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Loudoun County Public Schools, Legislative, Audit and Policy Committee (LA&P) Meeting, Tuesday, September 16, 2025

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[00:00:01] good evening this is April Chandler calling to order the legislative audit and policy committee meeting for September 16th 2025 we typically begin with public comment but seeing as we have no speakers tonight we'll move on to our first item which is item 3.01 approval of the August 19th 2025 draft minutes may I please have a motion to approve the August meeting minutes motion to approve the meeting minutes from last time August 19th thank you miss Chernoff. I'll second that. So the motion was made by Ms. Chernoff and seconded by

[00:00:36] Ms. Chandler. All those in favor please say aye. Aye. The motion passes you well we'll say Ms. Donahue. I would abstain Madam Chair since I was not present for that. Thank you for that clarification. The motion passes with Ms. Chernoff and Ms. Chandler voting aye and Ms. Donahue abstaining. Tonight we'll start with our information item first up is item 4.01 office of the auditor general the oag's quarterly update

[00:01:12] for may through august 2025 this update aims to enhance the transparency of the office of the auditor general's functions by providing the legislative audit and policy committee along with other invested parties with periodic updates on audit management mr ahmad woods our auditor general will be presenting mr woods the floor is yours thank you madam chair today i will be presenting the Office of the

Auditor General's quarterly update the update covers a period of May through August of 2025 the purpose of the update is to

[00:01:48] update the committee on the Office of Auditor General's activities and today we'll go over completed engagements in process engagements upcoming engagements our calendar updates to the my concern hotline internal audit training and key initiatives that we either started or are working towards that we started in May or through August for the period we did or have completed two audits we haven't issued those audits we plan to issue those audits in the near future

[00:02:26] those two audits were IT third-party risk management and LCPS staff support and advocacy resources are there any questions regarding these reports while Hello, we're here, all right.

[00:02:44] Currently the OAG is working on three audits. They are registrar information, management, and data integrity. The purpose of that audit is to evaluate the controls and practices used in registered data collection. That audit is currently in the planning phase.

[00:03:01] And even though it says planning phase, what that means in audit terminology is basically we are conducting that audit, but we are doing our background and research develop the audits testing steps and so it is a audit function don't think of it as an audit that we are currently thinking about performing but we are performing.

[00:03:22] It is just a step during the audit process. The next one is LCPS transportation management purpose of that audit is to evaluate the effectiveness of transportation controls and practices that is currently in the midst of fieldwork. The next one is teacher extended contracts, commonly referred to within our division as Jefferson contracts.

[00:03:44] I think currently we are trying to move away from the term Jefferson contracts to teacher extended contracts as Jefferson contracts was derived from Thomas Jefferson High School, and that's how the name Jefferson's contracts came about.

[00:04:01] The purpose of that contract is to evaluate the controls over the administration of these contracts and assess the utilization of these contracts warrants additional FTEs. Again, that audit is also in the fieldwork process.

[00:04:18] Upcoming projects are the review of school board and staff communication to evaluate the effectiveness of the framework design of communication and information sharing practices between the Loudoun County School Board and Loudoun County Public Schools Administration.

[00:04:33] That is a carryover audit from the FY25 audit plan. The next audit is also a carryover from the FY25 audit plan. It is security pass NID badging. The purpose of this is to evaluate the design adequacy of staff badging access security systems.

[00:04:53] Anybody who carries a badge understands what that badge allows them access to. And so the purpose of that audit is to ensure that we are disconnecting the badges when they need to be disconnected, making sure the individuals who are supposed to be badged have them.

[00:05:08] And so that will be coming up soon too. Next we have our calendar. So during the phases or during the period of May through August, as I mentioned, we completed two audits.

[00:05:25] We were working towards three others and two were upcoming. Just want to pause real quick and see if anyone has any questions regarding current audits.

[00:05:44] During the period of May through August we received no My Concerns submissions from anyone. Right now we are currently working on updating our marketing material to be updated with the new logo and the new branding our current information or branding which includes posters at every school bookmarks has the older branding of the prior logo and so we're working to update that information and get that out to the public and so that's what we

[00:06:17] have going for the my concerns hotline as auditors we are required to every year get 40 hours of CP or continuing a professional education and so though AG should be informing the committee we are fulfilling those goals during this period staff went to a vision University which was 30 hours of CP also attended the 36th annual Global Fraud Conference in Nashville.

