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Loudoun County School Board, 4th Tuesday School Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 25, 2025

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon. I call to order this March 25, 2025 Loudoun County School Board meeting. We will start with our item two, our disclosures, and I'll start. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the items on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for lcps employees specifically as a school board member i am eligible to receive health insurance

[00:00:36] and related benefits as an lcps employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which i am included i can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other

[00:01:13] discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose

interests may also be affected of which i am included i can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you thank you ms chandler vice chair donoghue thank you madam chair as a member of the leaven county school board i make the following

[00:01:51] disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, my spouse, my minor children, and I are enrolled in LCPS health insurance that may be affected by any potential changes to employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance. Additionally, my sister-in-law is an LCPS employee who does not reside with me and is not dependent on me. These subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may be affected, of which my spouse, my sister-in-law, and my minor children and I am

[00:02:28] included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you, Vice Chair Donohue. Ms. LaBeau. As a member of the Leiden County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include the effect or affect benefits of LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member I'm

[00:03:05] eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you, Ms. LaBelle. Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance

[00:03:43] and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an lcps employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees well in the excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which i am included i can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you ms shirnoff we'll move on to item three approval of the consent agenda board members are there any changes to be made to the consent agenda seeing none before we vote on

[00:04:23] the consent agenda we have five proclamations to be read our first proclamation recognizes April 2025 as autism acceptance month and will be read by vice chair Donahue vice chair thank you madam chair whereas the centers for disease control and prevention note that one in 36 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder or ASD and whereas most recent statistics from the Virginia Department of Education in December 2023 reported 30,492 students with autism as their primary disability in the Commonwealth. And in December of 2024, Loudoun County Public

[00:05:00] Schools reported that 2,209 students with the primary disability category of autism are served in LCPS. And whereas the increase in the number of students with ASD in Virginia mirrors national

statistics and is the subject of research to better understand the causes of autism and factors contributing to the rise in the number of children diagnosed, and whereas Loudoun County Public Schools celebrates autism acceptance by wearing red to support LCPS students with autism and their families on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, World Autism Day, and support school-based efforts to provide special events promoting autism acceptance, and whereas Loudoun County

[00:05:39] Public Schools empowers all students through inclusive and meaningful learning opportunities with exemplary staff and recognizes that an engaged community, including families and caregivers, is part of valuable collaboration with LCPS staff. And whereas Loudoun County Public Schools supports open communication and respectful relationships, resulting in positive outcomes for all involved and will continue to provide support and training to students, staff, and their families.

[00:06:05] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board recognizes April 2025 as Autism Acceptance Month in Loudoun County Public Schools. Thank you, Vice Chair Donoghue. Our next proclamation recognizes April 2025 as Military Child Month and will be read by Ms. LaBelle. Ms. LaBelle.

[00:06:23] Thank you, Madam Chair. Whereas April is the month of the military child, a special month to recognize and pay tribute to military families and their children for the daily sacrifices made and for their commitment, courage, and unconditional support of our armed forces, and whereas the Commonwealth of Virginia is home to more than 78,000 children whose parents serve in the military stationed in Virginia with 1,289 self-reported military-connected students attended Loudoun County Public Schools and whereas military families and employees in Loudoun County

[00:07:02] include active duty service members in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force as members of the Reserves and the National Guard. And whereas LCPS has 899 students who have a parent or guardian who is active duty, 508 students who have a parent or guardian who is in the Reserves, 179 students who have a parent or guardian who is in the National Guard, and 287 employees have self-reported as military veterans

[00:07:39] and whereas the children of our service members continue to make significant contributions to schools, community, the nation, and our commonwealth despite prolonged and repeated absences of one or both of their parents and whereas military-connected children often demonstrate resilience, perseverance, maturity, and cultural competence in the face of frequent moves, family separations through deployments, and reintegration following deployments, and whereas the month of the military child

[00:08:16] provides an opportunity to salute our military children and acknowledge their contributions that they bring to their families, our schools, our communities, and our commonwealth, and whereas Virginia is a proud member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which addresses key transition issues encountered by military students, including enrollment, placement, daily attendance, eligibility, and graduation, and whereas across the nation, individuals are encouraged to wear purple on April 9th,

[00:08:52] 2025, in celebration of Purple Up for Military Kids to show support and military-connected children and to thank them for their strength and sacrifices. Therefore be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board recognizes April 25 as the month of the military child and encourages Loudoun County public schools and communities to celebrate this recognition with activities to honor the contributions of our students from military families and be it further

[00:09:30] resolved that Loudoun County School Board expresses its sincere gratitude to military-connected students throughout Loudoun County for their service to our great nation. In witness thereof, the Loudoun County School Board issues this proclamation to honor and recognize the month of the military child. Thank you Ms. LaBelle. Our third proclamation recognizes March 2025 as Equity in Education Month and will be read by Dr. Linda Deans. Dr. Deans? Equity in

[00:10:07] Education Month. Whereas Equity and Education Month is celebrated in March to promote educational equity in Virginia, the Virginia School Boards Association established the month to increase awareness and support for students. And whereas educational equity is the premise that all students, all students have the opportunity for success regardless of their background or circumstances. And whereas educational equity is achieved through creating intentional systems

[00:10:47] of support that meet the diverse needs of all students in order that they meet their full potential. And whereas Loudoun County Public Schools has adopted a commitment to equity To ensure student growth and success for every child, create culturally responsive environments where all students see themselves represented, foster a sense of belonging, and eliminate opportunity gaps.

[00:11:21] And, whereas, educational equity focuses on creating a learning environment that's tailored to meet individual student needs, such as accommodations for students with disabilities, appropriate access to buildings and campuses, supports acquiring English language services, and the rejection of behavior that is discriminatory based on inherent characteristics.

[00:11:55] And whereas the Loudoun County School Board continues to be committed to equity in education and creating a climate and curriculum where all students receive the resources needed to graduate prepared for success after high school.

[00:12:16] And whereas the Loudoun County School Board affirms that providing an equitable education for every student is a valuable mechanism for increasing academic success, building a thriving community, and driving economic advancement for its citizens.

[00:12:38] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board recognizes the month of March 2025 as Equity in Education Month and supports equity in educational best practices and programming opportunities for all students. Thank you, Dr. Deans. Our fourth proclamation recognizes March 2025 as National Women's History Month and was supposed to be read by Mr. Estreffi, who's not here right now as the only male on the board, but we now have also Dr. Rashid who's going to be

[00:13:17] reading it. Thank you, Chair. Whereas Women's History Month began as a local week-long celebration in Santa Rosa, California in 1978, and since 1995, each president has issued an annual proclamation designating Women's History Month celebrating the courageous women who have helped our nation build a fairer, more just society that is the very fabric of our democracy. And whereas Women's History Month honors the contributions and achievements women have made, celebrating their perseverance and leadership across society, and their impacts on history, the present, and the

[00:13:51] future. And whereas, though these women's stories too often go untold, we stand on the shoulders of many sung and unsung trailblazers, from the women who took a stand as suffragists, abolitionists, and labor leaders, to pioneering scientists, doctors, engineers, educators, groundbreaking artists, public servants, and brave members of our armed forces.

[00:14:14] And whereas the National Women's History Alliance has set the theme for 2025 as moving forward together, women educating and inspiring generations, celebrating the collective strength and influence of women who have dedicated their lives to shaping education, advocating for equity, and fostering the success of future generations.

[00:14:34] And whereas in Loudoun County Public Schools, women comprise 77.23% of the more than 13,000 dedicated individuals in our K-12 workforce, serving as teachers, administrators, and leaders, counselors, and coaches, support staff, and mentors who inspire and empower our students every day.

[00:14:56] And whereas the young women in our schools represent the next generation of leaders, innovators, and change makers, and it is our responsibility to provide them with the opportunities, encouragement, and support to reach their fullest potential.

[00:15:10] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Loudoun County School Board proclaims March 1st through March 31st, 2025, as Women's History Month in Loudoun County Public Schools, and be it further resolved that the Loudoun County School Board encourages staff and community to celebrate women's history by learning about their contributions and encouraging women and girls to continue break barriers and to learn from and be inspired by the many contributions of women throughout history and today.

[00:15:38] Thank you so much, Dr. Rasheed. Our final proclamation proclaims April 2025 is School Library Month in all Loudoun County Public Schools and will be read by Ms. Chernoff. Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:15:54] School Library Month. Whereas April 2025 marks the 40th annual National School Library Month, a time to recognize the essential role of school libraries in fostering student success, and whereas school libraries provide inclusive student-centered learning environments that promote inquiry collaboration and critical thinking and whereas school libraries support instructional goals by providing high quality resources technology and research tools to enhance curriculum and deepen student engagement and learning and whereas certified school librarians work in collaboration with educators to develop students literacy skills digital citizenship and information fluency preparing them for lifelong learning and

[00:16:33] whereas school libraries curate materials and reflect the experiences perspectives and contributions of all communities ensuring access to knowledge and whereas school libraries foster a love of reading by providing access to a wide range of books and digital resources that align with students interests abilities and learning needs and whereas school libraries promote intellectual freedom by encouraging open inquiry respectful discourse and access to multiple viewpoints now therefore be it resolved that the the Loudoun County School Board does hereby proclaim April 2025 as school library month in all Loudoun County public schools to celebrate the invaluable contributions of school libraries

[00:17:11] and librarians in advancing student learning and achievement. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. I'll now entertain a motion to approve the consent agenda. Yes, Vice Chair Donohue. Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we approve the consent agenda as outlined in our packet.

[00:17:31] I have a motion. Is there a second? I second. I have a second by Dr. Deans. It's been properly moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda. At this time, we'll take a vote to approve this consent agenda. Clerk, please open the vote. Board members, please record your vote.

[00:17:50] Clerk, please close and display the vote. And that motion passes with Mrs. Griffiths abstaining from the vote and Mr. Struffy absent for the vote. We'll move on to our work session.

[00:18:06] Department of Business and Financial Services and Human Resources and Talent Development. retiree health insurance with Ms. Lisa Boland, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Sharon Willoughby,

[00:18:17] our Chief Financial Officers.

[00:18:49] Good evening, Chairman Mansfield and School Board members. We appreciate the opportunity this evening to share some additional information with you about the proposed retiree benefits changes. At LCPS, every decision we make, especially those related to our workforce is guided by goal two of our strategic plan. This means ensuring that our employees, both current and retired, have access to competitive, sustainable, and equitable benefits that reflect our commitment to their long-term well-being. Before we begin, I want to

[00:19:28] acknowledge the expertise and support we have in the room tonight. Healthcare, especially retiree healthcare is a complex and evolving landscape. When you factor in Medicare, pharmacy, vision, and dental coverage, it becomes even more intricate. That's why we are fortunate to work closely with Aon, our benefits consulting partner. Their team provides critical support to both human resources and talent development and business and financial services, helping us design sustainable plans that balance affordability with quality coverage. They ensure that we remain

[00:20:06] compliant with health care laws and regulations while also analyzing financial trends to anticipate cost drivers and necessary adjustments and also plays a key role in contract oversight conducting audits and market comparisons to ensure that lcps is receiving competitive pricing and best in class services from our health care vendors their expertise in benchmarks benchmarking financial forecasting and RFP processes allows us to make informed, data-driven decisions about the future

[00:20:42] of our health care plans. We deeply appreciate their insights, and I want to take a moment to recognize the team members joining us tonight. In person, we have Jamie Roberts, the Assistant Vice President of Health Solutions, Terrence Pregel, Senior Vice President, Account Executive Health Solutions, Anna Kruiser, senior consultant, and our day-to-day contact. And then joining us virtually, we have Meridale Gough, senior vice president, retiree medical practice leader, and Megan Marsdink, vice president, lead health solutions. Thank you all for being here with,

[00:21:22] and with that, let's dive into our discussion on retiree health benefits and the proposed changes. Okay, LCPS is committed to supporting our employees beyond their active years by providing a comprehensive package of retiree benefits.

[00:21:43] We contribute monthly to the Virginia Retirement System to help fund retiree pensions. LCPS covers both the employer and employee share of the life insurance benefit, ensuring continued financial protection for retirees and their families.

[00:22:00] We also fund 100% of the health insurance credit, which offsets the cost of retiree health insurance. In addition, LCPS offers retiree health insurance for those who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Policy 7628 Retirement Benefits.

[00:22:20] These benefits reflect our long-standing commitment to taking care of employees as they transition into retirement. While pensions, life insurance, and health insurance are familiar benefits, I want to take a moment to explain the health insurance credit as it is a unique and valuable part of our retiree benefits package.

[00:22:47] The health insurance credit is an additional amount added to a retiree's VRS pension to help offset the cost of insurance premiums in retirement. This credit is fully funded by LCPS. We make contributions directly to VRS throughout an employee's career to ensure they receive this benefit upon retirement.

[00:23:12] In addition to funding the health insurance credit, LCPS pays 100% of the life insurance premium for employees throughout their careers. For retirees who meet the eligibility requirements in Policy 7628, LCPS also offers health insurance coverage in retirement.

[00:23:33] This structure ensures that our retirees have additional financial support to manage their health care costs after leaving LCPS. Throughout this presentation, I'll be using several key terms related to retiree health care.

[00:23:52] To ensure we're all on the same page, let's quickly go over them. Medigap, this refers to Medicare supplement plans that work alongside Medicare Parts A and B to help cover costs like co-pays and deductibles. Essentially, it fills the gap. Medicare Advantage, which you've heard lots about, also known as Medicare Part C, these are bundled plans that combine medical and pharmacy benefits and may also include vision and dental coverage. Premium,

[00:24:29] this is the monthly cost retirees pay to participate in a health care plan. A deductible is the out-of-pocket amount an enrollee must pay before the insurance starts covering costs. Non-Medicare eligible, this is retirees who are not yet 65 or who do not qualify for Medicare due to a disability. Medicare eligible. This is retirees who are 65 or older or who qualify

[00:25:02] for Medicare due to a disability. Retiree health reimbursement arrangement, RHRA. This is an employer-funded account that allows retirees to use tax-free funds to pay for medical expenses, including health insurance premiums, prescriptions, and out-of-pocket costs in retirement.

[00:25:30] On January 1st, 2024, LCPS transitioned to the Cigna True Choice Medicare Advantage Plan for Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents. This change reduced medical claims costs, but LCPS remains self-insured for pharmacy, vision, and dental, which means we are still financially responsible for those expenses.

[00:25:56] The pharmacy market is volatile, and we anticipate a 12% increase in pharmacy costs for 2025. But this is just one of the drivers for why we are making this proposal. So, what are the other drivers? Flexibility, consistency, stability, and choice.

[00:26:17] The retiree health reimbursement arrangement gives retirees the freedom to choose the coverage that best fits their needs. whether that's a Medigap plan, a Part D pharmacy supplement, vision and dental coverage, or a Medicare Advantage plan. Additionally, after extensive research and benchmarking against our comparator school divisions, we believe the RHRA is the most viable long-term solution. It provides retirees with a consistent greater choice while also allowing LCPS to better manage costs in a

[00:26:55] predictable way. This change supports long-term financial stability, particularly in managing our other post-employment benefits, OPEB liabilities. OPEB is essentially a retirement savings plan for future retiree health insurance costs, and ensuring its stability is critical. And Ms.

[00:27:17] Willoughby will go into that a little bit more later on in the presentation. And finally, choice. We have heard from retirees through direct feedback to the employee benefits team, outreach to school board members, and submissions through the Let's Talk portal that some are dissatisfied with the Medicare Advantage network.

[00:27:37] Given this feedback, we explored alternatives, but reverting back to fully self-insured model for medical, pharmacy, vision, and dental was not a financially viable option. The RHRA model is a balanced solution, addressing retiree concerns while keeping costs sustainable for the division.

[00:28:01] This proposed change is about ensuring that our retiree health care offers flexible, consistent, financially sustainable, and responsive retiree needs, both now and in the future.

[00:28:17] As we explored potential solutions, we also reviewed what our comparator school divisions are doing regarding retiree health care. The data on the slide shows a consistent trend.

[00:28:34] Most school divisions have moved to Medicare Advantage plans as the primary option for Medicare-eligible retirees. Notably, two school divisions offer no retiree health care once retirees become Medicare-eligible, And one division is actively proposing to discontinue retiree health care for Medicare-eligible retirees in an upcoming budget cycle.

[00:29:00] This analysis confirms that Medicare Advantage or alternative structures like RHRA are the direction many organizations are moving toward to balance cost sustainability and retiree support. Our proposal keeps LCPS aligned with these trends while offering greater flexibility and choice for retirees.

[00:29:26] So what does our current retiree health insurance coverage look like? Under Policy 7628, retirees must meet specific eligibility criteria to enroll in LCPS retiree health insurance. To qualify, a retiree must have been hired before July 1st of 2013, have worked full-time for LCPS for at least 15 consecutive years, have been enrolled in LCPS health insurance for the three years immediately preceding retirement, this includes any dependents they wish to enroll as well,

[00:30:05] and B, retiring and collecting a pension under the Virginia Retirement System, VRS, at the same time as their LCPS retirement. Currently, for non-Medicare eligible retirees, these retirees enroll in either the OAP or the OAP high plans.

[00:30:31] These are the same plans and are identical to those offered to active employees. But the rate structure is different to reflect retiree status. For Medicare-eligible retirees, which are those retirees age 65 or older, they are automatically enrolled in the Cigna True Choice Medicare Advantage Plan, and they may elect to cover their spouses and dependents, provided those dependents have been enrolled in LCPS, Active Employee Health Insurance, for at least three years immediately preceding retirement.

[00:31:11] Now that we've reviewed the current structure of retiree health insurance, it's important to look ahead. To ensure long-term sustainability, financial stability, and greater flexibility for retirees, we are proposing key changes to the retiree health insurance model.

[00:31:27] Let's take a closer look at those changes. So how does the retiree health reimbursement arrangement actually work? Under this plan, LCPS contributes funds into an account that retirees can use

to pay for medical expenses, including health insurance premiums, co-pays, co-insurance, and other eligible health care costs. LCPS is proposing to provide \$400 per month for each retiree enrolled in this plan, and there are some key benefits for the RHRA. The contribution is non-taxable, meaning it will not

[00:32:07] increase the retirees tax liability. Every dollar contributed goes directly to covering medical expenses. The account will function similarly to an FSA or a flexible spending account or HSA health savings account and will be managed by a third-party administrator for ease of use.

[00:32:27] The unused funds will roll over from month to month and year to year allowing retirees to accumulate balances for future medical expenses. So how can retirees actually use the RHRA?

[00:32:43] Retirees can choose a health care plan that best fits their needs, whether that's a Medigap plan, Medicare Advantage, Part D pharmacy supplement, or vision and dental coverage. If the cost of their selected plan is less than the monthly contribution, the remaining funds can be used help cover health care expenses for dependents. Future adjustments and school board oversight was a popular question. The school board will have the opportunity to review the contribution amount annually as part of the budget process. If necessary, the board can approve an increase

[00:33:21] to ensure the RHRA contribution provides meaningful financial support to our retirees. This approach provides long-term flexibility for retirees while ensuring cost predictability and sustainability for LCPS.

[00:33:41] No changes will occur for retirees who are not yet Medicare eligible, so those under the age of 65. These retirees will remain in either the OAP or the OAP high plan, just as they do today.

[00:33:57] These are the same plans, again, offered to active employees, though the rate structure is different. Once a retiree becomes Medicare eligible, so at age 65 or due to a disability, they will transition from their current plan to the Retiree Health Reimbursement Arrangement, RHRA. This allows them to select the Medicare plan that best fits their needs using the \$400 monthly RHRA contribution to offset costs. Retirees who choose not to participate in

[00:34:32] LCPS retiree health insurance at the time of retirement will not be eligible to rejoin the plan at a later date. This policy ensures consistency in plan management and financial planning for the division. The structure again maintains stability for non-Medicare retirees while ensuring a seamless transition to Medicare coverage when the time comes.

[00:34:57] All Medicare-eligible retirees must enroll in Medicare Part A and B when they turn 65. Options for current Medicare-eligible retirees include, under this proposed change, retirees who are already Medicare-eligible will have two options.

[00:35:22] They can remain in the LCPS-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan, or they can elect to move to the RHRA plan. Retirees who choose to switch to the RHRA must follow Medicare rules regarding any plan changes.

[00:35:40] Retirees who become Medicare eligible on or after July 1, 2026 will move to the RHRA plan automatically. They will be required to, one, enroll in Medicare Parts A and B, and then choose either a Medigap or a Medicare Advantage plan to supplement that best fits their needs.

[00:36:05] They can optionally also enroll in a Part D pharmacy supplement, vision plan, and or dental plan, depending on what they choose. The RHRA model provides flexibility, allowing retirees to select

plans that best align with their health care needs and location.

[00:36:23] This approach ensures that current retirees have choices, while future retirees gain greater flexibility and control over their own health care coverage. Under this plan, dependents who are under age 26, so their children, may continue in the retirees' LCPS health insurance until they turn 26. Once they reach age 26, they will have the option to enroll in COBRA or seek their own

[00:37:00] health coverage. For Medicare-eligible dependents, so spouses, dependent spouses and other eligible dependents who become Medicare-eligible, either at age 65 or due to a Medicare-approved disability, will also transition off of the LCPS plan. At that time, they can enroll in Medicare and select the plan that best fits their needs. Retirees can use RHRA funds to help cover health insurance

[00:37:33] premiums and medical expenses for both themselves and their eligible dependents. This provides retirees, again, with greater flexibility in managing health care costs for their family. This structure ensures that dependents remain covered until they reach eligibility thresholds while giving retirees financial support and choice through the RHRA.

[00:38:04] Medicare offers 10 different Medicare plans, each with varying benefits, co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles, and premiums. These plans are identified by letters of the alphabet. Availability of plan differences include not every plan is available in every location, So retirees must check what's offered in their specific area.

[00:38:33] Some plans are only available to individuals who turn 65 prior to 2020. And certain insurance companies offer high deductible options, which may come with lower premiums but higher out-of-pocket costs.

