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Loudoun County School Board, Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee (MSAAC) Meeting NO VIDEO, Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Date Wednesday, March 18, 2026
Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 55m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/1175197739?rel=0>
- BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-11. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:05:48] Good evening, everyone. How are you? I know Nana gonna always give me a comment back. Thanks, Nana. You know how to make me feel loved. At this time, we're gonna ask for everyone to find a seat. And you do not necessarily have to find a seat with someone that you always are seated with. You can find a seat with someone that is new to you, you've never met.

[00:06:10] The purpose of us being here together tonight is to be together. And together means making space and recreating space for one another. I thank you for being here. My name is Dr. Leticia Ellis-Williams. I am the Assistant Superintendent for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility Office. I have the pleasure of serving all of your students and your families in this community, and I do so with pride. And most recently, I have evolved from excellence because it is exhausting to humanity.

[00:06:42] So again, good evening and a heartfelt welcome to all of our esteemed guests here this evening. We are delighted to have such a wonderful gathering of dedicated individuals joining us here tonight.

[00:07:02] Our accomplished student leaders, supportive parent delegates, tireless educators, and valued community members, and our superintendent. This dinner is a celebration of the strong partnership we

share. A partnership that is essential to the success and vitality of all of our schools and a broader community.

[00:07:26] Tonight, we honor the collective effort and commitment you all bring. Our student leaders represent the bright future of our community, demonstrating incredible maturity and vision. Our parent delegates are the crucial link between home and school, enriching our decision-making process.

[00:07:48] Our educators are the foundation of our institution, providing guidance and inspiration every day. And our community members are the vital resources of wisdom, support that extends far beyond our classroom walls.

[00:08:07] We hope you enjoy the meal and the food that's been brought here this evening and prepared for you. And the opportunity to connect and celebrate in a relaxed setting. Thank you for everything that you do. At this time, I'd like to put Dr. Spence on the spot.

[00:08:31] He was about to sit down. And I'd like to offer him the opportunity to extend a few words to our community and family that we're here with tonight. Good evening.

[00:08:49] I will be unexpectedly brief. It's wonderful to be here with all of you. I think this is the second time I've been here. Is this the second time for the event? So second time for the event. Second time I've had the opportunity to fellowship with you all this evening.

[00:09:06] and I really appreciate this opportunity, and I want to reiterate our appreciation for the folks that are in the room. In particular, I do want to recognize that we have a couple of board members with us this evening. We've got our chair, April Chandler. Thank you so much for being here.

[00:09:23] We have your MSAC liaison, Dr. Samara Rasheed, who is here with us this evening. Did I miss any board members? Did not, go me. I just want to celebrate and acknowledge the room in general.

[00:09:43] the opportunity to be together and celebrate the theme. I love the theme of this event. I think I expounded upon this last year quite a bit, but the idea that we are better together is meaningful. It's meaningful in our classrooms every day.

[00:10:01] It's meaningful across our schools. It's meaningful in the work that we do to lift up one another in our communities. And it's meaningful understanding, if you look at the program that's in front of you, that we move forward better together.

[00:10:18] Because in my estimation, based on conversations that I'm having with our children that we serve, based on what I'm seeing happening in the world around us, that we must find a way to move forward better together.

[00:10:33] And I think one of the keys to our success in that endeavor is to make sure that we stay connected to one another, and that we use the opportunities that we have Loudoun County Public Schools the opportunities that we have like MSAC to ensure that we stay connected to one another, that we remain open in our conversations as we seek to understand one another, that we remain open in our conversations as we seek to challenge one another to be better in our work together so that we can continue to ensure that every single student that we serve has an opportunity to thrive and feel belonging and that every single family

[00:11:12] that we work with has an opportunity to see clearly their place in our space and so I'm really appreciative of this opportunity to model for our community for our teachers for our classrooms and

frankly for our commonwealth and our nation what it does mean in fact to be better together so thank you all for joining us tonight and thank you for allowing me to be here.

[00:11:36] Thank you, Dr. Spence. At this time, I'd like to have Dr. Samara Rasheed and Chair Chandler join me at the podium, please. Thank you so much, and good evening, everyone.

[00:12:02] Thank you for joining us tonight for this family dinner and social hosted by the MSAC committee. It truly means a lot to see so many members of our community gathered here together, especially when we're doing it at a time where we're most likely going to be breaking bread together, and what better idea that is.

