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Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting, Wednesday, February 5, 2025

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[00:00:50] afternoon everyone I'd like to call this February 5th curriculum and instruction meeting to order my name is Lauren Chernoff I'm the chair of this committee and I am joined tonight by my colleague Dr. Rashid and we are going to cover two topics tonight but before we do that there's no public comment so we will skip to approving the minutes so we need to approve the minutes from our January meeting is there a motion to approve the minutes motion to approve the Minister seconded I second the motion all those in favor aye aye any

[00:01:29] opposed no all righty we will move right along tonight we have two information items the first one is an update on Lexia core 5 and the presenters tonight are Miss Katherine Neal who's the supervisor of early literacy elementary reading and writing and Dr. Michelle Picard who's the supervisor of secondary English and reading and Mr. Jeff Roundsley the director of teaching and learning so I will pass it off to you thank you for being here. All right thank you we're excited to talk about some some successes that we've had with Lexia core five and power up which are middle school program or secondary program. So I'm gonna let Miss Neal talk a little bit

[00:02:08] about core five and some details around that program and then we'll also have the opportunity to share some of our data that we've collected thus far this year and have any questions from the committee right so Lexia core 5 is an approved intervention under the Virginia Literacy Act it is approved

for all five pillars of literacy so when you look at the student reading plans under the Virginia Literacy Act there are certain categories in which students should receive intervention there's five of them phonemic awareness phonics vocabulary

[00:02:47] comprehension and fluency and lexia core 5 is one of the programs that had been approved to meet all five pillars it actually was one of only three programs that had been approved in all of those areas in all grade levels we had a lexia core 5 last year with all in tutoring and we were able to we had some licenses that had not been consumed yet and so this year we are using the licenses from all-in tutoring that kind of carried over into this year for to meet the requirements of

[00:03:23] the vla and to have an intervention that's approved so in taking a look the the sheet the overview sheet that is attached on board docs kind of gives a lot more detail around lexia core five what we are using it for currently is for our students that are under the mtss structure needing a tier 3 intervention so for students that have taken the vows and are high risk on vows they would they could be receiving core 5 for students that are maybe not taking the vows like

[00:04:03] they're third grade or above and they took the map they are in that tier 3 range and they are in need of an intervention they could be receiving core 5 as well in taking a look towards the end of that document we did share some data around what we're seeing from core five so far really intervention plans got started in about octoberish so we're talking maybe three months almost four months of usage with lexia core five and you can see there that we have had some movement

[00:04:37] with students they are moving into you know we had some students that started even as high as six grade levels below and now they're moving into like four grade levels or even two grade levels below and then we've had quite a significant increase in the one grade level below region so we are seeing some movement in that right direction currently we're in the middle of our mid-year vows testing so we don't have all of the vows scores ready to share however as of last week

[00:05:11] we were able to look at the data and we had 1348 students who at the fall testing window for vowels they were in that high risk band and so their reading teachers worked with them and you know set their plan up and they decided that core five would be the intervention that would best meet their needs and so looking at the data now for mid-year out of these 1 348 students 69 of them

[00:05:44] are still in that high risk ban but we've had 22 move into moderate risk and then 9 move into low risk so that is definitely some good movement about 31 have moved into that moderate or low risk ban so the way that we have worked with our reading teachers with core 5 it is a blended learning model so part of the time they are using a digital component they are on you know their devices with some intentional student practice not every student is doing the same practice it is targeted to meet

[00:06:18] their needs based off of the testing or the the assessments that they were given and then reading teachers are providing intervention face to face with them five days a week so the digital component is in addition to the max amount of minutes for for a fourth or fifth grader would be the program talks about them having about 80 minutes per week really we have told reading teachers that only about 50 percent of that is what they need to meet in order to be able to make instructional decisions

[00:06:56] which ends up being you know 40 minutes a week less than 10 minutes a day that they would be on on their device that I'll hand it over to Michelle. Yeah I just want to thank the board for the support for Lexia in the school board budget and we recognize that there are significant questions around Lexia

and its implementation and concerns from teachers so we welcome the time for a discussion and to also hear more about specifically talking about Lexia core five but also that in the middle school we are implementing Lexia power up and Dr. Picard can answer any questions

[00:07:33] you might have about that as well. - Thank you so much for the overview. Dr. Rasheed, did you have any questions? - Just a main question is, have you guys heard of any concerns on the negative for this use from teachers?

[00:07:53] - We actually added some of that in the document too, that there is definitely some challenges to work around with Core 5. Finding time for usage during the class, I mean, finding time for everything that, you know, that is a possibility for elementary students is really difficult.

