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# Loudoun County Public Schools, School Board Budget Work Session and Public Hearing, Thursday, January 22, 2026

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Place LCPS Administration Building / School Board Room, Ashburn, Virginia  
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1157321723?rel=0>

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[00:03:53] Good afternoon. I call to order this January 22nd, 2026 Loudoun County School Board fiscal year 27 operating budget work session. Tonight we will start with our disclosures. I will start. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for lcps employees specifically as a school board member i am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an lcps employee these

[00:04:32] benefits however affect thousands of employees well in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which i am included i can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Vice Chair Donahue. Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance, and any other discussion that may include or affect salary and benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, my spouse, my minor

[00:05:10] children, and I am enrolled in LCPS health insurance that may be affected by any potential changes to employee salaries, the budget, and or health insurance. Additionally, my sister-in-law is an LCPS employee who does not reside with me and is not dependent on me. These subjects include thousands of employees while in excess of the statutory three employees whose interest may be affected, of which my spouse, my minor children, my sister-in-law, and I am included. I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years. Thank you. Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. As a member of the Loudoun County School Board, I make the following disclosure to

[00:05:49] the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees while in the excess of the statutory three employees whose interests also may be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively in the public's interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the clerk for the for the

[00:06:28] next five years thank you thank you Miss LaBelle thank you madam chair as a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with an item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and/or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees. Specifically, as a school board member, I'm eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee. In addition, as a former LCPS employee, I, as well as my spouse, receive Medicaid Advantage insurance

[00:07:05] benefits through LCPS. These benefits, however, affect thousands of employees, well in excess, of the statutory three employees whose interests may also be affected of which my spouse and I are included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you miss Chernoff thank you madam chair as a member of the Loudoun County School Board I make the following disclosure to the school board and to the general public in connection with the item on tonight's agenda regarding the budget and or health insurance and related benefits and any other discussion

[00:07:43] that may include or affect benefits for LCPS employees specifically as a school board member I am eligible to receive health insurance and related benefits as an LCPS employee these benefits however affect thousands of employees well in the access of the statutory three employees whose interest may also be affected of which I am included I can and will participate fairly objectively and in the public interest this disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the clerk of the school board for five years thank you we will now move on to our public hearing I'll start with reading the procedures for our public hearing thank you for engaging with the school board through

[00:08:21] the public comment process the school board welcomes comments from Loudoun County residents and believes that strong community engagement and outreach are important components of a successful school system as a reminder tonight's public comments should be limited to the subject of tonight's public hearing and work session which is the proposed fiscal year 27 operating budget speakers must limit comments to the time allotted based on the number of speakers and the agenda this evening all

speech speakers have been allotted two minutes each for public comment please be advised that speakers who miss their

[00:08:58] time slot will not be called at a later time decorum and civility all audience members shall maintain civility decorum and respect for the functioning and dignity of the school board at all times. Please remain seated unless arriving, departing, speaking at the podium, or during a break. Violations of civility, decorum, and respect include shouting, heckling, jeering, applause, or other noise which disrupts or delays the meeting, obstructing speakers from being able to see the school board and vice versa, interrupting speakers, attempting to speak when not called to do so by the chair, and approaching a speaker or otherwise attempting

[00:09:37] to intimidate disparage or distract a speaker staff member or other meeting attendees speakers should refrain from vulgarity obscenities defamation profanity and other like breaches of respect nor may speakers target criticize or attack individual students and or individual division employees during public comment as a reminder school board policy 2520 state speakers may not target criticize or attack individual students during public comment speakers should communicate those concerns to their school principal or an appropriate

[00:10:12] member of staff the school board requests that comments on an individual student or employee related matter may not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements speakers should face the dais and direct their comments to the school board per policy 2520 members of the school board will not answer questions or respond directly to the public during the public comment period violations of decorum and civility by any meeting attendee may result in the chair directing staff to remove the attendee from the remainder of the meeting repeated or persistent violations of decorum or civility by

[00:10:50] the audience may result in on the decision of the chair public comment being tabled until a later point in the meeting's agenda limiting the number of attendees in the meeting room during public comment for safety reasons or public comment period ending for the evening distribution of materials to school board members copies of materials for school board members should be be given to the public information officer in the media box in the back of the boardroom before the start of the meeting. Please provide 12 copies of the materials. Under no circumstances may a speaker approach the dais. The public is reminded that access to the school board meetings

[00:11:25] is available through LCPS-TV on Comcast Channel 18 and 1070 HD and Verizon Fios Channel 43. The live stream of the meeting may be viewed on the website. We look forward to hearing your comments, we will now start with our virtual public comment. Our first speaker is Caitlin Dallaire, followed by Alexandra Patton. We do not have a virtual public speaker by that name.

[00:11:56] Alexandria Patton, followed by Morgan Cabuzzi. Hey, good evening. My name is Alexandra Patton. My husband and I have two elementary age students in Loudoun County Public Schools right now.

[00:12:13] I just wanted to say that I am in support of Lauren Chernoff's proposal to transition away from one-to-one model for Chromebook usage to a CART model where they are brought in as necessary. I think this is an excellent initiative.

[00:12:31] I think that we should get back to more traditional style of learning during that crucial developmental time, five, six, and seven years old. I think we should not utilize Chromebooks to shape and

develop our children's minds, but rather look to our teachers and administrators.

[00:12:52] Thank you. Thank you. Morgan Cabuzzi, followed by Jacqueline Porter. Hello. My name is Morgan Cabuzzi, and I'm a parent.

[00:13:09] I see the irony in making my comments virtually, but I am aware that Lauren Chernoff has brought through committee the notion to eliminate a one-to-one ratio of Chromebooks to students in grades K through 2 and replace them with carts. This will undoubtedly save the district money going forward as they won't have to maintain one Chromebook per student for these grades.

[00:13:29] The benefits of this change extend well beyond the financial, however. There is increasing evidence worldwide that digital learning is not superior to traditional learning methods and may even inhibit student learning. The Teachers College of Columbia University found that children's brains process written text more deeply in print versus digital screens.

[00:13:49] Studies have shown that writing by hand improves memory and remains superior to computer work for stronger brain connections, reduced distractions, and easier visualization. Studies done by the Digital Education Review and Association for Psychological Science show the use of technology negatively impacts students' social-emotional development and interpersonal skills, is linked to depressive symptoms, and irregular sleep patterns.

[00:14:15] Decreasing digital learning in our schools will benefit all students academically, emotionally, and socially. Thank you. Thank you. Jacqueline Porter. Hi, my name is Jacqueline Porter.

[00:14:32] I have a kindergarten at Ashburn Elementary, and I am also speaking in support of Lauren Chernoff's proposal to go from the one-to-one Chromebook model to a shared classroom cart system. As previously mentioned, this has fiscal and cognitive benefits.

[00:14:48] From a budgetary standpoint, the one-to-one model is an unsustainable expense. beyond initial purchase, we have initial costs, including high breakage rates among five-year-olds and constant need for IT troubleshooting, draining resources that could be better spent on physical classroom materials or specialized instruction. A CART-based model allows the district to maintain a smaller, more durable inventory. This shift represents a move towards surgical technology use rather than blanket technology use, ensuring our tax dollars are spent where they have the highest return on investment for student outcomes. However, as

[00:15:25] mentioned before, the academic argument for the shift is more compelling. The university in Norway did a study showing that students who read printed texts consistently perform better on comprehension assessments than those reading digitally. This is because physical paper provides spatial anchors that help a child's brain map out the story. Furthermore, research by the psychological science demonstrates encoding process the way the brain stores new information is significantly more robust when children use pen and paper compared to keyboards we must consider

[00:15:59] the psychological impact the american academy of pediatrics is large warn of excessive screen time when a child is tucked behind a one-to-one screen they lose out on serve and return interactions with teachers and peers that harvard center of developing child identifies is the literal bricks and mortar of brain architecture. CART-based model returns a focus to human element of the classroom and using screens as a tool rather than primary environment and is fiscally responsible. Thank you. Thank you for those comments which pertain to the fiscal year 27

[00:16:34] operating budget. With that, before we begin our budget work session, I'd like to take a point of personal privilege and wish a happy birthday to Miss Richardson happy birthday with that we'll move on to item 4.01 our response to budget questions which will be presented tonight by miss Sharon Willoughby chief financial officer in board docs you will find our first budget question and answer packet that we have delivered to the school board you will find included in there

[00:17:11] that we have provided answers to 21 questions that we have either received via email or that we documented from the last work session. At this point, we have four open questions that we are still currently working on, and our next anticipated delivery of a packet would be the next meeting on Wednesday.

[00:17:31] I'll also just take this opportunity to, again, remind the board to please email me your budget questions, and we will promptly begin working on providing responses to include in the next packet. Thank you. - Thank you, board members. Are there any questions at this time?

[00:17:47] All right, thank you so much for providing those questions, and we'll move on to item 4.02, continuing to invest in our exemplary staff. Tonight, our presentation will be given by Ms. Lisa Bolin, Chief Human Resources Officer.

[00:18:19] Good evening. Tonight, I have the privilege of sharing information about our continuing investment in our most valuable asset, LCPS, exemplary staff. As the superintendent shared during the Siam presentation on January 15th, one of the most important things to understand about our budget is that it is, at its core, a people budget.

[00:18:48] Approximately 90% of the school operating fund is invested directly in our staff. Salaries, benefits, and the personnel costs required to operate a school system of this size and complexity. That percentage is significant, and it reflects a clear value statement. It tells us that our ability to serve students rises and falls with the people we recruit, support, and retain.

[00:19:14] When we talk about investments in this budget, whether that's compensation, staffing, or support structures, we are talking about investments in the adults who are in classrooms, supporting students, and keeping our schools running each and every day.

[00:19:31] It also means that even small changes in staffing or compensation having meaningful impact on the overall budget. There is very little in this fund that does not in some way touch people. So as I walk the board through the staff-related components of the proposed budget, I want to be clear that these requests are not new in spirit. They are a continuation of our commitment to exemplary staff and to ensuring we can attract, retain, and support the workforce our students

[00:20:06] deserve. Now that I've grounded us in the reality that 90% of our operating budget is invested in people, I want to take a moment to orient the board to the department responsible for supporting that investment. The Department of Human Resources and Talent Development exists to support staff across the entire employee life cycle, from recruitment and onboarding to development and recognition, support and retention.

[00:20:37] Our teams work behind the scenes to ensure that schools are staffed, employees have access to meaningful growth and development, benefits are accessible and sustainable, leaders are supported and workplace concerns are addressed fairly and consistently.

[00:20:55] This slide provides a high-level overview of the teams within HRTD. Those teams include school-based staffing, recruitment and substitutes, Support Staffing, Operations, Compensation and Recognition, Employee Benefits, Workplace and Labor Relations, and Title IX.

[00:21:14] Each team plays a distinct role, but the work is highly interconnected. Together, they support more than 14,000 full-time employees and maintain a substitute workforce approaching 5,000 across 100 schools and numerous departments.

[00:21:34] Whether it's hiring hundreds of teachers each year, supporting principals with staff and performance, managing benefits for tens of thousands of covered lives, or navigating complex employee relations and labor requirements, this work directly impacts the day-to-day experience of our staff.

