



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Loudoun County Public Schools, School Board Retreat to include Closed Session, Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Date Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Place LCPS Administration Building / School Board Room, Ashburn, Virginia
Length 2h 31m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1166045288?rel=0>

Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-12. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:33] Good afternoon everyone thank you for being here today I call to order this February 18th 2026 school board retreat in terms of our plans for today my hope is that we will be able to ground ourselves through this conversation given that we are effectively a new board it seems important to discuss expectations and norms and to come to a consensus on some of the technical aspects of our working relationship so with that I would open

[00:01:13] the floor to school board member comments if you would like to share some of your ideas for how you hope that we work together and and perhaps what motivates you to be here this is Griffiths Thank You madam chair this is just you're asking for comments basically how we can work together with

[00:01:47] the meetings and that sort of thing and give suggestions um really i'm what i'm looking for is an opportunity for us to sort of discuss our expectations for how our relationship will work in terms of how we're working together as a board and what i'm hoping for is that we would be able to sort of discover some guiding principles and perhaps a north star that guides our work together here is board so for example I'm happy to start right like one of the things that's important to me as a school board member is that we focus on holding

[00:02:26] education and the welfare of our students at the heart of all the decisions that we make and that we work together with respect and courtesy Dr.

[00:02:43] Rasheed thank you chair Chandler I think this is a great opportunity I guess to kind of open the floor for a discussion I think that it would well I I think that it would be really helpful that during board meetings, and again, I don't know how this would be done, but if we could kind of always recenter ourselves and always maintain that focus that it's all about the students, and I throw myself in there too.

[00:03:05] So I don't know if there's some sort of exercise we could do or workshop from time to time we could do that could make us kind of be focused on it. I'm not negating that none of us are focused, but sometimes there's topics that kind of make us go astray and I to kind of go astray so I always need to kind of need that reinforcement thank you Jack mr. Bell thank you madam chair I think that

[00:03:44] as a board we were elected because school boards are supposed to be nonpartisan and I would hope that we would approach any of the issues that we have focusing as dr. she'd said on students and not you know party politics or anything like that I think that we were elected as individuals we owe our allegiance to our constituents and that that should be where we are focused

[00:04:14] thank you miss LaBelle mr. pepper thank you madam chair I'm gonna say this is one of the newer members of this board as many have had the opportunity to serve several years I think one I agree with what miss LaBelle said I agree with what dr. she says she had said about making sure our focus is on the students and doing what's best for the students one of the things that I do think that we need to center ourselves on is that we're not as a board we're not individuals

[00:04:50] right we're not always going to agree on everything but the way that we interact with each other the way that we work with each other the way that we treat each other really does need to be respectful and kind and honest and transparent to approach every conversation we have whether one-on-one or as a whole board with both kind of where we're coming from but also respecting that everyone has their own background their own experiences their own difference of opinion that's very important thank you

[00:05:24] sure enough thank you madam chair I'm looking forward to this more of a day of listening and just hearing where people are at on the various topics I think the topics that are on here will help guide some of the you know beliefs that we have for me the number one thing for a board to function well is to have good relationships I think mr. pepper said it well you know we're not always gonna to agree but a mutual respect that we all were equally elected to be here and represent our communities is really important it goes without saying that students are at the center I think but sure I'll reiterate that and

[00:06:01] additionally I hope that we can figure out what the best way to communicate is because I think in terms of a board that starts to wander off the path is a board that's not communicating and a board that operates in more of a blind environment then making sure that everyone is read in on what what's important and what's coming up and kind of knowing where we stand I realize our quorum rules make that challenging at times but I think that that was something in the last two years that we really were striving for and so I'm

[00:06:32] hoping to reestablish that foundation today thank you I sure Donahue thank you madam chair I echo the sentiments of my colleagues and only wanted to add to slash reinforce after two years on the board I have been I have been pleasantly surprised by

[00:07:04] the working relationships that I've been able to to forge doing this work and with with people who I disagree with on sometimes on policy issues sometimes on what I view as moral ethical issues and

as well as on political issues because as many people have already pointed out we are here to do what is in the best interest of the students and staff of Loudoun County and I have like I said

[00:07:40] been pleasantly surprised that when we are able to focus on that and to give each other the space to hear each other out and assume good intentions on the part of our colleagues have open listening ears and try to reach compromises it's gone in many ways better than I thought it would and so I look forward to continuing to work on that myself with the new board members and as well as

[00:08:14] with all of our returning board members as well to continue to work together to prioritize the best interests of Loudoun County thank you any further comments all right well as part of this table setting exercise I thought it would be important for us to look at some of our foundational documents and to that extent I have asked staff to sort of speak just briefly to an overview and then I hope that we can have a conversation for how we intend to work together so

[00:08:52] with that we'll move on um to item 3.01 our board norms and policy review and mr allen will kick us off thank you chair chandler policy 1035 entitled school board norms protocols and violation was adopted in april 2021 it sets forth the general norms for school board members to include social media norms protocols to include expectations for how to respond to various communications or requests from parents and guardians and the media communications with one another committee chair

[00:09:27] reports visiting schools professional development and then lastly sets forth the processes and procedures for addressing when school board members are alleged to have violated any of the norms or protocols school board policies lcp regulations or law the lamp committee reviewed this policy last fall and it's my understanding that at its december 9th 2025 meeting the committee voted to move this policy out of the committee to the full school board so that it could be taken up with the board as an information item with the caveat or request that the school board chair hold

[00:10:02] the item in December so that it could be discussed in a work session after the new school board was seated and a new chair is elected. So this is the first opportunity to do that. My understanding is that the idea of presenting this item today is for the school board to have a dialogue about its norms and protocols as they currently exist in policy 1035 and to determine if there are other expectations, norms, protocols that the school board has an interest in memorializing in this policy.

[00:10:31] One item that Ms. Chernoff raised during her tenure on the LAMP committee was whether the board has an interest to memorialize the duties and roles of board leadership either in policy 1035 or in a separate distinct policy.

[00:10:48] In response to such requests, staff incorporated the red lines that you'll see on lines 129 to 432, which are about seven pages or so. These are compiled from other policies and governing documents to include the annual resolution, annual organizational resolution.

[00:11:07] Additionally, you'll see red lines for Section B, Professional Development on lines 78 to 88 which incorporates language from policy 2140 which is orientation and professional development for new school board members as that policy was recently revised by the school board as some of you will recall on december 16th 2025 to focus solely on the orientation and professional development for new school board members rather than including continuing professional developments as required under Virginia law.

[00:11:39] Reviewing this with fresh eyes, that language pre-exists in policy 1035, albeit in a paraphrased form in lines 491 to 497, which is under section E8 protocols. So the board may want to consider consolidating that language as it moves forward.

[00:11:56] With that, I'll turn the floor back to you, Chair Chandler, for further board discussion. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Allen. Jump in. Ms. Chernoff. I'm happy to kick this off since a lot of these changes were at my request and then with the approval of the lamp committee which i very much appreciated um for me as a new board member two years ago as we were kind of navigate we were kind of you know we were all new so learning the policies and the structures that we have especially as it relates to what the best practices across the state or in our neighboring districts was was something that

[00:12:34] kept coming up frequently and one of the things that would come up is you know in other policies as listed here there was lots of responsibilities of the board chair it seemed to me that were being mentioned sporadically throughout and for me that was hard to keep track of what is leadership look like what is the accountability there and so i was very grateful to staff for doing the leg work which was extensive it turned out to be more extensive than i even anticipated having all of those roles and responsibilities in one place just so that we could see them so i'm appreciative of that i don't know i would i really don't have a personal preference on whether we create another

[00:13:12] policy out of this one this makes it quite lengthy but i do like having it all in one place i think it provides transparency for the community for the board if you're a new board member you know what that role would be and what what the expectations are also if you are not the chair there is a lot here about how school board members interface with the chair and so i think that that's important to know in terms of accountability as well so i would like for us to stick with having them all in one place but the form of that i'm i don't really have a preference as i was reading through it again this

[00:13:47] weekend one of the things that i mentioned in committee and i feel like still is lacking here in terms of the duties is what is the communication expectations back to the board and when is the board solicited for i guess consensus feedback would be the best way to say it we talk a lot in this board about the will of the board and of course that remains true for a majority how are those opinions solicited throughout these various processes i think a blanket statement about how communication is expected and turned around would be helpful it is something i feel that is missing

[00:14:23] thank you mr carty thank you so much so um i also went through this kind of and took my time reading through it this weekend and i think it was really helpful to see everything in one place um and and part of this is you know understanding the difference between public and private boards and non-profit boards and whatnot and what the chair roles do and it differs depending on i guess the