[00:08:13] And so to be able to find some time during their classroom instruction where they could be doing some of this intentional practice is definitely something that we've had to kind of problem solve. Some of the things that I've seen teachers have as they're doing some literacy stations during their literacy block.

[00:08:33] So students are working independently during this time as maybe the teacher's meeting with a small group of students. I know that a lot of the students are using that independent time to take that you know eight to ten minutes to get on core five and do some of their practice on the flip side teachers have said that they appreciate that because it does give them some targeted practice during that time but finding the time can also you know be a challenge for that too core five has a lot to offer in regards to learning what the different reports are understanding what the information that we're getting and it's so it's definitely a learning curve

[00:09:11] We have not, we work, we meet with reading specialists once a month and our meetings, our monthly meetings have been around understanding Core 5 and that platform and what the information we can glean from it and then how we can adapt our interventions to meet student needs.

[00:09:28] Thanks so much for that. I mean, I do like the percentages. They do look promising. So it's that good forecast that we see that we can kind of predict, hopefully, that it continues that trend. Thank you. I just wanted to add Catherine the challenges that she mentioned are absolutely the challenges that we've also experienced in middle and to some degree high school which is it's an incredibly robust platform we're actually using it in middle school not only for an intervention but also for supplementation so there is a really steep learning curve and we've been very grateful for the support both of the offices and of the the product owners to

[00:10:06] do that time is always going to be an enormous issue and then it's implementation anything that is new is going to come with with some the pros and cons the happies and the not so happies I do want to just add not only to underscore those things but I also want to add that I've never seen a program not really a program person I've never seen a program that kids liked so much. Middle school children do not like programs. That's just not something that they're interested in. And we've just had extraordinary anecdotal evidence that kids are enjoying the

[00:10:45] program and they're also setting goals and taking ownership. I met with our subject area lead teachers yesterday and they were talking about how kids know where they are and that they have literally reached out for help when they're stuck. And that's the beauty to the program. It's not all one or the other.

[00:11:03] You're not completely on a program. LCPS is calling me. There you go. Sorry about that. Right. So it's not only practice, but it's tutorial, and it's very targeted, so it's differentiated.

[00:11:19] And then finally, I would just add another, and I know you wanted the negatives, but another real positive is there's a democratization of information. All teachers are not reading teachers, not even third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers. We cannot ascribe to them the deep knowledge that you have from becoming a reading specialist.

[00:11:37] But with Lexia, it will tag what you don't understand and then provide a vetted lesson plan. You don't understand schwa? Let me show you what it is. You don't understand how to infer in this particular type of writing? Let me give you a lesson.

[00:11:54] So there are really a lot of unexpected benefits. Joy was not one that I expected, and I think that there is a lot of joy with kids. We're also getting a lot of buy-in with teachers. And we also have data, but I won't go on, about that it is making a difference.

[00:12:09] It's closing gaps. Thank you. And, Dr. Picard, I know we had a long conversation about, I mean, I have the elementary lens in my background, but we had a long conversation about how, you know, not every, especially with these gaps that are trickling up, you know, especially post-COVID and because of, you know, the science of reading and implementing all of that, we're seeing those kids now are sitting in the middle school classroom needing intervention at a level that we've never seen before and so these teachers are tackling that and a lot of them don't they teach in English 7 curriculum right so it's not necessarily

[00:12:47] knowing how to teach word study or all of those things and that's where Lexia can support my concerns I've voiced this from the full board and we've had lots of conversations and I'm so grateful I do want to mention that I've had multiple meetings about this platform just because I happen to have a middle schooler who doesn't love it um I'm just gonna put that out there um and just trying to she's on or above grade level and really struggling with like why do I have to be on this program I just want to read books um and so that's where kind of this conversation sort of came from my mom hat to now you know thinking about curriculum

[00:13:24] and instruction and then it being a budget item I will echo what you said about time I put out for some feedback and the number one thread is time and I think reading specialists and teachers and I heard from a couple of parents but mostly reading specialists say it's a good program like they don't really have a problem with the program as a tool what is hard is the implementation and I think that's where we always struggle especially a division this large with lots of different needs and so I just I know you talked about the literacy

[00:13:59] centers I think there is an ongoing feeling of like is it worth my time to sit and babysit a kid on the computer because I am hearing that that is something that they feel like they have to do because you need 40 valuable minutes is my understanding on a week which is half of what is recommended to get the reports that would be valuable enough to drive instruction and if you want to get those valuable minutes sometimes people feel in their wind time or their power up time that they which is their intervention block they have to sit and watch the child on

[00:14:37] the device when they are the highest leverage person with the most reading knowledge in the building so how would you advise that how do we get around that because if they don't have the

time to do the minutes and then that infringes on their time to teach face to face I think it puts them in a difficult situation, at least that's what they've expressed to me, at the elementary level.