[00:38:49] So how can a retiree find available plans? Retirees can use Medicare.gov to search for Medigap plans by zip code and compare available options. Once they identify available plans, they can review provider networks, costs, and coverage details to select the best fit for their needs.

[00:39:12] Retirees do not have to navigate this process alone, and assistance is available at no cost through Medicare.gov resources, the Area Agency on Aging, which provides guidance on Medicare options, state Medicare assistance programs, which offer one-on-one counseling, and in Virginia, retirees can use BICAP, or the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program, for free support in choosing the right plan. This approach, again, ensures that retirees have the tools and

[00:39:47] resources to make informed decisions about their health care coverage. This chart displays the Medigap plans approved by Medicare outlining the differences in coverage across each option.

[00:40:03] You'll notice that plans C and F have been blacked out. These plans are only available to individuals who turn 65 before 2020. As you can see, each plan offers a different combination of coverage for deductibles, co-pays, and co-insurance, allowing retirees to choose the best fit for their needs. Based on enrollment trends, the industry data shows that plans G and N appear to be the most popular options among retirees. Retirees can use this chart as a

[00:40:37] starting point when comparing plans and determining what works best for them. The funds provided under the proposed RHRA plan will give retirees the flexibility to purchase medical, pharmacy, dental, and vision plans that are comparable to the coverage currently offered under LCPS retiree health

insurance. Retirees can use the RHRA funds to select a plan that best fits their needs, including a Medigap plan, which is a Medicare supplement, a Part D pharmacy supplement,

[00:41:13] a vision plan, and or dental plan, or alternatively, if the retiree was happy with a Medicare Advantage plan, they could still choose a Part C Medicare Advantage plan that combines these benefits into one plan. RHRA funds are not limited to the retiree alone. They can also be used to eligible medical expenses for dependents, providing additional support for retirees with covered family members. This approach again gives retirees greater choice and control over their health care while ensuring they have financial support for their medical needs.

[00:41:52] To better understand the potential costs retirees may face, we conducted research using the Medicare site and focused on the 20148 zip code in Ashburn. We compared three different Medigap plans available in this area, plans A, G, and N. Plan A was the lowest cost option but had higher co-pays and coinsurance. Plan G had a higher premium plan, but with lower out-of-pocket costs. And Plan N

[00:42:27] was similar to Plan G, but with lower premiums and slightly higher copays and coinsurance. In addition to Medigap coverage, we also reviewed a pharmacy plan priced at \$105.40 per month, based on a 65-year-old retiree taking four common prescriptions, a vision plan at \$30 per month, a dental plan at \$52 per month.

[00:42:54] And you will see these costs were combined with the Medigap premiums and the totals are reflected on the chart. All of the identified plans fall within the proposed LCPS RHRA contribution, meaning retirees will have multiple affordable options when selecting their coverage.

[00:43:16] This analysis reinforces that the RHRA provides sufficient funds for retirees to choose a comprehensive health care package that fits their needs. This slide presents the same Medigap plan comparison, but for individuals who are 70 instead of 65.

[00:43:39] Even at age 70, with Medigap premiums increased slightly, all identified plans remain within the proposed LCPS RHRA contribution. This reinforces that the RHRA provides retirees with sufficient funds to maintain quality coverage as they age, ensuring both flexibility and long-term sustainability.

[00:44:04] We recognize that while some retirees prefer Medigap plans, others are very satisfied with the Medicare Advantage Part C program. To ensure retirees have options, we've researched available Medicare Advantage plans using the 20148 zip code again and age 65 as the criteria.

[00:44:26] You will see this plan shows here has \$0 premiums, so \$0 monthly out-of-pocket costs, meaning there is no monthly cost to enroll. These are network-based plans with pharmacy deductibles and co-pays for primary and specialist visits.

[00:44:47] Many Medicare Advantage plans also include extra benefits such as gym memberships and hearing aid coverage. But this is another example of the flexibility offered by the RHRA funds. Retirees who select a \$0 premium plan can use their RHRA funds for other expenses such such as a Medicare Advantage plan for their dependent, co-pays, co-insurance, or deductibles, medical equipment for themselves or their dependents.

[00:45:17] This, again, ensures that retirees have multiple pathways to secure affordable, high-quality coverage that aligns with their health care needs. The Retiree Health Reimbursement Arrangement offers retirees the flexibility to choose health care coverage that best fits their needs.

[00:45:38] However, with so many options available, how do retirees determine which plan is right for them and their family? Assistance is available in multiple ways. Again, the Medicare website, medicare.gov, provides tools to compare plans by zip code. That is what we use to present you with those options earlier on in the slides. Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistant Program, or VCAP offers free, unbiased guidance to help retirees understand their options. And the Area Agency on Aging can also provide localized support depending on where a retiree lives.

[00:46:19] In some locations, this may be a county or state agency. These resources ensure that retirees have the information and support needed to make informed health care decisions for them and their family. And at this point, I'd like to turn it over to Chief Financial Officer Sharon Willoughby, who will provide more details on the financial necessity of these changes and how they align with the LCPS's long-term sustainability goals.

[00:46:48] Thank you. So as school board members, you know you have the responsibility to balance providing the best affordable coverage to our active employees and our retirees with sound financial management of our funds. And that's what I'm going to share with you today is some of that information regarding the financial management and the challenges that we are seeing there.

[00:47:08] Starting with our health self-insurance fund, this fund covers the current financial activity for active employees. This fund pays for ongoing medical expenses and is funded through employer-paid premiums that are transferred from the school operating fund and employee-paid premiums.

[00:47:30] LCPS also, on average, covers almost 90% of the total premium that is going into the health self-insurance fund. Once those funds are received in the health self-insurance fund, then those are then used to pay for the costs associated with the active employees.

[00:47:50] So again, we're self-insured. And so rather than us taking those premiums and paying them to a third-party provider, let's say a Blue Cross Blue Shield, we are Blue Cross Blue Shield. We pay for our costs. To adhere to policy and financial management best practices, our goal is to maintain a reserve fund balance equivalent to at least two months of claims expense.

[00:48:16] In the past, as you can see on this chart, we had some very strong financial years where we significantly exceeded this target. However, in recent years, the reserve has steadily declined. Specifically, you can see at the end of fiscal 23, the reserve stood at 1.7 months.

[00:48:35] For fiscal 24, it was projected to drop to 0.3 months before we transferred funds from the school operating budget to help restore the balance. The County Board of Supervisors appropriating resolution allows LCPS to transfer surplus school operating funds at year-end to the health self-insurance fund if the balance falls below 10% of claims expense, which is equivalent to 1.2 months.

[00:49:02] A two-month reserve represents 17% of claims expenses. Since the fiscal 24 reserve was projected to fall below 1.2 months, we transferred funds to bring the balance up to 0.9. Without additional funding, the reserve is projected to enter a negative balance this fiscal year.

[00:49:22] If we transfer surplus school operating funds again at this fiscal year end, we can maintain a positive reserve balance. However, as projections indicate, further action is necessary to stabilize this fund and ensure revenues are sufficient to cover expenses.

[00:49:42] This slide highlights the challenges we, like many other organizations, face in managing health plans. It illustrates how annual premium increases in blue have not kept up with rising annual claims costs that are depicted in orange.

[00:49:58] As shown in the previous slide, we had several years where our fund balance exceeded the reserve threshold, allowing us to use those excess funds to offset claims expenses. And that's why in certain years you do not see that we had any increase in premiums.

[00:50:14] In 2022, however, we began increasing premiums for active employees. And in 2025, we extended those increases to retirees as well. The orange bars represent the rising claims costs for both active employees and retirees.

[00:50:30] Inactive is on the left and the retirees are on the right. For 2025, we are starting to see reduced claims expenses due to the Medicare Advantage Plan for retirees over age 65. However, these savings are offset by rising costs in pharmacy, dental, and vision for all retirees, both over and under 65, as well as, well, and again, just reiterating that also it includes for the cost for the retirees who are under 65 as well.

[00:50:59] Our second fund is the other post-employment benefits, or what we refer to as our OPEB fund which manages retiree financial activity as required by GASB regulations. This fund covers both current and future retiree medical costs.

[00:51:16] For current expenses, the OPEB fund pays for retirees medical costs using revenues from employer paid premiums that are transferred from the school operating fund as well as retiree paid premiums and then also a direct transfer from the school operating fund for the pay-as-you-go expenses that are incurred.

[00:51:35] For future obligations, the fund also accounts for our OPEB liability, which is the projected cost of retiree medical benefits. This liability is currently funded through an annual \$12 million transfer from the county that is funneled through our school operating fund.

[00:51:53] An easy way to think about this is one part of the fund operates on the pay-as-you-go basis for current costs, meaning we are, as costs are incurred, we are transferring funds from the school operating fund and combining that with the premiums that are paid into the fund to cover those current costs. And then in addition to that, we are basically putting money aside like a savings account, and currently that's at \$12 million a year to help cover those future costs for the retiree medical. So again, thinking of our OPEB liability as that savings account, the best practice recommends having at least 70% of the required

[00:52:32] funds saved to cover future retiree medical costs. This 70% target is represented by the blue line on the chart. You can see by the dotted line where we have fallen below and it shows our actual funded liability or how much we have saved so far. While we are currently below the target, we believe we are on track to reach 70% within approximately five years, assuming we implement effective plan changes. Finally, according to our consultant's projections, we are expected to achieve a full funding within 10 years. Our primary goal is to provide

[00:53:11] affordable, high-quality health care for active employees while maintaining our commitment to eligible retirees as well. At the same time, we must ensure the financial stability of our health self-insurance fund and work toward fully funding our OPEB liability.

[00:53:27] Balancing these priorities is challenging, and from a financial perspective, the key is to increase revenues and reduce costs, which is essentially bringing in more funds while controlling expenses to restore balance to the fund. On the revenue side, we have been gradually increasing premiums over multiple years, as you see on this chart, a trend that is likely to continue.

[00:53:51] However, we do not raise premiums arbitrarily. Our approach ensures that annual pay increases are more than sufficient to offset any rise in health premiums, maintaining affordability for employees. And again, this is related to our actives, but again, this is really balancing a health plan that is for both retirees and active employees.

[00:54:13] On the expense side, we have had several measures taken in that others are in progress to reduce costs for both LCPS as the insurer and for the employees and retirees. The FY26 budget included plan changes for both active and retirees.

[00:54:31] The active plan changes were approved by the school board and will be effective January 1, 2026, and those are depicted in the middle box. So you can see we have increased the deductible by \$150 across plans.

[00:54:48] We also increased our out-of-pocket maximums, and then to help offset that, and based on our cost analysis, we increased our HSA contributions for employees as well. Prior to that, we had made plan adjustments, as you see depicted on the box on the left, where we moved the POS plan to the OAP high plan.

[00:55:09] We also had increased deductibles, and as Mrs. Bolin referenced earlier, we moved retirees that were over 65 to the signature choice Medicare Advantage. Beyond these plan design changes, we have also been actively seeking vendors that can offer better coverage and pricing that are shown in the last box on the right.

[00:55:32] We are currently evaluating pharmacy proposals and have started the solicitation process for Medicare Advantage providers. Last fall, we awarded a new vision contract, and we also completed a pharmacy market review that resulted in improved pricing.

[00:55:48] So we remain committed to exploring all viable options to manage the financial health of our funds while ensuring employees and retirees receive the best, most affordable coverage possible. In terms of next steps, as I mentioned earlier, the school board did approve the recommended changes, plan changes for the active employees and we put a pause on the retiree plan changes with the direction to bring this back as you know as a work session so that is why we're discussing it this

[00:56:20] evening however we also are looking for an action at the next school board meeting as recommended on the slide that the school board approve staff recommended retiree health plan changes to be effective January 1st, 2026. I will also highlight the request for the action at the next meeting would support the fact that we have the Medicare Advantage plan solicitations currently on the street. And so that takes some time to go through. And we also want to be able

[00:56:55] to make sure that we can provide respondent vendors with the best information. And that also, January 1st may seem like a date that's far off, but there's a tremendous amount of work that goes in to preparing for those plan changes to include preparing for open enrollment that would occur in the fall.

[00:57:14] So when we basically work backwards on that calendar is where we arrive at the April 8th. And with that, myself and Mrs. Boland would be happy to take any questions that you may have. Thank you, Ms. Willoughby. Thank you, Ms. Boland.

[00:57:30] Board members, do you have any questions? Yes, Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair, And thank you, Ms. Boland and Ms. Willoughby, for bringing this back to us and being responsive in taking the time to address this.

[00:57:45] I think we've received a lot of emails this week, and I'm appreciative of the feedback from our constituents and our retirees particularly. I want to be clear that people understand that no action is being taken tonight. I think there was people that were thinking that tonight was the change, so I want to say that out loud.

[00:58:07] And that this really was the chance for us to get the information and to really start to process it before action is taken. So just in light of some of the responses that I received in my inbox, I wanted to make sure that people understand that that's where we're at. So even if we were to take action in two weeks, that would leave two weeks for us to engage with our retirees and dialogue about these proposed changes.

[00:58:33] I do want to ask a couple of questions, follow-up. Can you address, can you speak to what happens with unused funds in a monthly RHRA? So when you do not spend your full \$400, as we saw on the chart, there were some plans that were as low as in the \$200s, what would happen to those funds?

[00:58:55] Does that go back to the retiree, or does that dump back into LCPS's SIF? So it's kind of neither. Okay. So it's an account set up, and, for example, if I had \$400 in that month and I used \$300 with 100 left, that 100 would carry over in that account to be used by the retiree, but for specific health care or medical expenses.

[00:59:24] So the next month they would have \$500 available to them. Okay. So what I meant was would it roll over into the medical expenses? Yes, ma'am. I just wanted to be very specific. It's not cash in your pocket. Yes. Got it. To go on vacation. Got it. I appreciate that because that was also something that people asked.

[00:59:41] I think there was an understanding or a thinking that it would go back into the LCPS-based self-insurance fund, but that will be credited to the RHRA account. Correct. Okay. Another question I had was about just a little bit more clarification about where the \$400 dollars comes from and what the justification for that is. And I know, and I hope I'm not putting you on the spot, but I know you and I spoke about how that there were other recommendations that were

[01:00:13] even potentially lower than \$400 as being a sustainable RHRA plan. And there are lots of companies that in fact use like \$250 as their default. So if you could just give a little bit more insight to that um about where that number sort of fits and why that number so and i may i may rely on some of our ann friends um to help with this as well because what i will say is that we worked with them on an approach um and they made a recommendation um based on some information

[01:00:53] and LCPS decided to make a proposal that was quite north of their recommendation. I don't know if that answers your question or if you're looking for more. I mean, any additional context I think would be helpful since this is the information dump portion.

[01:01:13] I'm going to ask Jamie Roberts from Aon to answer that question. Yeah, thanks. So we provided some benchmarking information about our clients. We do a periodic survey of our clients and about folks that have chosen this strategy, what their allocation is.

[01:01:34] And we can give you the entire kind of rundown, but about a little north of 80% of the respondents to our survey are providing less than \$3,500 a year. So that's less than about \$300 a month.

[01:01:51] So \$400 is certainly higher than that. and we have, you know, the other statistics we have go below that, 3,500 is the maximum in our survey. Thank you, I appreciate that, and my last clarifying question for now is there seems to be an overwhelming sentiment, and change is hard, right? I mean, we know that change is hard, and I think many people feel like their retiree health insurance, it was a promise made to them, or something, you know, that they, a commitment that was made to them for their service here in LCPS,

[01:02:27] And I certainly know that we as LCPS feel that way, that we want to honor that and give back. So I just wanted to ask, what would be the foreseen drawbacks to people? I mean, we've seen a lot of numbers, like that before with the Medicare Advantage plan, it was on average \$544 a month, so \$400 feels like, you know, they're taking a hit.

[01:02:53] But, I mean, to me, in the way you're explaining it, the flexibility seems really ideal, especially with the way things are changing right now. But what is, and maybe this is just a subjective question in your mind, would be the major drawbacks and why there would be so much pushback that we can't do this, we have to wait, maintain status quo for another year, do more research, when clearly we have taken steps to do that and just trying to understand that balance?

[01:03:25] So I'll do my best to capture based on, like you, we have gotten an influx of questions. So I'll do my best to capture what I see or understand the drawbacks to be.

[01:03:43] And I think what I will say is I think we, meaning myself, and I'll speak for Sharon, Ms. Willoughby, as we spoke about this, I think the scary piece is the change is scary, and we may not have done a great job up front of sharing all the information that we've shared tonight. And so we know now we have to get in front of it and share more information from the beginning. So that's one, right? I think a lot of it was misinformation or misunderstanding and being scared that the rug

[01:04:16] was getting pulled out from under them. I feel like this is an amazing option. I am somebody who likes flexibility, who likes to be able to pick what works best for me. However, one of the drawbacks that I have come to understand is there are many individuals that maybe don't want to have to worry about it. They want to just be able to know it's there. They don't want to have to maybe do the research or look at the plans or try to identify benefits are complicated, right? And they don't

[01:04:54] want to have to weigh the differences in the plans, which is why we really wanted to highlight that there are very good resources to help them with their specific needs. They may think that the Medicare Advantage plan is the best plan for them, and then they do the research and are amazed to find that there's another plan that meets their needs.

[01:05:17] So I see those as some of the major drawbacks. I also think there is a fear that those that have spouses or dependents, that there was a fear that they would not be able to cover them, And there is still a way to do that through a Medicare Advantage plan, which is similar to what they're on now, if that works for their medical situation.

[01:05:41] Those are the drawbacks, the three major drawbacks that I've come to understand. Thank you. I really appreciate that. And I appreciate your vulnerability and honesty in kind of addressing the budget cycle and all of that, you know, that wasn't trying something to sneak through, but that we do need to take a step back and really honor our retirees and their understanding of what's going on. I'm hopeful that after tonight, we can get to a place where the feedback is really responsive to what we've seen now and kind of decide what is best from there. So thank you so much for your

[01:06:20] work. Thank you to the retirees. I see many of you here tonight. I saw you in my inbox this week. And I thank you for sending your questions, sending your concerns. We see you, we hear you, and we're doing our best to get to a good solution. Thank you. I have a question that's, so, Ms. Bolin, you said that the unused funds roll over month to month for that retiree, but what happens at the end of the year?

[01:06:49] So, it just rolls over. That account continues to roll over. They're the custodians of their own account. So, at the end of the year, if you have \$1,800 left, that \$1,800 rolls over to the next year.

[01:07:06] It continues to accumulate. The second, thank you. And if I could just piggyback off of that, just to really stress in terms of this account, it's establishing an account for the retiree, and LCPS is making a contribution or a deposit, a monthly deposit into that retiree's account.

[01:07:24] So they have ownership over that account. The second thing is I have received lots of emails, and one of them is that discrepancy between 544 and 400. Could you say a little bit more about that, please?

[01:07:42] Yes. So that comparison was pulling, so the \$544 was referencing the monthly employer's share of a premium to the health self-insurance fund. So again, remembering we are self-insured. We are the insurance company. So we are paying our premium, and the employer's share was \$544 a month into that fund. In addition to that, though, because we're self-insured, any additional costs that were being incurred related to, for retirees specifically, related to their doctor's

[01:08:20] visits or medical procedures or anything related to that, was a separate transfer out of the school operating fund to pay for those costs. So what was missing in that comparison was the cost behind what was being paid with that premium. The RHRA is a contribution into the account, to the retiree's account. The retiree, as Mrs. Boland has walked you through, then has the purchasing power to buy a commercial product, self-supplemental plan. That third-party commercial

[01:08:57] insurer covers those costs. That's why there's a saving. So when to look at just the dollar amounts, yes, today we pay more on a premium basis compared to the RHRA, but we also pay for all the costs associated with that retiree care.

[01:09:16] And based on all of our costing and analysis and with the full support of Aon, it is showing that it would be not only from a financial perspective, a better plan to do the retiree contribution to save money for LCPS to help balance all the challenges I shared with you earlier, but from the retiree's perspective, thought it was really great in terms of providing that choice to retirees to use those funds as they best see fit.

[01:09:47] And my last question that I'm getting a lot of that I would please like some clarification, pre-existing conditions when you go from plan to plan, is there a problem? So, and I'm going to look to Ms. Evans to make sure I am communicating this correctly, But the only, so at the time of this transition on January 1st, 2026, if the individual registers

[01:10:21] for Medicare and goes to the RHRA plan, there would be no issue with the pre-existing conditions. However, if there is a lapse in that coverage and they make that change, then they would have to potentially have impact to their pre-existing conditions also before if you're in that rhra plan and you go from one plan to another you just is that going to affect things

[01:10:57] as well so i'll answer the first question first unless you are so if you're moving from a retiree who is already post 65 and wants to move to the rhra program from the medicare advantage If they do it within 12 months of starting the Medicare Advantage plan, then they can do that without having to undergo medical underwriting.

[01:11:21] If they are more than 12 months, then yes, they're going to have to undergo medical underwriting. So somebody moving from one plan to another, that's going to depend on the Medicare rules, but my understanding would be, yes, they may have to undergo medical underwriting because they're moving from plan to plan.

[01:11:46] So they really can only make one change from us to this other without medical underwriting. I'm going to ask Jamie Roberts to clarify what I just said.

[01:12:02] Thanks. So there are two different situations that people might find themselves in. In Medicare Advantage plans, and there are many of them, there's no underwriting for anyone at any time. So those plans are available to every Medicare beneficiary that lives in a particular geography.

[01:12:22] For a Medigap plan, a Medicare supplement plan, there's no underwriting allowed if someone enrolls essentially as they become Medicare eligible. But if they want to enroll in a Medigap plan a year later, three years later, four years later, they may be asked to complete some underwriting questions in order to get that coverage.