[00:15:03] format and the structure of the organization as a whole um i agree that um you know in this case and this is you know again just my opinion on this um you know we are nine duly elected individuals and my thought um is really that you know the board chair is here to facilitate the meeting and help set the agenda and whatnot but i feel like there's an enormous number of things in here that i'm uncomfortable with and i i look at this through kind of a kind of the both sides of the

[00:15:42] coin thing i get um why some of these things are probably in here it makes some of it i i get the gist of it I think I would like to see this be a much more collaborative scenario and in that art you know and this isn't you specifically but just as a function of the board chair role and the vice chair role that we as a board are read in on on everything I mean in the sense that I don't see

[00:16:18] the board chair being a off doing their own thing separate from the rest of the board and so I agree that I think there's some pieces around that I think there are just some accountability pieces for sure in here that need to get tightened up and that would be an interesting conversation I don't know how we're gonna if we're gonna go through this piece by piece or if we're just gonna look at this just as a whole this is coming back to committee or is this going back to the board where are we in the process for this is that a curiosity really that's part of the conversation we're having today right I could absolutely see it going back to committee and giving the committee an opportunity to decide if it should be

[00:16:55] its own standing policy having some conversations around the actual items and then having it come before the full board but as the past chair of LA&P it was you know my goal was to clear the docket so that when the new school board started there would be a clean slate and so that really was and having our conversation I and I will say I really have appreciated having this all together in one place I could find it very difficult to have to try and go and find

[00:17:31] in every policy where all of these things lie but to that end you know I think it is the will of the board and the reason why it's on the agenda today so we can decide what the best path forward is thank you madam chair just to follow up on some of this Riccardi's comments I if it is extensive a lot of it for me in being on again being here for two years a lot of it's just a function of efficiency making sure that things get done because if I can speak we have a lot going on all the time I think you

[00:18:08] guys probably realize that too so for me it's not a matter I mean we elect the chair and you know that's part of this role and the vice chair although the vice chairs rules are shockingly minimal in my opinion but that's I guess that's how it is but for me so I want to speak to that efficiency a little bit and the respect I have for that process I think for me the layer that is important as we go through each one again is just that how were we solicited for just staying in the loop you know on all of those things I mean not necessarily signing off on attendance records or you know academic records for the whole year but because we get those in presentations but just those those decisions and meetings that

[00:18:47] are had that are you know specifically between the superintendent or the chair or legal counsel that we are constantly, which is an additional kind of bullet point for you if you're the chair, but to make sure that it is board corporate, that we are really making sure that we are checking that box and it doesn't become a routine of, oh, yeah, I did that, but I didn't circle back.

[00:19:09] So I think having that accountability in the policy would help me. The individual items, having been through this process, feel appropriate to me in terms of the level of getting the work done in a division this size. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. Vice Chair Donahue.

[00:19:26] Thank you, Madam Chair. Following on to some of Ms. Chernoff's comments, for efficiency reasons, for making sure that work is getting done, as has been said, it does make sense to consolidate a lot of this decision-making into one person.

[00:19:45] And I think related to the question of communication between the chair and the rest of the board, while it does make sense for those responsibilities frequently to fall to one person, the rest of us are also presumed not just to have approved of them, but to know about them.

[00:20:01] And so we do get questions from our constituents, from community members about, did you know that XYZ happened? Did you approve XYZ happening? And it just, when there isn't robust communication, it can put individual members in, I will speak only for myself, I guess.

[00:20:26] I have had moments where I have been in what I felt was a less than ideal position, having, you know, trying to answer a question from a community member when I didn't know the answer because it was a decision that had been made that I just didn't know anything about.

[00:20:44] Not trying to get out of the lane, right, and not trying to, like, insert myself beyond what was appropriate for my role, but just wanting to have, as has been said, like, the insight into what decisions are being made.

[00:21:01] And I do think that that has to be balanced with how do you figure out the best way to do that communication, writing with how much frequency, wanting to not necessarily invite feedback where feedback is neither necessary nor potentially appropriate, just as a means of communication.

[00:21:25] Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Pepper? So going back to this policy 1035, I love that these duties are all in one place.

[00:21:43] Does make it does make it really easy you're laughing because you're laughing because I said duty, um But um I'm wondering if and this is just for me because 1035 is titled norms protocols violations Duties is really a separate thing for me And I'm wondering if a policy that just specifically spelled out, you know Duties of chair and vice chair would be a much cleaner place to put it and easier to find I also am going back a little bit in this policy reflecting of course on the

[00:22:23] experience that myself and a couple of members had during our our onboarding talks about line 78 want to say like 88 about professional development maybe putting in some more details I don't know where we fit this on what professional development or onboarding of new school board members looks like particularly having just had that experience knowing you know a lot of the good that we went through like there's some amazing things that we did but there's also some things that I'm still

[00:22:57] like need to do x and y how do I approach these couple things so cleaning that up as well but like I said I'm glad this is all in one place and easy to find questions is it the right place for thank you Mrs. Griffiths thank you Madam Chair I think that I guess we took a lot of pieces from other policies and kind of put this put everything into this 1035 it does come across a little bit

[00:23:31] like we're shifting procedural power to you madam chair and at least three areas student disciplinary appeals licensed employee dismissals and school visit oversight to have it all under what I'm all about putting things all under one umbrella but it just gives the the wrong impression and and with that I did want to say that as far as school oversight while I appreciate

[00:24:02] structure and working with the administration to visit schools I thoroughly enjoy visiting my district schools and I'm in solidarity with my community and I like to be able to just go to my schools sometimes if they have activities or events going on you have nine school board members here with different schedules I don't feel like we should have to check in with administration if we want to visit one of our schools or if we're asked to go to one of our schools.

[00:24:37] That's an issue I have because I feel like that's been brought up before. Not necessarily in public, but behind the scenes. We're school board members. We should be able to go to our district schools when we need to, if there's anything going on, and also to advocate for staff and students and talk to our staff at the schools and find out what's going on so that's one of that's a sticking issue for me thank you thank you for bringing that forward as this is currently in draft

[00:25:12] form especially on line 473 that's not actually how the current policy reads because it wasn't passed out of committee it was just a suggestion that we had to bring policy in line with our current process which has been to notify the chief of staff if we're going to a school when we haven't been invited by the principal but that is certainly something that could continue to be discussion seeing no urgent further discussion would there be an appetite by

[00:25:49] the board to send this back to L.A. and P thank you madam chair I not to put mr. Svensson on the spot but since he is the current chair of the L.A. and P committee I was curious what his thoughts are about this thank you vice chair Donahue um yes I think it would be helpful for it to come back to committee I think that looking at some of the other school divisions policies in the area that seems like there's quite a mix in terms of the level of detail that's included in policy versus what's in practice or in a regulation so it

[00:26:29] might be helpful for us to walk through each piece and make sure it's like appropriately placed here versus as you know the previous discussion alluded to something that may be as best as a practice so I think I think it would be helpful thank you I agree and I think that the consideration for having a separate policy or a manual or the millions of things that we talked about in lamp previously the different iterations that are out there of this I think are still important and it sounds like mr. pepper supports it being

[00:27:07] separate so that could definitely hopefully be part of the conversation is if you decide to split the C's on it can we please take a temperature ship or to go back to committee go back to committee thank you this policy will go back to the LA and P committee right next up we'll discuss item 3.02 our global response to emails we I guess I'll say it we should probably look at

[00:27:46] four different categories of emails emails to all board members emails to more than one board member but not to all emails to one board member and the at-large member and committee emails and come to a consensus for how we want to hold or handle those as a reminder I guess or for the information of our new school board members we had a board retreat at the beginning of our first term those of us that are back today and it was decided at that time that emails to all board members would be responded to on behalf of the chair in sort of

[00:28:24] having the experience of being a board member before being chair I don't necessarily feel that that is I mean I think it's important for us to respond to matters that have been decided with the United Voice and that's part of our school board norms as well but I would not like to prevent anyone who is speaking directly to their constituent from responding but that I would be very interested to hear what the other board members think about this I'm Miss LaBelle

[00:29:25] that's a good point I'm sure enough thank you madam chair have lots of opinions on this um i was pretty vocal in our first outing that i made this idea of one person responding blanket for everyone kind of made me uncomfortable just in in terms of the nature of that we are responsible to our constituents and sometimes as a board while we do move forward as a majority there are other perspectives that can be represented and someone might appeal to a minority opinion um in those instances additionally it became more complicated as we got into the specific curriculum and instruction work with the grading policy because people were reaching out

[00:30:05] to us from all 100 schools and i was responding but in some instances i know that that did step on people's toes if that was their district so because it was like well if it's to everybody it should be go to the

chair of the board so we had some conversations about that in our committee so i think the water is pretty muddy on this right now and when things are muddy i think things fall through the cracks and I felt like that on a number of occasions we also have the issue of mass emails that come through on particular issues that I believe outside groups probably give a draft to contact your board member that