[00:15:02] You know, I think part of it is just, like Dr. Picard was saying, like the implementation. You know, we're really in this implementation phase of trying to understand the program, the constraints that the program has, and our understanding of it.

[00:15:19] So that being said, we have not asked reading specialists to sit down and watch them do it on a computer. Now, part of Lexia Core 5 that is also a positive is that there's progress monitoring involved with the program.

[00:15:36] So part of that 10 minutes that they're on during the day also helps to progress monitor them. So it would be the same as when a reading teacher, like on a Friday, might fast bridge a student. That time on Lexia Core 5 is helping to progress monitor. So we just were able to, with the student reading plans, have Lexia Core 5 sync with those student reading plans, which is a positive for teachers because they don't have to go into every plan and enter the progress monitoring.

[00:16:05] But if students haven't gone through, like if they haven't been on the program and they haven't gone through some of the cycles or the different levels, it's not going to progress monitor them. And so they're not seeing the data in their plan. So I think that some of kind of just a realization that really just Friday when we met with them and this sync has just taken place like within the last week that we started to realize, you know, we do have to try to work with classroom teachers and try to find some time, maybe in lieu of some of the other programs that students are on, such as Epic or BrainPop, maybe we're choosing to do Core 5 instead.

[00:16:43] And I think part of that is just some education with teachers so that they understand why it's important that they get on for the 8 to 10 minutes so that they have that practice and so that they can be progress monitored. Yeah, I definitely have heard that they feel like that if they don't do it enough, then they need FastBridge to progress monitor, right, because they don't have enough information.

[00:17:07] So I think that that's the rub. I was wondering, too, I did get a question about how people are collaborating, how you guys are collaborating across departments. So some concerns about English language learners also needing to meet a quota of minutes on Imagine Learning, a quota of minutes on DreamBox, a quota of minutes on Lexia.

[00:17:25] Like, with that being the focus, like, are there collaborative conversations around those things? What is the guidance there? Like, I mean, I don't think any of us want to just stack the deck with a whole day's worth of getting on a device. So we still meet as a core literacy team with Elle and SPED every other week.

[00:17:46] And so we do talk about this. They were collaborators on our division literacy plan. Imagine Learning is a program that is approved in some areas for supplemental, and so L students are on that program, but it's not approved as an intervention.

[00:18:04] So we also have to take into account what the students need. And so if they are tier three, and in that high-risk band, they need to have an approved intervention being delivered. And I think, like I don't want to get away from that fact either because our approved programs for interventions are very limited.

[00:18:29] And so our other options would be to piecemeal a bunch of different programs together in order to make sure that we're meeting student needs. And I think we can provide a lot of research around how that might not be the best next step for students or our most struggling students is to have multiple programs to help support them.

[00:18:48] so we do collaborate with ellen sped some we do have some special education students that have iep's that are also on core 5 and using that as an intervention in lieu of spire so there is some back and forth that way so it really is a conversation around what best meets the needs of those students and we're definitely happy to have those conversations yeah i think that's important because we want to make sure they're not doing program after program after program

[00:19:20] One of the questions that someone asked was about the guidance between, is it Focus Phonics? What is the difference between Focus Phonics and Lexia Core 5, and what are their different uses, and are their students doing both, or is it one track or the other?

[00:19:40] So it's one track or the other. Focus Phonics is only approved for phonics in kindergarten, first, and second grade. and it was provided to literacy tutors those are new pals tutors um formerly known as right formerly known as palsters um it was provided to them this year because they needed to have a very explicit program that was on the approved list um this program really we we did some training with the literacy tutors at the beginning of the year we made sure that they had all the materials that they needed to implement the program and so that is really students that are on focus phonics

[00:20:20] are students that are in that high risk band but are meeting with the literacy tutor so that they have some more um directive and scripted lessons for them to be able to do okay and then this was a new one to me that i hadn't heard about was about sort of where it is there like an initial assessment that drops them into a track and then are they in that till they finish it or not because the question was with some of their goals they're supposed to be able to master grade level skills but the track that they're in will never get to those grade level

[00:20:56] skills and so how is that an issue I really didn't you probably understand the question better than I do because I haven't seen that piece I'm not sure that we would know at this point in the year that they wouldn't be able to get to that grade level goal I'm not quite sure where that part is coming out from however there has been some discussion around with student reading plans and following the guidance from the state the the intervention plans you have to set a grade level goal that students will meet because you know we're never going to close the gap unless we see where students need to be right so

