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Loudoun County School Board, Legislative, Audit and Policy Committee Meeting, Tuesday, March 18, 2025

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[00:00:02] Good evening. This is April Chandler calling to order the Legislative Audit and Policy Committee meeting for March 18, 2025. We will begin with public comment. Sign up to make in-person public comments occurred prior to the start of the committee meeting. The meeting will be audio recorded and posted in board docs. Today, we have one speaker signed up for public comment. We will allow three minutes. Our first speaker is Andrea Weiskopf.

[00:00:29] afternoon. I was looking at the policy for committees of the school board. I didn't know if the equity committee goes under something else, but I did not see the equity committee, and there was not a meeting in March, which has me a little worried. But I was mainly focused on

[00:01:02] the list of committees with MSAC and SEAC. I don't want to judge. There are days that I phone it in, but if you look under the gifted it only says who's on the committee it has no mention of what the committee does whereas if you look at msac it takes the line directly from the msac website

[00:01:30] has what it does but not who's on it um seac does say they want actually who is on it and what they do but this is not standard. Again there are days I phone it in but that needs to be standardized.

[00:01:54] Thank you Black Lives Matter. Thank you. We will move on to item 3.01 approval of the February 18th 2024 draft minutes. May I please have a motion to approve the February meeting minutes.

[00:02:14] So moved. Second. The motion was made by Ms. Chernoff and seconded by me. All those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye seeing none opposed the motion passes unanimously with all or with miss donahue absent for the vote we will move on to our discussion items of which we have many tonight we will begin with item 4.01 office of the auditor general the audit of student placement policies and procedures this update will offer an overview of the report detailing

[00:02:50] the findings and the recommendations in this most recently published audit. Mr. Woods, our Auditor General, will be presenting. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the committee.

[00:03:07] Today I'm going to present the overview or the briefing of our most recent audit issued. That will be the Audit Report of Student Placement Policies and Procedures. The topics I'll go over will cover the background as to why we did the audit.

[00:03:24] audit opinion the criteria scope and methodology audit findings and recommendations and at any time if you have any questions feel free to chime in so this was a follow-up audit on recommendations from the special grand jury report one of the things we also looked at was the MOU which is the agreement between Loudoun County Public Schools Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and Leesburg Police Department to improve communication and coordination the purpose of the effectiveness and implementation of LCPS student placement and transfer policies.

[00:04:02] So our audit opinion is the audit concluded that controls should be enhanced based on the scope and observations of the audit engagement. The audit finding did have a critical risk finding related to the documentation and attendance of transition meetings for student disciplinary transfers.

[00:04:21] Recommendations were made to improve training documentation and compliance with policies to ensure effective student transfer transitions and adherence to procedures the scope of our audit was to follow up as I previously mentioned the special grand jury's report and accept and assess the effectiveness and implementation of our policies regarding transfers the audit covered activities from 2023 to 2024 school year through April of 2024 during our audit we interviewed relevant we reviewed relevant documents and policies we

[00:05:00] interviewed key personnel and administrators. We sampled student transfer files and we review those for compliance with the MOU. On this slide we have our criteria. There are a lot of things we used but the criteria is are the policies procedures or requirements with which we evaluate the performance or compliance of LCPS. And some of those include the MOU as previously mentioned policy 8035 policy 8155 policy 82 82 20

[00:05:38] 82 30 and finally policy 82 90 so when we have a finding we we classify our findings as critical moderate alone and so we assess the risk level it poses to LCPS and so this will just give you an overview and a definition of what those risk ratings mean critical being the highest level of risk moderate being moderate and low being the lowest level of risk so the report had two findings

[00:06:17] as you'll see the first bulleted point the first finding was documentation in attendance issues there is two bulleted points but it was one finding and that was a lack of evidence for transition meetings in some cases and required staff not always present at transition meetings and this is regards to policy 8155 section F so if anyone wants any reference it is policy 8155 section F the second and that was deemed

as a critical finding the second finding was behavior reporting which was assessed as moderate risk to LCPS and that was

[00:06:55] inconsistent reporting of student behaviors and violations recommendations included training provide comprehensive training to relevant staff in transition meetings documentation ensure all transition meeting documents are forwarded to the Office of School Administration a set access to threat assessments OSA should have access to all relevant threat assessments to help them make their decisions and transparency include details about the emergency removal process on the Title IX office web page

[00:07:32] And those are emergency removals related to Title IX and so we ask that those emergency removal process be included in our webpage. Management response was acceptance. They concurred with the findings and they are performing steps to take to address the recommendations including training and improving documentation processes.

