



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Loudoun County School Board, Legislative and Policy Committee Meeting, Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Date	Wednesday, April 8, 2026
Place	Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length	52m (video)
- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): https://player.vimeo.com/video/1181343404?rel=0 - BoardDocs (School Board): https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public	

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

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

[00:00:01] afternoon everybody i'm calling to order the april 8th 2026 legislative and policy committee meeting welcome everybody here today we're really looking forward to hearing from our our general assembly delegation on the great work that's been done in the legislative session this year and before we turn to them we have a couple of orders of business to attend to first i just wanted to note that mrs griffiths couldn't attend today's committee so it will be just dr rasheed and myself and we'll first ask if anyone has signed up for public comment today seeing no sign-ups

[00:00:41] we will move on to the next item on our agenda the minutes item number three the minutes from the last meeting uh march 11 2026 um dr rashid have you had the opportunity to look over the minutes and did you have any changes yes i had an opportunity to look over the minutes chair spenson and i have no changes um so i'll entertain a motion to approve the minutes from the march 11 2026 committee meeting so moved i'll second that motion um all those in favor of approving the draft minutes say aye aye the motion passes two to zero with uh all members present

[00:01:20] voting in favor and mrs griffiths absent for the vote all right we'll now turn to the legislative update presented by mr. john sutton i'll turn it over to you mr sutton thank you mr chairman again thank you uh thank you mr uh mr chairman dr rashid thank you uh for being here as well it's really my pleasure

to welcome our partners from the Virginia General Assembly and recognize the continued collaboration between our delegation and Loudoun County Public Schools the annual

[00:01:57] conversation this annual conversation is important is an important opportunity to reflect on our most recent legislative session. Strengthen relationships and better understand how policy decisions shape our classrooms, educators, and students here in Loudoun County. The 2026 session of the Virginia General Assembly focused broadly on affordability, workforce development, public investment alongside a wide range of policy initiatives affecting K-12 education. While the session still has some things to work out, our lawmakers advanced and passed hundreds of bills

[00:02:33] across policy areas underscoring the dynamic and evolving nature of governance in the Commonwealth. I would like to, on behalf of Dr. Spence and the school division, I would like to obviously thank Delegate Reed, Delegate Martinez, and Senator Srinivasan for being here.

[00:02:53] We do have other members of the delegation who could not be here, but expressed their desire to let it be known that they are, in fact, a wonderful friend of Loudoun County Public Schools and education. But before we expand to the Q&A and our discussion, I'd like to let our legislative partner, Joel Andrus, who is here, say a few words about our legislative agenda and how we did this year as a division and as a community. We look forward to hearing directly from our state legislators after that about the intent behind this year's legislation and what was ultimately passed and really what remains ahead. So I'll give it to you, Joel. Thank you, John. It's good to see

[00:03:33] you all and I appreciate you allowing me to come today I don't want to steal anybody's thunder but I just thought I'll take five minutes and just sort of talk big picture about session and a few items that we're working on as it relates to the legislative agenda that you all adopted at the end of last year so quick you know 30,000 foot view of session it was a 60-day session we gaveled in they gaveled in on January 13th and adjourned on March 14th there There was over 3600 bills and resolutions that were introduced during that time period.

[00:04:08] Of those, we were tracking in excess of about 300 of those bills, and so needless to say, it was a very busy 60 days for us during that time period. There was a number of bills that were directly related to our legislative agenda, so I just want to highlight a couple of those really quickly.

[00:04:27] Next is the continued support for the Joint Subcommittee to study elementary and secondary education funding. This is a result of the JLARC report from a few years ago. While the budget is still being negotiated, I'm happy to say that both the House and the Senate have expressed support for continuing that work, so looking forward to that work continuing on in the coming months and years, and that's really important work as we think about long-term investments into K-12.

[00:04:57] on re-benchmarking the introduced budget from December fully funded re-benchmarking so that it looks like it's in good shape even though budget negotiations as I mentioned continue next on our list was teacher recruitment and retention specifically as it relates to affordable housing as Mr. Sutton mentioned affordable housing was a primary focus of this past year's General Assembly session we saw numerous bills introduced and passed on that topic not to go through all of them but including legislation dealing with faith and

[00:05:35] housing as well as a that would allow nonprofits to develop affordable housing on their property as well as a bill introduced and passed by Delegate Reid that is awaiting the governor's signature

right now that will allow localities to use surplus properties to develop it for affordable housing to help with both local employees locality and school board employees next on the agenda is SOL reform you might recall that during the 2025 General Assembly

[00:06:11] session there was a pretty significant bill on SOL reform implementation after that legislation passed everyone sort of took a deep breath and we had to make some tweaks to that so we're able to go through that legislation and make a number of changes to that including how it deals with special ed students related to the 10% of the student grade which is now getting pushed off until the new SOL assessment is developed and implemented as well as some other really important implementation tweaks to that legislation and then the last thing I

