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Loudoun County Public Schools, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Date Wednesday, September 10, 2025
Place LCPS Administration Building / School Board Room, Ashburn, Virginia
Length 2h 02m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1117304088?rel=0>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-13. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:03:02] Okay. Hello, everyone.

[00:06:07] If everyone could please get your seats and then we'll go ahead and get started.

[00:06:28] Good evening, everyone. Welcome back to our 25-26 school year, our first SEAC meeting kickoff. I know it was a very, very short summer. I don't know if you all felt it, but I really did. So I'm Shanaz Khan. I'm the SEAC chair. Just before we get started, there is a public comment sheet in the back if anyone needed to make public comment during our business portion of our meeting. Also, please use the QR code up on the screen to sign in. Those of you who are live streaming, the QR code is the same, so please go ahead and use that. Very

[00:07:07] important, there are some amazing snacks back there. I mean, it's a plethora of snacks, so please help yourself, and we really have Laura Colossi, our SEAC member. Where are you, Laura. Yay! She baked all of those by herself. I don't know how long she took, but thank you again, Laura. I really appreciate that. And there are other flyers and information on the back table if you're interested. So let's go ahead and get started. And we're going to kick this off

[00:07:39] with our superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence. Well, good evening. There we go. Let's do that one more time good evening it's great to be here with you all this evening this is the season of opening remarks

and first meetings of the year and and but this is one that I do look forward to and I just want to tell you a little bit about why I look forward to that so first I look forward to that

[00:08:12] because this is such a functioning group it's a fun group to be with because you all really do great work in support of our school division and I and I want you to know first and hear first that that's not normal everywhere. I want you to know that and recognize and understand that the work that this group does in Loudoun County doesn't happen everywhere. It is intentional. It is because of the leadership of this organization. It is because of your decision to be here and be a part of this and your commitment to that. And so I want to sort of start these remarks by just saying

[00:08:46] thank you for that. Thank you for choosing to be here and be a part of this important work. We all have choices about the things that we do with our time particularly if we're volunteering our time and so for those of you who are volunteering your time to be an advocate for your child and advocate for the children that we serve across the school division thank you for making that choice that's a powerful reflection and just looking around the room a powerful reflection of our belief in kids and our belief that we can always be better tomorrow than we are today which is the functional

[00:09:23] motto that I live by as a superintendent. It's okay if we're not perfect, but we got to be better tomorrow than we are today. And I think that's what this group really stays focused on. And I appreciate that very much. I want to celebrate some of the successes that we've had. So many things that are happening are coming out of the conversations happening in this advisory committee.

[00:09:47] And I really do mean that sincerely and appreciate that sincerely. And that's sort of everything from like major facilities conversations that matter, the advocacy of this group to make sure that we are installing inclusive playgrounds, which has now been included in our CIP, the advocacy of this group around a transition center.

[00:10:06] I'm pleased to note that a location for a transition center has been identified and planning is underway for that project. Our academic achievement is incredible. the gains that our students have seen has been across the board, across the board, but also, particularly our students with disabilities, seeing gains in their academic work, which is a testament to your support, to our partnership, but also to your advocacy, for example, for additional staff.

[00:10:39] If you weren't aware, I hope you're aware, that there are, as a result of the support of our school board, 196 new special education staff members in Loudoun County Public Schools this year. Something that we all know has been critically important as we address the ratios of how we work with young people and make sure that they're provided the services that they're needed.

[00:11:02] And while we can do more, and we'll likely talk about that in the next budget cycle, that was a major leap forward for Loudoun County. And that came directly because of your advocacy and your recognition of the need to support our young people. And so I want you to know that I appreciate and value that level of support.

[00:11:21] I also want to acknowledge that in addition to the many successes that I think that we have to celebrate together because of this work, that there are also always going to be challenges. Like I said earlier, we're not going to be perfect. There are going to be things that we have to uncover and that we have to work on and continue to strive to be better at.

[00:11:41] And I expect, and my challenge to you, is that you continue to challenge us, right? It's kind of the concept of iron sharpens iron, if you've ever heard that. We don't get better by pretending problems don't exist. We get better by talking about what those problems are, learning from one another, and taking the strengths that we have together to make ourselves better than we were the day before.

[00:12:03] And so I want to challenge you as you come together for this kickoff event to kind of put that as your purpose, to remember that it's okay for us to challenge each other, but we're going to do that in ways that are powerful and functional and civil, that's what's going to make us really effective as an organization so I appreciate you all doing that I did want to just acknowledge a couple of areas that I know have been conversations in this room around advocacy and I want to acknowledge them as areas because of your attention to them that have been elevated into my sphere for advocacy and I think will be part of

[00:12:42] the conversation with our school board as we continue to move forward and think about what's next for us and I just want to put these on your radar as things that are on my radar so so the first will continue to be staffing as I mentioned the the staffing that I talked about a minute ago includes 40 new programs and we know that program development is critical for the success of our students and so we're thinking about that we're thinking about the staffing for that and also the facilities for that and how that impacts the use of those facilities and we want to do those things in ways that make sense for our families, make sense for our kids, but also are indicative of being great stewards of the resources that we have available to

[00:13:21] us, and that is the collaborative nature of the conversation that we have to have. I also want to acknowledge the importance of and the advocacy around specialized instructional facilitators for those programs. As the needs of our students continue to identify themselves as more and more complex, which think is happening as we engage deeply in these conversations and as the number of students with special needs that we are serving continues to grow we can't simply rely on the classroom teacher to step into the breach and make a difference for every child although that's the singular most important

[00:13:57] relationship between our families and our children it is the relationship with our classroom teachers there are other supports that are needed we need facilitators who can come in and support the development and growth of those programs so that we are best meeting the needs of our students and Tedra and Paige and their team have an incredible team of experts that they work with on a day-to-day basis and we know we're probably going to continue to need to grow that team of experts and then the the other piece pieces the advocacy around public separate school programming making sure that we have the best opportunities for our kids to stay in our public schools and have their

[00:14:37] needs met and so that you as families don't have to go find that elsewhere and I think that's critically important that we think about and figure out how to provide those opportunities especially for our most intensive needs students and so know that that's on our radar know that that's something that we're thinking about and then finally know that we are also thinking about the extension of contracts for specialized staff because we know that that learning and the needs of our students does not stop because of an agrarian calendar we know that our students need support year-round and if we can make sure that we have specialized staff available to you

[00:15:12] to our families and to our kids that that is a critical part of the puzzle for supporting our special needs population so know that there are other things that we recognize as challenges other opportunities for us to engage in advocacy and to work together to continue to improve our work but let me just say

again how proud I am of all that we're doing together to meet the needs of our students how proud I am of the deep partnership that we have with SEAC and I'll just conclude with this when I was at Lead Loudon this year we look I've talked so long the screen's

[00:15:47] gone blank when I was at they don't they don't give me a time limit you're not supposed to tell do that to super until you're supposed to tell me I only have 10 minutes when I was at Lead Loudon this year, which is our administrative conference, I took the opportunity to identify priorities for the school division, and a couple of those I'll just mention, and they won't surprise you.

[00:16:09] We talked about the need for really foundational skills development, making sure that we are attending to literacy and numeracy as the kind of key foundations for our work. We talked about that. That makes sense to people. We talked about as a priority the need for our kids, all of our kids, to identify pathways to their future, right?

[00:16:26] What are the ways that they are going to be most successful? And not only like how they imagine and are passionate about something that they want to get to in their future, but do they see those pathways here in LCPS? Do they see a way forward for themselves, right? Because those pathways are key to building hope in our young people.