[00:30:42] may not always be the case but when you get flooded with you know a thousand emails on the same topic with this same exact email that becomes a challenge in terms of responding for the chair I would imagine I mean I know our former chair had spoken to that that you know responding to thousands and thousands of emails is hard so I think it is a balance I don't think it should solely be bore by the chair I think in terms of responsibility level that's a lot I think something that makes it clean is if it's in your committee you can respond to it if it's in your district you can respond to it and if it's to you individually you can respond to it that seems to make it easy for me that's sort

[00:31:19] have been the rule that I've been following even though we talked about not doing that um I I think you know communication with the people in that you were elected to serve is is first and foremost and then as the work applies I mean I wouldn't know how to answer some of the questions from other committees so I think it's important to have flexibility and not be so rigid thank you um Mr. Cardi yes I'm so glad we're talking about this one because this is such a crazy town thing especially with let's talk yeah I know I know I hear you so I I love I mean the idea of

[00:31:58] let's talk is fantastic I just feel like we need some operating procedures around that especially the one I mean number one I you and I've already had to tag you on something I didn't realize you were already on right there's just some operating pieces of that that I think would be really helpful the other thing within that too is this whole responding in a certain number of days to certain types of things and trying to figure out who did i handed i tagged somebody in this did they actually take it and run with it or is it just sitting here and is there i mean i had a whole bunch right at the beginning and i'm like i've tagged people but i have no idea if that's

[00:32:34] the right thing to do if that's the right person although i think i've got that part okay but i think there's just some operating procedures around especially let's talk stuff that the individual the one-on-one um people in our in our district i i think that's makes perfect sense and i would respond and want to be timely to that but it's the for me it's the bulk email or emails to all of us and then okay well who's who's who's running with this and then who's going to close it out do i close it out or if i close it out does it close it out for everybody like just some protocols around that i think would be really helpful miss labelle as a passing thought and i

[00:33:14] have done this several times i get letters from somebody that's not a constituent of mine If I feel that the question is better addressed by their own board member I refer them to the board member and say please contact your board member it's so and so at and I give them the address and if you're not getting a reply back from them please let me know and I'll see what I can do for you usually at that point if they write back to me and said well I wrote my board member and I never heard back I said okay well I will make sure I tell that to her the next time I see her speak with her or her.

[00:33:51] to him as the case may be. Now we have more than one him you have to be careful. Vice Chair Donohue. Thank you Madam Chair. I realize I'm slightly differently situated than everyone else because everyone I'm everyone's board member you know but I have observed in previous instances right like people will reach out as in my capacity as chair of Student Services Committee to ask questions about

special permission like if I were a district person under you know depending on previous guidelines it wouldn't

[00:34:30] necessarily be would not necessarily have been appropriate for me to respond to some of those inquiries which I you know I also had some hesitations about the approaches that we were using before it is it's important to have consistency in responses as as chair Chandler said especially where a decision has already been made you know but that I don't think that means that we should be prohibiting each other from

[00:35:04] adding their two cents and responding right like the our constituents reach out to us because they want a response we are here to represent them they deserve to get a response from us and I am aware that many people keep track of of the ratings that we get on the let's talks and and things like that that are you know that are there there is keeping track of that and keeping track of the numbers that indicate how responsive you are to your community like there is value in that and so the previous practice of having

[00:35:41] the chair respond to emails on behalf of the entire board is i can see ways that it is less than ideal for other members so I'm in support of not continuing with that practice Mr. Spenton thank you madam chair one thing I maybe we won't figure out at this meeting but just thinking through we often get these emails that don't go through let's talk or you know on flow and they just come to the email address and that's even harder for folks to keep track of than if it's in let's talk and you can see people tagging so it might be helpful like to

[00:36:19] discuss a system where it goes to like the full school board and our individual email addresses and getting that into Let's Talk so that folks can keep track of it. Or some kind of-- maybe not putting into Let's Talk, but some kind of tracking mechanism for the emails that just could disappear into the wind.

[00:36:42] Mr. Pepper. So I agree and disagree with my colleague, Mr. Spetson, on some of these things. I think there is kind of a segregation I have between actual email and Let's Talk. Because with Let's Talk, I can see whether it was sent directly just to me or the was sent you know with the reply to the entire board with email i have to look at who it was sent to right because with email it could be sent just to me it could be sent to the entire school board email um it could also be sent to me and then every one of you also could

[00:37:13] have gotten it individually and i have i'm having a very hard time with having a single set like this is the protocol we're going to because there's just too many variables right i you know I get an email sent to me that was clearly sent to all of you, but it was someone in my district, so I feel like I really need to respond to them.

[00:37:40] Or I see something on Let's Talk that I'm like, I don't even know who this person is or what they're talking about. This is no relation to me. It's sent to the entire board as a blanket inquiry. This is something that's probably better handled by just a singular email from the chair.

[00:37:56] So having a set policy makes it very – or set protocol, I guess, makes it very difficult to kind of assess and triage the email situation because that's what I'm doing is I'm triaging emails being like, I need to respond to this right away.

[00:38:12] I need more information. I love the little in-progress button that we get on Let's Talk. It's the only thing I like about it because I can be like, I've received your email. Please let me contact the right

people, and I can get you an answer. But I have a very hard time saying, you know, if X, then Y, because there's too many other things than just a direct linear.

[00:38:36] And no, please don't direct people to Let's Talk. Please let them send me a direct email to my inbox. Thank you, Chair. I actually don't have any issues with the on-flow messages. I find that the current process that we have works out.

[00:38:53] I liked how it kind of has an umbrella on top. I do like how we triage it. Maybe I'm just missing something. I've been answering every message that I receive in my inbox as well as in OnFlow. I don't know, maybe I'm just missing something. And I think we've had tags, like, among school board member colleagues.

[00:39:12] They say, hey, look, you know, this person is in your district. You know, do you want to attend to this? And they'll tag me. And then I think it's a great system. I don't find that there's any issues currently for me. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Riccardi? I'll just also say, too, and this may be just an access issue again.

[00:39:30] might be also because i'm new i don't know anybody else having the problem i would like to be able to have my aids dealing with a lot of this stuff at least initially both in let's talk and in my email box and then me handling the things i want to handle so i don't know if anybody else is doing that either yeah okay then it's an access issue okay then it's an access issue for me i'll take care of that okay so um in trying to encapsulate the conversation that we've had so far we all all seem to be in agreement that when a constituent writes directly to the school board the school board member should respond.

[00:40:07] Okay the only concern that I have is that there are always potentials but the potential that some people will not get a response. I mean that's an accountability issue I guess that we will hold each other to perhaps.

[00:40:29] I guess my question is I don't want to diminish the sentiment of that conversation that we had two years ago because I believe it was like we don't want nine different perspectives going out if something has been decided right and I totally respect that I think a lot of the emails we do get are before a decision is made but there is a difference in after a decision is made let's talk about special permission right now right like I'm getting a ton of emails about the 85 percent capacity that's been decided so there is that that should have a clear response from the division because there's no wiggle room there so would in that case would that be something that I don't want to

[00:41:08] more to you but would that be something where the chair could respond and to and you know maybe CC the board first and say this is what we're sending so that you don't have to respond because but I think if it's before a decision we should be able to talk with them chime in you know hear their opinion or whatever but I think it's more an issue post decision is that accurate I agree with your sentiment I think the majority of emails that we receive are actually people sharing their perspective before a decision is made yeah and and then once a decision is made it will be the responsibility of the chair to reflect

[00:41:48] the board's decision yeah so could that be maybe a clearer line in terms of differentiating for what might be more appropriate I mean if it's a Leesburg person who's asking about special permission I'm happy to respond the policy is the policy we adopted it but if that were the concern I could see that that could be a line to consider I mean it's also possible that you'll get emails and not know what district people reside in oh for sure in the inbox yeah like you said many variables there are many variables thank you

okay so this is an accountability issue that we will hold each other to which is something we can flag for later yes mr. pepper thank you

[00:42:26] you're kind of going off with the date of what mission off said on a email that is a post decision thing right such as special permissions for example that is directly to us maybe it's not a procedure we don't know do we want to have some sort of system in place because what I feel like might be the best scenario is even to run it through communications perhaps right to get a standardized response so I mean I don't want to speak outside of policy don't get me wrong right I mean well there's so there's this policy there's also a

[00:43:06] policy later later in the agenda on written comments and complaints which also probably is relevant for this part of the conversation um one of the things i'm reflecting on as i'm sitting here listening to you all talk is i think there are also a lot of instances where you all are responding to constituents and we don't have any idea what you're saying because we're not copied on those emails so one of the things that we've talked about in the past is if you are responding to ensure that we're tagged in to a response because oftentimes we're getting similar emails

[00:43:41] from the same people. One of the things that's really important is that there's not misalignment in the responses because, you know, you don't want a parent or a member of our community getting four different messages about what may happen with their concern. So that's not directly addressing your response. Your question is just a broader reflection on the general nature of the conversation specifically to yours no I don't think I think if it were if it were an issue of a global response to an issue that's already been decided I

[00:44:18] think that for me would be properly situated with the chair which is I know Lauren said she didn't want to put on her plate but to me like that's where it probably should be situated and then at least in my experience the chairs will work with either me or the chief of staff and/or communications to try to of support getting the best possible response based on what we know is going

[00:44:39] on well thank you Samara I know I pushed it but didn't go on but sending

[00:45:43] questions like that or complaints that I might be getting for example we brought up special permissions I got one that somebody said well I heard it was up to 90 percent it's been changed and I did send out a note to mark and he confirmed know or you know Kurt and he did confirm yes we're still at 85 so you know at that point in time it was a quick thing for him a quick thing for me and we can get the word back out and we know that we're giving out the right information so a lot of times that's what's happening. Dr. Rasheed.