[00:21:34] there's that grade level goal and then there's multiple objectives in that student plan that you can think of as like stepping stones these are our stepping stones of how we're going to get our students there right so we've talked with reading teachers and been very explicit that we understand that there may be a grade level goal where you know it's um you know you have a first a fourth grader and they're performing on a first grade level so we're setting a goal at a fourth grade goal at the end of the year they're at you know mid second grade you know they've made some growth

[00:22:10] we're starting to close that gap but we still have some work to do it's not about um and and so i think that it's just a different approach to thinking about intervention plans and it's not about meeting every single goal but it's starting to target what we need to do to help students to move them forward I think that makes sense it's hard to have to set a goal that feels impossible to reach I don't want to say

anything is impossible kids are doing amazing things every day but I know that the upper grade teachers did say that that feels like a little defeatist so that that one

[00:22:50] is that is a challenge um the other thing um oh we had a great conversation about OG as orton gillingham as a full lot of teaching method that is approved so if you could just like recap that because i thought that that was a really important conversation that we had that showed because i know some of the concerns are around the lexia lessons feel a little tight scripted um maybe not as much variety in terms of the different levels of sensory and tactile things that some of the

[00:23:27] other methods such as OG would accomplish. So you really gave a great example to me in our meeting. So if you could expand upon that, I think it's important for people to understand how that fits into this. Sure. So Lexia lessons are very scripted and for good reason, right? However, We've talked a lot with reading teachers because, you know, since our, you know, we want to prioritize those face-to-face interventions and over the course of five, like a five-day week, those core five lessons are only going to get us so far.

[00:24:04] And we really need to lean into the expertise of our reading teachers to be able to bring in things that we know are evidence-based and that they know work with students, right, to help kind of supplement and to really improve on some of the things that they're experiencing with Core 5.

[00:24:22] So with that, we've talked about options to bring in to those daily lessons, one of them being OG. the majority, if not all of our reading teachers have been trained in the past with EMSI, which is an OG training that the state had, you know, supported us with and so forth.

[00:24:42] And so I think we had hoped and we had thought that this would be one of the interventions that we could use on the approved list, and it was not on the approved list. So the state has been very clear that OG is an approach and we can use that approach and that methodology within our interventions, and that we should.

[00:25:04] The OG professional learning is actually one of the approved professional learnings for the VLA. So that is something that we have been told that we can bring into our lessons, into our supports with students. So we can make those core five lessons more multi-sensory.

[00:25:21] We can bring in those, the word cards or the letter cards or the manipulatives and those kinds of things that we know have worked students in the past and so that is definitely something that we have been talking with reading teachers about about how they could incorporate some of those things I appreciate that I I struggle when I hear teacher I teachers are rule followers I think we've talked about that in committee before I was one and when you get a directive you want to do what you're told but you also have all these tools in your toolkit that you bring to the table that you know work with kids and most of the people that work in our schools have worked with

[00:25:58] those populations or students for a long time and and they're really invested in especially our reading specialists they're super invested in what's best practice for reading and writing and so my pause on all of this is when I hear teachers say well I can't do what's best for my kids because I have to put them on Lexia now I know that's a generalization statement and I have come a long way in my understanding but I wonder if you could speak to that sort of that teacher autonomy that teacher trust balanced with following what the VLA says and what we know

[00:26:34] to be right in terms of best practice of what the research says which we definitely want to follow and I don't want to say versus because I think we need to find a way to help our teachers understand how those things work together and how we do honor those components so I don't know even middle school or anybody if anybody wants it's kind of more of a philosophical question but I just want to make sure teachers hear us that we're not trying to put them in a situation where they can't do what's best for their students and I know you agree with that and I'm going to let you speak to it but I don't think that that's our stance you know programs don't teach teachers

[00:27:11] do and that is something that you know we've said you know even with the the textbook adoption with anything that we've come across like we just really want to emphasize that teachers have to bring in like we're having these same conversations with it the HMH and to reading implementation we know what's best for our students because a program is not going to be able to script you know to make scripted lessons for every single student and all their varying needs and so we have to we are more than willing to work with teachers and reading teachers to see how they can

[00:27:48] feel less like the program is making the choices for them I had a conversation with a reading teacher about, you know, can I bring in some of the books from my book room? You know, instead of using, you know, maybe some of the materials that Core 5 provides, can I bring in some of those decodables?

[00:28:06] Yes, absolutely, let's do that. So all of these things, we talked about some of the recipes for reading materials that we have. We have a lot of tools, like you said, tools in our tool belt that we should feel empowered to bring in based off of, you know, what the students need.

[00:28:23] And I think it's about that rationale. Like, we have to really look at the data. What is, what, where are the gaps for students when we're thinking about intervention? And then what's going to best meet their needs? And we can do it. It's going to take some time to get there, but we can do it.