[00:16:43] And one of the other priorities that I talked about was this. I talked about, I don't know if I'm touching things, I don't know what I'm doing. I talked about belonging as a priority. I talked about belonging as a priority. And what I meant by that and what I talk about when I talk about belonging is that every child who comes into our classrooms has to know, they have to know through our behaviors, through our attitude, through our intonation, through what they see on our walls, through what they see in their curriculum, they have to know that we want them there.

[00:17:15] We have to send a message that we want our children here with us, right? And unfortunately, I think all of us maybe might have an experience somewhere in our past where we didn't feel that way, right? Where we walked into a space where either the peers that we were with or the adults that were around us made us feel like we weren't supposed to be there.

[00:17:36] And that can't happen in Loudoun County Public Schools if we are going to make sure that we are a place where all children thrive. And so belonging has to be a priority. But I bring that up not just to say that your children need to feel like they belong. I also bring it up because I said to the principals, the other folks that need to feel like they belong are our staff and the families with whom we engage every single day.

[00:18:01] There's no reason and no excuse that our family should walk into any building in Loudoun County and feel like we don't want you there. And that's why this partnership matters, because we need to know together that you belong, that we belong, and that this work that we do matters and will make a difference in the lives of our kids.

[00:18:20] So thank you so much for this work. Thanks for agreeing to be a part of it. And I am looking forward to another great year with SEAC and learning and listening and advocating with you on behalf of our kids. Appreciate you all very much. Thank you, Dr. Spence.

[00:18:41] And we also appreciate all the support that we have had in presenting our inclusive playgrounds, in presenting our transition center. So we appreciate each and every one of you for helping us through that. Next up, we have our Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

[00:19:01] I don't have slides anymore, so, you know, Tedra Richardson, sorry. Thank you, everyone. Good evening and welcome. First and foremost, I echo Dr. Spence's sentiments.

[00:19:18] Thank you for your commitment and your collaboration and sticking through it with us. You know, in all relationships, it's not always, you know, peaches and rainbows. and sometimes we have some rocky paths, but you guys have been so fabulous with always working with us through it all.

[00:19:34] So I do just have a few highlights from across the Department of Student Services. I'll spotlight one from each of our five offices. So from the Office of Diagnostic and Prevention Services, we have welcomed a new director. It is Dr. Carlin Floyd, and so she is now serving in that role.

[00:19:53] Dr. Floyd has been a previous principal, high school principal. She has served in public separate programming, and she holds a Ph.D., I'm sorry, an Ed.D., in special education and policy. So she's very dedicated to this work, and she has already started some really groundbreaking steps towards looking into our eligibility practices. So very excited about that. From the Office of Student Services, I don't know how many of you have signed in and looked at your student rights and responsibilities,

[00:20:26] but we have changed that format, so it is no longer that PDF that you had to sort of click the pages and they flipped. We've now made it a web-based tool, so it's broken down into the sections, and it's much more user-friendly, so please make sure you check out the new Student Rights and Responsibilities on our webpage.

[00:20:46] Dr. Carter is going to share all of the amazingness from the Office of Special Education. From the Office of Student Mental Health Services, we have SIB shops coming to LCPS. So we are sending 19 of our unified mental health team members, school social workers, and school psychs in the month of November are going to be trained as SIB shop facilitators.

[00:21:12] So there's more to come on that information. From the Office of Procedural Support, we welcomed two new coordinators. We have Katherine Hudson, she's one of our newest CSA coordinators because we have seen an increase in the number of students that are out placed for special education services, which is why I'm very pleased that Dr. Spence has highlighted the fact that we need our own public separate school programming here in LCPS.

[00:21:40] And then we also have Stacy Bothy, who's a coordinator of procedural support, and her focus is on MANT training, making sure that all of the stakeholders across LCPS that require MANT are fully certified, okay? And I think most exciting for me, right? I love the five offices.

[00:21:59] They're amazing. They're rocking it. We started the school year off fantastically. But we are launching a new regional model of support. It became abundantly clear, right, as a department because we are so large and we really do serve all 81,000 students as a department. While each office has its specialty, we as a department function in service to every child. And so what we found out is that collectively as a department we really needed to focus on our direction, so all

[00:22:37] five offices moving in the same direction, our alignment across our work, and our commitment not just to our office in the department or not just to the department but to every aspect of the department of student services collectively. And so what does that mean for you and your child?

[00:23:02] Holistic student profiles, making sure that we're looking at every aspect that impacts the child and we're doing that through a regional focus and bringing all of the experts from all of the offices that are

assigned to the regions together on a quarterly basis and really beginning to make data-driven decisions, right?

[00:23:24] Looking at the data and helping it to tell the story, not just for what our needs are, but what are the successes that we're experiencing across this division. It looks at earlier identification and proactive support because people across the clusters and the regions, so we have six regions we have 18 clusters right so it's bringing the clusters within those six regions together with a focus and a purpose it's going to lead to consistent because we've

[00:23:58] heard you things aren't consistent consistent high quality services from the department of student services and of course stronger collaboration with our families so we will continue to give you monthly updates on how we are working through our regional model. Our first regional meeting is going to be November 7th, so that's at the end of the first quarter, and we'll be bringing our teams together. We've identified a structure for which they will be meeting. We've identified the data points that they're going to be looking at, and then how we're going to synthesize that as an

[00:24:34] overall team, as a department, in moving our practices and services and supports forward. so thank you for your time this afternoon thanks you for all of you being here and I'm really looking forward to another amazing school year thank you next we have our director of special education Dr. Paige Carter thank you good evening everyone I really just want to start by

[00:25:09] thanking Dr. Spence to say just I've worked with a lot of really good superintendents over the course of my career, especially as I was in administration and I realized just how vast their job is. But Dr. Spence is really the first superintendent that knew exactly what our needs were. He listens to all the constituents and really takes it in for him to be able to speak with no notes up here about what the needs are that we've identified for our students.

[00:25:43] means a lot to me personally, but also to our team. So I just wanted to acknowledge that really quick. Every time I see you every month, I have to update you on where we are starting or how many kids we're serving. We are starting with 10,404.

[00:25:58] That is 200 more, 204, I believe, more than last year. So once all of our students graduated and moved on, we are plus 204 for this year which is quite a bit of growth so a lot of school divisions dip once the senior class leaves and we come in again it's a lower number than we ended with but we are

[00:26:25] starting starting much higher than anticipated so oh you can yeah I'm gonna break it okay all right Well, I wanted to share some celebrations with you, and I think I wanted to do this one first.

[00:26:51] Last year, I reported out vacancies to you every time we were together, I think up until April. And this time last year, we had 66 vacancies. And just noting on this slide, we have more positions this year.

[00:27:07] We've added 40 programs and 23 CrossCat teachers and a few specialty teachers, and we only have 33 vacancies at this point. So that is a huge accomplishment that I want to celebrate with you. And, of course, in those 33 places where there is a vacancy, that is still a priority.

[00:27:27] So while I celebrate the percentage of filled vacancies and how much improvement we're making year over year, it is still a priority that we fill those 33 positions. But our fill rate is better than it has been in several years, and we were really happy about that.

[00:27:45] So I want to tell you about some of the things we're celebrating already this year, some initiatives that we have going. We have a focus this year on professional development and support to co-teaching teams across the division. And we have a special focus on teaching triads, which would be special education, English language learners, and the general ed teacher as a triad in the classroom.

[00:28:13] It focuses on our students who are duly identified. And this initiative, what we've really done is taken sort of, if you can imagine, a Venn diagram and all of the strategies that we have in common for those two groups of learners, English language learners and students with disabilities.

