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Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting, Thursday, March 5, 2026

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[00:00:01] hey good afternoon everyone I'd like to call this March 5th 2026 meeting of the curriculum and instruction committee meeting to order my name is dr. Sheed and I'm the chair of this committee we appreciate your presence here today and the purpose of today is to go over several agenda items one being approving the minutes and the other being a couple of information items which is gifted education program evaluation recommendations next steps in generative AI digital citizenship and student use and the third one would be Department of academics we're going to be talking about the new ADA title 2 accessibility rules but before we proceed we do value public input if there's anyone from the

[00:00:40] public who wishes to address the committee go ahead and fill out a speaker go ahead and fill out a speaker card at the registration table and I'd like to open the floor to public comments we'll now open the floor for that so if you wish to speak please please come forward state your name and limit your comments to two minutes thank you yeah hi my name is Beth Wiesna I am

[00:01:16] a parent of elementary school and middle school kid in the county and then I've been teaching in the county for ten years at Freedom High School and I know it's not an action item or a discussion item today but I'm here we're just referencing policy 50/30 because I know it's a topic last month at the meeting I sent a very long communication to a few of you that I knew were part of the committee I just wanted to voice like as a teacher and parents just opinions that I know discussion is starting to happen about how

changes have been going and you are accepting feedback from the community and various stakeholders as a teacher I am grateful for the changes that have been implemented and I can see

[00:01:56] anecdotal positive behaviors and students and personal sense of responsibility and students and I know discussion starts to happen for upcoming school years and Dr. Rasheed thank you very much for getting back to that very long email I don't have concerns that the policy is going to change this year I just know that the discussion that starts to take place would be potentially for future years including next year and my hope is just to make sure that we are looking at like end-of-year data and data from all stakeholders because I know sometimes the loudest and most persistent voices can be heard and sometimes other voices can be diminished a little bit but I've

[00:02:33] heard a lot of positive feedback from colleagues at least at the high school level so I'm I have lots of opinions too many for two minutes but I just wanted to express positive voice in the changes that have been made so thank you well thank you all right okay your input is really valuable to us so we'll move on to approving the minutes so it has everyone had a chance to review the February 9 20 26 minutes are there any corrections or additions I entertain a motion to approve the minutes from February 9th I move to approve the

[00:03:13] minutes from February 9th second thank you all right all those in favor say aye aye okay great so the minutes have been on to the first item which is gifted education program evaluation and recommendations I'll turn it over to miss Wendy King supervisor of gifted education thank you I'm very pleased to be here today to talk about and to share the findings of our gifted program

[00:03:51] evaluation and a set of strategic recommendations designed to further enhance our identification process and our gifted services. Our goal is to accurately identify highly capable students from all backgrounds and provide a consistently challenging environment that fosters intellectual growth, social-emotional development, and the skills to be lifelong learners. Now, I know whenever people talk about gifted education they say oh my gosh there are so many names

[00:04:26] so many programs so I'm gonna do a quick tutorial here that will help ground us in everything that we talked about today so we're gonna start with elementary programs of course we have search searches for k3 students there is no identification process gifted teachers go into k3 classrooms every other week to provide a variety of lessons that really challenge students to think deeply creatively and then we have DCI K2 which is a smaller program but that's a program for K2 students who are really performing significantly above grade

[00:05:04] level in reading and math and gifted resource teachers just collaborate and work with classroom teachers to provide differentiated learning experiences for these students now Edge I'm sure you've heard about is a talent development program designed to provide additional rigor and challenges for students to exhibit high academic potential and are from groups historically underrepresented and gifted and other advanced academic programs now we get to fusion fusion is

[00:05:39] and you may know that as Futura but it's now fusion it is the gifted program for identified gifted learners in fourth and fifth grade the program includes interdisciplinary enrichment studies and leadership and innovation as well as math and language arts enrichment and that is a school-based program and it's approximately four hours per week now we also have DCI grades 4 through 5 and that's a gifted program for identified gifted learners who demonstrated exceptional performance in one area of the gifted identification program so they

[00:06:17] receive enrichment services one hour a week in their area of strength and that's either math or language arts and that's with the gifted resource teacher so spectrum is our program for our middle school identified gifted learners and then our high school gifted learners self-select advanced academic pathways in high school including AP and dual enrollment and special programs all right now we can move on and talk about our program evaluation so really just to ensure that our services are meeting the needs of students effectively the

[00:06:55] gifted office partnered with our great friends in the research office to can I shouldn't maybe say that because you're evaluating us but they worked together with us very well to conduct an evaluation on current programming and practices and so here are some of the highlights from that evaluation the evaluation highlighted our progress in refining curriculum for greater student engagement as well as our success in bringing recognized experts to LCPS to provide specialized training for our teachers and for our families and we're