[00:21:52] And ultimately, how well we support our staff directly affects stability in our schools, continuity for our students, and our ability to deliver on the division's strategic goals.

[00:22:09] With that foundation in mind, I'd like to walk the board through the new investment proposed in this budget that are specifically designed to strengthen how we support staff. The first new investment I wanna highlight is the addition of a mentor coach focused specifically on special education.

[00:22:28] Over the past several years, we've seen a growing number of novice special education teachers entering the field through non-traditional pathways. While these educators bring commitment and passion, they often require more targeted and sustained instructional support as they build confidence in their roles.

[00:22:48] This is a proactive investment. This mentor coach would work directly with new special education teachers to provide hands-on, job-embedded support focused on instructional practice, compliance, and classroom management.

[00:23:05] particularly during those critical first years when attrition risk is highest. Again, a proactive investment rather than responding after teachers struggle or leave. This role allows us to strengthen support earlier, reduce burnout, and improve retention in an area that continues to be one of our hardest to staff.

[00:23:29] Ultimately, this investment is about stability for teachers, for schools, and for students with exceptional needs who benefit most with consistent, skilled instruction. This investment strengthens our ability to support some of our most vulnerable learners by first ensuring we are supporting the educators who serve them.

[00:23:51] The next investment I want to highlight is the addition of an intake specialist within our workplace and labor relations team. This role would serve as a centralized intake and triage point for employees' concerns, complaints, and workplace reports.

[00:24:09] Similar to the intake model currently used within our Title IX team, as our division has grown, we have seen both the volume and complexity of employee concerns increase. Beginning July 1, our workforce will also be navigating its first collective bargaining agreement, which adds new processes and new complexities to how concerns are raised, reviewed, and ultimately resolved.

[00:24:37] An intake specialist allows us to assess concerns early, route them appropriately, and ensure timely and consistent responses, whether that involves informal resolution, supervisor guidance, or a formal workplace review.

[00:24:53] This is a proactive investment focused on efficiency, consistency, and early intervention. It allows our workplace and labor relations team to focus investigative and compliance resources where they are most needed.

[00:25:09] while improving the employee experience by providing clarity and responsiveness at the front end. Ultimately, this role strengthens our ability to address concerns early, reduce escalation, and support a more stable and effective workplace environment as our labor relations responsibilities expand. The next investment included in the superintendent's proposed budget focuses on strengthening the experience of candidates and new employees through the addition of an HRTD

[00:25:43] coordinator dedicated to operations, applicant processes, and onboarding. This role is designed to ensure that candidates feel welcomed, supported, and prepared from the very first point of contact with the division, and that the transition from applicant to employee is clear, seamless, and well-coordinated. For many new hires, especially in today's competitive labor market, the applicant and onboarding experience shapes their first impression of an organization.

[00:26:17] When that process is confusing or fragmented, we risk losing strong candidates or starting employees off on the wrong foot. This coordinator role strengthens candidate care by providing consistent communication, timely support, and clear guidance throughout the hiring and onboarding process, helping new employees arrive on day one feeling confident and ready to succeed.

[00:26:43] This is also a retention focused investment. Employees who feel supported, informed, and connected early in their employment are more likely to stay, engage, and build long-term careers with the division. Ultimately, this role helps us create a more welcoming and supportive entry experience for staff.

[00:27:05] One that reflects our values and supports long-term success. The next investment focuses on teachers who are new to LCPS, but not new to the profession. Currently, teachers who are brand new to the profession start two days earlier than experienced teachers who are new to the division.

[00:27:26] That means not all new LCPS teachers return at the same time or have access to the same onboarding and training experiences. This proposal would add two additional workdays for experienced teachers new to LCPS, allowing all new licensed staff to start on the same date and participate in onboarding, training, and preparation activities. While these teachers bring valuable experience, transitioning into a new division still requires time to learn our systems, expectations, curriculum, and culture.

[00:28:04] By aligning start dates and expanding onboarding to five days for all new LCPS teachers, we are creating a more consistent, welcoming, and supportive entry experience, and ensuring that every new teacher begins the year prepared and connected. Ultimately, this investment strengthens readiness, supports retention, and benefits students by sending teachers up for success from day one. The next investment builds on work the board supported in last year's budget. The addition

[00:28:38] of a part-time principal leadership coach focused on elementary school principals. That was the initial investment and allowed us to provide targeted job-embedded leadership support to principals at the elementary level, where the coaching focus has been on instructional leadership, staff support, and day-to-day school operations. This year, the superintendent's proposed budget includes additional part-time funding to expand that model at the secondary level. Middle and high school principals face a different and often more complex set of challenges, including larger

[00:29:18] staff size, master schedules, graduation requirements, student discipline, athletics and activities, and increased community and operational demands. With more than 100 schools across the division, providing individualized leadership support at this level requires dedicated capacity. This role allows us to tailor coaching to the unique needs of secondary leaders rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. Ultimately, this investment strengthens principal effectiveness, supports leadership retention, and helps ensure consistent,

[00:29:56] high-quality leadership across all levels of the organization. In addition to the systems and supports that help our staff succeed, the superintendent's proposed budget also includes continued investment in salaries, which remain foundational to our ability to attract and retain exemplary employees. I'd like to begin the salary discussion by grounding us in the compensation impacts related to the collective bargaining agreements for fiscal year 27.

[00:30:29] As the board knows, these agreements span three years. I will speak to the multiple year impacts shortly, but this slide is focused specifically on the investments included for this first year. For eligible employees, the fiscal year 27 budget includes step increases, averaging approximately 2.5%.

[00:30:50] These step movements recognize experience and progression within the salary structure. In addition, the budget includes a one-time percent, 1% top-of-scale payment for eligible employees who are no longer eligible for step movement, ensuring they are also recognized within this compensation framework.

[00:31:10] Those are our top-of-scale employees. This agreement, the agreements also include cost-of-living adjustments. For certified employees on scale A and C, that adjustment is 4%, while non-certified and non-burgany unit employees on scale B receive 5%.

[00:31:31] Finally, this budget reflects the cost associated with the addition of bereavement leave provisions, including the related substitute costs needed to ensure coverage in our schools. Together, these components represent the fiscal year 27 compensation investment tied to the first year of our collective bargaining agreements, balancing employee support with long-term fiscal responsibility.

[00:31:58] This slide is intended to show the longer-term budget impact of the collective bargaining agreements over the three-year term. As I mentioned earlier, these agreements were intentionally structured to provide predictability, both for employees and for the board, rather than creating uncertainty year over year. For fiscal year 27, again, the first year of the agreement, salary actions include a 4% cost of living adjustment for certified employees and a 5% cost of living adjustment for non-certified and non-bargaining unit employees, and step or top of scale movement

[00:32:36] for all eligible employees. Looking ahead to fiscal year 28 and fiscal year 29, the agreement includes a 2% cost of living adjustment for all salary scales in each of those years, along with the continued step or top of scale movements for eligible employees. While these actions do increase the budget over time, they do so in a planned and measured way. The multi-year structure allows the vision to anticipate costs, plan responsibly, and avoid the need for large or unpredictable

[00:33:10] compensation adjustments in future years. This approach supports employee stability and retention while also giving the board clear visibility into the financial commitments associated with the agreements. This slide provides important context comparing historical teacher compensation increases

with inflation beginning in fiscal year 24. Along the bottom of the chart you'll see two sets of bars for each year. The blue bar represents the average annual increase in teacher salaries

[00:33:48] while the orange bar represents inflation for the same year measured by the CPI. What's important is not just the year-to-year comparison but the trend over time. That's where the line overlay becomes helpful. The blue line reflects compounded teacher salary increases and the orange line reflects compounded inflation across the same period of time. When viewed this way, the data show that over time, investments in teacher compensation have kept pace with and exceeded

[00:34:22] rising costs. While there may be individual years when inflation spikes or salary increases vary, the overall trend reflects a sustained effort to ensure teacher pay does not fall behind the cost of living. This slide helps illustrate the division has not treated compensation as a one-time adjustment, but as a long-term priority, recognizing that competitive and reliable pay is essential to recruiting, retaining, and supporting high-quality educators.

[00:34:56] Ultimately, this context is important as we talk about current and future salary investments. because it shows that compensation decisions have been made thoughtfully and with an eye toward long-term stability. This slide is intended to bring the salary discussion down to the individual employee level and show that the fiscal year 27 compensation actions mean in practice. What's reflected here is the impact of moving an eligible employee from their current step on the fiscal

[00:35:28] year 26 salary scale to the fiscal year 27 salary scale. For each salary scale, the slide shows a range of potential outcomes, minimum, average, and maximum, based on an employee's placement on the scale and the structure of step movement within that scale. These figures are not meant to represent three specific types of employees. Rather, they illustrate how impacts can vary.

[00:35:54] Because pay movement is percentage based, the same percentage increase can result in different dollar amounts and step increases are not uniform across all points on the scale. What's important is that across all scales, eligible employees experience meaningful salary movement in fiscal year 27, reflecting both cost of living adjustments and progression within the salary structure where applicable.

[00:36:22] This slide helps translate the broader budget investment into real-world impact while recognizing that individual incomes will vary. This slide focuses on the master's degree lane on scale A and how LCPS compares to the market.

[00:36:41] The orange line represents LCPS's fiscal year 26 master lane. The red dotted line reflects the current market average for comparable divisions. What this shows is that through approximately step 15, LCPS is generally aligned with the market.

[00:37:00] Beyond that point, from step 16 through the top step at 30, LCPS begins to fall below the market average. In blue, you'll see the fiscal year 27 master lane included in the superintendent's proposed budget. This reflects the impact of the fiscal year 27 salary adjustments and shows a meaningful improvement in our market alignment, particularly at the upper end of the scale. It's important to note, again, that market comparisons are not static. Neighboring divisions will likely make adjustments to their own salary scales,

[00:37:35] which could shift the market average again over time. That said, this slide illustrates that the fiscal year 27 adjustments move LCPS in the right direction, addressing known compression at the top of

the scale and improving competitiveness for experienced educators. This is a step toward maintaining alignment across the full career span of a teacher, not just at the early and mid-career stages. This slide looks at how LCPS compares to our Region 4 neighboring divisions using the three

[00:38:13] teacher salary data points reported in the WABE guide. These are standard reference points used for market comparison. The first is bachelor's degree step one. In the current year, LCPS ranks third in the region. While we had previously led the region for several years at this entry point, this reflects recent market movement among our peers. The second data point is master's degree step one. LCPS is also currently ranked third, which represents an improvement from last year

[00:38:47] when we ranked fourth. The third data point is the master's degree middle step. At this point in the scale, LCPS is currently ranked first in the region. This is a notable shift from previous years when we ranked third and held that position at third for several years prior. Taken together, these comparisons show that while LCPS is not leading the market at every point, we remain highly competitive across the career span of a teacher with particularly strong alignment and improvement at the mid-career level.

[00:39:24] This reinforces the importance of looking at compensation holistically rather than focusing on a single step or lane and supports the multi-year approach reflected in the superintendent's proposed budget. In addition to salaries, I want to briefly highlight two other areas where compensation changes are typically considered.