[00:28:32] And there are lots of strategies that we have in common, but there are also strategies that evidence and research says are very different from one another. So we're taking that information and sharing it with our co-teaching pairs across the division to really focus on evidence-based practice.

[00:28:51] What are those teacher behaviors that we are looking for that lead to enhanced learning for students who have our greatest needs that are in those classrooms? So that has been really well received. I know that the folks that presented those I tried to get into a couple of those presentations recently and I could not get in the door so they were very well received and our teachers were hungry for that information so we also have a new walkthrough tool and look for forms for our programs for students with emotional disabilities this is a we've had growth in those programs and we're

[00:29:28] excited to have a new tool for our principals and our staff to use as they go through those classrooms and support the staff that are there we also have this year new new rollout of some things for our early childhood classrooms we have a standards document and we also have a monitoring tool really looking at the virginia standards for young learners and we also have a kindergarten transition tool which we'll be utilizing throughout the year to really aid in that transition, it is really hard to decide what to do when you're moving from an early childhood

[00:30:05] setting into the kindergarten setting. And does this student require assistance of any kind? Do they need to be pulled out for a little bit of the day? Do they need a specialized program? And this tool is really going to help teachers sort of determine what are the needs of this student and where is the best place to start when they get to kindergarten. We also have a new coaching model, our specialized instructional facilitators that Dr. Spence mentioned, and they are our experts in the classroom helping our new and novice teachers. And we have a new coaching model that

[00:30:39] will not be evaluative in any way, but completely supportive for our teachers, all teachers across the division, but focusing on new and novice teachers. We also have additional offerings at the high school level across the continuum. We have added programs for students with emotional disabilities at that level, and that was definitely a missing rung on the continuum, and we doubled those classrooms this year. We're also deep in the design phase, and I want to focus on that for our transition center. So yes, we have a location, but we've been working with architects and the folks

[00:31:14] that design to really come up with what is the best way to offer different pathways to our students. Those meetings are so exciting. They're usually limited to an hour, but we leave with just so much information and new things to think about. I also want to talk about our intentional support to elementary schools. We've increased the number of special education deans that serve elementary and the kinds of schools that are getting the help of a special education dean in their school have changed. We're really focusing on, because we have students with special needs, students with

[00:31:49] disabilities across every elementary school, but it was our larger schools or schools with a lot of programs there was a lot of different criteria that has changed over the years but we really are trying to expand that support so that all of our elementary classrooms have a special education dean in addition we have international teachers that have been hired and are going through the process to to be here they will be joining us later this quarter these are teachers who are coming to us from other countries across across the world and their interviews were so exciting

[00:32:26] and the things that they were talking about when we interviewed them and how very focused they are on students I'm so excited for them to get here it'll be probably another four weeks before we begin to see them but they're on the way and in addition I just want to celebrate the dedication of my team and I know I do not have time to introduce them all but if you are on the office of special education team and you are here obviously you have to be here tonight to stand up would you please stand up so people can see who you are I want to celebrate them because they

[00:33:05] have a work day just like everybody else but I see them on at nine o'clock at night ten o'clock at night I get an email that was sent at one o'clock in the morning really working hard trying to support our schools and I want to celebrate everybody from the aides on the buses to folks in the classrooms starting a school year is tough and and students are in transition and it and while there have been a few bumps it has been relatively smooth and we are we are really focused on on smoothing out those rocky points right now but I just want to celebrate the work of all of our

[00:33:41] staff across the division and to let you know we have opened 37 of those 40 new programs this year and there are kids in them and they are coming to school every day and the staff is doing really well so I just want to celebrate those new programs and I believe one more point for you this year for many many years VDOE has had a grant that offered us access to Learning Ally

[00:34:08] I don't know if any of you are familiar with Learning Ally, but it is a program that is for audiobooks and different ways to experience literature and other things in writing.

[00:34:24] And we no longer have access to that. We are exploring ways to get it ourselves. but we do have other options for our students here in Loudoun that have improved recently with the addition of generative AI voices. A lot of our programs that we've had in the past had that robotic voice and students did not prefer it. A lot of students would prefer to use Learning Ally to access books but we do have new options here and we're exploring more. We had around 40 students who used it with regularity, so we are working to make sure that those specific students have

[00:35:01] what they need, but also exploring additional options across the division. So if you hear anything about Learning Ally and that somebody doesn't have access or that you want to learn more about those options, please let me know. But we found out about that about, I don't know, 10 days before school started, so it was a little bit of a shock to our system, but we were able to find options within the assistive technology that we already have but for those who are used to learn using Learning Ally it might be a bit of a challenge but we are working on it but I wanted to share that update with you

[00:35:36] guys and that's all I have but thank you Dr. Carter before we move on I just wanted to take a second to acknowledge a couple of our school board members who are here today with us I know Carrie LaBelle was supposed to be in today wasn't able to make it our school board members have been going back to back to back so I really do appreciate your coming out we have Arben Struffy over in the corner over there Mr. Arben Struffy Sterling Dristrick and we have Miss April

[00:36:11] Chandler who is our Algonquin district and I think I got everyone right up you will be soon I promise you'll be next soon so thank you so much for coming out and joining us for the kickoff. And next, we have Nakia Purnell, our Assistant Special Ed Director, who will come up and she will just join us in hosting a Connecting as a SEAC event.

[00:36:49] Good evening and welcome back to a new and exciting school year. When we walked in, and excuse our tardiness, we were just probably 60 seconds late, but when we walked in and the room was full, I was like, this is how we want to see the room every single month because we love that everybody is here to celebrate this with us. So today, and Dr. Spence didn't know it, but he cued me up. And I love that because that means we're all in alignment. So I decided of the four LCPS strategic priorities for the year to focus on belonging. And I love that he ended with

[00:37:28] that because that means that's one of the four, while they're all important of the four, I think this is the one that brings this group together the most, and the one that I think holds a special place for us, because what we've been focusing on for the last few years, at least as a SEAC community, is belonging, creating connection, figuring out ways to find out how much more we are alike than different. We spent a lot of time devising definitions on what meaningful inclusion means, what it means to feel included, and we did a lot of work and activities together on that.

[00:38:04] So we're going to keep that energy going, and we're going to focus on a sense of belonging, which again is one of the most important strategic priorities for us, because we know that when people, not just students, feel a sense of belonging, they are more engaged, they find more success, they are happier.

[00:38:24] It shows that we have a sense of cultural awareness. So again, these are the things we are looking to have our families, as Dr. Spence said, our students and our staff experience anytime they're engaged with LCPS. So we're gonna get to get up and walk around because you know once that business meeting starts you're not gonna have a whole lot of breaks. So we're gonna get up and walk around. There are four posters and we want you to have an opportunity if you can to get to each of them. We're gonna spend two or three minutes at each one. You have some stickies at your table and some pens. You

[00:39:03] You can either write on those or you can write directly on the posters. It doesn't matter. But I figure if you're all going to be gathered around, it might be easier to have your stickies in your hand and then you can leave it there. So we're going to focus on four different questions. Share a time when you or your child felt a strong sense of belonging in school.

[00:39:24] What helps you feel like you belong in a group or a community? What can SEAC and or OSE do? This year, to help families feel a greater sense of belonging.

[00:39:41] And finally, what does belonging for students with disabilities look like in action? So we're going to get started. You can spend some time at your tables if you want, if you prefer to sit and write, and then head over to the posters.

[00:39:58] But again, if you need more materials, we can definitely come to tables to give you those. One of the posters is here, question number one. Question number two in my mind should be here, but I don't see it over there. So it's some, it is there.