[00:07:31] very excited that we have Dr. Sandra Kaplan who is a leading expert in depth and complexity and she will come and speak with our teachers on March 19th so we're very excited to work with her during our review of the program data we found some positive trends including the fact that over half of our fourth and fifth grade gifted learners are achieving past advanced scores on reading and math SOLs and we're also seeing the success continue to our secondary school to a secondary level where our gifted learners are frequently enrolling in advanced coursework and pursue our specialized high school

[00:08:10] programs so while these strengths definitely provide a solid foundation for us the evaluation also helped us pinpoint specific areas where we can refine our approach to better serve our students so first as always we are committed to closing current representation gaps by exploring alternative assessments like the NGAT and we'll talk about that in a few minutes this builds on the work that we've already started for example implementing at the third grade level a

[00:08:47] universal evaluation so all of our third graders are evaluated we've revised our portfolio tasks to really emphasize creative thinking and problem-solving and we are using school school specific and group norms to find talent in every building and we also see a major opportunity to expand our talent development lessons in the k2 search classes this will allow us to nurture high-level thinking skills early on so that this helps potential emerge before students even get to that evaluation phase and then finally we want to improve

[00:09:26] how we welcome new families into the program by enhancing our onboarding and keeping communication regular we can build even stronger partnerships between home and school for our gifted learners so now we're going to turn these identified opportunities into action and our first recommendation focuses on deepening our partnerships with the community to ensure our services remain responsive to those people that we serve so we propose a more structured approach to gathering stakeholder feedback which we just heard earlier about how important that is ensuring that our program improvements are

[00:10:04] directly aligned with the values and priorities of our families students and staff and this and this includes launching targeted stakeholder surveys and establishing, we're excited about this, a gifted student advisory committee, giving our learners a formal voice in the evolution of their own program. And then additionally, we are prioritizing a new onboarding process for students entering LCPS gifted services to ensure every

[00:10:34] family feels welcomed, informed, and supported from day one. So our current identification process, it is comprehensive, but our evaluation does indicate that we're still missing highly capable students from certain backgrounds such as our English learners which is why we are evaluating a more precise tool to help us identify talent that might otherwise be overlooked so we are planning a pilot of the NGAT that's the Nagliari general abilities test and that's not to be confused with the NGAT

[00:11:13] that was a tool that we used to use this is much more balanced and comprehensive so it's going to be a potential assessment to better identify gifted ability in students from underrepresented populations and the end GAT is basically it's a nonverbal measure that removes the language barrier often found in traditional ability tests and by testing an identification tool designed to recognize potential across all backgrounds we aim to hopefully remove some of those traditional barriers to our programs and our plan is to conduct a pilot of the NGAT providing special

[00:11:52] provide specialized training for our staff and carefully analyze the results to determine its long-term effectiveness so we're going next year we'll do the NGAT we'll also conduct the COGAT as usual and then we'll really do a deep analysis into which one helps us better identify a broad range of students so building on our goal of identifying potential across all backgrounds our Our next recommendation is to expand front-loading strategies through talent development lessons aligned to our portfolio tasks in the K2 search curriculum.

[00:12:31] So providing these lessons during search, prior to our portfolio tasks, we give students the time and space to practice the very skills they will need to demonstrate their strengths during the gifted evaluation process. So front-loading is a research-based instructional best practice where students are exposed to and practice the essential skills that will support their future learning and success and experts in gifted education talk a lot about front-loading and they point to it as a specific practice as a promising strategy for shrinking excellent gaps and developing talent and students who may not have had prior

[00:13:10] exposure to the types of tasks they'll see during the portfolio so alongside this K2 work we also want to explore expanding formal services formal gifts services to third grade students who are identified as being in need of gifted instructional support so as you know fusion starts in fourth grade we'll bring it down so we'll start earlier in third grade so as we introduce these enhancements our focus is on striving to provide every teacher with the support and resources needed to deliver high quality instruction consistently across

[00:13:49] schools and we are developing a system to help us provide more targeted professional development and learning for and specific resources for schools ensuring that support is tailored to the unique needs of each building and we will build supports toolkits for school leaders to assist them in identifying high-quality gifted instruction and supporting ongoing growth of their teachers and our aim is to provide a consistent cohesive experience for our students working to maintain high standards of gifted services regardless regardless of where students attend school okay so we've talked about what now it's time

[00:14:29] to talk about when and how so to ensure to ensure that these recommendations are implemented with precision and care we have developed a multi-year timeline that prioritizes thoughtful planning and collaboration across departments so our immediate focus for the upcoming year is the preparation for a fall 2026 pilot of the end gap so that will be our first order business we are already

beginning conversations with the assessment office to coordinate the logistics and timing ensuring the new tool integrates seamlessly into our existing testing and then parallel to our identification

[00:15:09] efforts we are planning for a gradual rollout of our enhanced third grade gifted services and this includes a pilot phase in the 2027-28 school year allowing us to gather real-time feedback from our teachers and students before full implementation and then by phasing our approach this way we ensure that our staff is fully trained and our resources are aligned providing a high quality consistent experience for every student as these new services come together all right so as we move forward our

