr. Streffy one of the things I think about when I was looking at the presentation is the question of so what right to each student as you're going through a content area

[04:08:55] or teaching something regardless of the topic to this the question in the student's mind a lot of times the question in the teacher's mind is like so what right why how is this relevant to me or what impact is this going to have on my life and why do I need to know this and I think that culturally responsive teaching tools allow teachers to really figure out how do you how do you engage the student in a in a way that's meaningful to them so that they can kind of deepen their knowledge and it was and getting more into kind of methods around like the Socratic method of problem-solving and understanding how to debate ideas and issues, but that's

[04:09:34] really what I think about is I think some of our best teachers, you know, try to figure out, well, how is this, how could I make this relevant or contextualize this for students coming from different backgrounds or experiences, so just something that kind of I was thinking about as you were presenting.

[04:09:52] So when my kids were in third grade, the twins, you know, one who's dyslexic and one who has other processing issues and and one of my favorite teachers miss parker if she's listening and miss milham um who's now an educational diagnostician the one thing that they did and i don't even i think it was probably before cultural me and my kids are over 20 but the one thing that they did was they had that morning meeting every meeting and it was you know will

[04:10:26] had his ipad and he was one of the very first ipads around to have some accessible pdfs and things like that and other kids were kind of teasing him and things like that and what they did was and during that morning meeting it was like everybody had something someone had alopecia someone had diabetes someone had something like we're all not perfect and and they really did work together as a team like it that class to me was so connected and they were so connected to

[04:10:58] their teacher that i i can't help but think that's why she made such beautiful gains in her reading and um and math and everything else because those kids were connected and they they helped each other and that was so that's something i'll always remember i don't know that was you know called that at that point of time but that's definitely what my understanding is right now of what it is so what you're doing is beautiful work yes dr. Rashid thank you for that awesome presentation i

[04:11:32] think that what really stood out to me also was the myth slide of disregarding the differences just knowing that we have differences and just kind of not acknowledging that way we won't have conflict in the classroom or anything of the sort but i like how you know to acknowledge those differences, and to recognize those helps to bring all the students together.

[04:11:51] Thank you. Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thanks, Madam Chair. I would have liked to have read this earlier if it was on the agenda, but I do have a question for slide 19. What does student culture and identity have to do with math?

[04:12:14] So thank you for your question, Board Member Griffiths.

[04:12:31] Student identity and culture are embedded in all instruction, and the point that it is making here is that in math and science and social science and global studies, in any content area, that students' identity and culture play a big part in the way that we can connect as teachers, that students can connect to the curriculum, and that they can see themselves as critical thinkers in the classroom.

[04:13:01] So the connection is that it connects and interweaves throughout all curriculum and instruction. Thank you. I'm not sure I believe that, but thank you. Mr. Muhammad, I was wondering, so many years ago when I was doing some of these, you know, more into education and things like that, and

looking at assessments, and one of the things that was interesting to me was, and we're talking about math and like a word problem, living in Corpus Christi, Texas, kids knew what the tide was.

[04:13:39] But living here in Loudon, Virginia, they might not know what the tide is. And so then they would get that wrong. Is that something that would be something talking about cultural identity and things like that? Yes, as students interact with curriculum, all parts of their beliefs or ideas that play a part in their lives.

[04:14:03] So when we think about identity, we think about the sense of self and who you are. And then when we think about culture, you think about things that are interacting, beliefs and ideas that you share with others, that you interact with others on. So when you think about the aspect of, let's say, the tidewater or another principle in science, you would have to open up the background knowledge and front load with information for students so they have a better understanding of what that is, what it looks like, the modeling, the representation so that they can connect to what those topics and ideas are, and then have those conversations about how does that impact you, your family.

[04:14:43] Some students may not have had those experiences. some students have that what that way by providing the opportunity for students to share and discuss they can also learn from the students in the classroom and that's another part of the instruction that teachers are able to provide but once they know that these things about their students they can also plan for these things that students may not have and so that's a that's another aspect of the instruction as far as knowing who my students are and what I need to provide to them in order for them to access the curriculum effectively thank you any other questions thank

[04:15:22] you so much for coming. Appreciate you. Thank you. And our pleasure. And we'd be happy to come back and discuss another topic at a later date. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for your time. Okay. Board members, we have, I mean, we have until four. Are there any other kinds of things that you guys want to discuss? Communication issues, anything like that to work through before we end for the day? Or are we just tired? Yes, ma'am.