[00:07:58] That concludes the briefing. If there are any questions related to any of the slides, I look forward to them. Thank you. you Mr. Woods are there any questions or comments from the committee I'm sure enough um thank you so much for this presentation I feel like I'm just so glad that you're here and that this office is here because reading through this and and I know this it comes on the heels of a very difficult time that LCPS faced and a time where we were not in leadership and I it's sensitive in

[00:08:34] nature and events that led to a special grand jury report I am grateful this was done in response to that because of what you found I'm not super grateful about what you found but I am in the sense that it gives us a chance to do better and I found a lot of this to be concerning if I'm being honest as I was reading it I I was a bit surprised at some of the things I saw and I am grateful for the recommendations I I think that that is I

[00:09:11] really glad to see that we're gonna move in a direction that will you know hopefully tighten up some of these procedures it definitely has me wondering if there's some policy work on our end that needs to be addressed and I'm you know hoping to kind of navigate some of those channels as we look through the various policies obviously consistency is something that really stood out to me a lack of consistency and a lack of consistency through our processes especially with these transition meetings which must be crucial to a student success I would think handing off the baton from one school to the other especially as it relates to discipline matters would be

[00:09:50] really really important and then I actually I have a question about policy 8155 which was specifically mentioned in the report and now obviously the board has recently revised policy 8155 but more in relation to special permission so I'm and forgive me for for not remembering there were a lot of conversations was this specific concern brought forward during those meetings and has it been addressed or is this something we need to tighten up because if I read section f it seems pretty vague in terms of the transfer

[00:10:27] process and maybe needing some more consistent guidelines there so I would like some clarity on that how that went down missed out on that committee so maybe she can take it Ms. Donahue would you like to thank you chair Chandler and I apologize to everyone for being late arriving to the meeting thank you for your patience obviously I will defer to staff if any of them want to correct me but I am the chair of the Student Services Committee and we are the ones that worked through the policy revisions to 8155 my recollection is that we did not address

[00:11:03] that particular issue because that policy was not up for a cyclical review it was not triggered by any external changes of law or code or to conform with current LCPS practice but we chose to tackle it specifically to look at the special permission process so while right like it it is not a standalone policy it's all part of the school assignment policy we were specifically focused on the special permission aspect of the policy and I don't believe we addressed that other issue that was my recollection too but I wanted to make sure that that was true I know it's not

[00:11:40] always best practice to like jump right into revising again but on the heels of this I think there are some things in here that may not be able to be ignored so I would ask that we kind of think about that and then just a couple other notes and then one closing question I obviously definitely support tightening up the student record requirements and our reporting procedures as well from school buildings in terms of student discipline I'm happy to see that as a recommendation keeping up those cumulative records I do think is really crucial for our kids that have past discipline it helps us know the history and see the patterns going forward and maybe can shed light on what we can do

[00:12:20] that might work or might not work uh happy to see training in there think that that's super important and like i said i'll be kind of contemplating these other policies and maybe reaching out to other staff members as it relates to the different departments but my big question for you mr woods is what is the timeline now for these changes and how is accountability going to be insured and when is it revisited because we do not want to fall into old ways if we need to tighten things up how what does that look like for lcps well for many of the recommendations they've already been

[00:13:00] enacted by the administration but for the for policy 8155 section f specifically that one is up for discussion and i i do think going forward you may want to revisit that but we do go back and we do a follow-up to review just to ensure that the recommendations were enacted that will be at a later date to be determined but I will get that answer to you when we do perform the follow-up I appreciate that just this is really the first time I feel like we've had this full debrief of report and recommendations and seeing some critical things in there just now

[00:13:39] feels weird that we wouldn't talk about it ever again so I just don't know what that process is so I look forward to engaging that thank you thank you mr. or not thank you chair Chandler I wanted to I do have a question for you Mr. Woods but I also wanted to follow up on some of the some of Ms. Chernoff's comments specifically that we are going to look at 8155 again in our committee this year because I wanted to take a look at the impact of the changes

[00:14:15] to the special permission process so if we are doing that we can take a look at the at the other issues that you flagged as well and my question for you mr. woods is I was I was going to ask about where we find the the criteria for threat assessment I believe looking at it it appears to be in policy 8290 and the accompanying regulation yes okay and are there any other policies that govern kind of that

[00:14:49] process not that I'm aware of right not I have to go in and look extensively to see but I if it's not in the report I don't think it exists or it might there might be a regulation that accompanies 8290 but I couldn't tell you off the top of my head thank you and is the MOU publicly available to my knowledge I believe it is but I'm not too sure thank you and thank you for thank you for the work that you do thank you for putting together this report I second some of Mr. Knopf's comments that some of these findings are troubling although not

[00:15:27] inconsistent with anecdotal reports of instances that have had unfortunately happened in our community over the last few years so on one hand it is not great to see that these were your findings but on the other hand it's good that we're focusing on them and have the chance to improve grateful for your efforts thank you miss Donahue and mr. Woods I'll just say luckily my colleagues have covered most of my questions and and I will reiterate I do think it's very important

[00:16:03] work and it always gives us the opportunity to improve and I do appreciate that some of the concerns that the management team had can be addressed in the future so like I there there was a note essentially saying that They didn't think that the policy made it possible for staff to be compliant with the recommendation.

[00:16:27] And so having that ability to engage in these conversations really does give us the ability to continue to improve and serve our students better. So thank you for that. And with that, we will move on to item 4.02, the legislative update.

[00:16:45] This update aims to inform the LAMP committee and the Loudoun community on the latest updates out of Richmond related to the recent legislative session. We are joined tonight online by Mr. John Sutton, our coordinator of government relations. Mr. Sutton, the floor is yours. Excellent. Thank you. Can you hear me okay? Yep. Okay. Wonderful. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, as well as the committee for the opportunity to speak today. The 2025 Virginia legislative session

[00:17:20] is the topic of discussion, the Virginia General Assembly, which convened on January 10th, concluded with several significant legislative actions that currently awaits Governor Youngkin's signature. Now, both legislative chambers are controlled, obviously, by the Democratic Party holding slim majorities. So that has affected the outcome of some of their legislative progress.

