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Loudoun County Public Schools, Performance Monitoring Committee, Monday, December 8, 2025

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[00:00:00] good evening everyone hope you're all doing well I'd like to welcome you all back I think this is our continuation of our last performance monitoring committee today is December 8th my name is Arvin I'm the chair of this committee I'm joined by Ms. Chernoff and chair Mansfield we'll go ahead and jump right in seeing that we don't have any public comment for this evening we'll move into our discussion items and that is the continuation of item 3.01 division of diversity equity inclusion and accessibility continuation of creating and sustaining positive school culture and i believe this is presented by dr ellis and dr

[00:00:37] ellis williams we have many many friends here presenting um thank you chair estafi we do have a brief presentation for you this evening and then wanted to make sure we give most of the time recognizing we don't have much of it um for you all to have follow-up questions from the conversation last time so without further ado i'm going to turn it over i think to dr. Bergen and dr. Ellis Williams and miss Mitchell and I will chime in on a couple slides good evening given the topic of developing a sense of

[00:01:14] belonging for students crosses all of our departments for our leaders who represented here plus Tedra who would normally be with us here but couldn't be at this particular time I just wanted to join in participate listen in and lean in on this important topic so I'll turn it back over to the rest of this abled cabinet members but one you know how important this topic is to the superintendent's office and chief of

staff's office given its application across all of our services we provide for students as always we anchor in our

[00:01:54] one else if you have strategic plan of excellence and today's will be covering empower students and so as we move into this presentation we'll be leaning into to our first of the four strategic goals for excellence so really briefly we thought it might be helpful to provide a brief review of how we started addressing racial slurs and hate speech so way back in 2019 you might recall obviously not being a board member at the time but being a community member we

[00:02:29] LCPS did conduct an equity assessment at that time and sort of simultaneously During the 2019-2020 timeframe, LCPS received an inquiry from the Virginia Attorney General's Office that we responded to immediately and over the course of the next several years.

[00:02:51] The Virginia Attorney General's Office and LCPS entered into a conciliation agreement in 2021, And that conciliation agreement went through 2024 when we received an official closeout letter from the Virginia Attorney General's office indicating that we had met all the terms of conciliation.

[00:03:14] So around that time, we, after the initial equity assessment, we recognized that racial slurs and hate speech were a concern in our schools, across our schools. and we began tracking that and as dr. Ellis Williams spoke about at the last meeting and we'll probably speak about again tonight that has changed or evolved over the years and we don't track the same we've we've gotten better at what we do and so the way that we've tracked racial racial slurs and hate speech has evolved over time that I'll turn it back to dr. Ellis one so I know

[00:03:52] this slide looks familiar because we took a dive into it without having that preface during the last meeting and as you can see here we have represented in blue our elementary school in gold our middle school and in red our high school and beginning back in school year 22 23 we had a consistent through line so we'll call that the baseline year because prior to that it was hand tracked it was tracked in google spreadsheets there wasn't a level of fidelity At one point, religion was just one category.

[00:04:25] It wasn't broken down by denomination. So we didn't know if it was anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, or any other denomination. So as you can see, in 2022-22 school year, across the division, elementary, middle, and high, there were a total number of 583 racial slurs and hate speech.

[00:04:46] And that is RB9, which is a racial slur or hate speech that is said based on a protected class. It is not just name-calling. It is not a one-off bullying. So as you can see represented in the blue, we have elementary school, which is about 120 in 22-23 school year, rose to almost 300 in 23-24, and lowered to 216, and I'll get to that line of demarcation shortly.

[00:05:18] As far as our middle schoolers, for the last six years, despite the ways in which we have been tracking this data, middle school has been the top number of represented incidents of racial slurs and hate speech over the last five to six years, beginning with starting the school year out in 2022-23 with roughly 350 incidents, peaking in 23-24 with over 500 incidents.

[00:05:48] and, as we are pleased to see, declining in 24-25 at the culmination of last year to 307. High school, as we can see, was always under 100 in 2022-23. It elevated in 23-24, and I'll put a pin in that in a moment to speak to that theory.