[04:15:57] Thank you, Madam Chair. We all do our newsletters, and I don't know if I should bring this up during new business, but we have a policy where our newsletters only go to our constituents. And I was just talking to Natalie Allen in communications that maybe we can revise the policy where maybe once or twice a year we can send a newsletter to the whole county, you know, even though we're not in a specific district.

[04:16:29] So I wanted to know, and we wouldn't do it all the time, but, oh, I hear April here. Just maybe once or twice a year. So I'm hoping for new business to bring that up as, you know, to revise the policy and maybe we could do something like that so other counties can see what other districts are doing.

[04:16:51] Do you remember what policy number that is? And would that be LANP? I can pull it up real quick for you. Ms. Allen, would that be LAMP?

[04:17:08] Yes, I believe so. Yes. Vice Chair Donohue. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask a question for clarification. I haven't looked at this policy, but is it the case that we are not allowed to send newsletters to other?

[04:17:26] I mean, I'm the at-large, so whatever. Right. If you're a district person, for example, I would like to get Lauren's emails because my kids go to a Leesburg school. I assumed that if I just ask, I can be added

to her mailing list.

[04:17:44] If you ask as a constituent, I believe that's probably true. Per policy, though, it says as part of frequency that school board members may produce an e-newsletter, that LCPS will disseminate via email to families within their district.

[04:18:05] So I think it would be a policy change or expansion of that policy in order for that to happen. And one thing I did say to Ms. Griffiths, it might be potentially an overhaul of how we do that because the other piece of this is it might be inundating families with nine different newsletters.

[04:18:25] Not at the same time. No, not necessarily, but it's a lot of communication. And so worth talking about, potentially, at an LAMP meeting, what might be the most efficient way to communicate. For example, if we wanted to do something like this, you know, could it be that it's a school board newsletter where each board member has, you know, a component of it versus, like, a full-fledged newsletter like you all do now.

[04:18:50] But, again, that's just an idea, and we'd have to kind of bat around what might make the most sense. Ms. Allen, could you tell us what that policy number is? Yes, 2510. 2510. Thank you. Yes, Dr. Rashid.

[04:19:07] I'd like to bring up for, I mean, new business for, I guess, next time, for the district overlaps. I think we kind of touched on it earlier today. Maybe we could bring that about as an information item or a discussion about the district. I think we could discuss it now, although Ms. Chernoff and Mr. Streffi are not here.

[04:19:27] But one of the things was either to have everybody on there or nobody on there or have everybody on there with, find your legislator or whatever. What were the other ones, the other options, just having the primary and the at-large, the two and the at-large?

[04:19:46] What were people's thoughts about that? We're talking about the websites, school websites. Yes. I do think we should list all our school board members for the school websites.

[04:20:01] I think everybody should be listed. That's just my thought. From my perspective, I definitely feel open to making some change. I really empathize with Sumera with the idea of having 40 schools when I meant 42, I have 20.

[04:20:24] I'm afraid in listing everyone that people will get lost. And so I find I'm more drawn to the idea of having it primary by location. But I don't know that I fully understand how we have made the decision to include them as it stands now.

[04:20:46] So if it is based on special permission, if it's based on districting, I mean, like Mrs. Griffiths and I share Riverside, right?

[04:21:01] But I only have a small pocket, but I do have constituents at Riverside. But when my neighbor went to independence a couple years ago, should I be responsible? You know, that's the question. So I'm definitely open, and I think it would be nice if we could simplify it.

[04:21:18] And I share independence with Samara, and I share Broad Run with Linda. Just to give an example, the Riverside example is a good one. There are five board members listed on Riverside High School's website. So as far as consistency's sake, I get where you're coming from.

[04:21:36] Yes, Dr. Dean. And with the special programs being expanded, it's going to expand the need for even more to be on each website.

[04:21:53] Something like HamSci? Yeah. Yes, Vice Chair Donohue. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know that I particularly have strong feelings about we should list all nine board members or we should only list the primary, et cetera.