[00:17:46] Governor Yunkin has until March 24th to sign, amend, or veto bills presented. Let me talk about what I thought was a couple of key overall legislative developments. And on the surface, they may not seem like they're school-related, but some of them, whether it's something like campaign finance reform or public safety, have impact.

[00:18:09] So I hope you'll bear with me for a few extra minutes. Some constitutional amendments, lawmakers advanced measures to protect everything from social issues to restoring voting rights to individuals with felonies.

[00:18:26] So it was a wide ranging source of what we would call what we call social issues. They must pass the General Assembly twice over the next two years before being presented to voters via referendum.

[00:18:42] Some of them, including social media regulations, Senate Bill 854, Senator Van Valkenburg introduced that it requires social media platforms to verify users' ages. Under 16, must obtain parental consent to access feeds or are limited to one hour per day without their parents' consent.

[00:19:07] The bill passed the Senate unanimously and awaits further action. Campaign finance legislation was passed to ban personal use of campaign funds aiming to enhance transparency and accountability in political activities and political financing.

[00:19:23] Public safety measures, everything from additional background checks on police folks in our schools to laws mandating backseat seatbelt use and additional measures to monitor school zones for stop sign violations.

[00:19:50] Additionally, systems are now required to have cars slow down and provisions for pedestrian and cyclist safety in school zones have, in their mind, been addressed.

[00:20:03] We have economic issues, General Assembly approved measures to establish retail markets for everything from cannabis to 15 hour wage hike by 2027, tax breaks for civil social organizations, requiring paid sick leave and allowing collective bargaining for public employees.

[00:20:31] So, again, a wide range of things that on the surface sound sort of innocuous, but may have impacts at the school level, as most things generally do when it comes to economic and social interest. Some key impacts on education.

[00:20:49] The General Assembly introduced several legislative actions that definitely impacted the state system. I have a few. Budget amendments and funding allocations. teacher bonuses and school voucher funding. Both the House and the Senate proposed amendments to the 2024-26 state budget, allocating \$1,000 bonuses for teachers and school staff.

[00:21:13] Additionally, both chambers rejected Governor Youngkin's proposal for a permanent \$50 million private education voucher program, opting instead for the one-time rebates. Virginia legislative actions in this case have established specific timelines for teacher bonuses and funding related to those school choice programs. I have a couple of explanatory notes. A one-time bonus of \$1,000 is scheduled for state support instructional support staff. The bonus is

[00:21:47] allocated through \$140 million fund and is set to be distributed September 1st, 2025. The Virginia General Assembly has passed separate budget amendments proposing the elimination of \$50 million in funding for private education vouchers.

[00:22:07] The governor referred to those as opportunity scholarships. These budget amendments are currently awaiting reconciliation and governor's input. It's important to note that these dates and funding allocations can change and are subject to change based on final budget approvals and legislative action.

[00:22:30] So that's important to know. So I could be coming back to you with some additional information about things that we already thought were cleaned up. Some really quick educational initiatives and reforms. Civic education enhancement, House Bill 41.

[00:22:46] It was first introduced in 2023. That has passed. Legislation was introduced to require Board of Educations to include in the standards of learning for Virginia and United States government for grade 12 information that our curriculum that emphasizes instruction on local government in their civic education. So that's something that that has has passed. The school accountability system overhaul Virginia is implementing a new rating system for K-12 schools, separating accreditation from accountability.

[00:23:21] The Virginia House and Senate have passed separate budget amendments, each proposing different approaches to education funding and policy adjustments. The Virginia Department of Education has finalized its school performance and support framework, aiming to provide what it sees as transparent and actionable data, the creation of actual data on student performance.

[00:23:45] This framework was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in January, and regardless of the budget amendments, it is set to be implemented in 2025-2026 school year. So therefore, basically, while legislation, while legislative attempts to sort of work through the pitfalls of the new accountability system, they have not been successful and the system is moving forward as planned.

[00:24:16] Although budget negotiations may influence its final implementation, it is still moving forward. Just an explanatory note worth knowing, the changes expected to classify a majority of Virginia Beach schools as, quote, off track or needing improvement with projections indicating around 60% of schools may now be classified as struggling over the new criteria.

[00:24:42] So that's something that we're going to continue to monitor, and as more information comes with that, I will gladly give that to the committee. Higher education policies during 2025 General Assembly, several bills related to the Virginia Literacy Act were passed.

[00:25:01] The VLA initially enacted in 2022 aims to enhance literacy outcomes for Virginia students. So it's important to remember that. House Bill 2053 empowers the Virginia Department of Education to develop a rubric for institutions of higher education to self-assess the alignment of their teacher preparation programs. Again, I'll add an explanatory note. The bill requires each education preparation program offered by public or private institutions of higher learning

[00:25:39] to basically complete a self audit. This assessment aims to ensure compliance with statutory requirements related to coursework, student mastery, I believe field experience and student literacy instruction is in there as well as identifications of student at risk for disabilities. The audit utilizes a rubric developed by the VDOE and institutions must submit their findings and plans to address any gaps to the House Committee on Education and the

[00:26:11] Senate Committee on Education and Health by November. We're looking at November 2025. So overall, the 2025 legislative session focused on enhancing what they deem to be educational standards. They're trying to ensure equitable funding, improving school safety, and they're trying to, through the bill, is attempting to address both current challenges and future needs in our system. As of March 13th, several education-related bills have come to light as well,

[00:26:47] and they are awaiting Governor Youngkin's signatures. These bills include the Virginia Step Grant Program, House Bill 2590. This bill establishes the Virginia Step Grant Program, aiming to provide financial assistance to students pursuing post-secondary education.