[00:06:57] So one of the auditors who is a certified fraud examiner attended that conference in Nashville. But also, one of the big things that one of the auditors performed this period was they performed a peer review. They attended the peer review in Santa Cruz County.

[00:07:15] Auditor, controller, treasurer, tax collector, department. And what that helps us in our office is when they perform these peer reviews, they're reviewing another office's practices to make sure that they are aligning their practices with those standards.

[00:07:34] And that helps us so when they come back from these peer reviews to make sure that we are following the areas that they identify that maybe we need to also carry out too. And so even though they are peer reviewing another department within the nation, It is valuable internally for us to make sure that we're also following those standards, too.

[00:07:58] And slide. So in the annual plan last year, there were initiatives that we outlined that we would take part in during the fiscal year 2025. And those included the Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan. We have held quarterly QAIP meetings.

[00:08:16] The last one did incorporate the auditor who attended the Santa Cruz peer review presentation on the items that Santa Cruz office, I wouldn't call them, I don't think they weren't deficiencies, they were minor corrections the office needed to make.

[00:08:33] And so that auditor provided that information to us so we can make sure that we are abiding by those standards so when we get peer reviewed. Also the conformance readiness assessment. This year, the Institute of Internal Auditors enacted new standards, new global standards that we follow.

[00:08:55] And so, during the QAIP, we made sure that we are following these new standards. And so, right now, we perform all our audits per the new global Institute of Internal Auditing Standards. Lastly, we completed our annual audit plan approval at the last LAMP meeting.

[00:09:19] and we are in the process because this was from may to august currently at that time we were planning and developing the annual audit plan but now it is approved and we are working towards doing that that work this fiscal year that concludes the oag's quarterly update are there any questions i'd be more than happy to answer thank you mr woods are there any questions or comments from the committee oh yes miss donahue thank you very much chair chandler thank you mr Woods for the presentation and for everything that you're doing for our division I had just a couple

[00:09:57] of questions when I was going over the slides and my first question was with regard to the the my concern is report from the last several months were you surprised that there haven't been any reports

do you think that that has to do with the fact that we were on break or do you think that that there may be other reasons.

[00:10:20] 'Cause I recall there were in previous reports that you reported to us there people were using this outlet. - I do think that a lot of it had to do with the summer months. May is towards the end of the school year. A lot is happening at the school level and in families lives as they prepare for summer and graduation for students.

[00:10:42] In June and July I think historically there are just slow months for the division. So I do think that break had something to do with it. I do think that we will see a pickup through now that we're back in school. And so the next time we come back and update you I think that we'll have at least one that we can update.

[00:11:04] Somebody contacted us in this area. Thank you. And if I may thank you. So I was also curious are does LCPS ever use external auditors for for any purposes? Okay so if they do not in my office. I do think that is a a good question. I think it's one that actually is is a broader discussion because we are the internal

[00:11:37] audit department. We should when we need to hire external auditors to perform audits on our behalf in areas we lack the expertise. One area would be IT audits and so if we ever needed to form an audit on our IT architecture we do not have the skills or expertise to do penetration testing which is basically hiring an ethical hacker to penetrate our systems we do not have that professional expertise and we would have to hire external auditors for that and so we currently do not have that in our

[00:12:15] budget but that is a conversation we can have going forward that's all I had thank you very much I will just say I am delighted to see the learning opportunities that your department had available to them this year i find it incredibly interesting to think about what you might learn at a global fraud conference right and i to be honest would love to hear more about that and find the idea of our team auditors learning about the peer review

[00:12:50] process and being able to really have the opportunity to test and reaffirm the processes to be indicative of overall healthy processes so thank you for that seeing no further questions we will move on and item 4.02 tonight which is also the Office of Auditor of the Auditor General Policy 3410 I am going to present tonight actually I chose to bring this policy forward as the first course of

[00:13:28] action following our discussion in August on aligning the policies related to the staff who report to the school board To that end, after reviewing the procedures that are used in neighboring divisions that also have an Auditor General, I have suggested some new language that would bring the authority to employ the Auditor General under the authority of the school board with the superintendent in an advisory and supporting role.

