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Loudoun County School Board, School Board Retreat, Monday, June 9, 2025

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[00:00:05] Good morning. I call to order this June 9, 2025 Loudoun County Public Schools School Board Retreat. At this time, we'll read 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 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.

[00:00:31] 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 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.

[00:00:50] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Who's here? One, two, three, four, five. And we will all pass it to Vice Chair Donohue. 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 today'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.

[00:01:18] 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. subjects include thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may be affected of which my spouse my minor children my sister-in-law and 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 all right we'll

[00:01:54] go back to 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 today's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and 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.

[00:02:20] 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.

[00:02:38] Thank you. Thank you. Mrs. Griffiths. 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.

[00:03:03] 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 while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected, of which I am included.

[00:03:19] 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, Ms. Griffiths.

[00:03:35] Ms. LaBelle. - 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 for any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees.

[00:04:00] Specifically, as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. In addition, as a former LCPS employee, I, as well as my spouse, receive Medicaid Advantage Insurance benefits through LCPS.

[00:04:18] These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees, well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected, of which my spouse and I are included. I can and will participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

[00:04:35] 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 today'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.

[00:04:59] 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 interests may also be affected, of which I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest.

[00:05:16] This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. And when Mr. Estruffy gets here, I'm probably going to need to be reminded to have him read his disclosures. So welcome, everyone, to our retreat.

[00:05:35] We have a lot going on today, and I'm excited about the board priorities and budget priorities. and talking about our special programs and everything like that. So I think we'll just go ahead and I will give it to Dr. Spence for getting us started.

[00:05:55] Dr. Spence. Thank you. If you'll give us just a second to get the PowerPoint up and running for the day.

[00:06:13] And just briefly, the agenda for the day, as you mentioned, includes a conversation about budget, some time for the board to discuss various topics on its mind, as well as visioning and planning for special programs, and then we'll conclude the day with a conversation about attendance zone and boundary adjustments.

[00:06:38] But I am pleased this morning to kick off the conversation with a post-entry plan project summary where we'll close out the post-entry plan, and then we'll have the opportunity to hear from Dr. Allison Missingel about the strategic plan, the current strategic plan, and then a little bit of thinking about what's coming next because we are going to be needing to engage in a strategic planning process in the near future.

[00:07:05] So we'll jump in then. So let me begin by discussing the post-entry plan as we close that out. When I joined LCPS, I did spend time, as you all know, learning about our community. We did listening sessions, meetings. We did surveys and data analysis and, of course, had formal and informal conversations with constituents across LCPS.

[00:07:24] As a result of that work, we launched an entry plan to focus our attention on analyzing needs and addressing the wishes of our school division and community. In the entry plan phase, we asked our community the following questions. What are your hopes and dreams? What are we doing well? And what areas of improvement exist?

[00:07:42] So it's worth noting first many things we should be proud of and should be celebrating. Our community shared that we do these things exceptionally well. For example, LCPS is committed to providing diverse, rigorous, and inclusive educational experiences, preparing students for future success.

[00:07:58] Our professional development is perceived as robust, well-structured, and highly beneficial to our educators. The integration of technology as well as access to devices and support systems and innovative programs contribute significantly to a modern, effective educational environment.

[00:08:13] LCPS has a strong positive response to the division's efforts in community engagement and communication. Our school and central office leaders are committed to the continuous school

improvement process. And then our stakeholder input that was collected reflects a high level of satisfaction with our efforts to promote safety and well-being, and the LCPS community and staff are overall satisfied with the divisions, facilities, and resources.

[00:08:41] It was noted that LCPS emphasizes hiring high-quality teachers and administrative staff committed to student success, and that staff strive for strong and positive relationships with their students and school and community. So the analysis of data in the community listening session feedback on what LCPS can improve upon provided us with next level opportunities which were captured in the post entry plan so this morning i'm going to be sharing an update on those next level opportunities and steps we've taken to close out those recommendations so the post entry plan outlines 15 recommendations separated into 22 actions which reflect the dedicated efforts of our team to bring the

[00:09:21] community's recommendations to life i will provide a brief update on each of these actions which are presented here based on the key owners of these actions identified by departments. So one of the key recommendations in the post-entry plan is that the board might consider creating a performance monitoring committee to create clearer communication and expectations between the administration and the board about what data is monitored and what actions should be taken as a result of that learning.

[00:09:50] The committee held its first meeting in the fall of '24 and has analyzed strategic plan data and heard from school leaders and their teams at each meeting. The Performance Monitoring Committee convened seven times this year. The initial meeting focused on establishing data priorities, key focus areas, and strategies for presenting strategic plan goals.

[00:10:10] Throughout the year, each meeting featured data related to the Strategic Plan Goal 1 empowered students. Discussions on data for Goals 2, 3, and 4 were distributed across subsequent meetings. Each session also included a school-based presentation centered on the monthly Goal 1 topic, which allowed the committee to gain valuable insights from practitioners regarding the implementation of crucial division initiatives and priorities. During my initial listening tours, I also consistently heard feedback on the assessment and grading policy. So we spent this past year gathering data through focus groups to better understand the challenges facing our teachers, students, and staff, and suggesting revisions based on the extensive feedback received.

[00:10:49] Board approved the revised assessment and grading policy on April the 8th. Once approved, we convened a work group made up of a cross-section of LCPS staff, including principals, assistant principals, teachers, coaches, and facilitators and others to help us translate the policy into regulation and then finally into a handbook. Staff is currently working on providing support materials such as training materials and grading exemplars to schools so that the new policy can be implemented in the new school year. This year we've also elevated belonging as a district-wide priority by bringing principals together at an all-county principal meeting to explore research on student belonging as a condition for learning and reflect on how we already foster students' belonging

[00:11:28] in our schools. We shared research on how to foster and improve belonging and our increasing family engagement practices so that families also have this sense of belonging in our schools. This is a key focus area of the instructional framework and will be a continued focus for the division next year as a result. We plan to continue monitoring through surveys and we'll share that progress publicly through the performance monitoring committee. So I'm excited to share with you key initiatives and achievements that we've accomplished in our recent efforts to improve our school division's budget management. First

and foremost, as you all know, we engaged with the school board earlier and more often to obtain your priorities, beginning with a retreat last

[00:12:08] June, which we will do again today. This proactive approach allowed us to better understand the needs and expectations of our board, ensuring that our plans align with our LCPS vision. Next, we identified \$3.6 million in year-over-year budget reductions based on a detailed review of historical spending. This careful analysis of past expenditures allowed us to pinpoint areas where we could make cost-saving adjustments without compromising the quality of education and services provided. In addition, we combined contingency and flexible staffing into one maximizing flexible usage. This strategic move has enabled us to allocate resources more

[00:12:46] efficiently, ensuring that we can respond to unforeseen circumstances and staffing needs with greater agility. And furthermore, we proposed a balanced budget that invested in each school board members top priorities and by prioritizing the key areas identified we've ensured that our budget supports the most critical initiatives and projects that will move LCPS forward and then finally of course for the second year in a row we have received full funding for that budget as a result of that thorough conversation both with the board and our board of supervisors the board has already received an update on the recommendations of the blue ribbon panel we will note that seven

[00:13:24] of the ten recommendations have been successfully implemented and three of those are in progress Highlights include added security personnel to our elementary schools, increased security personnel coverage for after-school events, and additional layers of security through investments in technology.

[00:13:41] Regarding the need for greater family engagement, the Department of Communications and Community Engagement now includes an Office of Community and Family Engagement. Some key accomplishments of the office includes rolling out a new family and community engagement webpage and resource hub, elevating community partnership participation and growth, improving parent outreach to support student achievement, uplifting the role of family liaisons, and streamlining their training and resource access, as well as launching the Parent Academy.

[00:14:10] To reinforce our values of creating a culture of trust, openness, and accountability, we've increased accessibility of information by implementing a new division website, offering multilingual access, improving access to accurate information, and building trust in the LCPS voice for families and staff.

[00:14:27] We have adopted an enterprise-wide alerts messaging system that delivers messages to families and the language that they indicated they speak. And we've improved school websites, news feeds, and translation features. And then finally, we've increased community access to information through in-person events like student success talks and through strategic communications such as the kindergarten registration campaign and many more. LCPS also remains focused on purposeful digital innovation. Technology support ensures students and staff can use digital tools effectively. Parents appreciate the increased community and transparency fostered by these technology tools and LCPS is continually looking

[00:15:07] for ways to improve tech integration, ensuring we stay current with advancements and best practices. For example, I'd like to take this opportunity to celebrate our 94 schools that have been certified in Common Sense Media Digital Citizenship.

[00:15:23] And as shared with you previously, we've established an artificial intelligence work group comprised of staff from across the division. The purpose of the work group is to provide common learning experiences around AI and generate AI guiding principles. The use of generative AI is now included as part of policy 8655, and two regulations have also been developed as well as a usage guide.

[00:15:47] Building community understanding and opportunities for learning and listening are embedded in our daily actions as a school division, and our shared understanding and trust are foundational to a welcoming, inclusive, and affirming environment for our students, our staff, and our families. Student learning and outcomes aligned with excellence are dependent on ongoing efforts to sustaining a strong and informed community.

[00:16:07] Administrative thought partner meetings with community organizations and faith-based groups along with regional school-based equity lead meetings have enhanced two-way communication and allowed for discussion on important school and community concerns. Professional learning for administrators and equity walks in schools communicate the needs of school-based staff as we seek a welcoming and inclusive environment for our students.

[00:16:28] As stated in the post-entry plan, we should continue to evaluate and improve our hiring practices to ensure we're attracting candidates that reflect the students we serve and to ensure critical positions at campuses do not go unfilled. I'm pleased to share several key initiatives that we've implemented to strengthen our hiring practices, to enhance employee engagement, and to expand access to licensure pathways.

[00:16:51] First, we delivered targeted professional development for our hiring managers focused on the candidate's journey. This training reinforced best practices and supported the creation of customized immersion playbooks for each work location, ensuring a consistent and welcoming onboarding experience.

[00:17:09] To broaden our reach, we extended recruitment efforts through targeted advertising campaigns in collaboration with our communications team, which helped us connect with more diverse and qualified candidate pools. We also launched our first stay survey to better understand what drives our attention.

[00:17:24] Insights from the survey directly informed updates to our employee value propositions and recruiting materials, making them more aligned with what our staff values most. In parallel, we expanded alternate pathways to licensure and tapped into new candidate pools, creating more opportunities for aspiring educators.

[00:17:43] These efforts are making a measurable impact. For example, the proportion of licensed staff of color has increased by 8.5% just in the last school year, and our fill rates for all positions remain over 98%. Additionally, we focused on staff onboarding and retention by strengthening the pre-boarding communications plan by increasing and improving candidate communications, increasing frequency of communications, developing a candidate care program, creating resources for best practices for onboarding, creating candidate touch points,

[00:18:19] and what's next steps after the new hire session. We've also been identifying and reviewing metrics to track the success of our pre-boarding and onboarding program, enabling better improvements in continuous optimization, as well as implementing new hire surveys. We are very grateful we've been

able to implement sign-on and retention bonus strategies as part of these efforts, and as a of our retention efforts we're also exploring how we might enhance social and interspace groups to create a greater sense of community amongst our employees. Recommendations for supporting our

[00:18:54] exemplary staff included recognizing the need for placement of our most challenging students. Our alternative education program opened to support this in the fall of 2024. As I shared in the post-entry plan we also have to pay closer attention to the issue of student behavior so we've expanded our resources and professional development offerings for classroom teachers. This ensures educators have access to the latest tools, strategies, and collaborative learning opportunities to support their growth and effectiveness in the classroom. We've introduced a new elementary model of behavioral support which includes the addition of dedicated behavior resource teachers. These professionals are embedded in our schools to provide

[00:19:33] targeted interventions and coaching helping to create more positive and productive learning environments. Give me just a second. So we're always looking for ways to support our educators to achieve a balance between teaching and supporting our students and having the time needed to plan for instruction and accomplish other tasks. To do this, we brought together a group of educators from across LCPS to help us find some solutions to the challenge of

[00:20:12] teacher planning time. The task force is currently paused due to collective bargaining, although information gathered is being shared with principals as they think about their building plans for the new school year. I'm excited to share some highlights from our college and career readiness efforts this year, starting with our campus program. We received over 500 applications for the 2025-06 school year, which is a powerful indicator of student interest and trust in the program. This year alone, campus students participated in 15 college field trips across Virginia, giving them firsthand exposure to post-secondary opportunities. Next, our course

[00:20:50] planner tool in School Links has been a game changer. It supported 98.4% of our 5th through 11th grade students, which is 46,000 students, and successfully selecting their courses for the upcoming school year. And we're seeing the results of our collective efforts. The class of 2025 has already reported over \$30 million in scholarships awarded to date. And then finally, our dedicated counselors have processed an impressive 41,806 mid-year college applications serving approximately 7,000 seniors. So these numbers reflect not just participation but real momentum towards student

[00:21:25] success. I'd also like to share several strategic initiatives that reflect our commitment to individualized and differentiated learning across LCPS. Our English learner and special education teams have joined forces to develop a division-wide coaching model. This collaboration is designed to elevate instructional practices and better support the unique needs of our EL and SPED eligible students. In parallel, our MTSS and teaching and learning departments have strengthened their alignment, enhancing the resources and structures that support intervention strategies and ensuring students receive timely and effective support. Looking ahead, we're proud to announce the launch

[00:22:04] of the LCPS Recovery School in August of 2025. This new initiative will provide targeted academic and social-emotional support to students who need a fresh start and a path forward. And then finally, planning and budgeting are actively underway for the LCPS Transition Center, which will serve our students with disabilities, helping them build the skills and confidence needed for life beyond our schools.

[00:22:26] I'd like to provide just a brief overview of our collaborative efforts to strengthen special education staffing and hiring across LCPS. We've seen meaningful collaboration across student services. Together, these teams have developed a comprehensive set of factors to guide staffing decisions, ensuring our schools are equipped to meet the diverse needs of our students.

[00:22:46] The Office of Special Education has been partnering closely with Budget and Financial Services to align staffing allocations with school needs. And this collaboration has improved the clarity and timeliness of staffing members sent to schools, helping our leaders plan more effectively.

[00:23:02] While we know there's more work to do there, our OSE and Human Resources teams are working in tandem to manage those expectations and to manage contracted services. This ensures we maintain high-quality support for students while also monitoring service delivery and cost-effectiveness.

[00:23:20] We're excited to expand our Grow Your Own initiatives as well. These programs are creating new pathways for aspiring special educators, especially those already working in our schools, to gain the training and support they need to become certified professionals, and we look to grow on this in coming years.

[00:23:37] This not only builds our capacity, but also strengthens our commitment to our students and to our community. We are appreciative of all the efforts the Department of Student Support Services has and continues to provide for many of the post-entry plan projects and beyond, specifically for their support for the Alternative Education Program, the Recovery School, and the Transition Center.

[00:24:05] LCPS is an excellent school division. LCPS has dedicated staff, and I cannot reiterate this point enough. A sentiment I heard across LCPS during my listening tour and ever since is the need to support that staff with a consistent vision around instruction.

[00:24:21] To that end, we've developed the instructional framework with many of our educators to highlight key instructional practices we believe every student should experience and we believe will support and enhance student achievement. We have defined teacher and student actions and collaborative efforts are underway to develop resources and professional learning for our teachers, our administrators, and instructional staff.

[00:24:44] This past year has been focused on developing the framework and the new school year will be about building our common understanding as we focus on the four key areas of belonging, clarity, literacy, and responsiveness. Another sentiment shared across LCPS is the need to continue to explore alternative pathways for students.

[00:25:04] HAMSCI was successfully launched. We're now preparing to launch the Access Academy, a laboratory school in collaboration with George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College, which will be housed at Potomac Falls High School. Additionally, we're expanding IB and are in the planning year for the Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies.

[00:25:25] I'll briefly walk us through our work on enhancing access and choice in professional learning. First, we've been focused on clarity, defining key terms, for example, distinguishing professional learning from training and identifying indicators of high quality learning, such as relevance and collaboration and alignment with strategic goals.

[00:25:44] We've also focused on the structure of professional development, building a consistent framework to organize learning across departments and ensure coherence while allowing flexibility. And then finally, we focused on delivery, equipping teams with tools like the high-quality professional learning toolkit with guidance on intentional design and presentation skills to ensure that learning is engaging and effective.

[00:26:08] Together, these efforts have aimed to make professional learning more accessible, intentional, and impactful. As we close out this entry plan, obviously we haven't been able to talk about all of the amazing work that has been done, but hopefully this gives you a high-level overview of the deep engagement of our departments and seeing that the recommendations of the entry plan are implemented.

[00:26:33] With that, I'd like to thank the school board and our community for sharing the many ways we can continue to work together to support our families and our students in LCPS. While we will always have opportunities to improve. I'm proud of the steps we've taken to address these recommendations and I sincerely appreciate all of those engaged in this work. As we close this stage of the work we will turn again to our strategic plan for guidance on moving forward and to discuss that in more detail I'll now turn it over to Dr. Ellis. Thank you Dr. Spence. Good morning Chair Mansfield, members of the

[00:27:09] board. As Dr. Spence mentioned at the beginning of his remarks the performance monitoring committee was formed this year and was an important structure for monitoring and discussing metrics and data associated with the post-entry plan and the strategic plan. We look forward to continuing this structure as we continue our focus on the goals in the strategic plan and look forward to the next iteration. It is truly hard to believe that we're already starting the planning process for the next strategic plan, but that time has arrived and we want to be prepared. So at this time i will turn it over to dr anna single supervisor of strategic planning and continuous

[00:27:48] improvement she will walk you through the draft timeline for our strategic plan 2032 which outlines the key phases and milestones from fall of 2025 through spring of 2027 thank you dr ellis so we begin in the fall of 2025 by defining our planning process this includes determining the questions for surveys and focus groups and elevating or evaluating our current mission vision, and values. During this phase, we'll also identify members of the strategic plan team. Moving into winter of 2026, we'll engage the broader community through surveys

[00:28:26] and advisory committee meetings to gather further input. In the spring of 2026, the strategic planning team will hold internal meetings and collaborate with the vision-level departments, advisory committees, and cabinet members to collect further insights. By the summer of 2026, the committee will analyze all collected data and begin identifying some initial themes.

[00:28:48] In the fall of 2026, we'll transition into drafting the strategic plan by developing goals, strategies, and metrics that align with our findings. During the winter of 2027, we'll seek feedback on the draft from both the community and the school board, and the strategic planning team will revise the plan based on feedback. And finally, in the spring of 2027, we aim to secure school board approval and officially launch the strategic plan 2032. This timeline ensures a thorough, inclusive, and data-informed approach to shaping our future direction. And this slide

[00:29:25] is a more detailed roadmap of the strategic planning process. Here I would like to highlight that the errors represent touch points we plan to have with the full board. So this concludes an overview of

the strategic plan 2032 process, and we are now happy to answer any questions that you may have. Do you guys have any questions about the strategic plan draft roadmap? I mean,

[00:30:03] I can tell you, I'm wondering focus groups, how you're going to identify them and what different populations you're going to look at as far as like special education and to include everyone.

[00:30:19] Thank you for that question. The goal is to work with our school board advisory committees to identify members as well as our family and community engagement office. And there are some opportunities to work with principals. We hope to include students on that committee as well, part of focus groups as well as the strategic planning team.

[00:30:39] So we do hope to have an inclusive and representative strategic planning team from all across LCPS members. - So I saw on Dr. Spence's previous slides that there's going to be a SEL focus group for students. Would that be incorporated into this as well?

[00:30:59] - So those SEL focus groups are middle school focus groups and they have been operating during this school year to try to determine better understand the needs of our students and see how we can make the middle school advisory a more effective process for them.

[00:31:17] So not necessarily related to the next strategic plan. Although information we pull out of there may provide some insight as we think about our goals. - What our goals are gonna be as far as like what they-- absolutely just going on in their schools yes they just weren't specific to that purpose it was more about informing practice in the middle schools when is that coming out are we going to have access to that those have been ongoing throughout this year i know but when you've put together a final work product of some sort we can certainly bring that back for conversation with the board

[00:31:51] thanks anybody else it's going to be a long process to put together another strategic plan how long did it take the last time last time we partnered with a third party to support the work We, at the time, did not have a supervisor of strategic planning and continuous improvement.