[00:27:05] The bill is passed and is pending the governor's communication. We're looking at regulations governing allowable credit for teaching experience, House Bill 2598. This proposes changes to the regulations governing allowable credit for teacher experience.

[00:27:23] It also has passed and is awaiting the governor's communication. Seizure rescue medication in schools. This legislation, House Bill 2104, allows certain school employees to administer seizure, rescue medications, and permits possession by certain students.

[00:27:40] The bill has passed with the governor's action deadline set for the 24th of this month. We have the indoor air quality inspections. Senate Bill 1413 mandates inspections and evaluations of indoor quality in public school buildings.

[00:28:02] This is awaiting the governor's action. Extensions of temporary teacher employment periods, Senate Bill 1230. This bill extends the maximum period for which a school board may employ a temporarily employed teacher from 90 to 180 teaching days within a school year under certain conditions.

[00:28:22] It is identical to House Bill 2201 and is awaiting the governor's action. We have just a couple more school resource officer crisis intervention training. It requires school crisis intervention training for

school resource officers and all school security officers.

[00:28:43] That bill popped up and it eventually failed to pass and it was left in the House Public Safety Committee. And it quite possibly could pop up again next go around because it is still in the Public Safety Committee.

[00:28:58] The school safety policies, this legislation pertains to policies related to parental notification and response to school-connected overdoses. It was incorporated by the House Education Committee into House Bill 2774, and that is pending the governor's communication.

[00:29:19] A couple of quick ones I just found in my notes. The high school diploma seal for biliteracy, the bill designates high school diploma seals of biliteracy. That was created, House Bill 2360, that's awaiting the governor's communication.

[00:29:34] And that was created because of the high demand for an industry workforce credential in biliteracy. So that became, that is awaiting the governor's communication. And my, the last one is the House Bill 2584, which was left in the House Education Committee, but it shows insight into what might be popping up.

[00:29:57] That is the school board's employment of counsel that addresses the employment of counsel by school boards. And that has to do with before a legal counsel, school legal counsel can get involved in a legal proceeding, they need to seek out, they need to include or seek out permission from governing bodies, which they describe as not just the school division, but the locality.

[00:30:26] It could be a county or local office, a municipality, things to that effect. I put in the report some, as of March 15th, sort of congressional overview. I sent that to the committee. I won't go through that, but that gives information related to some of the things that are happening on the federal level.

[00:30:47] They haven't quite affected us yet, but at this point, we don't know if they will. But as they present themselves, I will gladly let the committee know. And I think I talked really fast and I apologize for that if I've confused anybody or made some flubs. Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Sutton. We appreciate the thorough report and I'll ask the committee members if there are any questions or comments. Thank you, Mr. Sutton. I do have just

[00:31:21] a couple of quick questions. First, you mentioned that the overdose notification was rolled into another bill what are the specifics of the of the current uh proposal the uh that is the let me look that up here we go hb 20 2774 um i i i'm embarrassed to say i don't have uh the information uh with me uh i'm out of town i had to go out of town for for on a on a on a very on short notice but i can

[00:31:56] certainly, I can certainly respond to that ASAP. And I can speak to it a little bit. So it does have some of the language related to suspected, which is something that we advocated for so that there isn't confusion about whether the overdose has to be confirmed by law enforcement. We're able to say suspected. And then that way it's within 24 hours of a suspected overdose. So that clarity really great and we obviously appreciate that and different than what the executive order says it talks about specifically principals sending out

[00:32:33] messages to the school being what is required not to the full school division which is something that's interesting when we think about student privacy and FERPA and so we'll have to work through that from a legal lens and I don't know if Wes you have anything else to say about it but those were

the two kind of highlights, I think, from that bill. Thank you. And then I had one other question for Mr. Sutton or Ms. Allen, whoever's best positioned. I was just curious about Delegate Martinez's bill

[00:33:07] that was related to chronic absenteeism, not counting against the divisions for accreditation. And John, you correct me if I'm wrong, but my understanding with that one is I think that was referred correct yes um to be looked at by and studied yes that is correct that's that's why that's why i didn't i didn't put it in the report it is um it's it's it's a i'm not saying it's delayed it's just it's just moved to it's just moved to a different area so that they can look

[00:33:41] at it a little bit more before they reintroduce that at a later date thank you for that update i i had not been aware of that proposed bill before we went to richmond in january but um you know having had a number of conversations with family members of students who are enrolled here who may have family overseas and want or need to take their kids out of school for extended periods of time to visit.

[00:34:11] That issue has definitely been raised as a concern because of the unenrollment issues, hardships for the family, separate and apart from the issues affecting the division. So I'm relieved that that's still being looked at.

