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Loudoun County School Board, Finance & Operations Committee Meeting, Tuesday, March 17, 2026

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Place	Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): https://player.vimeo.com/video/1170806432?rel=0 - BoardDocs (School Board): https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public	

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon. My name is Dena Griffiths, the chair of the Finance and Operations Committee meeting today for March 17, 2026. Happy St. Patrick's Day. I have school board committee members with me, Ms. Riccardi and Mr. Pepper here.

[00:00:18] we will begin with public comment but i understand there isn't any so the meeting will be audio recorded and posted onto board docs we are going to skip to the approval of the march 3rd meeting minutes could i please have a motion to approve the march 3rd 2026 meeting minutes i move that we approve the march 3rd 2026 minutes of the finance and operations committee meeting madam chair

[00:00:50] Second. Thank you. The motion has been made by Mr. Pepper and seconded by Ms. Riccardi. Is there any discussion? No discussion. All those in favor, raise your hand and say aye. All those opposed, please raise your hand and say nay. Aye. Aye. Aye. The motion passes unanimously with all committee members present. Let's move on to our items starting with the consent items. Do I have a second or a motion?

[00:01:27] Yeah. I make a motion that we approve the consent agenda items. Second. Thank you very much. That the consent agenda items were motioned by Ms. Riccardi and seconded by John Pepper, Mr. Pepper. Any discussion? Okay. All those in favor of sending them to the board, say aye. Aye. Aye. Aye. Thank you.

[00:01:55] Let's move now on to our information items, starting with 5.01, Business and Financial Services, RFP, R23252, Geotechnical and Construction Testing Services Renewal.

[00:02:13] Thank you. Good afternoon and thank you. I have before you this evening the final renewal on RFP, R23252, Geotechnical and Construction Testing Services. We did not incur any increase in the pricing provided by the vendors.

[00:02:31] vendors remained flat on their cost and you will see in the background that we have listed some items that will be covered with this services including building projects throughout the year including the Waterford elementary school renovation in addition, CTAE renovations, walking tracks, artificial turf and lights, tennis court lighting, the New View Transition Academy playground improvements and other small projects that should arise during the year. The The new contract has an effective date of May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027.

[00:03:05] This contract does offer the option to make this available at your next meeting as an action item or a consent item with a move to the full school board on April 14, 2026. Thank you.

[00:03:21] Any discussion? I just had one question. You said items that come up during the year. could be a school that needs some turf or can you explain can you explain you mentioned all those items but if you can explain what would come up during the year mr. Lewis or mr. Pascarelli did you want to explain some examples of small items that may come up with this contract sure so any of the projects that we do have soils work that have to be the foundation work and so all testing has to be done so anytime we have a project that we would start whether it's a small project or a large project would we have those same parts and so we would

[00:03:59] use these contracts to have those inspections done as part of the special inspection process for the county allowed. So just an inspection. It's not actually taking action and replacing anything. It's just having somebody come in and do an inspection. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Okay. With that, we can send this to consent. Do I have a motion to send it to consent

[00:04:28] or a second? I move to send it to consent. Second. Thank you. We'll go ahead and do that and send that to the board. Madam Chair, we do have to take a vote on setting this to consent. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Aye.

[00:04:50] Chair Griffiths, this is an information item, so there's no action required. Typically for the information items, as Ms. Villiol highlighted at the end of her update, we look at guidance from you. Typically it's the thumbs up, thumbs down of whether or not to send it to consent at the next F&O meeting or to have it as action at the next F&O meeting I was thinking consent for the next meeting I think your typical practice has been doing a thumbs up with the okay so if there was so you'd like us to do a thumbs up or thumbs down okay we'll do thumbs up all right thank you and that'll

[00:05:27] be for most of the items today correct for the information items that have a resulting action at the next meeting we would just need direction from the board if whether or not to bring it back as consent or bring it back as action okay so we can now move on to 5.02 madam chair before we we go any further just to clarify with miss with miss willoughby i apologize late in the day talking names um i appreciate the idea of thumbs up i do know that these meetings are being audio recorded so um some sort of verbal statement i believe would be

[00:06:05] helpful for the public just to know where that's fine yeah so long as there's some direction it just doesn't require a formal vote because it's an information item um well all of us were in favor um to send it over and we'll we'll do all those in favor say i and then we'll send it over thank you thank you so much um now we'll move on to 5.02 business and financial services renewal of rfp R21268 Security Guard Services. Thank you. Thank you. As mentioned, this is a renewal that is also in its final renewal for this contract, which means this will be the last time this contract

[00:06:44] will be brought before you, and next year we will be bringing a new contract before you. This current contract is with Allied Universal Security Services to provide supervision, labor, materials, personal supplies, and equipment to support on-site guards and effective performance of security services for Loudoun County Public Schools.

[00:07:04] This new contract is scheduled to commence on July 1, 2026 and run through June 30th, 2027. Once again, this does afford the option of making it a consent item or action item at your next meeting. - Thank you very much.

[00:07:19] Is there any discussion? Mr. Pepper? - Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for clarification on these hourly rates, I'm assuming that RR is regular rate and OR is overtime rate, is that correct? - I'm sorry, can you say that again? the hourly rates on the pricing schedule for this, for the guard services, there are two rates for different types of security personnel. One is RR and the other is OR. I'm assuming these are regular rates versus overtime rates, or am I, those abbreviations mean something else? I believe that is the regular rate and the overtime rate. Okay. Thank you for the

[00:07:57] clarification. And there was an increase, as you can see, I did want to mention that. Thank for that there was a 2.6 percent increase in the hourly rates for both categories is there any particular reason why um only one of the type of guards rates increased and the others stay the same or is it just hiring qualifications labor well as you may be aware we don't use the armed guard services for this so there was no increase in cost there that's the service we do not use And I'm also not, and we have the armed handler, dog, and patrol vehicle rates.

[00:08:33] We do not use those. These are other services that are provided by the vendor. Thank you. Yes, Ms. Riccardi. Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a number of questions about this. I just want to make sure I'm clear on this. So is Allied Services the only provider that we're using out of the ones that bid for this?

[00:08:53] Yes, they are the awarded vendor that was awarded the contract through the competitive solicitation process. Okay, I didn't know if there were multiple like we have on some other contracts. I just wanted to be clear on that. No, they're the only one. Okay. And then are we doing any kind of evaluation of their performance from year to year?

[00:09:10] Mr. Clark is here, and he would be happy to answer that question. Thank you. Good afternoon. Yeah, absolutely. We constantly evaluate their performance. We have a great relationship with their chain of command and their supervisory personnel, and we are in constant contact with them.

[00:09:34] Thank you. And then I noticed in the original solicitation, which was done back in 2021, that I guess one of my first questions when I looked through it was, have our security needs with them shifted in the last five years from when that initial solicitation went out?

[00:09:53] Yes. And has the scope changed contractually, or how have we been addressing that? We have added several schools to the portfolio. You've added schools? Well, of course, because we've got new

schools since then. Well, yes, that and our elementary school initiative from last year as well.

[00:10:12] Can you explain a little bit more about that? So if you're not aware, we had a blue ribbon panel come in and evaluate all things safety and security. We received outstanding marks, but one of the recommendations was to increase security in our elementary schools.

[00:10:30] So we've done that in several different ways, but we have utilized this contract to increase security with their guard force. Were there any amendments to the contract in order to do that, or did we just fold their work into the existing? I'll defer to procurement on that.

[00:10:45] Just out of curiosity. We would pull them in because we've already established the hourly rates, the scope of work. All that has been developed, so there would not have been an amendment needed to add those additional services as long as they were within the scope of the original contract.

[00:11:01] And then from just a training perspective, I noticed in the original solicitation, there wasn't, if I recall, an explicit list of the training requirements for those guards. Have we clarified that at any point in time, and are we checking to make sure that they've gone through those rigors like we do with our SROs?

[00:11:21] Absolutely. So every guard is required to be certified through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services to operate in the state of Virginia. So they're all certified there. First and foremost, they undergo a host of allied specific onboarding training to include a K-12 environment course that teaches them how to work in the K-12 environment.

[00:11:47] And then once they clear all of that, they come to us for a two-hour training session, and we go over all of the LCPS-specific safety and security protocols. Okay, but do they go through the same? I know that the SROs, we had this conversation I think a couple weeks ago, go through significantly more training for, I guess, LCPS-specific types of things.

[00:12:13] Do the security guards go through the exact same training that the SROs go through? No. and would that be more or less it's less so you have to understand that these security guards do not interact with students they do not function like sso's or sro's they are strictly there for visitor management purposes okay so they're in the vestibules in the front of the building they're either in the main office or you know or near the vestibule yes okay but they're greeting everybody kind of coming in and out so correct okay i just wanted to just make sure i was clear about that Thank you so much.

[00:12:53] And if you don't mind, just to clarify, they are not armed, correct? So I'd rather not get into the specifics on who is armed and who is not armed in our schools, but we have a mixture of armed and unarmed support through Allied.

[00:13:12] In my experience with Allied, I haven't really seen them walking through the schools, but when I come in, they just check me in, and that's pretty much it, correct? That's correct. They are strictly there for visitor management purposes.

[00:13:29] That is their primary function. Okay, thank you. Any other discussion? Yes, Mr. Pepper. Thank you, Madam Chair. And this is for Mr. Clark, really. Has there been any discussion with Allied on expanding perhaps their function?

[00:13:48] I'm just going to give you, for example, in Falls Church, we use a company called Securitas. And in addition to doing the same visitor management protocol that Allied is doing for us, They also walk the halls of the high school, make sure that security doors are propped open, just general rounds.

[00:14:03] Granted, there are additional officers. Has there been any discussion about expanding the role of Allied to do something along those lines? We've had discussions, but I'm really not in favor of that. That is the function of our school security officers. They're in charge of walking the halls, mentoring students, ensuring security within the school and with the students.

[00:14:26] All right. Thank you. Also, if I may, we did have a bomb threat at Eagle Ridge, which is a middle school that has an SRO. What if we had a situation in an elementary school like that?

[00:14:41] How involved does Allied get? Do they check all the classrooms? Do they get involved with calling the police? Can you give more details on that? So any staff member or contractor in any one of our schools could pick up the phone at any time and dial 911.

[00:15:01] So, from that perspective, yes, they could. But do they take part in the crisis management of the incident? No. They are strictly there for visitor management. Thank you. That was it. Crisis management, that's what I was thinking. Thank you so much for clarifying.

[00:15:17] Is there any other discussion? How do we feel about sending this to consent? All those in favor, say aye. Aye. All those opposed, say nay.

[00:15:34] Nay. Nay. Thank you. Alright, so now we'll continue on to 5.03, Business and Finance Services Renewal of RFP R21271 Transportation Management System. Thank you. This is a renewal with TransFinder for their Transportation Management System, which provides support to our transportation team.

[00:15:58] The current contract expires on June 30, 2026, with a new contract commencing on July 1, 2026, with no change in pricing. Once again, there is an option of doing this as a consent or bringing it back as an action item.

[00:16:16] Thank you very much. Is there any discussion? Thank you. Yes, Mr. Pepper. Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe this is a question. Has there been surveys of our parapolulation as to how effective or how well they believe that TransFinder is doing with notifications on, you know, student transportation?