[00:32:16] And it took several months. And then I would have to go back and check, but it was several months. Any other questions?

[00:32:32] Yes. Mrs. Griffiths. Is this just about, you're asking if we have questions about the strategic plan or the presentation as a whole? It's just for this particular draft roadmap right here and strategic plan. I guess that's it.

[00:32:54] The staff is happy to answer questions about what dr. Spence shared as well. Okay about the post-entry plan madam chair Yes, sorry dr. Deans. Yes, I just want to say that I think that we are fortunate to have an insider to work on the strategic plan several school divisions actually put out for

[00:33:27] I'm requesting an IRS, what is it, yes, for an outside agency, an outside consultant to do that strategic plan. So I think we're fortunate to have someone from the inside who can take what we've already done and move it forward and expand it in addition to new pieces.

[00:33:51] But I've seen in recent weeks at least three school systems, three school divisions, who are looking for consultants to write their strategic plan. So I think we're fortunate in having an insider.

[00:34:08] Thank you. Thank you. I think it's good to have a third party at the beginning and see what you learn from that, and then you continue the process if you build that capacity, I guess is what it's called.

[00:34:25] Mrs. Griffiths, did you have any other thoughts about the post-entry plan for staff? I did. Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Spence, first off, I want to thank you so much for keeping it to 15 slides so we can all ask questions and get our questions in.

[00:34:43] I did have a question on the DEI section. I was just curious to know what we're doing about reports of anti-Semitism. We've had anti-Semitism in some schools, I believe Potomac Falls most recently.

[00:35:01] But also, you did that announcement on anti-Semitism. I think that was caused by a post we did for Jewish American Heritage Month that actually came out late. It came out the end of the month. So I was just puzzled why it did come out at the end of the month.

[00:35:20] And what are we doing to fight these sort of things except a press release? Thank you. Absolutely. Thank you for the question, Ms. Griffiths. So a couple of things. The posts on Jewish American Heritage Month are similar to posts we do for any of those months where the board does a proclamation celebrating a month that's dedicated to either cultural heritage or some other event or issue.

[00:35:46] And that was not the only post, the one that you're referring to at the end of the month, that was actually posted throughout the month. So there was one that went out right after the proclamation was made, and then throughout the month of May there were a few other posts. To the point, there were on our social media channel and then we saw coming on to the employee Facebook page, which of course we don't control or moderate a number of anti-Semitic remarks related to that post, which is why we sent out that press release to address that, to make sure that folks understood that we find that deeply troubling, we don't tolerate that sort of behavior internally.

[00:36:24] So to the question about what do we do, just as we do with any other incident that's outlined as unacceptable in our student code of conduct, we, our administrators, if that's brought to their attention, will investigate that.

[00:36:40] They'll take appropriate disciplinary action. All of that information is recorded into our student discipline reporting system. And obviously we then continue to communicate through our advisories, through training for staff, the expectation that we won't tolerate or accept hate speech in our schools and that we need to make sure that we are conducting ourselves with the highest standards of conduct.

[00:37:07] So I'm not sure if that answers your specific question, but short version, we hear about it and know about it. We address it. We deal with it through disciplinary action with the students. if need be, we communicate that to our community.

[00:37:22] For example, the board season digests, anytime there's something that impacts a broader group of students and we feel a community message is needed, we'll send a community message in the digest, and then certainly, as I said, handle it through our disciplinary procedures.

[00:37:38] And then we do provide, of course, advisory lessons and training for staff, as I mentioned, as well. Thank you, Dr. Spence. So I was asking for, I've been asking for data on the different incidents that happen at our schools, so I'm still looking for that. I haven't seen in the Digest specifically anti-Semitism in the Digest.

[00:38:00] It's always very specific to a racial slur or disparaging remark. If we can have more data on that, I'm asking for that again. Thank you. Yes, ma'am. So I want to just once again reiterate the purpose of the Digest, so the digest is not a cumulative set of data the digest go out when information is sent home to

the community based on a specific incident the other data that is collected is in the student discipline reporting system i believe dr bergen shared some of that with you in a meeting a division level

[00:38:33] report of the data and we can certainly we certainly continue to monitor that data and then ensure that we're addressing that and as i've stated before if any board member believes or is aware of incidents that have occurred that the division is not addressed, my ask would be again that you bring that directly to my attention so that we can investigate that.

[00:38:55] Ms. Chernoff and then Mr. Streffi and Dr. Rasheed. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dr. Spence, for that answer. Just to piggyback off what Ms. Griffiths said, wasn't there a presentation at MSAC about some of that data from Dr. Tyler?

[00:39:17] Was that last year or this year? I'm having trouble remembering. Yeah, I'd have to go back and check. On an annual basis, we do report on the incidents of hate speech and racial slurs in our schools. Okay. And in addition to the conversation around that has been in addition to reporting, then sharing other information about what we're doing in response to that as well.

[00:39:38] Yeah. I think just kind of thinking about what you were talking about with the SEL piece and then how we've been looking at sense of belonging and PMC and some of that data, like these things feel like they overlap. And so I think that would be maybe a data point that we could look at also in PMC to just see where we're at, what our trends are, what things we're doing to address it.

[00:39:56] I always think that that's a good piece for transparency since I do feel like as the community gets these messages, we do get those questions about what's going on. So I think that that would be helpful. - We agree.

[00:40:13] - Mr. Straffi. - Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Dr. Spence, for the presentation. I have a few points I just wanted to mention, just things that are kind of top of mind for me as well. Um, no particular order or organization behind these comments, it's just, um, so going back to, um, anti-Semitism, bullying, hate speech, racial slurs, I think that that is something that a lot of us are really looking at in terms of what we're seeing, maybe, um, as an increase in some of those issues.

[00:40:42] I do want to celebrate, um, one thing. I was at Stonehill Middle School, um, I think it was the other day, um, for their counseling advisory committee and you know just one example potentially could go obviously to the PMC committee is how the school has looked at the data from previous year and how their counselors have kind of put together a plan with the rest of the admin in the school to address some of the issues and you can see it as soon as you walk in the building you can see the signs and the murals around no

[00:41:17] place for hate about bullying prevention and they've really just weaved in they've decided to focus on one of the two or three areas that they've decided to focus on at that school was this theme and you can see it in the outcome so they presented the data for this year obviously the year hasn't closed yet but the numbers were really impressive and it just goes to show that when our schools focus on these things and they're allowed to kind of make it a part of their school climate and incorporate student voice, the results are super impactful.

[00:41:54] So I just wanted to share that as we talk about this kind of sensitive subject. But it's definitely top of mind for me. And, you know, when we look at how do we support our most vulnerable students and

think about things like belonging, it's just that bullying, hate speech, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, all of these things could just, you know, destroy so much of the work that we're doing in our schools.

[00:42:20] And it's really important for us to figure out how do we work with the people on the ground to develop the right culture and environment. So a little bit of a tangent, but I wanted to express some of those thoughts to the rest of the board.

[00:42:36] In terms of celebrating our teachers and students, I think that the division is doing such a wonderful job in this area. Being at the LEF Educator Awards Banquet, I got to speak with one administrator was nominated or awarded, and they told me that they had given so many years to another school division, so many years to another school division, and really just hadn't been celebrated or recognized, not for them, but even just for their school, and just in a

[00:43:12] very short amount of time with LCPS, they were recognized, they were celebrated, and they could pass that down to their entire school community, all of the staff, and so It's anecdotal, obviously, but just this idea of the impact of celebrating the work and passing that down.

[00:43:31] There are families that I've spoken to that, let me know if I'm hogging too much time, Chairman Mansfield. There are families that I've spoken to that, you know, the parents sometimes, public education had failed them.

[00:43:47] and so when the school division celebrates their child and brings them in for that that that kind of rewires or redefines and allows them to learn about how they can show up for their own child again just giving one example of just kind of the impact of celebrating folks within the school community and then the the other thing that's really top of mind for me and I think you've touched that you touched on a little bit in your presentation is just how we're thinking about some of these specialized hard-to-fill positions and are we zoned in on the schools that are most affected

[00:44:25] and how are they affected by that right like how is it how is that downstream affecting the children in those schools and so I know we we've had so many conversations about this but that in terms of this retreat I think is really top of mind for me I'll just stop there yeah just a few comments

[00:44:45] Thank you, Mr. Streffi. I appreciate you highlighting the work at Stonehill. I think you would find similar work being done. One of the expectations that we have built into our work through the school improvement process is that schools are taking a granular look at their data, not just their achievement data, but all of their data, that kind of cross overlay that Ms. Chernoff was talking about to see how they can better support their teachers and their students in the learning process.

[00:45:13] And some of that does include the conditions for learning and the climate around learning. And that includes how do we address and deal with issues around bullying and hate speech and making students feel like they belong. And so I think you will find examples of that, as we talked about earlier, across our school division with regards to student advisory, with regards to equity walks being led by our DEIA team so that they can get kind of a baseline understanding of how things feel and look in the building from an outside perspective.

[00:45:41] And then certainly with regards to training for staff as well, so that they're aware of paying attention to the issues, right? But also, as you talked about, examples of programs and initiatives in place, like our peer programs at the secondary level that are looking at that.

[00:45:56] No place for hate is another example of a program that many of our schools are looking at, and so I appreciate that. And then I think the other piece that I would just address briefly is looking at some of these hard-to-fill positions.

[00:46:11] And, of course, hard to fill positions, if you look at the list at the DOE, is a really long list, right? But I think in terms of the one that you spoke to that I think is most pressing for us is sort of how our school is dealing with unfilled positions. Where we hear it the most is with special education, right?

[00:46:30] And so that is a significant area for us. And I think my reflection, certainly, is we are continuing to work on making sure we are an employer of choice so that we can hire special educators. But I'm going to give you a pretty stark example of something that alarms me deeply.

[00:46:45] I've talked about this with others. So my daughter recently graduated from JMU School of Education, and I had the opportunity to go and be at that graduation. And they separate out the schools within the School of Education. So you've got secondary educators, you've got elementary educators, you have TESOL educators, which are EL teachers.

[00:47:04] And then you have special educators, and then a couple of other categories. Two things that were a little alarming. Simultaneously, my son was graduating from JMU from the business school and the accounting program.

[00:47:21] So the first alarming part was that the arena was one-third at capacity for the education program and at full capacity for the business program. So that tells you right out of the gates what we're up against in terms of who's coming into the profession. And so I think that's an issue we're all wrestling with and are going to have to continue to wrestle with.

[00:47:41] More alarming was that of the one-third of the arena of student educators who are coming out and coming into our schools, there were six graduates from the special education program. So if you think about that for just a moment and you kind of understand what we're up against, we have well into the hundreds of vacancies in special education, right?

[00:48:08] So because we've added positions, because we're adding programs. And the programs are not, I mean, we've done a lot of deep diving into this. The programs are not there as a convenience. They're not there as a want-to-have.

[00:48:24] They're there as a must-have. The students exist for those programs, and we have to then serve those students in those programs. However, the teachers are not there to fill many of these programs. It's been a consistent challenge for us.

[00:48:39] We've had a lot of programs with substitute teachers where we're looking for contracted staff to be in those buildings. And so, you know, we can say, well, why isn't LCPS hiring people? Well, you can't hire people that don't exist. And so I think that that is a significant issue for us.

[00:48:57] I think that we have to dig into, I mentioned it briefly in my remarks, growing your own. We have a lot of talented people who I think could become great special educators with support from the division, with financial support for the coursework that's required to become a special educator, and I think that's something we should be talking more about.

[00:49:17] I also think we may have to shift our mindset. One of the things I heard a lot from principals is how we get hesitant to hire these new teachers coming out as special educators, or somebody who's just

completed a special education program but hasn't taught in special education.

[00:49:32] And I think we're gonna have to shift our mindset to if they're interested in wanting to work special education our job is going to have to be to train them and get them to be as competent as they can possibly be in the work but get them on board and I mean that's just kind of the reality of the situation which we find ourselves it may not be what everybody wants to hear but the alternative is a substitute in the classroom and so I think this is an area of significant concern for me I'm talking with my colleagues across the Commonwealth and frankly across the

[00:50:07] country. I think we're all facing this concern. And so I think innovation in our thinking and creativity in our approach are going to be keys to being successful as we move forward. Dr. Rashid, I know I was going to, but I want to piggyback on that for special education in particular. So talking about provisionally licensed educators, there is something in code where they, if they fail the exam, the praxis, then the superintendent can. I mean, because we all know one test is not going to show exactly what they know, especially if they've gone to practicums and they've done everything else, they could be just a bad test picker.

[00:50:47] So, one of the things that code allows is for the superintendent to go ahead and sign off on, so that they could be a teacher, if they're already provisionally licensed, if they're already here, they're already teaching, and so, my understanding is that there's a process, Ms. Boland, is there any way that you could explain to me what that process and if we adhere to that process here in Loudoun County.

[00:51:13] So Ms. Bowen isn't here, but Ms. Holland is here. She's not here. I saw her earlier, so I didn't even look over there. I'm sorry. She has another meeting. Unfortunately, I don't know the answer to that question, but I'd be happy to follow up with you.

[00:51:30] I think the biggest thing, you know, coming from the special, I can tell you that a lot of my friends, when they had kids who went through special education, actually wanted to become special education teachers. And so that's a second or sometimes third or fourth career for some of our parents who were even stay-at-home moms during that time.

[00:51:51] So I'm wondering what other kinds of supports are we giving to those potentially provisionally licensed educators, teachers, for special education, helping them through their practices, helping them through everything else.

[00:52:07] I know mentors are one thing, but is there anything else that we're helping with? Ms. Richardson. Good morning, and thank you for the question, Chair Mansfield. As a school division, we have a cohort that we have established.

[00:52:26] So we have our George Mason University cohort, where we pay for a certain amount of classes for our current staff to work towards licensure, either general endorsement or adapted curriculum. We also have a partnership with HRTD and JMU.

[00:52:47] We have about 40 teachers in that cohort. For our current provisionally licensed teachers, we have supervisors in the Office of Special Education that bring those teachers together once a month to build their capacity and to help them prepare for the practice.

[00:53:04] Great, because I will say it's really hard to take courses and exams while you are teaching kids and doing everything else. I mean, that's a lot. Okay, so the last thing that I was thinking of, piggybacking

on this, is we have special programs for, I know we have educators rising, but we don't have them in one program, right?

[00:53:28] They're all everywhere, unlike we have like HAMSci, and if we could have a special program just for teachers and educators, future ones, I think that would be an interesting path to look into.

[00:53:45] All right, Dr. Rasheed. - Thank you, Chair, and yeah, I think that would be very helpful for our educators. And you had mentioned IB and HAMPSAI, and thank you, Dr. Spence, for mentioning all that information in the post-entry plan.

[00:54:02] I think that, I do look forward to the results, especially since this cohort will be done with their first year of HAMPSAI and IB and all the specialized programs. So I am looking forward to seeing the results, looking at the continuing enrollment to see their course completion rates, or rather their program completion rates.

[00:54:25] That would be very helpful to see. I definitely look forward to that. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff, for mentioning MSAC about that data that you had mentioned. And then just to also thank the cabinet and also Dr. Spence about what we're doing about heightening awareness about all the issues that are being presented or we're trying to kind of steer away from any of the negativity in the schools with bullying and I wanted to mention Islamophobia in particular. Lots of things that are going on on the rise in the communities but

[00:55:00] thanks so much for bringing that about. Yeah looking forward to the rest of it. Sure enough. Just wanted to piggyback off of the teachers rising. I did spend quite a bit of time with teacher cadets this year in various schools and one of the real perks of that is that they get to stay at their home school and still be involved in their sports and be involved in their local community schools for their placements and their partnerships so if we were to do special program we want to make sure that that's also still an option because I think we saw how many were there there was a lot a huge number this year that signed their letters and but I also just want

[00:55:36] an anecdote there was from Loudoun County High School one of the young women in the program was wanting like a gen ed setting and she ended up getting placed just because of numbers into a special education setting and she actually shared with me in December when I went to speak there and the whole group and said like I think everybody should have at least one of their placements in a special education exposed environment because she is choosing that path now and if that like accidentally hadn't happened she might not have so when I was at Ohio State for my education program we had to do a special education setting for part of our

[00:56:13] teacher what is it even called student teaching gosh woof and then that's embarrassing and then I had also a gen ed setting so we also had that exposure so something to consider I think in terms of English language learners as well somebody was also put in a music class this year and she's going to go do music now so I mean there's lots of options for educators and I think that program is a great springboard it's certainly been a do have the academy of loud and model where you go back and forth. Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say also that I'm

[00:56:48] happy about the Transition Center, and I'm throwing that out there because we will need special educators to be hired to help out in that center, because as board members, I think that we want all our students to be successful, so I think the Transition Center is a great idea.

[00:57:08] Getting back to the DEI and all that stuff, we do get a report from you, Dr. Spence, on what the department is working on. And I have been asking, I mean, and maybe you can share this, one thing you had given us was equity walks.

[00:57:26] Could you explain how equity walks and showing up in events may help an achievement for our students and help with bullying, hate speech? Please elaborate on that, thank you. - Sure, so as I mentioned about equity walks, the intention there is you bring in a team, you work with the administration, and you go through the building, and you are looking for the conditions for learning.

[00:57:53] The idea would be if you're sitting there in a classroom and you see that teachers are actively engaging with each of their students, that students are actively engaging with each other, that students are able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, in the classroom, and the things that are on the walls in the classrooms, that the conversations are geared towards students' backgrounds, what students bring into the classroom, their interests, and that it's clear that in the school, students are able to see themselves, excuse me, not just in their classrooms, but throughout the building and find opportunities to be engaged and connected to one another and to the school.

[00:58:34] we know through research that that sense of belonging creates the condition for learning, right? So, I don't know how much time I have here, but what we know, excuse me, what we know about learning is that it doesn't happen by happenstance, right?

[00:58:51] So, students in order to learn have to, if you're familiar with like Maslow's hierarchy, so students have to feel physically safe, they have to feel physiologically safe, so they have to eat, like everybody understands that, right? Like, nobody argues that we should make sure that students don't go hungry because we understand that in order to learn, you need to not be worried about whether or not you have had enough food to eat, whether or not you have shelter.

[00:59:19] Like, the physiological needs need to be met. We also know that psychological safety has to be met, right? So we know that students need to feel safe from bullying, which is why we need to focus on when we talk about bullying. We know that students need to feel safe physically so that we need to know that, you know, fighting and all of those things that we worry about in our student code of conduct or things that we don't tolerate.

[00:59:42] And then one thing that's in Maslow's hierarchy that people overlook, but it's kind of right above physical and physiological safety, is a sense of love and belonging. And so students do need to know, and all of us, frankly, as human beings, need to know that we're supposed to be there, that the teachers want us in the classroom, that they see us as human beings who have a right to be there.

[01:00:06] And sometimes the conditions in our classrooms or in our schools across the country and certainly I would imagine sometimes in LCPS and across the Commonwealth send different messages to our kids. Send messages that I'm not interested in you being in this classroom and various ways that we do that.

[01:00:27] And or the students are sending those messages to each other through their conduct, through some of the things that we've talked about. So what an equity walk can help do is to kind of set a baseline within a school to say here are some of the things that we're observing that may be creating some of these challenges for students to feel like they're safe or that they belong.

[01:00:45] And if we take specific actions to remedy that, if we do some training for our staff on how to recognize that in their classrooms, if we take some specific steps to work with our peer program to be intentionally inclusive at lunch, for example, or in access to different clubs, for example, then we can begin to find students who feel more engaged, more connected, and more safe.

[01:01:10] If we do that, what the research tells us is that students are more likely to engage in learning, they are more likely to be successful in that learning, they are more likely to be interested in collaborating with their peers, and that student achievement is more likely to continue to grow.