[00:46:22] I think the worst is and this is just me being very transparent about this is that when there is the conversation is still tied to the school board member and you're not referring to another school board member it's still on your plate and you're still responsible for the answer but when there's a cabinet member that doesn't respond and you're waiting and you're waiting and I'm talking weeks so when that happens I think that's when I mean you're still telling the constituent you know stay tuned folks you know I'm still looking into it I think that's when it for me that's the only time where it could be an endurance but then at that point then I just

[00:46:57] I cut and paste I take my information and then I send a personal email to that board to the cabinet members so that maybe things kind of got you know lost it's a lot of information that they're

getting from other constituents other board members that's what the cabinet's getting so maybe things just get buried so for me that's the only issue I ever had and I don't I wanted to ask what other board members are doing when they're not getting a response for in regards to a resource that's that's just my issue sometimes I don't get that often but what do you guys do when you have an issue and a cabinet member is not responding maybe because they're out maybe they're on vacation what

[00:47:35] do you guys do thank you Dr. Rasheed Dr. Spence would you like to respond absolutely obviously if that's the case I would suggest rather than waiting and waiting that you just reach out directly to me or to our chief of staff Dr. Bergen we will ensure you get a response that should not be happening okay so please check my encapsulation here but so in the event that emails are sent to all board members school board member that

[00:48:09] represents the district if it's known will respond by district they will tag in staff when it's necessary and when the school board has made a decision on a topic and there continues to be questions or feedback the school board chair will respond then in the interest of time I'm I'm going to ask Mr.

[00:48:38] Stinson and then I'll come back to this but I do want to move forward thank you madam chair I'll keep you brief I guess my I think the distinction I would make is between emails or correspondence it's about policy versus operational stuff like I think that I guess I don't understand the distinction about something after it's decided if it's a policy thing like I think that I could still respond to a constituent and say here's the facts here's what's decided I might not agree with it but it's it's what happened or I do agree with it this is why I supported it and I think that the school board member I don't know why that would shift to the chair and not stay with the school board member just

[00:49:17] because it's decided where something that's operational where we need to go to the admin to get a response and explain the process that would be something that you know we would tag in the admin and make sure that maybe the chair takes responsibility for something like that but i guess i didn't want to add something to the chair's responsibilities when i think it would be fine with me staying in our corner responding after something's happened if it's more policy-based okay um mrs griffiths regarding permissions i'm just trying to remember um and sometimes my uh the lcps emails go to my spam

[00:49:55] when we did put through the permissions at 85 percent did we do a press release you know that we could you know that clearly states everything I'm trying to recall because sometimes they go to my spam maybe Dr. Spence can answer that because it has come to my attention that a lot of people didn't know about the permissions and I didn't have anything written exactly to send them I'm happy to forward you the communications there was actually significant communication on the issue

[00:50:23] okay thank you okay school board members district will respond to constituents nothing will preclude district from responding to constituents but in the event that a decision has been made by the school board the school board chair will reflect the decision that was made by the school board then to go back in when emails are sent to more than one member but not to all the district board members should respond to

[00:50:58] we agree and and that would not preclude just just for clarification or there could be a discussion and then and then what do we want the committee chair to

[00:51:25] continue to respond when issues are being asked that are in committee well and I mean that's also a collaborative choice that we have to make as school board members to make sure that we're

including the right people in the conversation dr. Rasheed so just just for clarification so if let's say a constituent reach out reaches out to a specific committee and there's three board members so they just address it all three so the chair should respond but they won't reply all how would the other committee members know that the chair

[00:52:05] has responded or should we just assume it's up to the chair and the chair will just handle it would you miss LaBelle if you put out respond reply all if we were all on the same committee you me and Linda Dean's like we used to be and I put out an answer that somebody asked me and then put it reply all or added your names in so that you would get a response knowing what I had said and that this is taken care of um that would violate the quorum rules right I mean it

[00:52:43] would technically trigger the quorum rules if if everybody goes I'm responding to them a signal that this this letter has been answered well mr. Allen could you weigh in on that just so that we're all on the same page yes so whether a virtual meeting is occurring would be an analysis that talks about simultaneous or contemporaneous emails back and forth so if it's an announcement similar to when the board chair may email all of you all that's not a meeting unless you start weighing in board member at board members so that could be a potential

[00:53:22] approach to take as long as there's not a kind of contemporaneous responses from the committee members okay is there a consensus so then that will stay with the chair but the chair will attempt to inform perhaps by BCC the other members okay is there any further discussion on this topic all right let's see I would like to discuss briefly efficiency in meetings we have

[00:53:58] shared some of the Board of Supervisors rule of engagement and their order I think that's a long term discussion that we could put on our work plan and we would need to make extensive changes before we enacted any of those specific protocols one thing I will point out is that I we follow Robert's rules and in Robert's rules there is a point that you only speak twice to a motion and I would like to see us in the for the sake of efficiency hold on to that norm is there any

[00:54:37] discussion so when you're talking efficiency are you talking length of meeting are you talking about just getting through items faster like what when you're defining efficiency well how are you defining it well one of the things I think and it is very interesting given that conversation that we had at the last meeting is that it's hard to get to everything that's on the agenda especially if we I mean not to say that we shouldn't get into the weeds but I think there can be some rules that would make each motion more efficient so that we're better able to get through the agenda.

[00:55:14] That would be my hope. I don't necessarily enjoy not being able to complete everything that's on the agenda. And we have several choices when that happens for what we could do. But I do think it was something that I noticed in my study in preparing for being chair.

[00:55:32] And I don't think it's necessarily been normative here. But I do think it could be an improvement if it were something that we tried. And, of course, I'd probably need to ask Vice Chair Donohue to help me keep track in the event in real time. But Vice Chair Donohue.

[00:55:49] Thank you, Madam Chair. Taking a particular position on whether or not we should switch to that system, I would have some clarification questions. For example, if I ask to be recognized and am recognized and have some questions for a staff member, a cabinet member, and the cabinet member gives

me an answer, and then I have follow-up questions, Are my follow-up questions my second speaking to the motion, or is that merely a continuation of my first?

[00:56:23] And similarly, if a fellow board member asks me a question about something that I said on the dais, and I reply, is that my second speaking to the issue or not? From my perspective, it would just be being recognized to speak twice for any one motion.

[00:56:43] And that's not, if there are four motions, you can speak twice to all four motions at any item, but it's just... Not necessarily doing more than that, but being recognized. Mr. Pepper? Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:57:00] I'm all for the efficiency of the meetings. I like this idea of speaking twice. I believe, and this may be a question with Mr. Vice Chair, Donahue was talking about our points of information or points of clarification. Are those going to count towards our speaking towards a motion?

[00:57:16] Because when I believe it's speaking twice, it really is speaking either for the motion or speaking against the motion, as opposed to points of information and points of clarification. I would agree with you, but Mr. Allen, would you like to speak to that? Thank you, Chair Chandler.

[00:57:33] Yes, Mr. Pepper, my perspective is in agreement with yours. Mr. Cardi? Just to kind of follow up on my first question then. I think the thing that's really different in the way the Board of Supervisors meetings happen and ours is that we have a bunch of the administrative staff that's there, and there's a lot of back and forth between us and them asking questions and getting clarifications as we're clarifying our own views on varying issues, right?

[00:58:03] And they don't do that nearly as much as we do. They don't have a whole bunch of their cabinet there to answer those kind of questions. So I think their format of going around the room and doing it at a timed thing makes sense for them because their format is different in their meetings.