[00:16:38] Mr. Davies. Student transportation on where their bus is and what's going on. Would love to hear a little bit more, because I'm a parent who uses TransFinder, and I like it, but I want to know what the general consensus has been. No, we have not done surveys regarding satisfaction. We do monitor the volume and the type of concerns that are submitted through OnFlow to our call center that we respond to.

[00:17:03] And we have people that are dedicated to helping resolve issues, primarily with StopFinder, which is the parent app for tracking buses and getting bus information. Do we find that our drivers enjoy the TransFinder app as well? Yes. It was a slow start, I will say that, but it's been very helpful, especially we used to run around with paper route sheets and every route change generated volumes of copies of stuff.

[00:17:27] That has all ended now with the electronic tablets and the turn-by-turn directions and all that and the student information being on the tablet. That's all I have. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Pepper. To move this to consent, or was there any other discussion?

[00:17:44] Sorry. To move this to consent, all those in favor, say aye. Aye. Thank you. We will move now to 5.04, Business and Financial Services, new policy, 4190, Other Post-Employment Benefits, OPB Funding.

[00:18:06] And I will actually take this item. This policy for our OPEB funding is a new policy. It came through the Finance and Operations Committee back in November and December and then was brought

also then to the school board on January 13th and January 28th.

[00:18:27] There was discussion at that time regarding just adding some additional language that we have included as we bring it back to the committee. We did not necessarily receive clarity at the time regarding questions or concerns about the policy of it returning back to the committee.

[00:18:46] So I'll just real quickly just highlight though that this policy is a new policy and it is really related to the financial management of the OPEB fund. Its purpose is to ensure that we have financial management practices outlined and ensuring that we have the funds available to pay for those retiree health benefits.

[00:19:07] This policy does not impact the actual retiree benefit. That is a completely different plan, policy, in terms of what that looks like. This is solely related to the funding of the OPEB and making sure, again, that we have a documented process because we didn't have that before.

[00:19:30] And with that, again, so everything is redlined. I think on section 43 through 51 is where we capture the discussion that did occur during the school board meeting to provide additional clarity related to the OPEB investment committee, the joint committee with the county.

[00:19:49] And other than that, I'd be happy to take any questions. Thank you. Any discussion? Mr. Pepper? Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for Ms. Willoughby, I believe as I look at this policy, and it actually uniquely comes to the fact that myself and Chair Griffiths are on this committee as well, both of us have amendments to the policy sitting in there.

[00:20:14] Those were sent back before they were approved by the full board. Is that correct? So nothing was approved by the board since the policy was referred back to committee. What we have taken the liberty of doing was I believe staff didn't have any concerns with the potential motions that would have been made had this policy been adopted related to providing additional clarification of the makeup of the joint OPEB investment committee.

[00:20:44] So that has now been included in this revised red line version that we are bringing to the committee. So I believe we captured the discussion items from the school board, but if there are additional items that you have suggestions, this is the perfect time and place to have that discussion.

[00:21:04] So I did notice that the amendment, when I look at the red line version in board docs, I noticed the amendment that I put forth is included, but Mrs. Griffith's amendment is not included in the red line version. And so, Mrs. Griffith, unless you can speak on that.

[00:21:25] Yes, I think that I had the original amendment, and then when you put your amendment, I think we cleaned it up a little bit. I believe that's what took place, correct? Yes, I believe they kind of built on one another. They built on one another. And if I may, Mr. Pepper, we brought this back because for some reason it went right to the board where we wanted to review it, make sure the amendments were in the red line document.

[00:21:54] And I appreciate bringing it back. We wanted to take another look at it. But my concerns were that it just went right through and it didn't come here first. So can you speak to that? I yes and actually it did come to committee it came to committee on November 4th and then this and then this committee took action and referred it to the school board on December 9th I think it was a situation where it was done with the old older committee and I think there was a little

[00:22:28] confusion so I just wanted to clear that up so I think I don't know if you had any other questions Mr. Pepper or Ms. Riccardi? Go ahead. All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, one of the questions I guess I have in this is I -- and I'm not as familiar with this structure, so -- and I know this is brand new, so I'd love some clarification.

[00:22:52] I just want to make sure that the LCPS has kind of an equal seat at the table with regards to the direction of this fund, so can you speak to that a little bit and have the structure of that?

[00:23:09] Yes. I would say that we do have an equal seat. We also have a shared interest in terms of, at the end of the day, wanting to maximize the value and the protection of the funds that both the county and the schools have in our OPEB fund.

[00:23:25] The makeup with, it's kind of like a mirror image of the finance representative of the county along with their finance committee chair and similarly with the schools. The only difference, if it mattered, would be there's one additional county employee, is the county treasurer but again I would really highlight that we have a shared joint goal in the administration of the fund in terms of the fund at the next level at the state where our funds are

[00:23:58] invested I myself actually represent both the schools and the county and sit on the state board related to the investment strategy. And I share information back to the joint committee related to that. So again, I think we've got a good process in place. We, I mean, there's lots I could share about OPEB in terms of even how we manage our funds is different than all the other state participants. We have embraced a more conservative approach related to investments.

[00:24:34] we are also the largest investor in the state pool. So there's lots of conversations. There's quarterly meetings that are happening at the state level. And again, this was just an opportunity for us to be more transparent and put into policy our plan related to how we want to financially manage this fund.

[00:24:55] So if we have any issues or circumstances where we're at odds with the county on philosophy of investment and we're down one person as far as the voting body of that group um I'm ultimately just super curious I mean I'm just right no I understand your concern and ultimately if I recall correctly and I think the discussion I think what is described here as well the um the county is required to establish the committee and also is responsible for the the

[00:25:29] membership so I think the the Virginia code has it set up in a way that we appreciate that the county has set up the board as they're required to but also have have given us two seats on that board so in other words we're not going to have equal representation if the county is the one setting the membership of the board I would say again let me give another example of why I think we have a joint shared interest the county funds our OPEB fund so if there was a shortfall or if there was any issues related to meeting our goals because we both have similar goals which is to

[00:26:09] have 100 funded OPEB liability and the county has the responsibility right now of funding that for us they right now contribute 12 million dollars per year directly into our OPEB fund so they again they have skin in the game, for lack of a better way of describing it, of wanting to support what our positions would be as well related to the administration. So we're not two completely separate entities. We are joined in the fact that they are funding our OPEB fund. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Ms. Willoughby. And, you know, to bring this back again, I just

[00:26:47] want to reiterate, it's something that needs to be analyzed and make sure we're doing it right. So that's why, even though I was part of the former committee, I thought that the new members should get a chance to really look it over.

[00:27:04] And I think we're going to, is there a meeting set up yet for the OPEB? I don't recall at the top of my head. We have struggled to get one on the calendar due to availability and making sure we have a quorum. So I do know we had one set up in February, and unfortunately it had to be canceled, and I have not seen a rescheduling of that just yet.

[00:27:26] thank you very much um and with that um this particular policy i think it can go for information at this time correct so the the next step in the process would be that we would bring it back as action to committee here okay i will share that um we never took the policy down from public comment from back in november when the it started its journey so we'll just keep that open and active to again encourage you know if there's any public feedback on the policy almost treating it as if it was brand new coming through the committee I would

[00:28:03] appreciate that so all those in favor of bringing it back as action say I I'm sure I don't believe we have to vote we don't have to vote on it it's just gonna come back okay now moving on to 5.05 support services mid-year transportation update walk zone in school uh start times review thank you mr griffiths um tonight we're bringing to you our annual walk zone update and this year we've added to it to school start time as we've made an adjustment to this and we thought about having in two separate presentations but we put

[00:28:41] it all in one so i apologize for up front that it's a little bit long for that i will say that most of what we're going to talk about tonight is either guided or dictated by policy one of the things that we have to do by policy is to notify any parent of a student whose eligibility for transportation will be changed by June 1st so that dictates our timeline that's why we're here in March we'll come here in March and this is information only so these are not items that the board votes on or the committee a few years ago we started taking it through the policy says it would be vetted through the appropriate committee which is finance and operations and we

[00:29:20] also have started taking it to the full board for for their awareness tonight I am joined to my left is Tisha Austin who is our assistant director of transportation you talked to Mr. Davies our director a few minutes ago we also have Kathleen Guarini who is our coordinator of routing and training back here along with Liz Kratz who is our traffic and pedestrian specialist who value who evaluates all the walk zones every year and has a large part of this so this is this is a big part of our year so it's a lot of information a lot of work that's going into getting us here I will say that this year we know that the school start

[00:29:58] times we the board has had some folks come and talk about that so what we did is looked at the boundary changes that we just didn't look for opportunities to do that also say that we are fully aware of the the attention to rightfully so and concerns of parents in the community about the tragic accident we had to with respect to walk zones. So, you know, our team has really, really dug deep and made sure to look for anything that is out of the ordinary. And so just know that we take that very seriously as well and have had that at the forefront of our minds as well as we went through that. I will take a little

[00:30:36] bit of history on the start times. We went from a three-tier system to a five-tier system to allow us to be on time better. So we did that because we were not providing good service. We were not prime reliable service to certain schools. We were late on a regular basis and so that happened I think in 2022

and we look for every opportunity. I think two years later we moved several schools from 730 to 745 and this is the elementary level and so Mrs. Alston is going to tell you a little bit more about that in our evaluation for for this year. You also the if you have a chance to take a look

[00:31:11] at the the policy is pretty I don't say vague but it's just a brief mention in the policy. The Regulation outlines a number of steps and a number of criteria that we design our walk zones around. So we have very specific things about speed limits for elementary crossing and walking along.

[00:31:28] And so some of that, as I mentioned when I first started, is dictated or guided by a policy. That's what we mean by that. So our team has a very specific set of instructions when we go out and start looking at these. And those are what you're going to hear about tonight.

[00:31:43] So what I wanted to do was instead of have me talk about it, I want to have the experts at the table. Ms. Austin leads all this team of experts and specialists to go out and look at these things So she's going to walk us through our slides and I will stop talking Good afternoon and I would like to thank Mr. Lewis and Mr. Davies for this opportunity to present to you Our mid-year transportation update and our walk zone review My team of over 40 transportation staff from lead drivers, area supervisors, coordinators, and our traffic and pedestrian specialists Look at every walk zone we my team applies school board policy 62 10 to our walk zones an elementary

[00:32:23] student may walk up to one mile and secondary student or middle and high may walk up to 1.25 miles however we do have an exception zone so that we can catch maybe the home at the end of a cul-de-sac or a road or maybe a few homes and put that into the walk zone we do communicate with our families multiple occasions and those dates are listed here on the slide this table shows the results of our of our review I'll just go through it really quickly Cedar Lane will pick up 64 walkers due to an attendance zone change and Lane Thompson we had a path built or we didn't have it built but a path was built between

[00:33:00] communities 16 additional walkers there Gum Spring will pick up 85 walkers due to an attendance zone change Mill Run 47 additional walkers due to an attendance zone change Madison's Trust will lose walkers those students will now be bused to legacy and then we had Madison I'm sorry so when everything shakes out and everybody gets on or off buses we have about 36 additional students riding buses next year and of course these numbers are based on this year's number so they could change a little bit all right we have this slide

[00:33:37] shows our crossing guards we have at each level you can see there 42 at elementary 30 at each it's 30 different schools 16 crossing guards for middle and at seven different schools and these positions are very hard to fill so we thank the dedication of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office they fill those vacant positions with deputies and we really appreciate are grateful for the relationship that we have with the manager of the crossing guard unit she's very responsive and a pleasure to work with all right the yellow highlighted

[00:34:12] area here will now walk to Cedar Lane and this is an attendance zone change there is a picture of the path that they will be utilizing to get to school all right this is the path that was built for Elaine Thompson the yellow highlighted area will now allow students to walk to Elaine Thompson and there's a picture of the path of the gum spring the highlighted area here will now walk to gum spring and I'd like to bring to your attention the two small circled areas there that is the exception rule where it's just outside the 1.25 it allows us

[00:34:52] to capture I believe there's five homes in those two circles combined so that is an example of the exception rule that we applied there all right Madison's trust is losing the circled area there used to walk to Madison's trust they will now be bused to legacy that is a an attendance on change mill run again yellow highlight area will go to mill run and I believe those came from hillside okay switching gears to talk about about time changes so we with the

[00:35:32] The elementary zones, some of them, attendance zones, being looked at and rezoned. We looked at if we could push bell times back later and what impact that would have on our resources. We also looked at the idea or question had come up about rotating early and late bell times every other year for students.