[00:06:09] And then we had what perceives to be an increase to 134 incidents in the school year 24-25. And speaking with the high school leadership and level directors, what they found was that our high school students were no longer taking care of the discussions or handling how they were being mistreated by racial service and hate speech on their own, and they began to trust the process.

[00:06:35] So as we see an increase, it wasn't an increase in a number of incidents. It was an increase, of course, of all reported incidents, as opposed to we had MSAC parents as well as equity committee families say, well, this happened to my son, and my son just went and talked to the person after school, or they managed it in a different way that we did not want to see happening during the school, which would be reported as another type of incident.

[00:07:00] What I'm most proud of is that over the last three school years, ending with last school year, We see that DeMar on this slide that strategies on reducing and eradicating racial concerns and hate speech were introduced with a level of fidelity across the board with all levels and with our administration in collaboration as well as the culture responsive instruction to create sense of belonging and a school culture where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

[00:07:33] And we started to see with that intentionality a reduction. Now, mind you, high school did not see the decline yet, but what we do notate is that we had a significant decrease once we were intentional about ensuring that our students were empowered, their voices were elevated, so that they can speak to one another, be upstanders, not bystanders, and participate in this process.

[00:08:02] At one point, Dr. Spence came to speak with the student equity ambassadors, about 130 of them, and he challenged them. He said, you know, we talk about all of the things you would like to see adults do differently to help support you in school. I'm challenging each of you to begin to work on what it is you want to see happening in your schools, and this was a big one about how they felt about their peer-to-peer relationships.

[00:08:24] Next slide. On this slide, this is still talking about relationship behavior 9, RB9. In 2022-23 school year, we saw across the Division 583 as totaled out in the last slide.

[00:08:44] In 23-24, big incidents, big things were happening in the world, and we saw a tremendous uptick. We galvanized with our community external invested parties as well as within our departments and divisions here in LCPS, and we had to come up with some solutions, figuring out ways in which we can help students express themselves without causing harm to one another, as well as mitigating through restorative circles, other methodologies that schools were using, which I'm sure Ms. Mitchell will be able to share

[00:09:20] specifically from schools, to be able to be intentional. And as of the 18th of last month, because we tracked this for the last meeting, we had 190 incidents across the division. The cool thing is when I met with Dr. Blakelock, we were teasing out, of course, we don't want to have one more incident happen.

[00:09:43] But what we have seen since 2324 to 2425 is a decrease of almost 300 of this particular type of incident. If we were to continue on the trajectory and we don't want to continue on this trajectory, we would still come in at the culmination of this school year with another 300 less of this type of incident.

[00:10:07] So that is a decrease over the last two school years in the potential of this one of 300 of this type of incident, RB9, over the last two years. 23-24 was an anomaly in the sense that we had a lot of heightened tension.

[00:10:22] We had a lot of student protests and student walkouts, and things were just really amplified due to the state of the world and what was happening in the world. But that intentionality of meeting with our community-invested parties and working collaboratively internal proved to be beneficial.

[00:10:41] Again, we recognize that when there is one incident, that can change the trajectory of the way in which a student may perceive being safe in their school. So I'm never happy to see hundreds of any type of incident. Nevertheless, relationship behavior nine, which is a violation, using your words, based on the person or victim being a part of a protected class.

[00:11:05] Next slide. So one of the ways in which we are mitigating and supporting our schools, and right now I'm excited to say that we've held roughly 10, and we have a nice list ready to await us in the second half of the year of equity walks at our schools.

[00:11:25] So I'm just going to walk you through what an LCPS equity walk looks like and who's involved. So the division of DEIA is broken up into six regional clusters, and each regional cluster has a point person. That point person is responsible to know which schools feed to what schools, how they are mitigating circumstances that may or may not travel from one level to the next.

[00:11:48] As you can see, our elementary students trailing behind our middle school students with the number of incidents. We want to get to the root cause of what's happening, what's happening day to day. And that all leans back into the way in which the culture is in a school, set up to be positive and reflective of the assets of the students that are there, as well as other measurements such as school culture and climate.

[00:12:12] So for an equity walk, the process is the organizational meeting. That's when we meet with the school leadership team. Sometimes it's the equity team, which consists of the equity lead, select members of the staff, as well as the leader in the building and any other invested person, such as level directors or delegates from MSAC as well.