[00:13:53] That would give the Office of the Auditor General more autonomy and bring all of the employment processes, including the quarterly reviews, leave and travel approval for Mr. Woods and other administrative tasks under the purview of this committee.

[00:14:11] I also think it would be important for us to consider whether or not the audit function should have its own committee and we could discuss the best method for that going forward. But I look forward to hearing the perspectives and thoughts and ideas of the committee members on this proposal.

[00:14:31] And to that end, we'll offer the floor for any questions or comments. Ms. Donoghue. Thank you, Chair Chandler. I support the proposed amendments. I did have one question for clarification that might be best directed to Mr. Allen.

[00:14:55] But I was looking at the red lines, which provide on roughly lines 32 to 36, says, the authority to employ or dismiss the auditor general will rest with the school board.

[00:15:13] I was curious, what does that mean? Does that mean a majority of the school board, a unanimous decision of the school board, or a decision by the chair? And we don't necessarily have to have an answer for that right now, but that is something that I have to inquire about.

[00:15:31] - Thank you, Ms. Donahue. As written, the school board as a legal entity would constitute the majority vote of the school board. it speaks on behalf of the majority of its members through a vote. There are personnel actions that the school board approves pretty much every meeting.

[00:15:50] And so I anticipate that that's the same process that this would follow. - It is a very important question. Thank you for bringing that forward. Mr. Chernoff.

[00:16:05] - I also support the changes here. I think that it reflects the conversation that we had last time. And I think it makes it more consistent with our surrounding districts. I appreciate the work on it for you bringing it forward um and then my other question is just um since we aren't allowed to talk about it since it would be quorum um would your plan then be to kind of roll through these on a you know just sort of cyclical basis till we get through them all yes that is the plan that sounds good thank you yeah sure seeing no further questions or commentary um thank you very

[00:16:42] much actually i will ask mr woods is there anything else that you would like to add to this conversation before we move on not right now the only thing I would speak on is the formation of a standalone I'd be welcome to hear that conversation I do think it would be beneficial to have a standalone audit committee one that unlike other committees we wouldn't need to meet every month the audits move or

[00:17:16] at a little bit slower pace and so I don't know if it will be cumbersome to add another committee to the board's agenda but having direct communications between the OAG's office that is see on reports directly to the board and to have that standalone committee would be good and I think it's beneficial and I think it is a standard practice for internal audits and that's typically how we see this enacted across the division or across our neighboring divisions who

[00:17:50] are in the same position yes thank you for that and then mr. Allen if I could ask what would the most appropriate mechanism be for for taking this action if we chose to do so thank you chair Chandler I believe that it would be opening back up 2310 and making that amendment to provide for that as a

[00:18:15] standing committee all right mr. not I'll say it on the record too soon I I'm very curious about this conversation I'm curious about the function of this committee as each of its parts work together and I've always kind of if I'm being honest it it feels like each component because they're all together feels rushed and maybe that's just the nature of the meeting being back to back with my other meeting which I know we're going to talk about

[00:18:50] later but you know policy is a beast and we also talk about a lot of different policies in other committees so that's always kind of confused me and then the legislative agenda as LCPS seems to be

getting more and more involved and with our loud and delegation here and the and the things that support that movement I'm always feeling like that's sort of just a shorter conversation that could maybe always be a longer a conversation and something for me personally as an educator has been really enlightening this side of the dais and I have said that before that was something I really was in my lane as a teacher I didn't really realize there

[00:19:29] was so much advocacy going on at the state level and I've really enjoyed that part of this work so that piece also in the audit I know mr. woods and I have had a chance you know to meet before meetings to kind of get more information but I think that that would be valuable for the public to to kind of understand you know within the bounds obviously of what we can talk about it's for them to understand the process and how that works and I think to your point earlier miss Donahue that might generate more interest in communication much like the ombuds right like as more people know about her more people are using that hotline and you know using her as a resource and so I could see that