[00:34:26] - Yep, and I think to that point, both of those things are you know burdens if you will because we're talking about it negatively in fact impacting our absenteeism rate or potentially having to you know pull kids from the system because they've been gone a certain amount of days and that being an automatic thing that we have to do per you know policy and code and then if we're able to take a look at because I know you know a lot of times it's unique circumstances here to your point where folks are flying out of country to see family or because they need to and

[00:35:01] they're gone for extended periods of time so we were in support of that and look forward to next year hear about it more that's all I had thank you very much thank you Ms. Donahue I don't have any further questions I don't see any further questions so thank you Mr. Sutton and with that we'll move on to our next discussion item 4.03 policy web page update this update will provide an overview of recent improvements made to the LCPS policy review website dr. Mark Bergen our chief of staff will be presenting dr. Bergen the floor is yours

[00:35:38] thank you madam chair so at the last committee meeting there was a question about regulations the committee and the public are well aware when board policies change we have such public conversations about them in a two meeting cycle the regulations since they do not require board approval the The question was how would the board and how would the public know when regulations are being updated?

[00:36:07] So board members, you are aware the process or the practice here is very similar to anywhere else I've worked on regulations. While they don't require board approval, superintendents certainly want boards to be aware when regulations are changing.

[00:36:22] So Dr. Spence is in the good habit of sharing with you all prior to regulation changes going live in his weekly update what he's proposing to change, asking you or prompting you if you have any questions you know contact him and then short of him being contacted with questions or concerns those regulations then get updated in board docs the question was how does the public know when those regulations are changing so i went back and talked to hope about that and hope is super well organized

and a wonderful support to the board and the public on these matters so we maintain a web page on our school division website that

[00:37:01] historically has duplicated the information that's available in board docs just to make it easy for the public but Hope is now updating that page to list by month when regulations change and she's also gone back for this school year to go back just so we can go back and capture everything that the board has done since how far back did you go Hope? August of 24th so to navigate to this can can you show how to navigate to this particular page for the for the board members our website did just change so we now go to school board and

[00:37:39] then under school board is policies and regulations so I'll start I will start there so we've always had the top section with feedback for things that are out for feedback what's and we've always had the bottom section which are chapters what we've added is this middle section here and you can click on any of

[00:38:15] the accordions and see exactly which policies or regulations have changed in February there were only policies but here in January there is a regulation so you can go back through and see exactly what's changed for this last year I think she did that within the hour of my speaking with her so we will now continue to update those as regulations become updated we will keep that web page updated regularly and that's all I have on this particular item unless you have questions Thank You dr. Bergen are there any questions or comments from the

[00:38:54] committee? Ms. Chernoff? I feel heard. Thank you so much. It's no surprise that it was me that I was asking about the regulations. I think we're going to continue the conversation a little bit into the next item. But I really, as soon as this conversation was had here, it was almost instantaneous that action was taken. And so kudos to you all and thank you. Because I think that this is a really great step in the right direction. And Ms. Casserly, I thank you so much for your expertise and your efficiency as always so it I think this is really responsive I was able to highlight this last night at our LEAF meeting with the parents and they were

[00:39:32] very excited to see this the only piece of feedback that would that I would give from that meeting that when we looked through it was is there a way to denote in parentheses if it's a new regulation so just input in parentheses new and as I thought about 1040 and all the effort that MSAC put into giving us this beautiful feedback they probably want to know when that goes live and so if it said new I think that that might be helpful maybe maybe not but I that was one piece of feedback so instead of saying new for the sake of just when I

[00:40:07] think about having to update the website what constitutes new so could we potentially put adopted on or something like that right so that makes it consistent across yeah I love that I think that that's that's great and I really am just so appreciative that you ask and you shall receive so thank you thank you are there any further questions seeing none thank you Dr. Bergen and and

[00:40:38] we will move on to our last discussion item for tonight 4.04 policy 2010 legal status authority powers and duties Mr. not requested placing this item on the agenda for discussion and again I will ask dr. Bergen to start off the discussion dr. Bergen the floor is yours you have the policy in front of you I am happy to address any questions you may have about the policy of course councils here also are there specific questions about the policy that you would like us

[00:41:16] to speak to thank you dr. Bergen sure off I'll make it quick since you preempted me with the website which I see what you did there and I I appreciate it I don't really feel at this time that we need to codify this in policy I am very grateful to have seen the actions taken as I just stated additionally I have been reassured by dr. Spence and staff that if there is an issue with a regulation we could put it on an agenda to discuss just like we did with this policy so I think the use of discussion in committee is going to be the tool

[00:41:53] that I will personally use if I have something that I want to bring to attention and I am grateful for the weekly updates when we get to see the changes and ask questions as well as now I feel we have adequately equipped the public to do the same so much appreciated I don't know if you all have anything to add but I am I am good to go so thank you well thank you very much thank you chair Chandler I hate to be the person who's like but what about but

[00:42:27] But in reading this, so part two, excuse me, C2A says, in furtherance of this, the Loudoun County School Board shall adopt policy to provide for the day-to-day supervision of schools. And I have to say, like, that sentence just struck me as a little bit funny because in my conversations with Dr. Spence and various other administrative people trying to keep straight in my mind what is the what is the venn diagram or the the not venn diagram not