[00:12:32] We learn about the school goals, identify focus areas, and discuss schedule and logistics. From there, we have a pre-walk in planning in which the equity walk is planned and preparation of materials are put together, such as if we know we need to have maps of the building, figure out which classrooms we're going to visit intentionally, If we notice that there are hot spots maybe in one particular area of the building where maybe there are incidents, it doesn't necessarily have to mean racial slurs and hate speech, but it could be a space in which they're evolving to become more culturally responsive in their instruction, as an example.

[00:13:08] We would then begin to plan that day and host the equity walk. We take our time through the building, about 7.30 to 12 p.m., and we visit classrooms on 10 to 15-minute intervals. We observe the environment from the inception of walking into the building throughout the corridors, throughout the lunch period.

[00:13:27] We are noticing and capturing notes of the way in which students engage student-to-student, adult-to-students, adult-to-adult in some cases. Then there's the report and preparation that's created by the team where we collect and analyze the data, and we develop a report with the strength and opportunities for growth.

[00:13:46] And then there's a school meeting debrief, which happens, which is comprised of, I should say, a data dialogue protocol, delivery of the report, and a school dialogue about the glows and grows. And at

that point, the leadership at the school determines if they want to address more than one glows or grows or if they want to celebrate the glows and work on the grows or one at a time.

[00:14:07] Then there is the optional school collaboration, where we're available for ongoing support and collaboration based on the principal's plan of action. Sometimes it will turn into a community event, such as we just held, I think it was this morning, actually, we had a student, ooh, long day.

[00:14:34] They actually held a forum for the students to actually get to some root causes of what their experience was in one particular school. And that was sparked by administrators reaching out to our team, and we met and planned with them. And there was a presentation, and then there was work that followed them back to the classrooms.

[00:14:52] And the teachers that were there had the materials and resources to continue to follow through over time with this work to help build that self-efficacy with our students to reduce and mitigate what was transpiring prior to us coming in. I did give you copies of, this is a hyperlink, but I just want to go give this overview, And you each have a copy of the Loudoun County High School Equity Walk to give you an idea.

[00:15:19] All of our Equity Walks are focused on Standard 6. And it could be any one of Standard 6 or it could be all of Standard 6. As you can see, 6.2, which is Classroom Learning and Environment. 6.3, Student Relationship and High Expectations. 6.4, Inclusive Curriculum and Resources.

[00:15:35] 6.5, Cultural Inclusivity. 6.6, Inclusive Language. And 6.7, Creating Belonging. You have a copy of this document in front of you, and, Dr. Ellis, could you just click anywhere on the slide? It will hyperlink, and you can scroll for the rest of the audience.

[00:15:53] And in doing so, we're able to capture, and this is one type. So in this one, we were able to see that we started at arrival at main office. Staff were welcome and helpful. The students arrived at the beginning of the day. Procedures and reminders for respect, care and kindness were present.

[00:16:09] It was something that was highlighted. the hallways, cafeteria, library. Then we talk about opportunities for next steps. Second page, the main focus for this particular walk was 6.3 and 6.6, and it was student relationship and high expectations. Most observed look-fors were captured, opportunities for next steps, use of inclusive language. Most observed look-fors, an example was teachers allocated time to listen to students to build relationships affirmation and mutual respect as an example again opportunities for next step and then there were also the

[00:16:47] additional areas under 6.2 and 6.4 which focused on classroom learning environment and as you can see the cadence continues it culminates on the last page with recommendations and resources so when we meet with the administrative team or the equity team in most cases the resources that are pulled together are usually the ones that are asked for we don't have a single group or of activities that we give to everyone it really is tailored to the individual school's needs as well as what was observed during that walk and shared with those who live through that

[00:17:24] qualitative soft data in that school space the next slide actually is just a highlight overview overview of highlights all of our divisions and departments work with most of the community partnerships outline i think we might be the one and now we have our interfaith luncheon so we have more persons from the department of communication and family engagement as well as ourselves working with the interfaith collective community we work closely with the office of civil