[00:12:20] Events like this remind us of how important it is for a community to come together, not only during challenging times, but also during good times. So when we gather, we share, we listen, we support one another, and we strengthen the bonds that makes our community resilient and compassionate.

[00:12:37] So tonight is especially meaningful because we are sharing a meal. And although sharing a meal is one of the oldest and most powerful ways people connect, It reminds us that despite our different experiences and perspectives, we're all part of the same community. We all benefit and we all uplift everyone.

[00:12:55] So at the heart of MSAC, the heart of the MSAC committee is unity. We feel welcomed here, we feel valued here, and we feel supported. And as Chair Kunkel often reminds us, this is always a safe space for conversation, for connection, and understanding.

[00:13:12] I'd also like to acknowledge and thank our distinguished guests for being here with us tonight. You saw Dr. Letitia Ellis-Williams, Superintendent Aaron Spence, and School Board Chair April Chandler, and, of course, Chair Kunkel. Most importantly, thank you to all of you.

[00:13:29] You guys represent the entire community, and your presence, your willingness to connect, and your spirit of togetherness are what make events like this so special. So tonight, let's enjoy one another's company, celebrate our shared commitment to community, and continue building a space where everyone feels they belong.

[00:13:48] Thank you again for coming and breaking bread together with us tonight. Thank you, Dr. Rashid. At this time, I would like to invite our board chair, Chair Chandler, to come and give a few words.

[00:14:08] Hey, friends. Thank you for being here tonight. It's such a pleasure to be in this space and to be together with you. I would like to start tonight by asking my dear friend, Chair Kunkel, to come up. I have the extreme pleasure of being able to offer Chair Kunkel my most sincere thank you.

[00:14:33] I just want to tell you a little bit about my friend, Aaron Kunkel. We met when I was a candidate, and Erin, you had just decided you were going to be the chair, right?

[00:14:51] And so this is a couple years ago. Also, I find it really funny to be standing here and speaking, because it's been years since I spoke at this podium. But don't think I didn't. But anyway, back to Chair Kunkel. We had a coffee together at the very beginning, and we're able to sit and say, yes, like, yes, these are our values.

[00:15:12] These are the things that we are committed to doing together, and it has been the best journey and the best working relationship to have you in this position and to be able to advise us and help us make the right decisions for our students.

[00:15:30] And I just have to say that I cannot think of a better person in LCPS, a better champion for our students. And we are so grateful for the time and energy and investment you have made in making our division better.

[00:15:47] Thank you. Thank you for everything that you've done. You are so, we love you so much.

[00:16:06] And this is just a small token of our appreciation. We love to give our loved ones and our champions their flowers while they're with us. So thank you, Ms. Kunkel. Okay. So totally wasn't on the card to cry today. Okay. So I have the job of giving words of encouragement. I thought long and hard about this all weekend, about what to say, what I could say,

[00:16:45] to be an encouragement. I don't do any of this without the encouragement of so many people around me. I would like to say to you all, completely off the cuff, everybody who's ever shown up and said, keep going, Erin, who's ever offered me feedback, whether it was great or it was unpleasant, and I was uncomfortable in hearing what you thought, I learned from it, and I grew from it, and it made me a better leader. It made me a better parent. It made me a better advocate.

[00:17:13] It made me brave enough to go into these spaces that I come into and to ask for the things that our students need to be better and to achieve their dreams because ultimately what I hold dear to my heart and what I remember is if I am fierce for my babies I know you all expect me to be fierce for yours and I don't take that for granted and so I just want to say that this space is something profound it's special to me I am absolutely biased that we get to have this and we get to host this in collaboration and partnership with the division of DEIA.

[00:17:49] This started with a simple conversation about what we could do. We needed a moment to breathe, a place where our presence, our thoughts could be calm and be quiet, and the idea of having a dinner and a social was birthed. Every time we've gathered in this Better Together space, I am reminded that this is more than just an event.