[00:43:03] overlapping the the circles of influence of policy versus regulation and the way that i had been thinking of it in my head that i think i'd heard other people say too is policy is big picture and regulations are the day-to-day operationalizing um so i'm i don't know that i'm suggesting that we make any changes to this right now but I'm just saying like reading that sentence adopt policy to provide for the day-to-day supervision of schools struck me as sounding a little bit funny compared to how I've been trying to look

[00:43:38] so no requests to continue working on this policy I mean not unless other people think that there's a need that that reference could very well be in code I don't know Wes are you able to speak to that or maybe we could follow up at a later point yeah I was checking the legal references for the policy I don't see that it is from the code I haven't made all the way through but I can close the loop with you my sense is that you know the school board is charged

[00:44:17] with the overseeing the operation of the school division and so to the extent that's codifying just as part of that that includes the day-to-day supervision there are policies that provide the superintendent to enact regulations to operationalize so that could be the distinction thank you Mr. Allen of course if anyone on the committee decides to bring that forward we can address that at any time but seeing no further comments we will finally move on to our action items for tonight it's a very fruitful discussion

[00:44:51] I don't mean to sound facetious but right no an hour's not enough time beginning with our item 5.01 policy 2510 school community communications and community involvement this policy defines two-way communication strategy between the school board and the community miss natalie allen our chief of communications and community engagement will be presenting miss allen the floor is yours thank you chair chandler so with the red line version of this policy i know you all saw a version similar last time but there

[00:45:26] were some concerns regarding school board members who might be contacted for specific purposes like the grading policy or you know seclusion and restraint specific things that you all might be

you know wanting to talk to certain constituents about and so I think legal basically took some of those suggestions and put them into this red line here and so the question I guess is

[00:45:56] is is this something you would like to move forward for action are there any Any questions or comments from the committee?

[00:46:11] I was I was going to make a motion if I if I may. I I is it okay I'm sorry I I just want to pause and make sure is the red line the current red line the most updated.

[00:46:28] The one in board docs I believe yes. So some changes were made based on what you all shared last time about your concerns related to board members directly addressing folks pertaining to specific purposes so it you know there's like the example that says the communication pertains to an item pending before a certain school board committee and the communication is addressed to the committee's chair does it say do you see that okay thank you for that clarification I'm just I just needed that clarification

[00:47:05] thank you chair Chandler I move that we approve the revisions to follow the proposed revisions policy 2510 to the full board for its consideration notwithstanding that you're calling the at-large remember the secondary contact for all the schools it's not me actually that calls you that second it has been properly moved and seconded all those in favor please say aye aye

[00:47:38] aye the motion passes unanimously with all committee members present we will move on to policy 2320 school health advisory board this policy establishes guidelines for the school health advisory board miss Allen will be presenting again miss Allen the floor is yours no I'm sorry dr. Bergen that's That's okay, and I will likely invite council to offer comments as well.

[00:48:15] We received great community feedback on this particular policy, including some comments from SEAC and MSAC. So this, what was driving this, I think this was just on the five-year review. Yeah, this was just, you know, we hadn't seen it in a while.

[00:48:32] So we put it out for feedback, and you can see in the red line versions, which are in front of you or we're displaying on the screen from community members to broaden the definition of the 20 members of the SHAB so that that shall consist of broad-based community representation including but not limited to and then it already listed parents and students we receive feedback to put physical and mental health in front of health professionals and then in the second

[00:49:07] paragraph council can speak to this I think that was well I'll just I'll defer to council to speak to the changes in the second paragraph mr. Allen thank you dr. Bergen I can take that the proposed edits from here as I shared out during this item when it was presented for information the first item is just a clarification to specify that the reference to board members pertains to members of the school health advisory board rather than the school board to clarify any uncertainty there.

[00:49:39] The second item also offers a clarification specifically with request to the requirement under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act that any person appointed to a public body or extension thereof shall be provided with a copy of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act within two weeks following their appointment.

[00:49:59] And for members to read and become familiar with the provisions thereof, that's a requirement of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. So we just wanted to provide certainty and clarity there. And the final item is from a legal lens with respect to our Office of Division Counsel's review.

[00:50:21] We wanted to make sure that this language was added. It's straight from Virginia Code Section 22.1 to 75.1, that these procedures should take into consideration the size and staffing of the schools.

[00:50:39] - Thank you Mr. Allen, thank you Dr. Bergen. Are there any, is there any discussion? - Thank you Chair Chandler, I was curious, I believe SEAC had requested that we add a line into this policy requiring that at least one member of such advisory committee have experience or be able to represent special needs students, and so I wondered what the, if that suggestion had been considered what staff's view of that proposal was I can envision some

[00:51:17] pros and cons of adding in language like that we took that feedback and in the first paragraph where it initially says without the revisions that the school board may establish a school health advisory board of not more than 20 members which shall include parents students health professionals educators and others and we broaden that to your point to say that those 20 members shall consist

[00:51:54] of broad based community representation and that would be inclusive of not just individuals with familiar with children with disabilities but also people familiar with children who are learning English as a second language and others so it would be a broad based representation our community okay thank you with that I move that the policy 2320 redline

[00:52:29] action version from board docs school health advisory board be sent to the full board second the motion was made by Ms. Chernoff and seconded by Ms. Donahue all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye the motion passes unanimously with all committee members present and with that we will move on to our information item 6.01 policy 2310 committees of the school board Miss Donahue requested this item for review Dr. Bergen I believe you'll be

[00:53:05] presenting to discuss the structure and effectiveness of the committees in support of the work of the school board and the school division yes ma'am and And there are extensive recommended changes to this policy, and I'm going to rely on legal counsel to walk us through lots of this.