[00:28:39] So I would just jump in at a higher level than speaking about elementary literacy or middle school even. Just thinking about our curriculum audit, for example, and some of the feedback we received just about the amount of choices that our teachers need to make.

[00:28:55] And that's a balance, too. We have so many things at the disposal of our teachers that when we focus on a particular resource that, mind you, we're investing a lot of funds in, we're going to consistently get this feedback about being too directive.

[00:29:13] I think that's going to happen next year when it comes to math. We're in the middle of a math adoption, and we currently have three or four choices when it comes to math digital content, and that adoption process may narrow that. And I'm anticipating that we're going to get a lot of feedback from teachers about taking away choices, just like we did when they had five choices.

[00:29:34] So we recognize that's a balance, but we also have consistently gotten feedback. There's too much out there for our teachers to make choices for. And so we need to remember that implementation dip. Like when something's new, there's frustration, and then hopefully people start seeing.

[00:29:50] So more broadly, not so much about Alexia. And I don't know, Mr. Rounds, if you made that connection when you were thinking about the curriculum audit. Yeah, actually, the group that did our curriculum audits really shared that with us, that they've been asked to do these curriculum audits all over the country because of laws like the VLA that have been passed in other states, and that they saw every

time in the first year of implementation teachers feeling like autonomy was being taken away or limited, and that, in time, teachers really grew to appreciate the idea that they did have a resource that they could turn to consistently

[00:30:29] that have been vetted that was supported that we were that we were helping people move towards so it's always it's always that balance of of course that teacher in the classroom knows that student and that student's needs better than someone sitting here in this building and so we want to make sure we're giving teachers really good quality resources that they can turn to and use but also enough flexibility to know that they they're the person who knows that child best and and can make the most informed decisions about how to support and it's always a line that we're walking a balance we're trying to find between those two things.

[00:31:07] - And I think probably the way to find that balance is to do what you said Ms. Neal is to have those conversations and for people to feel safe to say like I'm in a real pinch here this isn't working here's my scenario a lot of the feedback that I got was like well with this group of kids and then with this group of kids I have this issue and then this and so it is speaks to the level of teaching that these teachers are doing which is highly individualized, but also each sort of round, if you will, comes with its own challenges.

[00:31:35] So, all right, on to the parent piece. I have some questions about how parents know how their students are doing in Lexia, how the reporting works, and how you're using those, it's three parts, how you're using that to report out to parents, and then also how are the reports in driving the instruction.

[00:31:55] So I know you spoke about the progress monitoring a little bit, but maybe at the middle school level, too, I'm curious about. That's sort of a new mentality, I think, of, like, using. Involving parents in that way? No, not parents, but, like, looking at the data and having maybe small group work for intervention and those kinds of things at the grade level of curriculum content might not.

[00:32:15] So I would build on the theme that you're hearing tonight, which is that implementation takes time. I was thinking about messaging, and you and I had conversations about messaging. we message and what is heard is not always the same it's rarely the same like the word guideline means it is a guide so for example a guideline on time doesn't mean if you miss 10 minutes someone's going to come and pick you up right so um i say that because the the parent reports teachers are learning all of these different reports and how to use the reports to drive

[00:32:49] instruction. So for the parent reports, they have wonderful parent reports. They do not have wonderful technology that uploads them in batches to our parent view. So Catherine and I have been working with DDI and the company to see if we can get that to happen on a quarterly basis because the data is really rich. What's happening at the middle schools right now is we're in the messy middle so some schools are literally printing them out and having them during conferences or they're sending them home we also had a professional video made so that they could

[00:33:25] send that along to show exactly how it works the parent reports are a little bit different at the elementary school and the middle school so it has to be differentiated so for example at the middle school there are three different levels and there are three different categories so you can be at three different spaces and places whereas at the elementary school they're they're still talking a lot about grade level so we're in the messy middle we absolutely want to to strengthen the bridge with parents and sharing what um what the data means and how they can support us at home

[00:34:04] I know the second part of your question was different than parents but I'm going to let Catherine talk about parents first. I just would add that for elementary since right now it is just students receiving intervention they have a module plan or the student reading plan and our MTSS department has worked really hard to you know part under the Virginia Literacy Act it's about parents being able to be involved in that plan and have that communication so it's all documented parent communication is documented within that plan and then any time like when they're about

[00:34:42] they're going into the process of making kind of mid-year updates to those then there's they are sent to parents as well so that's where they'll see some of that progress monitoring in those charts and they can have some conversations with teachers as well about their child and the other piece to it is which is really exciting is that those plans are being translated into all the you know into the languages that they so that's been a big big lift. That was a big plus too that I heard from teachers was that it's translated into a lot of languages and that sometimes can rely on that so that's awesome. One thing I had a parent reach out to me about the reporting