[00:39:48] The first is stipends, which I'll walk through over the next few slides. Before I talk about where this work is going next, it's important to ground us in where we started and why the review of stipends is both complex and time-intensive.

[00:40:06] LCPS has a wide range of stipends, many of which have been in place for many years and have evolved over time. Today, there are 158 unique stipend titles representing approximately 2,700 individual stipend allocations with an annual cost of about \$15.4 million.

[00:40:32] Over the years, stipends have been reviewed and adjusted in different ways. In fiscal year 19, a market review was conducted for co-curricular stipends, followed by a review of athletic stipends in fiscal year 20, and adjustments were made based on those findings.

[00:40:49] Since then, stipend increases have largely occurred through fixed adjustments in the annual budget process or through department-initiated requests, rather than through a comprehensive system-wide restructuring. There have also been prior efforts to explore a more formal tiered approach to stipends.

[00:41:09] In late 2021 and early 2022, criteria and factors for tiering were identified and shared with the board, along with a detailed overview of the stipend landscape. At that time, the cost of implementing a full tiered system was determined to be outside what was fiscally feasible, and the work did not move forward.

[00:41:30] It's also important to understand that stipends have historically been administered through a decentralized process. Eligibility and oversight occur across multiple departments, and HRTD's role has focused on recommending stipend amounts, not determining eligibility or approving stipends.

[00:41:51] In addition, the volume and restructure of stipends added complexity. A single stipend title may be assigned to multiple individuals, split among staff, or prorated based on assignment dates.

Stipends also vary in timing and duration rather than following a single uniform schedule. All of this context matters because it explains both the scale of the work and why a thoughtful phased approach is necessary before recommendations can responsibly

[00:42:24] be brought forward. Given the complexity and importance of stipends within our overall compensation structure, HRTD began focused work on strengthening the foundation needed for a more consistent and equitable stipend system. The goal of this initial phase has not been to bring forward changes, but to do the necessary groundwork specifically to clearly define stipend roles and establish objective criteria that can eventually support a more structured approach.

[00:42:57] The first step was to develop and refine criteria that could be used to consistently evaluate stipend rolls. This criteria includes factors such as education and experience, the total number of seasons associated with the stipend roll, hours required, student membership, grade level, and the overall profile of the activity.

[00:43:20] This criteria was refined during the 24/25 school year based on input from the individual departments, a survey of stakeholders in teaching and learning in school leadership, and feedback from a small work group that included athletic staff.

[00:43:38] The second step was the development of the stipend position summary form, which you see referenced on this slide. This form captures key information about each stipend role, including duties, responsibilities, requirements, and other relevant criteria in a consistent way.

[00:43:58] This form is now used internally by HRTD and is currently required when departments request new stipends through the budget process. It helps ensure that new stipend requests are reviewed using the same information expectations across the division.

[00:44:15] Together, these steps represent important foundational work focused on equity, consistency, and transparency, and they set the stage for future considerations about structure and compensation. The next phase of this work focused on translating the detailed information we've gathered into something cleaner, clearer, and more accessible.

[00:44:39] Step three was the development of the stipend role summary. This is a single page document that functions much like a job description. It provides a concise overview of a stipend role, including key responsibilities, requirements, and relevant details while drawing from the more detailed stipend position summary form.

[00:44:59] The intent of the stipend role summary is twofold. Internally, it supports consistency and clarity when reviewing and comparing stipend roles. Over time, it can also serve as a forward-facing tool to improve transparency and shared understanding of stipend expectations.

[00:45:19] With refined criteria and standardized forms now in place, HRTD has begun the initial stages of refining a tiered approach to stipends. I want to be clear that this work is still in its early stages and is focused on analysis and alignment, not on final recommendations.

[00:45:38] These steps reflect continued progress toward a more structured, transparent, and equitable stipend framework, while recognizing that thoughtful refinement must occur before changes are proposed. So what's next?

[00:45:53] This slide outlines the remaining work and the phased approach we are taking to ensure this is done thoughtfully and equitably. For fiscal year 27, the focus is on completing a comprehensive review that begins with reviewing all stipend roll summary forms with the respective departments. This step is important to confirm that each summary accurately reflects the responsibilities and expectations of the stipend roll. In parallel, HRTD will complete a comprehensive review of the finalized stipend position summary forms to determine appropriate placement of each

[00:46:29] stipend within a tiered structure using the established criteria. Given the sheer number of stipends and the wide variation in roles, this step is both time intensive and critical to ensuring that stipends are evaluated equitably and consistently across the division. Once that analysis is complete, HRTD will meet with division leaders and union leadership to review the findings and discuss recommendations because many stipends are held by representative represented employees engagement with union leadership is an essential part of this process the goal for fiscal year 27

[00:47:08] would be to finalize costing and if feasible begin a partial implementation in the spring any remaining funding needed for full implementation will be brought forward through the next budget process with the intent of implementation in fiscal year 28. Looking ahead to fiscal year 28, the focus would be on implementation based on available funding. If necessary, this could occur in phases with initial attention given to stipend rolls where the recommended tier differs most significantly from their current placement. In fiscal year 29, the work would continue as needed

[00:47:46] with full or continued phased implementation and a transition to a more cyclical review of stipends as part of the annual budget process similar to our bandit rates review process. I also want to note that the example shown on this slide is for illustration purposes only. I know it says that but I like to reiterate that. It demonstrates how criteria and point values are used to support consistency and equity across roles and is not a final ranking or outcome example. Overall,

[00:48:22] this phased approach is intentional. It allows us to complete the work carefully, align it with collective bargaining, and ensure that any changes brought forward are transparent, equitable, and financially responsible. LCPS's compensation program also includes established placement practices for newly hired employees, and HRTD regularly reviews those practices to ensure they remain fair, consistent, and competitive. While our overall pay ranges remain externally competitive

[00:48:58] and internally equitable, some historical placement practices have made it more difficult to attract experienced candidates whose backgrounds align with higher steps on the scale. In some cases those practices have also resulted in inconsistencies across similar roles. To begin addressing this LCPS made targeted adjustments in April of 2024 increasing maximum initial placement for specific positions including administrative assistant threes clerks the clerk to the board

[00:49:32] and financial technician threes. In April of 2025 that work continued with an initial phase of placement practice adjustments for our teacher assistants as a full implementation at that time was not financially feasible. The next step in this multi-year effort is to ensure internal equity across all remaining positions. To do that, the superintendent's proposed budget includes aligning placement practices so that all positions on scale B, levels one through five, follow a consistent maximum initial placement. This adjustment is focused on equity and consistency, not across

[00:50:12] the board increases. Employees who are already appropriately placed, including those at step one, step two, or at the current maximum step, would not receive an adjustment. The estimated cost to

complete this final phase is approximately \$1.2 million, with a proposed implementation date of April of 2027, reflecting three-month fiscal impact. Once implemented, this change would impact just over 2,000 employees and would complete a deliberate phased approach to better

[00:50:45] aligning experience placement and equity across the salary scales. Also included in the superintendent's estimate of needs and of equal importance to our employees are investment in benefits. This slide focuses on the financial status of the health insurance fund and the steps being taken to ensure it remains stable and sustainable. LCPS Regulation 4175 establishes that the health insurance fund balance should be no less than two months of annual claims expenditures. The regulation also

[00:51:20] states that if the fund balance falls outside that recommended range, subsequent budget cycles must include a plan to bring the fund into compliance. Managing a self-insurance health plan is similar to operating an insurance program. There are years when claims and costs are lower and years when they are significantly higher. Over the past several years, we have experienced sustained increases in claims, particularly prescription drug costs, that have outpaced revenues. In fiscal year 24 and fiscal year 25, year-end school operating funds were transferred

[00:51:58] to the health insurance fund to maintain a positive fund balance as permitted under the county's appropriation resolution. As reflected on this chart, projections indicate that without intervention, the fund would again move into a negative position, which is why we anticipate similar transfer of available fiscal year 26 year-end funds to stabilize the balance. At the same time, the proposed 20% premium increase is intended to generate additional ongoing revenue to better align contributions with rising costs. Importantly, financial projections show that with

[00:52:38] these combined actions, the fund begins to trend back toward a healthier and more sustainable financial position over time. I also want to note that revenues reflected here include both employer contributions and employee premium contributions. Taken together, this approach reflects responsible stewardship of the self-insurance fund, addressing short-term pressures while putting long-term measures in place to restore compliance with policy and protect the stability of employee benefits. This chart shows the historical pattern of health insurance

[00:53:15] premium increases, which have steadily risen since calendar year 2024. These increases are driven by higher claims costs and the need to maintain the financial stability of our self-insurance health plan. For fiscal year 27, the super intense estimate of needs includes a 20% premium increase that applies to both the employee and employer share of the premium. Based on current projections, we do expect premium increases to continue in future years as health care costs remain elevated.

[00:53:49] These adjustments are necessary to ensure the long-term stability of employee benefits. This slide provides an overview of the three health plan options offered by LCPS. The OAP high plan has higher premiums, but shifts a greater share of health care costs to the employer, resulting in lower out-of-pocket expenses for employees who anticipate higher medical use.

[00:54:15] The high deductible health plan has the lowest premiums, but shifts more cost responsibility to the employee. It includes a health savings account, or HSA, which can help offset health care expenses and can also be used as a long-term savings plan and retirement planning tool.

[00:54:35] The Open Access Plus plan, or the Open Access Plan, or AOAP, sits between the other two options. It balances cost sharing between the employer and the employee. One technical distinction worth

noting is how deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums are applied.

**[00:54:54]** For the Open Access Plan and the OAP High Plan, both the annual deductible and out-of-pocket maximum cross-accumulate between in-network and out-of-network care. However, for the High Deductible Health Plan, deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums do not cross-accumulate and are tracked separately.

**[00:55:19]** Together, these plans are designed to provide flexibility and choice, recognizing that employee needs vary across life stages, health care usage, and financial situations. This chart shows employee participation across the three health plan options and helps illustrate how employees select coverage based on their health care needs, financial preferences, and comfort with risk and cost sharing.

**[00:55:45]** The pink line represents the Open Access Plan, or OAP. This continues to be our most popular plan, with more than half of our employees enrolled, reflecting its balance of cost and coverage. The purple line represents the OAP high plan.

**[00:56:01]** The downward trend here indicates decreasing participation, which is a favorable outcome from a plan management perspective, as this plan carries higher employer costs. The blue line represents the high deductible plan. We see a moderate increase in participation over time, which aligns with employees taking advantage of its lower premiums and the availability of the health savings account.

**[00:56:27]** Overall, these trends show a healthy and balanced distribution of employees across the available plans, suggesting that employees are actively choosing options that best meet their individual needs while supporting the long-term sustainability of the program.

**[00:56:45]** While a 20% premium increase can sound significant, this slide is intended to put that change into context by showing the actual impact to an employee's biweekly paycheck. Effective January 2027, the proposed premium adjustment results in relatively modest changes per pay period.

**[00:57:06]** Depending on the plan and coverage level, increases range from as little as a few cents per paycheck for employee-only vision coverage to a maximum of \$75.92 per paycheck for the OAP High Family Plan.

