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Loudoun County Public Schools, Student Services Committee Meeting, Thursday, June 5, 2025

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Place LCPS Administration Building / School Board Room, Ashburn, Virginia
Length 1h 06m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1091257962?rel=0>

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[00:00:00] - Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the June 5th, 2025 meeting of the Student Services Committee. I'm Ann Donahue, I'm the chair of this committee. With me is Ms. Melinda Mansfield and Ms. Carrie LaBelle. As a reminder, this meeting is being audio recorded.

[00:00:17] It is not being live streamed and it is not being video recorded. But the audio recording will be available to listen to in the future through the LCPS website. so please remember to speak into microphones.

[00:00:34] Item number two on our agenda is public comment. We have one individual signed up for public comment and before we get to that, I remind everyone that you must limit your comments to the time allotted, which today will be two minutes.

[00:00:55] All audience members shall maintain decorum, civility, and respect for the functioning and dignity of this committee at all times. Please remain seated unless you are arriving, departing, speaking for public comment, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting, obstructing speakers from being able to see the members, or vice versa, interrupting speakers, attempting to speak when not called to do so by the committee chair, or approaching a speaker, otherwise attempting to intimidate, disparage, or distract a speaker, staff member, or other attendees.

[00:01:29] 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 division employees during public comment. Speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate school board official.

[00:01:47] Speakers should face the members and direct their comments to us. For 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 committee chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting.

[00:02:09] Repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by the audience may result in on the decision of the committee 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.

[00:02:25] If you have copies of any materials, you should give them to one of our public information officers. And under no circumstances is anyone to approach the committee members. And with that, we have our public comment, Ms. Gina Thoden.

[00:02:49] Hear me now. Thanks for allowing me to speak, everyone. I'm here today.

[00:03:04] I'd really prefer not to be here today. But I'm here because of the most recent incident in which three teenage boys are under investigation appallingly for sexual harassment, having dared to express their discomfort at having to undress in the locker room in front of a girl.

[00:03:26] So I stand before you or sit before you today to urge you to immediately abolish the insidious policy 8040 that has plagued the school district for years now. I was active when we had to fight this policy because a student was raped and the rape was covered up.

[00:03:46] And then that student was sent to another school where he raped another student. This needs to end. This is insanity. This policy prioritizes the interests of a tiny fraction of our student population over the vast majority of students. Dismissing real concerns of students whose rights to free speech and privacy are being blatantly violated by being forced to share private spaces with the opposite sex and then silencing them when they dare speak out against it it's a travesty this is insidious it is evil and this policy

[00:04:24] needs to be abolished now thank you thank you the next item on our agenda is item number three approval of the May 15th 2025 draft minutes hopefully my fellow committee members have had an opportunity to review the draft minutes and if there are any suggestions or requests for edits or changes now is the time if there are none I will I will entertain a motion to approve the

[00:04:58] minutes I'm excuse me I move to approve last month's minutes thank you is there a second second Thank You Ms. Mansfield the motion has been properly moved and seconded all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye that motion passes unanimously now we will move on to item number 4.01 our first action item revised policy 8-1-1-5 individuals who may be admitted free. Good afternoon, Mr.

[00:05:31] Dolson. Good afternoon, Chodani. Thank you. I apologize for my voice. You can tell I am recovering from a slight cold. So if you need me to repeat anything or speak louder, just let me know or I'll have my partner in crime here, Ms. Richardson, speak for me. Before you tonight, you have the revisions

for policy 8-1-15 individuals who may be admitted for free. The revisions that are before you were based on feedback from the May meeting the first bullet refers to lines 11 and 12 which is adding the phrase regardless of immigration status

[00:06:07] in lines 11 and 12 and again that was something that was discussed during the May meeting and then the second bullet is revisions to lines 26 through 30 that is based on CX recommendations to reflect the Virginia special education regulations following also what was discussed during the May meeting thank you for that concise summary mr. Dolson committee members is there do you

[00:06:37] have any questions concerns discussion happy for this to go on consent for the next one if you want oh this is action nevermind no I have no amendment is there a motion to forward to the board anyway miss Mansfield I move that the Student

[00:07:14] committee approves policy 8115 individuals who may be admitted free and sends it to the school full school board as an information item thank you Mansfield is there a second motion has been properly moved and seconded is there discussion none all those we will take a vote all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye that motion passes unanimously we will

[00:07:53] forward this to the full board to be an information item there now we will move on to item number 4.02 revisions to policy 8120 compulsory attendance good afternoon I have Darren Madison here with me he's the supervisor of Student Assistance Services and we're both here to answer any questions thank you for being here we were looking at this policy now as an action item it was up for review the five-year cyclical review We have made the grammatical and clerical corrections throughout the policy, which we discussed

[00:08:32] at our last meeting, and then we've cross-referenced the new policy numbers as well. We surprisingly received a lot of feedback on this, so we wanted to walk through that feedback with you all and answer some of the questions that were posed.