[00:06:48] will highlight is you know comprehensive mental health both policy and funding we saw a number of bills related to mental health introduced this year one that I highlight is teacher training for mental health services which I think is an important step too so overall I would say was a very successful session for LCPS certainly as it relates to our legislative agenda so I don't take anyone's thunder but I appreciate you giving me a few minutes so thank you well thank you Mr Andrus really appreciate that um and now I guess the floor is ours now to ask some questions uh I'll

[00:07:26] just kick it off first to ask our each of our members of general assembly just to have some opening remarks about what you perceive to be the highlights of the legislative session in terms of bills that affect LCPS and public education and I will suppose we'll start with the the Dean of the delegation Delegate Reed so we'll move from Delegate Reed to his right well thank you Mr. Chair and thank you everyone for being here as Mr. Stevenson said I'm Delegate David Reed and I represent House District 28 which is the area where you are right now and I've had the

[00:08:01] honor of being able to represent this area for the last nine years one of the things that I think is really very important to highlight for Loudoun County Public Schools as well as the board is the fact that we're even having this meeting because it is really a significant, I think, testament to your willingness to be able to work with the General Assembly that we're having these because we started several years ago of having meetings in advance of session to outline what it was that your priorities were going to be.

[00:08:34] Now, as you heard from Joel, we've got an overview of what went on during session and now we're beginning the process of what we did well what we can do better and how we can begin planning for 2027 and I think that's so very important because despite the fact that we are part-time citizen legislators you are working I think every month of the year and you're dealing with being able to provide good educational opportunities for the students throughout the entire year and so we need to be able to be informed and be aware of all of the items that are impacting you especially from the state level so

[00:09:11] I want to say thank you and kudos to you for continuing to do this. I think it's a very valuable forum for us to be able to interact with each other. So I have a couple, three bills that were specifically mine that I'd like to talk about.

[00:09:27] One of them was House Bill 1130, and this was on school workforce housing. And this was a piece of legislation that came out of some discussions that started back during the summer with the idea for school systems, much like Loudoun County, that might have surplus land, that they would have the ability to be able to contract with developers, nonprofits, or other organizations to develop workforce housing for school employees.

[00:09:53] So it's really very specific. And I'm really very pleased that it passed both the House and the Senate, and it is now before the governor for her signature, and I've not heard any concerns about that. So I feel very positive about that. The other one, and I'm having an opportunity to go tomorrow to speak to Broad Run High School, so if any of you want to join me, you can.

[00:10:13] I think we're going to speak to the History Honor Society. But one of the young ladies who was part of that had proposed the idea for making the SAT test more universally accessible for students so that they could take the test in the high school where they attend as opposed to a specific day where they have to travel somewhere because, unfortunately, the current SAT take rate in Virginia is somewhere right around the 50% level, which means that about 50% of the students who might have had an opportunity to go to college

[00:10:48] have never taken one of those interest exams, and so that becomes a gating factor that we're trying to overcome. And if you start thinking about it and you drill down into it, you find out that many times it's hard for a student to be able to get from where they live to where the test is being done.

[00:11:07] Maybe they have at-home responsibilities. Maybe they don't have transportation. And so there's all of these impediments that prevent somebody from being able to take the SAT test, which could have opened up all kinds of other opportunities for them to be able to, much like myself, to be able to get out of those cycles of poverty that my family had lived in for generations.

[00:11:27] And the third one that I'll talk about that was specifically a piece of legislation that I did last year and then we were able to do again this year, and it has passed, and this is a good example of even though Governor Youngkin vetoed the bill, I think when we came back with the bill again this year, the bill is in a better posture than it was last year, and this would be to allow African American history and AP African American studies to be substituted for World History I or World Geography for graduation credits.

[00:11:57] And so that has now been passed, and it is on the governor's desk awaiting signature, And I'm hoping for a different dispensation this year than we had last year. And then I just want to talk about, because I am also on the Appropriations Committee, I want to talk just for a couple minutes about some items from appropriations.

[00:12:16] First of all, I want to take you back to last year. Last year was the first time since 2008 that we had fully funded and lifted the support cap. That meant about an additional \$600 million going to schools across the Commonwealth. So all of those positions have now been funded, and that's part of the ongoing budget.

[00:12:36] And so that should be part of the calculations that you have. There was a decision in House Bill 29, which is known as the caboose budget, to remove the percentage increase on salaries and instead replace that with a \$1,500 bonus for everyone.

[00:12:53] And the intent behind that was that when you start looking at the math, The \$1,500 bonus given to everyone is actually going to help those folks of less means as opposed to 2%. So we did that, and then in the biennium budget, there is a 2% salary increase in there for 2027 and 2028.