[00:40:13] It's there. I just can't see it. Question number three is over in the back. And then question number four is right there. Again, please feel free to write directly on the poster or you can write on the

sticky note. And either way, we will gather all of this. We will look at your answers.

[00:40:29] And then I won't share any sneak peeks, but we will use this information to guide our next community activity for next month's SEAC. All right, so it is, we got to do good with timekeeping because you know we'll get off track. So it's 6:40. So let's spend about three to five minutes answering question one and then we'll kind of shift to question two and then so on. So let's say we'll spend the next, if you want to talk at your tables, if you want to go over to the posters

[00:41:09] and communicate at the posters it is meant for you to get up and walk around but I also don't want to push people outside of their comfort zones if that is not your preference but please yes if you want to get up and converse with people in your group but again these some of these things are very personal because we all have individualized needs so what feels like belonging to me might not be your idea of belonging so we do want some diverse independent answers but certainly if you want to share and then at the end we may go around and look at some themes to just see what comes out

[00:41:42] of this i don't know if this yes it's on so you guys can you can start at whichever one you want again if people feel more comfortable sitting down i'm gonna go grab a sticky so i can start

[00:43:01] back to our seats grab your snacks finish up

[00:52:55] your last really important words and we're going to share some of the themes. All right, guys,

[00:53:34] we're about to share out on the themes. Let's come back together. I really, really do thank you guys for the excitement and the engagement and the fellowship, all of the conversations that I was able to hear walking around the room. So I have Kim in the front of the room. So we're going to just kind of pull some themes just to see what some highlighted themes or some takeaways are since we don't have the time to deep dive into your responses but I promise we will do that and

[00:54:09] we will bring something back to you with those responses so question number one as a reminder was again share a time when you or your child felt a strong sense of belonging in school Kim what might be some themes that came away from that um there are some specific examples of certain events in which people felt either included or not included.

[00:54:33] And there are also quite a few post-its up here that really talk about being greeted by name, having an understanding of you and your child. So I would say that's a quick synthesis. I love that.

[00:54:48] And I'll give you time to walk across the front like Vanna White while we go to question number two. But just to kind of highlight some of the things that Kim just said, she said being greeted by name. I can tell you that Tedra does a really good job of that.

[00:55:07] We have a really, really large department, and I just go, how does she remember everyone's name, even if it's like their first week, because that's really hard. So remembering someone's name and then taking the time to pronounce their name correctly is one of the biggest forms of respect that you can show someone.

[00:55:24] So that's always something we like to remember. So, again, question number two was, what helps you feel like you belong in a group or community? Any themes that we can take away from that question? Interestingly enough, we see some commonalities because one of them is really knowing my name and having me feel welcome and included at the table.

[00:55:45] And what that inclusion looks like is active listening, posing questions. There's a lot on here about open communication, respect, kindness, trust. And I can tell you back when I was still a school-based employee and we were doing attendance circles, and we talked about that one way to get students engaged is that sense of belonging.

[00:56:08] They have to feel like they have a community, right? So a part of our restorative circles that we would have on attendance, we talked about that sense of belonging. and one of the things over there that I mentioned from that group, but I also think I resonated with some myself, is that you are missed. When you miss that opportunity, you are missed. People are emailing, texting, where were you today? I didn't see you. Or when you come back, they're like, oh my gosh, you're back. So glad to have you back. Those things are really important and they really play into a sense of belonging. And that was, again, one of the ways for students who are chronically

[00:56:48] absent, we were able to work with them. Like, hey, no, nobody's getting left behind. Somebody's coming to pick you up. Be ready in five minutes. One of your peers is on the way. We've got breakfast waiting, but we miss you here, and we don't want to do this without you. That really helps students feel a sense of belonging. It has a community that they can come back to every day. Okay, moving to question number three. What can SEAC or our office, the Office of Special Education, do this year to help your families feel a greater sense of belonging than what you felt in the past?

[00:57:20] And Margaret's in the back with her mic to share the themes on that question. It's a very dangerous day when Nakia hands me a microphone. So along with kind of what Kim mentioned, I'm seeing a very strong theme around communication, both from SEAC and OSE to parents directly, both to invite them to meetings.

[00:57:40] And one note on here that I really appreciate is also looking at how we might expand our offerings to both parents and children and siblings so we have sib supports coming but how might we as a SIAC and an OSC really support the whole family not just parents and then a lot for OSC really comes down to communicating with families being open transparent and really focusing on empowering and educating families to advocate for their job. I love that and a lot of the sharing out that happened earlier today from both Tedra and Paige was around making sure that you're informed on

[00:58:15] what we're doing so it's not a surprise I think a lot of times in the past people felt like you guys are doing so many things behind the scenes behind the scenes and while yes if you like theater you know it's the behind the scenes that's making the action happen on the stage right but we recognize sometimes you want to take a peek behind the curtain so we don't mind letting you in so we want to do more of that and if you feel like hey you said you were doing more of that but I haven't seen behind the curtain yet, then you say that. And we welcome that feedback. And so we're going to work on that. And we are working on more offerings for families around trainings and

[00:58:52] different things that we are doing for our staff here. We want to create those opportunities so we can do that for our families. And so hopefully we will have a list of those opportunities the next time we're together. And finally, question number four, what does belonging for students with disabilities look like in action? Not passive belonging, but what does that very assertive action of belonging look like in real time? Margaret? So the big focus is on understanding and shifting from awareness to acceptance, and that feeling on the part of students of feeling safe, feeling supported in those communities, and a really big focus on inclusion. And somebody said

[00:59:31] it doesn't look any different as it does for able-bodied students, because that's what belonging is. I like that. It doesn't look any different. We want you to be doing the exact same thing that you would be doing for everyone else. So again, I appreciate you all.

[00:59:48] I appreciate the level of engagement and excitement and communication you had around this activity. Again, this is not the end. We will take everything that you said and we will come back with our next really engaging and fun activity for next month. See you then.

[01:00:03] Thank you so much, Nakia. That was amazing. And yep, that is something we've been talking about in our meaningful inclusion subcommittee too. So this was really great theme to have. We, Carrie LaBelle was not able to make it today, but we are going to have Leanne Kidwell talk about family resource services, formerly known as parent resource services.

[01:00:34] Good evening, everyone. Welcome back. Welcome to school. And as Shanaz already gave it away, we have switched. We are now Family Resource Services to be more inclusive. So that's exciting. And I just wanted to tell you a little bit about myself and what Family Resource Services is. I'm Leanne Kidwell. I'm a special ed teacher. And I'm starting my 26th year with Loudoun County Public Schools.

[01:01:05] so in it for the long haul and what does family resource services do well there's really three main categories other duties as assigned always but the first thing that we do is direct support so if families have a question or a concern they don't know you know what's going on they can give me a call I talk to any family but I am especially a teacher by training so most of the families that I talk to are special ed parents. The questions that I get are varied. I get a lot of

[01:01:44] how do we get the process started with special education? What is eligibility? What are evaluations? What's the special ed process? I also get a lot of phone calls about how do I get tutoring for my students um so just any questions that parents have i'm the person that they can go to if i don't know or if i need to bring in another support i work with the special ed supervisors i'm the transition team i will do that um i had one mom call her kid was having problems on the bus

[01:02:21] we called transportation and did a three-way call with transportation and got that problem solved so Really, I am, I always say that I have the luxury of time. My job is to talk to parents, to talk to families. So if they have any questions or concerns, send them my way.