[00:08:48] They were in some main areas. The first one was a lack of enforcement and accountability, which was probably the most frequent concern. Many respondents expressed frustration that attendance laws are not enforced. Teacher and staff observe that students regularly miss large numbers of days, 30 plus, 60 plus, with no consequences, and concern that chronic absenteeism is normalized, especially after the pandemic, and that parents face no repercussions.

[00:09:20] I am imagining we received a lot of that feedback from teachers and some of our administrators who we identified but the response I really want to give you is that enforcement has been occurring over the division when it comes to truancy chronic absenteeism is absences that are excused and unexcused and we've made significant strides with our chronic absenteeism over the last few years we were at 19 percent right after the pandemic and now we're holding strong at 14 percent the majority of the students who are chronically absent aren't truant they are missing school days

[00:09:57] because of medical reasons mental health reasons family trips or vacations which we have really tried to shape that conversation with our parents and have seen significant improvements and now the policy says those are unexcused absences our student assistance team has met with the commonwealth's attorney's office as well as the juvenile court services office and we are filing petitions on parents and students i have some data here that i'll share some highlights um regarding i don't know if they're highlights but they're they do show the story um in january we established an

[00:10:35] agreement of 20 in 2024 with the court for the chins filing process which is the child in need of services or supervision and we've re-established interdisciplinary team meetings with their department so in 2022 2023 the number of parents we filed on we had only four petitions for parents and students we had five so that was right after the pandemic this school year we have filed 34 petitions for adults and 50 petitions for students so there's been a drastic shift

[00:11:13] in what the court system is willing to take a look at so there is an accountability piece with the families and that's specific to truancy so i want to make sure there's the difference between the excused and unexcused absences as i said we've went from 19 to 14 with our chronic absenteeism and with our policy changes principals no longer have that discretion when it comes to what's excused and unexcused we've laid that out and it really doesn't say it's up to the principal anymore which the principals actually asked for that feedback our school teams

[00:11:48] have established procedures to address absences and that's in our 81 40 policy so it's not in this policy and that's laid out and we've recently updated that that talks about when a student has five absences you need an attendance plan the student has seven to ten absences you need to have a conference with the family and bring in all of the partners that are involved in the case and then following that if there's additional absences that's when we refer to the attendance officer so the attendance officer is really the last resort our mental health teams and our administrators and our attendance teams are really the ones who are trying to engage with the families figure out what

[00:12:27] those barriers are and address them because court really isn't a solution it's a stamp it's a fee and then we still have to figure out how do we engage these students and families in our school division the second area was that it undermines absenteeism undermines learning and instruction they there was feedback that we see it as a barrier to accessing curriculum especially in subjects like languages and labs where in-person presence is essential teachers are burdened with reteaching and managing makeup work which negatively

[00:13:02] affects instructional time and equity for attending attending students so I think collectively we recognize the impact of chronic absenteeism on academics and have taken significant strides in addressing it but our policy removes the principal as I stated before but in our 8140 policy it says if the principal requires students to complete makeup work the student will be student will be afforded a reasonable amount of time consistent with the length of the absence to make up the missed work the student first person is student and the teacher are responsible for developing a plan we want the onus to be on the

[00:13:41] student and the family upon the return and the teacher needs to provide the assignments that they missed but if a student fails to complete that work there's no additional time that's allotted so there could be a natural consequence for that lack of clarity in the policy language there were several comments about what is regular attendance I consulted with our legal counsel and we thought that a definition might actually make things more complicated uh the term is not even defined by law in the virginia law but there seems to be

[00:14:16] consensus that regular attendance means to the extent of something to the extent of attending school consistently as expected without excessive absences or tardies and then sorry there's a lot of there was a lot of feedback where are you getting that because it's not in board docs and i don't have that which

feedback policy you don't have the feedback it doesn't but that's just one two is there more maybe you're looking at my computer is is late so there's really only nine

[00:14:50] okay and then the second piece was related to defining compulsory attendance which actually if you look at the first paragraph of the policy it defines that additional questions were around how many absences are permissible when our students enroll unenrolled we all know that our policy states that after 15 days you're automatically withdrawn if they're consecutive days whether they're excused or unexcused and we did discuss that process at the school for addressing the number of absences and we in our policy really

[00:15:30] widened that broadened that to be for excused absences too because of the learning loss and the engagement concerns whether students should receive credit through short credit recovery programs where they haven't attended class seems like the person was suggesting that we not offer credit recovery for students who miss school and my response to that is I think this should be given to all students and oftentimes the absence is not the students decision so that seems very punitive and contrary to our goals in

[00:16:06] providing academic support to students the desire to restore prior attendance based incentives and consequences and some of the suggestions were reinstating seat time requirements, which is not in our control, denying course credit based on absences, and then monitoring athlete attendance more closely, which I think you're all aware the new VHSL guidelines, you have to be on time.