[00:15:44] priority is to transition these recommendations into a collaborative action plan that reflects the needs of our entire community and we will begin by sharing these plans with key stakeholders starting today including GIAC our school leaders staff and families and gathering feedback which will be really important to us as we shape these programs and changes it's going will really help it be successful and community aligned and then simultaneously we will collaborate with offices of elementary education and assessment to align our scheduling this coordination ensures that the NGAP pilot and our new third grade services

[00:16:24] integrate smoothly into the existing school day into the important part most importantly we will work to update our staffing standard to deliver these enhanced services we must ensure our gifted resource teachers have the necessary capacity aligning our staffing model to these new requirements is the foundation that makes this entire plan sustainable and these recommendations represent our commitment to an inclusive high-quality program that identifies and develops talent earlier and we appreciate your partnership as we align our resources and staffing to make this vision

[00:17:04] possible so now I'm happy to take any questions thank you so much Miss King I mean that was quite elaborate and it was it's a lot and I look forward to seeing the results as they roll out especially after you know the pilot rolls out I just had one question before I turn it over to my colleagues I was wondering if if we will seek feedback or if MSAC or SEAC weighed in in regards to students maybe that have any hindrances absolutely that's an incredible idea we

[00:17:39] do have many members of SEAC and MSAC who attend GIAC so that's one way certainly we can get the message out we always send invitations but they commonly invite us to talk about changes that are coming up so we would I'd be more than happy to do that.

[00:17:57] - Awesome, thank you so much. I appreciate that. I will now turn it over to my colleagues to see if you have any questions or comments. Mr. Ross, Ms. Benson. - Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much for the presentation. So I, for expanding to third grade, I think it's awesome to have that increased exposure for the younger grades.

[00:18:18] One thing I was going to ask about the current program and probably take on added importance if we're expanding further down, what are the opportunities for students they're not placed in fusion in third grade if they if their teacher recognizes them as maybe that would be a beneficial for them what are the opportunities for students kind of in later grades to jump into the gifted program well a couple of things I want to talk about there first of all we have an evaluation process every year and we know that students show us their strengths on their own timeline so you could have a student identified in third

[00:18:56] grade but you would also have a student identified in seventh grade so it's always the opportunity to go through the process again but also with fusion we do have opportunities for some flexible grouping so if a student is really showing mastery in math in a particular unit that student could be invited to sit in on the DCI lesson for that week so there is some opportunity for flexible grouping and there's also edge and edge is that opportunity to nurture talent so if we're not quite seeing enough of the strengths for identification for gifted services this might be that opportunity to nurture those strengths so that maybe

[00:19:35] future in the future they would be identified thank you that's very helpful on the staffing I have chatted with a few folks it sounds like I was about to say Futura but fusion is different than when I was in the program Futura and we would travel to another school my understanding now is that fusions at homeschool and that the staff I would imagine the staffing for the gifted programs is based on the number of fusion eligible students in that respective school is that correct like not every school would have the same number of staff that's true right now the staffing standard is based on total

[00:20:12] school enrollment okay and so there are some schools you know obviously our bigger schools have two gifted resource teachers or they might have one gifted teacher full-time and itinerant coming in at different times during the week so are there some schools where they you know school maybe has more eligible students and they use like their flexible spending to add staff and I guess I was wondering how prevalent that I guess like is there a desire from from particular schools to add staff but kind of don't match their overall capacity

[00:20:49] we have the staffing that's provided in a staffing standard and then we also have some discretionary staffing so we work with schools and then we do work with schools to make flexible staffing requests and I would just add the gifted staffing standard is something we've been looking at over the past few budget years and there are times where with Miss King and the gifted office may ask for flexible staffing based on needs that they identify part of what's important here is that prior part of why it hasn't been included in previous budgets is knowing this

[00:21:28] program evaluation is happening getting kind of a vision for where we want to go getting community stakeholders so that we when we do ask in a budget it's tied to what are the strategic goals around the gifted program and so i say that to say flexible staffing has helped us a lot whether it's from the principal request or from the office's request thank you that's really helpful looking forward to working with you all in the staffing standard okay any other questions comments yes Ms. Sherna thank you madam chair um great to see you as always I think this program evaluation is the right step for us I'm grateful to see the reflectiveness that you have your department has

[00:22:08] taken on um I will sort of piggyback off of Mr. Svensson's question certainly when I go out I mean I just had the benefit of seeing Ms. Waterfall at the school is eluding me Waterford to the project that they were doing with sustainability and certainly you know the work is so incredible a lot of them are itinerant and so it's because of the population and what's built on it's not necessarily built on the need so I'm very anxious to hear that conversation I think it's great that we're having it now budget conversations are certainly starting already for next year we had some yesterday in SPC

[00:22:46] too so I think the sooner the better and you know it's definitely been a commitment of this committee I think to sort of hone in on how we can support that work can you elaborate a little bit more on the format of the two different tests that in at and the call get is are either of them one-to-one testing or

is it all sit and you take they're both group testing they're both group testing okay and you anticipate they'll be close together in time frame or I know you said fit it into the testing calendar. I think what we're looking at right now is possibly we

[00:23:21] want to make sure that we want to conduct the end GAT in the fall. We want to make sure we do it after MAP. Yeah. So we're thinking maybe Octoberish, mid to late October, but then COGAT is going to be in February. Yeah, COGAT. I was just wondering if it would be, I like the idea of spacing amount.