[01:02:38] The other thing that I do is workshops, and I'm sorry, I apologize. I brought none of my workshop flyers tonight. I have been out sick all week, and really, really, SIAC is important to me. So I wanted to be here tonight, but I have brain fog and did not bring any of my flyers.

[01:02:56] But all of our flyers are on the website. So our next workshop, which is posted on here, is gonna be next Thursday, and it's What is Child Find? But we have all of our year workshops listed on the website, so you can go in and look at those.

[01:03:15] Sorry. And the last thing I do are resource and referrals. So if someone has a question about Medicaid waivers, I might refer them to John Hudson with a CSB who is sitting in the back of the room. So it may be, or someone has a question about their kids' transition plan, I would refer them back to the transition team.

[01:03:40] So, you know, just to, knowing who to talk to in LCPS sometimes is difficult, so I can help navigate through that process. Or if they're looking for after-school activities for their kids, you know,

where might they go.

[01:03:56] So those are the three big areas that I do. But as I said, you know, I do whatever needs to happen. This is what does child find us next Thursday? And then this is me. We have changed our name. So if you had saved our webpage address or our Facebook address or our Twitter address, those have all changed, so take note of those.

[01:04:21] and if you were already following us on Facebook or Twitter, you didn't even see the difference because it all changed automatically. But if you're gonna follow us on Facebook or Twitter, these are the new addresses. Thank you so much. I'm really, really happy to be in a new school year with you guys and have a great school year.

[01:04:48] - Thank you, Leanne. Okay, so I did go ahead and I made a list of all of our school board members in case anyone wanted to know who was their school board member, district rep.

[01:05:04] And then I just wanted to take a moment to thank Dr. Grubbs, if you don't mind, just raise your hand there. Dr. Grubbs, he's the director of career and technical and adult education that provides students with exposure to options when they are considering their post-secondary path.

[01:05:27] So we really appreciate all that you do and helping us with, as we build this Transition Center, our collaboration is very important. I don't know if Ms. Renee Dawson? Yay, okay. Ms. Renee Dawson, she is the Director of Family and Community Engagement.

[01:05:48] And she has been a key player in building strong partnerships with many community businesses. And again, our collaboration is so important, and we really appreciate all you've done. Next, we have Mr. Shad Mahomet, and he is the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

[01:06:19] And I don't know if Dr. Mark Bergen was able to come out. I know, again, they were back-to-back, and it was pretty busy. He is our Chief of Staff, and he's the guy who gives us all our policies, So that's why I was thinking, you know, if he was here.

[01:06:34] So I wanted to thank you all for coming out today and being part of our kickoff event. And we look forward to our continuing partnership. This concludes the presentation portion of our meeting. We will take about a 10-minute break, 7:15.

[01:06:52] We'll go ahead and reconvene over here for our business portion of our meeting.

[01:06:57] Thank you.

[01:16:56] Okay, everyone. Maybe we could get started on our SEAC business portion. Okay, if you have not signed in yet, please use the QR code on the screen to sign in.

[01:17:26] And again, for the live stream people, use that same QR code. Okay, and I just kind of went ahead and put our agenda out here for today. And so, SEAC is mandated by the state of Virginia, and the primary role includes advising the school division on the needs of students with disabilities.

[01:17:51] We help set priorities and strategies and submit recommendations to the school board. It also assists in explaining special education plans to the community, reviews policies and procedures before they go to the school board, and participates in reviewing the division's annual special education plan.

[01:18:13] I want to take this moment just to introduce our executive committee. again I'm Shanaz Khan I'm the SEAC chair and then here we have Tom Ketchum who is our vice chair of membership right next to

Tom we have Catherine who is our vice chair of planning to my right we have Erin Rosalpo who is our vice chair of communications we have Liz Crotty who's missing in action but she'll be here soon and she is our SEAC past chair and Catherine Rosenbrook who's our secretary

[01:18:48] And, of course, you've met Dr. Carter, our Special Ed Director, and our school board liaison, Carrie LaBelle, who is not with us today here, and or Melinda Mansfield, and she's our backup. Okay, so first item of business, we need to admit our virtual attendees, and we have one.

[01:19:12] so do I have a motion and a second okay so we have a motion to admit our virtual attendee any discussions all those in favor say aye and Sharon you are admitted to the meeting okay so I wanted to take a moment to have our SEAC members do just a brief introduction so

[01:19:46] everyone knows who we are. I don't have the roll call. Tom, do you have it? Okay, go for it. Carrie Adams. Hi, Carrie. Yeah, just go ahead and stand up. Yep. We want the mic there. Oh, yeah, that would be wonderful if she can introduce herself just a little bit. Thank you. Hi, I'm Carrie Adams. I have a second grader at Little River Elementary who is a special needs child or disabled child, I guess you should say, and it's my first, I'm a brand new SEAC member. I've been coming the

[01:20:22] past three years but first year as a member. Thank you, Carrie. Elizabeth Crotty, who is not present currently. She'll be here. Jen Dianato. Hi, I'm Jen Dianato.

[01:20:39] I, um, this is my third year as, or no, third year on it. Third. Second year, I think one year is your PTA, PTA. Yeah, second year is the member. Um, I have a sixth grade, uh, my son who has an IEP here at LCPS. Um, I am super excited, was super passionate last year about our playgrounds. I'm going to talk to you in just a little bit about another topic that's come up that I am super passionate about now. So I'm one for one with things that I get involved with, so I'm feeling pretty good about this next one.

[01:21:13] But if anybody has any questions or wants to talk to me, I'm here. Thank you. Marsha Kelly.

[01:21:29] Hi, I'm Marsha Kelly. I have two kids in elementary school, both with IEPs. This is my first year as a SEAC rep but I've sat in the audience and hidden for many years now it's a great community of people and parents you can get lots of information lots of help lots of support so welcome and we look forward to a great year thank you Tom Ketchum present so this is my first year as vice chair of membership my third year on SEAC my 17th year of being involved in school

[01:22:08] advocacy having served in gifted advisory in a previous county but I also serve here on GIAC as well as the equity committee and chair the meaningful inclusion subcommittee Janaz thank you all know me I've been here for a long long long time I think this is going on 10 years as part of CIAC in one form or

[01:22:39] or the other, and I have had the, I guess, experience of having different administrations along the way. I've worked with many different people, and I'm really, really excited about the existing administration and how we are working collaboratively. I have one child left. I have three children, but I have only one child left in LCPS. He's a high school

[01:23:05] student and he's my student with disabilities so. Rosina Katak. I'm Rosina. I've been with SEAC for over 10 years so I don't even want to think about the amount actual time. I have four children in LCPS. One is a returning grad and my youngest now is in middle school so I'm almost done. I'm also a

[01:23:34] Medicaid case manager so if you have questions you can ask me too. Thank you. Laura Colossi. Hi I'm Laura Colossi. I have a first grader at Legacy with an IEP. I guess this is my second year, I think, at

CEAC. So, love every minute. Also, bake my treats, too. So, come for the treats.

[01:24:03] We're putting you on our non-existent payroll. It's okay. Mary McClintock. Alicia McFadden. Escape this microphone. This is my second year on CEAC. I'm a speech pathologist, privately at CSGC Therapies, and I am on the literacy subcommittee with Aaron.

[01:24:38] Craig Metz? Craig's not here yet. Stephen Meyer? Good evening, everyone. My daughter is a proud graduate of LCPS. I'm a retired math teacher.

[01:24:59] I taught pre-algebra to students with disabilities here in Loudoun County. I retired three years ago. This is my second year on SEAC. As I say all the time, I hope to be a voice for students with disabilities who are real high functioning, who maybe are two or three years behind in reading and math, and they need good CTE programs.