**[00:57:24]** Looking at the impact this way helps illustrate how the increase is experienced by employees on a day-to-day basis rather than as a single percentage figure. It's also important to note that LCPS is not alone in facing rising health care costs.

**[00:57:41]** school divisions across Northern Virginia are experiencing similar pressures driven by claims and prescription drug costs. Despite these challenges, LCPS continues to offer a competitive and comprehensive health benefits program, and we remain focused on balancing affordability for employees with the long-term sustainability of the plan. This slide is intended to bring together the salary increases and the health premium changes to show the overall impact when employee take-home pay. When viewed holistically, employees will see a net increase in pay in fiscal year 27

**[00:58:20]** regardless of health plan selection. The proposed salary adjustments exceed the impact of the premium increases. To illustrate that, the smallest salary increase on the fiscal year 27 proposed salary scales is \$2,541 annually. By comparison, the largest annual health premium increase associated with the OAP high plan is \$2,065. In other words, even at the highest premium increase level, the salary adjustment more than offsets the additional costs for the vast majority of

[00:58:55] employees. There are a very limited number of exceptions. Based on current positions and current benefit selections, up to three employees could experience a net loss ranging from approximately \$12 to \$427 annually. This is highly specific to individual circumstances and does not reflect the broader employee population. The key takeaway from this slide is that overall, the fiscal year 27 compensation and benefits packages results in positive net

[00:59:30] impact for employees, even as we address rising health care costs. To round out the discussion on benefits, I'd like to shift from employee impact to the health insurance funds that support these plans. There are four self-insurance funds in total that roll into the self-insurance fund line. Earlier, we discussed the health self-insurance fund, and I'd like to also provide information about the three other self-insurance funds for fiscal year 27. This slide focuses on

[01:00:06] the three other self-insurance funds, workers' compensation, short-term disability, and the Virginia Local Disability Program. All three of these funds are fully self-insured and are 100% funded through transfers from the operating fund. We are seeing expenses increase across each of these funds driven primarily by rising medical costs that are outside of the division's control as well as by increased compensation levels which reflect our continued commitment to remaining competitive as an employer. At the same time we are actively working to mitigate these costs by

[01:00:41] focusing on workplace safety, injury prevention, and programs that support employee health and well-being. We are also seeing appropriate use of these benefits and related leave programs, which allow employees to care for themselves when they are unable to work. This support is an important part of our commitment to being an employer of choice while maintaining responsible oversight of these self-insurance funds. This slide reflects an ongoing investment in employee well-being through the expansion of the employee assistance program. Over the past year, we have

[01:01:20] seen an increase in requests for mental and emotional health support, as well as a rise in crisis-related incidents involving employees. In response, this request includes both the expansion of dedicated EAP counselor services and the addition of a supervisor to oversee and manage of the program. The supervisor would serve as the primary point of contact for urgent staff matters and act as the liaison between employees, supervisors, and the full range of EAP resources, including both traditional EAP services and the dedicated LCPS EAP counselors. Together,

[01:02:00] these resources would support employees during critical situations such as school-related crisis, student or staff deaths, and other significant events that impact employee well-being. The program would also help manage referrals to HRTD when additional assessment is needed, including determining whether a fit-for-duty evaluation or a mandatory EAP referral is appropriate prior to an employee's return to work.

[01:02:29] With the addition of EAP counselors, the Division would also be able to take a more proactive approach by offering resiliency training, crisis response support for supervisors, targeted support for specific teams, and ongoing assistance for employees' experience elevated stress or concern. Strengthening these resources supports employees' mental and emotional health, improves productivity and stability in the workplace, and ultimately benefits students.

[01:02:59] This investment also reinforces LCPS's commitment to serving as the employer of choice by ensuring employees have timely, appropriate support when they need it most. And while that concludes

my presentation for this evening, there are a few remaining slides from the budget book appendix that represent the fiscal year 27 salary scales that are available for your reference.

[01:03:25] And I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much, Ms. Bolin. Board members, do you have any questions? Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions, more than one. As far as the stipends go, I had brought up stipends last budget talk.

[01:03:47] I have some key club people that were looking to get a raise in their stipends, and some are employees. So does this, what you talked about as far as stipends, is that the same thing? they fill out the form, and I think they might be getting a little stipend now, but I know they needed more money. They were doing way too much. So, yes and no. So, this process would include that stipend if it was an already established stipend. It would also include

[01:04:21] the process by which a new stipend would be requested. Employees themselves do not fill out those forms. Those forms would be filled out by department leadership. So they would have to advocate through their department leadership if they needed a new stipend. As far as if an increase was required, that review would be part of this evaluation in regards to restructuring into a tiered system. So there is a way for them to get more

[01:04:54] stipend money potentially oh good um that's good to know um but as far as like field hockey um volleyball basketball those head coaches correct me if i'm wrong they seem to get a higher stipend than softball baseball lacrosse soccer can you explain why and i have more questions after that i think three thank you so i'm not sure i can explain why um i'm happy to to do some research and provide you a response in regards to the last review that was conducted.

[01:05:28] I believe it was fiscal year 20 of athletic stipends, if we can take that down as a budget question. But outside of that, this process would include a review of all positions. We don't currently have a tiered system. So in order to fit our current stipends into a tiered structure, for example, tier one is all \$1,000.

[01:05:50] Tier two is \$2,000. Tier three is \$3,000. In order to place stipends within a tiered structure, all stipends would be evaluated and reviewed. Yeah, I think that we should get a better answer to that because, you know, stipends for softball and baseball, they might be like, you know, why does this other sport get more?

[01:06:11] I do want to switch over to the raises. Now, my understanding was the raises in COLA were for our staff, our teachers.

[01:06:26] Admin is also going to get a 5% increase and teachers get 4%. Can you explain that as well? So I'll do my best. The collective bargaining agreement, we have two bargaining units. We have certified and non-certified.

[01:06:42] The collective bargaining agreement for our certified employees, which does include teachers, includes all employees that sit on scales A and C. We have three scales. That agreement includes a 4% COLA for all employees on scales A and C.

[01:07:03] On scale B, which is our scale that includes non-certified bargaining unit members as well as members that are excluded from a bargaining unit, that scale is getting 5%.

[01:07:20] So in the collective bargaining agreement, non-certified, it was agreed upon that non-certified bargaining unit members would get 5%. Those employees sit on scale B. I'm going to give you an example

to help provide a cleaner way of trying to translate what I'm saying. This includes confidential employees that are excluded from a bargaining unit, but some of those excluded employees do in fact share the same title or

[01:07:54] type of job or position as our non-certified bargaining unit members and sit on the same salary scale. For example, we have admin assistants who are part of the non-certified bargaining unit and admin assistants that may be excluded and included as confidential employees and unable to participate. So all the determination was made and included in the superintendent's budget was to ensure that all employees on that scale receive the same increase.

[01:08:34] Does that help? A little bit. It's a little confusing. I'll have to dive into it a little bit more. But I do want to ask you or maybe point out that it looks like salaries will increase 40% over the next five years.

[01:08:55] Can we even sustain these numbers in your view? Do you think we can sustain these numbers with decreasing enrollment? So I'm going to ask for help because I'm not the numbers person. I'm the people person. And if I could ask you to repeat your question, please.

[01:09:12] I want to make sure I heard your number correctly. Well, we're going to have an increase in salaries of 40% over the next five years. So are we able to sustain these numbers, especially with decreasing enrollment? But the budget seems to go up every year regardless of decreasing enrollment.

[01:09:34] So I'm just trying to understand if you could explain that to me. Thank you. I guess my first question, the 40% over five years, I'm not sure where that reference is coming from. What we have committed to in the collective bargaining agreement was a SEP increase and a COLA, a minimum COLA of 2% for the next two fiscal years.

[01:09:59] so for fiscal 28 and fiscal 29, with the provision that it can be afforded. That's what LCPS has committed to in the agreement. I don't have the math in front of me of what that calculates out to. In terms of answering your second part of your question of with declining enrollment and the budget goes up, I'll just reiterate what Dr. Spence included in his presentation, how with 90% of our cost invested in our employees to give a pay increase, we're going to increase the budget.

[01:10:33] In addition to that, to sustain the rich benefits that we provide to our employees with health insurance, to maintain that, that also is requiring that 20% premium increase. And as Ms. Boland said, that's 20% for the employee share of the premium, but it's also 20% for LCPS's share of that premium.

[01:10:53] So again, those are two examples of costs that are important as well as required per the collective bargain agreement, as well as required to sustain benefits for our employees that would drive the budget or would increase the budget despite enrollment declining.

[01:11:14] Thank you very much. Yeah, there is a huge concern as far as we're doing the budget now and we're asking for more money. There is a concern amongst the people of Loudoun County as to why the budget keeps going up and enrollment's declining.

[01:11:32] So I want to be transparent and give them as much explanation as possible. So thank you. Ms. LaBelle. Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question, first of all, about classroom assistance.

[01:11:50] You mentioned on the salary scale there were three levels, A, B, and C. There are three salary scales. Yes, ma'am. Where do the classified, the assistants fall on that, classroom assistants?

[01:12:07] The teacher's assistants? Teachers, special ed assistants, nurses' aide. They're on scale B. They're non-certified bargaining unit members. And they are getting the? They're getting 5%. 5%. Yes, ma'am.

[01:12:22] Thank you. The second question I have kind of chimes in with Ms. Griffiths. If we are looking at this form and if all of the requirements are equal, like how many years you've had, the number of quarters, the number of hours, does that mean that if, excuse me, if one coach, let's say the drama coach, gets the same number and hours and experience, et cetera, et cetera, as the football coach, that they'd get the same stipend?

[01:13:01] That could be possible, absolutely. oh good that has not happened because we have not reviewed them based on this criteria yes but all numbers equating to the same total would mean they would fall on the same tier yes okay good thank you um miss riccardi i just had a quick question for you thank you madam chair um i just had a quick question about the eap so is the is the eap i'm assuming you guys are outsourcing that as most organizations do yes ma'am right and that's the the request for the extra 400 000

[01:13:37] for the eap program is to extend those services out you're referring to the counselor um so we we are 400 000 extra so i get that you have a staff member that you want a supervisor you want to bring into this which i get but i'm talking about really the 400 the extra 400 000 yes ma'am so uh we currently have one ea dedicated eap counselor that is not our employee but we pay four right um that's not enough so we are we are asking for another one to support that program

[01:14:16] prior to adding that counselor last year to help support staff mental health we relied heavily on miss richardson's team who is really designed to support staff i mean to support students to help us with staff. We were able, like I said last year, to get a dedicated counselor that we have utilized all year long, but pretty tremendously to be able to go into schools to help support staff

[01:14:50] during those crisis. And we're looking for another one. Okay. So \$400,000 for one additional outsourced person. Is that correct? So I will have to look unless they put in two. That seems pretty high to me yeah two would two would sound right one would not so yeah I'm with you on that so I will double check math on that one so okay yeah that'd be great if you could give me a head you got it and I just want to make sure that you know that it's fully utilized I get that we don't want to use staff that's really designed to be student facing for our teachers because

[01:15:25] those needs are very different so okay thank you so much yes absolutely mr. pepper I have a whole bunch of questions and I will definitely send some of them Miss Willoughby's way. Can I, can I, it is too. My apologies. That's good clarification. Thank you, Chair Chandler. So a bunch of questions. I would definitely send some to Miss Willoughby because I think they're more chart stuff that I just want to look at. Going back to kind of the beginning, I love this idea of adding a mentor coach for our special education teachers. As someone who has

[01:16:01] done a lot of hiring recently and also works with a lot of special education teachers, one, they're incredibly hard to find, and a lot of them that we are getting are, you know, people who thought they'd be paraprofessionals, and the next day they are coming in as a special education teacher. My question is, I have a couple questions on this. The first, is there a specific job site or level that we're looking at for this position, or is it just kind of district-wide as needed?