[00:23:40] Obviously the testing calendar is hard to compete with. I know. It's pretty full, but I feel like this is supportive especially if it's going to give more access to our to our kiddos and get our eyes on them so just appreciative always of the work that you do and thank you for sharing thank you Miss King all right all right so we will move on to our next agenda item 4.02 next steps in generative AI digital citizenship and student use and just as a reminder to board members we do have a hard stop at 5:00 for another meeting I believe so I will now turn it over to

[00:24:17] to Mr. Sloven thank you Dr. Rasheed we are appreciative of having the ability to bring an update to the board around our support for AI literacy and digital citizenship and all things gender AI I also appreciate Aaron Smith being here our chief technology officer this is definitely a partnership between the department of teaching learning and academics and digital innovation we're joined by miss Alyssa Moritz our library supervisor and Mike Hendrickson our instructional technology supervisor and also Nicole Lagoni our director of professional growth and innovation all very much tied to this

[00:24:51] work so we recognize that generative AI is a reality in our classrooms and we also want to lean in on our students are already being exposed to generative AI and we want to make sure we're teaching them appropriate use and appropriate thinking around how it will impact their learning and also how it can help them we also want to make sure our teachers are supported in integrating these tools seamlessly into their instruction and this requires a real thoughtful approach about digital citizenship planning our professional learning for teachers and that's really what at the heart of this presentation

[00:25:29] our conversation is about as we think about expanding access to these tools so I really appreciate the team that is joining us today to give us an update and I believe we are starting with Melissa Thank You mr. Slavin Congress enacted children's internet protection act in 2000 and updated the requirements in 2011 in order to qualify for e-rate funding one part of the act states that schools must provide for educating minors about appropriate online behavior including interacting with individuals on social networking

[00:26:02] websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying and awareness and response since 2016 loudon county public schools has partnered with common sense media to meet these requirements this curriculum is the standard for teaching students how to navigate the digital world safely responsibly and ethically and is used by many school districts across the country there are three specific criteria schools must meet to earn common sense media recognition first is regarding instruction schools

[00:26:41] have to teach a set number of lessons and have and they have a flexible path to do so to do this work second they have to provide professional learning for their staff so the teachers who are also working with students on digital citizenship understand what needs to be done and finally there's a family component where schools share information and tips and activities to ensure that the conversations about digital citizenship occur continue at home from the school the current application process is an honor system when a school applies they're not required to provide student artifacts

[00:27:21] lesson dates or evidence of instruction they simply provide a short narrative on why digital citizenship matters currently schools plan their path to certification at the beginning of the school year by selecting lessons and scheduling instruction this results in a significant lack of divisional consistency a student's digital citizenship experience can vary drastically from one school to another. Secondary scheduling constraints often

[00:27:55] regulate relegate excuse me lessons to advisory blocks where they are frequently delivered in isolation. Without a collaborative or cross-curricular approach this delivery model risks low student engagement and may result in the content being treated as logistical checkbox rather than core competency. We gathered feedback from our schools this year with the part of an independent with the help of an independent group partnership and we created focus groups that covered all grade levels large schools small schools north south east

[00:28:34] and west and we got some takeaways from the feedback. Some of the things is some of the feedback that we received is that secondary school structures make implementation a challenge. Curriculum sometimes feels disconnected from the classroom instruction and the varied approach leads to inconsistent implementation.

[00:28:58] We also received some recommendations on what we might do to make our process better. One of the recommendations was to formalize school level champions establish a unified scope and sequence and curate supplemental content.

[00:29:16] Based on extensive feedback from our school-based focus groups we're introducing several key enhancements for the 2026-2027 school year to solve these consistency issues we have drafted a suggested scope and sequence aligned with state and national standards this framework ensures that every student regardless of which lcp school they attend receives the same high quality baseline of instruction we will publish the scope and sequence directly in power school curriculum and instruction this moves digital citizenship from a standalone task to a

[00:29:55] core component of our instructional planning janitor janitor of AI is a new literacy that we have included in our digital citizenship curriculum for the coming school year AI literacy is integrated into our scope and sequence the skills are taught develop in a developmentally appropriate way beginning in kindergarten and they're strategically introduced to spiral on previous learning AI skills will help prepare students for using the student

[00:30:31] facing AI tools that they will encounter in the course of their education all schools will develop an implement implementation team which will include the librarian the instructional technology facilitator and other staff to create a school-based plan using the division recommended scope in sequence schools at the end for monitoring and support schools will be asked to share their plan and will receive support through quarterly meetings to ensure the

[00:31:05] work is being completed and help will be given when struggles arise schools will complete a survey about their digital citizenship work for the year this data will be used to complete their application for the common sense media digital citizenship recognition and now I'm going to turn it over to mr.