[00:16:37] Now it used to be a 15 minute grace period for student athletes, now if they're not on time they're not going to play, so enforcing that and then limiting unexcused vacation travel during school school time we have provided extensive probably over-the-top communication about our school calendars and when we encourage families to take trips ece has been a thought partner in creating that so that families know that these are unexcused absences if you do take time away we encourage you to do it when we have our breaks and i and our new website really shares

[00:17:16] that information as well sorry I'm almost done equity and fairness concerns were pointed out allowing students to miss school for vacations or without valid reasons creates an inequity between students who attend and those who do not I don't disagree with that but I'm not sure how this policy would really address that concern concerning concerns about the exceptions and extra time disproportionately benefiting students who choose to be absent again that's an assumption

[00:17:53] that it's the student who's choosing to be absent which then adds pressure to teachers and classmates my thought is i'm not sure that that's actually a benefit if they're missing the in-person instruction i feel like they're already set back maybe they have more time but they miss the instructional time by being absent the technical corrections and policy language we've already gone through an added correct language there.

[00:18:24] And the feedback we received was from the Loudoun Education Alliance of Families, MSAC, our equity committee, and they said, I believe, a lot of teachers, some administrators. That was a lot to digest, so I'm going to pause.

[00:18:40] Did I miss anything, Darren? So something that has come to my attention regarding this, and you're talking about punitive, the problem with kids with disabilities or something with medical and

migraines and stuff i mean i know that there's ocr guidance that states that um you know what might a school need to do provide modifications such as allowing the student

[00:19:16] to make up work without penalty excusing late arrivals and absences when they miss class due to a medical appointment or when migraine hinders a student's ability to complete work um i don't see that that's so are we in the habit of putting these kinds of things in their 504s or their iep plans and because this says as you know required as exempt by law item four and five i'm just wondering if there is a way that we can make it more clear that section 504 and ieps are

[00:19:54] law they're right i mean they're legal documents and if the kid has that in there i want people to be able to have if they have a medical issue or they have migraine something that is stopping them from coming that i don't want it to be punitive yes and that is laid out in our 8140 policy so and so we don't need to put it here no personal illness injury death and family medical or dental appointments, mental health by VDOE is considered an excuse to absence, court

[00:20:30] appearances, legal obligations, and also there's a few others that are accused, but we have students, this is full day attendance, so we have students who have modified day schedules who are only coming on A days, who come in late because of their disability or because of a mental health issue that we're on, so we have that flexibility within the 8140 policy.

[00:20:54] is there in regulations or something that they need to if they are having these issues and the student might have to have look at eligibility for 504 section 504 or something like that i know that you're having these meetings but sometimes that doesn't even get they don't even think oh i can have that modification that that um accommodation they don't even think of it um because people are saying oh you're absent and so i don't know how to put that in there and make

[00:21:27] it clear to school teams that yes that can be an accommodation yes and I think that also is laid out in our 8140 policy it says who should be part of that MDT so this isn't just the administrator and attendance officer this is school counselor social worker school psychologist the mental health folks who are in there who are helping to figure out the needs whether that's a referral review team whether that's a 504 recommendation whether there's a provider in the community we need to get a release of information on a letter that documents what's going on with them those

[00:22:01] are things is it consistent because I'm hearing that it's not okay and that's has me worried for this um and that I would say would be something we could make more firm in 83 when that is up this is really about the law foster attendance and what are parents roles this lays out what happens when we have absences so then 2028 the regulation is something that we

[00:22:37] could take a look at but I would add that the you know the meaning the flow chart that Miss Evans indicated with the five-day meetings and that's outlined in 22.1 dash 258 so that is actually a law like 8140 supports the 22.1 dash 258 law which those meetings are required by a law that the means that you see I believe And Chair Mansfield was saying those meetings, you're asking if those could happen consistently.

[00:23:05] Those meetings had to happen by law. The conversations are having. Because there are Section 504 teams that wouldn't even think about it. I mean, there just are. That, oh, that's an accommodation. I didn't know that that could be accommodation.

[00:23:21] Or is that an appropriate accommodation? I mean, that conversation needs to happen, whether or not absences, retakes, all of those kinds of things need to happen. Yeah, and Darren has a whole attendance team, and we have some schools that do it really well. And so that's a training opportunity to highlight, I think you heard from Woodgrove, right?

[00:23:39] One of our committees or the school board meeting. But that's where we offer regular trainings for Lead Loudon. You have regular meetings with its officers and he has regular contact with the leads at every single school. So that's a talking point, training opportunity and a time to have accommodations are accounted for in this policy.