[00:17:58] rights louden county offices the anti-arab and anti-discrimination committee as well as local fraternity and sororities for tutoring books the lowland county government just to name a few and when we look at this slide one of the two things i want to highlight when we are talking about meeting with the interfaith community and our external vested parties a great example is we started to meet with our local rabbis about three years ago and we meet with our local rabbis because there's a reporting system for anti-semitism that is um established and so when there's an

[00:18:36] incident in school our jewish students are reluctant to report to schools for fear of retaliation or being outed as being jewish so they report to their families and their families report to the rabbis and the rabbis communicate with us and that has worked for the last three years i'm excited that this year when we met quarterly we had no incidents to report or discuss and that is huge because four years ago when we had the wonky baseline reporting year forgive me for using that term Rossi we didn't we were in double digits and we're happy to say last year we were able to reduce from double digits of 11 incidents that

[00:19:14] were reported because sometimes incidents are not reported reduced to three at the culmination of last year so that is something that we've been able to garner as well as working with the local county government and others so really briefly because I know you all want to have questions or want to have time to ask questions we just wanted to highlight some of the additional work that our offices docile and academics collaborates on with DEIA so equity walks dr. Ellis Williams already provided you a detailed explanation of

[00:19:53] those and we are partnering with her team on that support with response to racial slurs and hate speech and professional development sense on sense of belonging it's really all of our responsibilities right so it is a collaboration across multiple departments and additionally our work in central office is cross cross team collaborative effort as well so we meet weekly with dr. Ellis Williams team miss Mitchell's team and my team to talk about student achievement data and other important things happening in schools and so those

[00:20:30] are weekly collaboration meetings in addition to DEIA's participation in in school improvement conversations that that participation is extremely valuable to ensure that all voices are being heard and we are looking at data from from a variety of lenses so with that we will turn it back over to you chair astreffy to answer any questions thank you very much for the presentation for all of that context i'll just kick off the discussion board

[00:20:59] members questions discussion you um i appreciate the chance to have a few questions i know we're We're up against it here with another meeting, so I will also send on my slide-by-slide questions from the last presentation.

[00:21:22] I just wanted to, first of all, thank you for allowing me to be a part of the Equity Walk. I was on one last week at Catoctin Elementary, and when you spend a morning in schools with kids, particularly in our Leesburg schools because they're awesome, you have a great morning.

[00:21:37] Like, it's fantastic. Our children lead the way. They are, by nature, inclusive, little ones especially, kind. There's so many organic moments that support this work that are happening in our classrooms. Our teachers seem very intentional about how they've set up their classroom communities.

[00:21:56] I think this is a really neat time of the year to be in a classroom because you're not really establishing routines anymore, but you're really getting into the meat of the academic work. And if you don't have those routines in place, you're going to see that that's a struggle. And it clearly wasn't. And it was a beautiful morning to spend really focusing on these different areas.

[00:22:16] So I really appreciate it. It gave me a window into the work and how that can be grounded in our schools, especially with our children. I mean, I was just so blown away by how many times I was ticking the boxes for the different things that I was seeing. The question I had coming out of it was, there's really no debrief at the end.

[00:22:36] We didn't have an opportunity to debrief. And, I mean, shocker, I'm a debriefer. So I'm wondering just how all of that is accurately captured if there's no time to debrief. And I know there was some conversation around the fact that that could maybe impact our bias or we might have emotion about it, but I actually think that some of this work being rooted in those things is actually a positive thing.

[00:23:00] And when the person that's going to write the report and report back to the school didn't talk to the people that took the notes, that just feels like a best practice thing that I would love to see. So I didn't know if there was an answer for why we're not debriefing and if there is a specific reason, because I do think that that's super important for schools to hear from the people that saw it with their own eyes.

[00:23:22] So, yes, there is a debrief, and as a guest on that tour, you were a guest. And so that debrief happens when they come back to the office and then they meet with the school as per the roadmap that I had shared. So there is a debrief immediately with the team when we come back, and they're coming for patterns and trends and discrepancies, looking for the look-forers.

[00:23:41] And it may have been a drive-by before where it was just a walk-through visit, and it wasn't an equity lens put on the school. So, yes, that does happen. And the report that you have in front of you is actually a snapshot of what is captured and what is discussed and what is laid out with and in collaboration with the leadership team.