[04:22:16] I think to me it's maybe more important to make clear somewhere that parents who have concerns can contact any of the board members, whether we do that by saying, like, you can contact any of the board members by here, you know, link or go to Let's Talk or go to the, like, here's the email to contact the whole board or whatever.

[04:22:40] but not to cause people to conclude that they may only be allowed to reach out to one individual board member. The other aspect of that is there could just be a link, reach out to the board members.

[04:23:00] It says that on every website already. There's a contact your school board, and you can click on it, and it goes to your board page, and it has all the individual board members listed, and then at the bottom there's a button that says contact the full board. So I think the listing part is the...

[04:23:18] So why do we list some board members? That's the way we've done it before. And if we want to change it, we absolutely are open to that. And it's an easy thing for us to do.

[04:23:40] Okay. Dr. Rashid? If you go to each of our individual websites on LCPS, and then it has our beautiful picture, and then underneath it we have like a million schools underneath it. So that's another thing. Like, can that be fixed? I mean, I don't, well, fixed.

[04:23:56] I don't know, because that's where I found out I had 87,000 schools underneath my name. It was like these two long columns, and I was so envious of my colleagues. I was like, I just have all these, yeah, that large. So that could be fixed, too. I mean, I don't, I mean, I don't know who mentioned it earlier today.

[04:24:15] It gives that confusion that the constituent doesn't know who my school board representative, if we list all of them. I don't have a problem having them all down. But then how would they know if they don't, how do they know? Because they don't even know what district they're in. Ms. Allen, what have you done in your other, I mean, you've worked in several different school districts.

[04:24:36] Typically in smaller print on the bottom of a website is the full board and then the superintendent's name. But to your point about contacting your school board, it could be a button that says contact your school board, which is there on every page.

[04:24:53] And then when you click on that, it goes to the board page. should we have that routed but then that would be an extra thing to do like once someone clicks on that link can there be some way of some sort having that constituents concern be addressed by someone that then directs it further to the specific school board member and the at-large just a thought yes vice chair donahue thank you madam chair i am reminded of what april said

[04:25:25] earlier that i agree with slash find challenging because i am supposed to be have some responsibility for all of our schools but there but the needs are so different all over the county it is really helpful for me if I receive a constituent concern to be able to have conversations with if it's a Little River

School with Sumera or if it's a Catoctin school with Kerry because y'all know the ins and outs and intricacies of your district better than I do and I guess that that would be the

[04:26:04] potential downside of like just referring of referring to concern constituents or parents to the entire board is who is the best suited person to help them dr. Dean's had requested that we have a conversation about this but I don't know how else to have a conversation about it without being here my I said have a conversation but also and I don't know how this all works one of those platforms where the community could have input related to the topic

[04:26:40] versus just us talking about the topic and I don't know if I don't know if that's logical or workable. Ms. Allen? It's definitely possible I mean we could maybe ask a question via Let's Talk and send it out in a newsletter or something like that ask for feedback. It's not really a policy per se it's kind of operations in a way it's kind of your purview because your communications. Well

[04:27:14] Well, and it's philosophical for you all because, I mean, typically as it relates to board communication, yes, it's my purview in the sense of like what we can put on the website and how to make it look good and intuitive and those kinds of things.

[04:27:30] But I think it's philosophical as far as do you want to get every communication from every constituent routed to all of you or do you want, you know, your specific constituents to send specific messages to you? So I think it might be a larger conversation.

[04:27:47] Can I jump in on that one, Ms. Allen? I know this sounds crazy, but I am interested in what's going on around the county. I don't know if I'm the only one, but I may not respond to it if it's not my area. But I would like to be updated because I have had some people come to me from different districts.

[04:28:07] Didn't you know about this? I did not. If I had seen it come through, maybe I would have. I really think that I'd like to just be updated by what's going on in the county, even though I might not be able to help or assist, but I want to be updated, if you don't mind.

[04:28:29] Thank you. Ms. LaBelle, you've been waiting patiently. I'm going to have to backtrack with this a little bit. I want to go back to what Dr. Dean said about having a community discussion with maybe the community that you represent.

[04:28:48] For example, in Catoctin, we had a lot of snow, but we have some subdivisions whose roads were cleared very early. We have some areas in the mountains that you're driving down snow canyons.