[01:12:42] So the Medicare Advantage world, no underwriting ever. a gap there could be some if they don't enroll timely there was a woman who who emailed and said in florida she was not able to take advantage of the advantage plan um and in that situation what if she was if she if we approved this and she was able to do this rh ra would that be something she wouldn't have that problem with pre-existing conditions or anything is that

[01:13:21] correct? So I don't know the specific circumstance. What I will say is if she had, as long as she did not drop LCPS insurance, she would be eligible for the RHRA. But I don't think I can answer anything past that. I can give just a little bit. Medicare, the Medicare Advantage plans, each one has its own network. The average person in America has access to 34 Medicare Advantage plans that

[01:13:57] also cover drugs. So the likelihood that they'll be able to find a plan that has their doctors in it is reasonably high. Each plan will have a different network. Okay, thank you. Board members, any other questions? No. Thank you for that work session. We might have more questions for you in your email boxes later, but we appreciate you. Thank you. And I'm going to move on quickly because

[01:14:31] we have 15 minutes and I know we have to get through this um today important um so uh we're going to go on to 4.02 department of student services restraint and seclusion annual report presented by Ms. Tedra Richardson assistant superintendent of the department of student services because I don't see Ms. Smith I don't see Donna today it's just okay good evening I'm

[01:15:10] pleased to present the annual report on restraint and seclusion for the 2023-2024 school year. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the use of these interventions across our schools, with a focus on data trends, compliance with state and federal regulations, and our ongoing efforts to promote a safe, supportive learning environment for all students.

[01:15:36] During our time together this evening, we will examine overall incident rates patterns by student group, and comparisons to previous years. Along with the steps we are taking to ensure all students receive the appropriate supports to thrive in our schools.

[01:15:53] We appreciate the board's ongoing commitment to student safety and well-being, and we look forward to continued collaboration in advancing best practices that foster inclusive and supportive learning environments for all. Next slide.

[01:16:08] Policy 5345 serves as the compass guiding our practices in restraint and seclusion of students by providing a framework that ensures consistency fairness and effectiveness in decision making and actions it establishes clear guidelines objectives and boundaries within which LCPS operates moreover policy 5345 provides a mechanism for accountability and transparency it also serves as a tool for continuous improvement allowing for regular evaluation and adaptation of practices to better achieve desired

[01:16:46] outcomes. Policy 5345, restraint and seclusion of students, serves to protect the rights and interests of stakeholders while promoting efficiency, equity, and progress. Next slide. Our first supportive measure in LCPS is our multi-tiered system of supports. The Department of Student Services promotes a multi-tiered system of supports for all students through universal, targeted, and intensive interventions. These interventions include and are not limited to positive behavioral interventions and supports, social and emotional support through unified

[01:17:25] mental health teams, and individualized behavior plans. The MTSS framework provides the foundation that fosters safe and supportive learning environments for all students and staff. Next slide, please. Our second support measure in place across LCPS is our annual employee training requirement.

[01:17:47] Our LCPS annual training in understanding and supporting student behavior is comprehensive and multifaceted. All LCPS employees have the responsibility for understanding and complying with policies and regulations related to the appropriate response to student behavior.

[01:18:09] Each school must have a team that includes members who are trained in the use of physical restraint and seclusion. The school-based team is composed of administrative and instructional personnel including staff who by reason of their training and job responsibilities work with students who exhibit challenging behavior or have the potential to engage in dangerous conduct.

[01:18:36] We currently utilize the MANT system for relational and technical support. This system uses a trauma-informed approach to teach staff to build positive relationships with students, use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills, manage personal emotional response to challenging student behavior, verbally de-escalate potentially aggressive situations, and utilize physical techniques and restraint to intervene to prevent imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others.

[01:19:13] It's important to note in the upcoming school year that LCPS will be transitioning to MANT 3.0, which is the newest update to the system. In the new trainings, the term restraint will now be replaced with the term hold.

[01:19:31] and additional holes have been developed. In addition to MANT, we also utilize the UKERU Crisis Management System. That training also uses trauma-informed practices to resolve conflict as well as physical techniques and with cushioned blocking pads to manage physically aggressive behavior.

[01:19:57] Additionally, LCPS partners with the Virginia Commonwealth University University Autism Center for Excellence, Safety for All, Autism Training for Transportation Staff. Next slide.

[01:20:13] Now we will review the working definitions for aspects of restraint and seclusion as defined by the Code of Virginia. Next slide. Restraint and seclusion may only be used in emergency situations when other interventions would be ineffective and only to prevent a student from seriously harming or injuring themselves or others; to quell a disturbance or remove a student from a disturbance in which the student's behavior threatens serious physical harm or injury to persons; defend

[01:20:49] self or others from serious physical harm or injury; and obtain possession of weapons, dangerous objects, controlled substances, or paraphernalia. It is important to note that restraint and seclusion must be discontinued as soon as the imminent risk of serious harm has dissipated.

[01:21:10] Seclusion and restraint may never be used to punish or discipline, as a means of coercion or retaliation, as a convenience or for any other reason besides those explicitly allowed per policy 5345.

[01:21:29] Next slide. Our children's safety, well-being, and dignity is paramount in the educational setting. The following slides capture the last three years of restraint and seclusion data for LCPS.

[01:21:44] The number of instances of physical restraint, seclusion, and mechanical restraint are disaggregated by students without disabilities, students with disabilities under the IDEA, which is special education, and students with disabilities that are 504 eligible.

[01:22:06] It is important to note that the number of incidences reported are not reflective of the number of students as some students may have multiple incidences in the educational setting.

[01:22:21] Next slide. We will focus our attention on the bottom row, but we do have the last three years. So we are looking at the 23-24 school year. You will note that for students without disabilities, there was one instance of physical restraint.

[01:22:41] For students with disabilities under the IDEA, there were eight instances of physical restraint. There were no instances of physical restraint for 504 eligible students. Next slide.

[01:22:57] This slide reviews the number of instances of seclusion in LCPS schools. For the 23-24 school year, there were no instances of seclusion of non-disabled students. There were four instances of seclusion for students with disabilities under the IDEA.

[01:23:18] And no occurrences for students with 504 eligibility. The next slide is the number of instances of mechanical restraint. You will see that LCPS has no instances of mechanical restraint for the 23-24 school year.

[01:23:40] The last slide in this particular section is how LCPS is required to report the data to the Virginia Department of Education. This slide does represent the total number of students for the previous incidences reported.

[01:23:58] Nine students had incidences of physical restraint. No students were subject to mechanical restraint and two students had incidences of seclusion. Next slide.

[01:24:15] Now we will review the LCPS data for restraint and seclusion for students in private day and residential placements. Educational placements for students with disabilities in private day placements are one of the final considerations along the continuum of special education and related services.

[01:24:35] So the data points on the next slides only pertain to eligible students under the IDEA. As reported in our review of LCPS school-based incidents, the reporting of private day and residential student placements is reflective of the number of instances of physical restraint, seclusion, and mechanical restraint that is disaggregated by students without disabilities, with disabilities under the IDEA and students with disabilities under the 504 eligibility.

[01:25:10] As previously shared, the number of incidents are not reflective of the number of students as some students may have multiple behavioral incidences. I draw your attention to the middle column, 23-24. In private day residential settings, there were 31 instances of physical restraint.

[01:25:32] Next slide. As you can see, there have been no instances of mechanical restraint in private day or residential settings for LCPS students. Next slide. This slide reflects a total of six instances of seclusion.

[01:25:53] The following slide, we will review the number of students that account for the total amount. Next slide, please. There were eight students with 31 incidences of restraint in private day and residential facilities.

[01:26:09] There were no instances of mechanical restraint. And there was one student with six instances of seclusion. Next slide. As requested by the board last year during our annual report, you can see that we have provided you with data as it's reported by the Virginia Department of Education for comparison across school divisions of similar size.

[01:26:36] LCPS staff do a remarkable job utilizing preventative measures and alternatives to restraint and seclusion as evidenced by our data. Through open dialogue, collaboration, and a commitment to best practices, we can work towards creating safer, more inclusive learning environments for all students.

[01:27:04] It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every child feels valued, respected, and supported on their educational journey. Thank you for your attention and dedication to this very important matter. Together, let's strive to uphold the highest standards of care and compassion in our schools.

[01:27:22] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Richardson. Board members, do you have any questions? Yes. Vice Chair Donohue. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Ms. Richardson, for the information, for putting together this presentation, for all of the efforts that you and your staff make.

[01:27:40] I have a few questions, but in the interest of time, I'm only going to ask you one. On your slide number 15, private day or private placement information about the seclusion, there is a dramatic difference in the 2022 to 2023 school year reporting compared to the previous and the subsequent year.

[01:28:07] Can you comment as to what might have caused that difference? Certainly. So if you're looking, if you go back to slide 15, that is the slide for 22-23 for students with disabilities in private day residential, we had 67 instances of seclusion.

[01:28:29] That number is representative of six students from that school year that were placed in private day or residential. At any given time, we're looking at nature of disability and impact of disability, what the demands are on a student that might require that within the private day and residential setting.

[01:28:49] It is interesting that our number of students being placed in private day and residential has continued to creep up over the years, But we have seen a drop for 23, 24 with the number of incidences with physical restraint and seclusion, even in our private day and residential facilities.

[01:29:11] Again, across the Commonwealth, we are encouraged to use these interventions as the absolute last resort. Thank you very much, Ms. Richardson. And the only other thing I wanted to say was just that your slide 17 of comparing to other districts is remarkable.

[01:29:30] I think it reflects exceptionally well on the care that our staff takes in caring for students to see our numbers in comparison with school districts of larger student population that we have such low rates of incidence.

[01:29:46] Thank you. Thank you, Vice Chair Donohue. I'll also say that it's also indicative of the training that we have been providing and investing in. So, anyone else? Any other discussion?

[01:30:04] Yes. I have questions, but I'm going to email them. I don't want to take your time. Thank you. Okay. Any other? Okay. With that, we will go ahead and recess for dinner, and we will be back at 630.

[01:58:48] Welcome back. The board is coming out of recess at this time. We will continue with the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem. Please welcome the Lovettsville Elementary fourth and fifth grade chorus as they lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. Under the direction of chorus director Antonio Ford, and with the tremendous support of chorus moms Amelia Blair and Melissa Barton, this dynamic group of over 50 talented young singers is known for their harmonious voices and infectious enthusiasm. Lovettsville Elementary is proudly led by

[01:59:27] Principal Daniel Lani and Assistant Principal Timothy Finnerty, whose unwavering support of Arts has helped this chorus shine on prestigious stages, including the White House National Christmas Tree, Washington Nationals Games, Loudoun United Soccer Matches, and numerous community events.

[01:59:48] Today's performance features a select group of about 15 dedicated singers, continuing their tradition of spreading musical joy wherever they go. As true ambassadors of melody, the Lovettsville Chorus regularly shares their uplifting tunes at town events, the community center, and even Hershey Park.

[02:00:08] Please, let us all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. To the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[02:02:14] So now we will move on to Agenda Item 8, student staff, and in this case, community recognitions. Start with 8.01. Good evening, everyone. It is truly an honor to take a moment tonight to recognize someone who has made a lasting impact on LCPS, Mr. Jeff Morse. Mr. Morse, would you please stand and come forward to the podium? During his time on the board, Mr. Morse was a steadfast advocate for our students, always putting their needs above politics or personal agendas. His leadership was

[02:02:54] always rooted in a deep commitment to our schools and our community, and he carried out his service with integrity, thoughtfulness, and a focus on what was best for the children of LCPS. Mr. Morse's tenure on this board is particularly meaningful for me because he was my district representative for 12 years. When I made the decision to run for school board, he was incredibly generous with his time and insight, helping me to get the lay of the land and gain valuable experience as his board aide. His guidance and mentorship were invaluable, and I will always

[02:03:31] be grateful for the opportunity to learn from him. While we haven't agreed on every issue, that has never mattered because Mr. Morse has always upheld the principles of respect, collaboration, and most importantly, putting our students first. His dedication to our schools and our community is something I deeply admire, and I know that LCPS is better because of his service. I'll now read the proclamation issued by Delegates Hattusa Rieser and David Reed.

[02:04:05] Whereas Jeff Morse, a longtime member of the Loudoun County School Board, who proved to be a fierce advocate and proponent of the Dulles district in which he served, retired from the Loudoun County School Board in 2023.

[02:04:22] And whereas Jeff Morse has always been deeply invested in the students, staff, and community of Loudoun County Public Schools, and he works tirelessly to advance the mission, core beliefs, and strategic goals of the Loudoun County School Board.

[02:04:39] And whereas Jeff Morse was elected in 2011 to the Loudoun County School Board and re-elected in 2015 and 2019. During his tenure with the Loudoun County School Board, he provided outstanding leadership and guidance to LCPS.

[02:05:01] And whereas Jeff Morse served as chair of the Loudoun County School Board for four terms, playing a pivotal role in the board's accomplishments over that time. And whereas Jeff Morse has served as chair on various Loudoun County School Board committees, including what is now the Student Behavior and Accountability Committee, the Specialized Programs and Centers Committee, the Human Resources and Talent Development Committee, and what is now the Finance and Operations Committee and the Communications and Outreach Committee.

[02:05:34] And whereas Jeff Morse has also served as a member of the Joint Committee with the Board of Supervisors and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academies of Loudoun and as a liaison to the Loudoun Education Foundation, the LCPS Gifted Education Advisory Committee, and the Washington Area Boards of Education. And whereas with great honor, integrity, and distinction, Jeff Morse has served faithfully as a member of the Loudoun County School Board for 12 years, demonstrating a deep devotion to

[02:06:10] LCPS and its students now. Therefore, be it resolved by the House of Delegates that Jeff Morris hereby be commended on the occasion of his retirement from the Loudoun County School Board, and be it resolved further that the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for the presentation to Jeff Morris as an expression of the House of Delegates' profound appreciation for his distinguished service. House patrons were Delegate Reeser

[02:06:43] and Delegate Reed. Thank you, Mr. Morse, for your service to the LCPS community, and I'd now like to request that Supervisor Letourneau, who also represents the Dulles District and who worked

[02:06:56] very closely with Mr. Morse for many years, also come to the front for a picture. Now we will

[02:08:58] continue with item nine, the student school board representative comment. Tonight we have two student representatives. The first student I would like to present is Heath Federoff from Loudoun Valley High School. Heath Federoff is a senior at Loudoun Valley High School, and throughout the school year, Heath has enjoyed his role as student council president, as well as participating in multiple clubs and activities such as Mu Alpha Theta, National Honor Society, and Athletics.

[02:09:30] In the fall, he plays varsity basketball, football, sorry, football as a receiver and defensive back, and in the spring he runs track for the Vikings. Outside of school, Heath is a member of the Civic Air Patrol, is employed by his local church in the Events and Facilities Department, and volunteers for the Special Needs Ministry. For fun on the weekends, Heath enjoys motocross, the outdoors, and spending time with family and friends. Welcome Mr. Federoff, and the floor is yours.

[02:10:00] Thank you, Chair Mansfield. Good evening members of the school board, administrators, and community members. My name is Heath Federoff and I'm the student council president and student representative for Ladin Valley High School. I would first like to start by expressing my gratitude to our principal, Dr. Ross, for this amazing opportunity, my student council advisors, Ms. Weller and Mr. Vareb, and the LVHS faculty and teachers who have made a lasting impact on my growth and development through high school. Tonight, I am honored to share with you just a small amount of what Ladin Valley High School has done this 2024 and 2025 school year and reflect on our school's culture and history. As you may know, Ladin Valley High School has quite a storied

[02:10:38] history as the second oldest school within the county. For years, LVHS has ensured outstanding education of students to prepare them for a future within the world. Our purpose at LVHS is to provide a safe, inviting, and inclusive environment where we ensure that our students acquire an understanding of and an ability to apply skills, demonstrate character, and embrace attitudes necessary to thrive in a world that seeks peace and is respectful of all. Just this year, Loudoun Valley is one of the first LCPS schools to implement the International Baccalaureate program.

[02:11:09] International Baccalaureate, or IB, is a rigorous educational program that develops the academic breadth and depth of a student's intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills necessary to live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing world. LVHS plans to continue to grow this course over the next several years by expanding our course offerings.

[02:11:28] Since 1962, LVHS has also been deeply committed to preparing students both inside and outside the classroom. Recently, LVHS graduate Jordan Miller was drafted into the NBA by the Los Angeles Clippers after Miller had an outstanding career at George Mason University and the University of Miami. And the LVHS community is extremely proud of his accomplishments.

[02:11:46] As well, I'm immensely proud of our girls' field hockey team on becoming back-to-back state champions and winning their regional title for a third time in a row this year. Our school community is also dedicated to student engagement through extracurricular activities and clubs. Students are highly engaged in over 50 clubs at Loud Valley that meet during the school days, Fridays in regular rotation including the debate club, academic team, DECA, and many others. LVHS students have also traveled the country and the world on international trips in the summer, music trips to Nashville and New York City, as well as environmental trips to Wallops Island and the Shenandoah National Park. Loudoun Valley is the only school within the county that has a sister

[02:12:23] school outside of the United States that has been fostered by a teacher at LVHS. For the past 15 years and continuing, dual enrollment international relations students have been offered the opportunity to visit our sister school in Hungary at the end of the year on a week-long trip that offers a cultural connection across the world. What really sets Loud Valley apart is the culture and connection we have built and fostered over the years here. LVHS has a long-standing culture of inclusivity, kindness, and high expectations. For two years in a row now, Loud Valley has been the host of the springtime Virginia Special

Olympics feat meet that invites special needs students as participants from all over LCPS to have fun competing and track and field events. This event serves the entire community in a genuine

[02:13:02] sense of inclusion and connection while providing an engaging and fun environment. I'm extremely proud to announce we have 37 schools signed up with around 700 athletes and participants participating. I loved being a student in the Loudoun County school system and my four years at Loudoun Valley High School have truly been special. Loudoun Valley is more than a school.

[02:13:20] It is where I've grown as a leader, developed skills that I will rely on, and built lasting relationships with people who have impacted and inspired me to become the person I am today. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share some amazing things happening at Loudoun Valley, and I know there's a bright future ahead of us here at LVHS and within Loudoun County. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Federer, for being here and for your comments. Next, we have Genesis Cochran.

[02:13:51] She's currently a senior at North Star School and has been in attendance since her junior year of 2023. She was selected as the student representative for this year's Superintendent Advisory Council. Genesis is a driven young adult who strives to do well in all her classes. She takes advanced classes at the North Star School and will be graduating in June 2025. Genesis intends to pursue higher education in the field of high school education. Welcome Ms. Cochran and the floor is now yours. Thank you. Good evening. First I'd like to thank the school board for allowing me

[02:14:30] to share some words tonight and Ms. Minnenberg for choosing me to represent our school. My name is Genesis Cochran and I'm a senior at the North Star School where I have been a student since 2023. The North Star School is a non-traditional education program typically designed for students who prefer a smaller high school setting and for those who have moved to LCPS from another school in an alternative format.

[02:14:54] One of the things that drew me to North Star was the 4x4 block schedule, allowing students to complete four credits each semester rather than having seven classes on alternating days. North Star offers small classes where I know the names of everyone in my classes and my teachers know everyone and their individual struggles.

[02:15:12] At North Star, I can have one-on-one conversations with my teachers, I can ask as many questions as I need, and receive support from my teachers to do my absolute best in class. We have the privilege to operate as a real community, which is many of the valuable aspects of our school.

[02:15:28] This year we had many successes. The North Star School had five early graduates, three attending NOVA, and two at Richard Bland Community College of William and Mary. Students had the opportunity to visit both campuses due to the inclusion of campus advisory, which brought students the extremely valuable information about college and post-high school planning.

[02:15:49] We hope to see campus as a full class in the coming years. The 24-25 school year also welcomed the addition of higher placement classes at North Star. These additions include AP Computer Science, Advanced Algebra with Trigonometry, and Dual Enrollment English through Northern Virginia Community College.

[02:16:07] Offering Dual Enrollment at North Star gave four students, including myself, the opportunity to complete three college credits while still in high school. This was a big deal for us. Being able to try

college-level coursework gave insight on what pursuing a higher education might be like for those of us who hadn't decided what our next path may be.

[02:16:26] Personally, I used to believe that I wasn't prepared enough for college, but having the chance to experience that environment and also doing well in it really helped build my confidence about attending college. So with this newfound support, I was able to continue taking college classes via NOVA's Early Online College.

[02:16:43] In order to continually encourage the growth of our school, our principal and accessibility lead hold equity focus groups where they can hear from a variety of students about their experiences at our school. Students respond to questions related to feeling safe, welcome, and included.

[02:17:00] We as the students provide input on what we would like to see at North Star from an academic perspective. People may think that North Star is a school that is only for troubled students, but that is just not the case. Students apply to attend the North Star School. When students choose Northstar, they are doing so in hopes of seeing a better future ahead.

[02:17:19] The people I personally know at Northstar are there because they fell behind, be it from a mental health crisis, medical issue, or other uncontrollable life events, and they simply want to get back on track to graduate on time or earlier than they could at their homeschools. My first two years of high school, I struggled to meet deadlines and make friends.

[02:17:38] It was hard to not feel inadequate compared to those who were taking honors in AP classes while I was struggling with standard academics. I had fallen behind in my classes and began to fail. I didn't see a viable future. At Northstar, I am able to have a better connection with my teachers, which opened my eyes to greater opportunities, opportunities that include me.

[02:18:00] Before I came to Northstar, I was a C student. I really struggled to find a place at my homeschool. It felt like wherever I went, there was no space for me. I was always considered the potential student, but never the proactive, smart, poster child student we often see so glorified.

[02:18:17] As my sophomore year came to an end, I was offered two options, stay at my homeschool and repeat classes or try something new. I chose the new path, I chose success. I made a vow to myself that I would only earn A's at the North Star School. This would be my time to fix my GPA and have a clean slate.

[02:18:36] Since attending North Star, I have learned that I don't just have potential, I have opportunities. I stated before that I often felt like there was no place for me. When I arrived at North Star, I learned that there was a place for me, except I was the only one in it. We operate as a community, yet the value of individuality is equally fostered.