[01:01:27] It doesn't mean some students won't show up to be able to overcome those things we know students are super resilient but we also know that by and large a student who doesn't feel like they belong and who doesn't feel safe will shut down and will not learn that's what the research says clearly so it isn't about a direct link to student achievement but there's a lot of things that we do in our schools that you won't link directly to student achievement they're about setting the conditions for learning if you have the research I think everybody here would like to see it I don't believe you sent it to me yet right? I'm happy to provide you research on belonging. In fact, I think Dr. Tyler has done

[01:02:04] quite a bit of research around that that we can share with the board. I can say that there's also research around stress and how it decreases your processing and increases your anxiety, which decreases your processing. And so therefore you're unable to learn and able to grasp and remember concepts. So that's another aspect of that. Yes, Mr. Struffy. Thank you. I have learned so much i mean i have my own thoughts around this obviously um even for my own upbringing but i've

[01:02:41] just learned so much from administrators and educators in the buildings in the schools like um principal fru at sterling middle school walking me into the cafeteria and explaining why we have the flags of so many different countries wrapped around that cafeteria because we have students that their families come from those countries and we want them to really feel comfortable in that space in that cafeteria where we're asking them to kind of decompress and you know the efforts that they're making to kind of make allow students to feel more comfortable in the classroom and then you go over to Guilford Elementary and you know I'm connecting the dots but

[01:03:20] they don't know that I'm talking to each of them and I'm hearing the same exact thing and it's like principal Tillman walking me outside to the to the playground and explaining why he would like that the painting of the U.S. map on the playground include other countries around the U.S. where our students may come from to allow them to feel more included in that space.

[01:03:44] And so, you know, I could have all of the opinions in the world, but I think it's so much more powerful when you see the administrators or the educators who've been doing this for a long time, see the value in that, in doing that. And again, to try to ignite the learning in that individual student, regardless of what the background that they may come from or a zip code or anything like that, I think has been really powerful for me. Anybody else? Any thoughts about

[01:04:17] the post-entry plan or post-entry report? Dr. Spence, do you have any final thoughts? I do, but you caught me with a lifesaver in my mouth. I do. Again, to sort of wrap it up, I thank you for your questions. I think they're great questions. There's certainly things that we're focused on and that we know we need to continue to focus on. One of the things I said at the,

[01:04:50] hold on a sec, I can't talk and do that. Okay. One of the things I said at the outset was we know there will always be room for improvement, right? And, you know, any organization understands that continuous improvement has to be part of its DNA. And so this isn't to suggest all the things that we talked about that, you know, we're done with the work, right? As we've discussed here,

[01:05:12] There's plenty to do, and we are focused on that, but an opportunity to sort of close out the discussion around the entry plan and thank our community for spending all of last year really talking to us about what we needed to be focused on and then wanting to communicate with the school board that we have with great intention leaned into that work and want to appreciate you doing that with us.

[01:05:35] You have done that with us in any number of ways. We've talked about a couple of examples during this closeout conversation about working with us on the PMC, leaning into the grading policy conversations, just so many different things. And then all of the successes that we're able to highlight through your budget priorities, which are directly aligned to what the community is asking us to do, and the programs that are coming online, which are directly aligned to the needs that have been identified by the community.

[01:06:01] And I'm just wanting to appreciate the board for that collaborative leadership with us. as we have been leaning into those recommendations, but then also wanting to highlight the second part of the conversation, although brief part of the conversation, that we have a strategic plan, but it is going to be sunsetting in the near future.

[01:06:24] And that means it's time for this board with a fresh set of eyes to start thinking about next steps and what comes next for the school division. And I don't know if it freaked anybody else out when it was the strategic plan 2032 and you realize that we're talking about 2032 but we are very much looking forward to engaging and you can see again repeating what what dr single said the the number of opportunities to touch base with the board over the course of the time that we will be

[01:06:57] engaged in strategic planning with an eye towards approval of that plan in 2027 which seems like far away, but in truth is not far away. That time will go very quickly. What we want to signal to our community, we're looking forward to a robust, lengthy discussion. It's not something we want to rush. We want to really, again, lean into what is it we're looking for as a school division? What are the goals that we think will guide us over the course of the next five to six years? And then one of the interesting things that we will really look forward to talking with this school board

[01:07:34] about is kind of the differences between the current strategic plan and what you're hoping the next strategic plan will hold and how that will help us move our work forward. So we're really, I know it sounds strange, but we're very excited about the strategic planning process with the school board, and we really do look forward to engaging with you in that as well.

[01:07:53] Thank you, Dr. Spence. I guess we were, we'll be moving on to the board discussion, which this is your opportunity, board members um to raise issues and discuss board norms such as decorum and i think mrs griffiths wants to talk about presentations let's talk processes and everything else so is there anyone who wants to start off the conversation yes mrs dr rashid thank you chair for bringing this up and i

[01:08:27] i i think this is really important to to talk about um one of the main things i'd like to talk about is when we're up on the dais, I know there's, as you have mentioned before, there is a decorum that we have to follow. We have public comment, we have information items, acronyms, everything on the agenda.

I think one of the important things that us board members do, which is, which we accomplish, is we do maintain that professionalism on the whole. However, I think that it is important that all of us do remember, and again, this goes with personalities. Everybody's personality is

[01:09:04] different mine mine included um that when we think out loud um there i i know we some of us think out loud but i think it is important that when you think out loud you're affecting you're affecting like the adjacent person that could hear you think out loud you're affecting their thought process and how they can decide on the matter being presented for example in an action item or an information item, if that makes sense, Chair. I think it's important for us to kind of just be

[01:09:42] a little bit in tune with that. However, I do think that there is a time and place, and I know that we do have group discussions, which I think that's very welcoming to do something of the sort. However, there is a specific decorum that should be followed when we're on the dais, because, Again, that thinking out loud mechanism, I know a lot of us can't help it, but we just have to be more mindful of it is one of my thoughts.

[01:10:07] I have others, but I want to give my colleagues chances to talk about other topics as well. I mean, I can understand when it's, when, especially when we have amendments and amendments to the amendments and everything like that, and then we talk to ourselves about, okay, blah, blah, blah, and some of us are more auditorially sensitive than others.

[01:10:30] It can stop with the thinking, where are we, or we get lost. I can see that. Any other thoughts? Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:10:46] As you mentioned, the slides, I've always felt like, and I have mentioned this before, that if we're doing a work session at 5 o'clock and the slides are way long, we get cut off. We can't ask questions that we really want to know and we'd like the public to know for transparency.

[01:11:07] So I thought we were going to have the slides at 15 to 20, slides just to keep it down so we can... Having meat, having the meat in the presentation, the most specific things that we need to know so we can ask about them, not extra stuff, just the meat is what I'm looking for.

[01:11:30] So, you know, I'm putting it out there to the administration that me personally, I would like to see shorter presentations. They take up so much time to the point where we can't leave, you know, we're sitting up there past 10 o'clock, whether it's at a work session or it's a presentation for an information item, which also puts us back.

[01:11:55] So that's something that's really troubling to me and we got away from keeping the presentations down. And I do want to say again, thank you to Dr. Spence for having a presentation of 15 slides today. But that was one thing, and I'm hoping we can have that discussion today about that.

[01:12:10] Board members, what do you think about 15 to 20 slides? Any other comments about that? Dr. Sheet. Thank you, Chair. I think it's great to have 15 to 20 slides, but what about slides where we, where sometimes cabinet members go through them real fast just for the sake of a graphic?

[01:12:29] I don't know if we want to do the opposite and have more slides, but then I guess we need to consider the time frame for each slide. Because sometimes cabinet members will put something up as a graphic and they'll go through it like literally for like five seconds.

[01:12:47] They'll say, oh, this is a picture for when we were at some place or at some event or just for the matter of data. For me personally, it feels like sometimes I might need more because I might need more information and be able to go back and look at it on the slide later.

[01:13:05] And, I mean, I am one of those who more information is better for me. And I can see that for something like budget priorities, we might want more slides, but for something else we might not. I don't know that I feel completely comfortable with saying a cutoff at 15 to 20 because there are times when there's let's say the retirement benefits oh my god that was like still still confusing to me and I think that we still need conversations about it in fact we're having a select committee just to talk about it but all of that probably wouldn't have gotten

[01:13:41] done in 15 to 20 slides um I think there needs to be a give and take there I understand what you're talking about and I don't know that it's the presentations that make us go till 10 o'clock I think it's more of like three hours of public comment or maybe even more awards like we're having a lot of people go through the awards I think that's where mostly that is not necessarily the presentations it is we are also a verbose bunch and we talk and we yeah we talk a lot

[01:14:16] so I think that's the other part of it too yes Vice Chair Donohue thank you Madam Chair pretty much made all the points that I was going to say no no so I'm just um but I'm going to say I agree while I also don't necessarily always enjoy extremely lengthy slides of presentations I it strikes me as a little micromanagey for us to tell staff that they should limit themselves to 15 to 20 slides because there are going to be some there are going to be some topics that 15 is maybe more than they need to explain the issue to us and there are going to be other topics where

[01:14:55] 20 is just not enough and I I think we need to trust their expertise and not give them a minimum number and to Mrs. Griffith's point about being here until 10 o'clock at night and not even getting to our information items I'm also frustrated by that when it happens but as as Chair Mansfield already said my memory thinking back on the nights that that has happened it's not been because of lengthy staff presentations it's been because we have three hours of public comment and I do think it's worth bringing that conversation up because we have kind of talked around the issue before of whether

[01:15:35] we need to make some changes to our public comment process in some way we are very unusual in that we place zero limitations we do not limit the number the amount of time that public comment takes on our agenda. We do not limit the number of speakers that we allow to speak at a public comment in our full board meetings. The only limitation we put is on the amount of time that each speaker gets due to how many people are signed up and the length of our agenda. And we have seen recently that that lack of any restriction is sometimes interferes with our ability to do the business

[01:16:14] that we are here to do. Yes, it is important for us to have those opportunities to hear from the community and hear from our constituents, but it's also important that we discuss the issues that we need to discuss, the policies we need to discuss, and vote on those policies. And so I would encourage my peers to consider us having a conversation about do we want to make a change?

[01:16:36] For example, having one night a month that's public comment night and awards night or something. Yes, Ms. Chandler. Thank you, Chair Mansfield, and I am happy to say I feel both Chair Mansfield and Vice Chair Donahue have covered many of the points that I would like to bring into this discussion.

[01:16:56] I agree with what you've both said in this conversation. It is something that I tried to raise at the beginning of our experience on the school board. I think we should be cautious in terms of what changes we make now, but I do find myself very open to the idea of having a night that might be just for public comment. I think we could very easily bring our policies and our practices in alignment with what the Board of Supervisors does and to that end I would also be open to the idea of limiting our own conversation so that we could

[01:17:34] be more efficient and have the three-minute rule. I think they have a three-minute rule and then you have to request if you want to go a second time. That said, I don't feel the need to have a hard and fast rule around slides. I think it's more important and more transparent to receive the information that's necessary to a conversation. I'm always happy to jump in and read and make sure that I get the information I need to make an informed decision. But I do think there are ways that we could explore being more efficient and using our time so that we can really lean into

[01:18:13] good governance. Yes, Ms. LaBelle. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank Ms. Chandler for bringing up the idea of efficiency. I think that our board tours are very, very helpful.

[01:18:33] A lot of times we're sitting here, even just today, I've been trying to read through and process what the different slides are saying and then it changes and I think that having these things at the board tour and giving us of the time to look at it process it prepare for questions that we can answer here at the full board meeting is a better way to deal with the length the the slides themselves are not the issue it's the amount of time that we have to go through on each slide

[01:19:10] or how quickly we're processing the slides through so that we can't quite get our I our heads wrapped around what they're trying to say that causes us to stall and and slow up on the dais so I think that a lot of this could be solved by having a more thorough discussion at the board tour when they're presenting the ideas so that we all come prepared with questions and actually have the opportunity to ask some of the questions during the board tour itself I think that would be a better way to handle things rather than to limit time or how

[01:19:49] many times you may speak or things like that thank you I will say board tours is another thing that we came up with in this this board you know the way it is done now and it is something that I've appreciated I don't know that everybody takes advantage of it I will say that yes ms Chernoff thank you madam chair and thank you for the various comments I am also not opposed to us having a time limit which that's coming from me so I know I'm the chatty one so I'm limit for what just for like when we each speak I think that that would help tighten

[01:20:25] things up it's no secret I don't like the 10 o'clock rule I want to get the work done and I have been open about not really wanting to change public comment And I don't. I think it's an important part of the process. And I just have, I struggle with limiting that in terms of making sure that people have transparency with what we're talking about and the things that we're addressing on the board.

[01:20:50] I think we have made better strides with slide decks. I think we addressed this before, behind the scenes even. I know that there were some really lengthy presentations early on, but I feel like we've made good strides. What I would wonder is can we reverse engineer this and say there's a protected time for board questions and comments so that there are certain times where, you know, we say, like, we have one minute until we have to recess for dinner, so you guys got to shut it down.

[01:21:16] Could there be a 10-minute time that's always allotted just to make sure that there is protected time for board conversation? Now, I know we will go over likely at certain times, but could that be the reverse instead of micromanaging the slide decks and dictating what staff can and can't do, could we have a conversation about having some protected discussion time, much like we're having right now.

[01:21:37] I mean, I think this is nice because at first I was like, I don't know what we're going to talk about, but then it's opening up into some other things and I think that that is lacking on this board, on the dais, in front of the public. I don't know that that, I think we're talking a lot on the dais and I don't, I'd be interested if anybody has looked at every single one and made that look to see how much time we actually have at the end, five to 10 minutes or after, because sometimes we have two work sessions, and so that would be, I think, sometimes we go overboard on one and not on the other.

[01:22:14] That's another thing. I'd be interested if anybody has done that. Mr. Streffy. Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. My comments were in line with Ms. Chernoff, I think, in the work session specifically. I think a lot of the comments around our ability to weigh in um, would be related to the work sessions. And if we can, I think we've talked about this before, and I think it's, it's gone much better. We can reserve some of that time. I would agree. Um, just, uh, allowing some more conversation. Um, my other comment isn't really related to public comment. I'm open to the conversations. Obviously, I think all of us want to protect public comment.

[01:22:48] It's why we haven't changed it until now, but, um, I'm open to the conversations. I think more importantly, I wouldn't want to limit the awards and recognitions and all of the other things that happen because I would go so far as to venture that we don't, I mean, limiting that would, we already don't have enough time to do what we probably would want to do to recognize folks and do all of the celebrating and bringing people into the school board meetings and having more

[01:23:23] students and doing more recognitions. If we tailor that down, I think, I don't know that it will be something worth sacrificing so I think something that I wouldn't be open to I'm happy to discuss it but I think the more chance we get to bring in people from the school communities and into the school board meetings I think it's valuable time so I do have a question that I want people to think about so I don't know that all of us do our best thinking after 10 anyway

[01:24:00] so if we're doing um if we have such an open public comment then we will be redoing it the next week we will be continuing the meeting the next week and how much is that on staff and our resources and um is that really fiscally as responsible i don't like limiting public comment either um but i think it is something that the board does need to think about in the future um

[01:24:34] particularly during certain seasons of the year um yes dr shee thank you uh chair um i wish out of curiosity i don't know if anybody knows this when it comes to public comment the other counties are they following something does anyone know if anyone's following something similar or are they copying what what like what we have is it the is it the norm yes sorry Ms. Chandler.

[01:25:04] This was something that we did some research around last year. Our public comment is considered to be more open and perhaps more permissive than most in Virginia. I could give you, it's been at least a year since we looked into this.

[01:25:22] I think it was around spring break last year. I can certainly get that information and share it with the board. There are counties that cannot afford video recordings. There are certainly counties, I

believe Fairfax is a good example, that sets a limit.

[01:25:39] And there are also counties that will set topics. So you really can't talk about a topic in public comment unless it's on the agenda. But ours being open, I mean, I definitely think it would be considered a very open and transparent public comment policy.

[01:25:59] So one thing I am hearing is that there is appetite for a three-minute time limit of speaking similar to the Board of Supervisors. Is that what I'm hearing? Yes?

[01:26:17] Thumbs up? Do you want it or do you not? Okay. That did not go for. That's not majority. So and then but I'm also hearing slides.

[01:26:32] Yes, we would like traditionally 15 to 20, but there's a possibility of not happening because of what it is. So that stays. Ms. Chandler, did you have anything else to say? No, I just don't.

[01:26:49] I just wanted to be clear. I'm not feeling any need to set a limit on the slides. Okay. Dr. Spence, you wanted to talk about the slides of some sort? I do. we certainly appreciate some early conversation with the board around this topic of length of presentation I think if you just were to go back and look you would see very few presentations that would slide past the 15 slide kind of guidance we have not taken it as a hard rule but as guidance that we have

[01:27:24] followed and again I think it's been very few over the course of the last year if you counted it one or two that have gone past that so so part of it is like how how pressing is is is the need for any further guidance on it but i guess the the um other piece of that is i i would appreciate and i think you all are saying there are going to be times when that's just not going to work um you know i'm thinking about budget presentation and that's going to be really challenging to keep within that limit um and i think the more important part of that was the

[01:28:03] conversation that Ms. Shurnoff and Mr. Estreffi mentioned was baking in time for the opportunity for the board to ask questions, right? Like making sure that we are cognizant of the amount of time that is available. So I would just say kind of as a, like a broad thought, you know, agenda planning is more of an art than a science. And, you know, when you're looking at all of these things taken together how much time do you have to for your work sessions and how many things are you trying to squeeze into the work session is a conversation that we have every single time we meet as a

[01:28:41] cabinet and look at an agenda because what we want to do is make sure we do bake in plenty of time for the board to engage in discussion and so we do try to limit the number of presentations so that we can do that and I think what we would just ask is that you all kind of monitor that with us and hold us accountable if you think we're not doing that and i think we are working very hard to to accomplish that dr smith i think when we have two it's harder to work sessions i think it's more difficult to build in 10 minutes each because it's not that long of a period of time

[01:29:14] and i would respond to that by simply saying this is the board's meeting if the board doesn't want to do more than one work session that's okay that that's direction we'll take and we can do that in our planning, I would say there is a lot to talk about. And if we limited to one topic per work session all the time, that could become problematic. So almost like we said with 15 slides, guidance versus a hard rule would be appreciated just so that we can have those conversations in agenda planning and say we think we need to get these two in. Board members, would you prefer five or

[01:29:54] 10 minutes or i mean 10 minutes hopefully for like for work sessions um work session is gosh is it an hour it's an hour 15 minutes um what's your thoughts on 10 minutes i mean and some of them are work sessions like uh miss willoughby will come in and say here's our budget and then that's it and that's like five seconds so um you know like a like an update but um for the more meatier ones like if the green teams come in or and then we have that plus god forbid stipends

[01:30:32] that would be more meatier and that wouldn't be two that we could put together yes ms shernoff i think too i'm wondering i mean this is just kind of thinking about what's been going on with us lately but you know we we have a huge agenda tomorrow um in terms of information items and several action items and then most likely that's going to get bumped to an additional meeting because we have to get the work done and we're up against you know some different deadlines especially with being on a school year bound sort of calendar with some of our policies and things so

[01:31:05] I'm wondering I mean for me I don't necessarily mind having other meetings what makes it hard when it's full board involved with cabinet fully involved it means that they have to add that so I hear you on that I don't want to put more burden on staff but I'm wondering if work sessions would be served better separately instead of having information items as a carryover I don't know if that's something that we could do that would probably mean something different for you know the way we structure our meetings but I think the information and work sessions is important it's one way that the public can hear a lot of just operational things that are going on which

[01:31:43] honestly affects them the most I think in terms of what's going on in our schools but just trying to think out loud a little bit about what we do with work sessions because I agree with you and and I also really loved that we had a lengthy sustainability presentation a couple weeks ago because this week when it's on info we kind of already had all that information and we can just kind of move through it so I think we could be more strategic in putting those pieces in place but again like you said agenda planning is is an art not necessarily super prescribed so just food

[01:32:17] thought don't necessarily need any decisions. Yes, Ms. LaBelle. Along with what Ms. Chernoff has just said, I have heard several things during this discussion that makes me think maybe we want to restructure how we do our board meetings. For example, someone mentioned the fact that we should have a night for public comment. Someone else mentioned that we need to, you know, cut back on awards. Suppose we took one of our board meetings each month and did the things that are not actual board work like work sessions information sex

[01:32:57] sessions and action items but devote that to the community type things and then the other board session we could actually do our work for the entire time that we're here from you know all both of those meetings would encompass the same time we come in about 4:30 we go home about 10:00 but if we structured it that way instead of trying to put it all into one meeting it would give us more time to do everything and then if we took the public comment part and sorted it out by topics if you want to talk about this you know this is the group of

[01:33:34] people talking about this maybe this is the group of people talking about that and that would take up half of you know the time like the 4:30 to 6 o'clock and And then the next portion would be the awards, the announcements, all the other things that we do.