[00:24:11] It's fine with me. Thank you. I have a few questions also. I had written down to ask, where do we find the definitions of excused and unexcused? But you've already addressed that. It's in 8140, which I was just looking at, and it looks like this is not going to be due for a cyclical review for a bit.

[00:24:40] So some of the questions I had are probably more appropriate for that, unless we were thinking about maybe combining the two. But I did want to ask, one of the comments and the feedback was saying, right, like, we unenroll students if they miss 15 consecutive days.

[00:25:04] There's an assertion in here that there are students who will miss 14 days, attend once, and then miss another 14 days. Is that something that does happen frequently? And if so, what do we do about that?

[00:25:21] As they're approaching that day, those thresholds, we're doing all of the things that we've described, trying to reach out to the family, engage them, get them to just come in for a meeting, get them to come in for one class period to find out what's going on. Sometimes it's just they're going on vacation, and they're taking a family trip, and they know the rule, but I don't think that's happening frequently, and they will show back up on that 14th day, and then they'll have another trip.

[00:25:50] Those are all unexcused absences, so the other processes will play out if that's the pattern that we're seeing. I don't know if that answered your question. I don't know that there's a lot of people who do that with the 14 days, but our processes are still throughout that time, and once they're inactivated, then we're going to really be trying to enforce compulsory attendance, because now they're not enrolled in school, and the law is that you're enrolled in school.

[00:26:15] So in a situation like that, if that is happening, the student remains enrolled, But then is there, are there other consequences? Like if they miss half the class time, then they don't get credit or they can't get above a certain grade or they, is there anything in place?

[00:26:34] Well, there's also whether or not the school has space. So if you're inactivated or you choose to leave for 15 days, we can't guarantee you're going to have that spot in school when you come back. So there's that potential consequence. We don't have that happen all that much, but some of our over-enrolled schools.

[00:26:54] But in the circumstance that one of the commenters suggested, where the student doesn't miss 15 consecutive days, so they're never unenrolled, they just keep missing a lot of class. And they're going to have some natural consequences probably with their grades, but depending on the grade level, that might look different.

[00:27:15] I would just note that, you know, depending on the grade level, it makes a determination as well. So this is a first grader that's happening, and that's parent accountability. And that's when we see that, you know, where these attendance teams are reaching out and doing investigations and seeing what's happening.

[00:27:32] We're making an outreach to the family. So depending on the situation, depending on the grade level of the student, it could be that we're taking that parent to court. And about that, when you mentioned truancy in Chin's petitions and working with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, how does that work?

[00:27:51] Are we party to actions like that? Or do we just refer to another government entity? Just like the child that needs a supervision terminacy process. So essentially, once that attendance officer receives a referral from the school-based team, then that attendance officer will sit down and have a conference with that family, develop an attendance plan.

[00:28:14] If that student continues to miss school, the absence will continue, then that's the process that we establish with the juvenile court. we will file a petition with the juvenile intake officer.

[00:28:31] And they're going to look at that, essentially, that 22.1, that's 258 code, our 8140 policy, to make sure that you had your five-day meeting, you had your 10-day, you made contact, you did all these things, almost like this checklist under the law, and then the petition could be filed in court, it could be diverted, or the intake office could say we're not going to accept the petition.

[00:28:56] But particularly this school year, they are filing our petitions. Sometimes they will go to what they call a court diversion, which is like an agreement that the intake officer will have the family and say, if you continue to have absences, we will place your case on the court docket.

[00:29:13] I know it's not for this policy because it's for 8140, but I have had some people reach out to me concerned because they tell me They've had students who were counted as unexcused absences to do college visits, which I see in here is listed as discretionary, can be excused at the principal's discretion.

[00:29:46] And that is something that I might like to know more about separately from this. But are there any other questions or concerns about the proposed revisions to this policy? I need to agree with you on the college visit portion of it.

[00:30:07] That is a very critical piece in a student's life. And if they can go to a college, see it, it is really important to them and their family. And I think it shouldn't be discretionary. I personally think it should be allowed. And they can bring back documentation or whatever to show that they were there.

[00:30:27] If we need to really make sure that that's what they did that day, then they can bring something back with them. That's a conversation that I would be interested in having also at some point in the future. Yeah, and just to give you some context, they should be excused absences for the policy, but we do have situations where families want to take them to 15, 20 colleges over two weeks, right?

[00:30:54] So that puts us in a pickle, or three weeks, that puts us in that now you've approached 15 days, you're going to be dropped, so it's finding that right balance. I think that's why it says may, but we can work with our administrators to make sure that... Something that you might think about is when you apply for college, you usually apply to your top five.

[00:31:14] It might be a limit in your top five colleges. Anything more than that? Nope. Yeah, that might be good to put more clarifications on. So we'll, about this one?