[04:29:05] We have another area with snow blowing across fields, making it a virtual whiteout. I was in one on the way here. So if we could, on possibly our Facebook page, because that gives that information that I want to get out to the entire community about, well, I'm grateful that your roads are taken care of, but we have these other issues, and explain them, and then everybody could see it there.

[04:29:34] And if somebody had something else to add, if it were on Facebook, they could. Am I correct? I don't quite understand the question as far as it relates to our LCPS Facebook page, like what we would be doing differently i'm sorry that wouldn't be your facebook page that would be our personal oh your personal facebook page sorry okay we have said i have uh kerry uh catoctin district representative facebook page so if we could put those types of questions on the facebook

[04:30:08] page um that would put it out to the community the community would then understand where we're coming from with, say, school closures. And then we only have to say it once, but they could write

back in. Like I was telling someone earlier, somebody actually sent me a video because her children had to walk a mile to an alternate bus stop. And she had videoed it in the car and what it was like to drive. And it was a mile. She clocked it. Then maybe the people in the subdivisions

[04:30:47] would better understand what was going on in the more mountainous areas and that would help with us having to repeat the same answers over and over and over again they could engage in a community discussion at that point miss LaBelle I think that I mean our Facebook pages are our purview they're not managed or anything by LCPS I think that's would be us well what I was suggesting is that might be an answer to Linda Dean's comment about having you is that what you meant is dr. Dean's no okay then I think I think what you're probably

[04:31:26] saying is that the school board could leverage your face your platforms your social media maybe your newsletter and ask your constituents the question which you would absolutely be able to do as school board members okay and they could they could then have their community discussion about what that particular particular problem was and what they think they can do about it. And then I would be able to hear

[04:31:51] it and bring it to wherever it needs to go. That was just a thought. I'm kind of at a crossroads here because it's not something that we're really going to vote on. It seems kind of.

[04:32:14] And there's two questions, right? So it's a philosophical question that we had to figure out. And then I think, right? Okay. So it sounds to me, it's two questions. It's what, like who should be on every website what names and kevin lewis actually have to give you credit had a really good idea to have all the names on the bottom of the websites but then bold the ones who are your representative which we could do but as far as the contact like who to contact that's up to them what that's going to be up to you all as far it's right now if you go to any school website there's

[04:32:52] a list of board members and then there's contact the school board that you can click on it clicks out of the individual school website, it goes to your school board website, and then folks can click on your individual pictures and it says, you know, contact Ms. Mansfield, or they can click on a button that says contact the full board.

[04:33:13] And so those are their choices. Like, the constituents are already making the choice about who to contact in that regard that way. Okay, Dr. Rasheed. I think that's a great idea what Ms. Allen had mentioned, with the exception of on our own personal um lcps websites with our beautiful picture on them if we can get rid of those other if we can be more specific i guess is what i'm saying with those schools so we can just have the specific ones under each of our names not the ones that you have special permission for

[04:33:44] correct correct so that would also include hampsi because that could be any of us or not hampsi will continue to expand i don't know if we start including hampsi it'll just because we It'll go all over the place.

[04:34:07] We all have North Star. We all have Academies of Loudoun. We all have Robey. Right? Let's see it. When you said HamSci, then it'll be, I mean, that's at Tuscarora. I mean, then we're going to, if we plan to expand, then it's going to be a lot.

[04:34:23] Well, to that point, like IB schools as well, right? Or language immersion, where I can be from any school. So that's not really a program. It's more of a, it's a program as opposed to a school. Okay. But

the confusion may still lie with constituents that are not part of the special programs, and when it's listed under our name, and a parent is just attending, for example, Heritage at IB, and they contact April or Dr. Deans or anyone for that matter, and it has nothing to do with that, that's where the confusion lies.

[04:34:53] It's when it's listed under our name where other constituents that are not part of that special program still reach out to us. That's what I'm saying. That's where all that overlap may get a little bit more confusing later on if we start including special programs. Okay. I'm happy with not including special programs.

[04:35:11] How do you guys feel about that? Everybody's name on there, but then the two, primary and Vice Chair Donahue, since she's at large, bolded. And then there's just a link for everyone.