[00:20:07] becoming a functionality of the of the board as this if this could be another policy so if it means we do the work in 2310 then we do the work so thank you Miss Donna here Thank You chair Chandler in theory I'm not necessarily opposed to having a standalone committee my my recollection is that audit was a select committee before and then was folded into LANP by decision of the prior board shortly before

[00:20:40] we were all sworn in. So I guess if we're considering reverting to audit being an independent committee, it may be worth discussing why the decision was made back in 2023 to move it from being a select committee to being folded into LANP as we're working through that decision processing miss Donahue is there anyone on staff who can speak to that at this moment or is that something that we could ask for at when we reconvene at

[00:21:14] our next meeting no I don't have the history but we'll certainly do the research and bring it back to the committee to know what was the iteration of the select committee and what was the thinking involved at the time by the previous board to fold it into LA and P and regarding audit a standalone audit committee. I'm not familiar with all the other school divisions that have an office of Auditor General. There are not many in Virginia. The one that I am familiar with in Virginia Beach does

[00:21:53] have a standalone audit committee, but they don't have an L.A. and P. And so these are somewhat overlapped. This committee does take up and by these revisions would have responsibility for the office of the Auditor General. A standalone audit committee could accomplish that same function. But just for I'm being transparent in my thinking in Virginia Beach similarly size and complex school division they don't have an LAMP the auditor general does report to an audit committee because they they needed they needed a committee for it to report to so we work at the pleasure of the school board if

[00:22:30] the board would like to create an additional committee we'll do the work to find out what how it got to here and if the if it's the will of the board to create another committee we'll certainly support that obviously well thank you for taking on that research project you know how much our committee enjoys having historical context to make informed decisions so we will appreciate that weighing that weighing that information at our next meeting any other comments or questions at this time thank you for the conversation I'll be excited to

[00:23:07] continue on this process and working through it and I do feel just my perspective personally that having a new school board is an appropriate time to make some changes and would I would find it

most appealing to do it along that timeline so with that we will move on for a brief update item the 4.03 policy 2320 the school health advisory board dr. Bergen I believe you have an update

[00:23:45] regarding this policy the floor is yours yeah yes so we have been so mired in 2310 it escaped all of us a conversation I had with legal counsel earlier today that we folded SHAB into 2310 in your actions at the last meeting and that was by design to elaborate on the various advisory committees to the board that language didn't used to reside in 2310 so it's now captured in 2310 that there is a school health advisory board which would allow for 20 20 23 20

[00:24:23] to be eliminated from the policy manual unless there is some reason from the committee or from legal counsel as to why it would need to continue to reside as a standalone policy now that it's captured in 23 10 thank you for that dr. Bergen mr. Allen anything more to add to from a legal point a necessity to to carry 2320?

[00:24:54] - Thank you, Dr. Bergen. No, I believe when this was first presented before the LNP committee, we had discussed that this was an outstanding policy that memorialized Virginia code provision to have such an advisory committee.

[00:25:13] And we noted at that time that there were other advisory committees that are set forth in policy 2310 that are also required by code but don't have standalone policies, and so it would be proper for the committee to recommend that that policy be dissolved if that advisory committee is then being kind of extracted into policy 2310.

[00:25:39] Thank you, Mr. Allen. So is there a parliamentary procedure that we need to follow to take that action, or is it enough that we've had this discussion on the record? Thank you, Chair Chandler. It's the latter. You could make this recommendation for the full board to dissolve that there's a precedent for that.

[00:25:57] And then the board can consider it as an information item or and then move it to consent agenda if it so chooses. At this time, OK, just trying to read the room and make sure I didn't miss anything.

[00:26:22] Everybody's good. So this is currently on our docket as an information item. So I believe then I would need to make a motion to suspend the rules. in order to move it forward as an information item to the full school board tonight? Yes, that's correct.

[00:26:43] All right. So then I will make a motion that the Legislative Audit and Policy Committee suspend the rules in order to move policy 2320 school health advisory board forward to the full school board for consideration on striking the school health advisory policy from the public record.

[00:27:08] Second. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. The motion was properly made by Ms. Chandler and seconded by Ms. Chernoff. All those in favor, please say aye. Any opposed? Oh, I'm sorry.