[00:31:31] Yes, please be too. How do you address, like, regional championship meets and things like that for the athletes who have to go at, like, 10 o'clock in the morning or 9 o'clock in the morning or whatever? So what if they're on that cusp of absences?

[00:31:50] Can they go? Is it totally excused? Most of the trips for athletic reasons are unexcused, but they're usually isolated because there's no educational component to that. So we've had some situations that have not been easy to navigate with families who were doing cheer competitions or travel soccer.

[00:32:14] We had one who was going to an Olympic person at one person. Yes. But you wouldn't call that educational? Well, sometimes they have a component within whatever the camp is or the event is where they have instructional staff. So in those cases where we know they're accessing education, they're doing what we can get creative and offer them participating remotely as long as we have staff touching base with the parent and the student.

[00:32:41] And there's that accountability piece. But some are just, we're going to a national soccer tournament, and it's over the weekend. There's no educational component to it. they're not doing school work while they're there we can't verify that and that's where it's unexcused but if there's a component or a timeframe that's set aside for their academics we'll work with them to make it excused or partial participating remotely and that's not an absence even sorry that's school sanctioned that's as to 8140 yes this would be an 8140 I do want to I do

[00:33:16] want to have this conversation but we only have 20 more minutes and if there's no additional concerns or questions about 8120 I will make the motion to approve the proposed revisions to policy 8120 and send it to the full board for the board's consideration is there a second thank you miss Bansfield is there any further discussion all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye aye that motion passes unanimously this will be sent to the full board for consideration as an information item and now moving on to agenda item number

[00:33:52] five our information item status update that I am so excited about and so much looking forward to and I'm not being sarcastic I am very excited to hear the status update on policy 8155 school assignment Mr. Dolson Ms. Richardson not sure thank you thank you Miss Notohue yes I'm very excited to share with you the overview some feedback regarding our new policy implementation as well as current data as of today from our implementation the school year and then some suggestions that we have for revising the policy and just for your

[00:34:30] consideration so overall what what you all did at the beginning of the school year and we put into practice and into policy December of the school year we updated our timelines to reflect your requests to moving the special permission process up from a calendar perspective we added elementary schools to our over-enrolled list so we made those schools that were over-enrolled for elementary not possible to apply for special permission secondly we voided

[00:35:08] applications to any parent or student that applied to an over-enrolled school which limited their ability to appeal that application and then I just want to that the overall feedback from principals has been extremely positive having been a former principal myself they are not shy about making their voices heard to me about things they like or things they don't like and every person that I have spoken to has said thank you or this has been great or this has been a really smooth process and then we've had a significant reduction in the number of appeals

[00:35:42] and you will see that as soon as we get to the next slide which is show me the data so on our first slide and I'm not going to go through all of these and read all of them to you because these should look very familiar during our work session thanks to dr. Blake lock who's in the audience his work on his team from the research office helped compile all of this data and he was very kind to add this last column which is our 2025 data so like I said as of today right now for our the

[00:36:19] school year we've had 3795 applications for special permission across the school district what you're looking at before you on this slide is these are the percentages of students without disabilities who have requested special permission so in elementary school we have 87% middle school is 86% and high school is 88% and that's of that 3795 total moving on to the next slide the next slide is students with disabilities and for 2025 you can see in elementary school 13% of the students who applied were a student with a disability in

[00:36:59] elementary school 14% in middle school and 12% in high school and then moving on to the next slide these are our students with disabilities who were approved on special permission and again this is based on the data extract extracted while we were still undergoing some appeals and it could also include requests that are still pending so you have 75% at the middle school I'm sorry 75% at the elementary school middle school for this school

[00:37:35] year 52% and high school is 57% and that total number is 482 and then one of the last elements of data that we have to share with you tonight is the students without disability special permissions approval again the same caveats that enumerated at the bottom via the asterisk supply and you have 82% at elementary 89% at middle school and 82% at high school and that and is

[00:38:09] equivalent to 3313 individual students we did also want to share with you just the special permission reasons and again these reasons are very similar to what we saw last looking at this earlier this school year and you can see the additional reasons and that is articulated at the bottom so it could be that the student sibling is program placed in the requested school that's also in a special education program a fine arts or extracurricular activity

[00:38:46] opportunity and/or the current school year is over enrolled and they're seeking a smaller environment could also imply LCPS boundary change and/or athletic opportunities and you have your reasons that have been extracted from what has been put on the applications for you there and then one of our last pieces of data to share is just the analysis of what when some people apply they will submit something in the other category and you have those again

[00:39:24] articulated for you in the last column pertaining to our 2025 data and one of the things that we did want to point out is the asterisk here represents that the The analysis of the data did show greater prevalence towards some of the concepts, the peer-friend connection, and then either a sibling or other family member connection.

[00:39:53] And then this is where I hope you all will take a moment just to look at the information across the longitudinal information that's provided here for you over the past now four years. So, the data is pretty consistent, the special permission request and approval status.