[00:35:51] And we've had an on-time performance issue at Eagle Ridge. We looked at swapping bell times there with Watson Mountain. And then we'll also just touch base on our current bus driver shortage. So the good news, Cedar Lane can be moved to 745 with no impact on resources.

[00:36:11] Stuart Weller can be moved to 745 with only one additional bus needed there. And we have found that we could switch Watts and Mountain and Eagle Ridge start times so that we can improve our on-time performance there at Eagle Ridge. All right, so what did we do? Really quickly, this is a chart showing how many schools we have at each bell time this year and what it will be next year.

[00:36:35] So that's just a quick snapshot there. Our routing and our operations team worked together and looked at the rezone elementary attendance zones. They adjusted bell times and recalculated bus runs to confirm that the follow-on trips will work.

[00:36:51] And what we found is that we were going to need a few additional drivers to push back all of the schools. So we were able to only do Cedar Lane and Stuart Weller. Now this is an example of, I guess, a timeline for we have a bus serving Elaine Thompson and Creighton Corner, one right after the other.

[00:37:10] You'll see this current year, there's 19 minutes between those two runs. It allows for students to, well, and let me start over. For a bus to be on time, it needs to arrive 20 minutes, up to five minutes before the bell time.

[00:37:26] So students can have breakfast and get settled into their day. So we have a little bit of a buffer there before the bell actually starts for instruction. So the green arrow of 19 minutes between the Elaine Thompson and the Creighton's Corner allows for those for us to kind of get in there and but what our experience has been is that traffic congestion in and around schools it's just that 19 minutes on paper looks good but it really it gets narrowed down to just a few minutes so it may look good on paper but it not not necessarily in reality is it that good the second timeline is where we tried to adjust the school back or later

[00:38:03] 15 minutes and you can see we've only got four minutes but again our experience has been that traffic congestion around and around the campus is just going to eat up those four minutes and it's really that's not gonna we're not even gonna have that amount of time to get between runs so that you know in our scenario would not work Cedar Lane this shows you an example of what would work right now this year we have 36 minutes between bus runs and we currently use those buses to help cover for last-minute call outs in the in the area so it does help us with daily sub coverage and next year you'll see pushing it back 15 minutes or later it narrows down our window but we still have

[00:38:41] 21 minutes on paper to help hopefully get out maybe cover for some people that have called out sick at the last minute. Ms. Chernoff had asked us to bring back the the findings of a study that we had done a couple of years ago and this scenario shows you that if we made all elementary schools start at 7:50 a.m.

[00:39:03] that's what they that's the time they used to start a couple years ago we're gonna we would need an additional 117 drivers and and these numbers are actually two years old so it actually will be a little bit more expensive but This is a study we did a couple of years ago.

[00:39:19] This next slide is from the same study. It just shows a question that had been asked, could we flip and have high school go first and elementary go last? This shows that we would need 46 additional drivers. And again, the cost of that would be a little bit higher just because it was from two years ago.

[00:39:36] All right, we are having some on-time performance issues at Eagle Ridge this year. We've worked with, there's a light there at Watson Mountain. Those buses that serve Watson Mountain first then go and serve Eagle Ridge. They're having a hard time getting off the campus because of so much traffic. We've worked with VDOT to adjust that traffic light as much as possible, but it's still not getting us where we need to be.

[00:39:55] So our solution is to have Eagle Ridge start first and Watson Mountain start second so that we can use those buses more efficiently and solve our on-time performance at Eagle Ridge. The question about flipping bell times every other year from late to early for elementary schools has come up.

[00:40:18] Our concern is its effect on parents and students. They get into a routine just like we all do. Parent schedules would be affected. Childcare and daycare would be affected. We found that daycares actually do what we do, and they pair their vans. They'll serve one school and go serve another school, so that works for them right now.

[00:40:34] Student schedules and routines would be disrupted. We believe that it would be an overall dissatisfaction with flipping bell times. And as Mr. Lewis mentioned earlier, we went to a five-tier bell time to address on-time performance issues, massive second loads, and a driver shortage.

[00:40:52] So by adjusting to that five-tier of bell schedule, we decreased our second loads from 115 to 8. And then we reduced our driver requirement by 35. Now we did go back and push some of our elementary schools a little later. And so we ended up needing 12 additional drivers.

[00:41:09] So in our experience, if we continue to adjust bell times, our driver need is just going to continue to increase. Currently, and this slide is actually out of date, it says 32. As of today, we are 34 drivers short. So how we cover that is that our supervisors are driving, and Mr. Davies likes to drive.

[00:41:29] I drove for 15 years, but he still thinks it's fun. So he does drive quite often. He does try to encourage me. I'm like, look, I've been there, done that. Well, I would if I had to, absolutely. The bus driver, this slide shows our new hires and our resignations.

[00:41:46] As you can see, we've had some trim years. We've had some fat years. This year is panning out to be a thin year as far as getting new hires, and our resignations are a little higher so the lack of qualified bus drivers is just an industry-wide issue right this shows our recruitment statistics as you can see we have a lot of people apply 391 but once they go through all of the the training paperwork and interview process we only had 56 come out now this

[00:42:21] was for October of 24 through September of 25 had 56 school bus drivers come out and take a bus run and but we also had 62 drivers retire in that same time period so we were we were in the negative there all right we work with we are grateful for our working relationship that we have with HRTD and DCE HRTD works side by side with our training department to attend job fairs host one-stop shops stay in touch with our applicants and DCE and I'm using acronyms everybody knows who they are I'm sure they advertise for us on every

[00:43:01] platform that they can think of we also offer a \$1,000 stone sign a \$1,000 referral to any LCPS employee that recommends someone to that becomes a bus driver we also have a \$2,500 sign-on bonus for any driver that come that is successful it's not easy being a bus driver I did it for years it's a split shift the things that you are able to do between your break is kind of limited because you have to come back in the afternoon of student management is becoming an issue as well as maneuvering a 40-foot school bus in Loudoun County

[00:43:36] traffic is a huge deal so it's not for everyone all right this is a survey result that we did a couple years ago where we talked we asked the community what their preference was as far as which school tier started first so they they preferred an elementary than a middle than a high start for belt times and Miss Chernoff had asked us to provide this information again so again the good news Cedar Lane gets to move to 7:45 Stuart Weller gets to move at 7:45 and Watson Mountain and Eagle Ridge hopefully we definitely think that Eagle Ridge will not have an on-time performance issue next year by swapping

[00:44:13] those bell times with Watson Mountain looking forward just as a reminder don't need to remind you because you have to do this all secondary attendance zones will be re-evaluated the all the other elementary school attendance zones will be evaluated in the coming years any changes there could and potentially affect our bell times and then in addition we've been working with the sheriff's office to get stop on cameras on school buses a local ordinance is needed for that before we can actually start the process and that's so that we can take it not we but the sheriff's office can ticket drivers for running

[00:44:47] lights on school and then one last slide I believe mr. off had asked what what the world events was having on our on our fuel and as you can see as we all experienced there's been an uptick at the pumps if it continues as is what we heard today is that we will be negative \$187,505 if current prices stay as is. So we're hoping they go back down. And that is the end of our update. Thank you so much. Any discussion? Mr. Pepper.

[00:45:24] Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a lot of questions. As you can well imagine. I know this is really just a discussion, an informational piece. If so, I don't even know where to begin. Is there any action the school board has to make changes to these processes proposals or is it just information and we just move forward let me get let me get with that sure so one of the things we did a few years ago was try to codify our processes and and our thought processes i mentioned at the beginning

[00:46:01] where in the regulation it shows what their parameters are for for the walk zones in particular so if we were going to stray from that we would need some guidance from the board in form of the regulation um and and well actually in the policy because staff does regulation but um you know at this point it is one of those things that uh because of the timing of that is it takes a while to do that and we've got to get notice out to be fair to the parents uh so i guess the best answer is we are happy to have any conversation you want to have about that um it is a very complex process and every time we have changes to attendance zones which we will have for the next five years and

[00:46:37] every other five years after that um it reroutes and it's just a um it's a challenging thing to go through that process and and reroute all you know we have 80 80 almost 80 000 students 70 some percent of them are eligible and 70 some percent of those actually ride and so the folks that develop the routes have to develop them all and then we have to figure out in the first month of school who's riding who's not so it is it's a real challenge um but yet we're always open to the conversation there is a always a time limit to that no under understood i just wanted to know like what we have

[00:47:12] um going into it um i do have a couple that i'm a little concerned about in the walk zones and i'll just bring them to your attention the first would be mill run i noticed that the path on that walk zone crosses claiborne parkway um and that's an elementary walk zone what is the um accommodation for elementary school students crossing claiborne on that yeah so there is a tunnel that goes under clayborne that's how they're going to get there yep i was hoping you're going to say there's a tunnel yes sir okay and then the other one that i i have kind of bigger concerns about that i don't think was taken much into account is the one for gum spring um the gum spring middle school and i'm

[00:47:52] full disclosure i actually live in the yellow area um so uh the gum spring one the walking path is along destiny and there's some crossing issues there are actually no dedicated or striped crosswalks across Destiny Drive at any of those points.

[00:48:09] And the sidewalks are, if you've ever walked through the neighborhood, and I have, because I walk the dog there, they go in fits and starts, particularly in the Kirkpatrick Farms area. They're not contiguous sidewalks. I'm not sure why they were built that way, but it was a weird thing. The other thing to take into account is that in the nearby area, they are starting construction.

[00:48:26] There's a goat farm, I know this sounds really strange. There's a goat farm on Gumspring Road that is going to go under construction. There's also an area off of Greenstone Drive. It looks like a vacant area now, but they're building houses in there. So the increase in both vehicular traffic on Destiny and dump truck traffic that's going to happen in the next year leaves me very concerned.

[00:48:48] Additionally, this yellow area was already recently rezoned from Willard back to Gumsbury in the last year, which is why it became a walk zone after it wasn't a walk zone and all that fun stuff. So a lot of the opposition to the move, in addition from already uprooting students from one school to another, was now they're also gonna have to walk a pretty significant-ish distance.

[00:49:12] I know that the regulation says 1.25 miles, but I believe that's pretty far, particularly for sixth graders in heavy backpacks. So that is just some of my kind of discussion points that I feel need to be made on that, and I really would love if that one could be reconsidered.