[00:58:20] I don't know that many of us spend more than two, I mean, maybe in a really thorough discussion. But here's the thing about that. I think it's actually really great. think in just watching the board over the last many years like there's more caught with like really valuable conversation happening on the dais now than I've ever really seen and I appreciate that I like hearing from everybody and kind of getting people's views on things if we were you know and yeah maybe some of it's taking longer but there are other ways I think we can be efficient in the meeting but I I think that's a valuable opportunity for the public to hear from us and for us to hear from each other because it's the

[00:58:59] only time we can really as a group come together and talk about these things so You're absolutely right, and I'm not suggesting a time limit at all. Just two times to speak to a motion. Yes, Mrs. Griffiths. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:59:14] I just want to say a difference that I've noticed is you let us – am I echoing here? Sorry, guys. You do let us speak first, and then you go after, which is really good, so you open it up to our thoughts.

[00:59:31] As far as efficiency goes, I had, in previous retreats, had other suggestions. Am I allowed to mention them now? Well, I know Ms. Riccardi had mentioned comments, moving that up to the beginning. But also, I just want to reiterate presentations, maybe up to 15 slides would be helpful.

[00:59:55] Also, when the presentations are loaded, well, this is a little bit out of the efficiency, But when the agenda is done, the slides or presentations should be uploaded onto the agendas and board docs.

[01:00:12] Also, you know, I would like Dr. Spencer, Dr. Bergen, to elaborate on two things. Share the process of the students on the dais. How do we go about finding those particular students?

[01:00:29] And my suggestion is always one, because then it cuts it down a little bit. And then as far as band performances and all that stuff, I love that stuff. I'm just curious to know how we choose the bands that come in and play and National Anthem.

[01:00:45] I want to make sure we're giving everybody an equal chance, every school a chance to come and play at our board meetings. But as far as the students on the dais, maybe cut it down to one. might cut some time down but also the slides and the presentations and I've mentioned that before I don't know if comments would cut down with efficiency but I know mr. Carty had mentioned it moving to the beginning of the of the meeting thank you just to briefly respond so the the principals select their representative from each of the schools there aren't frankly enough

[01:01:23] formal meetings during the year to have just one at each meeting and so there are a few meetings during the year where you have two most of them have one but there are a few where you'll have two so that all of the high schools and the alternative sites can have a representative on the dais as a student school board representative.

[01:01:42] As far as the performances, the fine arts supervisors solicit those folks who want to have their groups perform and then schedule them accordingly. So that's a solicitation and they decide that they want to perform. - Thank you.

[01:02:01] - Chair Donahue. - Thank you Madam Chair. I have mentioned previously and will continue to again that I think that we should have a conversation about whether to continue with our public comment, rules and guidelines in the same way, or if we should make amendments to that.

[01:02:20] And I think we should make some kind of change. I think when you look back at our meetings where we have not gotten through an entire agenda by 10 o'clock at night, most if not all of those instances also correlated with a very high number of public speakers, which is the public's right.

[01:02:38] I acknowledge that agree with that not suggesting that we should be rolling public comment back but I I do think it is worth noting since we have new members here that the way that we do public comment here on the Loudoun County School Board is very different from the way that other school boards do it and also different from the way that the Board of Supervisors does it in most places they have limitations on the number of speakers who can sign up for public comment which we do not in one night they we do have the limitations on the length of speakers that each person has to speak, but that varies depending on how many

[01:03:16] people are signed up. So when we only have six people signed up and they get two minutes, it doesn't take very much time out of our agenda. When we have 120 people signed up, we still give them at least a minute each. We've never, to my knowledge, while we've been on the board, they've not, the speakers have not been assigned less than a minute, which as many or all of us know already is it's difficult to get something across in only a minute of being able to speak but uh even with that limitation of only a minute if we have 120 public speakers it takes us two and a half hours to get through public comment two and a half hours out of the six hours that we have

[01:03:53] here the less than six hours to get from a meeting that starts at 5 30 at 4 30 till our 10 o'clock stop time um i and i don't i don't know what the answer is um i don't know if the answer is limiting the

number of people who can sign up for public comment or i believe board of supervisors also limits the time on their overall agenda right public comment can only take an hour and a half of their agenda i don't know if that is the is the right solution for us we're limiting the number of speakers that can sign up or i have also floated the idea of maybe it shouldn't be part of our regular board meetings maybe we should have a separate night once a month or twice a

[01:04:32] month that is the night for public comment and recognitions, athlete recognitions, other things. I don't know, but I think, I believe it is worth having a conversation. If we are serious about this, if we are serious about the idea of making our meetings more efficient and being able to get through an entire agenda, I don't think we can avoid talking about making changes to public comment. Thank you. Mr. Allen, is public comment a right? Thank you, Chair Chandler. Under Virginia

[01:05:06] law public comment is not required um at every school board meeting or public meeting of a public body um there are certain prescribed situations under law such as budget approval as you just did redistricting and some other prescribed but it's not required to be at every um meeting of a public body may i briefly clarify sure sorry thank you madam chair thank you mr allen um to clarify what what i meant i did not mean to suggest that there is that there is an acknowledged legal right for

[01:05:40] the public comment period in our meetings uh except in those limited circumstances like redistricting rezoning a budget uh i was i was commenting more on the broad idea of our community has the right to petition us regarding their their grievances their their laudatories their opinions on on what is happening in the community and what we're doing in some form but we are allowed to have appropriate regulations on the time manner in place of those expressions thank you miss LaBelle at one of our

[01:06:18] other meetings I made a suggestion somewhat similar to what is Donahue is talking about I suggested since we meet twice a month that the first meeting would be for presentations, the work PowerPoints that we see, recognitions, whatever we need to do that we usually do from 4.30 to 6 o'clock, plus public comment.

[01:06:51] Then on the second, but instead of ending the meeting, because this would help, they wouldn't expect a second public comment, we continue the meeting on the second board meeting of the month, and that's where we could get to do our actual work on policies.

[01:07:09] That would allow people that are here for public comment to have a little bit more time to speak, feel more comfortable. We could listen to everything, do everything that we needed to do that dealt with the public or with the schools. And then the second meeting that we got together for, which would be a continuation so we didn't have to worry about that, we would actually get to work on policy the whole time.

[01:07:32] So that was what I thought, and that's how we kind of left it. We never discussed it any further. Thank you. I'm Dr. Rasheed. Thank you, Chair. I just had a recommendation, or I think it would be helpful. I understand that certain topics or certain concerns from the public bring about a lot of people, and then we've got this long list of people that want to comment from the public, which they have every right to do.

[01:07:58] However, I think it would be really helpful if we don't have a repeat public speaker to come the next time on the same topic and I think that's what takes up a lot of time so it'll be like let's say anything from nutrition fund and if the same person just keeps coming back with the same issue I think that that kind of hinders other people that want to come out it makes it longer the public comment time so I think

that a public speaker or rather a public commenter I think it would be helpful if they don't come back twice in a row like consecutively so they have to skip over i forgot which district does that i don't remember there was a district nearby

[01:08:38] that does that thank you um i also find myself um i think it would improve efficiency if we kept it to items that were on the agenda i mean it would be very beneficial um miss ricordi um so supervisor saints and i had a long conversation about this he has lots of opinions around the public speaking which i which actually i frankly i agree with him on a lot of it in fact almost all of it maybe all of it actually um you know his his big thing is our job is to hear from the public that is one of our three big things and there are many ways to do that but i have no appetite for getting rid of

[01:09:15] public comment now do i think we could reformat things yeah i do um and i'll be honest with he was very big on we need to turn the cameras back on we need to they do the 90 minutes they do it for like two or three minutes per speaker i'm i'm okay with you know 90 minutes of time that we allot the reality of it is we don't those nights that we go really long we remember but we haven't had a ton of those and when we do it's usually around a really hot topic and so if we if we do the 90 minute thing which you know i'm okay with people i think in the communities will start rallying

[01:09:50] certain individuals to come speak for them and come just as in numbers not necessarily to speak so i think there's some of that that happens too but i think it also helps us to understand the weight of some of these topics in our communities i think it's good for us to hear from them so i think those are key ones too so I just I'm really interested in us having this conversation again I know and I was present and I get the rationale for why we turn the cameras off but he was very big on you guys need to be hearing from the keep the public it needs to be public people need to see and hear everybody that's coming to speak but I do agree with you know maybe 90 but

[01:10:28] giving everybody two minutes and we have 90 minutes total that's 45 speakers that's how we looked at the numbers to figure out kind of what our what is our average for the year on you not none of us are are not subject to that error ultimately just from reflecting on the experience we've had some nights that have had over 100 125 i would say

[01:11:01] it's probably more typical to have 40 it just really depends i think it's incredibly important to hear from the community um in in interest of time since we're at 45 minutes um and still have a closed session i and we haven't necessarily started working on our work plan for 2026 i would ask vice chair donahue to add that um to the board and i think that's something that we could put on our work plan for this year to continue discussing um the last thing i would like to say about this um really and i i think um mrs griffiths i appreciate your comment um in terms of how i've

[01:11:38] been trying to operate as board chair and I just say this really more as a reflection of it's an important value to me and not as a reflection of how anyone has performed but I just think one of the best ways that we can be in relationship with each other and with the community is to speak to ideas and not to personalities and and that's really just something that I would just like to place on the table I'm happy to hear from anybody else but I just think it's it's a great Way to operate and it really gives us the ability

[01:12:11] Work collaboratively Seeing no further discussion. We'll go to item 3.0 for written comments and complaints and dr. Bergen We've asked you to kick us off. Well, good afternoon. This really is very much related to the conversation that you just participate in with global response to emails I took note of some of the comments that

[01:12:44] resonated with me as I was listening to your conversation. What oftentimes happens is a constituent will choose to communicate through Let's Talk and one of you or several of you will take the conversation out of Let's Talk and put it into an email and that's because you get a notice auto-generated from Let's Talk that someone has communicated to you and you take that notice and treat it as the email and then forward it outside of the system and then now we have two dialogues going on. We have one in Let's Talk that maybe didn't get back to you and then we have one that jumped over into an email communication.