[01:16:25] So we have a mentor coaching program that supports our new novice teachers. This particular position, we're not looking to pigeonhole them into anything specific. It would really depend on what's the applicant pool look like what's their specialty but in general it would be to just support our new special education teachers. Do we know and this probably is a question that we looked up how many new special education teachers we've had in the division over the last year and how many have either gone through alternative pathways of certification or have

[01:17:03] come in provisionally certified? We definitely have that information I don't have it but we can pull it for you. Okay I just was curious if one of these is enough or might need additional because this is a kind of a robust need. Second question is going with the new intake specialist for HRTD. If this position didn't exist, like if we didn't bring this person in, is there a way that we would handle these new concerns or is it just something that we might have to play by ear? So we would continue to do what we do now. We have a team that reviews them, we have supervisors that

[01:17:38] sort of filter them out to our investigators. The difference is our current investigators are dealing with employee relations as well as full-fledged investigations, so they don't have the opportunity to necessarily triage and return them to the schools. They are in the middle of both. This intake specialist would have the opportunity to address the employee relations issues allowing our investigators to do the full-fledged investigations.

[01:18:11] Particularly like grievance-related. I appreciate that kind of clarification. It's very helpful to know what that person is doing. A couple other things. I saw the \$144,000 earmark for the expansion of a leadership coach for secondary principals.

[01:18:29] I'm just curious as to why there's no FTE attachment on this. Noting that it's a part-time position and you would assume someone in that position would probably be either a retired principal or stepping out of a school administrator role, definitely making far more than 144. So just curious as to what the FTE thought would be because this person is working for us.

[01:18:50] So last year we got something similar in the budget, the part-time leadership coach for principals. And that individual that came in had a primary background in elementary and has done wonders for elementary principals but doesn't really have the necessary experience to help our secondary.

[01:19:11] And so we are mirroring that program and trying to be financially responsible in regards to what we are asking for. So what is the FTE on the elementary position right now? Is there not one? It is not. It is funded part-time with part-time funds, similar to this ask.

[01:19:31] It is not a full-time FTE. So there are no benefits costs associated. Um, is it more contractual then? Um, no, they're, they're, it's a part-time position that they are working, um, and based on the need, uh, designated hours per week, uh, dependent upon which principle or, or the, the amount of support needed at any given time. Okay. That, that helps clarify too, because I'm thinking more time card now than probably that that's a little more helpful. Um,

[01:20:09] And then just really quickly, when we do that market rate comparison, which other divisions are included in our market rate comparison for salaries? So we typically do the big four. We do Prince William, Fairfax, Alexandria, Arlington. We've expanded to Virginia Beach. We do several others.

[01:20:32] And then for positions that are not strictly educational-based, we have a system where we do sort of like a nationwide survey that pulls out specific organizations, both private and public sector, that

are similar size, and we use that data as well.

[01:20:53] Thank you so much. You got it. Mrs. Griffiths? Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, well, two things. So cabinet members are getting 5% at COLA.

[01:21:11] So cabinet members do not sit on the salary scale. That's done completely differently. They don't sit on a salary scale. And also, maybe I missed it. You didn't go over hiring recruiters for your department at all?

[01:21:28] Did I miss that? What slide was that on? I'm not sure I know what you're asking. I didn't ask for any new recruiter positions. We do have recruiters, but I didn't put in for an additional recruiter.

[01:21:44] The reason why I'm asking that is because when I was on HRTD, I think we had discussed you were going to put in for new recruiters, so I didn't know if I missed it. You're satisfied with the recruiters you have to hire staff?

[01:22:01] We are being financially and fiscally responsible on our asks. Okay. All right. Thank you. Well, I wanted to just take a moment and thank you, especially around the work on the stipends. I think we've made a great deal of when it's so nice to see the effort that was extended in this budget cycle and to see the clarity around it it's so much easier to understand that has been passed and I think that'll be a great greatly appreciated by the community that's great thank you thank you school board members any further questions on this issue nope okay with that we will

[01:22:37] move on to item 4.03 continuing to invest in our empowered students which will be presented tonight by Mr. Neal Slevin our assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, Dr. Ashley Ellis chief academic officer, Ms. Rae Mitchell chief of schools and Ms. Tedra Richardson assistant superintendent of

[01:22:55] student services.

[01:23:21] All right good evening madam chair members of the board this evening we will present elements of the FY 27 superintendent's estimate of needs that focus on investing in our empowered students. The departments of school leadership, academics, teaching and learning, and student services collaborate every day on providing the support and resources schools need to ensure every student has what they

[01:23:59] need to be successful and meet their full potential. This evening, we'll start with a high-level overview of each department for context and then dive into new and ongoing investments. We'll start with an overview of the Department of School Leadership. Good evening, board members.

[01:24:17] As the chief of schools, I am honored to lead our Department of School Leadership, referred to as DASO, which supports principals, assistant principals, and deans for our 96 comprehensive schools, five programs, and two charter schools across the school division.

[01:24:37] Leading schools in a continuous school improvement process designed to accomplish the mission and strategic goals established by the school division, we are comprised of three level offices, which includes the elementary, middle, and high school offices, the Office of School Administration, and the Office of Athletics and Extracurricular Activities. In collaboration with the Chief Academic Office, we promote high academic achievement in a learning environment that provides access to all students, provides opportunities for our students to participate in

[01:25:16] athletics and extracurricular activities that encompass a diverse range of sports, clubs, and events. And we build the capacity of school leaders by facilitating effective communication, providing professional development, and supporting a positive environment for students, staff, parents, and the community.

[01:25:36] We also provide support to our leaders with the implementation of policies and regulations that include initiatives related to student discipline, safety, campus climate across the division. I am proud to lead the dedicated teams that make up the Department of Academics. Every day these teams keep our schools focused on student learning while making sure we meet our responsibilities to the families and to the Commonwealth. In my overview I will highlight briefly what's included in our base budget to give you an idea of the resources that ensure each

[01:26:16] office in the Department of Academics can deliver the support our schools rely on every day. After this high-level overview I'll turn it over to Ms. Richardson and Mr. Slevin to provide an overview of the two large departments that sit within the Department of Academics. These three departments, along with the Department of School Leadership, are the machine that support our empowered students every day. So the School Improvement Office partners closely with school leaders to develop and monitor school improvement plans and meet state and federal accountability requirements. An example of an item in this base budget includes funding allocated directly to schools for in-person tutoring, ensuring that schools

[01:26:55] have flexible support to address student needs throughout the year. This team also supports the staff who manages title programs and accountability processes division-wide, including Title I schools and schools that have been identified for targeted or comprehensive support to close achievement gaps.

[01:27:12] The Assessment Services Office ensures that LCPS remains compliant with federal and state testing requirements and manages logistics of test administration across the division. One item in this base budget are the AP testing fees that the division pays for for each student.

[01:27:29] This is an important investment in access and opportunity for our students. This budget also supports the staff and systems needed to securely administer statewide mandated tests. The research office equips the division with high quality data and evaluation to inform decisions about programs, policy, and strategic initiatives.

[01:27:48] The team administers division-wide surveys and collaborates with subject matter experts across the division to conduct program evaluations for instructional and operational areas. Included in the base budget in this office are software tools used to design, distribute and analyze surveys and to conduct program evaluations.

[01:28:10] And then lastly, the strategic planning office. The supervisor of strategic planning leads the division's long-range planning efforts including the design and facilitation of focus groups, stakeholder engagement sessions, presentations and progress monitoring for the division-wide strategic plan.

[01:28:26] Included in this base budget is project management software that supports division-wide planning efforts, helping us coordinate timelines, track metrics, and manage large-scale projects effectively. So you'll notice in the budget book, the academics budget is quite small, as most of the staff and operational costs are housed in teaching and learning and student services.

[01:28:48] Good evening. It is my honor to serve as the assistant superintendent of the Department of Student Services. The department supports the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of all

students by providing a coordinated system of services that promote safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

**[01:29:11]** The department is comprised of five offices that ensure equitable access to essential supports and compliance with state and federal mandates. Base budget resources sustain the core staffing, programs, and services necessary for student success across LCPS.

**[01:29:32]** From the Office of Diagnostic and Prevention Services, in our base budget, you will see our multi-tiered system of supports, early intervention, progress monitoring, and prevention services. Core services include behavioral threat assessment, special education, and section 504 eligibility, and data-informed decision-making to identify and address student learning, behavioral, and developmental needs.

**[01:30:05]** From the Office of Student Services, the base budget, you will see student health services staffing and operations to ensure access to nursing care and health supports in our schools. It also supports registration services and records management, as well as McKinney Vento services for students that are experiencing an unhoused situation for school stability and access.

**[01:30:33]** In the Office of Special Education, the main base budget driver is the delivery of a free, appropriate public education for our students with disabilities. We also support specially designed instruction and related services.

**[01:30:50]** Funding supports the required staffing, the needed instructional resources, and compliance with federal and state special education mandates. Out of the Office of Student Mental Health Service, the main base budget drivers are funding that sustains our school-based mental health supports, including counseling services, crisis intervention, substance use prevention and intervention, and wellness programming.

**[01:31:15]** The budget also supports school psychologists, school social workers, who they also provide assessment, counseling, consultation, and family engagement services. And rounding out the team, we have the Office of Procedural Support.

**[01:31:33]** The base budget drivers there are division-wide compliance and consistency in student services and special education to include the IDEA and Section 504. It also funds supports for students that are served through the Children's Services Act for out-of-D vision placements, training in approved crisis intervention strategies, and technical assistance to schools.

**[01:32:00]** I will now turn it over to Mr. Slevin. Thank you, Ms. Richardson. As Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, I lead a team of highly dedicated educational professionals in providing high-quality supports to our teachers, classrooms, and programs across Loudoun County Public Schools in service of our families and our students.

**[01:32:23]** We are organized, as shown on the screen above, across five divisions, academic programs, career and technical and adult education, English learners and programs, professional growth and innovation, and teaching and learning K-12.

**[01:32:39]** Examples of items in the base budget across these divisions are as follows. In academic programs, you would find the cost of our partnership with TJ, Thomas Jefferson High School in Fairfax, IB curriculum development and exam fees, and materials related to gifted assessment and acceleration.

[01:33:02] For career and technical education, there are funds in the base budget related to industry recognized credentials or CTE certifications, CTE student fees and consumable costs, equipment and software that are needed for those classrooms, as well as new initiatives such as our development of workforce readiness skills in the LCPS Workforce Summit.