[00:35:20] and this is like sort of goes back to why I think student success talks are important and that whole idea of like educating parents because when you look at the first and I'm speaking mostly for middle school now this is a middle school parent when you look at the report you see the different levels and then below you start to see how they're achieving on the different units and so if they're if they have gaps I'm going to say not below grade level but if they have gaps let's say in word study but in each lesson that they've had so far it says high you know high average or average and high it's as you go down the skills it starts to rank how

[00:36:00] they're doing in those individual units but then if you go into the grade level standards report where it breaks it down by grade level you could go all the way back to like second grade and start to see that in the standard accuracy you're actually low even though the parent report says that it's high it's talking about two different things so I think that that's an important distinction I hadn't caught that myself at first and we can talk about that offline if you want but it I think it could be a little bit deceiving if parents see that like they're high achieving in all the units that they're on but if you're a seventh grader at a

[00:36:38] second grade unit you're still you still have big gaps that may need to be addressed does that make sense we can look at it together too if you want yeah I think that's a very detailed question that we would want to look at a little more closely for example the standards the standards report doesn't go to parents it's only the skills what we look at more is like you said the moderate to high or slow and accurate that's just letting us know how they were behaving in a unit behavior is different than mastery we look much more closely at we look at that but we also look at the score

[00:37:12] and they need to have a 75 or higher to be considered mastery so for parents we're really conveying where they're having success and where they're filling gaps so you'll see a student go through multiple units they'll get 100 100 100 90 75 well 75 is passing but they were having a lot of success so I'm either going to reteach there or I'm going to alert the parent that this is a place where they need additional support I think all those are important things for us to try and convey to parents because I think I agree a lot of information I know it's hard but is a little bit confusing in terms of we want them to have success where they are that's why they're where

[00:37:52] they are but we also want to make sure that you know we're continuing to move through that and what does that mean and look like so maybe some education around what the tool does and you know

why why it moves you through the units that it does that is definitely on our implementation plan awesome sounds good all right I've drilled you with questions and comments um I am going to send on some general feedback that I got just so that you you have it um one thing that really I found the most valuable and I'll send it on it was a sort of a like a case study scenario like this

[00:38:28] is my scenario and here's why these things are the things that I'm struggling with and I think work like that could be really helpful for teachers to be able to kind of just problem solve and I'm not saying they haven't done that but it kind of highlighted the different issues in terms of being able to bring in that face-to-face OG learning and making sure that they do that time during literacy centers, but that they also have support in small group work with some other strategies around vocabulary and things like that. So I really appreciate your time. I'm going to probably keep asking questions along the way. I know we're in the beginning-ish phases and that

[00:39:04] our options are limited. And if you fly ever gets on the intervention list, I know you're going to have a lot of people that would be very happy. So if the state's listening, we want that. anything else Dr. Rishi. I said quite a lot.

[00:39:21] Alrighty thank you guys so much for being here. The next item is 5.02 we are going to talk about credit through testing tonight and I want to thank Miss James supervisor of World Languages and Cultures for being here to present to us along with Mr. Roundsley Director of Teaching and Learning.

[00:39:43] All right and in addition to Miss James we have Louisa Quintero over here who is one of our World Language specialist who has done a lot of work with our credit through testing program a big supporter at all of the testing nights and and everything that happened so I thank Lisa for being here as well so we have a lot to celebrate about credit through testing we want to kind of give you an update on how our current year of credit through testing has gone with a lot of really good news and with that good news and a lot of success come some pressures and some beliefs that we have that we might have perhaps outgrown our current process and that we have some new ideas we want to explore with you around some benefits and opportunities that we see

[00:40:22] to help continue to grow this program and bring a lot of really good success to students in LCPS. So I'm going to turn over to Ms. James to share some of those details. So we'll start by giving you some background on the purpose of credit through testing as well as some historical data.

[00:40:40] So the purpose of credit through testing is twofold is to allow high school students the opportunity to earn credits for a language that they've acquired at home or through other experiences like study abroad or a course outside of lcps the exam measures student proficiency and can award up to three high school credits which fulfills the video minimum requirement for an advanced studies diploma the second purpose is for students who are currently earning are learning a world language in lcps who demonstrate the required proficiency level which is an intermediate mid to earn the virginia department of education seal of

[00:41:18] of biliteracy at graduation which is evidence to higher education and future employees that there are employers that they are biliterate in both English and another language and those two purposes are not mutually exclusive so if the student for example we're taking the credits for testing in Turkish they could get up to three credits as well as the seal of biliteracy in Turkish we have a lot of students who take the seal of the credit for testing exam in Spanish and they're in Spanish 5 for example they don't need the credits but they can earn the CELA by literacy but it is possible to do both the next slide shows some