[01:13:19] So one thing, if it would be helpful for you all, is if the constituent has chosen to communicate through Let's Talk, that we keep the communication in Let's Talk. And if the constituent has chosen to communicate by email, then we respond by email rather than convolute the two, if that resonates with anyone else.

[01:13:36] Because I often find myself having to go answer an email and then go back and embed the comments inside of Let's Talk. So I'm doing two things. Because it's in Let's Talk, one of the advantages to the system, I think it was several of you made a comment, you know, something has happened and you don't know if it got resolved, you don't know what the answer was.

[01:13:54] If it was generated within Let's Talk, we'll make sure that we answer the question within Let's Talk, and you all can see that. So when all the board has been copied on a comment or a complaint, which, by the way, the topic of this conversation is to discuss policy 80-70, which has been on the books for almost 20 years and has most recently been revised in 2022, it requires that we have a process in place for the public to voice a concern or comment or complaint or compliment, for that matter, and Let's Talk is the designated vehicle for doing so.

[01:14:29] The policy requires that we make the form available at least once a year. We make it available every day of the year, and that's why the policy is in place. So whether it is an email or it is a let's talk dialogue, if you see that the Chief of Staff has not been included, our practice has been, and I would ask you to continue to tag me.

[01:14:53] So if the email is, whether it's operational or policy related, whether it's come to you individually or it's come to all of you and you see that the Chief of Staff hasn't been at least CC'd, If I can see it, I spend a good portion of my day just tracking to make sure I'm very troubled by the concern.

[01:15:14] You know, when I hear the comment that, you know, I've asked a question and it doesn't get answered. We believe we're very responsive to you as board members, and I want you to always get a response. But if I'm not aware, I can't bird dog it for you, But if I am aware of a comment within OnFlow, let's talk, and or in email, I'll be watching for resolution because, relatedly, you all get a report weekly on board inquiries.

[01:15:42] So when something has been asked by a board member and an answer has been provided, whether that's operational or policy related, you all will get a copy of it. So you'll know the question that was asked and the answer that was provided. and I'm responsible for compiling that information. All the more reason why I need to be included on anything that you are discussing amongst yourselves.

[01:16:01] There were some comments from some of you about, you know, you feel like you need to respond because it came to you. And some folks are a little more savvy and they'll send the exact same

email to all of you individually, but you don't know that. And so, again, if you copy me or you come to me, then I can respond to you and say thank you for sharing that with me.

[01:16:19] I've already received it from the chair or I've received it from someone else. So you'll know I got it, and a response is being generated. And in terms of some of you want to respond to your constituents yourself, and we certainly honor and respect that. So if it's in Let's Talk and someone has asked a question and you tag me and or your board aide tags me or the appropriate member of cabinet who may have the most direct source of information, we'll put the response in Let's Talk as an internal message to you so that you can then respond to your constituent.

[01:16:52] Or we'll ask you, would you like us to respond to the constituent, or would you like, here's a suggested response. That's one of the advantages to Let's Talk is we can dialogue within, and you all can see the suggested response and that that matter has been taken care of. I just end my comments with when a constituent finds their way into Let's Talk, and they do every day because it's right off of our webpage, we have a disclaimer right at the front that sometimes they just gloss right over and they don't read.

[01:17:22] but I would ask that you reinforce as you're communicating with the constituents. And that is the policy that constituents, when they have a concern, that they start with the level where the concern originates. And oftentimes what happens is we'll hear from the constituent who has a concern about something that happened in the classroom or on the bus or before or after school, and they've not communicated with the teacher about their concern.

[01:17:43] They've not communicated with the principal about their concern. And so one of the first things we do, I say we, administration, when we become aware of this, is we make sure that the individual who has a concern is connected with the problem solver, the person who can solve the problem.

[01:17:58] We have talked about that with your board aides who oftentimes respond to these matters on your behalf, and that one of the things that you can do to acknowledge and let your constituent know you've heard them and you have empathy and you're concerned for them 'cause they have a concern, is to say it does not appear that you have addressed this with your teacher.

[01:18:14] I would ask that you please do that first, and then feel free to let me know if you didn't have a resolution, or please check in with your principal, whatever the case may be. I'll stop my comments there to see if there are questions or more dialogue. Thank you, board members.

[01:18:32] I'll be honest, I put this on the agenda, because Dr. Smith chastised me with this policy once when I got involved in an inappropriate way, even though I had been a board aide before being elected. So thank you for just entertaining that reminder.

[01:18:49] And then seeing no further discussion, we'll move on to item 3.05, policy 2610, Bowdoin County School Board aides, and I'll ask Dr. Bergen again to kick us off. Thank you, Chair Chandler. I think you're all aware, if you're not, please be aware we did have an orientation with all of your aides on the 10th of February.

[01:19:09] It's good to see all of them, or many of them behind you here, behind the classroom for me. And I just want to review some of what, it happened on the 10th because we were waiting for some of the last new board aides to get onboarded by HR.

[01:19:25] Once we had everyone onboarded, we had communicated the date. We did spend a good deal of time in that orientation session on this topic because we know that they spend a lot of time in let's talk on your behalf and how to respond to constituent matters. Oftentimes, it'll be your constituent, the concern in one of your schools, and you want to know that that's been addressed.

[01:19:47] You know, there's a concern that you want to know that got handled, and so, and as do we, and so they did meet Phil Hudson. Phil is someone we've encouraged them in addition to tagging me to tag Phil. Phil is a coordinator of constituent services in Docile, and so when he learns of in Let's Talk that someone has a concern, something hasn't been addressed, a question hasn't been run to ground for them, he'll run it to ground.

[01:20:11] He'll work with the Docile team to make sure that the principal is informed and that the school is responding to that individual parent, and you'll know that'll happen because it'll be captured in Let's Talk in an internal dialogue, or I will do that work. But if it's in Let's Talk, we'll make sure that an internal dialogue is generated so you and your board aide knows we have it, we're working on it, and we're going to answer that question.

[01:20:35] In addition, we also shared with the board aides a directory of our cabinet members and what their major responsibilities are, which cabinet members support which committees. We would ask the board aides, as we would ask the board members, that you keep your communications to the superintendent, the chief of staff, and the cabinet.

[01:20:54] that you don't communicate below the cabinet. In some cases, there are some exceptions, like when we're in the midst of redistricting and Bev Tate is the known expert on the topic, you go to Bev. But as a general rule of thumb, if you're not sure, please direct it to me and allow me to do that for you and connect the right staff member with whatever the question or concern is that you have to make sure that we're answering that question or concern in a timely manner.