[01:33:54] And rather than try to do them all in one meeting, actually separate it out. Of course, the public would be invited to both. They might get a better grasp of what we're thinking if we had more time

to actually discuss information items or things that we're working on.

[01:34:12] So that's just a suggestion because that seems to be what I'm hearing as I listen to people around the table. Thank you. Yes, Dr. Rashid. Chair Mansfield, can I talk about a different topic? I know we're on a streamlining a group.

[01:34:29] Yeah, but let's put that on things to, if I had a parking lot, I'd put it in the parking lot somewhere. Sticky notes about what we need to continue to think about including agenda planning.

[01:34:47] Okay. Yes, Dr. Rashid, go ahead. - Thank you, chair. Just, and maybe this is a question for legal counsel. I just wanted to know the definition and when does it apply, and an example of when we say the term point of order.

[01:35:05] - Thank you, Dr. Rashid. According to Robert's rules, point of order is when a board member feels that rules are not being followed. So the board chair has a duty to, and responsibility to ensure rules are being followed.

[01:35:22] if a board member and any board member can raise a point of order, they would state point of order and they could immediately state what rule they feel is not being followed. It's for the board chair to adjudicate. So they would need to say board chair, point of order.

[01:35:40] And if they don't immediately say what rule they think is not being followed, the board chair could ask board member, what's your point of order? What rule do you think is not being followed? the board member would state what rule they believe is not being followed and provide any further discussion on that point and then the board chair would say, I think that's well taken or I think that's not well taken.

[01:36:06] And so if there is a rule not being followed, the board chair will, if she says it's well taken, she'll address that and say, okay, please redirect or please come in compliance with the rules Or, the board chair, if they feel that it's not appropriate, it's not an appropriate objection to the order, would say, I don't think that's well taken, and then resume business as usual.

[01:36:37] - So, just to be clear, it is not to just interrupt. It has a specific function of asking about if a rule has been, you know, calling upon the chair for ruling and enforcement of the regular rules.

[01:36:57] Could you give me an example of a regular rule that might be not being adhered to that someone, a board member would say port of order? - For instance, if board members were speaking over one another and not following your directive as calling one at a time, if someone's speaking over someone, then a board member could say a point of order and they can interject.

[01:37:24] then there's interruption going on between board members, board chair, it's my understanding that we are to wait to be called on by the board chair yourself before we speak and we can't cut off another board member. And then you would say, if you observe that's happening in your estimation, then you could say that's well taken.

[01:37:46] Board member who's interrupting, please wait your turn. I will call on you per usual protocol. - Yes, Ms. LaBelle. Could Mr. Allen please also contrast what point of information is so that we know what the difference is between the two?

[01:38:04] Sure, and just for clarity, I will consult Robert's roles, but my brief understanding of point of information is if a board member is seeking more clarity around a discussion item, they can ask for a point of information, but bear with me.

[01:38:22] I got you. Request for information, or as it is also called point of information, an inquiry as to the facts affecting the business of hand directed to the chair or through the chair to a member?

[01:38:39] Dr. Rasheed. - If I can't find the rule, then can I still claim a point of order? Like let's say I'm just basing it off something I think I know that could be right or wrong, and I'm just throwing it out there. Could, do I, can I still call the point of order?

[01:38:55] Or do I have to know a specific rule that I feel is kind of being violated? - Thank you, Dr. Rasheed. So it's not per se a rule, it's a practice or a norm that the board follows as well.

[01:39:12] So to the extent you feel that the rules and procedures to maintain order are not being followed, then you could say point of order and then simply explain what you think, what rules or procedures or protocol or violation of maintaining the order of the meeting is being breached.

[01:39:40] - Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. - Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so much for this discussion. I do want to remind the board that putting restrictions on public speaking or public comment will not go well with the public at large. I do want to shift gears a little bit and talk about decorum, as you mentioned before.

[01:40:00] I haven't really seen it lately, but we, my understanding is, and Wes can verify for me, when we're on the dais, we should not be showing solidarity with people in the audience, organizations wearing their colors or buttons or anything like that.

[01:40:21] I think we are supposed to show we are completely impartial, and I haven't seen it much lately, But we used to have that where we were showing solidarity with the people in the audience that come in to speak or whatever.

[01:40:39] Is there a policy on that, Wes, that you can discuss as far as decorum on the dais and clothing or putting our jazz hands or whatever to show solidarity? Can you share that with us?

[01:40:55] Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths. The board policy, the board norms, protocols, violations doesn't explicitly provide guidance to directly address this currently.

[01:41:13] So I do recall during a prior board retreat, this was briefly discussed and I believe the resolve was on the dais. Their board members should not, you know, do acts of affirmation like jazz hands at certain speakers or not speakers.

[01:41:33] So that was discussed, but that concern or item could be further discussed and baked into a policy, the board norms, protocols, and violations, if the board so chooses. I think that also goes to how we treat others and how we treat our board members and how we treat cabinet members as well.

[01:41:56] while it's not really a policy per se, but I think impacting trust in the relationships, I think that in those kind of high, not high energy, but I think that it can affect in those instances relationships and the ability to talk and discuss things that are hard to talk about.

[01:42:30] And if there's so much emotion and so much smiling or jazz hands are showing solidarity, I think we have to really think about being more third party, more objective as much as we can.

[01:42:50] It also can go to emails and everything else. I think we have to really think about being civil in kind of an uncivilized society right now. What, jazz hands? Jazz hands. It's just being respectful.

[01:43:16] what it comes down to in tone of voice and everything else yes when we started a little bit earlier you said something about mr streffi when he came in does he need to read his disclaimer thank you for that mr steffi would you please read your disclosure before we thank you um as a member of the loudon county school board i said as a member of the loudon county school board i make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the

[01:43:54] 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 while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected, of which I am included.

[01:44:15] 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 okay so we have we can go get our lunch and come back for a board discussion or or we can have lunch and have lunch what would you guys like to do we can have we can bring the lunch in here and still talk about board discussion or we can have lunch and have lunch yes miss Bell personally I would

[01:44:53] rather have lunch because if we're trying to talk and something's in our mouth it's not comfortable kind of like his and it's tacos and it's gonna be super crunchy so oh my thank you okay so did you guys have any more discussion that you want to discuss as a board decorum stipends board norms presentations anything else no okay stipends will be brought up in our budget priorities i think good spot anything else okay then we will recess for

[01:45:31] lunch for what 12 30 board is not on recess all right the board is out of recess um we're back at

[02:29:00] it let's see uh we will continue on with 2.05 visionary and planning for special programs um with uh neil slavin assistant superintendent for teaching and learning and katie clark director of academic programs it's all y'all thank you and good afternoon chair mansfield school board and Dr. Spence. Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to speak with you today. We are excited to share an update on the progress of our special programs and explore possibilities for future innovation and expansion. You may have noticed during the lunch break in the back there is a small bag for each

[02:29:39] of you that has a little bit of swag so to speak from the different programs that we have been supporting. So please make sure you pick that up on the way out today or during the break. Today we'll cover three areas. First, we'll look at our program growth and admission trends. Second, we'll walk through our planning process and the guiding considerations for making decisions. And finally, we'll review next steps, including how we plan to

[02:30:10] engage our community for input. Our special programs have experienced steady growth, both in enrollment and student interest. This is reflective of the district's commitment to expanding opportunities and pathways that align with student needs, workforce demands, and educational excellence.

[02:30:34] This chart has been updated and it outlines the current status of both special programs and non-comprehensive LCPS programs across the four phases. Programs under consideration, these are programs being explored for viability and alignment with student needs.

[02:30:54] The proposal phase, these are programs that are under formal review or we are currently piloting specific courses. The third planning phase, these programs are in active development and aren't fully implemented at this time.

[02:31:11] And lastly is our implemented phase and these are programs that are fully operational at this time. The programs listed on the previous slide can be broken down into two categories. Our first is alternative centers and non-comprehensive schools.

[02:31:31] So an example there would be the North Star School and the new LCPS Transition Center. The second category there are special programs, and an example there would be our AET, AOS, and Health and Medical Sciences.

[02:31:48] This timeline highlights the evolution of special programs in LCPS. It reflects our long-standing commitment to providing high-quality learning opportunities for students across the county. In 1977, the Monroe Advanced Technology Academy, known as MATA, was established, laying the foundation for career and technical education in Loudoun.

[02:32:13] In 1985, LCPS began participating in Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, a regional governor's school operated by Fairfax County Public Schools. In 2005, we established the Academy of Science, known as AOS, and it offers a rigorous STEM-focused curriculum.

[02:32:34] In 2009, we started NJROTC, providing leadership and citizenship development with the Navy. In 2016, the Academy of Engineering and Technology, known as AET, was added to expand STEM pathways.

[02:32:53] In 2018-19, the Academy's allowed an open, bringing AOS, AET, and MATA together under one roof to foster collaboration and innovation. Then in 2023-2024, we launched the Dual Language Immersion Program, beginning with kindergarten, to support bilingualism and biliteracy from an early age.

[02:33:16] In 24-25, we had both International Baccalaureate IB and HAMSci offered, expanding both access to globally recognized academic pathways and responding to strong student interest in health careers. And then in this coming year, we will have our Access Academy, and it will launch with its first cohort of 9th graders.

[02:33:37] And then in the following year, 26-27, the Academy of Global Linguistic Studies is set to begin, also starting with 9th grade, focused on global leadership and global business. Thanks to the strategic planning and collaboration between our board and staff, we've been able to significantly expand the opportunities available to our students as clearly demonstrated here on this timeline.

[02:34:04] Next, we have this great visual that shows the location of all of our special programs throughout the county. Just want to thank our colleagues in Planning and Services for providing us with this map. This chart provides a snapshot of each special program's capacity.

[02:34:23] It includes the grade level served, the number of seats available per grade, and the total program capacity once it is fully implemented. Programs marked with an asterisk offer unlimited access to zone students, meaning any student living in the designated attendance zone can participate without a cap.

[02:34:45] Despite these offerings, we continue to face a significant challenge. Demand still exceeds available seats in many of our programs. This just reinforces the need to expand existing programs and continue to develop new ones to ensure more students can access the opportunities they're interested in.

[02:35:06] All of our programs have had tremendous success this school year, and each program was able to provide a detailed progress update during the May and June Specialized Programs and Centers Committee meetings.

[02:35:22] A few highlights from this year included expanding DLI to first grade, having our first group of students taking IB courses and taking the first IB exams in Loudoun County. It included a student panel at the special programs fairs, which was a huge success.

[02:35:41] The Hampside Guest Speaker Series provided our students with a look into different career pathways a student can take in health care. NJROTC was designated as the most outstanding unit for the second consecutive year for our area. And just to point out, we compete against 28 other schools. And lastly, AOS and AET continue to have many students who not only competed in research competitions, but took first place. Each November, we present our admissions data to the Specialized Programs

[02:36:15] and Centers Committee. This year's data reaffirms a strong and steady demand for our programs. In several cases, the number of applicants exceeds available seats by more than 10 to 1. This level of interest highlights both the popularity of these offerings and the need to expand access.

[02:36:38] As illustrated in the data on the slide, applicant numbers continue to exceed capacity across multiple programs. This underscores the importance of exploring scalable models and geographic expansion to ensure more students can participate.

[02:36:55] Thank you, Katie. Our planning process is comprehensive and collaborative. We integrate feedback from the strategic plan, school leadership, community events, and community events such as the CTAE Workforce Summit held last fall, budget discussions, and most importantly, student interest.

[02:37:17] This process ensures we are balancing vision with practical execution. As we discussed last fall, there are many things to consider when deciding what opportunities to provide next. As you can see, the left side of this diagram addresses what we should focus on, whereas the right side of the image will drive the where.

[02:37:38] All of these considerations are important as we need input from all key stakeholders to make these decisions. We consider student interest, family and community feedback, and engagement with the business community, as well as our strategic plan, school leadership, and the budget process.

[02:37:57] This slide emphasizes a comprehensive approach to planning, incorporating feedback, and data from multiple stakeholders to create well-rounded educational programs. I do want to point out that the creation of these special programs and academies involve all departments in LCPS working together collaboratively. Last fall, we also shared a few guiding principles that we consider as we are making decisions around new opportunities. Whether expanding course offerings or launching special programs, we've developed a set of guiding principles to help prioritize our decisions.

[02:38:33] First, we have balance and consistency. We recognize that programs vary in scope. Some, like IB, are broad and replicable, while others, like our new Access Academy, serve more specialized needs. Our goal is to ensure a balanced portfolio of offerings that provide consistent access across the county.

[02:38:53] We want our programs to be responsive. We strive to design programs that reflect the evolving interests of students and families, while also aligning with the emerging needs of our local and regional industries. We want our programs aligned. Every program should support LCPS's vision and prepare students for real-world success academically, civically, and professionally.

[02:39:15] We want the programs to be sustainable. Programs must be built to last. That means having the staff, facilities, and long-term student interest to support them beyond individual champions. And finally, cost-effective. We're mindful of resources and strive to balance impact with the investment as we provide which opportunities to provide first.

[02:39:38] Last fall, we also shared a graphic to illustrate, at the time, three key considerations. For this presentation, we added a fourth consideration, and that is space. When we evaluate or look at expansion of a program, we focus on four key considerations.

[02:40:00] First budget, do we ensure financial sustainability while aligning resources with program priorities and projected growth? Second space, do we assess current facility capacity and future space needs to support program delivery and enrollment growth?

[02:40:16] Time and established realistic timeline for planning, implementation and evaluation phases. And finally scope, clarify what is included in the effort, how large or small the initiative is and what boundaries define it. These guide our feasibility assessment and ensure we stay aligned with long-term district goals and resources.

[02:40:35] Next, we have a slide that provides an overview of the estimated annual costs for special programs that are currently still in the implementation phase.

[02:40:55] The chart includes each program, the projected FY27 costs, current student enrollment, and the capacity once the program is fully implemented. We've also included a line item for estimated hub stop transportation costs which supports access to these programs across the division.

[02:41:14] These estimated estimates are intended to support long-term planning as these programs are not fully funded until we reach that full implementation. We showed this chart in the fall as well.

[02:41:30] This shows the programs that we have committed to on the left but that are not yet fully funded, such as DLI, HAMSci, and so on, as well as potential special or educational programs on the right. As we look ahead, it's essential that our next steps for expanding and refining special programs are taken in close collaboration with our career and technical education CTE team.

[02:42:04] Intentional coordination with Dr. Grubbs and the CTE department ensures that we are not duplicating efforts, but rather building a complimentary ecosystem of opportunities that meet the full range of student interests, career goals, and learning needs. This collaboration will help us align program development with workforce trends and industry needs, ensure access to both academic and career-focused pathways, and lastly, engage families and community partners in shaping programs that are relevant, sustainable, and future-ready. Ongoing community engagement

[02:42:44] will remain a priority as we continue to gather feedback, share updates, and build support for new and evolving programs. In September, we'll launch the Special Programs and Academies Interest Survey. The last one was completed in 2022. This survey will help us measure community awareness,

gather feedback on current offerings, engage interest in new areas such as fine arts, trades, and environmental science, to name just a few.

[02:43:19] To maximize participation, we plan to launch the survey in coordination with our two fall special program fairs, ensuring families have both the information and the opportunity to share their input.

[02:43:36] We're fortunate to have access to strong data through school links, which gives us valuable insight into student interests across the division. Currently, Health Sciences is the top career cluster selected by our secondary students. This interest is reflected in the strong application numbers for both the HamSci Academy and the MATA Intro to Health and Medical Sciences pathway. These trends confirm that our students are not only interested in this field, they're actively seeking out opportunities to explore it. This is another reason why continued

[02:44:12] collaboration between academic programs and the CTE team is so important. By aligning our special programs with high-interest career clusters, we can ensure that all students, whether they pursue a CTE pathway or a specialized academy, have access to meaningful, future-focused learning experiences. We've continued to strengthen our outreach efforts to ensure families are well informed about the wide range of special programs available in LCPS. Last September, we hosted two special program fairs featuring a student panel and breakout

[02:44:51] sessions for each high school program, providing families with direct access to program coordinators and current student participants. We streamlined the application process by consolidating all special program applications into the Student Opportunities Portal in LCPS Go, making it easier for families to navigate.

[02:45:15] Each program hosted at least one dedicated information night to engage families and answer questions. As a collective group, we also all attended and presented at all of the committee meetings such as MSAC, SEAC, and LEAF.

[02:45:32] Our special programs team visited all 8th grade classes to introduce students to the exciting opportunities available as they transition to high school. Every program now has a dedicated website with up-to-date information and resources.

[02:45:50] And currently, we're in the process of developing videos for each program that will be embedded into Course Planner, giving students and families another accessible way to learn about these options.

[02:46:10] So that concludes our presentation for today. And while we're happy to receive any feedback or questions about the content of the presentation we shared. We do have a few driving important questions that we would put on the table to help with the discussion. What are you hearing from your constituents related to special programs and our offerings? Where do you believe we should expand or innovate? And which student populations could we serve better through special programming? So I'll turn it back to you, Chair Mansfield.

[02:46:39] Thank you, Mr. Slevin. Can't help but notice that it's my district that doesn't have barely any special programs at all. In fact, I don't see any. So I don't, I'd like to rectify that of course. The other thing, Mata, I'm wondering, at this point it looks like we have, there's a huge, like, 2,239 students, but only 860 seats are available.

[02:47:11] How many seats did we have available when it was a standalone? I'm not sure, are you able to get that? We could get that information for you. Um, so we'd have to take that question. I'm just wondering, um, as we build things out, is it better to consider another standalone and then take that out and have, cause I see also we have AT and AOS.

[02:47:38] We only have 300 seats for both of them combined. Um, and I'm looking, okay, so how would we increase that, that, those, uh, that pathway? And I know that I hear a lot of, in my area, from my neighbors and constituents.

[02:47:59] I hear that they would prefer something more like TJ, that they stayed there because it's harder to get back and forth. So I would, as Ms. Clark mentioned in the presentation, while this presentation is specific to special program development, And it's important to remember that we also are taking a deep look at our CTE programming, and there are many similarities between this discussion and that one.

[02:48:31] And when you bring up MATA, I'm made to think about our five-year CTE plan that Dr. Grubbs and his team are developing. And what I appreciate about Dr. Grubbs' leadership in this past year has been the relationship he's built with the team at the Academies of Loudoun and MATA, and really thinking comprehensively about how those programs inform decision-making around programs at the local schools.

[02:48:57] What that means is are there, and we've talked about this before in previous special programs committees meetings and with the previous board about are there programs that could potentially be moved out of MATA into a local high school to make room for either a new CTE program or possibly expanding AET or AOS.

[02:49:17] Really, the process for that engagement and decision-making would be through as we bring that plan forward, giving staff that direction and that input. But we've heard it, and so those are some of the things we're thinking about in terms of are there programs we can move out of MATA to make room for new and innovative space programs or expanded offerings.

[02:49:38] I also like when we have been to a couple of field trips as a board member, one to see satellites and things, and then the other one to see, I know, a water sewage treatment plant. And there are a lot of CTE and apprenticeships kinds of things that we could be partnering with, possibly in a new environmental program.

[02:50:00] And I think that would be of, you know, solar, all of that, I think, is something to look into. And I'm excited that you guys actually have that and looking at that, not to mention data centers, but I'd rather the other. But before I move away from your comment regarding the Dulles District, I do want to make an explicit connection to the conversation we'll be having later this afternoon around boundaries.

[02:50:24] Part of the conversation that we talked about, we talked about the considerations with space being one of them. Part of the reason that we added that was recognizing that we need to make sure we have capacity for students that want to go to that school as we're developing these programs.