[02:18:56] The encouragement that I receive from the staff and my peers has been so persistent, it changed my thoughts about school. I wanted to make my teachers proud. I can say with confidence that I have tackled challenges I never would have dreamed of. I have received all A's since coming to North Star. I did, in fact, take my GPA from a 1.8 to a 3.0.

[02:19:16] I learned to make friends and foster trusting relationships with the staff. And I always feel like the high achiever that I am when I enter that building. This is our goal. I am exactly what it looks like when we protect and support places like the North Star School, when we protect and support students like me.

[02:19:34] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Cochran.

[02:19:56] That truly warmed my heart. And that's why LCPS needs different programs for different learners and different ways to succeed.

[02:20:13] Okay, we will move on to the superintendent report, presented by Dr. Aaron Spence, our superintendent. Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the board. Tough acts to follow this evening, but I am, as always, happy to share good news from around the school division.

[02:20:31] I'd like to begin by congratulating Courtney Peckham, the assistant principal for Liberty Elementary School. She has been selected as the 2025 National Outstanding Assistant Principal for Virginia by the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals. She learned of this recognition in a surprise school assembly in front of her colleagues, students, friends, and family.

[02:20:52] Ms. Peckham has been with LCPS for 11 years, having worked as a teacher, dean, and now assistant principal, and she'll officially be recognized at the VAESP conference later this year in Virginia Beach. I also want to congratulate the Empowered Girls Club at J.L. Simpson Middle School. This club won a \$10,000 grant from Amazon Web Services' Northern Virginia Community Fund.

[02:21:12] Now in its fourth year, the club was started by teachers Jennifer Heron and Samantha Ashley to raise awareness among 7th and 8th grade students about future opportunities. Students in this club will receive extra support with homework and school assignments. They engage in service projects and participate in field trips.

[02:21:28] This June, the club's planning to visit Longwood University and the Moten Museum in Farmville. And this grant will fund this trip and others like it. We want to congratulate Riverbend's Middle School Counseling Program, which has earned its second recognized ASCA model program, or R.A.M.P. designation, highlighting its commitment to student success through a comprehensive data-driven approach.

[02:21:51] Riverbend joins other LCPS schools with this honor, including Forest Grove and Little River Elementary Schools, Smarts Mill and Stonehill Middle Schools, and Freedom and Independence High Schools. We know that busy weekday mornings can make it challenging for many of our students to find time for breakfast.

[02:22:10] So starting this month and through the end of this school year, Student Nutrition Services is expanding its grab-and-go breakfast service to all LCPS middle and high schools to complement their traditional cafeteria options. Grab-and-go allows our students to conveniently pick up breakfast meals from a central location as they arrive at school and eat in their classroom, supporting our mission to make sure that no child goes hungry and every child is prepared to learn.

[02:22:35] Next, at Trailside Middle School, we want to congratulate Socket Janalagata, who successfully completed the prestigious Virginia Senate Page Program for the 2025 General Assembly Session. As a Senate Page, Saket gained first-hand experience with the legislative process. He assisted in daily operations at the Capitol and was able to participate in a mock legislative session. I'm also pleased to recognize the outstanding achievement of our students who participated in the 43rd Annual Loudoun County Public Schools Regional Science and Engineering Fair, held on March 19th and 20th at John Champ High School. This year, more than 300 LCPS students

[02:23:15] showcased their innovative research and problem-solving skills in this highly competitive event. We are especially proud to announce that seven LCPS students have been selected to advance to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, which will be held in Columbus, Ohio in May. Additionally, I'm pleased to recognize Neja Shah, a senior at John Champ High School and the Academies of Loudoun as the recipient of the Willowcroft Science Scholarship. Willowcroft Farm Vineyards also awarded Dr. Melissa Willis, a science teacher at the Academies of Loudoun, with a matching scholarship for her work supporting young scientists. Congratulations to all

[02:23:52] participants, their families, and the dedicated educators who support and inspire our students in STEM. It was truly remarkable to see what these students researched and achieved. I'd also like to recognize the incredible success of CyberSlam 2025. LCPS students joined peers from 22 high schools across Virginia to engage in hands-on cybersecurity experiences at George Mason University. This immersive event provided more than 475 students with real-world skills, industry insights, and direct connections to cybersecurity professionals. A special thank you

[02:24:28] to co-founder and Briar Woods teacher Chris Stark, the Computer Science Department, George Mason University and the 28 industry partners who supported the event. Their dedication to preparing students for careers in this critical field ensures that events like CyberSlam continue to empower the next generation of digital security and innovation leaders. And then finally, at the recent Loudoun School Business Partnership Executive Council Breakfast, nearly 750 partners, school staff, and VIPs came together to celebrate the incredible impact of collaboration between

[02:25:02] LCPS and our community. This event, fully sponsored by business partners, underscored the power of partnerships in supporting student success. This year's theme, Together We Thrive, speaks to the heart of our mission, creating meaningful connections that open doors for our students.

[02:25:18] Whether that's through career exploration, hands-on learning experiences, or community engagement, these partnerships help equip students with the skills and confidence to make meaningful contributions in our world. This event is also more than a celebration. It's a testament to the strength of our community and the impact of investing in our students today to build a thriving tomorrow for Loudoun County. Thank you to all who make these partnerships possible. And thank you, Madam Chair. That concludes my report. Thank you, Dr. Spence. At this time, I'm going to

[02:25:51] ask Mr. Streffy to read his disclosure. Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and/or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically as a school board member I'm eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of

[02:26:28] which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you, Mr. Estreffi. Mrs. Griffiths, would you please read your disclosure? Thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS

employees. Specifically as a school board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an

[02:27:05] LCPS employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public's interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you thank you mrs.

[02:27:26] Griffiths and with that we will move on on to item 11 public comment thank you for engaging with the school board through the public comment process. The school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system. Speakers must limit comments to the time allotted. Tonight we have 108 public speakers, which is atypical. Working backwards, school board

[02:27:59] policy 2420H provides that school board meetings are expected to end by 10 p.m. We usually take a temperature check if we are up if we are still taking up business at that time to determine whether we will conclude for the night or keep going to finish up our agenda items. Given the sizable number of speakers who have signed up tonight and the need for us to do to be able to do the work of the board board members I'd like to take a temperature check on how to proceed with tonight's public comment. Specifically the two approaches we could take are number one we could

[02:28:39] proceed with allotting the typical amount of time for each public speaker which is one minute. Number two as a reasonable compromise for hearing public commenters input and allowing the board reasonable time to address the remainder of its agenda we could allot each public speaker 30 seconds. Either way I will take a temperature check at 10 p.m. to determine whether the board would like to conclude this meeting tonight and continue with the remainder of its agenda next Tuesday April 1st

[02:29:14] 2025 at 6 p.m. Board members do you have any questions or can we move forward with the temperature check move forward yes so the temperature check it would be board members all those in favor of the one minute per public speaker yes Mrs. Griffith I have April 8th is our next board meeting right this would be in a in addition in addition okay because we would

[02:29:45] continue where we stopped and continue the agenda at next tuesday and that would be at 4 30 no it would be at 6 30 i just i think i said yeah six o'clock there is an fno meeting on tuesday from 4 30 to 5 30 and then we would meet after that at 6 p.m and miss chandler is just now coming back

[02:30:18] in so i might have to repeat what i just said miss chandler we have we're gonna take a temperature check on two things because we have a very large amount of public speakers one is we can proceed with allotting the typical amount of time for each public speaker which is a minute or number two we could have public commenters input 30 seconds and either way i'll take a temperature check at 10 p.m to determine whether the board would like to conclude this meeting tonight and then continue

[02:30:57] with the remainder of its agenda next tuesday april 1st 2025 at 6 p.m so the temperature check right now in question is board members all those in favor of one minute per public speaker raise your thumb okay well there we go y'all get a minute um in any event so a whole minute but in any event the extent uh speakers have additional input to provide to the board you may do so by submitting your written comments to the public information officer who is located at the media box in the back of the ward room please be advised that the speakers who missed

[02:31:37] their time slot will not be called at a later time and board members and we will just see what happens at 10 p.m all audience members shall maintain civility decorum and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times please remain seated unless arriving departing and speaking at the podium or during a break violations of civility decorum and respect include shouting heckling during applause or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa interrupting speakers attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair and approaching a speaker or otherwise

[02:32:13] attempting to intimidate disparage or distract a speaker staff member or other meeting attendees speakers should refrain from vulgarity obscenities defamation profanity or other like breaches of respect nor may speakers target criticize or attack individual students and or individual division employees during public comment as a reminder school board policy 2520 states speakers may not target criticize or attack individual students during public comment speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school official the school board requests that comments on an individual student or employee related matter not to be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality

[02:32:52] requirements speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board per lcps policy 2520 members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period violations of decorum or civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in on the decision of the chair, public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda, limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons, or the public comment period ending for the evening. Copies of materials for board members

[02:33:32] should be given to the public information officer in the media box at the back of the boardroom before the start of the meeting. Please provide 12 copies of the materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to school board meetings is available through lcps tv on comcast channel 18 and 1070 and verizon via fios channel 43 the live stream of the meeting may be viewed on the website we look forward to hearing your comments we will start as usual with our virtual public comment for one minute and then we will move on to

[02:34:03] our in-person we have um zoe mutreha followed by ramakrishna mommy mamidi diputi am i audible yes soon. All right. Good evening. My name is Zoe and I stand before you not just as a former student of this district, but as someone whose childhood friendships and dreams were shaped within the walls of RLC and Rockridge High School. The proposed power lines aren't just metal towers

[02:34:39] and cables. They're a silent threat, one that looms over the classrooms where kids are supposed to feel safe. Research shows that living and learning near high voltage power lines increases the risk of serious health conditions, and yet we're still considering placing these lines just a few hundred feet from these schools. How can we let that happen? When I walked those hallways, I never had to question whether my school was slowly harming me, but these power lines are built along the green and blue routes, are exactly the reality that these students and tomorrows will have to face. Dominion's impact study ignores the people who matter the most, the students. It counts structures, not the 2,400 students whose lives will be affected every single

[02:35:17] day. And what makes this worse is that there is a safer option. Undergrounding lines. Please do the right thing and reject the green and blue routes. Thank you. Ramakrishnamadipudi, followed by Sam Mutreha.

[02:35:56] Members of the school board, can you hear us? Yes, sir. Yeah, yeah, thanks. So we face a very difficult decision today, but facts and data must lead us. The blue route impacts 65 homes, and then the default option five orange route affects thousands and thousands of homes 17 plus communities stonehill middle school two private elementary schools inova emergency hospital 55 plus community and the data is very clear yes i understand blue route runs near rockridge high school

[02:36:32] but it follows dominion's existing corridor 4.5 of its 8.3 miles already house utt lines this isn't a new disruption it's continued use of an established path avoiding two schools by choosing route 5 means exposing far more lcps families and neighborhoods if you don't act dominion will default to route 5 choose blue route let data drive that decision facts matter

[02:37:00] thank you um sam atreha followed by viva mamidi puti as a concerned resident and parent i'm deeply troubled by the proposed routes for Golden to Mars project, especially the green and blue routes that pass so dangerously close to the schools. Please do not discriminate between elementary and high school kids. Say no to both today, both the green and blue. The impact studies done by Dominion obviously is flawed. It considers, like someone just said, buildings and structures

[02:37:39] and homes. It doesn't even bother about the number of people and students in the schools. The proposed undergrounding line has not been thoroughly researched either. I am working with Microsoft Teams to identify land parcels or Dominion substation needed for undergrounding. They are willing to talk. Is Dominion willing? By proposing new routes on school property and close to homes, we are creating new rights of ways for Dominion. As part of school board, it is your duty to side with the health and safety of kids and teachers first, and then the community at large. Please vote no today. Voting any other way would be insincere and contrary to what the

[02:38:14] board stands for. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker will be Vibhav Mamidupudi, followed by Sue Weber. Hi, everyone. I'm a student at Stonehenge Mill School, and I need your help.

[02:38:36] Dominion is planning new power lines, and one option, Route 5, could hurt over 1,500 homes and even our school. Route 4 is a less destructive choice. It affects fewer homes and uses a path that already exists. It causes less harm. Please don't let them choose Route 5. Protect our schools and neighborhoods. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker will be Sue Weber followed by Bharat

[02:39:02] Gandhari. Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak. We love living in Loudoun County and we love living in Loudoun Valley Estates. I've been to and from Rockridge High School and Rosalie

[02:39:28] Carter Elementary for many years now. We as a family, all these things that we love.

[02:40:18] Thank you. - I'm not quite sure what to do with the kind of technical difficulty. Mr. Allen, do you have any thoughts about something like that technical difficulty?

[02:40:34] - Thank you, Madam Chair. It's really within your discretion how you would like to approach that. The public speakers certainly welcome to provide you the written comments tonight so that board members could consider that.

[02:40:51] I would otherwise defer to Mr. Aaron Smith as to the technological capabilities of allowing the speaker to restart a minute. - Thank you, the issues are not on the LCPS side, so something is on their connection, their side or their device, so we have no way to troubleshoot or intervene in that scenario.

[02:41:20] - Okay, we'll move on, hopefully the constituent will provide us some written comment for tonight. Bharat Ghandari, followed by Jikin Liu. Route 3, green.

[02:41:42] Hello. If the school board rejects both Route 3, green, and Route 4, blue, Dominion Power will move forward with Route 5, orange, a decision that cannot be legally challenged by the school board, Loudoun County, or local residents.

[02:41:58] This route endangers Stonehill Middle School, Moorfield Elementary, Primrose Daycare, Inova Loudoun Hospital, and 15 nearby communities with some homes located as close as 25 feet from the power lines.

[02:42:14] This situation is intolerable. It's crucial to protect our schools, children, and communities. We strongly advocate for the approval of the Board of Supervisors' recommendations, that is Route 4, blue, as the preferred choice, and Route 3, green, as the alternative. Thanks for opportunity. Thanks for this opportunity. I appreciate it. Thank you for your public comment.

[02:42:45] Jikun Liu, followed by Shreya's Chimedia. Okay. Good evening, members of the school board. This is Jikun Liu. I respectfully ask you to oppose Dominion Energy's plan to construct high-power transmission lines on or near the properties of both schools. The power lines carry extra high voltage electricity and will generate electromagnetic fields or EMFs that may potentially lead to health risks such as leukemia. Additionally, the construction and maintenance of these facilities and the power lines may negatively affect the

[02:43:24] physical safety of the students and the school staff. Power line complexes are composed of many towers and accompanied by multiple supporting facilities. If we allow this project to happen. The construction will significantly impact the surrounding environment of the schools and the neighborhood. There is no guarantee that Dominion will not introduce more power lines to this area in the future. I urge you to say no to Dominion.

[02:43:54] Thank you. Shreyas Chimidia, followed by Rushank Kalba. I want to highlight three important factors today in opposition to the proposed overhead power lines passing dangerously close to Rosalie Carter Elementary and Rock Ridge High Schools.

[02:44:19] In these schools, more than 2,400 children and teachers, which amounts to more than 2,000 families, would get directly impacted with the open-air EMF exposure that they would come under on playgrounds and fields in addition to the exposure inside the school buildings. Open-air EMF could be exponentially more hazardous than being in a vehicle or inside the insulated buildings, and this impacted number of families would keep growing as new batches of children come to these schools year after year. Secondly, the proximity of these overhead lines to heavily wooded areas and Columbia gas pipelines on the proposed routes presents a catastrophic safety

[02:44:57] hazard. A single incident could result in irreversible devastation. Prioritizing corporate cost savings or community well-being is unacceptable. Please protect our children. Please say no to overhead routes near our schools. Thank you. Thank you. Where are we? Was that Rushat Kalva? We have no virtual

speaker signed in with that name. With Rushat Kalva, no virtual speakers? That's correct. Okay. Nandita Paradikar.

[02:45:39] Power lines. I'd like to request the school board to vote today to reject all above ground routes on school property. Please do not delay and send a clear message to Dominion to not include any routes through school property unless it is an underground route. We reviewed Dominion's feasibility report and it clearly states undergrounding is technically feasible, acknowledges school proximity and public opposition, which means by their own findings

[02:46:15] these routes should be eliminated. School grounds can be considered exempt from eminent domain if you're willing to fight. Everything that Dominion says should be independently verified. They have not explored the partial underground options thoroughly as we have found from their report.

[02:46:34] You shouldn't be asked to take decisions that are against your responsibilities. Please make it a policy to not allow above-ground power lines on school property and codify that so you're not dealing with this again in the future. Thank you. Surika Kulkarni, followed by Haritha Billa.

[02:46:55] We have no virtual speaker signed in with that name. Haritha Billah, followed by Lakshminarayan Chandramouli. We have no virtual speaker signed in with that name.

[02:47:23] Lakshminarayan Chandramouli, followed by Raghu Kulkarni. Good evening, board members. My name is Lakshminarayan Chandramouli. I'm a parent of two daughters, one who will attend Rosalie Carter Elementary and another who will attend Rockridge High School.

[02:47:40] It is my view that school board should never have been put in this dilemma. We should reject both Route 3 and Route 4. Little kids will be walking under this extra high-capacity power lines daily to school. I cannot imagine putting little kids through such risk. If timing is anything, April is Autism Awareness Month, and I hope school board doesn't agree to power lines in March, which pose huge risk for kids.

[02:48:03] I ask the school board to implement consistent safety standards. School board rightly rejected cell phone towers. I believe the same standard should apply for extra high-capacity power lines. Finally, I urge the board to encourage undergrounding as the only viable long-term alternative.

[02:48:20] It is really about setting the right precedence for current and future generation and rejecting these dangerous routes near school. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Raghu Kulkarni, followed by Ram Rupri Reddy. We have no virtual speaker signed in with that name.

[02:48:42] Okay. Our next speaker is Ram Rupri Reddy, followed by Kapil Veerdy. The proposed green and blue high-voltage powerlands threaten our children's health and safety.

[02:48:59] Over 2,400 students and 400 staff members at Rosalie Carter and Rockridge High School representing at least 2,000 families will face daily EMF exposure, with long-term risk spanning generations to come. That is at least 10 plus years of childhood development you are impacting.

[02:49:16] Moorfield and Stonehills are also impacted, but they are at a safer distance compared to these schools. Other routes are also impacted. You will hear different opinions today from community members supporting or opposing one line over another. The school board's duty is to protect students where it has authority, not to pick which power line is best.

[02:49:35] Leave the rest of the choices to the SEC, Dominion, and the county. You must ignore all the noise and act in the best interest of the students. This issue should be resolved by Dominion and the county. Reject all above-ground routes near schools. Thank you. Thank you.

[02:49:51] Our next speaker is Kapil Viridi, followed by Siva Dharmavaram. Can you guys hear me? Yes, go ahead. Good evening, everyone. I urge you to reject overhead 500 kV power lines near our schools.

[02:50:09] Here's why. Point one, health, safety, and moral responsibility. We already have 30 kV power line and a cell tower near the schools. Adding 500 kV line would trap children in a toxic sandwich of radiation, doubling the health and safety risks. By rejecting these routes, you fulfill your moral responsibility, protect children, and align with legal precedent that prioritizes student safety.

[02:50:38] Point two, community trust. Safe, healthy schools will encourage more families to join and participate, boosting enrollment and securing funding for programs and activities that benefit every student. Finally, I ask you to lead by example, just as you did with the band cell towers near our schools.

[02:50:58] Create a permanent policy that prohibits high voltage power lines within our school province. Thank you. Our next speaker is Siva Dharmavaram, followed by Siva Moduga. before you as a parent of Lockridge and Stonehill seniors and a Loudoun County resident who replicates about community. I oppose all Dominion Energy's proposed power line routes. However, if forced to choose among the limited options, I strongly reject routes 1, 2, and 5, which would severely impact homes, including families with children and seniors, Stonehill School, child care centers,

[02:51:37] and Innova Medical Center. Over 1,000 plus homes sit within 500 feet of these routes. Families including children and seniors spend 16 to 18 hours per day in their homes comparing to the six to eight hours students spend at school relocating thousand families is simply not feasible making these routes the most destructive and harmful option are we prioritizing schools while overlooking the devastating impact on thousands of families we must take a broader view this decision affects the long-term health and financial well-being of our entire community With data also supporting, I urge you to oppose Route 1-2-1-5 and push Dominion to routes.

[02:52:17] Thank you. Our next speaker is Siva Mulduga, followed by Mohamed Najmoudin. We do not have a virtual speaker signed in with that name. Thank you. Our next speaker is Mohamed Najmoudin, followed by Nayala Sadaf.

[02:52:38] Me? Can you hear me? Yes, go ahead. Yeah. Good evening, guys. My son goes to Rockridge High, and we live in Caterham Drive Street, which is close to the Loudoun County Parkway, part of Route 5 for Dominion Energy Project.

[02:52:55] I'm here to oppose Dominion Energy Line to Route 5 and support Route 4 and 3 if undergrounded around school properties. It is impossible to move homes with 1,200 plus homes impacted due to Route 5, and we can't move that data center as well.

[02:53:11] But we can move the schools or use the underground route option around the school. I suggest LCPS school board to talk to Dominion and they can buy the property and fund the school new buildings. Somewhere there is no power line, zoning is virtual line, so we can change that as well, if that's an issue.

[02:53:29] If you move the schools, then Route 4 and 3 doesn't have any issue. If you oppose 3 and 4, it means you are indirectly supporting right-of-way Route 5, which is going to impact our families and kids

living 24 by 7. Thank you. Our next speaker is Nayela Sadaf, followed by Purna P.

[02:53:48] We do not have a virtual speaker signed in with that name. Thank you. Our next speaker is Perna P. followed by Shrija Poonuru. We do not have a virtual speaker signed in with that name.

[02:54:07] Thank you. Our next speaker is Shrija Poonuru followed by Shrika Manubola. Manubolu. Today I stand before you to propose a policy that mandates every LCPS student meet with a certified, licensed mental health professional at least once every quarter.