[01:33:24] In the English Learner office, we have our staff, our teachers, and the work that is happening in support of our English Learners, professional learning, as well as the English Learner FACE team. We also have a Welcome Center, and as you all know, we are set to open our second Welcome Center, and that is also included in the base budget, as that was an investment in the FY26 budget.

[01:33:46] We also have our local contributions to our pre-K program and our STEP and support for our Head Start. Within our professional growth and innovation office, that is where our division-wide instructional technology team resides, as well as the tools that we provide our schools, such as Schoology.

[01:34:05] Our library, how we invest annually in print books, e-books, digital and audio books, and resources for our schools. And then, of course, our professional learning and teacher development related to course offerings, books, and things needed to support our teachers in their career growth. And finally, teaching and learning K-12. Outside of our curriculum office, we provide program support to activities such as the Propel and Level Up program, BEAM, Summer in the Arts, things of that nature. We have instructional support positions, or FTEs, such as math resource teachers, science resource teachers, literacy tutors, and reading specialists. And we have

[01:34:45] support for pathways for our students in the secondary school, such as our GIS program, independent science research, and our amazing visual and performing arts programs. And finally, we also have content-specific professional learning that we provide our teachers based on content-specific needs.

[01:35:02] So we wanted to highlight this school board priorities slide that Dr. Spence shared in his FY27 estimate of needs because it identifies the priorities that the board identified in June and October in their work sessions and because as you can see on the screen your priorities focus on empowered students and that's what we'll talk about. So we are going to touch on almost every single one of these listed on this slide. We've structured tonight's presentation into two areas expanding

[01:35:40] academic offerings and access and then additional student supports. Within these two areas we have identified ongoing investments in existing programs and services that support all of our students. We will then share information about new investments proposed in the CIEON, again aligned to your priorities.

[01:36:01] These new investments are intended to deepen our commitment, strengthen our supports, and help every student thrive. So we'll start with expanded academic offerings and success. This slide highlights our continued investment in the RISE Academy, a recovery-focused program that was originally launched through a Virginia Department of Education grant to support high school students in active recovery who need a specialized educational setting.

[01:36:35] RISE provides a structured, therapeutic learning setting that promotes academic progress, accountability, and positive life skills. The program currently serves students through individualized instruction and targeted academic, behavioral, and social and emotional supports, allowing our students to earn credits in a safe, recovery-aligned setting.

[01:37:01] RISE operates in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education and aligns with Virginia's statewide recovery network and evidence-based practices. The Academy is further strengthened by our strong community partnerships with George Mason University, the Williams Center for Recovery and Wellness, Serenity House, the Ryan Bartell Foundation, and the Chris Atwood Foundation, providing a comprehensive wraparound model that supports academic access, recovery,

[01:37:36] and reintegration into our traditional school settings. - This next slide highlights three exciting expansion or continuation of special programs within LCPS.

[01:37:54] First, related to the Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies, this item funds two new world language teacher positions in Arabic and Chinese, and a content specialist for global education to launch the Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies in the fall of 2026 at Dominion High School. We have seen strong community interest with over 300 rising ninth graders expressing interest in this pathway.

[01:38:20] These roles expand access to rigorous language instruction, increase opportunities for students to earn the Virginia seal of biliteracy, and strengthen global competencies through authentic projects, exchanges, and partnerships. The content specialist will also ensure international programs are compliant, safe, and strategically aligned. Together, these positions establish a strong staffing foundation for a signature program that prepares LCBS graduates to thrive in a globally connected world with a pathway in global business and global leadership. Next, we have an exciting opportunity at our Academy of Science, housed at the

[01:38:57] Academies of Loudoun. Working collaboratively across the departments of school leadership in teaching and learning, the Academy is allowed and has identified an opportunity to expand the number of seats available for the rising ninth grade cohort at the Academy of Science by 50 students. This has been a long goal of LCPS to expand access to this program. Over the next four years, this will increase the capacity of the program by 200 students. We appreciate the leadership of the school administrative team. This expansion will have a positive net impact on access to specialized pathways across LCPS.

[01:39:31] And finally, we are including funds in this operating budget for a planning year for the expansion of JRTC. The planning year would be year 26, 27. We would build out the student opportunities application to accept interest in the program in fall of 26, pending the acceptance of our application, hire an instructor, buy supplies, make facility requests, et cetera.

[01:39:55] The first cohorts ideally would be in school year 27 and 28, starting with the ninth grade core cohort and build it out to a full program implementation by the 20, 20, 31 school year. And the development of this program would be communicated and worked through in the special programs and centers committee.

[01:40:15] On the next slide, the two items focus on our expansion for dual language immersion. This request, the top request funds the continued expansion of dual language immersion into third grade at Sanders Corner, including one teacher position one language ambassador, and establishing an additional language ambassador at Potomac Elementary School as that program transitions away from a regional model to a school priority model.

[01:40:42] As these programs grow each year from their kindergarten start, this investment supports students' sustained bilingual development, provides targeted instructional support, and ensures the

quality and consistency of the DLI model. These positions strengthen equity and access to high-quality language learning while advancing LCBDS's commitment to preparing globally competent graduates.

[01:41:02] We also are proposing the expansion of a dual language school priority school. This request funds the expansion of a priorities program to one school. As a reminder, the school priority model prioritizes students within the school's attendance zone, opens to, and only opens to out of zone students as school capacity allows.

[01:41:22] Following a call for interest and the evaluation of multiple factors, Leesburg Elementary School has been identified as the location for this expansion. The next slide relates to the enhancement of the English learner staffing at the elementary level.

[01:41:42] The current elementary EL staffing standard does not adequately address the growing needs of our long-term English learners, LTELs, which currently includes 55% of fifth graders in the complexity of language integration within core content classes. Additionally, the dual identified population stands at 19%, further increasing in structural demands.

[01:42:02] To improve student outcomes and align with best practices, we're proposing reducing the average teacher student ratio from the current 1 to 29 to an enhanced ratio of 1 to 27, ensuring more individualized support and equitable access to language development. This enhancement offsets the reduction of the negative 21.5 FTEs in our elementary school EL staff and I believe that was referenced in a budget question that was shared with you earlier this evening.

[01:42:38] This request reallocates identified FTEs that are now funded through our staffing standard for our dual language immersion schools. We are recommending focusing on the enhancement of the elementary library staffing standard, considering how these positions fit into the elementary master schedule, support other initiatives, such as reading comprehension and literacy.

[01:43:02] Working with the budget office and school leadership, we identified efficiencies in our dual language immersion staffing, so we no longer needed to budget the standalone teacher positions, and the program could instead be supported directly through the elementary school general education teaching staffer. standard this reallocation is not cost neutral as librarians are on a slightly longer calendar than licensed teachers and hence the the slight cost for the change enhancing our library staffing standard moves moves us closer to the aspirational staffing standards that will allow librarians to

[01:43:32] be scheduled as specials our investment in the character strong curriculum will deliver a strong return by supporting student achievement improving school climate and strengthening staff effectiveness. Character Strong provides a division-wide resource for targeted interventions for behavioral and mentor health needs, as well as character development. It's focused on equipping

[01:44:06] our students with essential skills such as coping strategies, emotional regulation, building positive relationships, and problem solving that directly support academic success and engagement. Next, Next, our investment in Second Step, a social and emotional curriculum for the elementary level also has yielded measurable benefits by strengthening student behavior, increasing instructional time, and supporting academic success for our elementary students across LCPS.

[01:44:42] Second Step focuses on building the foundational skills of empathy, problem-solving, and interpersonal All which are essential for learning, readiness, and long-time student success. Overall, Character Strong and Second Step are strategic investments that advance student well-being, instructional

effectiveness, and operational efficiency while supporting safer, more inclusive, and more productive learning settings across LCPS.

**[01:45:18]** This next enhancement also is related to EL teachers. This particular one is at the middle school. We are proposing the addition of eight discretionary middle school English learner FTEs with the measurable outcome being tied to the access progress rate to 58% by reducing teacher-to-student ratio for schools in the identified enhanced staffing.

**[01:45:47]** We appreciate the board's recent adoption of a duly identified staffing standard which provides additional staffing to middle and high schools based on the number of duly identified students at each school. While the middle and high school standards differ, both are grounded in student proficiency levels.

**[01:46:03]** We are currently evaluating an update to the middle school staffing standard so that it aligns with the high school model to achieve a lower teacher to student ratio and better address student needs. In the meantime, the staff recommended for this year eight FTEs for transitional support.

**[01:46:19]** Matching the middle school standard to the high school standard, which was discussed on Tuesday night, would generate an additional 22.5 FTEs inclusive of those eight FTEs. So it would be an additional 14.5 FTEs on top of that.

**[01:46:38]** Now that we've shared information regarding expanded academic offerings and opportunities, we'll shift to focus on additional student supports. Again, we'll start with ongoing investments and shift to new investments proposed in the SEON.

**[01:46:58]** This slide covers a number of positions that will support schools directly that exist currently and we are looking to expand in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The first being math resource teachers.

**[01:47:15]** Math resource teachers address the division's need to strengthen math instruction and accelerate student learning in schools with identified gaps. By dedicating 50% of their time to coaching teachers and 50% to providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support interventions, these roles ensure both instructional quality and targeted support for students.

**[01:47:33]** Assigning one math resource teacher per school increases focus and responsiveness, leading to improved SOL performance, strong classroom practices, and more equitable outcomes across LCPS. The Department of Teaching and Learning has identified 10 schools where data indicates a math resource teacher will lead to increased achievement in mathematics for students.

**[01:47:52]** Currently, we have 14 math resource teachers in our base budget, but on top of that, 28 schools have identified this need through differentiated or flexible staffing, showing the value principals are placing on this position. Additionally, we are asking for the expansion of our division instructional coaches.

**[01:48:12]** Instructional coaches support individual schools in implementing instructional priorities, support school improvement plan, And instructional coaches are placed based on data in collaboration with our partners in the level offices and school leadership. Currently, we have 32 division coaches.

**[01:48:31]** This enhancement will allow us to meet needs of an additional eight schools. And it is a priority for our principals in terms of support at the school level. Our ongoing investment in five

additional specialized instructional facilitators for programs represents a strategic high-impact response to our continued growth in special education.

[01:48:58] With the increased intensity in student needs and the expansion of specialized instructional programs across LLCPS, As our special education count rises, we are seeing a growing number of students with complex instructional, behavioral, and social and emotional needs that require expert, consistent, and high-quality program implementation.

[01:49:25] Our CIFs, as they are called, provide critical instructional leadership by coaching teachers, strengthening interventions, and ensuring fidelity of implementation of IEPs.

[01:49:42] As a point of reference, LCPS currently hosts 234 programs serving students with disabilities on the autism spectrum, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. We have 77 programs for early childhood special education and 16 programs for students with emotional disabilities with a mighty team of 11 CIFs currently.

[01:50:09] This next slide speaks to two strategic reallocations. First, we are proposing to move the division instructional coaches and resource teachers, specifically in mathematics and science, from a 217-day calendar to a 207-day calendar.

[01:50:36] This adjustment aligns these roles with other school-based staff funded through flexible or differentiated staffing. Currently, all school-based coaches and resource teachers who are assigned to a school through differentiated or flexible staffing are on a 207-day calendar.