[04:35:27] Yes. Oh, Dr. Spence, sorry. Would you like to say something? If it's okay, I've just been listening and trying to sort of figure out the issues. And I think there's two things I'm thinking about. Mostly I'm just thinking about, like, I'm a parent, and I'm looking at a website, and I want to know who to contact.

[04:35:49] I don't know that putting everybody's names on there, and then it's going to make that clearer for me. Like, that's kind of my initial reaction to that idea. I think it might make it less clear for me, even if it's bolded. So I'm a little concerned about that. but i'm also uh two other thoughts one would be does does that make it clear if i'm a parent when i go to a school's website uh that i should contact the principal first um you know does that create that challenge right so how do we make sure we're communicating that when we put your school board picture at the bottom and then the next piece of it is um although it's always

[04:36:29] under the administrative page so maybe they get that and then the other piece was like if i mean it seems to me well it just seems to me in general the and this is your again this is your all's direction of philosophy but the easier we can make it on a parent to figure out who to contact the better off we're going to be and if that means you just pick like the one primary and then that one primary says well technically though you yes this is my school but you live over in april

[04:37:03] chandler's district so here's who you got to contact and you know like it's a little i'm just trying to like i'm curious i actually kind of was interested i don't i hate doing another survey like that to get parents perspective but but the idea of like what do parents think about that like what would make this because isn't that kind of the point of the question what would make this easier on parents what would eliminate steps for parents to get answers that they need versus having to be told well i'm not the right school board member okay um april and then uh miss labelle Okay.

[04:37:39] I will say what Dr. Spence said really resonates with me. I think we should try to make it easier on parents. And, again, I've been around a long time, and I'm not clear on how the schools are assigned.

[04:37:54] So if somebody could confirm, is it truly that if a kid is in special permission but live in your district, that's how it's done? Because it seems to me like it would be significantly more transparent to have it be assigned to the district at the district level, and then perhaps it could be just a tad bit more work for the school board members to help redirect if that was necessary.

[04:38:23] That's just where I am with it right now. Ms. LaBelle. First of all, Dr. Spence, I can clear things up for you. You're in my district, okay? We're good with that one now. As far as the rest of it goes, I think that what we need to do is direct them, use their address where their school is to send out the newsletters.

If a parent has a problem for example I got a letter from a parent about his student he'd already talked to my first question

[04:39:00] always is he already talked to his principal the athletic director it was an athletic question and who does he contact now what's the protocol so I answered his question and then I said In addition, you know, I'm very happy to answer your question, but just so you know, you actually live in Dr. Rasheed's district, and you might get a quicker response going that way.

[04:39:29] So if it's a special permission person and they contact you the first time and they tell you my students over at, in my case, let's say they're at ROTC and they're in Leesburg and that's not one of the schools listed on my page, if they called me or contacted me, I should say, because their child's there on special permission, I would be able to say to them, well, I deal with you.

[04:39:59] my name was on your list because I am the representative for where you live, but if you want to talk to the representative that actually handles the ROTC program at County, that would be Ms. Chernoff. So it would be my responsibility to point out what their other options were, simply because we know where we're dealing with people, they don't, and it's just easy for us to handle their problem or if you don't know an answer then refer them and and still let them know you know we're more than happy to help you but next time you might want to try that kind of thing

[04:40:39] you know i'm i'm coming more towards the whole survey even though we are all surveyed out but um i think i am dr dean's i kind of am kind of you know dr dean's and april and um dr spence Could I suggest a focus group, potentially, instead of a survey?

[04:41:03] Yes, Ms. Communications Chair, of course. I'll defer to you on that. Just thinking about the context, like, this is a lot of context and nuance that we're talking about, and I can't imagine being able to capture what we're talking about in a survey, but having a focus group of parents or even bringing this to leave, potentially, as a conversation might be a good start to just say, you know, this is a problem that was brought to us by our school board can you tell us what you think um leaf has you know representation across all of the districts and um majority of schools so that

[04:41:38] might be a a good starting point for that point leaf msac and seac i think i think that would be fine um what do you guys think about that just a little focus group and and this seems so small but it does it is communication which could possibly be a big thing right it is a big thing So why don't we do that?