[00:40:13] this year it's 79% and 15% of those that applied have not been approved and then we have a small percentage that are still pending. One of the things that we did want to point out is that the voided and rescinded requests are also included in that not approved category. So just so you are aware and then

finally the school board appeal decisions. As of right now you all you and your colleagues have only heard 18 appeals compared to school year 24 where you heard 86 appeals.

[00:40:53] There are still some school board appeals being processed, but I can share with you that number is very low and that meeting will be held next week. So moving on to some of the staff suggested revisions for policy 8155. As you look at the policy that is included in your packet, we did go ahead and redline the current 8155 policy with some of our suggestions.

[00:41:24] The first thing you'll notice on page one is using the term base capacity in section A to align with language from our planning office. That is language that they have requested that we use. In section B, we remove the phrase at any time for clarity purposes.

[00:41:48] We also have clarified application requirements and other factors in section D.

[00:42:03] We added that special permission that would be rescinded by the Office of Student Services are not appealable, and that is under policy 2350, Appeal of Administrative Decisions, and that occurs in Section D3, letter E.

[00:42:21] And then we have made language in Section D5 more concise to reflect the new processes. and then one last request from our Planning Office they have requested that we move the staff access to special permission forward well back I guess approximately two weeks in January to account for possible attendance zone changes that might occur and for those rollovers to occur within the student information system to be equivalent with whatever the attendance boundary zones

[00:43:00] would be in December of a school year to reflect what they then for the new school year following in January when that rollover occurs and I will answer any questions and I'm able to thank you for pulling together all of this information we worked very hard on this last year I was excited to find out how

[00:43:35] it's been going since the changes last year I do have a few questions for you what so what would the new going back to the last thing you noted what is the new requested date for staff applications it would now I'm gonna say generally it would be January 15th right now what the policy says is the first day of the first I'm sorry work day I believe of January is when it opens for staff and miss Tate from the planning office just requested to me verbally would we be

[00:44:14] able to move it back a couple of weeks in order to account for those technical issues it would give them a little bit of lag time to ensure once we do return from winter break that any of the updated attendance zones a were updated via the planning office and then see they would be updated via where school might attend the next school year so in our student information system we can look forward to the next school year and we can see based on the address of the students home where that zone school of attendance will be if that makes sense

[00:44:49] and then likewise if a student is approved for special permission that also is it's indicated in our student information system so a person can look to see that oh this student might be zoned for Rolling Ridge Elementary School but they're actually attending Sterling Elementary School and it will say special permission via policy 8155 so I think the planning office is indicating that it would might be cumbersome for them to have special permission open for staff the first day we return and then not have worked some

[00:45:26] these kinks out with attendance zones possibly changing and then a rollover occurring at the same time if that makes sense thank you sure and going back to the special permission appeals timeline section 5 beginning on 299 of the red line y'all have taken out a lot of language there can you if you said this already and I missed it I apologize but can you comment on it's because you all all have allowed us not to allow families to apply to an over-enrolled school and so it really takes

[00:46:02] out the process for because all of those applications would immediately go to you as a board and so we've taken that that provision out and so we avoid the application we still keep it we have a running list of all of those applications so if room space does come available we can certainly go back to those families and probably not going to happen yes but probably not going to happen in some of our schools that are so overcrowded because it's just there's just not space but all of the appeals that can be

[00:46:38] appealed first come to me and then I deny them they would then go to to the board so the change the removal of this language is because these nuances of this procedure are no longer necessary no longer necessary and no longer doesn't apply to the current policy so that we and I felt the exact same way I asked my team we are taking a lot of that section out again I have a lot of historical knowledge on my team with this policy and they

[00:47:14] assured me that it's because we have taken out a large part of the of the work that goes in with this we are still able to field parent questions and the why behind that but you know I would forecast seeing we did see a reduction about 200 applications this year I would foresee a forecast of that continuing to be reduced as we move forward if we maintain the steps that we are using right now which I hope we

[00:47:48] will maintain thank you very much I will I will open it up for questions from my fellow committee members in momentarily but before I do that I wanted to say so this is on for information but I can already tell you I'm going to ask for this to be on for information again since we're about to go into our summer recess our next meeting won't be until late August and I don't know what my fellow committee members are thinking but as we've discussed before I'm still interested in feeling out the possibility of establishing some categories of bases for grounds for requesting special permission appeal and maybe some other

[00:48:28] procedural processes for their applications and appeals and for those reasons I think this will benefit from additional discussion so we don't we don't have to cram everything in right now but that being said Ms. Mansfield I have two things one is I think if we're going to put this back on information we need to look at the new vhs rules for ninth graders because they have now

[00:49:02] you are if i can get the language here beginning in fall 2026 vhs will require students to have been enrolled in the feeder middle school for the high school they wish to participate in for athletics students transferring to a high school for ninth grade without qualifying address change will it be ineligible for VHSL activities for 365 calendar days and so I think that we need to redo that in our policy the other thing is I still I know we've worked on this really hard and everything else and I appreciate it I'm

[00:49:41] still it's the special education that for me and that whole line 141 which is is, you know, that it must exist at the requested school for the student to attend on special permission without causing or exacerbating overcrowding or school reassignment without requiring additional staff or incurring additional costs to the school system.