[00:27:26] I should have also said any discussion. There's no discussion on that. That's why I was going to ask. I think there is not discussion permitted, Mr. Allen. That's correct. According to Robert's rules, no discussion is permitted when moving to suspend the rules.

[00:27:51] Thank you for that clarification. I always appreciate our parliamentary procedures. That said, the motion passes unanimously with all committee members present. And now I will make a motion.

[00:28:09] Well, wait, do I need to make a second motion? Yes. Yes. Okay. Right. Then we can discuss. Perfect. So then I would like to make a motion that the Legislative Audit and Policy Committee move forward for full consideration by the school board.

[00:28:25] the policy 2320 school health advisory board for discussion on whether or not this board this policy should be dissolved. Second. Thank you is there any discussion Ms. Donahue.

[00:28:40] Thank you Chair Chandler I just wanted to inquire of staff if there are any time urgencies or time sensitivities related to possible to related to consideration of us striking this policy I'm not I'm not opposed moving forward with this I did not come into this meeting anticipating that this would be the discussion so part of me wants a little bit more time to think through if there's any do outs or loose threads that would need to be tied up if we were to strike this policy and I understand

[00:29:18] certainly there will there would be time to do that if we advance it to the full board tonight because it will have to be on for info action at the full board but also I'm generally disinclined to suspend rules unless there's a time sensitivity I just would like to know if there is any such time sensitivity here no time sensitivity and I apologize it just escaped all of us that at the last meeting there is a duality now shab is mentioned in two policies at this point we're

[00:29:53] not dissolving shab shab will continue functionally this doesn't change anything the same people who are serving on shab will continue to serve on shab their function is the same we just we have it in to policies now and it's just unnecessary I would ask legal counsel is there any concern about it being listed in two different policies having it in both 2310 and 2320 thank you dr. Bergen there there's not currently particularly if the wills are in motion as they seem to be thank you chair

[00:30:28] Chandler I just had one follow-up our normal practice is right after we see this as an information item it is it is posted for public feedback so if we I'm not sure if that is part of our process if the proposal is to strike a policy altogether.

[00:30:46] If we were to make that recommendation tonight to advance that recommendation to the full board, is that something that would be put forward for public feedback? And if so, would there be enough time to gather public feedback before the proposal came on for action before the full board?

[00:31:10] - Thank you, Ms. Donahue. My estimation would be that the public had an opportunity for feedback vis-a-vis 2310 when that was kind of collapsed into 2310 and included in the other advisory committees.

[00:31:26] So, functionally, I think the public has had an opportunity to weigh in there. Sure enough. Since I have both of you here, I have a question for you guys. You both were on HRTD, correct?

[00:31:44] So, I think I remember, this is just like a housekeeping thing. I think when HRTD was collapsing certain policies, they had the entire thing redlined with a crossout. Just in the future, like, I also didn't really realize that's what we were talking about. It doesn't really say that that's the recommendation here on board docs.

[00:32:00] So I felt like we were revisiting it for some other technicality, which I was searching for, so it makes more sense to my brain now. But if we could be on just a consistent page, I'm not saying we have to do the redline like HRTD, if that's what we do for best practice to fold down a policy i think we should follow that here so that it's consistent um it's more just my type a coming out but i think that that would be important and that the recommendation should match that we're looking to fold this in because

[00:32:29] 2310 now reflects that thank you thank you mr i'm happy to go on the record to say i concur i would be happy to have processes that follow consistent um pattern um miss donahue would you you like

to comment? I am generally all for consistency and clarity. I'm losing my own train of thought. I guess my only kind of hesitation about this matter and when this has happened in

[00:33:08] HRTD it's generally been we're striking a policy because it's being subsumed in a different policy or there's a replacement policy or something. It's not just a right I mean I guess arguably that is what's happened here but it's happened in steps so it's a little bit different to say like well we already did the one you know we already did one part of this process and now we're just striking the policy I'm I'm a little bit stuck on the on the well I don't know about delay but the you know notice to the public right if we if it wasn't clear to us as board members coming in through no fault of

[00:33:44] staff at all but if it wasn't clear to us as board members necessarily coming into this that we may be striking this policy is it reasonable to expect that it was clear to any members of the public who are tracking this you know and but does that even matter if we have time to inform the public before it's voted on at the full board. Thank you Ms. Donahue. If it's the will of this committee they certainly could put it out for feedback and then as a point of information and Dr. Bergen may have shared this previously but this came before this committee

[00:34:21] in February of this year as an information item. And before it returned in March, there was feedback and recommendations from SEAC and MSAC that were collected and that I believe Dr. Bergen may have shared or considered in the language that was provided for in policy 2310.