[02:54:25] As many of you are aware, mental health issues among students have become an urgent concern in our school district. We've seen far too many instances where students have reached a breaking point with numerous reports of suicide attempts and struggles with depression, anxiety, and overwhelming stress. Last year alone, several tragic incidents in our community highlighted the critical need for proactive mental health support within our schools. These heartbreaking events underscore the importance of intervening early before a student's challenges become unmanageable. The reality is that many students feel isolated or unable to speak up about their struggles. They are burdened by the stigma surrounding mental health or are unaware of

[02:55:02] the resources available to them. By mandating quarterly check-ins with licensed mental health professionals, we can create a consistent, accessible way for students to seek help. Thank you. Thank you. Shreeka Manabulo, followed by Chris Stevenson.

[02:55:29] Can you hear me? Yes, ma'am. Okay. Good evening. I'm here to also speak about mental health. I speak in support of the proposed mental health policy that the previous speaker Shreeja mentioned. Mental health is a growing concern in our schools, and too many students are facing immense struggles in silence.

[02:55:46] We often prioritize physical health checkups, but when it comes to mental health, why don't we take the same approach? These quarterly meetings would provide students with a safe and accessible space to discuss their challenges and develop coping strategies before issues escalate. By implementing this policy, we can create a consistent, proactive system of care that ensures every student has access to the mental health resources they need.

[02:56:07] It's not just about preventing crisis. It's about providing ongoing support and creating a school environment where students can thrive academically and personally. Thank you for your time, and I hope this proposal is considered. Thank you. Chris Stevenson, followed by Sri Nagariti.

[02:56:29] Hello, can you hear me? Yes, sir, we can. Thank you, school board members, for your service. Our country is in a state of chaos because the president of the country and his administration rest on a foundation of lies and dishonesty, the first of which is his unremitting lies that he won the 2020 election.

[02:56:53] Our students know this. Nobody wants LCPS to become political. However, more important than that is whether we champion honesty. It is crucial that the school district issue a statement that helps shore up the foundation of honesty for our K-12 school-aged children and youth.

[02:57:10] Teachers and staff must be protected when they state the truth about the 2020 election, the insurrection, the president's illegal behavior, and convictions in a court of law. Our students need to know that there's a foundation of honesty. So please issue this statement to support honesty in our schools and for our children.

[02:57:31] Thank you. Thank you. Sri Nagaredi, followed by Sayem Madali. Good evening, school board members.

[02:57:48] I just have a question. Has the SEC or Dominion asked for your input? Are you proactively advocating for the safety of our students? My recommendations, establish a dedicated committee to work directly with the Board of Supervisors, Dominion Energy, and the SEC to represent the interests of students and families.

[02:58:14] Next one is, if all power lines should be planned underground to protect our communities and schools. If routes three or four are chosen, any portion touching schools' property must be underground, as the Board of Supervisors gave those two options.

[02:58:34] And create a dedicated infrastructure fund by Board of Supervisors. So why we are here is because caused by the lack of... Thank you. Siam Madali, followed by Brenda Bankson.

[02:58:54] There is no virtual speaker signed in with that name. Brenda Bankson, followed by Gaylin Liu. Teen from Baton Rouge. Linda McMahon was appointed to the U.S. DOE.

[02:59:13] Her plan, you know, the movie Fight Club, it's going to be like that. Real life experiences with fighting before college. The Onion asked McMahon about an honors level fight course. What's an honors program?

[02:59:29] To a parent worried that children could be hurt, she said, I plan on using funding for music and art classes for hospital bills. An avid sports better asked about profit. She said, kindergartners are always the underdogs.

[02:59:46] a higher reward. However, they can't beat the other 11 grades. McMahon was shocked to find out there are 13 grades with kindergarten before first grade. You got to love astute students of satire. Thank you. Galen Liu followed by Mahesh Domokuntla. We do not have a virtual

[03:00:18] public speaker signed in with that name. Mahesh Damakuntla followed by Minol But. We do not have a virtual public speaker signed in with that name. Minol But followed by Gabriel Hughes. We do not have a virtual speaker signed in with that name. Gabriel Hughes followed by Donnell Hughes. The

[03:00:55] school board. My name is Gabriel Hughes and I am in the third grade at Rosalie. I may sound like one child but there are 750 others just like me and over the coming years there will be many more. I'm here to talk about the new 500kV power lines that might be built in our school. One proposed route would have students and parents walking right under these high points. Another route is too close to people's backyards. I know adults are in charge of making big decisions like this. I hope that we can count on you to make a decision that is for the benefit of your students and now and in the future.

[03:01:32] As a kid, I know that walking near such tall and dangerous wires feels wrong and having them so close to home is not something anyone wanted when moving to Ashburn. Please, can you grown up to think carefully and find a safer way to build these lines without putting our safety at risk?

[03:01:52] I really hope you'll vote no to this plan until we have a better solution. Thank you. Thank you. donnell hughes followed by and we'll start with our in person after that good evening members of the school board my name is donnell hughes as a parent of a third grade student at rosalie carter i urge you to consider the potential risk of erecting 500 kv power lines within 300 feet of our schools while scientific evidence may be mixed the possibility of increased cancer and behavioral

[03:02:28] risks especially for our children in early development is something we cannot ignore our children's health and safety should always come first i respectfully ask you to vote no on both overhead routes traversing lcps campuses and advocate for truly and fully exploring alternative underground solutions further i implore you to adopt the policy that prohibits overhead high voltage lines near any schools especially elementary schools let us prioritize the well-being of our students ensuring their environment is as safe as possible for their growth and development. Thank you for your consideration. Thank you. Now we'll start

[03:03:07] with our in-person speakers. Moria Gudlodona, followed by Liana Paradikar. Dear school board members, I'm father of a one-year-old daughter. As parents, we were devastated after we came to know about Dominion's project around her future school premises. Students are already naturally facing economic and mental pressures inside the classrooms. At least leave the school grounds and walkways for them. It's a typical game that Dominion and data centers are playing with

[03:03:44] communities, hospitals, and other public entities. Do not be a pawn in that game. Be the first to oppose and bring change in the ways things are happening in and around Loudoun County. I strongly believe that promises you made about children's safety while contesting for board are not mere words, but you will show them in action. I urge you to make a decision that safeguard our children's educational environment. Thank you. Thank you. Liana Aparadikowar followed by Bhavna Chendok.

[03:04:17] Good evening members of the school board. I'm a freshman at Rockridge and my sister goes to Rosalie Carter. We walk to school every day under the route that Dominion wants to build 500 KV power lines on. I and my fellow students and teachers are afraid. Please vote no to both the green and blue routes today. Do everything you can to send a clear message to Dominion to not include any of the overground routes on their application to the SEC and pursue underground options instead. Tell them that you care about our safety and that you are willing to fight to protect us. Do not delay. Say no to power lines on school grounds. Not now, not ever. The argument that Dominion has presented that school routes are least impacted is flawed. It does not take

[03:04:55] into account the 2,400 students and 300 staff members who will be within 350 feet of or walking and playing within 50 feet of these high voltage power lines. Some will spend more than 10 hours a day of school, and our health will be affected by these lines as NIH studies have proven.

[03:05:10] I'm submitting a table of impacts, which includes the number of students and staff and their families whose voices are being suppressed. Please look at them to see the green and blue routes are, in fact, the most affected routes. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Bhavna Chandok, followed by Hassini Kay. Good evening, members of the Loudoun County School Board.

[03:05:34] My name is Bhavna Chandok, and I'm a resident of LV2. I'm here to express my strong opposition to Route 1, 2, and 5 running along Loudoun County Parkway due to the significant negative impact. These routes would directly affect 1,200 families, nearly 2,400 children, and are in close proximity to several schools and hospitals.

[03:05:55] While Routes 3 and 4 also raise concerns, Route 4 is comparatively the least disruptive. We've already received almost 1,000 signatures advocating for Route 3 and 4 as a community's safest option. I experienced a double-brain aneurysm just last year and had to relearn how to eat, walk, and talk.

[03:06:12] I'm particularly concerned about the potential health risk these high-voltage power lines could have, especially for people with increased health complications like myself. I understand that the final decision may not lie within your authority, but I urge you to stand with us in recommending Route 4, as it has the least impact on our families and our health.

[03:06:32] Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you, Hassini Kay, followed by Brian Turner. Good evening. I'm a junior at Rockridge and an alumna of Rosalie Elementary, and I love these schools so much.

[03:06:50] But what I don't like is the fact that we will be watching 720,000 volt power lines be built in front of our schools as close as 120 feet away. That's barely the distance between that parking lot and this room. This will double the chance of little kids to get leukemia, double the chance that they'll spend their childhoods in chemotherapy wards instead of classrooms, So will the chance to spend in hospitals instead of the classroom.

[03:07:14] Please do the right thing. Please don't let this happen. Thank you. Thank you. Brian Turner, followed by Ananya Chinuri. School board members, I'm Brian Turner, and I'm speaking on behalf of Loudoun Valley Estates One, Loudoun Transmission Line Alliance, and the Loudoun Coalition of HOAs and Condu Associations, and as an advocate against proliferation of above-ground transmission lines coming through our community.

[03:07:44] By asking you to make a decision, Dominion has placed the school board in an unacceptable and untenable position. Dominion put seven underground options on the table, giving this community hope for an undergrounding alternative, only to take all seven options away at the last minute just before filing their application with the SEC.

[03:08:04] Now, they're asking our community and this board to pick an unjustified option for above-ground lines. I urge you to consider two other alternatives. First, do not allow any above-ground lines, but instead vote to support undergrounding the line. And second, vote to intervene at the SEC alongside the county and the Loudoun community.

[03:08:22] By intervening this school, this board will have time to evaluate and consider all its options. Thank you. Thank you. Ananya Chinuri, followed by Anjika Bisht. Hello, LCPS board members.

[03:08:42] I'm a sixth grader at Stonehill Middle School. Students and adults going to Rosalie Carter in Rockridge High School will be affected if you build the power lines. We can get cancer, and that will damage the human body.

[03:08:59] Power lines damage our health, and researchers found that electromagnetic fields can create a negative impact and can damage health later on in life. Not only humans would be affected, but so would animals. They can get electrocuted. Many of the people I know live near the power lines, and it wouldn't be safe for them.

[03:09:19] Please take all of this into consideration and stop the construction of the power lines before it is too late. The schools will only be 300 feet away from the power lines. Please think about all of the people and animals affected. I hope this changes your mind. Thank you. Thank you. Anjika Bisht, followed by Kejing Liu.

[03:09:43] Kejing Liu, followed by Joshua Weber.

[03:10:04] Good evening, dear members of school board. I am the mother of Galen Liu, a first grader in Rosalie Carter Elementary School. I am here to respectfully urge you to reject Dominion Energy's proposal to build high-voltage power lines on or near school property, especially near Rosalie Carter Elementary and Rock Ridge High School.

[03:10:26] These lines emit EMFs, and multiple studies link long-term exposure to serious health risk, including childhood leukemia. leukemia. 300 teachers and staff would also face daily exposure. Our schools should be safe rooms not experimental ground for utility infrastructure.

[03:10:45] Dominion admits underground lines are safer and technically feasible but they dismiss them as too expensive. Cutting costs should never come before protecting the health of our children and educators. Please take a stand for safety, health, science, and our community.

[03:11:04] Say no to high-voltage lines. Thank you so much. Thank you. Joshua Weber, followed by Sharisha Balamkonda. Good evening.

[03:11:21] My name is Joshua Weber, and I'm a student at Rockridge High School. Every day, I walk to and from school, crossing the waters of Broad Run and walking through the wooded areas that surround Rockridge. It's a quiet, familiar routine with which I always start my day. This natural environment genuinely makes our school feel like a safe, welcoming place to learn.

[03:11:41] But that could all change. The installation of overhead high-voltage power lines near our school would disrupt this environment. The constant humming noise, the visual intrusion, and the well-documented concerns about potential health risks would not only distract from our education, but could also harm our well-being.

[03:11:56] So I urge you to vote against all proposed overhead power line routes near Rock Ridge. I also ask you to support policies that would prohibit the construction of high-voltage power lines on or near any LCPS campus. These lines must be built underground. Anything less would fall short of protecting the students who trust you to put their safety first.

[03:12:16] We as students on the front lines are depending on your leadership, so please vote to protect us. - Thank you. Sharisha Belamkonda followed by Vinad Yanala. - Good evening board members.

[03:12:32] I'm Sharisha Belamkonda and I'm resident of LV2. I'm here today to strongly oppose routes one, two, and five. These routes pose a serious and unacceptable risk to thousands of families. What is even more alarming is the number of young children who live in these homes.

[03:12:49] More than 1,200 households will be directly impacted, along with Stonehill Middle School, Moorfield Station School, hospitals, emergency care facilities, businesses, and thousands of commuters who rely on Loudoun County Parkway. If you fail to recommend the least impactful route, Dominion Energy has the right of way to proceed with Route 5, a decision that leaving a lasting and devastating impact on our community.

[03:13:12] I urge you to recommend the route with the least impact and to stand with the families who are counting on you to make the responsible choice. Thank you. Thank you. Vinod Yanala, followed by Ramesh Reddy Adepudi.

[03:13:31] Good evening, board members. My name is Vinod, and I stand here deeply concerned every time I hear the phrase least impacted routes or least disrupted routes. can you all define what is least

impact does it mean fear homes affected fewer complaints less visible opposition because from where i stand the green and blue routes do not mean least impact they mean sacrificing our children's safety comfort and future how is placing a very high voltage power lines near schools where over 2400 children and 295 staff members spend most of their

[03:14:10] day considered least impact. I appreciate and thank you all the board members for your dedication to serve our schools and community. As school board members, you have a duty to prioritize the safety, well-being, and education of our children. Today, you face a crucial decision. The proposed green and blue routes would place very high-voltage power lines near Rosalie and Rockridge High School. Please stand up for a real solution. Thank you. Thank you for your comment. Please sit down. Thank you. Ramesh Reddy Adipudi followed by Sushil Bombardikar. Good evening

[03:14:50] school board members. I've been a resident of Loudoun Valley 2 for the past 16 years and I'm here to raise my concern about Goal to Mars Powerline project. Rejecting Road 4 and Road 3 allows Dominion to use the right of the orange road which will have maximum impact on around 1,200 plus houses, 15 plus communities, and schools such as Stonehill Middle School, Moorfield Station Elementary School, ETC.

[03:15:18] With this request, I want to bring to your notice the fact that there are LCPS and private schools on all other proposed roads, not just Rosalie and Rock Ridge High School. And there are kids in all those schools as well, and their health is equally important. I'm very positive that the school board will consider all the options and take the best decision in choosing one of these roads which has the least impact on the community. I hope the decision is in the line with the Loudoun County Supervisor's recommendation. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:15:50] Sushil Bombardikar followed by Jagadish Chinuri. You guys can hear me? Good. Hello. If the school board rejects the proposed routes, Dominion will proceed with Route 5 Orange around Loudoun County Parkway, putting 15 plus communities, 3,000 plus students from Stonehill Middle School, Moorfield Elementary, little toddlers from daycares and emergency services at risk, with a lot of homes with infants and elders close to 25 feet.

[03:16:24] LCPS staff approved Route 3 Green, while the Board of Supervisors endorsed Route 4 Blue and Route 3 Green. I urge you to follow those recommendations. Leadership means prioritizing the greater good, not just by serving selective interest, but looking at things in its entirety.

[03:16:41] Ms. Deanna Griffiths, you emailed many over the weekend to reject the two proposed routes. That leadership is deeply disheartening. If you cannot act in the community's best interest, I would really request you to abstain from voting. Please follow the Board of Supervisors' recommendations to prevent Dominion from endangering our communities.

[03:16:59] Your decision will impact thousands. Thank you. Thank you. Jagadish Chinuri, followed by Raj Paradekar. Good evening, Chair Mansfield and school board members. Safety at school is not just about locked doors and security cameras.

[03:17:18] It's a peace of mind students should have when they walk in the doors, knowing they can focus on learning without fear. It's the trust the parents put in a system, hoping their children can lead to a better life. Mr. Arbanistrati, we know kids' wellness and mental is a top priority for you.

[03:17:34] The idea of stacking multiple sources of potential harm in the same location is an insult to every family in this district. Let's be clear, this proposal is reckless, dangerous, and completely disregards the health and safety of our students, teachers, and the surrounding community.

[03:17:51] We strongly urge school board to protect our children and say no to blue and green routes. Thank you so much. - Thank you. Raj Paradekar, followed by Jatinder Chandak.

[03:18:06] - Good evening, members of the school board. My kids go to the schools impacted by Dominion's proposed green and blue power lines. I would like to request the school board vote today to reject all above ground routes on school property. Please do not delay. Send a clear message to Dominion to not include any of these routes through the school property unless it is an underground route. We have reviewed Dominion's feasibility report and it clearly states undergrounding is technically feasible. It also acknowledges that the above ground route's proximity and public opposition, which means by their own findings, these routes should be eliminated.

[03:18:45] School grounds are considered exempt from eminent domain if you are willing to fight. So please do intervene in the SCC process also. Everything that Dominion says should be independently verified. They have not explored partial underground options thoroughly as we have found from their report.

[03:19:02] You shouldn't be asked to take decisions that are against your responsibilities. Please make it a policy so that... Thank you very much. Thank you. Jatinder Chandak, followed by Cheetan Doma. Good evening, members of the school board.

[03:19:21] I strongly oppose all proposed routes due to their significant impact on our community. Routes 3 and 4 raise concerns for Rosalie and Rockridge High School, but people are forgetting Stonehill, Moorfield, and other schools. Route 5 has the most far-reaching consequences as the right-of-way route affecting neighborhoods, schools, businesses, hospitals, daycares, gas stations, and others along Loudoun County Parkway.

[03:19:49] All proposed routes affect the homes of students at Rockridge, not just at Rockridge and Rosalie, but also their homes. Students are not staying in the school all day. They live in the same community. So they live in houses along Loudoun County Parkway.

[03:20:05] Also, there is precedence that there are power lines near Brambleton High, Brambleton Middle School, Independence, and other schools. If you can help, say no to Dominion completely for this project, else pick the best route possible.

[03:20:21] - Thank you. Lakshmi Adhapudi, followed by Ratnathkar Koram.

[03:20:38] Sorry, okay, so Chetan Doma, Chetan Doma, I'm sorry. Sometimes I lose my place. - Good evening board, my name is Chetan Doma, I'm a sixth grader at Stonehill Middle School and I will soon go to Rockridge High School.

[03:20:53] The high voltage power lines near the schools are highly dangerous. But today the decision will be made about if power lines are gonna be there or not. The power lines cause leukemia and serious illnesses that have to be taken seriously. Low-frequency EMFs can't be considered harmless. Dominion also has to consider partial undergrounding.

[03:21:11] The cell phone tower near Rockridge High School is already a safety risk, so we need to make a safe decision and refuse. We are not trying to convince you to choose one route or another, but just deny any overhead transmission power lines. I would like my county to stay as great as it already is.

[03:21:28] These power lines stand in the way of that. I humbly request you to please deny any of these 500 kV power lines near my schools. Thank you for your time, and have a great rest of your day. Thank you. Now, Lakshmi Adhapudi, followed by Ratnakar Karam.

[03:21:46] Good evening, everyone. I've been a resident of Loudoun Valley for the past 15 years, and I'm here to raise my concern about the power lines. With this request, I wanted to bring it to your notice. There are LCPS and private schools on all of the proposed routes.

[03:22:06] not just Rosalie Carter and Rockridge. And there are the kids in these schools and their health is important too. All these children spend their time at home outside of the school hours and some health issues, same health issues exist in their homes as well if these power lines go very close to their homes.

[03:22:29] I'm very positive that the school board will consider all the options and take best decision in choosing one of the routes which has the least impact in the community. Thank you so much. - Thank you, Radnakar Ghoram, followed by Sarisha Bumareti.

[03:22:50] - Good evening, members of the Loudoun County Super Board. My name is Radnakar, I am a resident of Loudoun Valley 2. I am here today to express my opposition to the proposed routes, particularly routes one, two, and five. While routes three and four raise concerns for a couple of schools, Routes 1, 2, 5 would have a far greater impact, disturbing thousands of households, neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and many commuters who rely on Loudoun County Parkway daily.

[03:23:23] Unfortunately, if a least harmful route is not chosen, Dominion Energy could proceed with Route 5, a decision that will have a profound and lasting effect on our community. Though the final decision may not be entirely on your hands, I urge you to recommend at least impactful route and stand with the families counting on you to make the right choice.

[03:23:46] Thank you for your time. Thank you. Sirisha Bhumeretti followed by Mihir Namkar. Hello. Can you hear me? My name is Sirisha Bhumeretti and my child is a freshman at Rockridge High School. It makes me so sad to stand here today and speak about the impact of the power lines on our own proud Loudoun County Parkway. Whose fault is it that our community is so divided over this? It is heartbreaking that I

[03:24:24] have to stand in front of our own school board and explain the value and beauty of the Loudoun County Parkway. Some says reject all routes, but doesn't the school board know that if all routes are rejected, the default is Loudoun County Parkway. Thousands and thousands of commuters rely on Loudoun County Parkway every single day.

[03:24:46] Yes, there are multiple schools along Loudoun County Parkway. For example, 1,110 students at Stonehill Middle Schools are within 490 feet from Loudoun County Parkway that get impacted. 1,079 students from Moorfield Station Middle School will be impacted directly by routes 1, 2, and 5.

[03:25:05] Thank you so much. Mihir Namkar followed by Srinivas Doma. Good evening.

[03:25:20] My name is Mihir Nimkar, and I am a student at Rockridge High School. Dominion's proposed high-energy voltage lines are coming right next to my school. The National Institutes of Health has

released numerous studies detailing links between these lines and health effects for students, especially clinical depression and childhood leukemia.