[02:50:41] So I'm sure the board is thinking about that, but when you think about currently rezoning and the attendance boundaries in Dulles South, that's a bigger conversation that we need to have as a school system. Perhaps looking at some of those littler, smaller schools, I don't know, that have a very small population, that we could expand something there.

[02:51:05] Aldi being one of them, that's, I know, in my district area, but I know you're smiling. But I'm just thinking outside the box. Any other questions? Yes. Dr. Deans.

[02:51:15] When we look at the table on slide, I don't know, current student enrollment, it's quite clear that the IB has a lot of interest, which could eventually evolve into not a TJ, but advanced students at different schools or across the county.

[02:51:50] And I think that when I've heard from the community, parents, they talk about the enrichment kinds of things for their bright students. You know, every mama thinks her child is the brightest in the world. But it is kind of evident with these numbers that we need more IB programs or more advanced programs.

[02:52:19] So we need to expand them to different schools. Having said that, I want to go back and say, I saw where you have alternative programs for elementary kids. Can you speak more on what that consists of and where that is located?

[02:52:39] I can speak generally that this is an initiative that was included in the FY26 budget, and I would defer to Ms. Richardson if you would like to add any context for Dr. Deans. Thank you, Mr. Slevin. You are correct that staffing for the new elementary alt ed program was included in the FY26 budget.

[02:53:03] The Department of Student Services is working collaboratively with the Department of School Leadership to identify the school locations as we look at our data across our elementary schools. So we'll be able to give the board an update at a later time. Along those lines, I'd like to say I encourage that to have our own alternative program for as many kids as we can, rather than place them outside of the system where we don't have as much control or oversight.

[02:53:39] So, yay, yay, I like that. Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think as far as opportunities for students, I'm sorry to get back into the CTE and trade types.

[02:53:57] And just to piggyback off Ms. Mansfield, I do think we need to do more CTE and trade programs. For example, I brought up the CAS program, being able to go do inspections on the schools. I just would like everybody to know that some of these programs, I'm not sure we'll be able to sustain them.

[02:54:17] Like, for example, slide 15, access and Academy of Global Linguistics, if they do not have the enrollment, I think you said they're evaluated every year. Is that correct? And I'm not done, but is that correct, Mr. Slevin?

[02:54:34] So policy includes an expectation of a progress update annually, and we currently do that through the special programs and centers committee. There is also a sunset provision where the programs need to be reauthorized every five years currently.

[02:54:50] So authorized every five years, but if we don't have the enrollment, we can't continue, we can't sustain having teachers and that sort of thing? In the event that we have concerns around student enrollment, this is something that staff monitors on a pretty regular basis.

[02:55:09] we would likely bring that forward to the superintendent to consider a recommendation to the board in terms of what we're doing with that program. So we wouldn't run a program if we didn't have students. Well, I mean, as far as the AGLS, I know it's affiliated with the Qatar Foundation, so I'm not sure what it's going to look like, and I guess we would have to reevaluate it.

[02:55:35] But students would need to qualify for these programs. If they do, it would require extensive transportation. I'm also concerned that we're getting away from the arts. Now, I've had several people speak to me about they're not doing plays, they might not be doing band because we're throwing out all these new programs and they don't have time to do those things.

[02:56:00] And I understand we took away credits from the arts as well, if you could explain that. But, you know, I think the Academy of Global Linguistic Studies and Access, you know, being for a year, should be re-evaluated. But also, CTE programs, getting back to that, and I apologize.

[02:56:18] I mean, I personally would like to see more trades as far as automotive. Ms. Mansfield mentioned sewer work. There was the water sewage treatment plant, and there was some, we found out that there was some, you know, oh, gosh, I'm sorry.

[02:56:37] Oh, I believe I was in that meeting with you, too. Apprenticeships and certifications that we could be exploring kind of a thing. Yes, yes. Stuff like that. I was in that meeting with you. That was in finance and operations. That was all fascinating to learn about. Any of that might be more applicable for our students rather than these other programs where we'd have to provide transportation.

[02:57:01] We should have them at the different schools. We can have some of these at the different schools. And as far as automotive, I'm going to throw this idea out there to you. Not necessarily, I mean, when I was growing up, we had gas cars. They weren't all electric and that sort of thing. The idea of our students working on their own cars, bringing their cars in that have the new technology.

[02:57:23] They could teach each other. They can learn how to fix cars. I don't know a lot of kids today that can change a tire. These are things that I think are very important in survival. If you have a flat tire somewhere out in the wilderness or wherever you are, you want to be able to change your tire. So simple things like that where we don't even have to bring in, buy a car and have them work on it. We can have kids bring in their own cars. If they're 16, 17 years old, they can learn that way. I'm just giving you an example, but these are the things as far as CTE

[02:57:57] and trade, HVAC, what Ms. Mansfield mentioned, the CAS program, I would really like to see them do inspections and learn about a lot of these things. So once they graduate out of the program, they are successful, they're able to get jobs and be independent.

[02:58:14] So these are all the things I'm thinking of. I'm not thinking of the Access Academy, and I'm not thinking of Academy of Global Linguistics, unfortunately. So again, we will check to see what the enrollment is for that. but I foresee that it's not going to have a lot of sustainability there.

[02:58:30] But these are just things to think about, and I appreciate the presentation. Thank you. I know Monroe Tech also did, like, build homes in the community, too, at one point. That still occurs. And that's still going on?

[02:58:46] Yes. Okay. And then I have Ms. Chandler. A number of things you said. I just want to first thank you for your support of CTE. And as you may recall from Dr. Grubb's presentation, One of the things that stood out to me was his acknowledgement that we are not at the level of CTE programming that a division our size could have.

[02:59:08] That being said, similar to special programs, we need to think about budget, we need to think about facilities and space, we need to think about time and scope. How big of a program do we want to

add? And so while we may agree, for example, that we could have another auto collision program or an HVAC program, that takes specialized space that we would need to plan for.

[02:59:34] We would need to either remove something from an existing space or seek additional opportunities. So that's why conversations like this, setting us up for budget conversations in the CIP are so important. And that's just a great example of taking our time with our decisions as we have a lot of different things coming up at us as a system but at the end of the day we really appreciate your support of the expansion of CTE programming. Ms. Chandler. Thank you Madam Chair and thank you so much for the presentation. This is an exciting conversation and one that I'm very happy to engage in.

[03:00:07] Going back to question number one I will speak for my constituents and let you know that what I'm hearing from them is that they are very excited about the Academy of Global Linguistics it's Linguistics and Access Academy. I've actually heard from some parents who are disappointed that their kids didn't get in to Access already, and we're really trying to understand how that came about this year, and what the opportunities might continue to be in the future.

[03:00:41] So, in looking at this, I know we're trying not to focus on CTE in this conversation, But just for the last part of what I intend to say, I will say, I do also hear from my constituents that they're looking forward to that expansion and maybe having more localized access to some of these programs.

[03:01:00] But that's something we'll look forward to continuing to discuss as the five-year plan evolves. So thank you. Dr. Rasheed, and then Ms. LaBelle, and then Mr. Streffi, and help keep me honest on that. Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Mr. Sevin.

[03:01:17] Thank you, Ms. Clark. - This information was very enlightening. And again, it makes me really excited, especially to see, as I mentioned before, the data about all the students once the results start rolling in, especially since they completed their first year in some of the new programs that came about.

[03:01:35] I wanted to say, I got some interest from constituents about law. I know there's a law program under MATA, and I think, Mr. Sullivan, I think we had mentioned this as a side conversation, But it would be great to have any of the districts, something more, I guess, developed with the law program, especially since we're so close to D.C., I think that would be extremely helpful.

[03:01:58] I know we had a student on the dais from, if I'm not mistaken, Briarwood, or no, from Independence, and he was interested in doing law, and I know we spoke about that as a side conversation. So it's something I would love to see, especially since we live in such an area that's close to Washington.

[03:02:17] Miss Labelle. Miss Labelle, your microphone. Yeah. Hello. She can't reach me. About Matt, not Matt, Monroe. Back before Matt became a program here, annually they could take in about

[03:02:50] 125 students a year. So that was one of the big problems. It couldn't provide enough seats for all the students that really wanted it countywide. And as the county grew, it was even worse. And they said, oh, well, the new academy is allowed and we're going to be able to double that.

[03:03:09] And I thought, well, big whoop, I mean, 225 every year, you know, for a population of 83,000 students isn't that much. So that's why I've been very, very strong about trying to get some of the CTE back into the high school where more students can access it.

[03:03:28] So that was the first thing. So my question for you, Mr. Slevin, would be for question number two. If we were to take the MATA programs out of AOL, how much more room would that give you in the

AOL building?

[03:03:44] And if we could find another space or put many of these things back into the high schools, how many more people do you think we could, or students, I apologize, do you think we could serve?

[03:04:01] - So, looking at the slide 10, which is the Special Programs Admissions Trends, There are currently 860 seats for MATA at the Academies of Loudoun. And so to keep it simple, we would assume 860 seats of programming.

[03:04:19] That being said, we also recognize that CTE does have some very specific code requirements related to class size, and so it may vary depending on the type of program that would be in there. There are also, as you know, the Academies was built to serve the purpose that it's currently serving.

[03:04:37] there are some very specialized spaces that were considered in the building of that building. And so to replicate that at local high schools, while there are some programs that we could move by simply moving some equipment, it would also be an infrastructure conversation.

[03:04:53] - Okay, I understand that obviously the automotive collision repair and auto body, as well as the greenhouse classes would have to stay there. That I am aware of. If we could replicate one or the other someplace else, that would also be helpful because more students could then apply to those places.

[03:05:12] So that would be a good option. - And that is one of the considerations that's driving the development of both our special programs and our CTE work related to oversubscribed programs. And so if we have a significant, for example, we have a significant number of students interested in our certified nurse aid program that we're not able to meet that demand.

[03:05:36] So I'm not entirely sure what's gonna come out in the first or second year of the CTE five-year plan, but it's likely that there'll be some conversation about trying to provide additional access to that program, whether it's at MATA or at another school, to try to be responsive of that student interest.

[03:05:55] - Thank you. - Mr. Streffy. - Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Slevin, Ms. Clark. Appreciate the opportunity to talk about special programs in addition to our committee. When it comes to CTE, I won't talk about that.

[03:06:11] I'll only say that I think that we're thinking about CTE in all the right ways now, and we're kind of down that path. And so I'm excited about what's going to come. I am very interested in the conversation of expanding the academies.

[03:06:27] And I say, I don't want to use the words, take MATA out. I just think we should explore expanding the academies. I think that that is a really good conversation to have. I don't know what all the details and nuts and bolts are. I understand space, and I don't know what the dynamics of expanding the campus versus having another location, or whether it would be MATA that we expand outside of the campus or be something else, but that's a really exciting conversation.

[03:06:55] I also think that, to answer your question, in terms of constituents, very high demand for dual language immersion. And even to the extent that constituents are comparing with other counties, right, the opportunity to have students take Korean or Japanese or some of the other languages that neighboring counties have.

[03:07:17] I think that the Academy of Global Linguistics has checked so many of those boxes off for me, personally. I'm very, initially I had lots of questions about the Global Linguistics Academy, but then I'm

just, I think I'm one of, it's also one of its biggest advocates because it's It's such a distinctive, unique opportunity that no one else in the region really has.

[03:07:43] And another thing that I think I've said before related to kind of this philosophy around special programs, it's really hard on a yearly basis to keep reinventing our board philosophy around special programs. I think that if we had some principles that we could kind of agree to, It might help the division to better plan for the years ahead because these are large investments.

[03:08:10] And I feel like, you know, frankly, I feel like we are – discussions are great, but I think every few months we kind of have this, you know, discussion, free-form discussion of all of our opinions, right? And a lot of them are driven by new data points as well that you all bring up.

[03:08:28] So I think it might be worthwhile to talk about how we could maybe have some consensus on principles. So for me, that would mean maybe no new big flavors of special programs for a while. We have lots of amazing programs.

[03:08:45] We cover a lot of bases. I think the combination of what we're doing in CTE and what we already have, expanding them and making them more accessible and robust, I think is going to be the formula for me. So that's one of the principles I just wanted to share. and then outside of that I love the community outreach it just keeping the focus on community outreach for special programs and just yet the the fact that you all are developing kind of curated videos that are accessible to students because that's how I would process this I I wouldn't want to sit in the auditorium although those are great presentations but just being able to sit down with my family and go through kind of a curated experience of videos to then

[03:09:24] and talk through, I think, is ingenious. Thank you. - Anybody else? Yes, Ms. Chandler. - I'd just like to add to what Mr. Estreffi said and thank him for bringing up the student survey.

[03:09:39] That was the piece in sort of reviewing all the materials yesterday that stood out to me. I feel very enthusiastic about the fact that we're actually gonna ask students what is interesting to them. I know the timeline and making those, it might not work out for every student, but I think it's a great way to determine what is important to students in general.

[03:10:02] And I think that should be something that we consider for all of our programs, including the CAST program, is really seeking that voice and choice and giving kids the opportunity to let us know how we can serve them better. So I'll be really excited to see the results of that.

[03:10:18] Thank you. - I will have to say though for the language, there was a lot that wanted Japanese and we did not go for that. So I think that, yeah, survey, but then we should probably listen as well.

[03:10:38] So I agree with the choice. Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to go back and reiterate a little bit the programs, the AGLS and the ACCESS. Those are for kids that are looking to go to college. Not everybody's going to go to college.

[03:10:54] So that's why I just wanted to reiterate that. Ms. Chandler mentioned CAST. I don't know that a lot of those kids are going to go to college. We really, as school board members, we really need to make sure our kids, our students, not our kids, our students are successful once they leave our programs or graduate out of our programs.

[03:11:14] I think CAS goes up to 22, correct? We need to make sure we're working with these students to make sure they're successful and they can live independently. And that's going to be more likely with the trades, not a global linguistics program or Access Academy.

[03:11:32] So I just wanted to reiterate that if I didn't clarify that before. Thank you. Could you tell us a little bit about Access? I seem to remember that they are on the regular track. Like, it's not an advanced track, but it's a...

[03:11:51] Yes, that's correct. The programming for that is a standard diploma for the Access Academy. Anybody else? Yes. Just a comment about Access Academy. I know it's grant-funded as well, and so there's kind of this review process that we have for, I guess, We've talked about this, Mr. Slevin, around how we look at maturing programs that are originally grant-funded, and so that there will be opportunities to kind of look at maturing that into LCPS in the years down the line.

[03:12:24] So the Access Academy is unique in that it is a governor's lab school, and actually George Mason is the holder of the grant. And so LCPS, while a partner of George Mason and Northern Virginia Community College, the funding body is George Mason.

[03:12:42] We do have a local, half an FTE that funds the LCPS coordinator. So while, yes, it is grant funded, it's different than many of our LCPS grants. But we do need to have continued conversations with Mason about the funding for the program and keep the board apprised of that.

[03:13:03] Would you add anything to that? Discussion questions? Thank you so much. thank you we appreciate the dialogue um and it looks like we're right on time about 1 15 with

[03:13:19] our budget priorities brainstorm with miss willoughby chief financial officer thank you and this will actually be a joint presentation with mr lewis as well so building on the discussion

[03:13:59] that you were just having regarding the programs a word that kept coming up was the budget the budget and the budget impact and what i wanted to start with was just to really kind of ground us in terms of what we mean when we talk about the budget because there's actually two budgets that the school board takes action on each year.

[03:14:19] First is the operating budget, which is in the first column. That operating budget encompasses the funds of the school operating fund, which is our main fund that we're typically talking about the most. It also includes the school nutrition fund, the lease purchase fund, grant funds, and our self-insurance funds.

[03:14:38] The type of activities that is being budgeted in the operating budget are the personnel and the supplies and the services that is required to operate the school system every day. So really the daily operations, the recurring daily operations are budgeted here.

[03:14:57] And the funding source across all those funds really span the whole gamut of county and local funds as well as state and federal. With the capital budget, that budget is encompassing The Capital Improvement Program Fund, or the CIP, as well as the Capital Asset Preservation Program Fund, or the CAP.

[03:15:17] The type of activities that are being budgeted here are for those one-time large dollar investments in facilities and major equipment such as the bus purchases. So the construction and renovation of facilities, land acquisition, as well as the renewal and alteration program.

[03:15:37] For the CAP specifically, it's addressing major maintenance and replacements that have a value over \$10,000 and will also have a lifespan of over 10 years. The funding source for the capital budget is predominantly bond sales that the county issues, as well as county and state federal, county funding as well as state and federal grants.

[03:16:01] Because the ideas that school board members can come up with during the budget process can hit either area, We really wanted to highlight these two areas. A recent example would be the transition center, where we needed to identify a location that would be in the capital budget, but then the personnel and the materials and the resources to operate the transition center would reside in the operating budget.

[03:16:27] In terms of the timeline, there's also two different timelines that overlap when we talk about the budget. On top is the CIP and the cap budget development, so the capital budget process.

[03:16:42] And you'll see on the far left, we're starting with today, with our June school board retreat. So we are all talking about the FY27 budget cycle and for the CAP and the CIP, actually, the five-year program. So we'll start that off now, today.

[03:16:59] Mr. Lewis and I both have exercises to obtain feedback to talk about the budget and obtain your priorities. And with the capital budget, the school board work sessions will be held in the fall, which is also right around the corner. just in a couple of months and then the school board adopts the capital budget in December concurrently we have the operating budget development happening and as you may recall the school board work sessions for that occurs in January with the adoption occurring in February

[03:17:33] and so this is why it's also really important to have an awareness of the different timelines and also understanding of where your priorities may land so that Mr. Lewis and I can make sure we have it captured in the correct budget so I'm going to start with the operating budget and I wanted to just do a recap of what the school board adopted for the upcoming school year for the school operating fund and so there's a lot of numbers on here but if you just kind of focus on the second to last column it shows where and I see the formatting kind of wraps the number

[03:18:11] but the budget increased 137.4 million dollars or 7.5 percent and that our increase in the county transfer was \$113.9 million, representing a 9% increase. Specifically for the \$113.9, that represented approximately 60% of the local tax funding that was available, even with the Board of Supervisors reducing the property tax rate. I'll also highlight that you may recall that this budget projected a relatively flat enrollment compared to our actual, and so again,

[03:18:49] And even with a flat enrollment, we still saw a budget increase of 7.5% to fund all the very important investments that was included in this budget. When we build our budget, our school operating fund is built to balance with the projected total revenues.

[03:19:07] At the end of the day, it must be a balanced budget that the school board adopts. The projected revenues will include state funding that will be included in the state's new biennium budget, 60% of the projected county local tax funding, and other revenue projections projections from charges and fees how to build the expenditure side will be focused on the school board's high level direction regarding investments and identification of priorities which leads me to the first feedback opportunity for the school board and you may recall this is

[03:19:43] going to be the same question that we had last year which is we have a scale on on one side of scale we have compensation, on the other side of the scale we have all the other investments. The question

would be, do we target an even distribution of projected revenues equally between compensation and other investments, or would you want to tip the scale slightly more towards compensation, or vice versa, to tip the scale more towards other investments?

[03:20:15] As noted in the little bubble burst on the slide that for the FY26 budget, the final budget ultimately landed with 60% of the budget increase invested in compensation and this was in line with the feedback that we did receive from the school board which was to tip the scale slightly towards compensation.

[03:20:37] As I mentioned compensation, I must highlight though that the only time that we're going to talk about compensation is going to be on this slide and it's going to be at this very high level and that is because with collective bargaining we cannot discuss anything more specifically so any other discussions about salaries a cola a step increase stipends benefits retiree health leave opportunities cannot be discussed so what I would ask share if you don't mind is if we could just get feedback similar to what we did last year of each person sharing out how they

[03:21:16] would distribute either equally or more towards compensation or more towards other investments please you must just go down the line okay for me I think that I would like to build out some of our ongoing investments as well as like the new after-school program I think I'd like to focus a little bit more on the

[03:21:47] students and those kinds of things right now um specifically because we don't have we can't okay um vice chair donahue mr stravy stop me if i say anything off topic i know because we can't really discuss um i would like to tip the scales similar to last budget seasons tip the scales towards compensation because i believe that even though we did that we still made enough room for some really key investments outside of the compensation bucket and we were able to get so much done so

[03:22:26] I think that if we kept something similar always keeping our eye on our ability to recruit and retain great teachers and staff in this division I think that's going to be key and just remembering conversations around how we compete with other divisions I think it'll remain important and then we had a conversation earlier about key positions and just some ideas that are bubbling up in my head that you guys are probably already have had in yours around maybe building out our own programs to put people into those pipelines that are incentivized through some

[03:23:04] type of a compensation structure. I'll stop there. Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the question. I agree with Mr. Streffi. I was 60, 40 last year compensation. I'd probably even go higher on compensation.