[00:24:00] So it wouldn't happen right away, and the only reason why is because of time. Oh, yeah. I mean, that's a long day. And as you're trying to come out of the fog of, like, literally looking at all things with your specific equitable lens, it's exhausting. So when they come back, there is a debrief.

[00:24:18] There's a, ah, and then they start to talk about glows first because they feel great, and then they start to talk about the grows. And that happens over three days, and that report is generated and shared with the school, and the meeting is scheduled for the debrief with the actual school. I appreciate that. And then I'll just give two quick tidbits of things that I just, you know, continue to hear and want to continue to provide feedback from our schools is just that this work sometimes feels separate and that it's hard to see how it's integrated.

[00:24:45] I'm hopeful that the equity walks will help. I hope that we can work with teachers to understand that a lot of this work is happening organically and sort of lift that up. And I did like that part about it because I felt like there was there was that. But some of it feels like how?

[00:25:03] Like, there's some really nice statements in here about, you know, create avenues for student voice and culture, but how do I do that? So I think that, like, giving specific nuts and bolts would be really helpful, and making sure that it is not just a one-and-done, but that it's a feedback loop and cycle.

[00:25:20] I think a lot about MTSS and the work that how far they've come in terms of analyzing data, going back in, reteaching, then coming back around and revisiting in that constant cycle, and keeping the data, whether that's how our economically disadvantaged students are doing, how the sense of belonging is, the SEL, all of those pieces overlaying.

[00:25:40] And I know we've talked about continuing maybe some of that work in PMC, but I don't want to take up any more time because I want others to chime in. We have five minutes, and then we have to go to the board. We have like two minutes, I think, and we have to go to the board.

[00:25:56] So the only thing that I am always interested in is how does special education go into this? and one thing is i am always a proponent of assistive technology and i know that we have a presence for the visual auto and language accessibility but then are we encouraging kids to use it and are they using it those kinds of things and so i'm wondering like and also like for the you know when we go into our elementary schools are the self-contained classes actually going to the fenced in playgrounds or are they just in the courtyards like those are

[00:26:34] the kinds of things that I'm and I know that you guys are now working with SEAC and that's amazing and I'm super excited about that um but I think those are the kinds of things that for me I would like to see more um as well because I want them to have a sense of belonging to um so that that's that's my quick quick and little dirty um thing but otherwise I'm super excited about the equity wax. In typical Arban fashion, I will agree with both my colleagues here, but the way I want to just tie it together for me is that, you know, there's so much good that's happening in our

[00:27:13] schools, and we are looking at, and that's why I love the PMC, is that we're looking at so much of the hard data around scores and numbers, but when I went on a walk with the equity team, this team has an amazing ability to look at issues or to look at trailing edges or to look at gaps and communicate them in a way that is still very empowering and that is where the work is at right it's identifying because that's not easy right it's you're actually trying to you're actually telling the school community that you you can do better in this area and that what might

[00:27:53] that might translate into is you have to do more work and they're already overworked or burned out and so finding a way to bubble up issues in that way to make that school community better and to integrate that into the school improvement plans and to figure out how to bring more resources or just identify where that bottleneck or where that issue is I think this team is in that position to do that work most effectively and weave that back into some of the other teams that are already on the front lines of that so I think that that has been my experience kind of just going into the

[00:28:28] schools with the equity team is being able to just spotlight the amazing things but just to use those those gaps and um bubble up issues in a way that isn't that is still empowering for that community so um that'll be my comment i still have some outstanding questions that i can send you all but um anything else yes i would just ask that we maybe consider having this you know as part of the forecast uh with the new board coming on to understand the work to understand how it's grounded in the schools to look at the more collaborative process and you know really put this out there for the full board i think that that would make a nice session there's certainly

[00:29:08] fulsome data and if we really want to be monitoring this as top of mind i think you know for us this is one of those data points that i feel strongly could be some i know we don't like vote to send things to the full board from pmc but i would like for us to to consider that in the future i see mark's taking notes so

um i will uh leave it at that i think any board member can ask for a work session with two friends too exactly wonderful well with that thank you all very much appreciate your time. With that, any new business? Okay, this meeting is now adjourned.



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