[00:31:26] Henriksen to speak about AI literacy thanks Alyssa so as Alyssa shared as we are looking at our digital citizenship curriculum and looking at how we might enhance and improve our practices and support our schools we're thinking strategically about how generative AI and AI literacy fits into that plan

it's important that we're having regular conversations with our students to help them develop AI literacy skills and help prepare them for encountering these tools in the wild whether or not whether or not they're encountering them

[00:32:06] in school they're encountering them in other places and these are important conversations to have with our students so as our students are encountering these tools they need opportunities to learn how to use AI and then also to learn a how to use AI to learn they need to learn how to use it as an effective tool to support their learning and not to circumvent the learning process so really the conversations with our students around AI focuses on on four areas what is AI how does it work what's the technology behind it you know

[00:32:40] it's not magic it's it's it's technology and having an understanding of that how do you stay safe when using AI how do you recognize and mitigate AI bias and how do you use AI ethically and responsibly so these are the skills that will spiral through that digital citizenship curriculum in a developmentally appropriate way.

[00:33:01] So the data tells us what we already know and that our students are encountering and using generative AI on their own. So this, I know the chart is small, but this is showing some data from College Board.

[00:33:17] They have done some regular surveys asking students about how they are using generative AI. And the important takeaway from this chart is that the percentage of students who are saying they're using generative AI is significant and growing. So it is not something that we can pretend doesn't exist for too much longer.

[00:33:35] We need to make sure we're actively teaching our students how to use these tools safely and effectively. So what we're starting to see is generative AI, like in consumer online services that you may be using, Generative AI is starting to pop up in lots of different ways inside of instructional tools, inside of consumer tools.

[00:34:02] And so as a school division, we are trying to make sure we understand how we know how to respond to that. We know how to evaluate that and we know how to proceed and make informed decisions as we're thinking about how we integrate some of these new features into the tools that our providers are adding into their software.

[00:34:24] so for the most part what we're starting to see from our partners is AI that is you know designed for education and usually has significant guardrails and controls either they you know these education vendors will develop a feature and give us options for what we turn on and to whom what features we will allow and which features we won't allow so there's significant controls in place and we've developed a risk matrix to help us evaluate these tools and make some determinations about whether we should be using these tools with

[00:35:01] students so we do have some examples of places where we have AI powered features that are available to some of our students in some of these instructional applications that they're using in their classrooms and we're going to talk about some examples of that when these features could become available we evaluate them to see how they're going to respond to use them to try to use them in ways that we think students might try to use them and see what kind of responses we get and so tools that are low risk or medium risk

[00:35:39] that pass this testing that we that we we conduct we have decided in some places to turn these features on so let's see some current examples where we this This is inclusive, this is all inclusive.

[00:36:01] This is just a few examples of places where our students are encountering AI tools. In most cases these are heavily guard railed or very kind of narrow in what the AI is designed to do.

[00:36:19] So examples might include a feature in Magma Math called Lava AI. This is a non-interactive feature where the AI can see what the students are doing as they're completing math. and then it will give them feedback. If they're off track, it'll give them some hints and suggestions, but the students can't then engage in a conversation with that chat bot, so it's not interactive.

[00:36:41] We have some places where students have access to image generation, for example, and in places where image generation is in place, the vendors have significant guardrails and controls to help make sure that the outputs of those tools are appropriate for school and for students.

[00:37:02] Another example is Ask Britannica, which is a chat bot that our students can interact with. That's available, I believe, to K through 12 students. And is that high school only? Oh, sorry, that's an error. That's high school only.

[00:37:17] And that particular tool is scoped so that it will only answer students' questions about content in the encyclopedia. So it's narrowly scoped. If students ask a question that the chatbot is not designed to answer, it will redirect, tell them, sorry, we can't answer that, but we can answer these things for you.

[00:37:39] So just some examples of ways that our students are already beginning to encounter generative AI features instructionally inside of LCPS tools. So some next steps for us as a school division, we're gonna continue to evaluate and deploy Some of these features as they appear in instructional applications.

[00:38:07] We are working on professional learning resources for teachers so that they can begin to have conversations with students about AI and AI literacy as the students are encountering these tools. We want the teachers to be prepared to have supportive conversations with the students about how to use these tools safely and effectively.