[00:53:26] I'll just make some brief introductory remarks. Two things happening separately from this policy driving these changes. One is we have a practice in place of the superintendent creating an advisory committee that advises the administration and has a board member serving as a liaison as opposed to a standing board committee where the board serves as the chair of the committee. It's an important distinction, but we don't have that codified. So the example would be the school business partnership. They meet on a regular

[00:54:02] basis, staff organizes the meeting, and Mr. Streffi is the board member who is appointed as the liaison to the board. The meeting is going to happen whether Mr. Streffi can attend the meeting or not. It is an administratively led advisory committee. So a lot of what we've added to this policy would allow for that to exist and others as a superintendent and under the superintendent's direction the administration would like to have other advisory committees.

[00:54:30] Separate from that and to the request from Mrs. Stonohue is a discussion about how our student discipline matters heard currently they're heard by SBAC and we could broaden and have additional committees for student discipline hearing matters so that's by my way of introducing these changes and then I'm just going to ask Mr. Allen to walk you through the policy section by section. Thank you Dr. Bergen.

[00:55:03] So moving to the first item under section A you'll see a new creation of section a4 which is the school division administrative advisory committee that's defined as dr. Bergen shared earlier as a committee of the Loudoun County Public Schools administration to which the school board will appoint a school board member liaison that's to provide clarity there that such a school division administrative advisory committee would not be necessarily a committee of the school board it's distinguished because it's a committee of the school division

[00:55:42] and to advise the school division administrative function. Next moving down to line 85 you'll see that the SBAC committee a large chunk of that has been deleted to address Ms. Donahue's inquiry and request that there be language included to consider a separate committee for student discipline appeals hearings that set forth as section D on line 99.

[00:56:16] And under that specifically, it sets forth that that committee will consider the appeals of student disciplinary decisions and recommendations of the superintendent as provided for by policy 8230 and policy 8220. The school board chair will assign the three, actually three three member committees, since there are nine school board members, which will rotate and preside over such appeal hearings.

[00:56:42] The school board chair will also appoint a chair for each of those rotating committees. The next paragraph addresses to the extent there's a member that unable to serve at a particular hearing how that will be addressed.

[00:56:58] To the extent there's questions on that, we do have Dana Scanlon, the Director of Office School Administration, here to address those questions. Finally, we move down to Section D, which sets forth the advisory committees.

[00:57:16] This confirms as well, and I know we're under a time crunch. So, Madam Chair, if you'd like us to pause, I'm happy to do so. - Sure, actually, given, I would, under normal protocol situations, like to ask Ms. Donahue to speak to her suggested amendments, but given Ms. Chernoff's time constraints, I would like to give her the opportunity to take the floor, so good.

[00:57:49] - Thank you, and it's another committee meeting, so. - Legit. - Of course. - I have given this a lot of thought, i do support the changes that are in here i think that the consistency piece is notable in terms of the committee and doing the appeals but i do feel like just the exposure and experience for understanding what a discipline appeal entails and really seeing that process is a learning process and i think that that is an important process for school board members so i would support the changes that are on lines 99 to 115 and I very much appreciate Miss

[00:58:28] Weisskopf's comments tonight because I honestly it didn't really occur to me that they weren't aligned and standardized and they certainly are not so maybe there can be more discussion about that as we move forward but I agree with her I think that there should be membership what the purpose is just follow a blanket template so that all of that all things are created equal there and then other than that I think I'm good I don't have any questions if I do I will direct them to the appropriate parties at such time so that's kind of

[00:59:00] where I stand thank you chair Chandler I also very grateful for the work that went into this I had thought about seeing what my fellow committee members thought of making a change to paragraph D that would require one member of SBAC to be on each of the three member panels that hear the appeals to address the concern about consistency familiarity

[00:59:35] with the substance area is that a middle ground approach is that what I hear I'm in thank you miss Donahue I am not quite ready to state on the record what my position is one of the things that I really looked at within preparing for having this policy come forward to the committee is understanding what has happened typically in Loudoun before and I do think it would be appropriate at the very least

[01:00:11] somehow for us to seek out some feedback from the current aspect committee in the past typically although not necessarily for standing committees but ad hoc committees and other committees the action to modify the committee has come from within the committee and so I don't necessarily think given that the policy as it stands gives the authority to the LAMP committee to contemplate some of these changes into the school board to contemplate some of these

[01:00:46] changes I do also want to seek a middle ground approach and ensure that we are really looking for what's considered a best practice and my underlying question which I've discussed with the staff is seeking to understand what gives us the best outcomes and the most consistent outcomes for students and Miss Scanlon thank you so much for being here I wonder if you have a perspective on that in terms of what's typical in other standard practices for

[01:01:19] other school divisions or what you've seen in practice here. So clear let me shift a little bit here so sorry I'll shift because I've already started here we go otherwise we're gonna play we're gonna dance back and forth. This is my third school division my first school division where I did this exact work for 16 years had rotating committees.