[00:49:28] And then the other question I have, and I have this written down is was there any consider I know you talked and I appreciate you looking at start times I know that's a huge a huge thing any talk on what would happen if Stuart Weller went a little bit further into eight is that something that was considered and what other runs are affected by that kind of bouncing around what we found is that in the afternoon in the afternoon runs we would not have time to do those later at a later time and

[00:50:04] Kathleen's coming she was really hands-on it was the issue is with the afternoon it would require two additional buses for the afternoon runs and so we did not consider that and right now we have one additional bus I'm sorry right and based on the current proposal if I'm not mistaken it was one additional bus one additional bus for both a.m. and p.m. and that was mostly for the rezone students from

that we're going to Seldon's Landing yeah and then now they're going to Weller and then if we did move it to 8:00 it would require three buses or two buses three in total okay so one for the am pm and two additional resources for

[00:50:40] the pms that did not work okay that's uh what i would that's important to know and understood um has there been any talk and i know that and i'm in agreement i know that that slide some of the slides do a little um kind of explanation as to like why it's bad to flip back forth and i'm a proponent is that like you can't keep flipping this annually like one school's early one school's late. I know it puts a ton of work on you guys. Has there been any thought, and I know that maybe we can look at this when we get into the rezoning, of going for like maybe a four or five year period for some schools, moving back to early and then flipping back to late just for a little bit of

[00:51:18] equity? So we haven't considered that particular thing. I mean, interesting when you said that, my first thought was, well, a lot of those students would already have passed through the elementary school at that time before the change. We have not looked at it as something we can certainly think about and talk about a little bit uh we do really believe though that the annual change would just be devastating for families and that just and i know some folks are proposing that that would be a better thing uh but we just think it would be a well it would be a logistical nightmare for us because one of the things to remember is our routes and our driver counts are

[00:51:54] based on the routes we have and the the schools that were chosen to be early were done that way for a reason to help with the routing so if we flipped it it may be every other year we need another x number of drivers and buses just to be able to fill those those routes so that would be difficult to do no as and someone who understands the nuances of child care and work schedules everything the annual is just seems like the annual flip seems just very cumbersome on families and drivers and everything else i was hoping more for kind of a psych secular thing cyclical cyclical can't use my words today cyclical process um with something that i would be um i'd be hoping for Is any of this, and I know I asked this already,

[00:52:33] we do not have to vote on the timing either at the school board level. It's just a recommendation, and you've presented it, and it goes from there. Say that again about the bell schedule timing. I know we don't have a vote on the walk zones, but the bell schedule timing, do we vote on that either or no?

[00:52:49] No. Okay. Just clarifying what's in the policies of the public is aware of kind of where we're limited as a school board. Those are operational things that we can make those adjustments along the way to get kids there. Yeah, and then last question, because I know we've talked about this as well.

[00:53:05] There has been a walk zone from in the South Riding area for Lunsford Middle School. Yes, yes. And I know that there have been several parents who spoke at school meetings have been concerned about this particular walk zone. And I know I've had concerns.

[00:53:21] There's been this video of kids coming through. There's like a weird piece of private property in front of Cardinal Ridge. There's a bit of a hill on one side. Braddock has some kind of structural issues as well. Has there been any look as to what that would take to put that back into a busing zone just for safety purposes?

[00:53:41] It would take two buses. That's two busloads of kids. However, what we have found is that we would fill up buses as they come in. Instead of dedicating two buses to the walk zone, we would fill up as

the buses come in from the farther out of the tenant zone and pick up those kids. So it could be three or four buses, but it's definitely at least two buses based on the number of kids.

[00:53:59] And that was based on the year, a couple years ago, the number of kids in that walk zone. Okay, I appreciate that. And then finally, one last question, I promise, this is the last one. Has there been any talk, and I know Fairfax County does this, with our sheriff's office, particularly because I'm thinking of that spot along Braddock Road is a school zone at 25.

[00:54:17] And I'm as guilty as everyone don't tell the sheriff, but, like, it is hard to go 25 in that stretch. Is there ever been a thought to putting in the speed cameras that activate during school times? because I know they have those along Braddock further down when you get into Fairfax County towards Stone Middle and some of the other ones. Yes sir so I can't speak for the Sheriff's Office but I do know that there's active conversations with the Sheriff's Office and the board about whether or not and whether there's a conversation coming up possibly at the joint committee to talk about that as well. We have those speed zone cameras in the town of Leesburg now and so we don't know if or when the Sheriff's Department do that but it is a conversation that's

[00:54:56] happening so your your comments are timely for that and so hopefully we'll have some more information on that in the next in the coming months on something that maybe can be done the the one slide that we had in here one of the things that has to be done has to be an ordinance change and that's being worked on with the county attorney's office because the supervisors would have to adopt an ordinance to allow that at this point because currently it's not allowed just to go out and do that if I may to get back to your gum spring question I appreciate you bringing that up and I talked to the folks right before the meeting after you and I talked that's something that what we're

[00:55:32] gonna go out and look at it and look for those concerns you mentioned and one thing if we've done before and they reminded me and I hadn't thought about is in some cases we have a walk zone established and if there is a short-term construction project something we have provided bus service in a walk zone on a temporary basis until that construction clears up so that's one of the options we have moving forward as well thank you and i thank you mr lewis and i i also understand that you may not see them right away if you go out right now because the projects are just in their infancy or haven't really fully started yet so this may be something that appears july august

[00:56:07] september as opposed to currently right absolutely thank you mr cordy thank you madam chair um this is a job that i would never be able to do in a million years so i have great appreciation for you guys I do not have that level of detail attention to detail that in no way but thank you guys for doing this because I know this has been a massive puzzle that we've been looking at for years and years and trying to sort out the right start dates and school calendars and buses all there's never a wind situation in that and predicting weather related things too I know

[00:56:42] I just a couple of really quick questions for you it's not lost on me that recruitment is an issue for our bus drivers and so I would and not today but I would love to hear some more about what we can do to help support recruiting bus drivers and you know hopefully getting in a really solid cadre of them here and hopefully at some point in time even being able to narrow the walk zones because we've got enough drivers to cover that I mean I think that'd be an ultimate the ultimate goal that we would have I'm really concerned about some of these kids having to walk

[00:57:18] through their own neighborhood through another neighborhood and to get to their school if my kids were in a walk zone that's exactly what they would have to do too they actually have to walk through two neighborhoods and I'm not sure that's an ideal situation to say the least so that would just for whatever that's worth the other thing I'm really curious about diving into is student behavior on buses because if that's an issue for for not keeping and retaining retaining our bus drivers, then we need to be looking at some serious behavior policies for

[00:57:52] bus students on buses. And again, I'm a Southern mom, so I don't have a whole lot of patience or tolerance for that kind of nonsense. But I think we need to seriously look at our policies with regards to behavior on buses. That's a huge safety issue in a million different ways.

[00:58:12] And without sharing all of my beliefs on this, I think it's pretty obvious, I think that we need to probably bring that policy back up at some point in time to the school board to re-examine that because we've got to have our cadre of bus drivers filled. And if that's the number one reason why people are quitting or not continuing through the year or whatever, we as the school board need to be looking at that specifically.

[00:58:37] So I would love to hear your thoughts on that. And frankly, any other, you know, as people are doing exit interviews or whatever from that, I would love to hear kind of the top two or three reasons why bus drivers aren't and figure out ways that we can address those issues and and see if we can help our retention and recruitment uh thank you to you both you you had some great suggestions some great questions um and um i do want to piggyback on uh what miss ricardi said i don't want your job it's very difficult um you know and

[00:59:13] and just to the regarding the discipline um we did have a situation where i think uh there was a fight on a bus and the bus driver didn't want to get involved was nervous to break it up um he ended up i i think he ended up losing his position here so that's a good point uh miss ricardi um i was hoping we can move him somewhere else it didn't work out um after that situation so yes um i think discipline on the buses are a big issue so i did want to bring that to your uh attention

[00:59:47] again piggybacking off of Mr. Carty but a couple things for me crossing guards I know they're through the sheriff's office I have to tell you my children went to Belmont station didn't know there was a crossing guard there for years somebody brought that up to me at a meeting the other day and because my children took the bus to cross over Portsmouth you know they never walked or anything which I would have liked them to walk. We didn't have that beautiful crosswalk put in yet,

[01:00:22] which, by the way, still needs work. It needs flashing lights. But I did not know there was a crossing guard there, but that crossing guard appears to be at the end of Nightwatch, if you're familiar. Are you familiar with that? I had no idea she was there, so that was a surprise. I think we should be talking more to the Loudoun County Sheriff's office to see if we can get crossing guards. Um, that particular situation with Portsmouth, um, I mean, the cars are coming 40 miles an hour. I mean, the kids that live across the street from,

[01:00:58] from the, from pretty much from the school across Portsmouth can't cross. It's, it's a difficult situation. So that's, that's sort of just personal. That's bothered me for years. And I'm glad we did end up getting a crosswalk there. But, um, I have to say too, I, I was riding my bike and watched a kids still run across even though he was in the crosswalk. There were still cars coming really fast. There was no

blinking lights like we have on Hay Road. And a lot of history has been brought to me regarding Hay Road that there was a student hit there. That's why we ended up having that

[01:01:35] crosswalk there. He survived. He's fine. And then other kids have been hit as well. So that's something I want to talk further about because we did have that situation at the end of Portsmouth and Claiborne and my view there is you did put or we or VDOT whoever did put some some more signs there and put a crosswalk there or and I think it's an electric when you when you hit the button it says wait you know that wasn't there before my kids were there but I think it's more of a VDOT

[01:02:13] issue, because there's no arrow in the left turning lane. So I think that's an issue. And then people coming off Claiborne very quickly to make their left turn are not realizing there might be students there. And I'm thinking maybe we should do, and this could be a VDOT issue.

[01:02:36] These are just suggestions if we were to go back to VDOT. No turn on red, number one, because when they're on that corner, it's turn on red, so sometimes you don't realize there's students standing there, ready to cross the street. I, for one, almost got hit there once myself, but also, coming off Claiborne, I don't know how we can fix that situation when they're making the left, so that is where somebody, a student, was just hit by a car recently, so there's got to be super re-evaluation of that intersection.

[01:03:14] And I know you're familiar with it, Mr. Lewis. So that's number one. And crossing guards, of course. Now, I didn't see trailside in here. Did I miss it? But that trailside would be included in that. That's where some students go to trailside and some go to Stonebridge. I don't know if you're familiar with that intersection. Yes, when you say trailside would be included, what you refer well trailside would be included um in your paperwork because um uh students crossing over portsmouth um are going to trailside and then there's students coming the other way that

[01:03:51] are going to stonebridge yes but we're not making changes this year to the walk zone which is why we didn't have a slide for it that's okay okay that's fine that's fine i just want to um be clear that that area right there should be should be evaluated that's and we appreciate i know you reached out uh immediately to supervisor turner and supervisor turner is working with it and right as you mentioned it is a the vdot jurisdiction so and and they um they have regular conversations so i'm sure that's still being talked about over there as well and and i appreciate that and also

[01:04:25] the walk zone um to belmont station um my suggestion is to put lights there but i'm not sure and maybe you can answer this for me i'm i'm not real sure it may it may be with the board of supervisors, they're looking at putting a development there. So maybe they're waiting to see if the, you know, if the developer will go ahead and do that. Maybe you can answer that.