[01:21:21] We also spent a good deal of time with the board aides talking about how to navigate within board docs and gave them a list of all of the committees and the meeting structure for those committees because one of the one of you asked me thought was a great question said how do you think I can best utilize my board aid and I said well I think one of the best things they do for you is to help you know what's happening at the committee level you all are on a committee but there's eight of them you're not on all that information is very publicly available in board docs and so if the board aides are watching what's happening at the committee level and keeping you apprised virtually everything happens in committee is going to end up at a board meeting

[01:21:59] where you are going to be asked to weigh in on something and so as much time as they can spend living in board docs and informing you about what's happening at the committee level so we want to make sure they had access to that information and could navigate within there and then of course we talked about this we talked about comments and complaints in 87 amongst other things but and we talked about confidentiality we had legal was in the room and talked about the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and FERPA and confidentiality and other topics but I'll stop there to see if you have well just one more thing I want to highlight this all is listed in policy if you've not reviewed it yourself I'd

[01:22:35] encourage you with fresh eyes to look at policy 2610 which is board aides it's an extensive policy that lays out in great detail responsibilities of board aides and what is required of them it's clearly stated not that you all need reminded I'll just highlight out of it that board aides cannot attend any

meetings in which confidential or privileged information is shared or discussed nor should confidential or privileged information be forwarded it's confidential and privileged information for the board members from the

[01:23:07] superintendent or from legal counsel thank you dr. Bergen board members any comments or questions miss recording I actually have two questions one is in the new technology platforms that we're going to be getting here are we going to be able to have those committee meetings streamed live i mean i thought this one was going to be but i don't know that it is um are we going to be doing that with the community so they can watch if they're not here we actually had a discussion about this in lamp probably a year and a half ago

[01:23:43] and and we had mr smith provide us with documentation about how many times people were engaging with the committee meetings and how much effort it takes to record all of them and i think at that time where we landed was for the amount of people who are watching it doesn't necessarily make sense to utilize that many resources because the numbers were actually low um mr smith not to put you on the spot but it does that is that an accurate reflection of

[01:24:14] our conversation and all of the committee meetings are recorded for posterity so they may not be

[01:24:51] available at the exact moment but they are available thank you my second question really quickly it's just about the confidentiality thing i know the board of supervisors board aids are in confidential meetings and get access to that stuff because they've signed their non-disclosures as well as our board aids have so i know this is kind of an ongoing discussion and debate i get it um i get and i get why but again our board aids have been hired by us they've signed on

[01:25:22] non their confidentiality agreements so i guess my question is why are we still insisting on that when we've taken every I mean we've all signed them too so I mean we've all everybody in this well I've signed them what's the issue with this at this point and we're all looking at what give you some think time and not your

[01:25:58] specific question but related one of the things we wanted to impress upon the board aides is that when they're communicating any question or any matter doing it on your behalf as the elected official that they're not the elected official and so that may be one of the reasons is any questions or concerns that you have you're going to ask your board aid to run the ground for you and then get the information to bring it back to you as opposed to staff communicating with them directly or directly communicating with the elected official uh maybe west wants to layer on some more to that answer or not thank you mr

[01:26:37] carty um i i think that's uh will of the board in terms of what policy says regarding confidentiality and access to confidentiality and then it's a contractual matter that's set forth in the non-disclosure agreements that board aides sign so more to say well um i mean i have had this conversation with mr allen and several others because to me the point point of a board aid amongst many things is making sure that the work is being done efficiently i mean that's that's the

[01:27:16] point right it's to have that extra set of hands eyes ears so when we're limited in certain confidential matters to even share just to have a dialogue with our board I mean I'm not talking about someone going out and then sharing that I mean obviously that would be a violation of the NDA and I understand I really do respect the confidentiality between client and attorney I think that's a no-brainer

and a no-brainer for highly confidential matters especially as it relates to personnel definitely would never want to cross that line but I agree with Mr. Cardi I think we had this conversation in committee too about like what's the point of the NDA if you have

[01:27:52] to get permission from Dr. Spence every time a school board confidential email comes in even if it's just an update or a report on something that you're looking for like did I read this right did I see that right did I process everything because let's be honest I mean I'll speak for myself the amount of information intake in this position is mind-blowing like I think I've adjusted over two years I've learned how to take in that information but it's still so much and so to have that trusted person that is in the game so to speak with you and knows how you feel about things how you think about things be able to sort of read something with a different set of eyes has value to me I

[01:28:30] trust that she is not going to go blab that to anybody else because she signed an NDA she's bound to it so I struggle also especially been having the conversation about wanting her to have email access we are working on a shared folder situation so that i can share more of my email with her but again that's another step in the work process um so i echo those things and then i'll just ask my other question and then we can i don't have anything else to say i do think also there's just we have a new group a lot of new aides that have come welcome we're glad you're here um and they're building a really nice camaraderie from what i hear from mine um so there are some operational

[01:29:09] things i think that they would like to implement you know pre-meeting meetings or being the liaison between different committee members who can't talk which has been a long-standing practice but are those things that we necessarily always have to solidify in policy or should that be you know something we can trust them to ask the others if they want to obviously we wouldn't force anybody but i think as a board like my concern is if they want to collaborate more or go to school visits with you know multiple board members like i think those kinds of things are nice for them to be able to do but i don't know i never know if we like have to outline the changes in the policy because it's pretty specific about what they can and cannot do so just food for thought um

[01:29:48] to make the work more efficient well i actually think this makes a nice transition to the last item on our agenda well it's not even before we move into finalizing our work plan um accountability is a big part of this right and i appreciate your referencing the nda but ultimately i mean that that That is a question I have for the board, right?

[01:30:13] And this is a different situation that has evolved over time, right? As when I was a staff aide, I came in as an employee of LCPS and was responsible for being supervised by LCPS.

[01:30:31] That changed with the previous school board. But ultimately, in the event that there is a failure, who's accountable, right? But what's the mechanism, right?

[01:30:47] Like, should we send this policy back to LAMP? Clarify? I mean, I think that's... If we want changes that are, you know, more specific to allowing that or providing a mechanism for who the accountability falls on and you don't feel like that's...

[01:31:08] I mean, to me, it's the board member, and then there's a mechanism within 1035, or the other one, 1035, to hold board members accountable. So, I mean, I would be open to that if that's what we want. I just, I don't want to get into a place where we're so legalistic that we they can't help us like that's kind of

where we moved away from and so I want to you know this also has to do with trust like we have to be able to trust you know and can only speak for

[01:31:38] myself but I trust her. Mr. Svensson. This may be for my own clarification just to understand because I think I agree on certain items that we would want to make sure the school board aides can see but are there particular pieces of information like we have the legal piece which is separate but I guess what are some examples that like of information that we currently can't share the school board days but we would like to you know one thing that I think would might be helpful like the Friday updates we get from Dr. Spence I don't think there's anything really confidential in that for the most part

[01:32:17] so that's something that you know if there is something confidential we could put a disclaimer at the top but otherwise like share that with the school board aid But, yeah, I guess just curious, Mr. Cartier or Ms. Chernoff, if there are, like, particular pieces that you had in mind.

[01:32:35] For me, it's mostly about just them getting the emails that I get, which I know then I would have to trust that if it says highly confidential or attorney-client privilege that they would not open that, which I understand. So, like I said, we're finding a workaround with an external folder that is an extra step for me, but I'm trying to meet them in the middle.

[01:32:54] I have asked Dr. Spence for permission as per policy about the board updates each week because that's what the policy says, that he has to give permission in those instances when it comes from him if she can see them. A lot of those permissions are locked out in terms of personnel and things like that anyway, so she wouldn't be able to see them.

[01:33:12] So that would be the appropriate mechanism, right? If you want more information, we just ask you. Ms. Riccardi? And I would just add to that. The way, and again, this is more of a corporate background background, right?

[01:33:28] But when I hire people and they have, I mean, I run my company, they get to see all kinds of client confidential things in a law practice too all the time. And my expectation is if I have a breach within my team, somebody's going to be gone.

[01:33:45] We're not playing those games. I'm not playing those games. And I take that seriously. And I brought people on that I trust implicitly with that information. And I also like the idea as well. I mean, I would like to be able to have more of a thought partner amongst my aides so that I can noodle through stuff because they're looking at things, I'm looking at things, and it would be nice to be able to have that.

[01:34:10] So, you know, and again, it's the fire hosing of data and information. Here's the thing. I'm not, with all due respect, I'm not here for us to ask permission for things. I think we need to come up with the model that works for us as school board and then explain how we want that to be versus us asking permission to have that.

[01:34:28] I mean, that's the role that we play here is we're in charge. We have to decide what we want to do. And I think that it's important that we all have aides that we all trust and that can be trusted with the information that we've got. Thank you. Vice Chair Donohue.

[01:34:44] Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple of things in response to some of the comments that have been made. I take Ms. Riccardi's point, but I think, and I have worked very little in the private sector, but if this were a private sector situation, yes, you could choose to fire someone who works for you if you were

unhappy with their performance, but moreover, if other people in your organization were unhappy with that person's performance, most likely they could also result in that person getting fired.

[01:35:16] And under our current setup, we can't do that. If my aide does something that someone else on this board thinks is wildly inappropriate and violates our norms and protocols, the onus falls on me and me alone right now to discipline them or to hold them accountable.

[01:35:36] If I choose not to do that right now, there is nothing that anyone else at this table can do. And that raises some concerns for me, that it raises some concerns for me, particularly where we are here talking about with some people at this table saying that we want to give more access to things to our aides and I it's not that I don't want to be able to do that I do I want I would prefer to be able to discuss everything that we talk about and think

[01:36:10] about and vote on and discuss in closed session here with my aides but I don't because right now that would violate our policy and because to me the the risk of negative consequences to us as a group to the division as a whole if there are failures with information being repeated advice of legal counsel sensitive information regarding specific students regarding specific employees

[01:36:39] i i have huge concerns over those potential situations and until we have a until we have what in my opinion would be a better system in place to hold people accountable if there are failures like that I will not be supporting for example expanding additional access for our aids thank you are there any other ways that we would

[01:37:13] like to discuss how we can be more accountable to each other as a follow-up I was just gonna say as a follow-up to our conversation I my team did a deep dive on agenda setting in school board meetings and what I am willing to do is is move new business and school board member comments before any closed sessions.