[00:34:45] Sure, but in fairness to this conversation, we didn't put out for feedback for striking the policy because it's been a moving target. 2310 evolved through this committee. I just feel the need to repeat for the listening public, it functionally changes nothing.

[00:35:03] SHAB will continue to function as it currently functions. We're just capturing the fact that it exists in two policies. We can have it in two policies. I didn't hear legal say that that's inappropriate to have it in two policies. And if you want to slow the roll, we can put it out for feedback to the public about striking 2320 since it now resides in 2310.

[00:35:25] that would be entirely your decision I think for the sake of efficiency this conversation has occurred in the past and this is really just a housekeeping function in my opinion I don't feel any discomfort about continuing to seek any further feedback because it is really just the information and the policy is

[00:36:01] moved into a different policy but still exists on the public record any further comments thank you I agree with Miss Chandler I think having a separate standalone with all the rest doesn't really make sense since we folded the rest in and we've done that work so I support that I'm generally one for feedback but this has gone out and you know hopefully if someone's really upset about it now they're gonna let us know between now and the full board but I I think it's, you know, good to get everything into the one policy and have it there equal.

[00:36:42] Seeing no further discussion, the motion was made by Ms. Chandler and seconded by Ms. Chernav. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye.

[00:36:59] Aye. Seeing none opposed, the motion passes unanimously with all committee members present. Thank you very much. And with that, we will move on to item 4.04, the legislative update. This update aims to inform the committee and the community about developments since the end of the legislative session.

[00:37:17] Mr. John Sutton, our coordinator for government relations, will present. Mr. Sutton, the floor is yours. Thank you, Madam Chair. Forgive me, I'm going to apologize at the very beginning because my allergy medication is starting to wear off and I'm starting to get a little weird in my voice, so I apologize for that. Thank you, Madam Chair, Ms. Donaghy, Ms. Chernoff. Before I move forward, I'd like to take an opportunity to introduce Joel Andrus. He is a key member of Kemper Consulting and is now serving as our trusted legislative partner in Richmond. Joel, I'm going to make you stand up.

[00:37:53] Stand up, Joel. With a deep expertise in government relations and strong presence at the Capitol, Mr. Andrus definitely provides a boots-on-the-ground presence, necessary strategic you can cite an advocacy to help us navigate Virginia's legislative landscape effectively.

[00:38:11] His experience and relationships across the state and state government, especially in our greater statewide education community, make him an invaluable asset to LCPS in advancing our division's legislative goals in Richmond this year. So I welcome Mr. Andrews.

[00:38:28] I won't make you talk to you all. So I would say, Madam Chair and committee members, This is the time when organizations like ours start to begin our session work.

[00:38:44] Our legislative work for 2025 will reflect our commitment to advancing key issues within Virginia, centered on critical areas such as education funding, teacher recruitment, retention, student support services, and special education. We will draw from the work and recommendations of ongoing state-level commissions, committees, subcommittees that include the Commission on youth the joint legislative audit and review Commission or Jay Lark the joint subcommittee to study elementary and secondary education funding and various standard standards of learning work groups in addition to addressing broad statewide initiatives as

[00:39:22] they approach as they come up following priorities to emphasize the need for sustained improvements in educational outcomes for not only LCPS but for all Virginia students so what I'm going to do is I'm going to briefly talk to you a little bit about consider this sort of a draft introduction about what we foresee as key issues that are going to be popping up that I think LCPS will have an opportunity to to really to really bite into the first is affordable housing options statewide affordable housing options is a topic great interest interest