[03:23:20] I still feel like we have some right sizing to do in terms of paying the people that take care of our kids. So every day, and that goes across all departments. That's not just teachers, that's, you know, bus drivers, and we've made great strides there. And our nutrition workers, it also now extends to benefits and things that I didn't really understand that were all part of that process.

[03:23:43] So as we deepen our knowledge there, I expect to see action and results that tip that way. Thank you. Dr. Rasheed. I, you know, thank you so much for providing all this detail.

[03:23:59] I'm actually very excited to see the effects and the differences that will come about after presenting all these funds. I do want to see something along the lines of with teacher salaries. Again, I'm really concentrating on that.

[03:24:16] I have been since I got sworn in, but I really want to concentrate on that. But I'm looking to see progress, and I know we have already. I understand there was a percentage increase, but for me, that's still on my concern list, so to say. Thank you. Ms. LaValle.

[03:24:33] Thank you, Madam Chair. My first concern with everything in this school board are the students. I think what we need to focus on is providing them with the best instruction, the best teachers, compensation.

[03:24:51] So I would like to see that emphasized in our budget 60 40 is okay but again we we can if we have a safe place that we can sit and gather with students we can teach any good teacher can do that so I think that's the focus is getting the good teachers and the good services for our students thank you dr. deans I think because we are in such close proximity to surrounding school districts our teachers go and come

[03:25:30] too often to other districts so I think that I think that we need to focus on getting teacher salaries and benefits commensurate with surrounding school districts so that it won't be so easy for them to go income. And if that is so, then I guess I'm saying focus on on employee salaries.

[03:26:01] Ms. Chandler. Thank you. I would also reiterate what my colleagues have said. When it comes to my priorities, I'd like to continue to focus on putting students first by investing in staff compensation I and this again I think will be at just as relevant in our next session but one of the things that I'm hearing a great deal for my constituents is a desire to see LCPS as a whole shift away from always looking at a growth model and make sure that we're utilizing our schools effectively and

[03:26:36] efficiently and then look towards updating some of the facilities that we already have to make sure that they're world-class facilities as well thank you miss Chandler you meant growth model as far as like not doing more schools and okay yeah not not just continuing to look to add more seats but to make sure that each building that we have is utilizing the available seats in an efficient way I think I'm just like growth I think map so mrs. Griffiths thank you madam chair and just to piggyback a little bit off miss

[03:27:11] chandler um i don't think we need to really support new investments um we need to focus on our teachers compensation and renovations to existing schools and and put a stop to introducing new investments uh to fund um even though the bos lowers the tax rate our home assessments go up every year and therefore our taxes go up every year uh people can't afford to live here um we do have to think of our teachers not to mention the county takes in hundreds of millions from data centers I think it's very important to focus on compensation and renovations for health and

[03:27:50] safety of our students so as far as the compensation goes we need the teachers for our students and then renovations health and safety thank you I think when I said what I said earlier I just want to be sure I just want everybody to know that of course I want more compensation for teachers but i didn't feel like that was part of our role anymore honestly i guess at a high level maybe but that's all collective bargaining so i don't know how much control and again you're absolutely correct this is just a really high level that we need some type of blueprint of

[03:28:28] how we move forward even as we go down the road with collective bargaining and we have those discussions of what our directive is in terms of setting perhaps caps or ranges of funding amounts so that we're not going into the collective bargaining table blind.

[03:28:49] So this has been extremely helpful, again, of giving that feedback in terms of where that high-level priority is. When we also build a budget, we also use three investment categories that you may recall from from this time last year as well to help prioritize the numerous ideas that will be brought up we group costs associated with continuity of operations as the top priority these are the basics to keep schools operating the people the supplies the resources next and priority are

[03:29:25] ongoing investments and those are going to be those investments that were already approved by the school board but may have like a next phase associated with it or an expansion with that investment and then lastly on the list would be new investments and those are something that would be newly introduced to the budget and operations that are grouped there you may recall from last year that the continuity of operations and ongoing investments take up a significant piece of the pie

[03:29:57] only leaving a smaller piece of the funding pie available for new investments on this slide I've taken the opportunity to identify the priorities that this school board identified for us when we were talking about the development of the FY26 budget.

[03:30:17] So through the June work session and the fall work session last year, these were the priorities identified. And you may recall that some level of funding or resources to support every initiative that was identified as being top initiatives were included in the FY26 budget.

[03:30:39] That means that those costs are now in the base budget for FY27 and are either continuity of operations or may appear as an ongoing investment if the item had a multiyear rollout. Our review identifies approximately 6.4 million would be needed for items that were in the FY26 budget and have a next phase or expansion plan for FY27.

[03:31:05] And you can see, again, just high-level, rough estimate of what those items were and the additional FTE to support the next phase. Building on that, another priority of the county board of supervisors and the school board has been to reduce and or eliminate charges, helping to ensure an equitable student access and experience.

[03:31:31] So on this slide, you will see how when this was first discussed several years ago, this isn't something that is just resolved in one budget year. It's something that's going to take several years and will likely take several years going forward.

[03:31:47] But we did our best to identify either direct reduction or elimination of fees in the first column or other indirect supports. So, for example, in FY19, we introduced a differentiated allotment, and that's an allotment that is available to schools to offset fees such as a field trip for a family that may experience need.

[03:32:11] In FY20, we reduced the athletic fee in half. In 21, we introduced increasing the fine arts allotment. In 22, LCPS began covering the first four AP tests for our high schoolers.

[03:32:27] That same year, we also introduced the new teacher classroom supply allotment. In 23, we eliminated the student parking fee entirely. In that same year, we added new fine arts stipend as well as increased the existing stipends.

[03:32:45] In FY24, we further eliminated the athletic participation fee. And then we also identified 6th and 7th grade music books as something that the division would cover versus charging families for. For

this current budget year, we provided an activity allotment to offset student fees for non-athletic, co- and extracurricular activities.

[03:33:11] And then included in the budget for next year that the school board approved was eliminating fees for supplemental CTE materials. And I'm sure there could be some other examples we may have missed, especially on the indirect supports. But I think this highlights the commitment of the school board to reduce student fees and charges.

[03:33:35] Associated with that, you'll notice that there is a notice of a new at-promise indicators. For the upcoming school year, LCPS will introduce two new voluntary demographic questions for families, known as the at-promise indicators. Previously, the free and reduced meal indicator was used to identify student needs.

[03:33:54] But even when this indicator was able to be used, it often understated need in Loudoun County. So the need for an available, more comprehensive indicator was identified, and as a result, the socioeconomic status work group was formed in November of 2023.

[03:34:11] Over the past year, this work group reviewed and discussed various indicators used by other states and school divisions. From this work, they developed a draft of Loudoun's own at-promise indicators. These new indicators will combine multiple factors that provide a more complete view of the potential needs and promise of LCPS students and families.

[03:34:31] With this better understanding, LCPS will be more effective in supporting students and families. At the school level, these indicators will help principals identify students who may need additional support and resources. Data collected through these new indicators during the upcoming school year will also inform future efforts to target for fee reduction or elimination.

[03:34:54] So all of this has been shared, all this information regarding the priorities and actions to help you as we move into our next budget activity. And so you may notice you have a small stack of post-it notes in front of you.

[03:35:12] And I'm going to give you a few minutes to identify your top three operating budget, emphasis operating budget. Mr. Lewis will give you a feedback opportunity for the capital budget. so again these are the items associated with the daily operations of the school so if you can take a few minutes and write one idea per post-it note of what your top three priorities would be if you could also put your initials in the corner of the each post-it note that would be helpful after a few minutes we'll open the floor up to for each school board member to share

[03:35:51] um briefly what their top three identified priorities are and then with that we will take this information back to organize and return um in the fall at the next budget work session to discuss further prioritizing um the the items that the school board brainstorms right now so with that i'll just watch the clock for a few minutes i almost forgot i have a big post or

[03:36:29] big note here what not to include in addition to not including the capital again do not include anything related to compensation so nothing with salaries stipends benefits this would be anything else people resources materials programs those are the items that could no compensation

[03:36:54] but items that could be would be people resources programs supplies services i get a thumbs up if

[03:39:53] y'all need more time or if you're done if you need more time you guys good okay so I guess I'll [03:40:44] start hope I did this right problem with me is that that we put a lot in place last year and I kind of want to see that those continue um including like I want to the after school pilot program I kind of want to see that built out and continue we don't know what that even looks like right now so um and the transition school right that's my other one um build out again we don't know what that kind of looks looks like but rather than adding anything else i kind of want to see

[03:41:18] the one thing i guess i don't even operationally i want to see a better i see more structured or something mtss at the middle school level and i don't know if that's what this is for or not but But I feel like literacy as well as, and I know y'all are already looking at it during the guidance time at the schools.

[03:41:49] I want, I don't know what you would call that, but I just have MTSS and literacy at middle schools if that will help. So those are my three. Vice Chair Donohue. I wrote down after school programs, alternative school, and bus driver recruitment retention.

[03:42:14] Thank you. So my three are, first one is staffing ratios, Title I supports, and flexible staffing, all grouped into one.

[03:42:31] Anytime you ever ask me, you know, what's my first priority, I'll always double down on that. And then number two would be along the lines of what Chair Mansfield mentioned, continuing our current investments.

[03:42:46] And, you know, I think we've identified the right things to invest in. We just need to see them through. And then the third thing would be CTE and special programs, whether that's continuing the investments into special programs that we've made or giving life to this new direction for CTE within the division.

[03:43:09] I think that it's going to take some more investment. So those are the three. Me sure enough. Thank you, Madam Chair. Kind of also in sort of in line with what Mr. Streffi is saying, I want to take flexible staffing even a step further.

[03:43:27] I think one of the biggest things we're struggling with and one of the things I saw this year is, while we increased the flexible staffing in an amazing way, what we're seeing with the way the staffing standards are tied to enrollment and for different various things that they're tied to, even with flexible staffing, we can't make up that attrition gap.

[03:43:48] And so we kind of end up in sort of a level place. Like, it's great that we can compensate for the drop in enrollment. And I know that that is sometimes a concern of the community. But I would really like to see us take a fulsome look at adjusting some of these staffing standards.

[03:44:03] And I'm going to take a second to just address a couple that I'm concerned about. So I'm also cheating. I think we're looking at adjusting middle school schedules through the curriculum and instruction committee. And that might have some budget impact in terms of staffing. and I think this ties in with your MTSS plug and literacy also for middle school is going to have a huge lift this next year. They're administering a new literacy assessment. They are also, they have one literacy specialist per middle school, so I think we're going to see some heavy burden put there, and we're also already seeing it with their intervention needs, and we're relying on digital

[03:44:41] programs to meet those needs, and I think we need people, and I, we've talked a lot about elementary master schedules with librarians not necessarily tied as in as a special itself so I would like to see some work maybe possibly done around that I have also talked to many of our teachers in the arts where the staffing is contingent on how many kids are in the program and I sort of have if you build it they will come approach where if you right size the staffing and then they have that consistency and that assurance that they're staying and not getting split or moved every year they can really focus on building a substantial program that kids want to be a part of.

[03:45:20] And so I think kind of reversing that philosophy, I am hoping to see some strides in that area. I also think with the increased emphasis on English language learners as part of accreditation, that I think we're going to need to see an increase in the coaching model and the co-teaching model.

[03:45:37] And so I think that's going to require staffing, particularly at our elementary levels. If we're going to really do co-teaching right, we need bodies. and we need really highly trained bodies so I want to see some of these staffing standards really evaluated and looked at for needs and not numbers so that's kind of like the big dream fine arts fees is like the small dream but we're also running that through our curriculum and instruction committee and I know they're doing a great job gathering those information points for us to be able to make some sound budget decisions so looking at that and then I'm always going to also put in a plug for transportation incentives because those early start times

[03:46:15] continue to plague our families, so thank you. - Dr. Rasheed. - Thank you, Chair, just to... Ms. Chernoff took a little bit of my thunder. Bus transportation was one of the ones that she had mentioned, so that was one of my three that I wanted to share.

[03:46:36] The other one was, it was extra training for, from what was described to me, self-contained assistance to become behavioral assistants in that case. I went to Sanders Corner Elementary earlier this year and they face a lot of challenges, so it'd be great to have that get concentrated on.

[03:46:59] The other one was, and I'm jumping here and there, the other one was the American Sign Language. I know that there are some challenges with that, and in general special programs. I'm a little biased 'cause of special programs, but with American Sign Language, I know that it is a little bit challenging, especially in getting educators for that.

[03:47:19] So that would be another thing for us to concentrate on. For now, those are my three, I do have others, but if I could nitpick which ones, those are my three. Thank you. - Ms. LaBelle. - Thank you, Ms. Nansfield.

[03:47:37] Obviously, my first concern is first and always for our transition center. I'd like to see things move forward with that and have expanding pre-staffing and things like that for the Transition Center. My second love of my life, of course, is CTE.

[03:47:55] And I'd like to see that move forward with more opportunities countywide for our students to get access to programs. And we talked about that quite a bit today, I think. And the third thing is the teacher shortages that we're seeing in special ed.

[03:48:14] I think we need to see more opportunity for our non class, what's the word I'm looking for, our assistance in special ed programs or people that are very sympathetic and want to volunteer to have opportunities, lane changes, like if you're working in a co-teaching session with an English teacher and

you're the SPED teacher and suddenly the other teacher is becoming more and more interested in moving into becoming

[03:48:49] Certified in special ed those kinds of programs for our teachers for our assistance to be able to get help in accessing Coursework that will help them get that done. That's another good source of people who've already worked with sped kids Have an idea of what they're going into and would make wonderful teachers. So those are my three Dr. Dean's I would like to see

[03:49:20] us solidify the sustainability of current academic programs that are already in existence. I think since we just got the monitoring, the progress monitoring committee, that maybe that has not been done as much in the past as need be, so I'd like for us to look at them.

[03:49:44] And we should, as a result of that, we should reduce or eliminate classes or programs that do not serve a representative number of students. And I know when teachers are teaching something, they hang on to it because they love it or they like it, but maybe some of those classes can be combined.

[03:50:06] For an example, some of the African American history classes, if you've got five students, then those students need to take that class at the high school next to it, not hold up one teacher to teach five.

[03:50:22] And you know that African-American studies is very special to me. But when those classes get so small, they should be eliminated in some creative way for the students to learn or get that information. And then the third thing is collaborate with local colleges and universities to hold teacher certification programs within LCPS.

[03:50:47] And I know we have collaborations with James Madison and what have you. but are we teaching some of those classes at XYZ Middle School at 4 o'clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays so that teachers can stay within the district and go to their classes?

[03:51:06] I think that is an encouraging or an incentive for the teacher assistants and other teachers who need that certification to get it. So those are my thoughts. Ms. Chandler. Thank you. First and foremost, I think it would look to invest in supports that help students, whether it be behavioral supports, special education supports, mental health supports, school counseling, ways in which we can really ensure that we're setting our students up for success.

[03:51:42] I think our families would appreciate a continued reduction in student-related fees. And then I think it's wise to continue to invest in sustainability efforts that actually generate cost savings over time.

[03:51:58] You know, having one school that's zero energy bill is a good investment, and there's a lot of potential for us to harness savings and to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[03:52:15] I'm trying to remember if you said renovations. I can mention renovations, or is that strictly CIP? That would be capital. Okay. Well, I was going to say with the renovations, it would come in line with the CTE and trade programs because we would build up on that, and that would be possibly renovations in our schools and also the transition school as well.

[03:52:42] But also I know, Ms. Willoughby, We've discussed booster funds. I'm also interested in seeing a lot of more opportunities for the arts. And in doing that, it's probably a conversation for Mr. Slevin, but more of a requirement for kids to graduate, maybe taking an arts class, theater, or whatever it is.

[03:53:08] I feel like because we're going so much with the special programs, we're losing that a little bit. So when I say CTE and trade, I want to get away from all these extra special programs and just stick with what we have right now because I feel like we're losing kids that might be interested in the arts.

[03:53:28] And anything we have to do to save the arts and push that area because I know a lot of kids would like to be involved in the arts, but it's not a requirement anymore. Way to shut me up, huh?

[03:53:46] I guess that means all of us go out. Do I need to say anything about the school board meeting? We'll be recessed.

[04:01:04] All right, I'm not going to be mad about that.

[04:05:52] Right. I agree. Hey, baby, let's talk. Let me know when we'll give you a call tomorrow around this time. Thanks a lot, Janet.

[04:06:09] I'll talk to you soon. All right.

[04:06:26] Sorry for that excitement.

[04:07:29] The board's now coming out of recess again after a little break. Mrs. Griffiths, you are in the middle of talking. Would you like to say to finish up? I think, thank you, Madam Chair. I think I got everything I needed to say.

[04:07:46] Just to reiterate, it was, you know, I mentioned renovations, but also the CTE and trade with the renovations, and expanded, of course, getting away from special programs and all the new stuff. I really do like the HAMSI program, which is health, and some of the programs we have already, IB, but getting away from new special programs, I don't think we should be going that route.

[04:08:12] And of course, the transition school, and I mentioned booster, I'm allowed to mention booster, okay, booster funds, okay, instruments, the arts, and Mr. Slevin and I will have a conversation about the arts and classes students need to take to graduate and that sort of thing.

[04:08:35] I feel like, I think it dropped to one credit, two credits. You might have to correct me on that later. But these are the things that I think are help in achievement, help our students. And it's a health and safety thing when it gets to the renovations.

[04:08:51] But that was it. Thank you so much for coming back to me. All right. Ms. Willoughby. So if you will hold on to your post-it notes, later on we will collect your notes to help us really again identify the themes this feedback opportunity is really important to adding to our blueprint for building the budget and will like I said help us broaden the discussion in the fall there's a couple other items so that caps off the school operating fund but as I had mentioned on

[04:09:27] the very first slide there are other funds that are being approved in February when the school board adopts the operating budget so I wanted to touch on those funds and then before turning it over to mr. Lewis to talk about the capital budget also allow the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the school operating fund budget process and these other funds so with our other funds we have our grant fund as it mentions there we we do a projection of what we think our grant awards are going to be for the upcoming year and then we align the expenses to match you may recall especially during this year it is in the grant fund where

[04:10:05] we see the biggest well one of the biggest impacts related to federal funding especially with our special education funding so this would be an area we would continue to watch as we develop the budget if there are any federal funding impacts and then make any adjustments as necessary as we develop the FY27 budget we also have the lease purchase fund there's not a lot that happens here it's pretty fixed every year that we lease we do a lease up to the maximum of 10 million and is just a valuable funding stream to purchase capital technology and vehicle equipment

[04:10:41] we also have our school nutrition fund this is a fund that is also heavily impacted from federal funding and would be another area we continue to watch currently the school nutrition fund is relying on our excess fund balance that was generated during the pandemic era however we continue to look at efficiencies and ways to reduce costs while also increasing revenues from increased meal participation you may recall for for this upcoming school year we have another meal price increase we had one the year prior and as this slide indicates we we are projecting that

[04:11:20] We will continue to increase meal prices in the foreseeable future. Our self-insurance funds, there are four. This highlights three of them. Our workers' comp, our short-term disability, and our VLDP program.

[04:11:37] These are all projected claims for the upcoming year that we look at our historical trends as well as we work with our consultant to determine what we should budget in terms of funding to support those claims. All three are funded from a school operating fund transfer.

[04:11:54] So there is a relationship between these funds and the school operating fund. And then lastly is our health self-insurance fund. As you're aware, this fund is capturing the costs related to our medical, vision, dental, and pharmacy costs primarily.