[01:50:51] A key priority of the Department of Teaching and Learning is ensuring that school-based coaches and interventionists and resource teachers receive the same high-quality professional learning, resources, and communication as division assigned staff. This proposed calendar helps streamline existing structures while maintaining strong instructional support, cost savings, offset expansion of positions to support other schools.

[01:51:15] Additionally, we are recommending the reallocation of the aerospace content specialist to a science outreach specialist. This position would expand real world science learning by coordinating field experiences and leading environmental literacy initiatives.

[01:51:30] This position will serve as the primary liaison with the new Northern Virginia Science Center, which is now under construction, supporting plans to leverage the facility for expanded STEM resources and student experiences. Success will be measured by increasing student participation, integration of environmental literacy, sustainable partnerships that enhance both instruction and teacher capacity.

[01:51:52] This position will move from a 12-month position to an 11-month position, hence the cost savings. This slide addresses our efforts in enhancing access to student opportunities through the elimination of fees for students, which is a long-standing priority of the school board.

[01:52:17] First, we are proposing eliminating fees in middle school and high school visual and performing arts courses. This investment increases the allotment for visual and performing arts classes by 60% to fully cover the cost of required materials that are sometimes passed on to families currently.

[01:52:34] By removing fees, LCPS ensures equitable access for students regardless of financial circumstance, while supporting robust participation in band, orchestra, chorus, theater, and visual arts programs. Success of this will be measured by the elimination of student fees, increased enrollment, and

retention in arts pathways, and stronger alignment with LCPS commitment to equitable, high-quality learning experiences.

[01:53:00] It should be noted that these fee reductions are strictly related to course enrollment. Student fees for co-curricular and extracurricular activities continue to be evaluated and will be addressed in future budget years sorry we are also proposing the the extension of the removal of CTE fees that we started last year within CTE we have identified a number of fees at the academies allowed in MATA program and so we are proposing the elimination of the fees for CTE programming at MATA and finally we are expanding our use of

[01:53:37] differentiated allotments in partnership with business and finance high schools Schools will be allowed to use differentiated allotments to offset costs related to student activity trips and competitions based on economic needs. Families would contact their activity sponsor to discuss their circumstances.

[01:53:53] The activity sponsor will then work with school administration to provide support. Our investment in a Coordinator of Threat Assessment Services represents a critical high return strategy to strengthen school safety, ensure fidelity to mandated threat assessment protocols and to mitigate risk across LCPS. During the 24-25 school year, LCPS conducted more than 2,000 threat assessments, underscoring both the scale and the urgency of this work. The threat assessment process is a

[01:54:30] proactive, student-centered, prevention-focused process that is designed to identify and address potential risk before they escalate into serious incidents. A dedicated coordinator will ensure consistent application of evidence-based protocols, timely case overview, and appropriate follow-up supports to schools and families.

[01:54:59] Our investment in five MANT trainers provides a strong and measurable outcomes for LCPS, making sure that we provide timely, consistent, and high-quality delivery of our required MANT training across all schools and departments.

[01:55:23] This investment strengthens staff safety, protects students, and ensures compliance with state regulations and IEP requirements as well as Division Policy 5345.

[01:55:40] MANT is a critical component of crisis prevention, de-escalation, and trauma informed practices. By having a division-led team we will ensure consistent implementation and fidelity of training, thus lowering the risk of staff injury, student harm, and improper use of physical interventions across LCPS. Recognizing the importance of expanding our staff at the school

[01:56:17] level, we also want to ensure that this staff is supported in implementing quality teaching for our English learners. The investment of an additional facilitators in our elementary and secondary instructional EL offices will reduce facilitator to school ratio by 35%, enabling more frequent coaching cycles and greater instructional impact. The addition of a content specialist in our professional learning office for English learners will increase our professional learning delivery capacity. The number of teachers trained in high leverage

[01:56:51] practices such as QTEL and incorporation of ELD standards will increase by 20 to 25 percent based on the addition of this content specialist in terms of the number of trainings and coaching cycles we would be able to offer. The community schools coordinator is a school-based position shared between Guilford and Sully Elementary Schools that supports the implementation of the Virginia Department of

Education community schools framework. The position began in April of 2025 and is being requested as a new investment as it is currently funded through the VDOE Community

**[01:57:30]** School Implementation and Development Grant. The role advances four core areas, addressing student and family basic needs, supporting emotional and mental health, increasing student engagement and motivation, and strengthening family and community partnerships. The coordinator works closely with school staff to ensure students and families facing financial or other barriers have access to critical school-based and community resources, enabling students to fully engage in learning and thrive academically.

**[01:57:59]** A couple of examples of the impact this position has had since April. Conducted a needs assessment at both schools using input from families, staff, and students. Aligned the identified priorities and goals to each school's school improvement plan.

**[01:58:17]** And established a community school leadership team at each school to guide implementation. Since implementation launched, they have launched robust after-school enrichment programs as an attendance and engagement strategy, and they've increased family leadership and engagement, for example, quadrupling Sully's PTO participation.

**[01:58:38]** These are just a couple of examples of the work already being done. For the 2026-27 school year, the Office of Athletics and Student Activities is proposing to add three additional sports to our high school for our high school students.

**[01:58:59]** Data collected over time has shown that students involved in athletics and extracurricular activities demonstrate higher GPAs and improved attendance. For the 2024-25 school year, students that participated in athletics had an average GPA of 3.71 as compared to our non-athletic GPA of 3.15.

**[01:59:24]** To expand access for athletic opportunities, we are proposing the addition of boys' volleyball, girls' wrestling, and girls' flag football, all three of which have been advocated for by students and parents and board members.

**[01:59:44]** Girls' flag football is one of the fastest growing sports in girls' athletics, with participation in school programs expanding rapidly across the country, and especially here in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area.

**[02:00:02]** Local data shows that teams in these areas are increasing year over year, and the Washington Commanders, in partnership with LCPS, will support this opportunity for our female athletes by assisting in the provision of uniforms, equipment, and partial funding for our coach stipends.

**[02:00:23]** We believe that the girls' flag football will achieve VHSL emerging sports status in the near future. Our next sport is girls' wrestling, which is another rapidly growing sport across the country and is now a VHSL-sanctioned program.

**[02:00:45]** By offering girls wrestling, we will support female athletes to compete in a sport designed specifically for them, providing gender equity and supporting the Title IX compliance for expanding opportunities for females in sports.

**[02:01:02]** This pathway will allow for female athletes to participate, compete, and excel. Our third sport is boys volleyball. Introducing Boys Volleyball will enable LCPS high schoolers to participate in the Virginia High School League sanctioned competitions.

[02:01:25] Currently, Boys Volleyball is one of only two VHSL athletic programs not offered by LCPS, limiting opportunities for student engagement and competitive growth. By expanding our athletic program, we are providing pathways for our students to engage in teamwork, leadership, and other developmental opportunities that will enrich their high school experience.

[02:01:56] So now I'm going to switch to school leadership staffing standards for our assistant principals and deans. The Department of School Leadership is proposing a strategic shift in school-based administrative staffing.

[02:02:13] Our current standards rely heavily on student enrollment versus student need and have not been evaluated since workloads have shifted to account for increased responsibilities in instructional leadership, family and community engagement, student safety protocols, and tiered interventions. Specifically, our assistant principals have become managers of student behavior, administrators of division assessments, and at some schools, leaders of special education where their days can be fully consumed with meetings.

[02:02:50] The increase in demands of the responsibilities of our assistant principals has outpaced the current staffing model and changes are warranted. The request to lower the staffing standard of assistant principals across the levels as it relates to student enrollment will allow our assistant principals to have a greater focus on the monitoring of instruction, reduce the percentage of time per assistant principal spent on tasks such as testing, discipline, reporting, and address the disparity between schools based on student enrollment.

[02:03:30] Additionally, we propose an additional assistant principal for our Title I served schools. In these high-needs environments, administrative workload is driven by program complexity rather than student enrollment alone.

[02:03:46] These schools require more intensive and data-driven instruction to close achievement gaps and typically have higher teacher turnover an additional assistant principal at all levels allows for instruction to be a priority ensuring frequent frequent coaching and growth producing feedback for our teachers during the 2024-25 school year an additional assistant principal was provided for our title one serve schools at the middle and high schools at the elementary level deans were staffed at those identified schools for fiscal year 27 we are proposing that these

[02:04:26] title one serve schools be staffed with an assistant principal which accounts for 11 of our elementary schools the additional positions are a result of adjusting the staffing standard ratio there is also a proposal to adjust adjust the staffing standard for deans at the elementary level to provide support to schools that still have needs but do not qualify for an additional assistant principal based on the staffing standard at the middle school level we are also proposing an adjustment to the staffing standard for assistant principals. Currently

[02:05:03] at the middle school level, the staffing standard for assistant principals is based on student enrollment, while the staffing standard for deans is one per grade level, regardless of the number of students, which has created some inequities across our middle schools. Since these staffing standards were created, the demands have increased exponentially for our assistant principals. The proposed staffing standard would provide additional assistant principals based on student enrollment while adjusting the Dean staffing standards from a standalone position of one per grade level. We recognize that grade level support is valued and with the increased

[02:05:43] responsibilities of our assistant principals we want to move toward a discretionary model that allows principals to have flexibility and use these FTEs to support these specific needs of their schools. The Department of school leadership will continue to collaborate with the middle school principals to develop a plan of what this flexibility will look like. And lastly, as with both the elementary and middle school levels, we are proposing a shift in the staffing standard for assistant principals at the high school level,

[02:06:17] lowering the student to administrator ratio. As issues that face our students become more complex, so does the job of the assistant principal at the high school level. In addition to being instructional leaders of some of the largest staffs in the division, these leaders are also responsible for tasks such as home visits, collaborating with our unified mental health teams, providing coverage for evening events and activities, managing student discipline, being over operational management, and assessment accountability and accreditation. These responsibilities are just a few that are required to

[02:06:57] ensure the safety of our students in compliance with mandates. Additionally, as we expand instructional programs and pathways at our comprehensive high schools, having additional support on the leadership team as an instructional leader will help support the fidelity and implementation of these programs.

[02:07:17] Thank you board members, and this concludes the presentation of continuing to invest in our empowered students with the Department of School Leadership, Academics, Teaching and learning and student services thank you everyone for the presentation school board members are we ready for questions miss Riccardi I'm gonna have some other questions but the one thing is as I'm kind of flipping through the book while you guys are doing the presentation so I see on the assistant principals that you were just for the high schools you were just talking about that you have on the slide that it's 14 and I could be by the way completely wrong on the citation of this so that's why I'm asking for the correction on page

[02:07:57] 159 I see it says 18 so I'm just trying to figure out if I'm looking at the right numbers and which one would be the right one yes mr. Cardi thank you for that question so after the staffing standards were published we had some ongoing conversations to go back and look at our model and the needs of the schools and so we did have an adjustment between what was printed and what is presented. Yes, ma'am. So what's presented is what you're looking at. Okay, great. Thank you.