[00:13:15] And then the last thing before I turn it over to my colleagues is we added into the House budget \$400 million in what we refer to as flexible funding to go out to school divisions across the Commonwealth that they would then be able to use as they see fit.

[00:13:34] And it's a combination of that and lifting the support cap where I think it really highlights how much we've made a commitment to K-12 public education over not just the last couple of years but the last several years. So those are some of my highlights from the session and I'll take questions as we get towards the end.

[00:13:53] Thank you, Delegate Reed. Delegate Martinez. All right. I will say that I don't have any specific school bills that passed, but I was very happy to support all of Delegate Reed's bills.

[00:14:09] And plus, I was working, you know, I deferred some of my ideas about no child going hungry and the school systems and stuff to other delegates who had more seniority. So, but I'm very supportive of that.

[00:14:24] patron, seat patron, some of those bills that ensured the child care issues with our young single parents who are struggling to survive, and child care is a big issue. Those are things that I really looked at and supported, and there was not a school bill that I did not support.

[00:14:46] So I'm very, very happy that we were able to get as far as we did. I do know that the JLARC study, we still haven't, in my mind, done some of the things we need to do that the JLARC study suggested.

[00:15:03] We've narrowed the field a little bit with all the bills we've been passing, but there's still things we can do to improve the school system and stuff. One of the things that I really am looking at and looking to do next year would have to do with mental health, especially in the elementary schools, see what we can do.

[00:15:28] Instead of putting an SRO in the schools in elementary, let's put some mental health specialists out there that can look at and maybe even catch problems or catch issues before they become a real problem.

[00:15:46] Those are one of the things that I am looking at. I also, for example, when I was in middle school and high school, I was considered a hoodlum.

[00:16:04] I was not given any opportunities. As a matter of fact, I was neglected because it was easier to not pay attention to me than it was to find out where I was at, come to find out that I am not dumb.

[00:16:20] I was bored. And so I wanted to find ways that we can take these children and find a way to make it work for them. I was a substitute teacher in the school system for a while. And I know that one of the things that they gave me was because of my voice, I guess, and the fact that, you know, I was in charge of the children that were misbehaving and were put like in a little room.

[00:16:47] And I found that, again, some of those children weren't necessarily just misbehaving because that's what their intent was. They were bored. And when I challenged some of them, there is one kid I can distinctly remember was talking back to me all the time.

[00:17:08] And so I turned it around and got him to help mentor some of the other kids completely 180 degrees in his personalities. And so that's where I think a mental health specialist, that's where I think we, instead of looking at these children, we try to help them and push them in the right direction.

[00:17:33] And the other thing I know I'm going to probably touch a nerve on this one is I think when I was teaching at Leesburg Elementary School, I was very, it really bothered me that I saw these young teachers coming out of college with really no life experience in handling children.

[00:17:54] they didn't have children they you know and I don't know what the school system has done since I was teaching as a substitute teacher but we need to arm our you know you can put them in classrooms through college you can do all this but until they're on their own and having to deal with these children we need to find ways to better prepare them and understanding that you know you really have to deal with these children and those are things I'm looking at and I would love suggestions from the school system on what we can do to help implement that.

[00:18:32] Those are my concerns about our children that are at risk, that we really need to focus that. You know, I look at me, and if it hadn't been for the Air Force, I'd probably still be a hoodlum. And so a little direction, a little interest can go a long way, especially in our children at risk in elementary schools and middle schools.

[00:18:56] So that's where I'm at, and that's where I'm going. I had a really good year this year. I'm sure these guys are going to beat me as far as bills and stuff. But I've already got eight bills signed by the governor.

[00:19:13] And one of them, a couple of them that I really, really liked was one was increasing the unemployment benefits by \$100 a week. Makes it, doesn't solve the problem. But because of that, I got appointed to the Unemployment Benefit Compensation Board.

[00:19:33] And I'm going to do what I can to make sure that our parents, our federal workers, our state workers, any worker, has a chance to survive. And there's other ideas I have on that, which I don't know if they're going to appreciate me being on the Unemployment Commission.

[00:19:50] But I'm going to do my best to do that. And that was one. And the other one, we have a doctor in our General Assembly now. And by the way, he's great in emergencies. We had a couple, and he was right there.

[00:20:06] But he really appreciated this bill because any child, 14 and younger, who rides an electrical vehicle, skateboards, scooters, has to wear a helmet. And I'm going to do more about protecting our children because these EV vehicles, you've got a two-wheel scooter going down 20, 25 miles down the street with no helmet, no pads.

[00:20:33] Not only that, they're not taught how to use that or taught about what the rules of the roads are. So I'm still not done. That's just the beginning. So I'm going to continue to move forward on that. And, again, suggestions, I'm willing to listen to any suggestions you all may have.