[01:04:49] Have you been in, have you been in those discussions? There's been development plans for that area for quite some time. So I don't know if it's imminent. Ms. Austin and I were just talking the speed limit on Portsmouth might be higher than 25, which is why we wouldn't have elementary kids walk across there um and the the policy i can't remember exactly how it says um would not cross a a roadway with a 25 mile an hour or higher speed unassisted and the unassisted is a reference to a crossing guard well either or um i i feel like something needs

[01:05:26] to be done whether we we have 25 mile an hour signs for just a little bit with the flashing lights or we have a crossing guard. Either or, I think, might work. And just to bring up another issue, I don't know if you're aware, the 25 mile an hour on Claiborne near Stonebridge, I believe parents have constantly

called that they're not working all the time. The lights are not flashing when they're supposed to. And electricians come out, they fix it, and then it goes dead again so I'm not sure if you're familiar with that either that's certainly our

[01:06:06] area of responsibility so when we know about that we send folks out to do that so anytime you see it please let us know and we'll keep an eye on it thank you I just wanted to bring it to your attention and thank you so much for pushing back Stuart Willer we did have a lot of people coming in that wanted to move back that time hopefully it's understandable the bus situation Cedar Lane um we had the redistricting so now we you mentioned we have all these walkers now um were they surveyed um and they came back and told you they will be walking or they were

[01:06:42] redistricted so no busing at all if you could just clarify that for me yeah so there was the only survey we do is that for those that want to the rising fifth graders that want to stay at their school have that a option to do and the board just took action on that the other night and so we don't petition them for whether or not they're going to ride the bus or walk we do find that out during the course of the school year when when we well in this case i apologize they're walkers so we wouldn't be we would not know that they'll all be either walking or their parents will be driving them and we strongly encourage the walking and how many did you say you had for

[01:07:18] cedar lane uh proposed to walk 64 that's a lot yes that's a lot thank you um that's all i wanted to mention um any other discussion and this is a review so this will come back to us again correct actually it won't it won't come here but it'll go to this the school board okay 24th you'll see the same presentation to the school board all right thank you thank you um with that we'll move on to

[01:07:49] 5.06 business and financial services procurement overview presentation thank you thank you and i appreciate this opportunity to share information with you regarding the procurement and risk management team and the work we do for Loudoun County Public Schools. I'm also happy to have Ms. Ewing here from the Office of Division Counsel to participate in this presentation this evening.

[01:08:12] This also is an information-only item just being brought forward for you to acquire additional information regarding our office and the services we offer. Maybe. Why won't it move? There we go.

[01:08:33] Okay. Our office is made up of three teams. That includes our solicitations team, our contract contract risk management team and a support team. The solicitations team, along with informal and formal solicitations, works with supplier compliance, approval of purchasers and our cooperative contracts. Examples of their work are what is brought to you on a regular basis for your approval when the contract exceeds \$250,000 in value for those contracts that are issued by Loudoun County Public Schools through our formal solicitation process. Some of those include the recent adoption of the ERP contract. We've also recently done civil

[01:09:12] engineering with you. Our school nutrition food contracts will be coming up in the next few months. Pretty much every Finance and Operations Committee meeting, we have items to present. Moving over to the contract and risk management team, they're responsible for contract review, confirming legal compliance, and do a risk analysis. They also help develop memorandums of understanding and agreement, and also handle property damage claims. Some Some examples of some of the things they do include software applications and subscriptions, moon bounces, field trips, partnerships, student support services, and licensing agreements.

[01:09:48] The last team is the support team. They support both the solicitations team, the contract risk management team, as well as our end users. They provide supplier onboarding, the purchase card administration, data analytics work, are responsible for validation of ACH validation for our vendors to be paid by ACH. They also review and maintain the purchase card program and they also do a vendor spend analysis. Procurement at Loudoun County Public Schools is what you call a hybrid model. You've heard of centralized probably and decentralized.

[01:10:26] We're a combination. In the center you have procurement risk management services and then going in and out of that you have our account managers which are your administrators, principals, assistant principals, directors, supervisors. Vendors. We all know vendors play a crucial part in the procurement office and what we do. Without the vendors, we would not be able to do the things we do in procurement. Our end users primarily include the financial technicians at the schools, the bookkeepers, and then, of course, our friends in legal who help us on a regular daily basis with the contracts. I wanted to share with you a little bit of the data related to the work we do in procurement. You'll see that I've given

[01:11:06] you some numbers for the contracts and I gave you the year to date for the first half of the fiscal year 26. So that shows you where we are to date. We also are responsible for those property damage claims, getting that information into VACorp, working with the end users to get pictures of the damage.

[01:11:24] Not transportation, they handle their own vehicle accidents and damage, but a tree falls on one of our buildings or students decide to drive something on one of our turf fields. We are responsible for those property damage claims. We also are responsible for reviewing fundraisers, field trips.

[01:11:43] We obtain permits from the County of Loudoun. We are responsible for submitting the permit application for anything a student is going to get in or on, graduation stages, moon bounces, any type of amusement where the students will be getting in them or on them.

[01:11:59] We do special events. We have a lot of various events at the schools, both those sponsored by the schools as well as any events sponsored by our boosters our PTAs and PTOs we also the solicitations that we bring before you we review all the purchase orders when they go out we also review all requisitions when they are created we are part of that review process and we also conduct a purchase card review where we make an attempt to review every card within Loudoun County Public Schools at least once a year now I'm going to turn it over to miss you

[01:12:35] Ms. Filial, briefly introduce me. My name is Janice Ewing. I am Deputy Division Counsel. My areas of coverage are support services, procurement, and FOIA. I have an absolute odd love of procurement. It's not anything that's interesting to anybody else, perhaps Andrea, but I absolutely love it. I get a thrill out of it. I love to be a part of a negotiation, and I think it's just a very, very interesting topic.

[01:12:59] So hopefully I won't bore you to death today, but if you ever have any questions about the process, procedure, the regulations, feel free to reach out. So I'm briefly going to go over some legal requirements. So generally our contracts may be subject to a variety of legal constraints.

[01:13:16] So one is our federal procurement standards. This is for any federal procurement or use of federal grant funds. So this is found in Title II of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200, and it requires additional procurement steps like kind like performing cost price analysis for certain contracts and also has additional contract provisions these are like termination for convenience and law and cause Davis Bacon for certain construction contracts equal employment clean air and also anti lobbying provisions so

a lot of times if we have federal funds we have to be sure to include those terms and conditions in our contracts the Virginia Public

[01:13:54] Procurement Act this is the law in Virginia for all public procurement and applies to all non-governmental transactions for public entities so this covers everything from how we procure how we contract and what happens if there's a dispute or a protest so it is the primary law in Virginia also you hear a lot of conversation about accessibility compliance specifically the Americans with Disabilities Act which requires a procurement of accessible good services technology for individuals with disabilities recently the Department of

[01:14:28] Justice has added new compliance standards in title 28 of part 35 of the CFR where they are requiring new standards for web content and mobile applications which we must come into compliance with in April 24 of 2026 so staff is absolutely working on that and not only us but every entity in the state and in the nation has to come into compliance that's over a population of 50,000.

[01:14:55] A last major area of legal concern for us is FERPA, which is the Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act. This is found in Title 34 of Part 99 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This enforces strict safeguards on student data that's handled by vendors. So vendors that process, transmit, store, or otherwise access our students' record information, they have to either be considered a school official as defined by FERPA or we have to obtain parent or guardian consent before that information can be shared with them.

[01:15:28] It's something we definitely take very seriously here at LCPS. This next slide just gives you a couple of examples because there's one thing to kind of gibber on about these regulations, but how do they look in practice? So one of the requirements for federal contracting compliance, you may see something like a conflict of interest.

[01:15:47] A lot of times those are a little bit more robust on the federal side than on the state side. For sole sources and procurement, in fact, the VPPA, if you often see something weird going on with the contract, so for example, we have three-year renewals and not four, why is that? Oddly enough, there's probably a code section that requires us to only have three and not four. So a lot of times if something seems odd, there could be a provision in the VPPA that requires a certain type of compliance. With respect to ADA accessibility, I mentioned that earlier, it has to do with software, but also closed captioning, alternative text, and assistive technology support.

[01:16:25] So FERPA, one of the ways that we enforce it here is a data privacy agreement, also referred to as a DPA. We try to require all vendors that are interacting with student record information to execute that. If they refuse, a lot of times we'll have to escalate it and review their privacy provisions to make sure they're in compliance with FERPA.

[01:16:45] The next side down, of course, is school board policy enforcement. Our school board policies both include procurement thresholds, signature authority, contract provisions. And I think Andrea's about to go into more detail. I did want to add as well, like Janice, I live and breathe procurement.

[01:17:02] Walked in the door at L.A. County Public Schools 28 years ago, not knowing what procurement was even going to be involved. And 28 years later, here I am. So do thoroughly enjoy procurement. And one of the things is the procurement policies, which brought us back to this meeting.

[01:17:18] The procurement policies that I am first showing to you are those that have either been recently revised or adopted through the five-year process. I'm not going to list them all here, but you'll see here the ones that have recently been acted upon. And once again, we bring these before you every five years.

[01:17:36] The next slide. These are the ones that are coming back. What I've done here is given you some dates of when we'll be bringing those back. The school board contract approval and the purchasing authority will come back on April 21st, and the reminites and bids and awards and procurement procedures will come back in May 5th, 2026.

[01:17:56] I do have the comments and information from Ms. Riccardi, as well as other comments that we will be incorporating into this as Janice and I move forward in working on these. Just wanted to give you the dates. You'll also see there the dates they went to the school board, F&O, and coming back here.

[01:18:15] Policy 4320, Methods of Procurement. This policy really sets the framework with how we procure the goods and services here at Loudoun County Public Schools. Across the top, you will see thresholds. That is for goods and services.

[01:18:30] These thresholds are based on the aggregate spend for the purchase of like items across the year. Other jurisdictions may have varying numbers related to the top line. Some may have a higher authority before they have to go out to a formal solicitation but these are the numbers as per policy 4320.

[01:18:51] In addition, line two is professional services. The Virginia Public Procurement Act does require that once professional services exceed \$80,000, we do a formal solicitation. Down below you'll see some examples of professional services including accounting, engineering, architectural services, some of the things that are brought here before you.

[01:19:13] So how do we order at these thresholds? For the order method for \$5,000 or less, we recommend the use of our purchase card program. The purchase card program provides us the opportunity to make small purchases, also provides a rebate back to Loudoun County Public Schools, and we are part of the large state of Virginia contract for our purchase card.

[01:19:34] The primary holder of a purchase card at each of our locations is the financial technician or a bookkeeper or an administrative assistant, with the approver being once again account manager that I mentioned previously, administrators. Then we recommend purchase orders for the next two, for the rest. Purchase orders, that preferred method, as I shared previously, we review the requisitions as well as the purchase orders. Now procurement method. How do I get the information to make the orders? We recommend that you always get a quote, even before you place the order, just to know how much it's going to cost. Anything that's greater than five but not exceeding

[01:20:13] 50, three written quotes. Those quotes can be obtained by the end user. Greater than 50 but not exceeding 200 is an informal solicitation called an RFQ. And then greater than 200,000 is your IFB and RFP. Down in the footnotes, I also shared some links here. We post all of this information on our website, including all LCPS contracts. They're currently listed in alphabetical order by type of commodity. We list all the cooperatives we use. Cooperatives are contracts awarded by and other jurisdictions that allow other jurisdictions to utilize the terms, the conditions, the pricing.