[03:25:39] Furthermore, these studies look at high-voltage power lines, while the proposed power lines are actually two whole steps above that, ultra-high-voltage power lines. These lines emit powerful electromagnetic fields, or EMFs. These aren't just any normal EMFs that exist in natural life, however, but are rather extremely low-frequency EMFs, which are the most dangerous kind.

[03:25:58] The most dangerous kind of radiation coming from the most dangerous type of power line should not be allowed right next to schools where students work and play. We all depend on the school board to keep us safe. Voting against all proposed overground lines is the only way to do this. So please, reject all routes for student safety.

[03:26:16] Thank you. Thank you. Srinivas Zadoma, followed by Rajitha Polam. Good evening, school board members. My name is Srinivas Zadoma. I have two children that go to the infected schools.

[03:26:33] Many children will be affected by transmission line. That's why I'm opposing power lines. These 500 kV power lines have significant impact on growing kids and staffs can cause many illness. I want my children to be safe and healthy, and I'm confident many other parents will highly agree with that.

[03:26:56] We cannot have another high-voltage transmission line when we already have a cell phone tower next to the Rockridge High School. Dominion must find a better spot for the transmission lines or at least opt for the partial undergrounding.

[03:27:11] the Virginia Department of Education guidance says that there should not be power lines on school premises. They made this rule for safety for our children. That's why they are set. They were set. My humble request everyone to school board deny power lines. Thank you. Rajita Polam followed by Mahinder Gauravaram. Good evening school board members. I am the resident of Loudoun Valley two communities in 16 years. I am here to share not only my perspective but also the

[03:27:50] collective voice of students, parents and my concerned community members. Dominion Energy has proposed five possible routes. All of the routes involve overhead lines running through my community including schools, daycare centers, LCPS parks and also other businesses and not to exclude the daily commuters on the Loudoun County Parkway. I strictly oppose all the proposed power lines. I would suggest to consider the underground option, but if that is not feasible, I would ask you to choose the least impacted route, which is Route 4, the blue

[03:28:25] line, as my first choice, and also Route 3, green, as my second choice. Thank you for this opportunity. Thank you. Thank you. Mahinder Gauravaram, followed by Anvita Ghandari.

[03:28:41] Good evening school board members. I'm a student at Rosalie Carter Elementary and I'm worried about the power lines Dominion Energy plans to put near our schools. My brother at Rockridge High School could be affected too. We're just kids trying to learn, make friends and chase our dreams. Scientists say these power lines might cause serious health issues like cancer in children.

[03:29:06] That's scary to think about while we're trying to grow and learn. At school, we should be excited about learning and playing. Instead, we'll face two years of construction noise and safety issues. These power lines won't go away.

[03:29:23] They'll be here for decades, affecting future students too. Other cities have put power lines underground. Why can't we? As students who will be directly affected, we're asking you to say no to above-ground power lines near our schools.

[03:29:38] Please keep our schools safe. We're counting on you. Thank you. Thank you. Anvita Gandhari, followed by Muntira Rory.

[03:30:04] I'm sorry, what was your name? Manita. Manita, okay. Dr. Anvita.

[03:30:24] Hello, and good evening from a Phoenix mom. Route 4 Blue and Route 3 Green impact Rockridge and Rosalie Carter schools. If you reject both these routes, Route 5 Orange becomes the most likely option. Did you know that Route 5 Orange impacts Stonehill Middle and Moorfield Station Elementary?

[03:30:45] With both schools within 500 feet? And you cannot oppose this right-of-way orange route. Here's a solution. If we shift the Rockridge track field, we can eliminate the impact of Route 4 Blue on Rockridge.

[03:31:00] This would make Route 4 Blue the no-impact route for all four schools. Rockridge, Rosalie Carter, Stonehill and Moorfield Station. This is the right call. Let's protect the well-being of our students and teachers.

[03:31:18] Save all four schools. Choose the route that benefits everyone. Thank you. Thank you. Raj Khatapali, followed by Ratu Chaudhary. Good evening, members of the school board.

[03:31:35] My name is Raj Khatapali. I'm a homeowner in Loudoun Valley 2. I'm here today to respectfully urge you to oppose not just one, but both Route 3 green and Route 4 blue. If installed, these power lines will not only affect the current students and staff, but will also impact thousands of future students for generations to come.

[03:31:54] the decision will set a dangerous precedent for other lcps schools young children rely on us to prioritize this safety and well-being and it is up to the school board to advocate for what is right for them please say no to overhead power lights near schools thank you thank you ritu chowdhari followed by malakalva hello good good evening everyone my husband my name is ritu chowdhari my husband and i live in birchford 55 plus community which will be directly impacted if if Route 5 is selected.

[03:32:31] I urge you to consider please Route 3 or 4 alternatives. Most of us in the Birchwood are retired and have invested our life savings to live closer to our children in one of the most expensive counties in America. In our community, 81 houses will be impacted, meaning 362 seniors will be affected by this decision.

[03:32:51] And some of us have paid like premiums for those wood facing lots where these power lines are going to be. At this stage of our lives, the health effects of these high voltage power lines are concerning but the potential depreciation in our home values will be even more devastating route 5 would place the power lines very close to the clubhouse where we gather for all our activities so on behalf of all the residents of birchwood i respectfully request the loudon county school board please select the alternative routes thank you for your time and consideration

[03:33:21] thank you mala kalva followed by srinivas de kanda good evening school board members i stand before you as a parent, neighbor, and a friend. Deeply concerned about the proposal to install high

power lines on the school grounds. This is not just about infrastructure. It's about the safety, health, and well-being of our children. Our school should be centuries of learning and growth, not a place where parents worry about invisible dangers. The long-term impact of our

[03:33:56] community could be devastating. Families might move away seeking safer environment of their children. Is this a legacy we want to leave? Think about the faces of the children we see every day, their dreams and their potential. Let's not allow this proposal to cast a dark shadow over their bright futures. Together, we can find alternative solutions that ensure the safety of our children.

[03:34:21] God bless you all. God bless America. Thank you. Thank you. Malakalva, followed by Shunibaz Dikanda. Good evening. As you know, the proposed power lines near Rosalie Carter Elementary as well as Rockridge High School are of extra high voltage, not just high voltage. So they'll be having a devastating effect on the health of the children as well as their safety.

[03:34:51] So please say no to the overhead power lines near to the schools as well as make it a policy in future so that you don't need to deal with it. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:35:09] Srinivas Dekhanda, followed by Vani Potanini.

[03:35:23] So Vani Potanini, followed by Sriniti Dekhanda. Good evening, members of the school board. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Vani Potanini. I'm resident of Loudoun Valley Estates Community Ashburn for the last 16 years, and I'm here along with my other community members also.

[03:35:45] This is regarding the Dominion Energy power lines. Dominion Energy has proposed five possible routes for 500 kV golden to mars transmission line compared to the other routes routes one two and five impact 1100 plus homes a lot of stone hill middle school morefield elementary school inova emergency which are all located within 100 to 500 feet of the proposed transmission it's impacting a lot of young kids and elderly that are staying in the homes also i i urge please please don't let loudon county parkway become loudon county electric way i once again urge both to consider the least impacted routes to the

[03:36:22] neighborhood and save the community. Thank you, everyone. Thank you. Srinidi Dekonda, followed by Rashamak Reddy. Good evening, honorable chair and school board members. My name is Srinidi Dekonda, and I stand before you not only as a proud graduate of Rockridge High School, but also as a deeply invested member of this community. I have never before ever witnessed such a passionate and unified call to action from my peers within this county, one that speaks to the heart of our well-being in future. Tonight, we are here because we believe that protecting the health

[03:37:00] and safety of students should be a top priority. The decision before you is very clear. We are urging you to act in the best interest of those who you serve and to reject all the proposed overhead power lines. We trust that you, as leaders of our community, will listen to the voices of those who will be most affected. Thank you. Thank you. Rishamak Reddy, followed by Prateek Shah. I'm a student here at Rosalie Carter. Today I want to talk about something very important to me and all of us. Our school grounds and the proposal to install high power

[03:37:40] lines here. Our school is a place where we learn, play, and grow. It's supposed to be safe and welcoming, but if high power lines are installed, it could change everything. If these power lines can be dangerous, they can affect our health and make us sick. We should be able to play and study without worrying about getting hurt.

[03:37:58] Imagine playing soccer or running around with friends and always seeing those big power lines above us. It would be scary and distracting. We should be focusing on our studies and having fun, not worrying about our safety. I believe we can find better solutions that don't put us at risk. Let's keep our school ground safe and free from high power lines.

[03:38:17] Thank you for listening. Thank you. Prateek Shah, followed by Rama Rapparthi. Good evening. Prateek Shah, Loudoun Valley 3 resident.

[03:38:36] and as a father of three that attend Rosalie Carter and Rockridge High School, I come here to share my grave concerns, very similar to one that you share, regarding health and safety of student and staff, which is being put at risk by proposing overhead power lines on our school property and proximity.

[03:38:59] I understand that a lot of information is being put in front of you. There's feasibility analysis. There is many route options. There are opinions from us, from Board of Supervisors. But at the end of the day, some of this is all noise.

[03:39:17] I think the only two facts that you should be considering is, is it safe to put these routes on the school property and whether Department of Education guidelines guides us to put them away from us? So I hope you reach the conclusion that they should not be on school property.

[03:39:34] Thank you. Thank you. Rama Rapparthi, followed by Carolyn. Good evening, school board. Today I'm here to actually ask a question. So today, for example, like, you know, you're voting only on Rosalie Carter and Rockridge, but you're not voting on any other schools that are passing through the Loudoun County Parkway, which is like the Moorfield Parkway, Moorfield School and the Stonehill Middle School.

[03:40:02] The only reason that you're voting today is because, in my opinion, because the lines are passing through the school property. Versus they are not passing through the Stonehill or Moorfield Parkway. So I urge you to refrain from voting because by doing this, by voting today, you are dividing the community.

[03:40:21] You are really dividing the community and the folks that are, you see so many people here, eventually, you know, if you're picking one route or the other, it is definitely going to divide the community. And I urge you because with great power comes greater responsibility for you guys. So in the best interest of all, something will definitely happen tomorrow.

[03:40:39] This is not the final decision that will be by the school board that will be given. But you are definitely dividing the community. That's what I have to say. Thank you. Carolyn, I just have N.A. Good evening.

[03:40:58] We have data centers and all of the technology that they support because young minds were allowed to cultivate, innovate, and grow. We have the school board because you believe in all of these young minds. Every single child and educator who comes through Rockridge, Rosalie, and every other school in this community is more valuable than Dominion's bottom line.

[03:41:22] Similar to cell towers, you should have a policy that prevents high-voltage power lines on school property. Who's going to sit in your seats tomorrow? Who's going to fulfill the legacy you build with every vote? Don't set a precedent today that risks the health and safety of our children and our educators.

[03:41:43] One thing is true of every proposed route. Dominion should find another way. Instead of using its enormous resources to fight against our children and divide our communities, they should use them to find a safe, sustainable way to fulfill their obligation to the data centers.

[03:42:01] Thank you. Karthik Diracanda, followed by Arun Subramani. Hello, school board members.

[03:42:19] I'm a resident of Loudoun Valley 2 community. I'm reaching out with you with a request. I know everybody has spoken up different opinions. I would like to strongly oppose Route 1, 2, and Route 5 because it runs in Lauren County Parkway.

[03:42:39] Not just the traffic, which is a nightmare, but we have many schools and hospitals within 1,100 to 500 feet. There are a lot of engineers who can find a solution, but I just urge you not to consider Route 5 because of the above reasons.

[03:42:56] Hope you will support us and recommend the least impact routes, which is Route 4, Blue, and Route 3, Green, but not just Route 5. Thank you so much for your support. Thank you. Arun Subramani, followed by Madhuri Gogginini.

[03:43:13] Good evening. The decision and vote that this board takes tonight will have consequences beyond this room, beyond this county, beyond this state, and all across the country.

[03:43:33] Ladies and gentlemen, this is an Erin Brockovich moment. Let us take our responsibility seriously and firmly reject Blue and Green Lines as they will put 2,400 students and educators at serious risk and irreversible risk sometimes and for the future tens of thousands of children who will be having the good fortune of attending Rosa Lee and RRHS.

[03:43:55] I'm sure we can't agree on everything, but we can all agree that the health and safety of every child and every student in our beloved country is precious and valuable. I humbly request all of you to kindly examine the impact study done by Dominion, look at alternatives, and support the dreams and desires and health and safety of our kids.

[03:44:20] Thank you. Thank you. Madhuri Guggenini? I'm here today. I don't want to repeat what all the people before me have already mentioned. Today, I believe in you and the power that you have as a board, as an educator.

[03:44:42] And I urge you to think as a leader and take a decision to protect the greater Loudoun County and the people, the communities, and the human life that is surrounded by the schools and the communities that we are living and staying nearby.

[03:44:57] I urge you to think and take proper decision as a leader and protect the communities. Thank you. Thank you. Kamal Gojanini. Hello. You hear me? Okay.

[03:45:24] So, yeah, I understand it's a difficult decision to make. This Powerlines project actually virtually dividing our community, diverse community, and every community, every school is important. And so basically my suggestion or request is to take a holistic view of all routes and suggest the least impactful one that will help our communities as well as schools.

[03:45:54] Thank you. Thank you. David Palancey, followed by Moni Palachami, Moni Palachami, followed by Rajiv Naluri.

[03:46:33] I have under how to pronounce it as Moni, but it looks like it's Moni Khanda Raja. Does that, nobody by that? Okay. Okay, so Rajiv Naluri.

[03:46:49] - Good evening, school board. If children's health concerns due to power lines are an issue right now, why were Brambleton Middle School, Independent High School, Farmville Middle School, Rockridge High School, they were built next to the existing power lines?

[03:47:06] Some individuals advocating for children's health seems to be using this argument primarily to prevent power lines from running through their backyards. However, there are also schools, hospitals, adult homes on Loudoun County Parkway, which will be impacted if you reject Route 4 blue or Route 3 green lines.

[03:47:32] There are many homes and many people are getting impacted because of your decision. So I request you to approve blue or green as a backup. Thank you. Thank you. Anne Wong, followed by Arushi Raghavendra.

[03:47:58] Arushi Raghavendra, followed by... So, Arushi, I see that before you begin and before the timer starts, I see that you included two additional names.

[03:48:23] It looks like it's Anvi Bastati and Annalisa Doyron to provide public comment tonight. Is it the intent that you each would provide comments? I'm sorry?

[03:48:41] Would it be okay if we each had one minute? Speak in the microphone, I can't hear you. Would we be able to have one minute of speaking time each? You did sign up. I see it on the spreadsheet. But I thought it might be the case that you guys wanted to do it.

[03:49:02] And after consulting with the board clerk, due to a technical glitch with the Google Form, the names were not included as separate speakers on the speaker list. But that being the case, I will, because they were on here, I will let you each provide comments, so you each can have one minute, okay?

[03:49:23] I would like to just speak on behalf of my group, if that's okay. Okay, that's fine too. Thank you. All right. Okay, one minute. Good afternoon. I'm a student at the Academies of Loudoun currently studying the administration of justice, and we propose to you an amendment to the current D.A.R.E. program in elementary and middle schools.

[03:49:42] In a survey that we conducted across the county, over 80% of high school students reported that they don't remember anything taught to them from the D.A.R.E. program. We believe that this is because youth modern day have low engagement and attention spans with the material.

[03:49:58] Additionally, the material includes lectures and teachings that drugs come from sketchy environments, when in reality it's often family members in their inner circle that are providing them these drugs. Our proposal is to make D.A.R.E. more engaging so that students are actually engaging with the material and it's being taught to them from peers and they're seeing how it really impacts people around them.

[03:50:23] We need your support to make D.A.R.E. and Beyond a reality because education only works when students are engaged with it. We look forward to touching base with you on our specific ideas to amend the program. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you. So the next person would be Divya Devi Chidambaram, followed by Michelle Stoll.

[03:50:49] Good evening, everyone. I am Divya Chidambaram, a resident of LV2. I strongly oppose routes 1, 2, and 5 along Loudoun County Parkway as it directly affects approximately 1,200 homes and 2,500 children, whereas the routes 3 and 4 affects less than 100 homes.

[03:51:09] These are our forever homes, and we have old parents living with us, Given that there are not enough studies conducted to fully understand the long-term neurological effects of exposure to these high-voltage lines, especially for children and the vulnerable population, I kindly request you to keep options 3 and 4 open also.

[03:51:27] By keeping these options 4 and 3 open, we maintain the ability to advocate for a broader and more responsible solution, one that does not simply shift the burden to other neighborhoods, but instead push for a long-term solution, maybe considering underground options just close to the close school premises, thus making it a hybrid approach.

[03:51:47] Thank you. Thank you. Michelle Stoll, followed by Sushma Kandamala. Good evening, school board.

[03:52:16] My name is Sushma, and my children attend Rockridge High School. I firmly believe that placement of power lines should prioritize minimizing oral community impact. In this regard, I am not deeply concerned about the proximity to Rockridge High School as they are situated farther from the school building than homes along routes 1, 2, and 5, which are among the alternative proposed routes.

[03:52:39] I trust that the school board conducted comprehensive research on the potential impact of high-voltage power lines while approving the construction of Brambleton Middle School, Independent High School, and Rockridge High School, particularly given the presence of existing high-voltage lines near these schools.

[03:52:57] Therefore, I respectfully urge the school board to approve Route 4 or Route 3 as these alternatives present a comparatively lower impact than the other routes proposed by Dominion. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you.

[03:53:24] Anika Duraja, followed by Kevin Winters. Hello, I'm a 10th grade student at Rockridge High School. My sister is five and she begins attending Rosalie Carter next year.

[03:53:41] She'll play in the playgrounds behind the school every day, and one of the routes is right behind that playground. The construction of routes three or four will impact her life, along with the life of every single child that goes to Rosalie Carter and Rockridge High School. Dominion Energy keeps repeating that the power lines do not have long-term health impacts, but the NIH has published studies reporting an increased risk of leukemia in children that had long-term exposure to high-voltage power lines.

[03:54:06] Building these power lines above ground will impact every single child and educator at Rosalie Carter and Rockridge High School. Even if it costs more money, the long-term impact of building these lines underground would be significantly less than building them overground. Our lives are more valuable than high-voltage power lines.

[03:54:22] I urge for all of you to push for these power lines to be built underground so that we can protect the hundreds of students and educators. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Srinya, I mean, Kevin Winters, followed by Srinya Taluri. Thank you.

[03:54:44] I'm a high school teacher in my 10th year, and I wanted to discuss the problems of grading policy 50-30, especially regarding retakes. I understand the philosophy behind allowing students an opportunity to prove mastery, but that's not how the grading policy actually works in practice.

[03:55:01] In the last school year, I made students fill out a retake request form prior to actually getting their retake, so I could have a record of how many I had to administer. This binder represents 520 retakes that I was forced to administer last year as part of this policy.

[03:55:16] These are not academic students struggling with content and struggling to get through. These are AP students who are trying to goose their GPAs by trying to, for marginal gains, or trying to ace the class while doing the bare minimum amount of work.

[03:55:33] In addition to reinforcing bad work habits and poor life skills is a tremendous burden on the teacher. A third of these students are in the academies. I have to do all of this work outside of the school and it's gonna cause burnout, serious burnout. - Thank you.

[03:55:49] Shania Taluri, followed by Alex Bennett. - Good evening, school board members. I hope you are doing well.

[03:56:05] My name is Sriniya Taluri, and I'm a student at Rockridge High School. Like many others here, I'd like to address the proposed routes for the Dominion Project and the significant impact that will have on my house and many other homes in our community. Routes one, two, and five, which run along Lowne County Parkway, represent the greatest risk to the members of our community.

[03:56:25] They run alarmingly close to 1,100 homes. Thousands of our neighbors, friends, family, spend around at least 12 hours every day in our homes and communities will be exposed to electromagnetic fields. Over the course of a lifetime, this can be extremely detrimental to the lives of these people. We sincerely urge you to prioritize the safety of our entire community when making this critical decision. Thank you so much. Thank you. Alex Bennett followed by Chad Hamowitz. Good evening. I'm here to correct a mistake made by two members of the grading and curriculum committee and the opportunity to discuss the negative impacts that

[03:57:04] policy 50/30s had on our school system several teachers including myself were ignored and LCPS deleted a public portion of the committee session when they publish it we share the truth about the lessening of academic rigor and student accountability regarding regarding grading I'm asking you to support the amendment Ms. Chernoff proposed by eliminating grade floors and retakes in AP classes and IB classes. I've expressed my frustration to you, the amount of students who are drastically below their grade levels, reading comprehension, and writing, all because we do not hold a high standard and LCPS wants to pad their graduation numbers.

[03:57:43] I ask you to finally set a reasonable grading policy and begin to hold students accountable because LCPS won't. Thank you. Chad Hamowitz, followed by Nicole Cranford. While none of the five options are ideal I highly encourage you to vote yes to routes three or four as those options will impact the least amount of homes it appears that option three would be further away from the high school and athletic fields when compared to option four so that may be the best choice between the two if

[03:58:20] dominion goes with options one or five I will literally see power lines within a hundred feet from my window and it will be directly above a running path that goes through our community at moorfield station impacting thousands of homes i know that there was an individual a couple weeks ago

here that stated that they will not vote uh due to their frustration of additional power power lines and i'm just you know paraphrasing but keep in mind that if you do not vote that is in essence a vote for options one or five on loudon county parkway

[03:58:54] which will impact the most homes and families 24 7 not just school hours thank you thank you nicole cranford followed by asia brown good evening school board members i had this speech all lined up but the truth of the matter is is that leaving option three and four open truly does impact the least amount of people that is not to say that none of these um or that none of the

[03:59:30] schools or the children are important all of these lines affect children hospitals my forever home I mean, this is my retirement home. If you don't leave option four open, I will see those power lines outside my backyard.

[03:59:49] I walk the paths. I don't want to walk under high voltage power lines. I don't want my kids near those power lines. I do feel that my kids spend a greater deal of their time at home rather than at school.