[00:38:25] And we are also looking at how we can begin to do some longer term planning for how we introduce tools that perhaps have fewer guardrails and support. So students have a little bit more autonomy and ownership of how they're using the tools, but they're also in a safe and protected environment.

[00:38:46] So we do have some neighboring school divisions or divisions across the Commonwealth who are beginning to pilot or enable certain tools for students in certain age groups.

[00:39:02] Most of our examples here are high school examples, but Prince William County, they have enabled co-pilot access for their students. Henrico has enabled Notebook LM for their high school students. Virginia Beach has provided access to Gemini for their high school students, and they allow that during school hours only.

[00:39:22] So they use their internet filter to make it available during the school day and then turn off access after the school day. So we're thinking about how we set ourselves up for success as we introduce these more open tools for our students or consider how we might introduce more open tools for our students.

[00:39:43] So up on the screen here is one potential option for what something like this might look like. So the two tools represented here are Google's Notebook LM and Google's Gemini tools. The tools aren't really the important part here because this is changing very frequently, but I think the important part to know is that Notebook LM is a little bit more guard railed.

[00:40:07] It's an AI-powered study tool where students can upload content or teachers can upload content, and then they can interact with that content to help prepare for tests and to study and to get deeper understanding of the content. And then Gemini is a more open, large language model, AI chatbot.

[00:40:23] It's still guardrailed for education in the version that we might deploy to students, but it's a little bit more open, so it would provide a little bit more autonomy, a little less direct teacher oversight for a tool like that. So this is across potentially looking across two school years what a rollout might look like.

[00:40:41] So maybe we start with deploying something like Notebook LM to our high school students and then expand that to our middle school students. And then as we are establishing Notebook LM as a tool and students are gaining experience and our teachers are gaining experience and working with students in using these AI tools that we then open access for our high school students to a more open tool like Gemini.

[00:41:08] so these are challenges I think that we may have already touched on we know that our students are using these tools on their own if they're not experiencing them in school they're experiencing them elsewhere and we know that the tools that they're using they lack protections in guardrails so the kinds of things that are in place to help keep kids safe in a tool designed for k-12 education don't exist in a tool they might find an application in their phone so we also know that you know we know from actually talking to some students that we have a

[00:41:46] wide range of opinions from our students some are using them very strategically in very positive ways some are using them as maybe not as positive ways some are choosing not to use them at all because for a variety of reasons some there's they don't want to feel like they're going to be accused of cheating or they have concerns about environmental impact or other issues.

[00:42:14] And so this creates an environment where we have this wide range of student experiences and how do we kind of unify that and provide a baseline set of learning for a broader base of our students. So this is a real tension that we have to figure out how to balance.

[00:42:35] This idea that our students are entering an AI-powered world and it's increasingly AI powered every day but how do we acknowledge that while also understanding that students have to learn how to use these tools in an effective way not as a shortcut for learning. We want to ensure that we're setting our students up to be thoughtful and reflective about how they're using generative AI and we're helping them be a little metacognitive about what they're doing and how they're doing it and understanding whether that the way they're choosing to use AI is supporting their learning or circumventing their

[00:43:11] learning and the analogy here is we don't want our students to bring a forklift to the gym right when they're coming to school they're coming to school to exercise their brain and we want to make sure they're you know using the tools to help make sure they're accomplishing those goals so we're looking at feedback pathways as we considering these plans for expanding access to these more open tools and through these feedback pathways we want make sure we're asking stakeholders to provide access on or provide us feedback on what are the right levels of access and at what age do our students need these at this access what a students need to know before we start

[00:43:50] providing more access what teachers and staff need to know what supports do we need to have in place and how do we best support and communicate with families and some of the ways we're gonna try to gather some of this feedback are through classroom teachers through parent community advisory groups through potentially community thought exchanges or stakeholder thought exchanges and student focus groups and with that I think we're ready for some questions thank you so much for once again an elaborative presentation I know AI has been on the minds of many of us parents educators school board

[00:44:29] everywhere I like your metaphor of forklift to the gym you know that that explains it all I do wish it was it would be more than one lesson as was explained for the students that would be helpful but I understand baby steps we have to incorporate that into curriculum you know as a college professor when I get my students they're kind of just thrown in there and students have to kind of venture out on their own to seek resources as to how to help them maneuver AI or use AI to their benefit but without I guess plagiarizing or using it word-for-word this I know will be very helpful having them start at it

[00:45:08] earlier age with such sessions like that I know we're pressed for time but I wanted to turn it over to my colleagues if they had any comments or questions oh yes yes mr. Spencer I just want to say thank you for the presentation and I appreciate this is really really important work so looking forward to collaborating with you all of you yeah this is I think really critical to our students and our educators and their success so thank you yes just one