[01:20:50] We list our sole sources. We also list emergencies if they are greater than 30,000. With these, the sole source and emergency are approved by myself as the Director of Procurement Risk Management

prior to them being placed, or in the case of emergency, Mr. Bowhead from Facilities will reach out to me immediately and let me know.

[01:21:10] We just had a pipe burst at Academies of Loudoun and we need to get over there right away. Okay, get the vendor you need to make that happen. The next slide shows what our role is. I've shared with you a little bit. We in procurement review all the purchasing activity under 5,000.

[01:21:28] Remember I mentioned review the purchase card transactions. We're reviewing them for compliance, making sure they're not using something that we already have on contract. Then we, in the next column, we review the quotes, we create the contract, we approve the requisitions and purchase orders, and we do contract management.

[01:21:46] Contract management could include a problem vendor. We're having an issue with the vendor, the department reaches out, we get involved in talks with that vendor. The next column, we issue and award the request for quotes in collaboration with the requesting department or the budget holder.

[01:22:01] We create contracts once again, approve those requisitions and the contract management. The last column, greater than 200,000, is when we issue and award IFBs and RFPs in collaboration with the requesting department as well as our office of division council.

[01:22:19] The next slide gives you a breakdown of the total spend for FY27 in the amount of \$897,924,173. This includes CIP, CAP, grants, as well as our operating fund.

[01:22:37] You will see broken out there that out of this dollar amount, 57.3% of that is made off of LCPS awarded contracts. So over half comes from contracts that are awarded by Loudoun County Public Schools. Our next area is cooperatives.

[01:22:53] Cooperatives, once again, have gone through a formal process, been approved, awarded, and allow us to use those contracts at the same price or a better price. Government-to-government. This is an example of government-to-government would be Thomas Jefferson. School of Thomas Jefferson is government-to-government.

[01:23:10] George Mason University is government-to-government. Taxes, government-to-government. That's examples of government-to-government. Sole source. That means that only that vendor can give you that product. It is a case of, for example, I always use books. Maybe you can only get the book from the publisher. If they have a reseller, they're not a sole source. So we do our due diligence with sole sources, including the vendor sending us their sole source letter and the requester justifying to us why it is a sole source.

[01:23:44] Exempt. Exempt means they are exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act. Examples of that our legal fees. That is an example of something, and leases, that are exempt from the Public Procurement Act. We have a single quote, which I mentioned before, and then the other ones I previously mentioned. That remaining balance makes up basically 2.2% of our overall spend.

[01:24:06] So like I said, the main thing is that over half of our contracts are done by Loudoun County Public Schools with competition for another 23.2%. So there is a lot of open competition with our contracts? Ms. Filial kind of mentions the procurement team creates contract.

[01:24:27] That's a very loaded word because there are many, many pieces that come together as far as making a contract. A lot of times the team will start with our own standard documents, which we have for

goods, services, goods and services, and technology. But a lot of times we're sent a lot of vendor, what we call vendor paper. This can be anything from service agreements, end-user license agreements, software-as-a-service agreements, or SAS, or master services agreements.

[01:24:50] All of those documents have to be reviewed for both their terms and negotiated and either added or removed from our standard contracts. The procurement team also goes through memorandums of understanding and memorandums of agreement. This is probably the number one question I get from anyone is what is the difference?

[01:25:08] Um, nine times out of ten a memorandum of understanding is an agreement to agree. We use that with collaborative arrangements where we don't really need a lot of enforcement language. So a lot of our agreements with other governmental entities or other nonprofits will often be on a memorandum of understanding.

[01:25:25] Memorandums of agreement are required whenever there's a fiscal element to the arrangement or if we need a stronger enforcement language, especially if we're dealing with a corporate sponsor. Um, so both of those MOUs and MOAs are governed by, um, our own school board policy 4180, which requires certain terms and conditions.

[01:25:44] Right now we're working through all of our sponsorships and agreements and making sure that those terms and conditions are in fact in place and we've been pretty successful with it. Some people are a little slow and it creates a clog but compliance is the most important element. In addition, the procurement team also deals with purchase orders and as Ms. Philead just mentioned, government-to-government transactions. So just to go over briefly, what does the contract review process actually look like? So once the procurement team is able to identify the procurement method as mentioned earlier, depending on the the

[01:26:23] costs, the scope of work, the needs of the end user. They determine whether a solicitation, cooperative procurement, small purchase procedures, or sole source procedures can be used. If there's federal funds, they'll check to ensure that the federal procurement requirements, if they are applicable, they are performed. A lot of times we have involvement with DDI for software and application onboarding and review. DDI will review the system requirements, data security and compatibility. Once the contract is identified and the contract is starting to be reviewed,

[01:27:01] we have several layers of that review. It includes legal compliance review, and this means not only reviewing the LCPS contract and finding the one that's most appropriate to the transaction, but also reviewing the vendor documents, as I mentioned in the last slide. There's also a risk analysis. We review liability, indemnity, data protection terms, certificates of insurance provisions, reviewing the coverage limits and endorsements.

[01:27:28] Also we incorporate the data privacy agreement at this stage, depending on what the use of the data is. Is it student, employee, or just business information? We also require certain contractor certifications, which require background checks, licensing, and safety certifications.

[01:27:45] There's also negotiation with the vendor in collaboration with me, typically, where we go back and forth to negotiate the terms and conditions of all of the documents finally the procurement team will finalize the document and continue with contract management that includes obtaining signatures attaching the correct exhibits the required attachments they then upload it into their repository and track

for retention wow so how do we do all that procurement expertise and resources in the world of procurement we believe in not reinventing and we rely very

[01:28:24] heavily on our peers throughout the country. Professional development is key. Training. Professional organizations were members of the National Institute of Governmental Procurement as well as the Virginia Association of Governmental Procurement. On the Virginia Association, I'm just completing my final year on the board for that organization as the past president, so I've been actively involved. I also have a member of my team that is on a committee for the VAGP. NIGP, I've worked with them on various committees as well as other things with that group certifications my staff a lot of them have certifications through the state i for example

[01:29:00] have four different certifications that are related to procurement mentorship that's internal mentorship but also mentorship across the country i just recently we just recently hired someone in my office that i actually mentored the past two years through the national purchasing association buyer seller workshops every month we hold a buyer seller workshop on how to do business with us And next month in April, I will be joining my counterparts at Loudoun Water, the county of Loudoun in the town of Leesburg, for a workshop for suppliers about how to do business with, we call the Loudoun Procurement 4, how to do business with Loudoun County.

[01:29:40] We also have account manager and end-user training provided through our FAST team, which is a team within business and finance. And I've already mentioned it throughout, the peer support. At any time, we can call a fellow procurement professional in any entity, and they are more than willing to help out with any questions we might have.

[01:29:58] Now, I shared with you earlier our procurement policies. But on the next slide, I'm not going to go into a lot of detail on these slides, but these are all the other policies that this committee will be reviewing. On the five-year cycle, if you'll make note, we have quite a few in 2022, which means next year, 2027, there will be policies coming before this committee. If you see confirmed, that means that it was done before on the five-year cycle. It was only a small technical change or no changes at all, revised and then adopted. You'll see that OPEB, which was brought before you this evening,

[01:30:34] is on this list as well as one additional list of policies and that's not including Mr. Lewis's policies that also come before this committee. So there are a lot of policies headed your way but along with those policies what's your role with procurement? Adoption of the fiscal year budget creates the framework for procurement activities. As per policy 4130 you approve what my office purchases. You let our office know these are the things that we need to procure.

[01:31:08] Budget has already shared with me new initiatives and enhanced initiatives for next year so we can get started. I also like to remind you that your role is you're contacted many times or maybe by vendors. Not maybe that's your role but they figure they'll reach out to you. No communication with them. What I would like to do is suggest that they submit their questions through Let's Talk or they can email the web address or email address I've provided here.

[01:31:37] When there's an open solicitation, for example, we've got things what I call on the street right now that we're working to award, all those communications need to come to the procurement office. They should be not communicating with anyone but procurement. Lastly, the school board contract approval.

[01:31:54] As per policy 4370, we bring before you the contract's award for LCPS solicitations over \$250,000. And quarterly, in your school board update, you will get a list of change orders to a fixed price contract exceeding the greater of 25% of the contract or \$50,000.

[01:32:16] So you do play a critical role. You set the foundation for my office on what the work looks like ahead for us in the next fiscal year. And with that, we're happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you so much for that. Any discussion?

[01:32:33] Ms. McCarty. Thank you, Mantra. I'll be really quick because I'm watching that time, and we've been here. This has been a long agenda. It's been good, though. A couple of questions for you all. I noticed on slide 11, the pie chart that was in there, that we've got almost 8% of that budget is to sole source contracts, and then there's an additional exempt and single quote in there, too, which is that top kind of whole slice of that pie.

[01:33:02] you know, that's a 7.9 or almost 8% of that total is a really, it's about \$71 million if I do the math correctly on that, which seems to me like a really pretty large amount of money. What kind of accounting do we take for those kind of, like the sole source, and you said exempt was legal fees, correct? And then the single quote, what kind of oversight are we doing with those three entities, Especially, I guess, really the sole source and the single quote.

[01:33:33] The sole source generally come through on requisitions and purchase orders. And as soon as we notice that it's a sole source, there's the process we go through that I had mentioned with a sole source letter from the vendor as well as justification from the end user. A sole source could also be a system that we've adopted that we've had for five years.

[01:33:53] The contract is out. We don't have the funding to implement a whole new system. We've already done it competitively. It'll then become a sole source because we have the existing product. So there is a formal process that we go through with the sole sources. In addition, when something is sole source, we also create a contract that goes with those goods or services.

[01:34:12] And we're totally transparent and post that information on our website as to the things that are identified as sole source. Regarding single quote, single quote primarily comes into play through our review of the purchase card transactions. By reviewing the purchase card transactions, we ensure that if we have a contract for toner cartridges, they're buying them from our contract and not buying them from Costco.

[01:34:35] So we have mechanisms in place to review for compliance as we go through the process, and procurement is involved at each stage of that process. Okay. I get really nervous. \$71 million is a lot of money to put into those vehicles, and it makes me very nervous.

[01:34:56] And I'm not suggesting there's any impropriety, but that's always where the crazy stuff happens, right? And so I just want to make sure that we've got that. Has the Auditor General done a review of those entities in particular? We have not gone through an audit review.

[01:35:13] We did go through an IT risk audit review, but we have not gotten through a review regarding the sole source. I will share that I had a meeting with him earlier about these methods and so on, And he thought we were, he should say, well, you're in compliance with those requirements.

[01:35:29] And I'll just add, though, specifically with the Auditor General, as I think you may be familiar, I think you're on the Audit Committee as well. So how he defines his topics. And so this has not been an area that has been identified for him to do a specific review.