[01:25:25] And it's been proven that if they're in a CTE program, their academics go up considerably because they have a focus and a goal. So I hope to contribute in many ways, and that's just one of them.

[01:25:47] Catherine Moran. Hello, I'm Catherine Moran. I am a parent first, always. Our youngest daughter just exited LCPS, so she's 22, and Rosina, I'm calling. We are in the throes of transition as a family, and I'm also a CAS teacher for our pilot program of CAS I this year at Rock Ridge High School,

[01:26:12] And I've been in and around this field for about 30 years and have had a privilege to work with PETSEE, our Parent Education Advocacy Training Center, and U.S. Department of Ed, and some other things.

[01:26:28] But this has been one of the most fun, challenging, and rewarding places to be, is here and to see all the growth and to see all of the support that's happening for our kids. Kelly Ralston.

[01:26:50] Hi, I'm Kelly Ralston. I have three kids, two girls, and my second grade boy is twice exceptional. I didn't know what that meant, and I ran into Tedra for the first time.

[01:27:06] She said, you should come to this meeting. It's about 2E. I said, don't know what that is, and here I am. I'm learning from Tom every day. Erin Rizal-Poe.

[01:27:22] Erin Rizal-Poe. I've been involved formally with SEAC three years, four years, about that, unofficially for many years. My oldest now is a sophomore in college over at Shenandoah. He did have an IEP with LCPS.

[01:27:37] He now has a 504 in college. My youngest has just started high school over at Briar Woods. He also has an IEP. What I can say is what caused me to get more active in the role of SEAC was mainly due to, like Shanaaz, living through multiple administrations and actually seeing a change with our current administration.

[01:27:57] I think for the first time, there is too many families raised in hope that we didn't have Many years ago, especially with when my family first started here in the county So I love coming to SIAC. I love being a support for other family members I help service families all over the Commonwealth of Virginia. So I'm glad you all came tonight. Catherine Rosenbrook Brooke. Sorry. I'm Katie Rosenbrook I am

[01:28:29] Secretary I think I'm going in year six or seven as the secretary for SIAC. I'm a special ed teacher for the county I spent a number of years in middle school and graduated a few years ago, and now I'm teaching seniors for our Start on Success program and a floating cast teacher.

[01:28:52] Carly Sabatino. Hello, I'm Carly Sabatino. I have one child in LCPS. He's autistic, nonverbal. He's in kindergarten, and he was in ECSE for three years.

[01:29:16] So while this is my second year coming to the meetings and everything, we've been around for a little bit now. And I am excited to be here and keep learning and making positive changes with everybody. Carla Solo, who's not here.

[01:29:40] Sharon Troth. Find that mute button. Hi, I'm Sharon Troth. I've been involved with SEAC for well over, oh, too many years to count, well over 10 years.

[01:29:55] And I, too, am very excited, Shemaz, to see the diversity of our group and to hear about all the wonderful collaboration that's occurring and look forward to a great school year. Melissa Waugh.

[01:30:17] Hi, I'm Melissa Waugh. I am also a parent first of two students who are proud graduates of Broad Run High School, both had IEPs at the time. I have been involved in SEAC, I think, four or five years now.

[01:30:36] I'm also the co-chair of the policy and compliance subcommittee and I'm also a special education attorney representing students here in Loudoun County but also all over the Commonwealth of Virginia and I did want to reiterate what Dr. Spence said earlier about RSEAC and how unique it is. Working all throughout the state I do see what's happening in other districts and this is very unique what we have here being able to work so collaboratively with the staff being able to be effective with you know when people come up with great ideas about playgrounds you know we

[01:31:14] have the support from the administration to be able to make those dreams come true again i can't emphasize how unique our SEAC is and how proud i am of each and every individual who participates in this organization both you know the parents and the SEAC members but also the staff and the the administrators who spend so much time with us, not just on these meetings, but in our subcommittee meetings. And it's a big commitment that they've made to us as the families of students with

[01:31:42] disabilities in Loudoun County. So thank you. And Sakina Zarbusch. Good evening, everyone. My name is Sakina Zarbusch, and I'm a speech therapist in a private practice. And I joined the SEAC for information gathering, information sharing with the students I work with and their families.

[01:32:10] And I also enjoy the hard work and the energy and the collaboration that I observed during the sessions and with all these committees. And I have been in different public schools all over the country, in Ohio, in Maryland.

[01:32:26] And I'm fascinated and very impressed by the hard work that you guys do here. And it's just so nice to watch. And I wish there is a way to share what you do here with other places. So a lot of people can benefit from that.

[01:32:41] Thank you. And that we already called her name. We're not going to let Liz Crotty not introduce herself. Oh, awesome. Hi, guys. I'm Liz Crotty. I am the past chair of SEAC and also a first-year teacher of special education and a graduate student.

[01:33:10] So I'm sorry, but I'm going to be late to all of our SEAC meetings this semester. but I'm so excited to be here with all of you and to see all these wonderful faces so yeah you welcome back to a new

school year okay and then our SIAC PTA PTO representatives do we have any here today if you could just raise your hand

[01:33:41] yeah I got you guys don't worry I I have you guys covered we are going to try and set up a time, maybe do a Zoom call where we can discuss what kind of the roles and responsibilities are of a SEAC representative.

[01:33:59] It gets intense because we have a lot of the business portion and you probably don't know what to relay back to your school sometimes, but we do provide PTA, PTO talking points so that you can take that back to your school and discuss how your school can be more inclusive and bringing that sense of belonging to your school community.

[01:34:25] So, also, if you could please join our Facebook group at SEAC Reps, and I will try my best to remember to post meeting information there, and if you have any questions, you can always reach out to me there, too. And now we have public comment, and we do have one public comment.

[01:34:47] SEAC really values hearing from the public because your feedback helps guide the recommendations we make to the school board about special education needs. We do ask that comments focus on system-wide issues rather than individual students or staff. You can share your thoughts by giving a verbal comment to three minutes or by submitting your comment in writing to be read by me, the SEAC chair.

[01:35:12] And please remember to follow up with our SEAC secretary with your written comments so that it's part of our record. And our first public comment is from Jen DiDenato. No, I'm just kidding. You would have to enlarge that big time before I can read that thing.

[01:35:31] I'm just kidding. One thing to be clear on, I did not come up with the playground idea. I just hopped on board and was on that train driving it with them. But, all right, so thanks, everybody, for allowing me to speak tonight. I'm a SEAC member, PTO rep, and a mom of a student with disabilities.

[01:35:46] We entered middle school this year, and, man, it's been a whirlwind. Now, our school's been great, and the teachers have been super communicative and supportive during this, but adjusting to the new school has been a big effort, but doing so and educating everybody about my son's IEP is a very large task, especially with such a big change.

[01:36:08] One of the items that is in ours, and I'm sure in a lot of everybody else's, is things like advanced notice of tests, written down homework assignments, pre-printed study guides. And during our transition meeting when we were in elementary school, they said, no worries, everything's easily accessible on Schoology.

[01:36:27] You'll have everything you need. And I was like, great, this sounds, well, it looks like a few of you know my pains, right? So maybe it's on Schoology, but the only way you can find everything you need on Schoology if you're a detective and have about 16 hours a day to look for it.

[01:36:44] So, and just to note, I have a computer science background. I work for a Fortune 50 tech company. I am not, like, I am a tech-savvy person, and I really just can't figure it out. I had some meetings, and the teachers, again, really willing to talk to me.