[01:37:38] I think that would be a good compromise. The goal overall with the way the agenda is designed comes from, or it is established through Robert's rules that you work through the old business and towards the new business. So I don't necessarily want to move something like announcements up, but I think we would get to those items more efficiently if we did them before we went into closed and then adjourned after closed so i hope that's agreeable to everyone i also would suggest that we

[01:38:11] put staff aids on our work plan and with that i'd like to move on to that item 4.01 our 2026 work plan i have socialized this with some of you we've done a great deal of work over the last two years in putting together a process for the evaluation and goal setting of the superintendent and putting into policy the evaluation of division council and that is something that we will continue to work on this year but to that end i would like for us as a school board to work towards evaluating

[01:38:46] ourselves and setting some goals and to that end mike murphy who's helped us with setting up the process for evaluating our superintendent is available to do those things if the school board is agreeable and I absolutely would love to hear what ideas you have in terms of what we should continue to work on in these retreat sessions this year. Ms. Chernoff? Can I ask a clarifying question? Is this like each individual is reflecting on their own practice or is this board

[01:39:23] corporate efficiency rating or both? I think it's a it's a conversation that we have in terms of deciding what we want to work on together and how we want to work on it together and then evaluating if we've been successful. And I think, you know, it feels like a logical next step to me because I've found the

process that we've put in place and I'll be excited for the new board members to see it as we approach June.

[01:39:51] But I think it makes sense for us to sort of be able to express some goals and then hold ourselves accountable for them. As a school board. As a school board, not necessarily as an individual. Okay. And certainly not.

[01:40:07] I think our constituents hold us pretty much together as individuals. And that is 100% the way it should work. Right. But I think in terms of how we come to the table together, there could be some opportunity for more productivity if we set some goals and then assessed if we were meeting them.

[01:40:27] Yeah, I will just say that this idea of this conversation, I think for me it would be about two things which we've touched on here today, which I think we're kind of like circling around, is one, towards working towards better work efficiency, using our time wisely, and that's through the entire governance process from answering emails, directing them to the right people, to working through committee, collaborating, all the way up to the board.

[01:40:53] I think that all those things are really important. And then I would also say just in terms of accountability is just how are we going to make sure what are the measures for us going to be, you know, because we are we do struggle with this, I think, in terms of we're nine individuals and we're very different individuals and we each bring different strengths to the table and we're all learning at different levels.

[01:41:13] So I think we have to walk that delicately in terms of how we hold ourselves accountable because it can't be all one person doing it. It has to be a shared vision of where we want to go as a board. I agree completely. Any, yes, Mrs. Griffiths.

[01:41:31] This is sort of, you're working on the 2026 work plan. I know you're talking about the board in general, but there was something I forgot to mention earlier that I think we're giving enough time to have this done by the end of the year.

[01:41:48] I had mentioned in a previous meeting having compared, I know this is getting away a little bit, having comparison budgets with and without investments. that something we can put as a request to the administration to have that for our budget talks by the end of the year I'm not sure this is the best path to do that but I don't think that there's anything that would preclude us from making that request okay I just wanted to make sure I included it I forgot to mention it earlier I don't know if you want to put it at the end or as new business I'm sorry I'm getting away from the actual plan thank you any other

[01:42:27] ideas for things we can work on this here we will look for oh yes miss LaBelle I do want to say that for the past two years and the beginning of this new term that we as a board tend to work pretty well together and I appreciate that from all my colleagues we tend to listen to one another we're serious with discussion sometimes we're a little silly I know me in particular with my

[01:43:07] with my microphone here but I really appreciate all the work that everybody's put together to work together and that's something we need to continue to do I think thank you miss Lavelle I really could not agree with you anymore and I think that we've been able to do some amazing things over the course of our time here together when we've really looked past those differences and found the things where that we can meet in common okay of course we will be I'll follow up with you after when we have some other dates in mind I would like to

[01:43:46] please email me if you have a time preference if this time doesn't work for you I know not everyone everyone almost has some other commitment outside of the school board so we'd like to respect your time and and truly that was one of reasons why i tried to make this a working lunch um so thank you all for being here and for cooperating and collaborating today um and with that i will ask vice chair donahue do you have a motion yes thank you madam chair i move that the loudon county school board recess this public meeting and enter into a closed meeting pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the code of virginia for

[01:44:21] the following consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation where such consultation or briefing an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as authorized by section 2.2-3711 sub a sub seven of the code of virginia discussion or consideration of matters that would involve the disclosure of information contained in student scholastic records as authorized by section 2.2-3711 sub a sub two of the code of virginia and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel authorized by section 2.2 - three seven one one sub a sub eight of the Code of

[01:45:00] Virginia thank you Vice Chair Donahue has made a motion do I have a second second thank you Dr. Rasheed it has been properly moved and seconded that the Loudoun County School Board go into closed session is there any discussion all right given that we are not in our boardroom we will take a vote by show of hands all those in favor please raise your hand and say aye go to close all

[01:45:37] right um thank you the motion passes unanimously with all board members present the board is now in closed session board members we are going to hold closed in the board room so please join me

[01:46:16] in the board room vice chair donahue do you have a motion yes thank you madam chair i move that the

[02:26:37] closed meeting be adjourned that the loudon county school board reconvene its public meeting and that the minutes of the closed meeting reflected no formal action was taken in the closed meeting thank you vice chair donahue has made a motion is there a second second thank you um i have a second by ms shirriff it has been properly moved and seconded that the loudon county school board adjourned the closed session is there any discussion vice chair donahue thank you madam chair i was just going to note for the record that mrs griffiths did not uh was not present

[02:27:17] in uh or participating in the closed meeting thank you um any further discussion seeing none board members we will record our vote by taking a voice vote I will call in order of district Mr. Svensson aye Ms. LaBelle aye Mr. Pepper aye Ms. Chernoff aye Dr. Rasheed aye

[02:27:53] Mr. Cardi aye Vice Chair Donahue aye my vote is aye so that motion passes unanimously with eight school board members present for the vote and mrs griffiths absent for the vote with that vice chair donahue do you have another motion yes thank you madam chair i move that the following resolution certifying the closed meeting be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting resolution number 27-25-26 whereas the loudon county school board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with

[02:28:29] the provisions of the virginia freedom of information act and whereas section 2.2 dash 3712 sub d of the code of virginia requires a certification by the school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with virginia law now therefore be it resolved that the loudon county school

board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge one only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies and two only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered by the loudon county school board

[02:29:04] thank you vice chair donahue has made a motion do i have a second second i have a second by mr svensson it has been properly moved and seconded that the loudon county school board certify the closed meeting is there any discussion seeing none uh we will um ask the board members to record their vote by voice vote again um mr svensson Aye.

[02:29:29] Ms. LaBelle. Aye. Mr. Pepper. Aye. Ms. Chernoff. Aye. Dr. Rasheed. Aye. Mr. Cardi. Aye. Vice Chair Donahue. Aye. My vote is aye, also aye. So that motion passes with all eight school board members voting yes and Mrs. Griffith absent for the vote.

[02:29:53] Next, Mr. Svensson, do you have a motion? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the school board authorize counsel for the school board to take the actions as discussed in closed session. Thank you. I have a motion by Mr. Svensson. Do I have a second? Aye. I have a second by Ms. LaBelle.

[02:30:13] All right. Okay. It has been properly moved and seconded that the Loudoun County School Board certify, or excuse me, could you please record or repeat the motion, Mr. Svensson? Yes, Madam Chair. I move that the school board authorize counsel for the school board to take the actions as discussed in closed session.

[02:30:33] Thank you. Is there any discussion? Seeing none we will record our vote again by voice vote. Mr. Svensson. Aye. Ms. LaBelle. Aye. Mr. Pepper. Aye. Ms. Chernoff. Aye. Dr. Rasheed.

[02:30:49] Aye. Ms. Riccardi. Aye. Vice Chair Donahue. Abstain. And my vote is aye. So the motion passes with seven school board members present for the vote voting yes, including Mr. Svensson, Ms. LaBelle, Mr. Pepper, Ms. Chernoff, Dr. Rasheed, Ms. Riccardi, and myself, and with Vice Chair Donahue abstaining and Mrs. Griffiths absent for the vote.

[02:31:21] With that, we can now adjourn the school board retreat that occurred on February 18, 2026. Thank you so much for your hard work today, and please have a nice afternoon.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com