[01:35:46] There has been, as Ms. Villal said, some just more informal discussions. I will highlight, Ms. Villal knows I also share the concern about sole source. I'm very sensitive to that as well. And over the years, I appreciate the work and the structure her team has put in place to really strengthen and make sure that we have a very high standard of what that sole source justification is.

[01:36:11] And I think we have, if we were to look over the years, where our usage of sole source has actually come down because we have really looked at those through a much tighter lens. Yeah, that'd be great. And I tried to click on the link, but I don't know that it actually was linked in the presentation so i'll have to go dig through or somebody can send me a link that would be fantastic um i think that's just from a board and a financial oversight perspective i just think that's one of the um places where not necessarily here but in other places that can be a source of concern so i appreciate that um i think i think what would also be helpful too is we have these

[01:36:51] policy reviews that are coming up next month or the next couple months um any recommendations you all have as far as um changes to policy would be helpful too so as you're working especially from a legal perspective if there's stuff in there that you think that we need to be looking at from a policy perspective and adjustments to that it'd be great but thank you guys so much for this i appreciate it uh mr pepper thank you manager um i'm gonna echo what uh my colleague said on the last one um i don't know how you do this i could handle the transportation and the walk zone stuff

[01:37:24] of this procurement stuff um um no i uh this this number i think the pie chart slide got me too um this is a very large number that we spend a lot of money on and it's good to know that this is um coming through i was looking ahead to um what the policies were that we're going to go through on slides eight would be the slide that I was looking at and noticed that 4310 4330 4340 and

[01:37:58] 4370 are all coming up kind of in back-to-back meetings and I know that some of these particularly 4340 and 4310 were sent back to F&O from the full school board to kind of clarify between purchasing authority and signature authority so I would any information you guys have on that would be just really helpful when we go through both these policies. My question though is, would it make more sense to do all four of these at once, or do we think we split them up in a nice way, either time-wise or based on what the policies entail? In respect of time and the other things

[01:38:37] that I know I have coming before you in the way of contracts between now and June 30th, out of respect of time, I tried to pair them together based on which policies kind of really go together. That's why I picked the two together that I did and the other two. I'm willing to look at bringing them all four back, but like I said, I know I've got other items.

[01:38:56] I know Mr. Lewis is going to have items. So I just, you know, like right now it's 10 after 6, just trying to spread it out some for you and then also give you an idea of what lies ahead for you for the next upcoming year as well. So thank you very much.

[01:39:14] Ms. Riccardi? Thank you, Madam Chair. Just really quickly too, and I would just like to, make a request to. I know that it's typical that we get our documents posted a couple days ahead of time. Some of these things take a little bit more, take some mental bandwidth to really get through, especially larger

contracts, but then also when we start looking at these policies and how they kind of interplay with each other, if there's any chance that we could get our F&O agenda posted earlier than just the three days on some of these bigger things, I think that'd be great so that we can really take some time to wrap our head around it and for us to be able to get back to you with questions ahead of time so that we're not

[01:39:50] having to do it so much you know last minute I think it'd be really helpful oh okay I thought Ms. Willoughby was going to say something I'll just what I was whispering to Mr. Lewis no secret that includes Mr. Lewis too right no of course of course absolutely of um I think there's definitely an opportunity for us to with the draft agenda that we share with the committee to to um have more information in the draft similar to like a board packet that you have for the school board

[01:40:26] and then um our posting for the you know the full agenda for the public on the friday and again if we're if we're done early we can try to strive earlier but um you know friday is that that legal requirement deadline but yes and i know we've gone back and forth a little bit miss willoughby about um seeing things ahead of time so um i would like to work with you on that um especially with all the policies that are going to come forward. Any other discussion? Okay, and with that, we do have one more item.
5.07, Business and Financial Services Review of the LCPS

[01:41:02] Budget Process. Good evening. This is our final information item for the afternoon. As we start reviewing the LCPS Budget Process, it's important to recognize that Virginia Code establishes the legal framework to budget for K-12 public education in our state. First, on the left, we have section 22.1-88. This code requires that we identify and include specific revenue streams when developing our budget, including federal, state, local funds, as well as other

[01:41:37] revenues such as donations and grants. Next, we have section 22.1-95. This section not only gives local counties, cities, and towns in the state of Virginia the authority to collect taxes to fund public education, it actually requires localities to do so. This makes Virginia just one of 10 states in the nation where school divisions are not fiscally autonomous and rely on their local taxing authority or their local governing body to do so. Next, we have section 22.1-92. This is the estimate of monies needed for public schools, and you would recognize this language from each

[01:42:14] year's annual superintendent's estimate of needs. This requires that each division superintendent prepare and present to the local taxing authority with the approval of the school board their estimate of monies needed for the following fiscal year. And finally we have section 22.1-93 which is approval of annual budget for school purposes. This actually requires that our local taxing authority, the county of Loudoun, adopt a budget for school purposes or educational purposes no later than May 15th or within 30 days of when they are made aware of the estimate of state funds

[01:42:53] that they would receive. So that drives a lot of the timelines that we'll review. You've actually seen this slide before, but I think it's helpful to revisit, and we'll start there in the middle section. This represents the county timeline, and while Virginia Code generally allows local governments to adopt their budgets by May 15th, Loudoun County government must adopt its budget and tax rate earlier, typically the first week of April. This earlier adoption is necessary so the approved tax rate can be applied to property tax bills that are mailed in late April and due in

[01:43:27] June. This timing is shown in the purple highlighted box on the slide there in the middle. Because the Loudoun County Public Schools budget becomes part of the county's overall budget, the Loudoun County School Board must adopt its budget before the county administrator presents the

proposed county budget so it can be incorporated into that proposal if we work backwards from there we then move up to the LCPS line at the top in order to meet that deadline for the county administrator that means that the board the school board usually adopts the budget during early February and if we backdate from there this would

[01:44:04] mean that the superintendent and the school division is presenting the estimate of needs during the first half of January with multiple school board work sessions following thereafter leading up to budget adoption. However, this timeline is also influenced by an important state deadline, shown on the bottom row.

[01:44:22] By December 20th of each year, the Governor of Virginia releases the proposed state budget, which provides critical information about revenue projections and potentially mandated expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. While work to identify budget priorities is already well underway before December, the The governor's proposal provides the more complete information needed to finalize the superintendent's estimate of needs.

[01:44:46] That means we have a relatively short window in late December and the beginning of January to finalize the proposal and begin the school board's formal budget review process. Moving any earlier would miss out on the governor's budget proposals and, in biannium years, re-benchmarking information, both of which are critical to building a revenue-informed estimate of needs.

[01:45:08] I would also like to review industry best practices for governmental budget development. Beyond the foundational legal requirements, we also align our budget process with recognized industry best practices. One of the many resources for this is the Government Finance Officers Association, or GFOA.

[01:45:28] GFOA provides extensive guidance to support strong financial management in public organizations. They maintain a large library of best practices, training resources, and policy guidance across more than 20 different financial management areas, including accounting, capital planning, procurement, and budgeting, to name just a few.

[01:45:52] Within budgeting specifically, GFOA has developed 34 best practice papers focused on budgeting and forecasting, which help guide organizations in building transparent, effective, and well-structured budget processes. Here, we have several best practices that GFOA calls out that are particularly applicable to LCPS.

[01:46:12] First is a GFOA best practice that government should use strategic planning to guide budgeting. Strategic planning establishes a long-term vision and aligns budget decisions with organizational priorities through an ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

[01:46:28] GFOA also recommends making the budget easy to understand. This includes organizing the budget book and presentations clearly, limiting unnecessary detail, using consistent formatting, and highlighting key information, often through a budget in brief summary. For department presentations, it is a GFOA best practice that these presentations in the budget book include using a consistent format explaining each department's responsibilities, outlining challenges and opportunities, summarizing revenues and expenditures, and including staffing information and performance measures. Additionally, GFOA recommends that

[01:47:05] organizations track and communicate performance measures to monitor financial health, service delivery and program outcomes, ensuring that results are meaningful, reliable, and shared. And finally, but certainly important, is the GFOA best practice of multi-year financial forecasting, which helps organizations plan beyond a single fiscal year.

[01:47:27] These forecasts should rely on defined assumptions, data analysis, and regular updates as they help guide future budget decisions. We'll discuss later in this presentation the timeline by which this information is scheduled to be brought to the school board for FY28 budget development.

[01:47:44] In addition to GFOA, we also look to guidance from the Association of School Business Officials International, or ASBO. ASBO provides best practices and professional standards specifically focused on school divisions and school system financial management.

[01:48:00] ASBO particularly emphasizes that educational priorities drive the budget and that budget should support the educational plan. Instead of preparing the educational plan and the budget in isolation, they must be integrated. As an example, a school division may wish to improve test scores by reducing class sizes, and the reduction of class sizes would require additional teachers, which is a budget priority.

[01:48:24] Similar to GFOA, the Association of School Business Officials also prioritizes budget communication and presentation, goal setting, financial monitoring, and performance management as best practices. Our commitment to these best practices has been recognized at the highest level.

[01:48:42] For 20 years, LCPS has earned the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the GFOA, placing us in an extremely select group. Last year, only 30 school divisions nationwide, or 0.23 percent, received this prestigious award.

[01:49:00] Earning this award demonstrates the school division's longstanding commitment to budget excellence, that the budget meets rigorous industry best practice standards, and that the budget is a clear and transparent communication tool. Similarly, LCPS has been recognized by the Association of School Business Officials for 26 consecutive years.

[01:49:22] This places us among 140 school divisions, or about 1% nationwide, to have received this honor. The ASBO award is earned following peer review of the district's budget by experienced school finance professionals, measuring adherence to best practices for strategic alignment and financial transparency.

[01:49:43] These consistent achievements show that our budget process and documentation meet the highest standards in government finance. We would also like to address the committee's request for how information on how other school districts and government organizations prepare their budgets.

[01:50:02] To do that, we sampled four other public entities, including three school divisions and a county government. We looked for broad representation that included neighboring Fairfax County Public Schools, which is Virginia's largest school division, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools from North Carolina, Bedford County Public Schools, a rural division from southwestern Virginia, and our very own Loudoun County Government, the governing body who appropriates funding for LCPS.

[01:50:31] As we reviewed the budget processes and documentation for these organizations, a few consistent approaches emerged that are applicable to government finance as a whole, including school

divisions, towns, cities, and counties. These consistent approaches identified that: Budget discussions are aligned to visions and goals.

[01:50:50] presentations and documentation focus on investments and changes from the prior year, budgets are organized by financial component or fund, and budget processes are increasingly including trade-off discussions as part of the budget process. Not all presentations, or not all had presentations, and each of the government entities we reviewed had varying degrees of public documentation available. We'll provide examples of each on the following slides. Here we have Charlotte mecklenburg schools or cms from north carolina cms follows a strategic planning and budget alignment

[01:51:27] process very similar to loudon county public schools in it their local board of education establishes the vision and outcome focused goals for the school division the superintendent translates that vision into a specific action plan directs staff to prepare budget requests that are supportive of and aligned to that action plan and uses that information to present budget recommendations to the Board of Education that are necessary to achieve the Board's vision.

[01:51:54] Again, you'll likely see parallels between this process and the one LCPS strategic plan for excellence, including the thoughtful work that the Board and staff are undergoing to develop the next strategic plan. Here, we can look to Fairfax County Public Schools, which is Virginia's largest school division, for how investments and changes are incorporated into the budget.