[00:40:00] all over the state Loudoun County is no exception it is critical to improving teacher retention high housing costs have made it increasingly difficult for educators to live in the communities where they work leading to long commute times burnout and higher turnover by investing in these discussions surrounding affordable workforce target housing options the state can help ensure that our teachers and staff have access to stable nearby living accommodations this support not only strengths and strengthens our local education system by

[00:40:36] improving retention and sometimes something as simple as morale but also helps maintain high quality instruction for students across the county again that is an incredibly prescient conversation we're having here it's a major topic all through the state let's talk about the J Lark recommendations 20 in 2025 we'll be looking closely at the 2025 J Lark recommendations to reform Virginia's K through 12 education funding including support for the updating the student-based formula fully funding the cost of competing adjustment for Northern Virginia districts and

[00:41:15] enhancing support for local special education and English learners this would significantly benefit Loudoun County these measures would channel much-needed state dollars into one of the fastest growing and highest cost regions in the Commonwealth reducing local budget pressure and enabling retention focused investments as a result Loudoun County Public Schools schools could sustain competitive teacher salaries expand staffing for special education and English learner programs and better absorb any potential growth ultimately again improving

[00:41:48] stability morale and student outcomes in what we consider a high demand district we're going to talk about the SOL reform bill the bill which shifts tests to a hundred point scale moves end of the year assessments to the final two weeks of school requires SOL scores to count as 10% of student final grades 7 through 12 and expands multi-lingual testing options could have impacts for Loudoun County tying grades to SOL results can do something as seemingly benign as as elevating test anxiety it

[00:42:25] could narrow classroom focus towards massive test prep and generate opposition from parents and educators a concern would be that inhibits instructional time recovery greater test transparency and broader access for our English learners and at-risk students LCPS will work towards careful imitation with robust support systems like opt-out guidance possibly anxiety mitigation strategies multilingual assessment infrastructure this all these conversations will be essential to harness benefits while minimizing

[00:43:02] potential drawbacks so I'm sure that we will be talking a lot about that in the session we're going to talk very briefly about federal hold harmless or block grants federal hold harmless provision in any upcoming education funding package designed to ensure that districts receive at least the same level of federal aid as in previous years even amid fluctuating enrollment or new policy changes could have a significant positive impact on Loudoun County first it would stabilize funding for for key programs such as title one supporting students for low-income families English learner services and after-school

[00:43:38] initiatives and allow the county to maintain or expand these critical supports even if federal formulas shift the fiscal predictability would empower local leaders such as yourself to plan long-term investments in teacher recruitment and retention mental health support and enrichment programming without fear of sudden unknowable and catastrophic budget cuts however a wallet tighten federal budget may mean static funding levels which in a in a

[00:44:14] district like ours could dampen per student support over time policymakers should ensure any hold harmless language is coupled with sufficient base funding and flexibility so that LCPS and other high-growth high-cost districts can sustain quality services and maintain a staffing as our challenges grow so we'll be looking at that we're going to talk about statewide dual enrollment teaching certification which seems very benign but I assure you it's not granting high school educators the credentials to teach dual enrollment courses anywhere in Virginia would greatly benefit Loudoun County Public

[00:44:49] Schools by removing local certification barriers this proposal would expand the pool of qualified instructors allowing more students to access college credit courses and workforce credentials right at their high schools supported by recently enhanced scholarship and grant funding up to 12,000 per teacher and 350,000 in recurring funding statewide for credentials districts like ours could more easily incentivize teachers to obtain the necessary coursework that in turn eases staffing bottlenecks improves equity and access across our schools and helps retain teachers by offering professional

[00:45:28] development and supplemental compensation ultimately a statewide certification pathway aligns with Virginia's college and career-ready initiatives and supports Loudoun's growth while elevating educational opportunities and educator satisfaction.

[00:45:44] So what does it all mean? It means that Loudoun County Public Schools, our legislative goals, our program, our agenda, whatever we want to refer to it, will represent a thoughtful, forward-looking agenda rooted in opportunity and innovation.

[00:46:00] From strengthening education funding and addressing teacher shortages to expanding student support services and ensuring consistent and constant high-quality dual-enrollment access, the plan will be grounded in data, as always, policy research, and the lived experiences of our students, educators, and our greater Loudoun families.