[02:08:37] Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair. I had four questions. As far as the EL students that we had last year, can you give me the numbers this year versus last year? Do you have those numbers? Are you doing away with some EL high school teachers, or is that what I saw? So I can get you those numbers. I don't have them in front of me, but there is a reduction due to the number of students in the in the high school staffing that was part of the staffing conversation on Tuesday and I believe it's in the budget question there's a there's a

[02:09:14] table that captures that and I'll send these to you as well how many students are currently in rise and I saw you know I knew we hired clinicians and that sort of thing and you I guess want to keep what we already have. We already have one clinician there, one instructor. If you could just tell me how many people we have there right now. Thank you, Mrs. Griffiths, for that question. We currently have one principal, one clinical coordinator who is a licensed school social

[02:09:50] worker. Then we have the four core content area teachers, so English, math, science, and social studies. We have a school counselor. We have a student assistance specialist. We have a 0.5 school

social worker. So what you see as an ongoing investment is to maintain that current staff because our grant funding through the Virginia Department of Education ends in September of 2026. Our enrollment has ebbed and flowed over the course of this current school year.

[02:10:23] Leading up to winter break, we had 21 students. Returning back from winter break, we have 11. several pending intakes. Thank you and to maintain the program how many do you need to have? How many students? To maintain the program we have said that we need a minimum of five and we don't want to go above a maximum of 25 given the nature of what they are working through being an active recovery. I thought we were just starting out with five. I didn't know that was the minimum. It has

[02:10:58] grown for sure okay and Access Academy how many students currently there and that's at a Potomac Falls right yes I believe we are I don't want to misspeak I want to say we're at 42 the last time I checked but I don't know if that is a change so and that is just at one grade level so we're we're building the next cohort with 10th graders I know Miss Clark is watching and she says that is accurate. Oh, okay. How many students in the Academy of Global and Linguistics, and are we still

[02:11:38] partnering with Qatar on that program, if you could just clarify for me? But how many students? So that program is not open. We're in the planning year. We now have 300 students that have expressed interest. We have 100 seats that would be available, 50 in the leadership and 50 the business pathway so we're we feel good about the interest in that and while in the proposal um the qatar foundation was listed as a potential partner we don't have any existing nor have we had a partnership with that with that foundation thank you very much i might have another question but

[02:12:13] thank you vice chair donahue thank you very much madam chair thank you dr ellis miss richardson mr sullivan and ms mitchell for the presentation uh i actually don't have any questions i just wanted to say thank you about the sports i'm very excited uh that has been as many of my colleagues possibly all my colleagues know um this has been an issue of significant interest and outreach from various pockets of the community and i'm really excited to see that we have this opportunity to expand offerings that are available to our students thank you for putting in the work

[02:12:47] for us to do that miss labelle thank you madam chair if i may go back to slide 14 Dr. Richardson, on that slide, you have measurable outcomes, and they're for things such as character development, positive school culture and academic success, and enhanced student engagement.

[02:13:11] How do you plan on measuring those, and are the measurements you're using valid and reliable? Yes, Mrs. LaBelle, thank you for that question. So our MTSS team and our SEL teams currently oversee this work.

[02:13:26] It's important to note that both Character Strong and Second Step were previously grant-funded, and those grants are running out, which is why we're asking for them to be covered by local funds. We are monitoring implementation across all of our schools. We are collecting data.

[02:13:42] We meet with school-based teams, and then we're analyzing, looking at that, looking at how many students at schools are referred for interventions, tracking their progress towards those intervention goals, looking at our discipline data and also looking at attendance so those are the factors that go into us sort of looking at how are our efforts to build character and that those problem-solving skills and those critical thinking skills how are they helping our students to maintain within the classroom setting okay but we don't have any data on validity or liability yes we do and I

[02:14:20] can work with the MTSS team to make sure that we can provide that for for the board okay thank you absolutely mr pepper thank you madam chair uh just two quick questions one to piggyback off of vice chair donahue i really just want to say this sports thing is awesome um i do have a question on the girls flag football particularly as it relates to the input from the washington commanders how long is that partnership lasting or is it just one year and is there going to be a funding increase on that program after we get through the first year

[02:14:51] I can follow up to make sure I get these specifics in terms of exactly how long. I do know that when we had initial talks, it was to definitely get it as a startup to begin it.

[02:15:08] And I'll look to see if it's going to be in a phased approach so that I do believe eventually we will become fully responsible for the costs associated with it. But that was something that they were offering to help us get it off the ground. Thank you so much. And then my other question is unrelated, but it's about the additional assistant principals that we're bringing in at both the middle and high school level as, I know it wasn't in this, but as we look to kind of phase out the dean program, particularly at the middle school, we're not phasing it out.

[02:15:37] I know you mentioned something about it, so I want to kind of know where we are with that. So, in the staffing standards, when it was struck through, it's because we are trying to work to no longer tie it to a staffing standard of one per grade level. Because what we're seeing is, regardless of the enrollment of schools, you can have schools that are, one is twice as large as another, and they have the same staffing standards.

[02:16:02] So what we are looking at is more of a discretionary model, and I've been meeting with some of our middle school principals to look at how to do things differently and make sure that we provide the supports for them. For example, if they're saying that they really need a special education dean, but they already have three academic deans, how can we make some shifts to provide them with the needs that they have at their school?

[02:16:30] Really knew right where I was going with that. was Mitchell, didn't you? So I love this idea of bringing in some help for special education in particular. So thank you so much. I don't have a follow-up question now. Mrs. Griffiths? Thank you, Madam Chair. And just to piggyback on my question on RISE, you said 21 students, now we're down to 11. How much for the total, what's the total cost for the program, if you don't mind?

[02:16:57] I might have seen it somewhere, but just clarify for me. Thank you. I'll have to work with business and finance on that absolute total cost of operations for RISE, and I can certainly get that to you. Ms. Riccardi. Thank you so much.

[02:17:13] I just want to thank you guys again for this, and thanks for all the follow-up. I'm in the middle of going through the answers to the questions, so I appreciate that very much. And, you know, again, as a former Division I volleyball player too, super excited about sports in general, and specifically our boys' volleyball.

[02:17:31] It's a great program, so thank you for that. I'm going to just reiterate, I think, my general philosophy on what I'm going to be looking for in the budget moving forward. I love the fact that we have so many wide-ranging programs and options and learning opportunities and experiences for our students.

[02:17:53] And I want to make sure that we can honor that to the best of our ability. but I'm also extremely concerned that we have a population of students, especially in our Title I schools, who need a lot of additional support. And like I said at the last meeting, I am really looking for us to fully fund the supports for our English learner programs.

[02:18:15] We have got to get these students up to speed as quickly as possible. I had a great opportunity today to go to Sterling Middle School with Ms. Chernoff, and it was an amazing thing to be able to see the reading program there. I'm super excited about that, but we need that in all of our schools, especially where our English learners are really struggling right now, and so I want to just let in full transparency.

[02:18:40] That is going to be a really big focus when we look at the budget for me. I know that's not going to be in the 26 budget, obviously, but as we're preparing for 27, I would really like to see us fully fund not only the supports for our students but for our teachers and the training. opportunities that they're going to need to be able to support our students. So thanks for all this and it's a lot of information to kind of go through but I'll be going through that over the weekend since we'll probably have some snowy days coming up. We'll have some extra time but thank you guys again for your presentation. Mr. Svensson. Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you all for the presentation and thank you all for your work on expanding these academic opportunities and these student supports are really incredible so thank

[02:19:20] you. I am excited to hear about all the interest in the Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies, and I wanted to know how that, if we have a hundred seats and 300 interested students, how that compares to some of our other academies in terms of the admissions rate. Is that on par, or are there fewer or more seats available? Your question is about how does it, how is it comparing to interest in other other programs? Yeah, I suppose my question is more with the the admit rate, in terms of how many of our students will be able to participate in

[02:19:57] that kind of program compared to our other academies, and I'm happy to, I have lots of questions I'm sure I'll follow up in writing, so happy to follow up that way, too. We are in the middle of our window, and so the 300 is kind of like a period of time, and so we'll, we do a full report on the admissions process, usually in the fall after the process is done, and we are seeing a healthy interest in all of our programs, and so, you know at about 300 it'll probably be in that ballpark at the end of the day and by admitting 100 students at about a third of the folks that get in there are definitely programs such as our aos

[02:20:37] and our aet programs advanced aet and even mata where there's um even more of an interest and so less admittance um but i could kind of give you we could probably i could give you a historical snapshot and we'll probably end up in a similar place with agls being new um it is a geographically unique being on the eastern side of the county and so I think we're also kind of curious how it's gonna it's gonna work out but we do have healthy interests we were confident that the program is going to be fully enrolled yes I'm not surprised I would have loved that program as a student in LCPS so thank

[02:21:16] you and I also am very excited about the increased athletic opportunities and I was just curious miss Mitchell what is the other sport other than boys volleyball that VHSL has that we do not. Crew. We don't have it as a sport that is offered at all of our high schools. It is considered a legacy sport but it would be crew and I did get a response the commanders are willing to support for three years. Thank you Miss Mitchell. Well as a former rower I would be excited to see crew added into the mix. Thank you. Mrs. Griffiths. To piggyback

[02:21:55] on mr. Spenson are you you know he was questioning the 300 potential students are you looking at a lottery system for that are you how are you going to evaluate who gets into the program and who doesn't because when you just from past when we have these programs a lot of students are very upset they try and get in and they can't they're not chosen I specifically we will need to know exactly how you're gonna go through that process to single out who gets to

[02:22:29] enjoy the program. So when a special program is proposed to the board the admissions process is included in the proposal and the admissions process for the Global Linguistics Studies Academy is a lottery based on a set of criteria and students that meet that criteria are eligible for the lottery. I'm just curious about the criteria what the criteria is going to be I believe it is since it's a entering in ninth grade it's successful completion of eighth

[02:23:01] grade and so that that is a criteria thank you well I'd like to take a moment to thank you too I'm very excited to see really a lot of the experience that we've had and a lot of the feedback we've received not just from the community but also from teachers and staff have been incorporated into this investment and I'm just really so pleased to see the investments that you're making in our students and I'm incredibly excited to hear at the level

[02:23:39] of response for the academies of global linguistics that I thought might be a little niche and clearly there's a demand and so I'm really quite excited that we're seeing that much interest and then very very excited to see the MANT trainers expanded. I have heard from so many on my school visits, school leaders and staff say how impactful that training is and how really when we're applying that fidelity to our program, I think we're going to be able to really support some of the changes to policy that we've made.

[02:24:16] And I'm just really like wanted to call that out. Very pleased just to see that. I'm also very committed to the significant support that we're applying to our English language students I think that's going to go a long way in addressing any existing gaps and making sure that we can take the time now to ensure that all of our students have the ability to learn and achieve and to provide those supports that are necessary and then again like everybody else to follow on

[02:24:50] with all my colleagues right the sports are so exciting right like the community is going to be thrilled and i mean right like we've heard from so many families and i just i want to acknowledge the fact that you took the feedback from the community and addressed it so um thank you with that are there any other questions from the school board no all right seeing no further questions the january 22 22nd 2026 loudon county school board fiscal year 27 operating budget work session is now adjourned thank you for coming and please drive home safely



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