[00:50:14] And we're using that to have a separate category for special education students still. And I know we're doing better. It just, this didn't do what I thought it was going to do by having the increased timeline because my original thought, and I know Mrs. Richardson has explained this ad nauseum to me, and I still don't understand, I still don't understand if we know that these kids are going

[00:50:46] to be coming in early enough, you can have the staffing for it. You're going to be, it's early enough for the principals to put together like cross-cat staffing and TAs and things like that. And so, and I know, and it's just not making sense to me, Mrs. Richardson.

[00:51:07] I appreciate that, Ms. Mansfield. I anticipated that, which is why I gave you all as committee members printed copies of where our specialized programs are currently for this year by region and cluster.

[00:51:25] And then you'll see at the bottom of each school that CC teacher, that's CrossCat Teaching Allocations. You also have a copy of where specialized programs and cross-cat staffing has been allocated across our 100 sites for next school year.

[00:51:46] So as school board members, of course, during the budget process, you heard that we required funding for staffing for 40 additional special education programs. So you can see that with each year, especially since our eligibility trend has been continuously moving up for the last three years, that we are getting to a point as a school division where we have almost replicated the continuum of educational services for students with disabilities across all of our sites, with the exception of programs for students with multiple disabilities.

[00:52:25] We just don't have the volume of students in that special needs category that would require us to replicate. So with that being said, the spirit of the Virginia SPED regulations is truly for students to be educated in their home school.

[00:52:41] So that the burden is not placed on the student or on the family with regards to transportation, with regards to not being with your community peers. So when we're looking at the 13% out of the 3795, right, the 482 students with disabilities whose families said we would like to apply for special permission, which that is making a choice, okay, and then you saw the list of reasons for which they could make these choices.

[00:53:14] That is a very different and separate process from us looking at who requires a specialized program, such as our early childhood special education classes, self-contained and intensive programs for students with autism, with intellectual disabilities, and with emotional disabilities.

[00:53:37] We have a cross-cat staffing standard of 1 to 10, which is significantly richer than what the state staffing standard is. Depending on whether you have level 1 and level 2 students, that's based on percentage of specially designed instructional time, you can have upwards of 1 to 24.

[00:53:59] So imagine the impact on specially designed instruction when you have one special education teacher case managing up to 24 students with disabilities. Our reality in LCPS is one special education teacher and cross-categorical services to 10 students, which you see the impact when you look at our performance data with last year's data with over 80% of our students with disabilities who participated in SOLs meeting the proficiency standard.

[00:54:32] Our teachers are able to provide that individualized instruction because they're working with fewer students. So if you wanted to see more than 75%, say that elementary number, let's go back to that slide for reference.

[00:54:55] So let's take elementary. So out of the 482, 75% of the elementary students with disabilities that requested special permission were approved. As a school board, you would need to contemplate what flexibility and staffing would you need to allocate as a division.

[00:55:17] So in FY26, going into FY26 as a board, you were tremendously thoughtful about flexible staffing and the ever-changing and growing needs of our division. And you did approve for special education to have a separate allocation of flexible staffing.

[00:55:40] And boy, has that been impactful. Going into next year, as you can see, so if you do the side-by-side, and it's a little difficult for you to do with the spreadsheets now you will see not only have we increased specialized programs but we've also been able to meet the growing needs of eligibility students being found eligible across the division by being able to add teaching staff and ta staff so if we keep the one

[00:56:13] to ten ratio which what is what makes this division particularly for students with disabilities the place to be, okay? You're going to have to consider giving us more staff and somehow earmarking it for special permission requests for students with disabilities. Currently, the section of the policy that starts at 138 applies to general ed and special ed and EO, gifted staffing, all of the

[00:56:48] staffing, right? So if you want a carve out, you're going to have to, we're going to have, we're going to have to work on it collaboratively so that we're mindful of the fiscal impact because as a division we are already more than robustly staffed across this division barring the conversation about a teacher shortage right we're just going to exclude that right because we have the capacity as a division you have given us the positions to serve our students and our data indicates that

[00:57:23] we're doing so well I get that I just it's hard for me with 87 for elementary school for kids without disabilities 75 and then we go 86 in middle school for kids without disabilities and only 52 percent for middle school for the students with disabilities and then again 88 in high school percent and then for high school for kids with disabilities only 57 it's hard and so maybe we should just say well if they don't have capacity for special education either then you can't go for

[00:57:56] Everybody. So I'm going to interject here and propose that we maybe table this conversation to continue later because it is 535 and our meeting's blocked for an hour. Ms. LaBelle, do you have any urgent questions about 8155?