[04:12:10] The funding is coming from premiums from the employer share as well as the employee and also our retirees. We also have some significant funding coming from rebates. As noted here as well, we do expect premium increases will continue.

[04:12:26] and likely accelerate as we go forward however because this is related to collective bargaining that's all I'm going to say about that other than that we will talk about the history of the health self-insurance fund and just information only about the retiree health benefit during the special committee meetings that will begin in August and so with that as I mentioned before I turn it over to Mr. Lewis to talk about the capital budget I would be free to answer any

[04:12:57] questions you may have at this point. Any questions? Mr. Lewis. So we're ready to talk about the capital budget. Afternoon everyone. So today we're going to talk a little bit about, as Ms. Willoughby did for the operating budget, we want to talk about and get a feel for what your priorities are for the capital budget. And just as a reminder, this is a slide you've seen a number of times that goes

[04:13:35] over the different categories of projects that we have and the types of projects under those categories. And we do that to try to make the capital budget, which is a huge document, a little more easy to comprehend and understand and find what you're looking for. And I will also say that we are looking for some refinements this year with our staff to try to make that even easier moving forward. So this slide is one you've seen before. On the left-hand panel, you will see the exercise that you did last year in this room where we ask you to identify with a dot system of where your priorities were. And we took that exercise and created the list that you see on the right-hand

[04:14:14] side that shows with a point category of where your priorities were, beginning with independent living labs, recovery schools, school renovation and replacement, fine arts, and the like all the way down. And you'll see the points that were accredited to the corporate board itself, not individual board members, but all the board members together collectively created that point scoring. So what we want to do today was to start off with a recap of where we are with those priorities that you provided us so we took those in order and provided this this chart and so you'll see that your number one priority was the independent

[04:14:49] living labs and the progress so far with CIP is approved in the FY 26 so in July of this year in a couple or less than a month we'll get funding to begin the programming and design of those projects across the county and all the middle schools and high schools the recovery school we're very happy to say that we've We've secured the location, and we have some minor operating, little minor construction projects going on this summer to accommodate that, a couple doors and those types of things, and that will be ready for the opening this fall.

[04:15:20] The school renovation and replacement program, we're looking at maybe relabeling it to school modernization for this fall, and you'll see there we have available funding in FY26, July 1 of this year, coming to begin the process of those projects.

[04:15:38] And all those are outlined in the CIP as to where they come. And I know, Ms. Griffith, you and I have had a conversation a number of times about what the order is. And we'll be talking about that more as we go. Then we have fine arts. That program also is beginning with design funding this summer to be able to begin assessing all of middle schools and all high schools to look at the need for the fine arts program throughout the high schools and the middle schools, but focusing first on the high schools.

[04:16:08] CTE renovations was at the middle schools was number five and you see phase one of that was already completed and We're working with dr. Grubbs on developing a long-term plan for all those schools moving forward in the future. So the Six through ten you'll see transition facility had a lot of discussion about that We have design funding for the transition facility in FY 27 and at this point in time There's no construction funding because when this develop was developed last year

[04:16:39] We didn't have a site yet. So that's going to be, you know, you'll hear the conversation many, many times over that there'll be trade-offs in every budget. And this is one of them where we'll now be developing a cost estimate to renovate that school. And that will be then added to this year's CIP along with playground replacement. You see there, we have six beginning this year and 12 per year over the next three years. And that's the five to 12 age group. And then as soon as we finish that, we'll go into the two to five age group after that. So all that with with work and funding additional funding provided by the board through the end of year process then

[04:17:16] number nine was building and site renewal and those those to be contrast or compared to the school renovation replacement this is where we go into a building and we do the complete critical system repair where we do the hvac lighting all those things in the building and then we come back the next year and finish up those renovations as far as finishes painting carpeting those types of things there's just not enough time in a summer single summer to do those projects and then special programs academy expansion and that long-term planning and we've had that conversation here multiple times today those those conversations are underway and so that

[04:17:52] is where we took your priorities from last year and the progress we've made so far and we want to continue that conversation and make sure we're on the right path so that the next thing that comes to mind is the renovations and replacement schedule and you'll be familiar with this slide you've seen this a number of times it's also in the CIP this is how we develop what we call the facility condition assessment so we take all the buildings that were 25 years old so we did actually 25 buildings last year you see that they're the oldest 25 were evaluated last year this

[04:18:27] year mr. trainer mr. Pasquarelli's teams are working to update those from work we have done and any other things that may have changed in those schools that were done and then we're also going to do the next 24 schools so that the school board has a full picture of where they are along with that you'll see there on the second bullet down that we have a analysis with a plan and program as adequacy and that's something our team does with school school leadership sorry and teaching and learning to make sure that our schools are provided the

[04:19:05] mechanisms and the features inside the building that meet the instructional need and so those are compared with the facility the actual nuts and bolts of the facility condition assessment and that's what results in our final recommendation and you see here the top four schools are grayed out and those if you can't read those are Lincoln Hillsboro Aldi and Middleburg two of those are charter schools and the board agreed that we did not put those in the CIP last year and then the other two are for whatever reason you see there and right the site conditions did not allow an addition so those are how we look at that so the the consultants recommendation starts with all those and

[04:19:45] then down you'll see that in the CIP our first project recommended is Hamilton and so we will be doing that same assessment I cannot guarantee you the assessments going to turn out exactly like it did this year mr. overhead and his team do projects in the schools all the time and then so that this may change but which is why we update it every year and so we'll be getting that over the next few weeks and we'll be prepared to bring that with the superintendent's recommendation for the fall so we're here to try to get some feedback and like miss Willoughby we'd like your input and so we would like to know what thoughts

[04:20:24] you might have on the revised capital budget priorities based on the ones we had before and I think I'll start there and if I could ask chair Mansfield if you could help me gather comments from board members on any thoughts you may have and if it's helpful I can put the other list back up so the other list being like the FY 26 31 is that the list you're talking about and fortunately

[04:20:54] it's not it's only two slides but yeah yeah okay so I'll come back around let's start the other way. Mrs. Griffiths, do you have any new or revised capital budget priorities for 2027 or 2032? Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I did speak to Mr. Lewis about some schools in particular. I did want to add Stonebridge needs some work as well, if that's okay. As I mentioned,

[04:21:34] lighting in the auditorium doesn't work and it's pitch black you don't you can't see where you're walking that was a big thing for me but also I think I had given you a list of some other issues there safety health and safety issues but as as you know Mr. Lewis my big concerns are the health and safety the two other schools that I was talking to about were Guilford which is I think 1969 and Broad Run which is also built in 1969 that have some extensive work that needs to be done so per our conversation I think we had discussed I

[04:22:12] don't see it on this list but we had discussed some work for Broad Run in the summer and and for Guilford as well if you could just confirm that but as I mentioned you know case-by-case basis when we had our discussion it's taking everything together just to see what are the big health or safety issues and tackling those first per our conversation. So even though they might be lower on the list, sometimes you might need to

[04:22:44] move them up for some renovations that are desperately needed. Thank you. Mr. Lewis, can you help remind me about the safety issue? I mean, we've talked about this before and that there's no I mean we keep our school safe yes ma'am so if we have a report or a concern about a safety issue we we address that immediately and so there are times when things that may rise to the safety level for some may not for others and so we're making sure that everyone's health and

[04:23:24] safety is in mind we have folks that specialize in that and so we are either have addressed or addressing anything we've heard from so far at those schools and there was a process that might not have been happening with the principal like reporting like sometimes that's there's a i don't know like for lack of a better i guess reporting issues in the schools it didn't really get to you guys so it's not unusual for a staff member a teacher or any other staff member that may be aware of something that the message doesn't get to us and and there's no way for me to say that

[04:24:02] where that break in communication is sometimes the thought is it's been communicated and completed and sometimes it's just not communicated at all. But we are working and reaching out to our school administrators to make sure that we have clear communication, especially at the schools we've been talking about, and my team has been in conversation with them.

[04:24:21] Ms. Chandler. So I'll start by mentioning, in looking at the facility condition assessment report, Algonquian District has four schools in the top ten. There's a reason why this is an issue that I hear about a lot from my constituents, And truly, I think when it comes down to it, it is just a factor of when the community developed and when the schools were built.

[04:24:48] I think it's very important for us, especially after we start the process to have clear communication and to remain focused on accepting the expert analysis on what schools need to be addressed and in what order.

[04:25:09] We have, Alpha Corporation has made, has used their expertise to develop this list for us, and it is very important that we stick to the expert analysis and not be necessarily swayed by community advocacy, which is, it's very hard to say that out loud.

[04:25:32] But honestly, we're going to be more equitable and fair to the community if we look at the expert analysis and stick to the plan instead of being swayed by advocacy.

[04:25:50] That said, I think I am happy to go on the record as saying, and I noticed that in the slides there was a different name, right? So I don't want to say growth again, but the new capacity projects, right, I find myself very hesitant to commit to any new capacity until we have done some real analysis on whether or not we're using our current capacity effectively, right?

[04:26:21] I want to make sure we're efficient, effective. It seems important to me to utilize walk zones as much as we can and to try to focus on efficiency and then maybe discuss new capacity after we've done the analysis.

[04:26:40] So I'll leave it there. Thank you. Dr. Deans? I agree with Ms. Chandler in terms of setting priorities. that we should fix what we have before we build something new.

[04:27:02] And that's sort of the comments that I'm getting as well from constituents. And as I read through the questions, I realized that the second question answers my question because I had charter schools renovations, question mark.

[04:27:23] And I continue to hold to the fact that the charter schools, should not be on the capital budget list until all other schools are brought up to standard or up to par, because the initial contract, I understand, indicated that we would not include them in the capital budget.

[04:27:51] And then how could staff improve the format and content of the capital budget book? I think that once you have this outside agency to come up with this list of schools, you might put us on a school bus again and show us what they saw.

[04:28:12] Yeah, you think I like school buses, don't you? But anyway, I think that sin is believing. And if indeed, for an example, with the attendance zones, I drove out there, but I'm not sure I was looking at the same thing that you looked at or that you saw.

[04:28:33] So I think a guided tour would be more appropriate than leaving us to our own ears for advocacy or our eyes for visual. Thank you.

[04:28:49] Thank you, Dr. Deans. Ms. LaBelle. I have to disagree with Dr. Deans on the issue of charter schools. While we are not actually contracted to keep the schools in repair, I need to point out that those are Loudoun County public students in those buildings as well as LCPS staff.

[04:29:14] So I think that it is important to make sure that anything that involves their safety needs to be repaired. With that said, I'd like to go on to say that I think we also need designated storage spaces for our theater and arts programs.

[04:29:34] Those spaces need to be assigned to each department, whether it's music, whether it's theater, because there seems to be a lot of confusion about how they're sharing out those storage units that we've put out there.

[04:29:53] So I think that it should be something that is absolutely designated to music, chorus, and theater. Those are two big priorities for me. Anything else, you know, I'm good with following what's recommended, what's needed in terms of the structure itself.

[04:30:18] Some structures may be newer than others, but then needing more repair for various reasons. So I think we need to look at all of those to prioritize what we have. Thank you. Dr. Rashid. Thank you, Chair.

[04:30:34] And thank you, Mr. Lewis. I do want to continue improving the charter school buildings and including them in the CIP. So I do want to continue to do that. I think they provide wonderful opportunities to the communities, and especially after visiting both charter schools, they're quite inspiring. Another thing on my list was playground replacement. I think I mentioned this earlier last year, and I want to piggyback off what Chair Mansfield said. I just would like

[04:31:07] to see, has there been any change since a lot of us kind of brought it forward? I'm assuming there is, but just in case, I do want to make sure that our littles and everyone has that access, especially after public comment that came out last year with a lot of the parents expressing great concern. Some of

them were quite emotional about that, so that playground replacement is key. Another one, and I'm a little biased because I'm chair of SPCC, special programs expansion. We do continue to see increased interest, as was mentioned earlier today.

[04:31:42] We see all the applicant numbers, and they're always growing. So I do want that academy expansion, that special programs expansion. Thank you. Thanks, Dr. Rashid. Ms. Chernoff. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Lewis. It's exciting to be having this conversation again. I felt like we really learned a lot last year about the process, and I give you a lot of credit for the work that you did with us ahead of time, and so I thank you for that. I felt like it was very positive, and I look forward to another season of that. I just want to address a couple

[04:32:16] of things that I've heard today. I struggle with this as well, as Ms. Griffiths has brought up about our buildings. I agree with Ms. Chandler. There are always going to be discrepancies in our buildings they were built at different times in different places and every new building that we put up is better and brighter than the next and so that does create to me an equity issue it has always troubled me and the amount of funds it would do would take to continue to get to an even place would maybe not be attainable but I do think I actually do think that community input

[04:32:54] does matter in terms of bringing to light certain things that we may not have had and so I do appreciate that you've brought some of those things forward and I know that and I do not want to minimize the expertise but there have been times where the experts said maybe we didn't quite need new playgrounds yet but we overrode that because we felt that the public really deserved that I know that we you know had a third party for retiree benefits and we kind of said the public kind of said that we need to do something different and so we took a pause so there have been times where we have paused because of community input and I just want to ensure that I do think that

[04:33:32] that has value because it does bring to light certain issues and kind of along with the program something I would really like to learn more about and I don't know if this could be part of a conversation you and I could have separately or if the full board felt like they would benefit from it is how does construction and development and renovation impact access to courses because that was something that Loudoun County High School brought to me about their lab for their gourmet foods course they have a kitchen that it just cannot sustain the numbers that they have of kids that want to take the course and so that's an area I'd like to look a little bit more into is

[04:34:12] Where can we provide renovations that will provide more access to kids for other pathways other than the traditional academic pathways and electives? I also am grateful to Dr. Rasheed for bringing up playgrounds because I feel like we would really appreciate an update.

[04:34:29] I echo that sentiment, especially as it relates to the two through five-year-old playgrounds and where we are with that progress. And I also echo what Ms. Chandler said. I think the fulsome look at our boundaries is really going to inform our decisions on where we go with new construction, and I am looking forward to finding some efficiencies there and hopeful that those two conversations will overlap in a way that will be beneficial.

[04:34:55] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. Mr. Estreffi. Thank you, Chair Mansfield. Thank you very much, Mr. Lewis. From my side, as I said in the last budget cycle, capital budget cycle, the number one thing that we have to have in our minds from an equity standpoint is really these critical systems updates and renovations exactly for the purposes of equity.

[04:35:22] And I think that that should continue to be top of mind for us as we move forward with our capital budget discussions. I found in the last cycle very helpful the cost comparisons to, like, for example, the critical systems update, just how much of the capital budget that they take up and how we have to think about and plan for those versus renovations.

[04:35:46] versus new initiatives that have a capital budget implication. So I still remember how explosive those costs were and how quickly they'll just eat up the capital budget. And so I really appreciate the assessment of, you know, the third-party assessment from Alpha Corporation around, okay, how do we begin to think about this?

[04:36:10] Because we have a lot of old schools. Do you remember, what is the number of schools that kind of fall into that bucket of schools that have similar issues across the board. So there were 24 in the first assessment, and then there was 25 coming, and so a large portion of those will have systems concerns based on the age of their buildings.

[04:36:31] Some of them have been replaced, so that's what we'll do is we'll go through and say, you know, this building has been replaced already, and so it falls differently in that line of renovations. So at least a quarter of our schools, if not up to 50% of our schools, we're going to have facilities discussions around, right?

[04:36:49] So I think that is super, super important to really begin to think about. And this is not easy, right, for the reasons that I stated, right? Because how expensive critical systems updates are, how do we schedule out renovations in general? And when I look at the assessment of the third party, I think that what I've heard from other school board members is it's the assessment combined with the advocacy and what we're hearing from the community and the constituents.

[04:37:24] And then it's also being in the schools, which I've had the opportunity to do with you, Mr. Lewis, and your team, and just literally go and see the folks inside the schools that have had issues that they've reported and really trying to understand, well, for a given issue, are other schools facing it as well?

[04:37:46] What's the expectation for these types of things to be addressed? And then we were able to work out a schedule for a bunch of the schools for some of the summer work that's happening, right? And so I think that that just takes concerted effort, which, I mean, your team is always on top of, Mr. Lewis, so thank you.

[04:38:03] I've gone through the list of, yeah, the other thing that I wanted to mention was also in line with Ms. Chernoff's comment. I think our middle school CTE spaces, especially in some of our older schools, we've talked about this before, but they also need to be a priority because it's not just the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, right?

[04:38:28] It's not just the comparison of the physical feel of the spaces between the newer and older schools. It's that the opportunity to take advantage of actual content and curriculum and course offerings is not there. and that's that's a real issue um so if we can make that a focus area that would be that would be great but i mean we we have a lot to tackle when it comes to some of our older facilities because we just have so many older schools right um and i think that if we as a board are able to

[04:39:01] have nuanced detailed conversation about this um we'll we'll we'll be better as a board in coming up with the right solutions, right? What I worry about most is, although all of us need to absorb all of the advocacy, as a board, we have to figure out how to translate that into equitable approaches to, you

know, solving for the older facilities, right? How do we do that as a board and work together? We are one body. We're not just one, you know, we don't act as one school

[04:39:36] board member or individually and so I see an opportunity for us to work more closely together in the upcoming capital budget cycle and just try to really get on the same page with how we're going to tackle this kind of behemoth thank you mr. Struffy vice chair Donahue thank you madam chair top of the list for me I suppose is continuing to build out make sure we have appropriate facilities for the recovery school and for the alternative school program that

[04:40:14] we are planning to open in the fall so I'm having a hard time because like we voted on this thing and I just want to make sure that those continue and we don't just take them off the board while we're talking now because independent living labs are important to me as well as the recovery school and transition center and that kind of thing so I just want to make sure so we're following with

[04:40:50] this as your priority based unless you change that priority in this conversation so that's what we're looking for do you want to continue those or make changes to that okay that's what i was worried about so i want to make sure um i think our priorities were good last time i mean i might bring up the transition facility but we did do a lot of playground replacements so and i want to make sure that those continue the inclusive playgrounds um i do have a concern that we built all you know you built all these schools at once and then they're going to come up with

[04:41:25] their critical systems replacements. And like Mr. Struffy said, I think that that's something that we, and it does eat up a lot of our budget, but that's something that has to be done. And bringing them up to be more efficient, you call modernized, but I think being more efficient is also important so that we decrease our, and I know footprint is probably a funny word, but also it, we decrease the amount that we have to put into it like if we have the zero energy school um then we don't

[04:42:02] have to pay for all of that utility and i think that that's important um so i i have a little bit of a heartburn saying that the squeaky wheel gets the grease all the time because i don't think that that's all that equitable of practice and i think there's a reason why we go through a process and we have to keep that process um especially when it comes to getting audited by a third party there's a reason why we need to be objective about that um otherwise it can get um it can just be whoever could come to the school board more often and more frequently i don't think that's equitable

[04:42:40] um so those are my things i mean i think that what's important again is the the critical systems that i know is coming up because we have i mean how many schools did you build all at once i mean like within a period of like five, ten years?

[04:42:58] I don't have the year by year, but we've done 60 in 25 years. Yeah, and it takes 20 years to redo. I mean, often air conditioning and things like that, maybe 30 because these are those kinds of air conditioners.

[04:43:14] The life cycle is that 20 to 30-year range, yes. Yeah, so they all need to be updated, including energy. So that's mine. Those are my priorities, I guess. Madam Chair.

[04:43:30] Yes, ma'am. Dr. Deans. I just want to say one more thing, I think, about finance. Do all school divisions do self-insurance funding? And I ask that because I'm a dinosaur, okay?

[04:43:49] But when I retired, I retired from Hampton City Schools and from the state of Virginia. If we were to collaborate with the state with some of our insurance programs, would that be cheaper for us? Would it help us? I don't have straight information in terms of how predominant self-insurance funding is. I can say in my career, that's the only model I've worked under. I also know, I believe Fairfax and Prince William are also self-insured. One of the reasons

[04:44:23] from a strategy standpoint or a financial standpoint, really, of why self-insurance tends to be a preferred model is because you're taking on that risk directly in terms of covering those costs. If you are paying a third party to provide that service, if you think about a health insurance company, their bottom line at the end of the day is they also need to make money for their company, their shareholders, whatever their situation is. So naturally, by us engaging with a commercial

[04:44:58] health insurance company, you can see where we would likely pay more for that same type of cost because that company is going to build in their profit whenever they bid out for that service. So for us doing it directly, as you've heard me describe, by being self-insured, we run our own health insurance company, essentially.