[01:01:51] Which is what is being contemplated with the change. My second school division had one standing committee. Although I did not do discipline work there. When I came here and learned that we had one standing committee.

[01:02:08] I do think there are benefits to that. I think that certainly the largest benefit is the consistency piece. That, in my view, comes primarily because there aren't a lot of these hearings.

[01:02:27] So far this school year, we've had seven. So when you divide seven by three rotating committees, each committee maybe will get three of these a year. And I think that, as you well know, this is of great import to the child in front of the committee.

[01:02:52] And it's of great import to that family, to the safety of our schools. And there is both skill and knowledge that has to come to the table.

[01:03:10] And I think when you're only doing maybe two or three a year, that skill of being able to manage the hearing and the breadth of the knowledge that comes from the experience can be lost.

[01:03:26] I do, however, understand and agree that being part of those hearings, I think for the individual school board members who've been part of those hearings, they learn a lot about not just the child in front of them, the incident in front of them, but about the inner workings of schools and what's going on in schools and what are the processes and the procedures and the special education procedures.

[01:03:57] In Title IX, there's a lot that goes into it. And I do understand the benefit as an individual school board member to have that perspective and that view into the school that would come from those meetings. I think like probably every decision in front of you, it's a cost-benefit analysis.

[01:04:18] What are the benefits of the change? What is the cost of the change? And which outweighs the other? I too was thinking sort of like how do we meet both perspectives. I came up with something similar

but also a bit different.

[01:04:35] I was thinking having two SBAC members and constantly rotating a third in would give the ability for other board members to be part of the process but it also gives because in going through the the school board appeals policy you may recall that two to one vote a unanimous vote versus a two to one vote becomes very important if you did two SBAC members and one other member rotating through you in the event

[01:05:13] there's a disagreement consistency breadth of knowledge breadth of experience would be the two to one in the event of a disagreement that's just my perspective obviously it's legal either way and it's done both ways and we'll make it work regardless of what the board chooses. Thank you Ms. Scanlon for your perspective. That gives us something certainly to think about before the policy comes back for action. I would like to ask Mr. Allen to contemplate my question in terms of what's the most fair and if possible

[01:05:52] through the lens of what's typical in the judicial system. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, moving to a rotating committee would provide or be more reflective of kind of the judicial system in that judges are assigned to cases, but they don't preside necessarily over all portions of cases.

[01:06:20] You don't know Ms. Donahue as an attorney. You never know when you walk into a courtroom which judge you have drawn and so and judges take different perspectives different views that influence their determinations and so that provides less consistency at times and less certainty so with a rotating committee that might be more reflective of the judicial system thank you mr. Allen are there any any further comments or questions Ms. Donahue.

[01:06:56] - Thank you Chair Chandler. I was also going to say prior to, prior to seeing the red line version that staff proposed with the suggestion of you know, making student discipline appeals a whole separate category, another potential middle ground option that I, that had crossed my mind was assigning it to the SBAC chair to create the panels of three, you know, But including, you know, but the composition of those three member panels being made up of all members of the school board.

[01:07:33] So long as there is at least one SBAC member on each panel. And to Ms. Scanlon's concerns, I understand where you're coming from. I think the part that I get stuck on is that is the way that we do special permission and VHSL appeals now.

[01:07:54] is we have this rotating panel, or these rotating panels that I heard many, but I only sat on them twice last year, I think. And, you know, I think most people would probably agree that the consequences of a student discipline appeal are weightier for the individual student and likely for the entire school community than compared to a special permission or VHSL appeal. But those are still decisions where we want to have consistency we want to feel like I shouldn't speak

[01:08:29] for my fellow board members I have felt a strong desire to ensure that our panels are being consistent and hopefully with the other panels that are hearing those appeals to to feel that I'm making the right decision and and I don't know that it requires a lot of familiarity with different areas but if I'm allowed to say it I think the panels that I've been on we tend to immerse ourselves in a lot of details um that i think although i understand we have to think about this in the long term if we make this change this is this change is not just going to apply to

[01:09:05] our board um necessarily so um i i still advocate for making some kind of change that makes this process that involves more board members in this process um and i my understanding is that miss

LaBelle I know she has she has frequently invited me to join on those student discipline appeals when someone has not been able to and I have just I've not been able to because of my schedule but I understand that she has made great efforts to include all of the board members which I applaud I think that's

[01:09:40] really good for the education and experience of all of us as members but that too is she's doing that out of her discretion and again like if we had a different SBAC chair it could be a different practice and I would like to have something in policy that ensures that this is spread around through other board members but I don't I'm not opposed to this proposal necessarily that staff has put together in the red line but I also I don't think that that has to be the only solution I think there are other paths forward that we can

[01:10:14] consider thank you Miss Donahue I will I guess in the discussion with two requests for staff if you could please contemplate how we can collect information feedback from the SBAC committee in terms of what their feelings are about this proposed change and then also if we could please take a look at the language and make sure that we've standardized the language so that it's inclusive of a consistent approach so that we are sharing the same type of

[01:10:47] information for each committee and seeing no further discussion and without objection this information item will return as an action item next month we have completed the items on our agenda for this meeting is there any new business seeing no new business we are adjourned thank you for coming out tonight and be safe driving home



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