[00:18:10] It's a moment to pause and to breathe and to simply be, to be with people of like spirit, to be in community, and to remember everything that connects us because so many things connect us in so many different ways. Life comes at us fast and it's easy to feel like we are walking alone. It's easy to feel like we're isolated because our county and sometimes our world is so big, but I hope you remember that tonight we're not alone, that we're always learning and growing and laughing together, that we might be on different paths we might be in different places of our journey but we are when we come together like

[00:18:48] this and we we create something powerful and that is a sense of belonging and that's important to our students and that's important to our families and important to our community to our students um all of the students in the room could you do me a favor I'm putting you on the spot could you please stand up I would like to let you know that you are truly the heartbeat of better together your curiosity your courage your willingness to ask hard questions and dream boldly inspire every

[00:19:24] one of us we are so proud of the work you put in and proud of how you're growing into your voices and we honestly i honestly cannot wait to see what you do next the future is yours the sky's the limit reach for every single one of your dreams and do not give up on them and for the rest of us in this room if you've ever wondered where do i belong tonight is your reminder remember how it feels to be seen, to be a part of something bigger, to feel the strength of community around you, and that's the spirit that we celebrate tonight, the power of our togetherness.

[00:19:57] So I would like to end by saying how deeply grateful I am for the conversation that sparked Better Together, for the people who continue to nurture it, and for our LCPS community that has embraced it with open arms. This is something rare, and it is truly special, and every time we gather here, it reminds us that when we show up, when we listen, and when we connect, good things always happen. Thank you.

[00:20:23] So at this time, I know you smell the delicious food that has been prepared and brought this evening. We're going to have two lines, one on each side. I believe we have two sets of utensils.

[00:20:43] If not, I know Laura will get them there. And please enjoy the food. And for those of our loved ones and friends here tonight that are waiting until what time 7 21 to break fast please make sure that we provide them with a level of comfort as we partake in food prior to them being able to eat I thank you we are grateful for you all being here bon appetit and cue up the

[00:21:09] music good evening everybody I hope you're enjoying dinner we have the pleasure of having a couple of students present who have offered to share their gifts with us. And so our first student is from Eagle Ridge Middle School, and her name is Deekshita Prabhu, and she's

[00:21:37] going to do a dance for us.

[00:25:22] Thank you so much. That was absolutely beautiful. I can't imagine how much practice that takes. Thank you for sharing with us. I apologize. I did not know

[00:25:36] we have a second thank you so much that was fantastic we also want to introduce to you um

[00:30:05] neil hovel who joins us from lunsford middle school and they have um generously offered to share their art over at the table over here we encourage you to come over and talk to them they're a super interesting student and um thank you i mean if i'm being offered a mic i'll take the mic So, I brought a little bit of poetry and some cardboard creations.

[00:30:38] I just turned the light on. I'm hoping they don't run out. I do not think they will. And set up a little bit of paintings. They are acrylic paintings. I've been doing them for most of my life. I do a lot of art. It's been ingrained to me since I was a little child, even when I lived in England.

[00:30:54] Do all the little baby crafts. But I brought a few digital arts, just a bunch of random multimedia stuff that makes me super happy to create so let me know if you'd like to know any of the meanings behind any of the poetries I wrote or know more about the things I've painted in the potteries or which ones I've sculpted and which ones I've just painted but yeah worked really hard a few

[00:31:19] random things thank you thank you so much thanks everybody so this is my favorite part we have about 40 minutes left. In about five minutes our friends are going to break fast and then we are

[00:31:54] going to turn up the music and we are going to do this old school barbecue style with some line dancing and some regular dancing so get ready. If you need to stretch, stretch. If you need to get up and do a couple of lunges, get ready to do so. We just were thoroughly impressed with multiple dance

[00:32:10] moves so get ready to party.

[00:49:55] Sorry to interrupt.

[00:51:27] Just a quick announcement. You guys are more than welcome to take leftovers there's a lot of food left we have some containers you're more than welcome to get the containers take whatever food you

guys want the gets on the table or the baskets the bags the welcome bags please take them home they are yours to take um and if you guys have any questions i'm helen randolph y'all can find me i'm around okay have a great night everybody you guys don't have to leave i'm not kicking everybody out i'm just letting y'all know

[00:51:55] it's gonna be eight o'clock soon i'm not really sure how many msac delegates are here but if you

[00:52:32] are an MSAC delegate, please come up to the front. If you're an MSAC delegate, please come to the front, please. And thank you. Sorry, I almost forgot about that. I saw the bags.



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