[04:42:01] How do you guys feel about that? Yes? Yeah. Okay. Great. Done. Yes. One more thing. Thank you, Madam Chair. As far as the agendas go, I've noticed, and unfortunately Ms. Donahue left, she had mentioned it before, the agendas should be put up way before, so we can view them or the public can view them, not the day of and an hour before a presentation.

[04:42:27] And that's been happening a lot lately. And I think that needs to get under control. Plus, the slides, I think we talked about under 20 slides as well. So if that's something we can work on, I'd really appreciate that.

[04:42:43] But I think, I'm not speaking for everybody, but I'd like to see the information ahead of time. This retreat was planned, I think, over a month ago. And correct me if I'm wrong. I don't see why the agendas from the VSBA and the culturally responsive presentation were put on very last minute.

[04:43:04] So I just wanted to add that as well. Thank you. Mr. Allen, could you tell us the legal requirements for having agenda and everything else up? So the policy is what we, the school board, should be applying because it's a little stricter than what's required by law.

[04:43:27] So we would be looking at policy 2430, section C, which reads, agenda items and supporting documents or other information should be submitted to the superintendent.

[04:43:44] Ultimately, to answer this relevant question, board members should be delivered agenda items at least two days prior to the meeting. And then according to FOIA, which is under 2.2-3707, the requirement is that any items presented to the school board members must be made available for public inspection at the time it's presented to school board members.

[04:44:07] And how customarily that's achieved is by posting on board docs. And that's 2440, you said? The policy is 2430, Section C. Oh, 30. Thank you. so if the if there's a presentation that's not exactly um fleshed out completely yet and we don't get it two days ahead of time then it would be what then under policy um that could be viewed as

[04:44:41] problematic but not under law necessarily so let me um add to that and i guess i want just to ask a clarifying question the agenda and the what is made available to board members are not precisely the same thing right so the agenda has to be posted but if we don't have a presentation ready as soon as the board members are seeing the presentation if that's posted then that meets the policy uh goal correct right that said i would also say um we have had this conversation

[04:45:16] and we have created a new calendar for staff of how we get things to the board and how we get things up onto the agenda ahead of time it would be helpful probably to have some discussion about special meetings because that's different than the normal course of how we do the agenda planning and how we get things up and how our staff works off of our calendar.

[04:45:39] And so that's probably the issue here is that this is a kind of different meeting, and we haven't had the same direction or conversation about that. We're, as I was mentioning, we were refining the presentation as late as yesterday afternoon.

[04:46:00] not the VSBA one, because that's not ours, but the presentation yesterday afternoon that you saw this afternoon, we didn't have the same calendar and expectations set for that because that's outside of our normal process.

[04:46:16] But, I mean, we can talk about it. We're not opposed to it, and we're certainly not trying to hide anything from it. I don't know what we would be hiding. I just think if the board wants to give us any direction on that, we'd be happy to take it, And, you know, again, kind of remarking that we did have that conversation about the other agenda development.

[04:46:38] And we took that and created a calendar. And I think I actually would disagree and say that we actually have been pretty on top of making sure all of those things get posted to the agenda as quick as we can. Dr. Spence, would you say committee meetings were separate than school board meetings as well?

[04:46:59] Well, so your committee meetings, I think we follow the same process because that's what's outlined under the policy. Special meetings are just different. They kind of have a different attention to them. It's like when you had a special meeting the other day, you post the agenda, but not necessarily any aligned materials.

[04:47:23] But, again, we'd be happy to take any direction on that. I think in this case, this retreat was planned over a month ago. So the presentation was very last minute today. That's my point. I can tell you working on the agenda with VSBA, just because it was planned a month ago doesn't mean that we worked through everything.

[04:47:59] And then again, the presentation from VSBA, it's VSBAs. And so we can work through that another time. I was talking about the other one, the other presentation. And so we can, and then I just want to make sure about the committee meetings, too, that that's the same expectation.

[04:48:28] Yeah, I think it is the same expectation. Our staff understands that materials that are up for discussion in committee need to be posted two days in advance. Including presentations, or is that something that can be worked on until they're ready to present? I think that also includes presentations, but I'll have to double-check that with staff in our calendar.

[04:48:48] Thank you, Dr. Smith. I mean, Dr. Spence. okay all right if there are other any other questions concerns okay all right our uh what's today january 24th um retreat is now adjourned thank you



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