[01:52:16] The budget presentations to their school board, as well as their FY27 proposed budget book, focus on year-over-year changes when discussing expenditures and revenues. For FCPS, they specifically describe expenditure adjustments, which are categorized into the categories of compensation, baseline, and multi-year investments. Compensation adjustments are predominantly comprised of salary adjustments negotiated through collective bargaining.

[01:52:42] Baseline adjustments are driven by enrollment changes, restorations from prior-year budget reductions, and contractual changes. And multi-year investments are the continued rollout and expansion of programs and initiatives. Again, this is very similar to LCPS budget presentations and you may even recognize similar terms such as compensation, base change, new and ongoing investments from our own FY27 Superintendent's Estimate of Needs. And here we have Bedford County Public Schools located about three and a half hours southwest of Ashburn. Bedford similarly

[01:53:18] follows a governmental best practice of organizing and presenting their budget based on fund. In Bedford, that would include the operating fund, school nutrition fund, and textbook fund, as well as a maintenance contingency reserve. For Loudoun County Public Schools, this would be the operating fund, school nutrition fund, grant fund, capital funds comprised of CIP and CAP, and the self-insurance funds. Note that Bedford also organizes their budget aligns to the major categories identified by state code. While LCPS does not use those categories as a principal organizing construct. That information is included on page 73 of the FY27 Superintendent's Estimate

[01:53:56] of Needs. And finally, we will turn to the County of Loudoun as an example of how budget processes and materials discuss trade-offs. Increasingly, governmental organizations are highlighting how they must balance critical needs with projected resources, often in the face of economic uncertainty. As a result, important priorities are left unmet, partially met, or deferred until a future year. For the county, they acknowledge the priorities they elected to not include in their budget within the presentation and identify each within their budget book. They call these unfunded

[01:54:32] resource requests, whereas for LCPS, we identify them as unmet needs. This concept was discussed in the FY27 Superintendent's Estimate of Needs with the School Board, where the superintendent identified slower expansion of programs and initiatives and additional positions and staffing enhancements as examples of LCPS unmet needs.

[01:54:54] Now I will turn it over to Ms. Willoughby to discuss FY28 budget development. So looking ahead for the FY28 budget development, as Mr. Jones mentioned, the work is well underway in preparing not just the operating but also the capital budgets.

[01:55:14] That work is happening concurrently. Our budget team is preparing tools and resources for departments and there are internal discussions on what the key FY28 priorities will be for both the operating budget and the capital budget. Planning for the May 12th school board budget work session is also underway, and feedback from today's discussion will help inform the topics, the structure, and activities that may occur on that day.

[01:55:40] Specifically, I wanted to also go through, month by month, on the various budget collaboration meetings that are on the school board's agenda. Starting in May, again, the FY28 budget work session will again incorporate feedback from this committee.

[01:55:57] The school board will also receive a high-level multi-year fiscal forecast to aid in developing their priorities. And this will be the first time that we will be producing that multi-year forecast. The school board will also receive an overview of the FY27 investment outcomes that we introduced in the FY27 budget and our plan on reporting those to the board.

[01:56:19] Moving to the capital budget, information will also be shared about the FY28-FY33 capital budget plan and that evening, and information officially kicking off the capital budget process will be on the agenda. The school board will see the proposed capital budget calendar as well as the fall 2026 attendance zone change process calendar.

[01:56:40] The school board would then take action on those calendars at the next meeting in May. The following month in June, there is a planned capital budget work session slated for the 9th. Also a possible June school board retreat could occur where the school board can dive deeper into operating and capital budget discussions. That's something that has happened in the past.

[01:57:01] For the month of July as you may be aware there are no board meetings and there's only one meeting in August but you can rest assured that work is still continuing at the division level regarding developing the budget. That brings us to September where the proposed FY28 operating budget calendar will be brought to the school board as an information item and the board to approve it at its next meeting. Also in September would be an additional capital budget work session.

[01:57:31] Moving into the fall operating and capital budget activities definitely ramp up. In October the school board would have another operating budget work session and also hear about the FY27 enrollment report which as you know is very important factor driving the budget. In November and December the school board will receive an update on the county's fiscal guidance for the upcoming budget. There will be several capital budget work sessions and a public hearing before the school board adopts the FY28 through 33 capital budget in December. Then the board transitions to focus on the operating budget in January when the superintendent presents assessment of needs

[01:58:10] for FY28. The school board will have several operating budget work sessions in January as well as a public hearing followed by the adoption of the FY28 operating budget which would be expected to occur in early February and with the last action being the school board then presenting its adopted budget to the county board of supervisors to fall within that timeline that Mr. Jones highlighted of the county's budget process. As you can see there is significant work for the school board to go along with the all the other work that you have as school board members

[01:58:46] serving on the board as well as with the committee the committees that you serve on so with that our goal was to address the questions and comments and concerns that was brought up at the last meeting while we pride ourselves on our awards and following best practices we also embrace continuous improvement which i think is evident by us introducing the new element of you know the the metrics the return on investment as part of the 27 budget I'm excited to share what that looks like going forward you know to the board as well as the you know for the first time since we

[01:59:25] have a five-year projection of revenues from the county of presenting that to the board as well of what it does look like and addressing the the concerns that I've heard and that I share of the the um the reduced county support as they try to constrain their their own budget um so with that i do you know open the floor to you know any questions and comments to really drive um what that may 12th work session could look like to get that that consensus feedback from the full board

[01:59:57] any discussion mr recording yeah thank you so much thank you madam chair thank you so much for the presentation um so you know as you know this is this is an item that um i think i want to sort of tread lightly on it in the sense that i don't i don't know that the process is the process the timeline is the timeline i don't know that there's any i would welcome suggestions on how you all think we could do the timeline differently but at the end of the day i'm not really sure we can so

[02:00:30] i don't think for me it's an issue as much about the timeline as it is about the physical sion book and the presentations that we get from staff and making sure that they are as plain language and straightforward as they possibly can be so that we can really digest that information and the public can digest that information as quickly as possible in the short timeline that we're given.

[02:01:00] So I think that's the foundation of what I'm looking at. What I would love to be able to see in that at the very beginning is our base operations. So what does it take to run LCPS by department just to maintain the status quo? For example, for this year, we have our budget that's set out. What is it going to take to operate at that level? And then have it be more by, again, a breakdown more by department than it is within that programs. The reason why I'm recommending that is because we're in the middle

[02:01:39] the strategic planning process right now. I don't really want the budget being tied to the strategic plan is a great and nice to have, but I'm not sure we're going to have, I don't know what the deadline is for the strategic plan right now, but I don't know how far we're going to be into having the new strategic plan by the time the budget process starts. And really what I want to be able to do is have the strategic plan and the budget as two separate entities instead of it all mashed together, at least from an initial perspective. So I'd love to be able to see the base budget in the SEON, what it costs us to operate as we are right now, and then what are

[02:02:14] all the additional new programs and things that the administration would like to have, and then we can overlay on top of that the priorities of the school board, and we can take a look at that too. And then for the base budget, I'd also like to be able to see the ROI on the programs, the cost per student,

per program, so we can kind of see that. There are some times when our, you know, basically right now we're running, I think, at about \$24,000, \$25,000 a student.

[02:02:42] Is that about right? With the full budget all in somewhere. Anyway, \$22,000 to \$25,000, let's just say. But we have some programs where the cost per student is a lot more and some perhaps that are less. It would be really great to know what that looks like. And sometimes having the higher investment is necessary for a specialized program, et cetera.

[02:03:01] So there's justification for that. But I think this is kind of that kind of next level depth and transparency I'd like to see in the budget as we move forward. And I think it's a lot easier to be able to do that. And I think being able to see things at a more line item level is also going to be really important, at least for me.

[02:03:19] And I would love to hear my colleagues' thoughts on this. And then the last thing I will say, too, is before that May 12th meeting, I would really love for you all to do a survey of the school board and their aides as far as the practicalities of the SION and those presentations and how it helped them prepare for those meetings in January.

[02:03:38] Because I think ultimately that tool, those tools, the presentations and the SION book itself are what we're having to use in order to be able to make, you know, what I would consider to be pretty big and fast decisions on budget items. And I would love to see if we can just make it clearer and more simple and more straightforward.

[02:03:57] So that's really my goal in all of this. And I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Ms. Riccardi. Mr. Pepper. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to echo a little bit about what my colleague just stated. I know for me, this is just a personal kind of how I attacked the budget for the first time, right?

[02:04:17] We get this, and, you know, obviously, Ms. Riccardi and myself, we were brand new to the process, and you basically get thrown into the lions then, if you will, right when you start the school board. But I know that I went home and I got the C on and tried to tackle the C on.

[02:04:34] And for me, the challenge really was, you know, what am I looking at? And then it wasn't really until we got the, you know, the individualized presentations that I was able to kind of tackle the different pieces and come up with the questions that I had. And so for me, really, the only thing is kind of the marriage of the two.

[02:04:51] I do disagree with some things. I really think that, you know, a lot of what we do does need to align with our strategic plan because that is our vision and our direction as a school division. I think we do a pretty good job of that. I think that I also do agree that we really need to get input from all of the members of the school board on what is working and what's not working.

[02:05:14] And, you know, if there's consensus on areas that are working really well, obviously keep going with that. You know, these awards are awesome, so clearly there's some things that are working really well. But in other places, you know, there may be people that are struggling, right, with certain things, and so if there's, you know, something that all nine members of the board and their aides are recognizing are, you know, areas of difficulty in analyzing the budget, I think that that is something that we can look at when we talk together on the 12th or perhaps in the June school board retreat.

[02:05:47] I don't know, and maybe this is a question for my fellow committee members, fellow board members, or even you guys, the compression on the timing on this, right? Because I know that we have that work session kind of on the 12th that we're gonna talk about at the school board meeting if that's the best launching off point or if we want to do a little legwork before that meeting so we're not coming in and I kind of welcome your guys thoughts on this as well just timing wise for all of this. Thank you. Thank you very much and I have

[02:06:21] mentioned and to piggyback off of Ms. Riccardi making it easier in simple language for us to get through it but also um investments and and operating separate uh investments not investments the operating budget all separate just to take a look at you know to have an idea as a whole of what's going on so I really appreciate your input and I'm hoping we can um and thank you so much for breaking it down um as far as when we're going to start uh looking at these things I really

[02:06:55] appreciate that. My concerns are investments and also CIP, which I was going to bring up in my new business, but I'll just throw it out real quick because we've been here almost two hours. I'll be reaching out to you, Mr. Lewis, to see if I have certain, I'm advocating for my schools, and I ask that my colleagues do the same. I will be reaching out to you to see where we are on the schedule as far as certain items for our schools that they desperately need replaced or renovations and that sort of thing. So that's a big thing for me as well. So I see you taking notes. So thank you

[02:07:34] so much. I'll be sending you some information either today or tomorrow. But yes, I totally agree with my colleagues here. And any way to make it easier where it's in simple language and we can see the difference of investments, what investments do for us. Data is also important, is very important. So thank you. And with that, I think that was it for today. If you're okay to adjourn, we're done.

[02:08:06] Madam Chair, you don't have any new business that you wanted to bring? Well, my new business was what I just threw in. I'm going to be speaking to Mr. Lewis about it. So it ended up not being new business. So thank you so much.



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