[04:45:21] We're not doing it to make a profit. We're just wanting to make sure that we're sustainable and running a positive fund balance at the end. So that's another reason why that self-insurance is why LCPS is doing that.

[04:45:37] okay thank you and it's not necessarily the same for retiree for the like medicare advantage and i i know i don't know if i can talk even talk about this i would say yeah i would think um i'll take that question down for our special committee and what we can and can discuss during

[04:46:06] that time any other questions before we move on so thank you very much it's very helpful i will say a couple things that I heard one on the playgrounds if you look at priority number seven we were doing six playgrounds this summer in FY 25 dollars but we're also getting funding for 12 more so we're gonna be building 12 playgrounds per year for the next three years which will do all the five to 12 and then we'll start the two to five shortly after that the very next year

[04:46:44] and so that will then be all those will be in place I think that was a five year string to get all of the two to two to five year in there so a couple board members asked about the update for that so we're really happy that that's underway and moving forward and the contracts already been written for and let for that so I did want to go back oops sorry to this so I heard a couple comments about the charter schools and what I think from that conversation I'll

[04:47:18] take back and bring back at the CIP is we believe that we really need to fully brief the board on the risk associated with those buildings those buildings were both closed at one point in time for a reason and you know what right now that as you can see does the school board support the FY 27 to 32 capital budget being designed without charter school improvements and so that's our plan at this point I'll also say that the board is going to be looking at policy revisions coming up in the next maybe that maybe this month on the

[04:47:54] charter schools that will reiterate the position that the the charter school agreements and leases both say that they are not the responsibility school board for those buildings and so all those conversations need to be tied together obviously and so they will culminate in a conversation but I would from a production of the CIP perspective staff really needs guidance on on that part there and i think the

board before we get full guidance from there really needs to understand the full risk of those buildings and what it means to take on renovations in those buildings

[04:48:33] so it's a significant risk that you'd be taking on and we'll we'll explain that in more detail um i love the idea of a field trip i think that's a great idea and so we will work towards trying to find a way to put that together and i know ms chandler and i've already had a couple conversations about sitting down and talking in more detail about how the facility condition assessment process works so well what we want to do that with you as well and we'll devise some a work process to do so that you better understand what all goes in to the the many different points that the consultant does to look at those buildings and then how we compare that with the instructional needs as

[04:49:12] well and then we'll have by the time we get to the fall we'll have some you know some costing numbers and then we'll be able to start talking about what trade offs we need to be thinking about what projects we can afford and which ones if we can't as we open up conversations with county staff as well and that really the other slides that I have on over just in case you had specific questions about projects but that's really all we had unless anybody else has any other ideas about better engage in the board through the process we'd

[04:49:44] love to hear that so we can plan for that I'm board members you have any questions? Yes, Ms. Chernoff and then Ms. LaBelle. I'd just say that that session that we held with both of you before we got dove into it I would still like to do that again just to kind of go over what was going to come and now that things are you know a year deeper that was super helpful for me. So having that again would be a lovely option. Ms. LaBelle. I agree with Ms. Chernoff

[04:50:16] she just got her hand up first. I really enjoyed and and felt like it was extremely instructive to me all the different things that we could sit and talk with you about and compare and ask detailed questions about without having to feel like we're excluding other people and taking up their time so if we could do that again that would be great thank you oh Mrs. Cernoff I mean Mrs. Griffiths oh it's on the whole time thank you madam chair just to just to go back and and discuss

[04:50:55] the advocacy. I just want to stress that teachers and students that are at these schools every day might know better than we do sometimes because they're there every day. We just make a visit and they show us what the issues are, but they're there every day dealing with some of these issues and that's why I think with some of these issues the advocacy is important. So I just wanted to uh, stress that because we're not there, but they are. Um, and that's why I felt like I should bring

[04:51:31] some of these items to your attention. So advocacy is important for these schools. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Griffiths. Um, thank you, Ms. Willoughby and Mr. Lewis. I think at this point, I'd like to take about a 10 to 15 minute break before we move on to the, uh, budget priority, uh, or I guess boundary adjustments right um and i know that we have a four o'clock ending so we'll just yeah we

[04:52:04] can do it okay let's go until um 3 0 5 3 10 3 0 5 let's see 10 15 3 10 all right board is in recess

[04:52:16] okay the board is now out of recess and we are going to be moving on to um boundary adjustments

[05:09:29] With mr. Kevin Lewis our chief operations officer mr. Lewis the floor is yours Thank you chair Mansfield. Well good afternoon again So today we want to talk a little bit about the future and we've already had a couple of discussions and comments from board members about the need to make sure

we're using our facilities efficiently and So one of the ways we do that is that we move students around and take advantage of space that is available in our schools and better utilize them and split them up and make room for

[05:10:08] other programs as you'll see Mr. Slevin talked about that earlier is as we as we talk about these boundaries we need to think about the enrollment of the students that are in the boundaries but also programs that are coming on either now or in the future so I'll just point out that in a few weeks ago maybe a month or so ago the school board changed the boundary with the attendance zone policy policy 6530 and you see there and in bold all school attendance zones will be comprehensively reviewed by the school board every five years to assess student enrollment and capacity imbalances so

[05:10:45] what we have today is our plan to address that change in policy and to address the facilities efficiencies that we've been talking about so far today so I do want to just use these graphs we have three slides you'll see there and this is the elementary school just a set where you're what you're looking at this is the elementary school on the left you see year one which is the 25 26 school year the school year that is almost finished in a couple of days and then on the right is those schools and what they look like projected in year 6 of last year's CIP and that would be for year 2030 to 2031

[05:11:23] if you look at those the graphics and those are the county and you'll see the The yellow areas are areas of the county that are under capacity. In other words, there is space in the schools that are represented by those attendance zones.

[05:11:40] The areas in white are the ones that are at capacity, and so they are at 100% or very near that. And then whatever color that is showing up here, pinkish, the light pink, is schools that are over capacity from 101% to 105%.

[05:11:58] And then the red areas are schools that are over capacity of 105% or more. So this is just a heat map essentially to share with you the problem we are trying to solve. And this is the graphics that we will use.

[05:12:13] We'll develop new ones for this year as we start to get the enrollments in for the next school year. They may change a little bit. They may also change a little bit with things that you're going to be making decisions on. And one of those is the middle schools. So here you have the same two slides for the middle schools.

[05:12:29] You'll see Dulles South is bright red in both of those, and that's the issue we're trying to address right now with the secondary attendance zone process that you will be voting on tomorrow evening. And so the goal would be to minimize the depth of that color in that area between now and the fall of 2028 when the school board will undertake the enrollment or the boundary process for high school number 14 and others as we'll talk here in a minute.

[05:12:58] Same slide for the high schools, you see the Dulles South area continues to get, it's okay right now, and that's part of what we've been talking about in the boundary change we're doing tomorrow evening, is that the middle schools are more pinched than the high schools.

[05:13:16] And you see that there where you show the Dulles South area in high schools is either yellow or white now, but in six years, bright red, indicating that that growth is still going to continue. And so those will be the areas that we're approaching to repair when we do the full boundary for secondaries.

[05:13:38] So a couple of things we're trying to accomplish. You can see there's a support population changes. And so that manifests itself in new students coming to the area. It also shows up in new special programs and anything else that we want to plan for our schools.

[05:13:56] We want to make sure that we have equitable access to the programs. you've had that conversation this evening about having programs across the county for all students to be able to get to balance available capacity split elementary feeds and so we try our very best to have pure feeds so kids go with to schools from elementary to high school with all their same friends but as you know that's practically not it's not very practical but that's one of our goals as we embark on these exercises and then you know that has an effect on student health wellness and then it also we want to minimize travel time for students as

[05:14:34] we've had many conversations transportation is challenging as we get more special programs across the county as we get more students with special permissions well special permission I'm sorry doesn't really affect transportation but the different availability of schools with transportation is a strain on on the driver recruiting and all the other things logistics but mostly how long it takes a child to get from their home to school and so we want to try to minimize that as well so this is the plan we're proposing for the board to consider to address the five-year plan that's shown in the new policy and also to address

[05:15:13] all the things we've just been talking about with our challenges in enrollment so this fall you'll be doing a elementary school change we're proposing for ashburn and dulles north that calendar of events calendar of meetings is coming to you on june 24th as an information item so you can look at those. You'll see where those schools are. We'll do some awareness and making sure the communities are aware. And then so those would take place, those discussions would take place this fall, and they would become effective in the fall of 2026. If you recall, the decision you're

[05:15:50] going to make tomorrow night also goes into effect in the fall of 2026. So at the secondary level, we want to do those in the spring of the year and a half before they take effect so students have time to plan but for elementary schools we do them in the fall for implementation the following fall so fall of 25 ashburn dulles north be effective in the fall of 26 the following year we're proposing to do elementary schools in eastern loudon and that would be that discussion by the board would take place in the fall of 26 for to be effective in the fall of 27 and then you see there is spring

[05:16:27] of 27 and you switch we switch this spring so we can get an opening 18 months in advance we're proposing to do all middle schools and all high schools so the entire secondary school boundary change if you think about when we're doing HS14 which will open in the fall of 28 so that exercise would be effective in the fall of 28 in time for that opening that's definitely going to affect high schools in Dullet South it's going to affect them in Ashburn and in all areas you know a very big surrounding area so we believe it would make sense to do the entire

[05:17:04] secondary change in the fall of or for the opening of HS 14 in the fall 28 so that's a pretty significant lift we do think that's more feasible than doing all of the schools at once I do want to say that when staff participated in the change of the policy we did not anticipate all elementary all middle and all high all done at one time and so this is a plan that we've devised to try where we think we can manage it following that we would do in the fall of 27 in the fall of 28 the rest of the elementary schools as required and I will

[05:17:41] apologize ahead of time well not ahead of time it's too late I caught it this weekend and didn't have time to change those effective dates would be the fall of 28 in the fall of 29 and so that's an error in the slide there from when it was posted so that is the plan you'll see there the asterisk that would be Central Loudoun Dulles South and or the Western Loudoun planning districts would be the ones that we would have left to to make adjustments to for that those two successive years so as a point of reference right now we did this little exercise Mrs. Tate did the other day our elementary

[05:18:20] schools are 82% utilized so 82% of our seats are full our middle schools are 80.7 and our high schools are 91.7 for a total across the county of 84% utilization. Now the problem is students don't come in neat packages of 21 or 23, so that makes a challenge. And even though the middle schools sit at 80.7%, we know that Dulles area is bursting at the seams. So it's not a full picture when you hear that, but it's just an indication that there is space available that we need to be trying to look at a strategic way to utilize that space that best suits our students, best suits our

[05:19:00] programs and you know gives us a plan that we can count on and is more efficient and we know that we're gonna have those conversations with funding with this board and we're gonna have those with this the board supervisors as well to make sure that we are using our facilities as efficiently as possible so that was our plan the only slot I have left is during all these processes we're going to be talking through with our Virginia Tech friends and be able to you all can come up with as many plans as you like especially get into those multiple areas times it'll be quite an effort miss Tate and her team are

[05:19:39] gearing up to have everyone in place to make sure that we can manage all these processes and plans and get a plan out there that makes the most sense for the county and that is all I have to share and I'm happy to take any questions you may have well I don't know why you don't want to do it all at once elementary middle and high, just get up with.

[05:20:02] But I do like that plan of looking at it piece by piece and then every five years looking at it, you know, coming back. I think we know now why there's not special programming in Dulles South because there is just no room, which is, you know, that will be a little alleviated with HS14, but it probably won't be a whole lot alleviated, will it?

[05:20:27] Well, we haven't dug into that yet, but there is opportunity for that. And, you know, that utilization that I talked about does not include HS14, so we have another 2,100 seats coming online. And so there will be room to have movement, and it's going to be very difficult decisions.

[05:20:46] But that's part of going to be the challenge is to see what does free up, in a perfect world, equal space everywhere so that all schools are exactly 90 percent and we have 10 percent in every school. Likely won't be the end result, but that would be the lofty goal to start with.

[05:21:01] board members you got any other questions yes mrs. griffiths thank you madam chair um forgive me for asking um you may have sent it already but can i get a list of the ashburn schools are they in here i didn't quite see it and point if they are point them out sure i mean we have um we have a cluster we can send a list of all the schools and what the districts are certainly yes thank you yes

[05:21:33] thank you madam chair thank you mr lewis my i have a couple of questions one is right now on the Watson Mountain property area. We're building HS14, and that will open in 2028, you said?

[05:21:51] And then there was also projected to be an elementary school, correct, on that property? Yes, we have a special exception approval from the county of Loudoun to put an elementary school there. And

it is currently, the next elementary school I think is listed in the CIP as in 2029.

[05:22:10] Okay. But that doesn't mean that's why we're going to have the conversation this fall to see whether or not we need to push that out or push it in. And that's one of the reasons we're starting in this area, Ashburn and Dulles North, for this fall is so that we can help make that decision before we pull the plug to build another school that we may or may not need.

[05:22:29] And so we want to make sure we wait. So that school may stay where it is in the CIP this year until we have this fall boundary conversation and then we move it for next year. And that'll all be conversations we have this fall. Okay. And then do you envision, I mean, it feels like to me all middle and all high schools, I guess that makes sense.

[05:22:48] I mean, in terms of doing the Dulles rezoning process, it made sense that those were, like, intertwined. Do you feel like, I mean, I'm just saying from my experience of, like, taking the deep dive on it, it feels like the elementary sort of, like, falls more easily then once you have that in place.

[05:23:04] Is that sort of the thinking there, is that that'll sort of be a natural flow from once we've established that higher structure? We do, and the other thing that is, as I mentioned in one of the bullets, is we try as best we can to have pure feed so that all schools, all kids in an elementary school, go to the same middle school.

[05:23:23] And if you establish the middle school and the high school boundaries, then you know which ones that you can do that. So that will have an effect, we believe, on the elementary boundaries. Okay. And I do agree with the strategy, and I think Ms. Chandler said it too. I really do, when I look at some of the capacity numbers and think about schools' proximity, it feels like the right time to have that conversation as to whether that's fiscally responsible, and I tend to lead towards it's not at this time if we can figure it out.

[05:23:50] So I'm glad to see that that's not until after we have some of these conversations. Appreciate the work on this. I think it's going to be quite the task, but I'm excited, and I think it's overdue. And with this, I am a big proponent of walking to schools, too, and how we can best try and get more walkers out of this as well.

[05:24:20] And what that would mean, crossing guards or, you know, making sure that there's a light with the walking path and making sure that there is a walking path that makes sense as opposed to going all the way around to get there.

[05:24:38] Any other questions? - Yes, Dr. Rasheed. - Thank you, Chair, and just to piggyback off the walking that you had mentioned, I heard from many constituents that some of the walking paths are not very feasible. So it's something that we've heard from many constituents saying that please don't consider it because it's not very feasible or, and then also I've heard from constituents saying we walk certain times of the year and that we don't walk certain times of the year.

[05:25:05] So it's a mixed bag, thank you. - Ms. Chandler. - Thank you. This is, without a doubt, a very daunting process. And I think it's easy to say, as we go, tomorrow night will be the first time that we've been faced with making this decision as a board.

[05:25:28] And I know that we've all been very thoughtful in taking it very seriously. I just want to ask for a little bit of clarity around what staff views as the reason why it makes sense to do it, the elementary

schools separately, and then to do the secondary schools all at once.

[05:25:49] I just would like to understand that a little bit better because it is a time intensive process. And I'm curious if you had observed what has happened in Fairfax County over the last year and if that impacted the decision at all.

[05:26:06] - So I can't speak to detail on the Fairfax process. I know they had a number of public meetings so far, but for us, as we think through, How is the board gonna walk through that process and be able to process all that information that comes?

[05:26:22] And if you're trying to do 100 boundaries at the same time, we think that there's just be too much information. And again, the benefit I think that having the secondaries established first, we really, it's really important. We've done a good job of maintaining a straight feed for middles to high schools for a number of years.

[05:26:41] And that's important. Establishing that allows then the conversation with the elementary schools to try to accomplish as many of those as possible. You know, you hear your parents come to the board and say, you know, my child is gonna go to school with some people he doesn't even know because their street or this street or that type of thing.

[05:27:00] And so we know those are the concerns of the parents. So we're trying to have a process that the board can be as thoughtful as process without getting inundated and confused with all those different things and how intertwined they all are. I just think it's too much to take on at one time.

[05:27:18] - Thank you for that, and just as a clarification, so on the slide, the elementary all-at-once process would be in 28-29? - No, so, excellent question, thank you for that. So we would start with Ashburn, Dulles North, and then go to the Eastern, and then in the fall of 27-28, we would do Central Loudoun, Dulles South, or Western Loudoun, and then we would start over.

[05:27:46] And so at this point, maybe as we get through that process, we decide the next five-year cycle needs to be a little bit different order. But at this point in time, we would say we would do it this way, and then we would start over again and hit the same ones. But to your point, I mean, if we end up recognizing that the secondary should be the first step, then maybe we start over with the secondaries in year 29 and 30 and then do all the elementaries following that.

[05:28:17] So that'll be conversations we can have as we go through. We're going to learn a lot of lessons through this. We're going to learn a lot of best practices and adjust as we go. Thank you. Any other discussion? Nope.

[05:28:35] Okay. Looks like we're right on time so far, even with our... Thank you so much to you and your team. You're right. It is a daunting task, but I'm glad you guys broke it down for us.

[05:28:57] Okay. We have closing and next steps. i think dr spence would you like to start with your closing a little bit thank you um just to note board members that we appreciate your engagement today we know it's a long day and it's going to be a long week and we've got a lot to celebrate this week graduations coming along and many good things happening as we wrap up the last week of our school year which is hard to imagine and hard to believe but we do appreciate that in the midst of that you have been engaged

[05:29:33] with us today i do want to assure you that we have taken copious notes during each presentation with a list of things either to get back with you on directly or that will help us engage

strategically as a cabinet as we think about the direction moving into the summer and into the next school year certainly with regards to the topical pieces of this we appreciate the conversations around special programs and what you're thinking about there.

[05:30:03] We certainly appreciate the budget prioritization. That's a first run and a very long conversation that we will engage in more deeply in the fall. And certainly this last conversation around the capital budget and attendance zones and what that might look like over the next five years.

[05:30:22] We take out of these retreats, as I said, strategic kind of direction from the board so these conversations help us understand your thinking and and what support we need to be providing you as we prepare for the upcoming school year and then where we need to put our time and attention and so again just want to reiterate that we are very appreciative of that and I didn't mention but also want to mention that we are also excited from a strategic perspective of engaging with you again

[05:30:58] in the strategic planning process. And would also say we look forward to a January retreat, just to put that on your radar, where we can engage in more detail in the budget process, which is sort of timely for that part of the year.

[05:31:17] So with that, I'm happy to field any next questions about any next steps or turn it back to you, Madam Chair, for any next steps from your lens. - You guys have any questions or nothing?

[05:31:34] Well, I just want to say I appreciate you guys. This will be my last retreat. So because January I will not be here. So I just want to say I think before they had gotten out of the habit of having retreats.

[05:31:53] And I think that these retreats are really important. I appreciate staff working with me to get these the calendar twice twice a year I think from my perspective I am thankful for your conversations and your participation and these retreats are something to help work through and help to develop a more cohesive board and address some emerging issues and clarify roles and our responsibilities set goals and priorities and I think we you know dr. Spence has already has said this in

[05:32:29] public we are a high functioning board and the reason why is because we take this time to work together and work through things and also this time to work with staff on on these budget priorities and that helps them know what you know how best to meet the needs of our community so I just wanted to say thank you and I appreciate all of you and I appreciate staff that's all yes with that any other questions concerns thoughts with that here we go no more business

[05:33:07] June 9th 2025 Loudoun County School Board retreat is now adjourned



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