[01:36:59] They're like, well, everything will be under Akame Activities. I was like, great, everything's under there. They're like, well, some of the things will be there, but also in this PowerPoint slide that's an

agenda that I'll update every day. And I was like, great, so I have to look at the PowerPoint. They're like, well, sometimes, though, it's also at this other link you can go to.

[01:37:15] And I'm like, how are we supposed to do that? How's my son supposed to do that? And I know it's a problem for all students, but especially those with disabilities, where these things are written into the IEP, because my son has dysgraphia and he cannot write that physically, so I need to go be able to help them.

[01:37:32] So, looking through about what I actually wanted to say. So, it impacts all students, but it is an issue for those with IEPs. So, I'm going to be asking today that the SEAC tape up as a new initiative, and I've already offered to lead it um to work with lcps to develop some standard processes and procedures for our teachers on how to use schoology technology can be a great aid but a technology tool regardless of the things it's offered are only going to be effective if we have standard processes and procedures to use them so i know it's something that a lot of people struggle with

[01:38:09] i did too and i'd like to work together with lcps and all the great people that we have who are always super helpful to develop something to make it easier for parents for students and our teachers to know where to put all those assignments to help all of our children but especially those

[01:38:24] in with disabilities and that's it thanks before I forget to SEAC was asked to be part of two different focus groups one I did email our members about with regards to the LCPS strategic plan

[01:39:01] and that that would be a big initiative and I did have a couple of responses on that so I'm looking forward to us working together on the LCPS strategic plan the second one was about joining in a focus group with about history and science curriculum and so if anyone is interested as representing SEAC on one of these focus groups please let me know you would yes and anytime we're looking at new curriculum or revising anything that we have like that it's so important to have the perspective of of not only parents but also advocates for

[01:39:40] students with disabilities because you might find a curriculum that has checks all the boxes but doesn't really consider access for our students and so I think it's really a really really important it is not as long term of a commitment as the strategic plan that's sort of an ongoing thing but these curriculum committees that get together I'll get an email occasionally hey do you have any member and I forward that on to Shanaz so there have been a few of those they'll probably be a few more opportunities this year I'll also have my own stakeholder groups for a couple of issues as they arise throughout the year but anytime you have an opportunity to be the voice of students with

[01:40:18] disabilities of course we always have staff that participate but hearing from our community and from families it really bears a lot of weight in the consideration of those things so I just want to really encourage you if you have the time to spend on something like that it really is time well spent that will probably impact easily 10,000 students right off the bat so it's a small input big gain when you do that so thank you also I just wanted to say they usually provide lunch if that's a motivator for you like good lunch but I did both

[01:40:56] the math ones for elementary and secondary last year and it was such a great experience and i learned so much as a parent looking through all the curriculum and hearing from all the teachers and all the diverse perspectives and yes like as a parent i had a very valuable perspective in terms of we talk about middle school challenges in terms of how can i help my student at home let me see what kind of resources

this new curriculum has to offer and um so it's very much worth your time and i would highly encourage as many people as possible to participate um because it it's going

[01:41:34] to impact you one way or another so you might as well have some say in it in the process and you won't be alone really i mean you would even though you're part of this any one of us up here especially me I will always be able to sit down and discuss what exactly are some of the issues we've seen across the years and or what kind of positive feedback we can bring to the table so

[01:42:02] please feel free to reach out whoever does volunteer for these positions yes for the strategic planning and the curriculum is like the math curriculum that Liz is talking about for history and science yeah so for anybody that's interested in doing that that was a two days, it was two days, like all day, basically like 8 to 2.30 or 3 or something. And you sat down in like a little focus group and you looked at, people presented different information to you,

[01:42:37] you looked at textbooks and online platforms and that sort of thing to evaluate them. But the strategic planning, I was curious what that looked like. I can give you specifics and send them to Shanae's. I have an email with a listing, but it is basically a monthly commitment for a period of time while the strategic plan is being developed and then there are a few rollout activities that you would be a part of but it is over the course of probably a year's time it might be a monthly commitment to the development of

[01:43:10] the new strategic plan yeah questions okay so just to recap over the summer we did meet to discuss and provide feedback on the memorandum of understanding between the LCPS school board and the Sheriff of Loudoun County and the Leesburg Police Department which are SROs and we did vote on them we provided recommendations if anyone's interested in reading them they are on our website I also wanted to just bring to everyone's attention there is now a clear

[01:43:44] bag policy starting in the fall if you're attending varsity football games only clear bags will be allowed through the ticket gates similar to rules of other schools and stadiums so you know I just wanted to bring it to everyone's attention in case you know some of our students it's a small clear bag the rule I think they have their requirements on the website it's just I wanted to bring it to our attention here because I know I know some of our students they have particular bag requirements they need a particular bag

[01:44:22] or you know medical bag anything like that so that's why I thought it might be, but thank you. Yes. Yeah. I have specifics. Oh yeah. Okay. Um, tentative meeting dates are January 28th, March 18th, June 6th and September 16th, 2026 from four to 6 PM. So it is one, two, three, four meetings. And, um, we need to turn in who it will be by November 21st.

[01:44:49] Okay. Perfect. So think hard. Thank you. Okay. So I just wanted to kind of go briefly over you know what some of our priorities have started to look like for the 25 26 school year obviously SOLs is big concern for us moving towards SOLs are now moving towards being more rigorous and I think they are going to be counting towards 10% of a student's grade going forward this is obviously concerning for

[01:45:29] us because our students some of them have learning different differences Some of them, you know, they have processing disorders and stuff. So making the test harder and tying them to 10% of a final grade may increase anxiety, discourage progress, and hurt their confidence level.

[01:45:47] And, you know, and some of them are just not good test takers as it is. So what we would like to look at is more of what happens if they don't pass it? What are going to be some of the accommodations

they can have?

[01:46:02] What are the other solutions that can help our students with disabilities? So that's one on the list. The next one is the discipline data. This was presented to the school board on August 12th.

[01:46:19] And, you know, while we appreciate the presentation, we appreciate that the data was presented, the preliminary data showed that students with disabilities were suspended at a much higher rate than our typical peers. but it was there was a real gap a huge gap and so I think that what we would like to do is take a deeper dive I was talking to Tom for the meaningful inclusion subcommittee and and maybe asking more questions getting more data just to see how we can help this situation what can we bring from CX

[01:46:56] perspective that might be able to start making that gap smaller so that is one of our big endeavors for the school year bullying of course bullying has been um it continues to i see i continues to hear strong concerns with bullying about families that are um for our students with disabilities and again that's something we'll be bringing up in our subcommittees um for reading and math interventions we are going to look at the new vowels criteria how is vowels different for grades four through eight and i think aaron is going to speak more

[01:47:32] to it when i talk about the subcommittees and what they're actually kind of working on the school year we also want to look at the math and the new math curriculum transition center so the transition center there's a lot of stuff that's happening over there um again i'll probably go over all of transition what's going to be happening in our subcommittee reports but just to say about the transition center as dr spence said you know they have a spot i think they're proposing a name we we should be able to have the name approved at the next school board meeting so yay we're going

[01:48:04] to move forward okay so now we have our did you know and i'm going to hit enter to see if she yep there we go should i go ahead and play it katherine i'm going to try to put this no no it doesn't play anymore no i messed everything up hang on it played um yesterday for me but i think i don't

[01:48:34] see i don't see a play button anymore so yes if you don't mind playing it this person couldn't be

[01:48:46] here in person. So she's just made a video for us.