[00:45:43] question in terms and thank you so much I know we've been on an AI journey for a while um and I echo my the sentiments of Dr. Rashid I we struggle with this in our house too but some of the math stuff is really cool for our struggling math kids um so my question is about the feedback is the plan so I see the rollout plan I actually feel like that's a little slow on the rollout because I think like it's moving fast and I feel like we have the right guardrails in place that's my two sense but i appreciate the caution because i do think it will be a sensitive issue is the feedback

[00:46:19] more like how should we proceed in how quickly or is it more about the exact tools is it how comfortable they feel with the tools is it all of the above like what are what are we looking to i mean i want to gain feedback but i'm sort of what angle are you looking to pursue i could start and then see if the team wants to add i think this is a perfect example of two-way feedback meaning we want to make sure the message to our community is we're being thoughtful about this and we know students need support navigating this new tool that's entering their lives because I think if

[00:46:55] there are some emotional reactions to gender AI amongst our teachers amongst our families and our parents and so it's communicating our intention as much as it is about getting feedback like how do we engage in a dialogue so going out to the classrooms talking to teachers talking to parents going to MSAC going to SEAC but then specifically we do want to get some feedback on how our students using it what is the right tool what guardrails are important what information do we want to make sure is available we also need to be paying attention at the state level there's many conversations happening in the General Assembly about expectations for division so we're going to be responsive to that and part of that is that family engagement in terms

[00:47:33] of being transparent about how we're using it so I'm not sure if Alyssa or Mike would add anything, but it's a dialogue as much as it's feedback, if that makes sense. All right. All right. We're moving on to item 4.03, Department of Academics, new ADA Title II, Accessibility Rules.

[00:47:53] I'll turn it over to, yes, Dr. Ellis. Thank you. Thanks. I will kick us off, and Mr. Henriksen is going to help me out over here with this presentation. So we will try to be brief, recognizing that you have a hard stop, but this is relatively timely and really important for you all to be aware of the significant changes that we are being required to implement regarding the new ADA Title II accessibility rules so we have put together a workgroup we are managing this big project like a like a project so we have a project manager who is

[00:48:33] guiding us through the steps that we need to take in order to communicate everything that needs to be done to meet these guidelines and I'll just start by saying that we today are focusing on the work that schools will be doing with support of central office but this really is a division-wide change and impacts all offices across the county so with with that in mind Mr. Henriksen is going to talk a little bit about accessibility in general and then I'll I'll dive into the new rule.

[00:49:08] - Thanks, Dr. Ellis. So, I just wanted to set the stage here a little bit, just talking, make sure we are building some common vocabulary. So, when we're talking about accessibility, we're thinking about the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible.

[00:49:24] So, we're trying to make sure that a platform, a service, a tool can be used by the widest range of users possible through the design of that tool. So when we're thinking about web accessibility specifically, we're thinking in terms of technical access.

[00:49:44] Can it be navigated with a keyboard? Can it be read and interpreted by screen readers? Are we not relying on color or one method of conveying information? Are we including captions and transcripts when needed, using clear structures so assistive technologies can interpret?

[00:50:01] And so a key takeaway here is accessibility is really based on how it technically, how the content technically functions, not how it looks visually necessarily. So it's important also to start with saying that accessibility is something that ensures that all students and families have access to resources and instructional materials.

[00:50:27] If you are a student or a family member or a community member who has some sort of barrier that prevents you from accessing content, that is a door that you cannot walk through. So accessible content then opens that door and allows all of our students, all of our families to engage with the materials that they need to help support their learning.

[00:50:51] - So specifically, there are new accessibility requirements under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is a link to the full rule if you need a little light reading, perhaps before bedtime. It is very, very detailed and complex and I don't understand many of the words.

[00:51:10] generally speaking the rule did not create new obligations but it did clearly clarify accessibility requirements and then specific deadlines for compliance for school divisions and government organizations that serve communities over 50 000 which is us we have a deadline of april 24th 2026 which is quite daunting and we have a plan to move toward that deadline on the On the next slide, I'll talk a little bit about what the new rule really means for us.

[00:51:45] So Mr. Hendrickson explained the sort of the what and the why behind accessibility. And I will say that LCPS has always been very aware of and attuned to providing accessible resources when needed.

[00:52:02] The difference is that, in short, materials should now be accessible by default rather than upon request. Okay, so we have an amazing assistive technology team. They provide assistive technology resources.

[00:52:17] They support teachers in making sure their materials are accessible when students need it. The difference is that now has to be default. That's a big change. So that means that all websites, mobile apps, online resources, materials in Schoology, materials sent to families all need to be accessible.