[00:41:58] historical data we began credit through testing in LCPS in 2016 and it we have an internally developed assessment in which students have to write out two essays and you can see that from 2016 through 2024 we have experienced significant growth this year was a record number in both student registration and as well as the number of tests that were administered and we share both of the information because each student who registers we prepare an assessment for them and then so the fact that we had a record number of

[00:42:35] registrations as well as a record number of turnout is significant and we anticipate that that will continue to grow since this is also for the seal of biliteracy the number for the past three years has also grown we're really proud of this so that we have increased numbers in the seal of biliteracy and we also have the number of students who are earning that seal of biliteracy through our credit through testing exam as evidence there are other assessments that are approved by the Virginia Department of Education as evidence for the seal of biliteracy and our assessment is one of them that we have

[00:43:12] internally developed but we're looking to expand that the next slide is the current languages that are available for credit through testing through our internally developed assessment we added Sanskrit last year we're very excited to have added that upping the number to 28 and while this list is extensive it is not representative of all of the languages that are spoken and read in Loudoun County and so that leads us to navigating our continued growth

[00:43:52] for the credit through testing exam so some of our current challenges that we are experiencing are the limitations in the languages that are offered and part of the limitations are the recruiting and hiring of language assessors for a internally developed assessment if it's difficult it was difficult to find an assessor for Sanskrit for example we're really excited to have offer that but it's something that's difficult to find someone to assess the additionally a challenge is the development and the translation of our prompts to ensure

[00:44:31] accurate and valid assessment results we also have a relatively narrow assessment window so the testing registration opens on the first day of school and is open through about mid-October our testing window is November and then we start assessing and we usually notify families around mid February so we'll be notifying family soon we're still finishing grading the assessments which leads us to another challenge is that that's pretty significant because they are developed they are assessed by our language

[00:45:04] proficiency assessors who we bring in as well can I add something to that yeah I I would just say in monitoring the Let's Talk submissions that we get around issues in teaching and learning.

[00:45:20] It's very common right now to have students and families reaching out and asking where are my assessment results. And again that's a test that was delivered in November and through no fault of the World Language Office it's just finding people who are willing to give their time to grade and assess these results that does slow down the process for the students who are waiting for those results.

[00:45:40] And also because of our narrow assessment window We often get students who transfer to LCPS after October, and a lot of times those counselors, if they are students who are English language learners, for example, who are maybe biliterate in Spanish, because they've missed that window, they're not provided the opportunity to earn credits in Spanish.

[00:46:02] So we're looking as a way to expand that opportunity to those students. So what we're looking to is to expand to a third-party testing service, is to move away from our internally-developed assessment,

which offers a lengthy list of limitations, to something that would be a standards-based measurement of proficiency that would be a mostly online test to measure the student's language proficiency, and with that would be expedited results.

[00:46:38] We would get our results much more quickly. It would still offer language credit, evidence for the seal of biliteracy, But an additional benefit would be to give us some results and insight into especially the languages that we do offer in LCPS.

[00:46:53] How are we doing in terms of proficiency as well in terms of teaching proficiency. This is also aligned with what our neighboring school districts are doing. Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William have already moved towards this model for credit through testing.

[00:47:12] An additional huge opportunity towards moving towards a third party testing service would be the additional languages that are available to students. I've had requests for Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Mongolian, and those are not tests that we offer, but those are tests that we could offer in the future.

[00:47:29] As well as data collection and test history, I would like to have this become something that is available for students and families to see in their test history, specific results and the feedback on the assessment, as well as an expedited notification of results.

[00:47:47] Instead of it taking three months, it might only take up to like three weeks which could lead to the potential for offering two rounds of testing each year both the fall and a spring window which would give our students who come in later in the school year an opportunity to assess for credit especially as they get close to graduation where that might be their last chance to earn the seal of biliteracy before they graduate and that concludes my presentation. So I would just add the intent of bringing this to the committee is to just inform you on the work related to credit through testing and the

[00:48:26] expansion of opportunities for world languages we are appreciative of the support for different model for ASL next year in the budget as well as the Global Linguistic Studies Academy but by looking at our credit through testing this is another opportunity to really expand what students are able to access in LCPS so I think I cut you off Mr. Ronson. I think it's great I think this is an area where we've seen a lot of interest from families and students and we're excited to expand our opportunities to offer languages to students and to hopefully continue to build on the success that we've had in our local process.

[00:49:04] And we're happy to take any questions you might have. Thank you so much. This is fascinating. Dr. Rasheed. Being bilingual myself a lot of this stuff is really important but yeah great great data. I was just wondering if I know you said there were two rounds of if they is that if they don't if they don't pass when they attempt to take the test or when they attempt to do the assessment?