[00:46:22] It reflects the vital recommendations from JLARC and other key bodies while advancing specific priorities like the ones we talked about a few seconds ago. None of this work would be possible without the, obviously, the unwavering commitment of this committee, your colleagues, and our school division leadership, staff, families, and I think our broader community.

[00:46:43] Our collaboration, our hard work, and our shared belief in the power of what we do, public education, will continue to drive this agenda and LCPS forward. We will, I promise you, remain focused on securing the resources, promoting policies and partnerships that are necessary so that every Loudoun student has access to high, continued access, I would argue, to the high quality education that we offer and a genuine pathway to success.

[00:47:12] As we move forward with, you know, expanding on these things, I know it's a lot in a short period of time. I really look forward to continuing these discussions with you, especially as we get closer to solidifying our legislative agenda and getting closer to the session.

[00:47:33] Thank you, Mr. Sutton. I appreciate that. She was very excited, by the way. Very excited. I'm jealous. She's got the best seat in the House. Oh, my goodness. Are there any questions or comments from the committee, Mr. Knott?

[00:47:50] Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Mr. Sutton, and thank you for all the work that you've done on this. I just want to take a moment as we're getting ready to throw sort of my momentum for whatever it's worth, especially behind the work around the SOL reform bill.

[00:48:07] I'm super worried about it. You did allude to that it could be a small thing as test anxiety, but I think we have so much testing already. We've been down this road. I don't think it's a small thing. I think it's a huge thing. Sure. And I think it distracts from what we're trying to really do, which is help kids achieve and not do good on tests.

[00:48:26] So I'm really concerned and very, very grateful to see that on here. I feel very heard, and I thank you. And I am also so thrilled, and, again, I don't think it's a small thing. I think it's a huge thing, the dual enrollment courses. You are providing options for teachers, which so often in the old way when I came in, it was, you know, one track for one teacher for one career.

[00:48:48] And it's changed so much and not this only gives so many options for students, but for educators to shift and pivot as well within their field. Super excited to see that on here. So excited for the

others, but those two especially. Thank you so much for your work. Thank you. And I might say I've had a wonderful opportunity to talk to all three of you on an individual basis.

[00:49:08] And I think that and by hopefully by no means you thought I was trying to be glib by calling them small. But I think that through the conversations that I had with all three of you, I think that we are probably dedicated to the same thing, which is basically creating strategic actions to ensure the development of our students.

[00:49:26] And I appreciate that comment, and I appreciate the conversation with Ms. Donahue and, of course, Ms. Chandler. So thank you very much. I look forward to moving forward. Well, thank you very much.

[00:49:41] With that, we can move on to our last item. for the sake of efficiency I put on the agenda our meeting scheduling I thought it might be easier to discuss here I would was thinking before we came into the meeting today about just proposing that we move the meeting to 4:30 but given some of the traffic challenges today I'm wondering if that's a workable solution but just would be happy to open that for discussion I'm sure enough I do apologize for my slight tardiness tonight it's not the usual I did get

[00:50:20] stuck behind one of our high school buses but also there was homework drama in my house so there it's not I'm praying that that is not going to be repeated I would be an advocate for starting at 4:30 but I feel like I have to defer to miss Donahue with all her commitments and her job and I'm feel selfish because I can't take it longer into the evening because of PMC so that's my two cents miss Donahue thank you very much chair Chandler and I am theoretically not opposed to starting at 4:30 I I don't have my day job

[00:50:59] calendar in front of me so I I cannot definitively say right now like there would not be any can't say that I would have zero conflicts but I will be glad to check on that and follow up if I see anything that looks turning but we do that we we've done that with student services move to a 4:30 start time and again this seems like it would be a short-term solution that could help us get through the year and you know who knows what comes right after the end of the session so with that in mind I'll just ask Dr. Bergen if you could please

[00:51:39] work with Miss Donahue to confirm that and we'll plan on meeting at 4:30 next month unless we hear otherwise fair all right is there any new business nope seeing no new business the meeting is adjourned thank you and have a lovely evening



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