[00:52:39] So not to scare you, but it is a little daunting. going to the next slide I will say LCPS I think is far along compared to many organizations our community engagement office has spent a lot of time and resources investing in our website content and community facing materials so videos that we publish things on the website most of our digital assets are already designed with accessibility in mind we have an accessibility webpage link there for staff and community members we work really closely with our

[00:53:18] friends in DDI and procurement to review new instructional materials to make sure they are accessible we're also looking at our existing RFPs to make sure they are compliant as well we do have accessibility checkers we've had them since COVID and honestly most people have not used them since COVID so it's a oh it's a matter of dusting them off reminding teachers training new staff how to use those tools to make sure their tools are their materials are compliant so it is a heavy lift i don't think it's

[00:53:54] impossible but it will take us time to become fully compliant mr henriksen's going to talk a little bit about some specific tools again we're focusing right now on instructional tools for for classroom and and school-based but just keep in mind that it is really involving all of our departments and all materials we produce so many of the places where our teachers and our staff are doing their work every day already have accessibility checkers and resources to help support designing accessible resource materials so inside of google docs we have an add-on called

[00:54:31] grackle and that will analyze google docs and give the the creator feedback on how to make that document more accessible the same types of features exist natively in office 365 and adobe acrobat which are tools where a lot of our teachers and students are doing our teachers and staff are doing their work we're looking at what additional tools would be supportive here so we're looking at things like tools that we could plug into schoology that will give teachers a little bit of a flag of whether something is accessible or not when they upload it and then give them suggestions for how to how to remediate it if it's not accessible we're looking

[00:55:07] at additional tools perhaps to do some perhaps bulk remediation or sort of individual file kind of drag-and-drop remediation the challenge there is they're not perfect so it's still require it's a good starting point but it may still require some tweaks and adjustments but we're looking at those tools to see what other things our teachers might need so we're also taking a look with the work group that Dr. Ellis mentioned, we're taking a look at ways that we can strengthen our practices here and just get better at providing accessible content.

[00:55:46] We're looking at our procurement team is examining what contract language we might need to include and tightening our procurement practices, and we're looking at what other tools might be out there to help support designing accessible materials. designing professional learning that we can offer to staff on how to design accessible materials and we're training our instructional technology facilitators and our specialized instructional facilitators for assistive technology to be just-in-time supports for our teachers in the schools all

[00:56:24] right so actually I think mr. Hendrickson hit on most of these things and so instead of reiterating I will just say that we are we are really trying to strike a balance between a sense of urgency in getting this complete and being fully compliant with the reality of the size of our division the vast vastness of all of the materials that we produce on any given day let alone over the course of a year and so that is a balance there's a tension there that we're trying to manage setting realistic expectations while also making sure that it is urgent and top of mind for people to to

[00:57:03] meet the requirements of accessibility again once again thank you so much for this overwhelming information but it's also overwhelming for the educators for staff everyone and everyone that has to do that on the college level again we also have to get this done us professors have to get this done by the end of April and I have to go through approximately 500 slides to make sure that I have that hundred percent from the little man we call it a little man icon over here you had Adobe Acrobat you had Office 365 and if you don't hit

[00:57:41] that hundred percent is it go through the whole thing all over again even a video you have to explain person you know explaining this or person is seen picking up this or that and that will make the hundred percent from the little man that gives you that little pass but very it's a lot it is quite a lot for every slide but lo and behold and we put pictures and we put those videos to make it more interesting for students but it's a it's a little bit it kind of is unmotivating for a teacher because you you wind up saying I don't want to put that in there because I want my hundred percent from the little man or whatever source you're using but low and bold okay so I will turn it over to my

[00:58:17] colleagues do you guys have any questions or comments yes but sure not thank you I agree this is overwhelming from a profession that really is always feeling like it's one more thing and they're so burdened and begging for the division to create content and to create slide decks and new curriculum and all the things I mean this feels stressful to me a positive maybe that I can think about and I know Mr. Slevin knows where I'm going with this but I personally believe we are way too reliant on slide decks especially in the primary grades and my hope is that we can maybe be reflective and strategize

[00:58:56] around some more developmentally appropriate ways to teach the kids that are right in front of us and get away from that over-reliance on the technology. I know it's just become my marching orders, but I'm going to keep saying it. And I think this is an opportunity to really look at that and say, is that really moving the needle for our kids, especially in our younger grades?

[00:59:14] And then, you know, I think moving forward, we can obviously handle this. We can create content that aligns with the little man. But I do not foresee that this is a light lift with all the content that I know exists in the Schoology world, which honestly is making me sweat.

[00:59:30] So I know we have a tight end, so I will leave it at that. But I'm sure the team will be thoughtful on those things. And I will look forward to hearing about the progress. And I wish you well in your endeavor. All right. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. All right. I think we're ready to move on if there's no other comments.

[00:59:49] So our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 6th. That's a Monday, guys, at 4 p.m. Mark your calendars. So if there's no further business, I entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting. Yeah, but my style is I always ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

[01:00:08] Yes, Mr. Spenson. I move to adjourn the meeting. Thank you, Mr. Spenson. Second. Thank you, Ms. Chernoff. All right. So this meeting has been adjourned. Thank you. Have a great day, guys.



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