[00:49:31] - So right now we only offer one round of testing per year. It's the fall window. - Okay. - But what my hope is yes that if they don't meet the intermediate mid-level of proficiency in the fall they have the opportunity again in the spring. - Okay and then also so once they I don't know if this if you had any data about this once they receive the seal is there any data as to where these students then go on to become or where they utilize it is is or if if we don't have that data is there a way that we can provide that data perhaps a survey of some sort just

[00:50:06] to see I mean the use of it out of curiosity and I don't have any data about once they leave LCPS however more and more colleges and universities are providing college credit for students who have the

seal of biliteracy from their state so what we're looking at is students who once they provide they have that seal they go on to for example William and Mary offers credit as does VCU in a world language so that you're they're walking into university potentially having already fulfilled the general education world language requirement.

[00:50:44] And that list is only growing more and more colleges and universities are awarding credit for the seal of biliteracy. I'm not aware of any specific data we have on that either but I think it's a great question so we can work with our school counseling office to see what might be possible to gather.

[00:51:03] Yeah I'm just curious as to what like you know once they have this do they go on to become teachers or professors in this. Is it something that they what else do they do develop on it. That's that's what I was curious about. And then there was a slide with all the languages that that you had that we offer. I was wondering is that ranked in order as to demand.

[00:51:21] No I think that's just alphabetical order. Okay and so what determines I mean I guess what is the process of bringing that forward let's say like you had mentioned a couple of languages you said someone had asked you about Mongolian and a couple of other languages how can constituents bring that forward if they if they want to bring that as a language for the SEAL? So currently we have an internal practice of 50 students 50 families speaking that language before it's offered.

[00:51:56] Now that's a very arbitrary number. And that's one of the advantages of moving forward is that there's, you know, some of these testing services have maybe 50 languages that they offer. We could almost double what we're offering because we don't have to have internal assessors. They have ways to assess the test themselves.

[00:52:12] So we would greatly expand the languages that we offer if we went with a third party educational testing service because they have those resources readily available to assess in other languages that we do not. And also it'd be great to get data on those languages that get the seal, that get the percentage of the students from LCPS that get that seal in what language.

[00:52:36] To see if that coincides with the data of demand. Yeah, I think we can get that for you. Yeah, that'd be great, just out of curiosity. Thank you. Thank you. My, I'd hope to go one whole 24 hour cycle without talking about money, but here we are.

[00:52:54] I'm wondering what, how does it work with the assessors now? Do you pay them like part time hourly funds To come in and sit and assess? They're actually, there's a process where they're hired through HRTD for that position and are paid. So in addition to just the manpower preparing the test, there's a whole other process around identifying, interviewing, hiring, and the manpower involved in doing that work as well.

[00:53:22] And I want to say that the people who do that are, there's great people and have a really strong community there. So it's not necessarily an easy thing to maybe pivot away from that and take a lot of pride in assessing their language and students who take the test. But I think it's really for the benefit of our students and the opportunities to be able to provide to kind of move in a different direction.

[00:53:42] - You certainly have the data to support the interest and I cannot even imagine the lift that this is on you all. Like this seems impossible. I commend you for your work. It seems like a logical step to move to a third party. Of course, we're going to have to talk about how much that would cost.

[00:53:59] But in terms of what you're paying now, I think that that would be a good comparison and also just the opportunity cost of giving up all those hours that you're putting in yourselves. I would love to see that moving forward. But this is one of those things that just seems obvious to me that this lift cannot continue.

[00:54:18] Yeah, we believe this would be a budget neutral or relatively budget neutral cost when you factor in the cost of the test versus all of those other factors that you just mentioned. Yeah. I wanted to say that, Mr. Wright. I knew that maybe Ms. Chernoff was asking that. Budget neutral is something that I do love.

[00:54:36] Yes, and a lot of credit to these two for thinking deeply about this as an opportunity, rethink some practice that is a good practice, but ultimately this move will help us reach more students. Yeah, I'm just really blown away by these numbers.

[00:54:52] I really had no idea, and this is astounding, And it's so amazing that we have so many kids that have this ability and to give them access to this. And what a celebration of who they are and the skills that they have and what being biliterate means in America.

[00:55:10] I love this. So thank you so much. At first glance, I was like, what does this mean? And just listening to you talk about it, it's a very impressive lift and it's serving so many of our kids. So I really, really appreciate that. Anything else?

[00:55:26] All right. Well, thank you guys so much. We will move to new business. Is there any new business tonight? Me either. So with that, we are adjourned. Be safe in the ice.



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