[04:00:05] So I don't know if that argument that the kids are at school all this time makes most sense because my kids spend a lot of time at home. Thank you. Thank you. Asia Brown, followed by Brandon Kerr.

[04:00:27] Good evening. My name is Asia Brown, and I am the proud mother of an RLC student and owner of two properties along Lowne County Parkway. I am horrified that the Board of Supervisors approved two routes for the Golden to Mars project, where high-voltage power lines would be installed almost directly over RLC and Rockridge High.

[04:00:49] Their decision runs afoul of the essence of what makes Loudoun County great, its commitment to the health of the community. Never mind the hit to property value that a lot of people in this room would suffer, there are over four decades of research showing that children exposed to persistent magnetic fields could be at a higher risk of leukemia.

[04:01:09] Dominion Power argues that burying the lines is too expensive and creates a land acquisition challenge. What I hear is a Fortune 500 company would prefer to risk sickening our next generation of innovators and artists because not doing so would be an inconvenience. We, your constituents, elected you because we trust you to protect our most vulnerable citizens, which I ask you to do today.

[04:01:31] Do not grant the easement to Dominion Power. Thank you. Thank you. Brandon Kerr, followed by Esther Johnson. Good evening.

[04:01:46] I'm here tonight to talk to you guys about the grading policy revisions. Overall, I support the changes that I'm seeing. It is definitely a step in the right direction, but there is still more work to be done on this.

[04:02:02] You've heard tonight from people speaking on the excessive workload that it puts on teachers to enable these retakes over and over for students to basically use the original test as a pretest to avoid having to actually study the first time.

[04:02:17] But what I really want to focus on is the impact that has on students, our students are stressed, and the 50 floor in AP classes basically allows them to defer dealing with a class that they're struggling with until late in the year.

[04:02:33] I've seen too many times students will do well in quarter one, struggle in the second quarter, but say, eh, I've got 50 floor, I've got the grades I need to get into college, it's fine, and then they get to a point late in the year where they're struggling and can't make up for at that point.

[04:02:48] Thank you. - Thank you. Esther Johnson, followed by Lakshmi Pebdorthy. Hi, everyone.

[04:03:05] Thank you for all that you do. I know it's been a really stressful everything. So I just want to remind you, I am a teacher in Loudoun County. I actually have the privilege of teaching every level in the high school class, every level in science.

[04:03:20] So I have freshmen all the way through seniors. And my kids come back to visit me after they've gone to college. Every single one of them has told me, we are not prepared for college. Loudoun County did not prepare us for college.

[04:03:36] There are things that they learn. There are things that they're doing, and we are trying as hard as we can as teachers to provide them with that experience. And I thank you for the work you've done with the grading policy, updating it, trying to give us that step. But I ask you to really consider Lauren's amendments when we're looking at things like getting rid of the 50 floor in those AP, IB, college-level classes.

[04:04:00] They're not going to get that in college, And so why are they getting it the year before when they're in high school? Just being honest, being real, the retake policy is a problem. Thank you. Thank you. Lakshmi Pendurthy, followed by Ratnakara Pesladeen.

[04:04:19] Good evening, everyone. I am Lakshmi Pendurthy. I live in LV2 since 2008. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to voice over about Dominion Power Lines this evening. To me, all five routes proposed will impact the community pretty badly.

[04:04:38] in one or the other ways. For example, health and wealth of the community, house values will go down, 55 community living is impacted, and a lot of other impacts. Hospitals, pre-kindergarten schools, a lot of other schools in the power line will be impacted, and I don't want to repeat all the impacts. Already my fellow speakers mentioned about it.

[04:05:04] So today I propose Dominion to go underground as possible as it is, to minimize the impact from overhead. We all know it is relatively very expensive, but we all will have to come together to support Dominion financially.

[04:05:21] I request to HYA communities, county leaders, Senate... Thank you. Thank you for your comments. It's been a minute. Ratnakara Pesladini, followed by Raji Ramanathan.

[04:05:46] - Raji Ramanathan, followed by Eric Adams. - Sorry about that.

[04:06:03] Good evening. I'm here to oppose Dominion high power energy route five and support route three and four, the less impact routes. We cannot move the communities with 1,200 homes and data center, but we can move the schools.

[04:06:18] I suggest the board to talk to Dominion and they can buy the school property and fund to build new schools somewhere else where there is no power lines. If zoning is an issue, it is virtual life. It is movable. If you move the school, then if you say yes to Route 4 and 3, that is a less impact.

[04:06:37] If you reject 3 and 4, you are indirectly supporting right-of-the-way Route 5, which is going to have impact on many communities. Do you only care about the schools, and you don't care about the huge impact on the community? Please don't have tunnel vision and think only about the school. Please move the schools and say yes to Route 4 and 3.

[04:06:56] Thank you. Thank you. Eric Adams, followed by Aaron Krumblis. My name is Eric Adams, and I'm a high school English teacher.

[04:07:16] This is my 14th year in education and my 6th year in Loudoun County Public Schools. I joined LCPS from a private school, assuming that a public school system would be less inclined to participate in artificial grade inflation because there was no need to market to prospective tuition-paying parents. What I quickly realized was that the policy of grade inflation in Loudoun County is worse than what I'd left behind.

[04:07:36] In the six years since I joined LCPS, I've been pressured to record floor grade of 50% for students that had barely attended class. I've created credit recovery plans for students and asked to develop one assignment that could be used in place of an entire year of learning and growth. I've graded assignments in September that were due in March of the previous year.

[04:07:54] My students are bright, capable, and intelligent. Many of them are so bright, capable, and intelligent that they've figured out how to manipulate the flaws of our current grading policy as a strategy to avoid complex or labor-intensive assignments. In the past, I've expressed these concerns to administrators at my school.

[04:08:11] In the most egregious instance, I was ordered to adjust the student's grade to 50% when they had not turned in a single assignment for the quarter. Thank you. Thanks. Erin Krumblis, followed by Gopanathan Menachi. Hi.

[04:08:34] I'm an educator here in Loudoun County Public Schools, and I have taught in the school system here for 16 years, and I've seen a lot of change and things come and go. And this grading policy has been by far the hardest thing I've had to navigate in my whole career um i have watched my colleagues leave because of it because the just the pressure that it puts on us um there's a lot of changes in the policy that you've already made but there's so much more that needs to be done to help not just the teachers but the kids the lack of a due dates breeds so much anxiety in our students because they don't know when things are due

[04:09:13] that they're just try to perfectionist their way through everything trying to make everything perfect before they'll give it to us. It also doesn't give them the ability, if they don't turn it in until the day of the assessment, they don't have the ability to get any feedback leading up to that. And that doesn't lead to them mastering anything. This policy does not lead to mastery, leads to complacency. Please help us make some changes. Thank you. Gopinathan Minachi, followed by Aaron Thota. Hi, my name is Gopinathan Minachi. I live in Loudoun Valley too. My heart

[04:09:53] is sad and why? Because my community is already divided. Oh, thanks for the dominion power supply for asking us. Anyhow, you have two choices. Choose four or three or reject. What happens if you reject? It goes to the line five, which you don't have an option to choose. So you are throwing under the bus everybody else. The fact is already presented by everybody saying that 1500 communities will be affected. So what are you going to do? You have no choice. I don't understand what will happen. So if you choose

line four, which is the best solution, I'll tell you what, this is a win-win situation for both of us. Because you can, as my presenter is already present, saying that you can

[04:10:32] move the school out of the way. So nobody is getting affected. Everybody is talking about kids and everyone. I agree. I agree with everybody. The kids are affected. Move the school out. Where is the kids affected? Tell me, where is the school if there is no community? So if you split the community. Where is the school? Thank you. Thank you. Arun Thota followed by Venkata Valanki. Good evening. My name is Arun Thota and my son goes to Rosalie Elementary School.

[04:11:04] I'm here to oppose the Dominion high power energy line to Route 5 and support Route 4 and 3 which will have less impact on the entire community. Opposing Routes 3 and 4 indirectly supports Route 5 which is right of way and which has been recognized by Dominion as having a much more significant impact on the community. Others have complained about the influence of these power lines on students at nearby schools. I understand that we cannot move the data centers and the communities with 2,100 plus homes, but schools can be moved. I suggest that LCPS school board

[04:11:43] approach dominion about funding and building additional schools in areas without power lines. Please consider community impact and do not solely worry about schools. Route 5 will have more impact on the community as a whole as opposed to routes 4 and 3.

[04:12:01] Please approve either route 4 and 3. Thank you. Venkata Valanki followed by Kyle Nathanson. Hi, good evening everyone. My name is Venkata Valanki and I'm resident of LV2.

[04:12:19] And here, today I'm here to oppose the high-power energy line to Route 1, 2, and 5. In simple and precise, I urge you to please stop Dominion Mars Transmission Project in our neighborhood.

[04:12:36] If not, please choose full or partial underground or less impacted routes. I urge you to seriously reconsider the routes carefully, ensuring we are all considering better alternatives. Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity. thank you for your time thank you kyle nathanson followed by kimberly haw hello and good evening my name is kyle nathanson this is my second year here teaching at lcps and i actually really want

[04:13:14] to praise the work of the grading committee um as a teacher i think that a lot of the revisions the 50 floor the formal formatives the rebalancing of grades the due dates i think those are incredible things and i really urge the board to actually pass a lot of those revisions i was actually speaking to students today about it because they came up in conversation and they were like these sound really reasonable Mr. Nafison and I said I agree so I do actually think that a lot of these are good steps forward I also want to also propose the amendments by Ms. Chernoff to be put into consideration as well I think those will do a lot of progress in enforcing rigor and enforcing

[04:13:49] high standards of excellence for our students here in the county and like I said I want to genuinely appreciate all the work that you all do I know it's a tough thing to get something that everyone agrees with and I think you all have made really good steps and hopefully bare minimum we can work on retakes later thank you all so much thank you Kimberly Haw followed by Amy Riccardi hi I'm a high school math teacher and I've been teaching in Loudoun County for 11 years and I want to speak

[04:14:24] on our retake policy and I will mirror some of the same comments that have already been made my proposal is that we actually lower that retake policy to 70 percent to help some of that grade

mongering many teachers have walked in and the first thing the kids say is when's the retake before they even have looked at the test.

[04:14:44] If you had changed that policy to a lower grade, there would be a lot more incentives to study for the first time. Our proposal to include that all formatives have to be done before you take a retake is in the right direction. The other thing with retakes that happens, especially in the advanced classes, the kids run into a cycle where they keep a retaking and retaking, and it goes beyond just the current content, but it starts to affect their mental wellness.

[04:15:12] I've seen that happen more than once. So please consider adjusting some of that retake policy in our grading policy. Thank you. Thank you. Amy Riccardi, followed by Christina Farrello. Good evening, everyone.

[04:15:34] My name is Amy Riccardi, and I am a Sterling District resident and business owner. You've heard from so many parents, students, community members, and teachers over the last several weeks about the idea of entertaining the Dominion high-voltage power lines and their placement on or near our LCPS campuses, which really kind of defies common sense.

[04:15:52] As you know, the school board's role here is really to create safe environments and healthy environments for our students, teachers, and staff. Rosalie Carter Elementary, Rockridge, Stonehill, and the other schools that are in the area all should be schools that are safe havens and not places in the shadow of towering transmission lines.

[04:16:10] And while this school board has not necessarily had a great track record for caring much about public comment, This evening's suggestion to even shorten the time from one minute to 30 seconds is yet another example of the lack of interest you've shown from hearing from residents. You've closed public comment when you haven't liked parents' viewpoints.

[04:16:28] Last night during the joint board meeting, you conveniently skipped over my name on the list to speak for public comment. And my hope is that you actually pay attention to students and parents here that are speaking tonight. Christina Ferrello, followed by Kristen Washington. Is this a summative?

[04:16:51] If you've visited any LCPS high school, you've heard this question, and you've cringed a little bit because you know that the student is actually asking, do I need to participate in the learning process today? And our current grading policy answers that question with no, you don't have to participate in the learning process today.

[04:17:11] As a teacher who believes in the lofty ideal of education, I urge you to make the following changes to the grading policy so that my colleagues and I can effectively teach the students in this county. First, allow formative assessments to be graded. We cannot assess, reteach, scaffold, differentiate, and reassess if students refuse to participate in formative assessments.

[04:17:33] We need consistent baselines and cannot get them without student buy-in. Second, eliminate the retake policy for summative assessments. A summative assessment is meant to be an evaluation of the extent to which students have learned the material within the learning period. retakes are a thing for formatives. Thank you. Thank you. Christina, Kristen Washington, followed by Vanu Imadi. I'm here to speak about dyslexia. I've exhausted all options for my son, but I will

[04:18:12] not quit fighting. An LCPS employee suggested I look into the Siena School, a private school for students with dyslexia, to the tune of \$60,000 a year. It is LCPS's job to educate my children. That is what 54% of my tax dollars goes to.

[04:18:30] If you can't, then it's your responsibility to pay for someone who can. This is why parents want school choice. You all are asking for a \$2 billion budget, yet 53% of our now 5th through 9th graders are reading at a low to non-proficient level.

[04:18:47] With that budget, the number of students who can't read should be zero. Parents and taxpayers, this is my call to action. I have tried, but I can't fight this battle alone. If you are okay with this statistic, then stay silent. But if you are not, myself and families like mine need you to speak up.

[04:19:06] We can't do this alone. Thank you. Banu Amadi, followed by Corey Brunet. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I stand here with my fellow speakers in opposing the proposal for this high-voltage overhead transmission lines near our schools.

[04:19:29] I mean, this is just not a precaution. and it is absolute necessity and essential for the safety and well-being of our children. Prioritizing the economic gains while exposing the children to health risks is a dangerous trade-off.

[04:19:47] All the proposed routes impact our community in some way. It reminds me of saying, like, you know, to make a line shorter, draw a bigger line beside it, and choosing a less impactful option still jeopardizes the health of thousands of children. A bad choice, even if it is a little better, is still a bad choice.

[04:20:06] So I urge the school board to firmly oppose this proposal. I mean, if outright rejection is not possible, at least look for underground options and mitigate the risks of preserving the community integrity. I trust the school board will take an independent decision, carefully considering all the factors.

[04:20:22] Thank you very much for your commitment and attention. Thank you. Corey Brunet, followed by Ravi Janghili. I'm not speaking tonight. Ravi Janghili, followed by Mohander Reddy Gouravaram.

[04:20:44] Good evening, board. My name is Ravi Janghili. I have two kids. One goes to Rosalie Elementary School, and the other kid goes to Stonehill Middle School. Today, I came here to request board to not vote on the Dominion power lines, because if you reject three and four lines, Dominion will be forced to go on the Route 5, where thousands of residents who have voted you will be impacted health and wealth wise.

[04:21:14] And also I request you to work with the Loudoun County of Board of Supervisors, because they are also representatives of Loudoun County residents. So you together make a unified decision, which will be effect, I would say, which will be in the good for the Loudoun County residents.

[04:21:32] Thank you for your time. - Thank you. Mahindra Reddy Guravaram, followed by Narendra Chalar. - Good evening members of school board.

[04:21:48] I would like to begin by quoting one of your own, Mr. Arban Estafi, who has often said student first always. That powerful statement reflects the oath you all took to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of our students. Now it's time to put those words into action. We are here today because the proposal to place overhead power lines across school property directly contradicts that promise.

[04:22:10] We know these power lines pose risks to our students, to our staff, and to our community. We urge you to reject the proposal and instead insist the dominant energy to explore safer and more responsible alternatives. Now is the time to honor your commitment to our students, protect their future, reject the overhead power lines, and demand dominant energy to explore safer alternatives.

[04:22:30] Thank you. Thank you. Narendra Charla, followed by Omer Butt.

[04:22:48] Hello, everyone.

[04:23:16] First of all, thank you so much for staying late and listening to all our comments. I know it's a long list, and as you can imagine, it's a deeply concerning matter. I brought the two small guns with me because it affects them first of all kids safety is the biggest priority I have two kids Amir and Ahel five and nine years old both of them going to Rosalie Carter so it affects them directly my recommendation from last year has been go underground fully please go underground fully don't let Dominion choke us with these options

[04:23:55] that we have and if we have to go with a not fully underground option let it be partial underground where it does not affect our schools our kids because our kids safety is our biggest priority please thank you very much for your time god bless you all thank you and with that we will be ending our public comment for the night um school members we will take a recess until

[04:24:26] 9 10 and the board is now on recess and we'll be back at 9 10.

[04:39:47] all right the board is back from recess and we will continue with item 12 in our action item starting with 12.01 specialized programs and centers committee academy of global and linguistic studies proposal presented by dr sumer rashid chair actually do you have a motion dr rashid yes um i'd like to make about this item chair right yes ma'am why is my microphone so loud okay yes i'd like to make a motion uh for

[04:40:25] the action item 12.01 which is academy of global and linguistic studies proposal uh to be approved tonight but before we do so um it is a proposal with a planned opening in the school year of 26 27 um this came out of special programs and uh centers committee and i'd like to just turn it over to Neil Slevin if he had anything to say before I move on.

[04:40:48] Thank you, Dr. Rasheed. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a little bit more information. Last week, there was a last board meeting, there was a question related to transportation for the program, and I've worked with the Department of Transportation for an estimate on a HubSpot model for a special program without the exact location.

[04:41:10] We don't have an exact total, but the approximate cost is \$233,000 for transportation for this program. Thank you, Mr. Slevin. Do you now have a motion, Dr. Rasheed? Yes. Thank you, Chair.

[04:41:26] I'd like to make a motion to bring the action item, which is Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies proposal, to be effective for school year 26-27. I have a motion by Dr. Rasheed. Do I have a second? Second. I have a second by Vice Chair Donahue.

[04:41:41] It's been properly moved and seconded. Now, would you like to speak to your motion, Dr. Rasheed? Yes, Chair. Thank you, Chair. The Academy of Global Linguistic Studies proposal is set to be having a planned opening for the school year 26-27.

[04:41:58] It is with great eager and excitement that it came out of special programs and centers, SPCC, which I am the chair of. And we are very excited to bring this forward, and that's what I'd like to say. Thank you, Chair. Is there any discussion? Yes, Dr. Deans.

[04:42:16] As I was reading through, it talked about what the kids preferred and then it talked about what would be in the program. Am I correct in saying that the student's second choice was Japanese, even though we're teaching Chinese?

[04:42:38] I will turn it over to Mr. Subban about that data. Thank you. I believe you're referring to the world language survey that was conducted a number of years ago related to student and parents' interest for the expansion of world language.

[04:42:55] Is that what you're referring to, Dr. Deans, the tables? And so this particular academy is informed by that survey, but it is not directly connected to that survey. There are two reasons why Chinese and Arabic were chosen for this particular academy.

[04:43:14] One, we do have an existing offering of Mandarin Chinese at a certain amount of our schools. And so we feel we would have success in expanding that option and connecting it to the rest of the curriculum within the academy. And then with Arabic, it was both of interest to our families and also of our students.

[04:43:36] And we have certified teachers already in our system, and we feel that we could successfully launch a program with Arabic. and so those were part of the reasons why we recommended those two languages for this academy when I was reading there was just no way of me knowing that the survey was taken years and years ago and I saw the the options the the what should I say the level options or the priority options the other thing is that is there any way well I guess I guess maybe not but is there any way to

[04:44:15] include, you know, that sign language keeps coming up as a top option, as a top choice from special programs. Is there any way to expand that as well as Arabic and Chinese? So this particular proposal doesn't envision including American Sign Language, but we recognize and hear from the board and our community the need to expand American Sign Language. As you may recall, in the adopted budget for FY26, The board has approved two FTEs for division-level American Sign Language teachers.

[04:44:54] We have identified two areas within the county, Dulles North and Algonquian, where we are going to start regional American Sign Language programs with the goal of increasing the amount of schools that are offering ASL.

[04:45:09] And so while this particular academy is not tied towards American Sign Language, which we do have strategies in place in the budget going into FY26 to expand offerings because we know that it is a strong desire of families to offer that course, while it is also very difficult to staff.

[04:45:27] And so we're trying a different approach for that particular language. Okay, I would just recommend that in the verbiage, that there be some way to smooth out the choices by the students related to Japanese.

[04:45:48] I would also want a little exploration into Japanese because right now I know that there is a huge interest in Japanese, especially even at the college level. I don't know if it's because of anime or video games or whatever, but there is a huge desire there.

[04:46:13] Mrs. Grievous. Thank you, Madam Chair. Per the survey that Dr. Deans mentioned, in 2022, families were surveyed on potential special programs that LCPS would offer in the future.

[04:46:29] An international global studies special program was not on the list of possibilities, but there was significant interest in a civic leadership academy, which is quite different from this program. I'm curious to know who made the decision not to move forward with a Civic Leadership Academy and instead move forward with a Global Linguistics Academy.

[04:46:53] And I also have more questions after that. Thank you. This proposal was developed by the Division of Teaching and Learning K-12, specifically the Offices of World Language and Social Studies and Social Science and Global Studies.

[04:47:15] It says, due to the double-blocked languages for this program, we are requesting funding to offset the potential impact to other languages offered at the schools. Will any current language offerings be dropped in schools because of this program?

[04:47:31] And then I have other questions after that. We are not anticipating that, but I think what that statement references is the inclusion of two teacher FTEs to support the start of the Arabic program to make sure that we're able to fully implement the curriculum without taking staffing from the base allocation of the schools.

[04:47:57] We do anticipate that a number of the students would be out of the school, out of the attendance boundary of the school where this is placed. So the students that are in boundary would take advantage of the other languages that we traditionally offer in our high schools.

[04:48:18] The budget impact of \$250,000 listed on today's agenda is just for planning year 25-26 and then you said 26-27 and that that did not include and thank you so much for sending me the transportation cost of 233,000 for the cost of the program going forward which brings a total to about 650,000 per year is that correct yes that's correct okay thank you

[04:48:57] I believe we already have different languages offered in our classrooms. The Access Academy of, you know, bringing kids to George Mason was also just put through that requires transportation. It does not clarify who can really attend at-risk learners or everyone.