[00:58:19] Yes, I do. I see on these charts that you've given us that some of the numbers are in parentheses after the program. Is that the number of, let's say, autism classes or, okay, so nothing on this tells us anything about the percentage of enrollment or how many students over or under we are in each of these programs.

[00:58:42] No. I can tell you that the majority, we keep the student rostering completely separate from that overview because these are sheets we wanted to be able to share with you. This is information that we also share with building principals, okay? So not everybody needs to know everyone's students' names.

[00:58:59] But across our rosters, we have very few slots remaining in our specialized programs. We are growing very quickly. So the parenthetical number on your charts sometimes indicates more than one self-contained autism program at a school site.

[00:59:18] Or any other program. Any other program, yes. There's several, and that was the first one I saw there up there. Okay, thank you. Chair Dottie, can I just make one comment to what Ms. Mansfield said? I would encourage all of you to take the data that Ms. Richardson provided you with the staffing and look at a cluster.

[00:59:38] so look at a cluster of elementaries and the special education cross-categorical staffing for that for those elementary schools and what feeds into a middle school and what feeds into a high school and then look at this data you may have to do that separately for and dumb it down for me no that's fine but that i we we had a conversation and she walked me through because i was sort of going down the same line of thinking that you and and it was it was jaw-dropping so i would be glad to sit down with any of you and walk through that process because it's actually a very eye-opening process

[01:00:16] because when you think about the sheer percentages you're seeing up here then when you look at the numbers and how middle schools are larger than most of our elementary we do have a few elementary schools that rival some of our middle schools but then we have high schools that are like small cities. So I think it's and then we can certainly have a conversation about the questions you might you might ponder between now and when we meet again.

[01:00:39] Thank you, Mr. Dolson. We're going to have this on for information again at our next meeting. I do invite my fellow committee members to consider do we want to have yet another work session about 8155 prior to our next meeting, which will be in late August.

[01:01:01] And if so, let Ms. Richardson know and discuss. Indirectly, not meeting Cora. But with that, we will move on to item number six, new business. Is there any new business? Yes. Ms. LaBelle.

[01:01:18] I would like to state that we need to start thinking about 80-40. The last time that we spoke about it was back, I believe, in February when we had the fire alarm go off, and we never finished talking about it. It is coming up to the Supreme Court.

[01:01:33] In the next two weeks, we need to start thinking about what we can do to make this more equitable to all the students. Currently, the majority of our students are upset. They are not getting the same kind of consideration for privacy, respect, dignity that other students, a small portion of our population, are getting.

[01:01:59] We need to find a way to make this equitable for everyone. And I'm going to request that if we do any work sessions, that this be one of them coming up over the summer and that we meet on it immediately in August because the students can wait no longer. No applause. Thank you. Thank you for your thoughts, Ms. Labelle. I have mixed feelings about returning to 8040. I wanted from the beginning of our tenure on this board to make

[01:02:38] changes to 8040. I chose to put it on as an information item last spring because that is the conversation I wanted to have. Is 8040 protecting our students? Is it the best way to protect our students? Is there a better way to protect our students? That is the conversation I wanted to have last spring. This committee chose to pursue a different route at the time, and we

[01:03:10] went through that process of considering focus groups, and by the time we learned that procurement had recommended not to award the contract, we are now in a situation where LCPS has been sued over 8040 is being investigated by regulatory authorities over 8040. And because of that, even though I still question, is 8040 in its current incarnation the best way through policy

[01:03:49] for us to protect the dignity, safety, and equality of all of our students? I do still have that question in my mind. But we have discussed, I've discussed this with division Council, and I have concerns about making changes to 8040 right now while we are in the middle of these legal proceedings. So I have said already, and I will say again, I am not bringing 8040 back

[01:04:22] to this committee while LCPS is in the middle of these legal proceedings. And regarding what Ms. LaBelle said about the Supreme Court addressing 8040, that's not entirely accurate. The Supreme Court is not looking at 80-40. The Supreme Court is looking at other issues, other policies, laws that impact transgender individuals in the trans community. Again, I said I didn't think that we

[01:05:01] should discuss it right now in committee. I would like to be thinking forward so that we can discuss it, come up, watch what's going on, listen to what's coming up, and be ready because it is coming. there will be something that we will need to do so please be mindful listen to what people say watch what's going on in the courts because that's going to make a big difference thank you thank you Ms. Mansfield with that we will move on to item 7 which is adjourned thank you everyone for

[01:05:38] joining us the next meeting of the student services committee will be August 21st 2025 get home safely



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