[01:49:15] My name is Tamara and I have been a SEAC rep for Rockridge High School and I am going to present the Did You Know for tonight. Did you

[01:49:48] know the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, ensures access to education in all school-sponsored activities. This includes field trips, sports, after-school clubs, performing arts, and community-based learning. Schools must provide reasonable accommodations such as interpreters, accessible transportation, and sensory supports. Students with disabilities must have the same opportunity to benefit from extracurricular activities as their peers. Inclusion in non-academic settings builds confidence, friendships, and workplace readiness skills.

[01:50:29] Thanks. Hi. On the mic.

[01:50:47] Okay. Before we go on for subcommittees, I do want to talk about membership. Tom, do we have that information? So we do currently have 21 members of SEAC. We have a couple of applications, but we do have some people that will roll off both during the course of the year as well as from year to year.

[01:51:10] So if you are interested in joining SEAC and becoming a voting member, we would certainly encourage you to do that. It does require that you participate in subcommittee meetings as well, as well as attend the meetings here on a monthly basis in person.

[01:51:32] So we have approximately 70 identified PTO reps. I'm not sure actually how many of those are active. So one of the things we're doing is reaching out to individual PTOs to ensure that they are actually getting information from SEAC.

[01:51:51] Because I think some of those names have been on that list for quite some time. So I appreciate all the PTO reps that came here this evening. And if there are other PTOs in your sort of trees of schools, particularly at the high school level or middle school level, your elementary schools and other schools are associated, and they don't have SEAC members, please encourage them to appoint one.

[01:52:17] Thanks, Tom. Okay. So now we're going to move over to our subcommittees. We have four working subcommittees. This is where all of our discussions happen. This is open to the public, and we do ask that every SEAC member join a subcommittee because we do want everybody's input. Then we bring it to the main business meeting for a vote.

[01:52:39] the policy subcommittee is co-chaired by Melissa Wow and Craig Metz and they meet whenever we get our we don't have a realist I don't think we have a standing right Melissa we don't have a standing meeting but we do meet as soon as we get some policies we we put it on the calendar we'll send out an agenda and you all will know about it meaningful inclusion Tom is one of the co-chairs and Kelly I believe is the other co-chair do you want to speak a little bit about the scope of meaningful inclusion sure so meaningful inclusion picks up everything that's not

[01:53:16] included another subcommittee right meaningful inclusion is is certainly one of the important things that we talk about because it is about the intentional inclusion of our students we talked earlier about some of the key words I think the Kia that I wrote down that I don't now remember but about how we build that sense of belonging build that sense of being included and that can cover a wide variety of things the playgrounds that Jennifer mentioned earlier we're going to cover some interesting topics in addition to the discipline one that

[01:53:55] Shanaz mentioned earlier some things related to inclusion around 2E students twice exceptional students and special programs as well as another topic that we're going to tackle this year so we'll be announcing the schedule for those meetings here in probably the next week or so. And we have our specialized reading and math. Erin?

[01:54:22] So Alicia and I co-chair. Alicia, she's in the back back there. And our first subcommittee meeting is actually tomorrow at 10 a.m. and it will be virtual. We talk everything specialized reading and math and then some. I think that's about right. Everything from the vowel screener to the VLA, to the incredible recipe books that both Kim and Margaret have put together for tools for our teams to use to support children with disabilities as it pertains to reading and math.

[01:54:55] So we always have good conversation, good questions that we bring to our meetings, and it's a great opportunity for you to directly ask, you know, these professionals in this area if there is something that you're seeing with your own child or if you hear something at your school, it's a great opportunity to come and discuss it.

[01:55:13] And as we're looking at how reading interventions have been proposed for across the school division, we are looking at particularly those that have significant delays because a lot of these curriculums are not adapted enough for them.

[01:55:34] And so we will be spending some time in that subcommittee trying to find a better curriculum for our kids who really need that guidance. So that is another thing on the list. And then transition. Stephen, do you want to speak to you or do you want me to?

[01:55:53] Stephen has kindly offered to co-chair the transition subcommittee. And I am looking for, or we are looking for, another co-chair to help out on that subcommittee. Transition is huge. It's transitioning from preschool to K, from fifth to sixth, middle school to high school, and high school into work programs, like readiness programs, like CAST.

[01:56:26] And it also includes something I think is very important that the Transition Center will have is testing, in that any student with an IEP will be able to take a series of tests to help them determine what their real interests are, what skills they lack, they will be able to get training for those skills.

[01:56:50] And so it's really a wide range of things, and it's basically having students ready to transition at any point where they may have difficulty. One of the areas where I really appreciate, Dr. Carter, that you mentioned was our ECSC to kindergarten.

[01:57:13] That's a transition that has been difficult. I mean, our transition subcommittee has been focusing mainly on the post-secondary aspects. Of course, we've talked about the transition center, but SEAC has also advocated that we have a proper parent handbook where we're really helping our families understand and be guided through that transition process because it's not about once the students graduate high school and now we're going to look at what programs, what work skills that they can be working on, what independent living skills can they be working on.

[01:57:51] We need to back that up, not even just a high school. We need to be starting in middle and elementary school and really preparing our students for what's out there. How do we provide those skills? And so we will be taking, we were really appreciated that we have a parent handbook and we'll be reviewing it and then we're gonna have it for all of our families to kind of really understand that process and see what they're gonna be looking for.

[01:58:16] And again, another aspect that I like to talk about is CII because I feel CII is a very important piece as we move from elementary to middle and high school And I always forget, it's community independence instruction.

[01:58:34] I don't know why the last I all was. It used to be called CBI, and that stays stuck in my head. But it's important. It is how, at each grade level, our kids are interacting with the community. Whether they're doing something within the schools, whether they're going outside of schools, learning how to ride the bus, learning how to stand in a line, learning how to purchase items.

[01:58:57] What does that mean? How do you make your list? All of these things are vital. And I always believe that I really should start in elementary school. Our kids should be out there in the community learning to work with others and how that happens. So that by the time they get to programs like CAST and Project SEARCH, which are post-secondary, they have some of these skills already developed instead of us trying to work on those skills at that part.

[01:59:24] So that is what our transition subcommittee really looks at. And believe it or not, we're wrapping up. So I came across this flyer, it is a SEAC training. PTC is putting on a training for anyone who wants to know more about what a SEAC, what a role, what role a SEAC member plays.

[01:59:48] And even our PTA/PTO reps, if you are interested in just attending, it's September 20th, I believe. If you are interested, please let me know and I can send you a bigger version of this flyer. Otherwise, there is a QR code, and you can find it on the PEATC website now.

[02:00:11] I'm just opening it up to any questions or discussions from today, if anybody has any. Catherine? I'm not sure if we talked about this, but do you have to be a voting member of SEAC to be on a committee? So the subcommittee is open to the public, but when we do make voting recommendations, it would be only members can vote on the recommendations.

[02:00:38] But discussion portion, that's vital to our recommendation. So we would really welcome anybody who wants to come in, be part of the discussion because we would take that into account as well. Probably should have made this part of the public comment at the beginning, but I forgot to sign up.

[02:01:03] But I just wanted to say, we brought it up a few times today, a big thank you to SEAC for all the help about playgrounds last year. I know we've been, I preached it for, gosh, two years now. But they just announced that they're starting to make plans for my son's playground, and I cried when they announced it.

[02:01:18] So it was never going to happen without the work of SEAC. So thank you to every single one of you who stood up alongside of me and for our kids. So sorry, emotional. It was wonderful. So thank you. And thank you, Carrie, for your advocacy.

[02:01:36] It was a lot of your help, too, to make that happen. Okay. If there are no more questions or discussions, our next meeting will be October 1st, where we are going to have a very interesting conversation on generative AI in education.

[02:01:55] Also, our EC meeting will be held right after this at Clyde's next door. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate it.



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