[04:49:15] I was told it's a lottery. This looks to be another poor business decision. I'm not sure we need to be, I'm not sure we can sustain this program. I'm going to have to vote no to this additional program that I believe is not needed at this time.

[04:49:31] I would like to focus more on CTE programs that fit students that might not go to a four-year college. So I feel like we have the languages, and I don't feel that we need to proceed with another program and a potential transportation issue.

[04:49:49] That seems to come up a lot, and I feel like we throw transportation out there. last question for you where is the hub going to be for this are you asking where the site location is going to be yeah where are the site locations I think I saw one hub but it's going to cost I mean for transportation over 250,000 or 233,000 so hub stops refer by hub stops that refers to the transportation system we use to move students throughout the county so hub stops are located

[04:50:23] throughout the county, depending on the geographic location, and to make sure the students have access to a reasonable degree to a bus stop. As far as where this program is going to be placed, we're

currently in the process of soliciting interest from principals.

[04:50:41] We've had a number of principal information sessions, and we will bring a recommendation to the Special Programs Committee at a future date when we are ready to make a recommendation about where exactly this program will be placed. But you need at least 400 students, correct, to sustain the program?

[04:51:02] Is that correct, too? 400 students when fully, that will be in four years. But as you're starting the program, what do you expect to start out with as far as the number of students to sustain the program for this cost?

[04:51:19] We are expecting 100 students going into freshman year and school year 26. Thank you. I think you've answered all my questions. Yes, Dr. Deans. In where it says what is the data that supports the program, it clearly states that parents' interests are different from student interests.

[04:51:49] But it's the students that have to take the classes. And it indicates that Arabic is not offered in LCPS at this time, where Chinese is only offered at two high schools. So I'm wondering if we need more planning before we vote to implement it.

[04:52:14] That's a question I don't have to answer. We feel confident in staff recommendation for the interest in Chinese as well as the interest in Arabic. We have had a number of conversations within our special programs and centers committee related to the way these languages could support the social studies curriculum that's being aligned to it.

[04:52:37] We also have had conversations within our curriculum and instruction committee generally around the expansion of world languages. And a number of the proposals that were considered for this budget year included not just American Sign Language, but also Arabic and Hindi.

[04:52:54] And so for this particular academy with the cross-curricular connections to international relations and economic curriculum standards, that's why the staff is recommending Arabic and Chinese for this particular program.

[04:53:14] Any other questions? Yes, Mr. Streffi. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to take the opportunity again to express my excitement and enthusiasm for this program. First and foremost, I joined Dr. Rashid and Ms. LaBelle in the Special Programs Committee.

[04:53:39] There are a few reasons why I support this. One is obviously the interdisciplinary approach. This combination of global leadership with Arabic that focuses on international studies and global issues, as well as the global business pathway, which is the Mandarin or the Chinese focus on global economics, think is really special and this I think a lot of thought was put into how we develop this Academy it aligns with the National Security Language Initiative for youth which is a Department of State program and you know in my university

[04:54:17] program I had the opportunity to study diplomacy and you know my university had a special partnership with the United Nations and so it just made that experience very special so I see the potential of this program and in terms of the languages I think this is again those two languages align Arabic and Chinese as two of the most important languages for government and military work as defined by the national security language initiative for youth so I think it's just a starting point right the demand is there as Mr. Slevin mentioned and I really see the value in this this is not just a language program right this

[04:54:54] is an interdisciplinary pathway that incorporates so much more and so quoting from from the from the document that's attached in the information item right project-based learning collaboration with international organizations creative problem-solving critical thinking abilities and this interdisciplinary curriculum that challenges students to analyze complex global issues and encouraging them to make meaningful contributions to towards those global solution. So, again, I think this is a really important direction for us. And I know that as we look at special programs, there are so many other priorities that we need to be thinking about,

[04:55:32] including CTE. I do agree with Ms. Griffiths. I think this is an important program that we will have a lot of demand for. So, just wanted to make my thoughts public. Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair. I also want to state my support and excitement for this opportunity.

[04:55:52] In reflecting on a couple key issues, I'll say I did have the opportunity to go to the opening ceremony of the International Summit. I noticed the International Summit is mentioned as a growth opportunity several times within the planning document.

[04:56:11] To echo Mr. Estreffy's points, there is so much that our students can learn from international opportunities and having the ability to engage and interact with people from different cultures and knowing that that is a prominent part of this program and that students would have the opportunity to do some international travel.

[04:56:34] We are so lucky to be located where we are and to have the opportunities that we have. We're perfectly placed for a program like this. And so for me, it's not an either-or option. We don't have to choose one or the other.

[04:56:51] We heard from a student tonight who spoke about how having differentiated learning opportunities in our county had meant the world to her. And I think we have the option and the opportunity to do that for more students. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Chandler.

[04:57:07] Yes, Ms. LaBelle. I also would like to express my support and excitement about this program. We've been talking a lot nationally, not just here in Loudoun, about the need to expand CTE, career technical opportunities for our students.

[04:57:29] And this is a prime pathway to wonderful job opportunities. Again, to repeat what Ms. Chandler just said, you know, we are perfectly placed. Now, if we were in the middle of Kansas somewhere, yeah, this might be, you know, a frill.

[04:57:48] But here, it is almost necessary if you want to get some kind of job in this area to be able to speak and interact in another language with other people from other cultures. So I think this is a wonderful opportunity to do so.

[04:58:07] Thank you. Thank you. Okay, any other discussion? Yes. Ms. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just puzzled why we didn't consider the Civics Academy. And I also wanted to point out that on that survey, I believe Arabic came in eighth.

[04:58:29] And also, it looks to me like we'd be working with unvetted organizations. So that is another reason why I think we need to revisit Dr. Deans. I think we need to take another look at this program.

[04:58:45] Thank you. Okay. We have a motion. We have a second. We've had discussion. Anyone else? It's time for the vote. Clerk, would you please open the vote? Board members, please record your vote. Clerk,

please close and display the vote. That motion passes 7 to 2 with Mrs. Griffiths and Dr. Deans in opposition. Moving on to 12.02, Department of Support Services, Dominion Energy,

[04:59:22] Golden to Mars Transmission Line Project. We can start with a motion or you can discuss. Mr. trainer would you like to come and discuss a little bit good evening chair and school board members i have a just a short update this evening as a follow-up to our meeting the last meeting and some board actions that staff was directed to follow up on so of course we're bringing this

[05:00:00] item back this evening as an action item from the initial presentation on march 11th and while i do not have any slide an updated slide presentation i did want to provide this update and as background dominion energy is is required to connect the golden mars substation line by 2028 with a dual circuit 500 kv 230 kv transmission line that is to meet future electrical demand and maintain acceptable power reliability in our region dominion energy has proposed five potential above ground routes with three of the five routes above ground routes crossing rockridge high school

[05:00:39] or Rosalie Carter Elementary School campuses. Dominant Energy is planning to file the application with the State Corporation Commission by the end of the month. And at this time, they have told staff that no underground route alternatives will be proposed to the SEC.

[05:00:55] On January 22nd, the Board of Supervisors identified Route 4, the blue route, as its preferred alignment, and Route 3, the green route, as the second preferred alignment. the board also advocated that the ultimately selected transmission line be buried within 500 feet of any residence or public school a letter was sent to the school board which is attached to the board item tonight encouraging the board to adopt the same preferred alignments as the board of supervisors at our last meeting on march 11th the school board directed staff to follow up on a potential conflict between the electrical transmission line route 4 the blue line and a

[05:01:34] proposed Columbia Gas Line in the same area of the Rockbridge High School campus, as well as work with Dominion Energy to explore the potential of underground solutions around the schools. On March 19th, staff met with the Dominion Energy, Columbia Gas, and the County of Loudoun staff, and we can confirm that there is no longer a conflict between the two proposed utilities.

[05:01:55] Dominion Energy did make a slight adjustment on the proposed blue route to work around the gas line, and this realignment does put more of the blue line on school board property along the eastern edge of the campus, thus placing it slightly closer to the stadium and baseball softball fields.

[05:02:16] Staff was also able to meet with Dominion Energy to discuss the feasibility study that they completed on the Golden to Mars transmission line, and we'll note that Dominion studied 11 possible underground routes as part of their feasibility study.

[05:02:32] This included some routes through the school board property, and they determined that all of those routes were not feasible for multiple reasons that are identified in that study. The full feasibility study is now publicly available on the Dominion Energy website.

[05:02:48] I'll also point out that we've worked very closely with the Dominion Energy staff. a number of them are in the room this evening and they have asked that we also share with the board that without a specific board approval tonight on one of the routes on school property that they plan to file the one feasible route which would be the route five orange route with the sec later this week as a reminder the

proposed action tonight is for the school board to identify any preferred alignments only on school board property if a preferred alignment is selected

[05:03:25] on school board property staff will continue to work with dominion energy to develop the specific easement and then return to the school board at a later date for approval of that easement so i have any other questions board members do you have any other questions yes mrs griffiths thank you madam chair i have three if if this were to pass tonight um when will the majority of the construction be do you have a timeline in case I missed it do you have a timeline for that I don't have a proposed timeline I know that the Dominion Energy has

[05:04:03] said that the they need this line connected by June by 2028 so we would anticipate that there would be still several months of work with the SEC and going through the planning and development process so likely you would see most of the construction in 27 but I don't have specific dates um what you don't know if it'll be during the school year when kids are taking tests or you know or is it going to be in the summer you don't have that information either we don't have that information but it's unlikely they could build the power line in a few months over the summer it would it would have to happen through the

[05:04:41] course of the school year but I'm sure that Dominion would work with us on as much as possible to deconflict if there were activities that were very high noise around around instructional activities but that'd be something that staff could request then my concern would be that the schools lose electricity as well if it is happening during the school year this transmission line is it would not be directly connected to the school's electrical service it's at a much much higher voltage so they should not have an impact on the school's electrical

[05:05:19] service um thank you very much mr trainer i just want to add that everyone is okay with something until it affects them directly um there is a saying not in my backyard as well um well this doesn't affect me directly i don't live in this community this isn't my district this is a health and safety issue for thousands of students while it doesn't affect me directly and it's not in my backyard i'm a school board member that cares about the health and safety of our students and as a school board member is my duty to not be pressured into voting for something that I feel is

[05:05:54] a safety hazard and will affect thousands of people. This was dropped on this school board and I find it to be a heavy burden so I will be voting no to both Dominion lines. We need a better solution. All the lines need to be buried. Thank you. Any other discussion? Yes Mr. Streffy.

[05:06:17] Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to share that I shared in the last school board meeting that I am one of the Loudoun Valley 2 residents, and I have a little one that's going to attend, Rosalie Carter, hopefully be a coyote, next year.

[05:06:34] And in the last meeting, I acknowledged the difficult position that the school board was being put in, as was discussed earlier, specifically selecting one route from a list of what I believe are untenable options for above ground lines. I shared that the situation aligns closely with the recently approved school board policy on cell towers, which was updated, in my opinion, to ensure that our schools did not become the default locations for infrastructure projects due to the county's diminishing availability of suitable sites.

[05:07:04] I've also been concerned that what's being offered as the least impactful routes are disproportionately impacting our schools and our school communities. That said, I also acknowledge that

Route 5 is the most extreme and untenable of the routes.

[05:07:21] As a school board member, and someone who's talked to many neighbors in the area as well, attended the HOA town halls, I cannot support any route options that do not include a partial undergrounding so close to our schools at this time, especially because I feel that efforts to offer and look into feasibility of partial underground options were not sufficient.

[05:07:43] and now is really the time to continue to do so. Using our voice as a board, at least at this stage, to approve one of these overhead routes and giving up on the advocacy for undergrounding to protect our schools and communities is to me a bit premature and too early.

[05:08:01] The impact of the overhead route options to our school communities and the wellbeing of our schools, I believe, would be untenable, as I mentioned. Our first priority is to our students and our school communities, and these above ground high voltage transmission lines so close to our schools and having our students literally walk under and between 500 KV lines in their walking paths to the school should not be what we as a school board use our voice to vote in favor of, at least at this stage.

[05:08:32] So additionally, I also feel that allowing new rights of way that have such an impact on the community without fully exhausting partial undergrounding options or other alternatives sets a precedent potentially, making it easier for future projects to encroach on school sites.

[05:08:50] Again, something that I'm very weary of. It's also been acknowledged that this project's power capacity will likely be obsolete in just a few years, meaning that additional rights of way may be sought in the near future. So it's important to me that we don't allow our schools to become the default for infrastructure expansion.

[05:09:09] I think more needs to be done to look at the partial undergrounding of these routes, at least at this stage. And finally, I just wanna add, I think it's a critical opportunity to push for undergrounding of high voltage transmission lines, which is already past due here in Loudoun.

[05:09:26] As such, I don't accept the premise that we are defaulting to Route 5 by taking a vote for more to be done to consider and explore partial undergrounding at this stage. And I think that's how we should use our voice. So as a school board member, I feel that our priority is the safety and well-being of our students and staff, as well as the integrity of our educational environment when considering placement of these types of infrastructure.

[05:09:55] - Beautifully said. So we've all received numerous emails and phone calls about the Golden to Mars electric transmission project. I want everyone to know that the General Assembly authorizes the State Corporation Commission, or SCC, as a regulatory agency to control Dominion.

[05:10:13] I strongly encourage everyone to advocate with SCC and also to speak with your delegates and your senators. With that said, Policy 1030, Section A2 states that the public expects my first and greatest concern to be the best interest of each and every one of these young people without distinction as to who they are and what their background may be, and that includes the health and safety of our children.

[05:10:37] So instead of our typical way to make a motion, I'm just gonna make a motion that the Loudoun County School Board supports the continued exploration of an underground solution and opposes all above-ground transmission line options on school board property, including Route 2, Yellow Line, Route 3, Green Line, and Route 4, Blue Line, of the Golden to Mars transmission line alignment.

[05:11:00] Further, that the school board directs staff to communicate this action to the Loudoun County School Board of Supervisors and Representatives of Dominion Energy. Do I have a second? Second. I'll go with Mr. Estroff. Seconds it.

[05:11:16] Is there any other discussion? Yes, Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Madam Chair. As a representative of Algonkian, much like Mrs. Griffiths, I have a very heavy heart about this. I recognize that I live in the only district that, or I guess Mrs. LaBelle and I live in the only two districts that don't have data centers.

[05:11:42] There's not a data center in Algonkian, and I'm not aware of an overhead power line in Algonkian either. I drove over to your community over the weekend. It really weighed heavily on my heart. You have a beautiful community. The school campus is beautiful.

[05:12:02] The nature trails that are near the campuses are beautiful. And I'm sure when you bought your homes, that was what was important. And I appreciate some things that are hard and also true about our situation.

[05:12:21] We are funded at the local level at 71% by our board of supervisors because of the data center revenue. It is important, but it should not come at the cost of the community. We have to find a way, and it doesn't matter if it, I mean, again, I'm only offering you my opinion. I know that's what we were asked to do. To do the right thing, it should be the, to do the, it should be important to do the right thing and if it takes a little bit longer and it costs a little bit more that's

[05:12:58] more valuable than putting our future students our future through the lives of our students at risk and with that said the thing that has stuck with me the most throughout this entire conversation is that the Virginia Department of Education recommends in their guidance that you do not build new schools next to existing power lines and therefore from a logical perspective I do not understand how you can then build new power lines by existing schools and to to my heart that extends

[05:13:35] not just to the schools that would I mean moving the lines closer at Rosalie Carter and Rockridge did not strengthen the argument for me but I also don't necessarily want the overground lines closer to the other schools that are on the Parkway. It's really, really hard. So therefore, I will support the amendment. I really would like to see Dominion try to come up with different solutions, especially if it's possible that the technology that is perceived to have an immediate demand

[05:14:12] may be obsolete. And it's very important to me tonight that we set a clear precedence in support of our entire community because we know the demand is going to continue there are more data centers that are planned and coming and our decision as a board is to decide if it's the right choice for us to provide the right of way on our property and and I just don't think it is um thank you yes vice chair Donahue thank you madam chair I had some conversation with Mr.

[05:14:46] trainer during our last break and I would like I would like to ask him to to repeat some of the information that he related to me related to why we have the timing issue that we have for my first my first question and my second issue that I would like for you to address mr. trainer is what what do you expect is likely to happen if this board supports this position and says, we won't approve anything

[05:15:25] unless it's underground? So to address the timing issue, all I can share is that it's an extensive project to connect this power line route.

[05:15:41] And the need to have this connection made has been identified by PJM, who oversees the regional power, much a higher level than Dominion. They've identified the need for these two substations to be connected to ensure that we have the quality of power in our area that we expect, I guess, and is federally regulated.

[05:16:10] And so they have set the timeline for this connection to be made by 2028. And so backing that up, Dominion has expressed to staff that they are on a pretty tight timeline now to go through the rest of the approval permitting process and then to construct this power line connection.

[05:16:35] So does that kind of address the first part of the question? Yes, it does. Thank you. Okay. And then the second part? Right, the second part is, hypothetically, if this board were to take the position tonight that we would not approve or support any overhead power lines, which I understand all the reasons why my colleagues are taking that position.

[05:17:06] But my fear from my conversation with you and other conversations prior to today are if we take that position, that does not guarantee that we will end up with underground power lines. Do I have that right? I don't, I'm hesitant to venture on what other political actions, other things would happen in this process.

[05:17:28] but Dominion staff has shared with school staff that if an above-ground route is not approved going through school property, then their next step is to file with the SEC to pursue the orange route with Route 5 down Loudoun County Parkway.

[05:17:48] And then the process is all with the SEC at that point. Which we would not have any say in that route. My understanding is that the school board, the board of supervisors and other public bodies as well as the general public does have a voice with the SEC and could express opinions, but I don't know how effective that is.

[05:18:15] I mean, that's beyond my scope. Thank you. And if I could ask you another question, Mr. Traynor, are there lines of the same voltage and capacity similar to what Dominion is proposing to install in this project that already exist in residential areas in Virginia or elsewhere?

[05:18:35] There are other 500 KV lines in the county, and I'm not exactly sure how close they would be to other, say, school sites, but there are lines, existing lines within the county, within the state, that are in close proximity to homes.

[05:18:53] However, to the best of my knowledge, from what has been shared by Virginia Power, this is one of the denser areas that they've had to put a 500 KV line. Thank you. Yes, Mrs. Griffiths.

[05:19:10] Thank you, Madam Chair. Do we have anybody here from Dominion tonight? You knew we were voting on it. Oh, we do. Oh, good. Mrs. Griffiths, we don't have a precedent for people to, for other corporations to come in and discuss anything.

[05:19:27] Oh, I thought maybe they can answer our questions. No. Oh, okay. All right. Thank you. Dr. Deans, did you have a question? My statement is that if we refute it going on school property, directly on school property, it still will go in close proximity to schools and to neighborhoods.

[05:19:50] And the choices that we have here are pitting one neighborhood against another neighborhood, and all of those neighborhoods are our customers, our clients. And those two groupings, one is no more important or less important than the other.

[05:20:10] So we still have the need to try to find an alternate solution. Yes, ma'am. Is that a question or a statement?

[05:20:26] That was a statement. Okay. Okay. Sorry. That was a statement. Yes. Dr. Rasheed. Thank you, Chair. I live in LV2, and don't ask me how I represent Little River.

[05:20:42] that's just how the lines were drawn. I have kids that go to Stonehill and one of my kids has their hub school for Rockridge. So this does hit personal to me. So I do understand and I can relate to how the aesthetic value, the safety, especially the safety for our kids for attending these schools. So I don't want that to go unnoticed. I think it's important for you to understand, for everyone here to understand that there's also a personal aspect to this. Regardless, I can't support any of the proposed above ground routes, and I only support underground routes as a last resort, of course.

[05:21:18] And ultimately, I would prefer that any power lines be as far away from the schools as possible. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Dr. Rashid. Any other discussion? Yes, Ms. LaBelle. Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that the last meeting that we had when we discussed this, I noted that the blue line runs right along the athletic fields of Rockridge High School.

[05:21:42] that point the students that are going to be there they're going to be outside in very close proximity to these wires during PE classes during after-school practices during games and that is a lot more exposure than just having a wire pass by a school and then we find out that we have to increase the margins because the wire needs to work with the gas company and it's encroaching not on

[05:22:14] the eastern side at all but even more onto the school property. We as board members one of the first things they said to us is that we are responsible for the safety of our schools and our children and I think at this point in time i feel i have to say no if you can't bury the lines if you can't give us some protection then i can't vote for having this happen thank you any other discussion okay seeing no more

[05:22:52] discussion the motion to uh support the continued underground exploration um and opposing all above ground to mission lines for school board property is still on the table uh we will now take a vote clerk please open the vote for this is yeah board members please record your vote clerk please close and display the vote and that motion passes with miss us eight to one with uh

[05:23:31] vice chair donahue in opposition okay board members it is now almost 10 o'clock i told you i was going to take a temperature check would you like to continue this april 1st with just the information items oh on on tuesday at six o'clock after our fno what thumbs down if you want to stay

[05:24:08] and finish tonight thumbs down if you want to finish tonight thumbs up if you want to wait wait no stop stop wait no if you want to stay tonight and finish up our our agenda then you vote and you thumbs up stay tonight two three five six okay majority uh does not want to stay

[05:24:42] um and so we will continue this particular board meeting on april what did i say yeah hold on hold

[05:24:57] on okay so we will continue with the remainder of this agenda next tuesday april 1st 2025 at 6 p. m

[05:25:25] and we will start with the information items and just continue on yes ms shirnoff um just a clarifying question will items that are presented on April 1st still be allowed to be voted on the following

week yes even though it's not two weeks to get feedback okay thank you all right okay so this the school board meeting March

[05:26:02] 25 2025 is now adjourned until and going to be continued on April 1st thank you



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