[00:20:52] Thank you, Delegate Martinez. Senator Shinabasa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's wonderful to be here. Good afternoon, everyone. I had a wonderful session, so I'll give some updates. Many of you know both my parents were teachers, so I am very, very passionate about this.

[00:21:10] I think this is the best investment we can do, education. And, you know, we should never hesitate about investing in education and the technology and the tools. Health care is what brought me to politics. So I look for health care bills wherever I can. And I want to mention two things before I go into this session.

[00:21:29] In 24, I was able to pass a bill on tele-mental health national providers for school systems. In 2025, I passed a bill last year on school-based tele-mental health services. This summer, I'm hoping to do

that research and go back and see how it's working, what tweaks need to be made so that it's fully impactful.

[00:21:56] I think mental health is an extremely important topic for school systems. And I know you're doing a lot. I've met with your team on that. And I also want to follow up on the funding that I was able to secure last year and see what needs to happen.

[00:22:15] It's always, I've learned, it's multiple sessions that you need to get it where it needs to be. This year, I want to highlight Senate Bill 73. I served in the Medicaid board for seven years, so I know the amount of work the school systems across the Commonwealth do for kids in health, in the school system, in the school building.

[00:22:39] But many of them don't get reimbursed. They're just because the system is so hard to navigate. And I always said we leave money on the table. I mean, it's a federal state program. So I've been trying to get a navigator program in place. I think we are there with this bill, but not fully there.

[00:22:56] But I'll come back next year with more resources. But this year, it will be spearheaded by DMAS. So there will be resources available to school systems in the commonwealth to navigate the billing system so that we can get paid for the amazing work the school systems already do.

[00:23:16] I think that's very important. It's not a school bill, but it's a food allergy bill, which we all think of for kids, that we know. So I was able to pass this bill this year on food allergy notice. I just found out today the governor signed it, so I'm happy to update it.

[00:23:36] Of course! There you go. Delegate Martinez, thank you. He has a companion version. And thank you, Delegate Martinez, working on the helmet bill. For someone who got hit who was in a very bad bicycle accident years ago, it is such an important thing particularly for kids and angry folks so thank you for that housing was another priority in my in my legislative agenda i'm very happy to say i was able to pass an accessory dwelling unit i've been trying for three years in a row hoping the

[00:24:13] governor signs it by next one day it's also called adu but it's accessory dwelling unit so different type of adu but i think it can have an impact across the commonwealth talking about housing it's not my bill i've been i've been you know i was fortunate you know happy to support a lot of uh school related bills housing related bills one of the things that just came to my mind as we were talking about housing um bills that passed the house i think this is senator russet perry's bill this is about grants there is a cap on the grants now for 25 000 for local jurisdiction employees school board and counties for certain employees to be eligible

[00:24:52] for the grant. Her bill removes and we passed it, removes it. I think it's extremely important given how expensive it is to live. So I think that should make a difference for school systems.

[00:25:08] There were quite a few bills that I was able to support either on, you know, school meals program, expanding, you know, a lot of safety bills. You all know school safety bills.

[00:25:25] yes yes yes gun safety again gun safety bills um i had a bill last year uh sro bill um sro transparency in the senate we are bill limits this year so i couldn't carry it this year delegate jj singh carried we were able to pass it i'm looking forward to working with you all this is the time to get started for next session um your priorities you know how can we help as i said this is the best investment that we can do and we are very lucky to be here

[00:26:02] we have a wonderful school system I'm very passionate about technical and career education I'm also on the board of NCI New College Institute which is in Martinsville they specialize only on career and technical education would love to do something I've been talking to John Sutton at LCPS you know to see how we can help each other how we can take your I've already met with your director we have a good program being baked how can I help in the Senate to take it to the next one looking forward to it thank you for doing this and you

[00:26:38] know congrats on a wonderful session and hopefully we will have some good bill signing by next Monday thank you thank you I really appreciate it and I know that LCPS really appreciates the partnership that you all provide working on the General Assembly side and working so closely with us and being open to listening to our ideas and bringing ideas to us we're really lucky and loud and to have that kind of relationship so thank you to you all and to your colleagues who also are working hard on education specific issues but also these issues that touch on education as you know housing and the mental health

[00:27:16] and this this child safety all intersect and are important to our families our students parents and families here in Loudoun and Senator Srinivasan I wanted to ask you if you could share a little bit about your transmission underground transmission bill because I know that's really important to our Rockridge and Rosalie Carter families if you could share a bit about that work that you and delegates seeing it been doing yes so very happy to say that the bill passed it's a pilot program it's multiple pilots the bill allows for four pilots it's a permissive bill meaning the county has to make the choice the SEC

[00:27:56] technical approval was the first step the when the SEC approves any pilot project for technical feasibility the county has to adopt and agree to work be part of the pilot and and if that happens and the county has at least 50 percent share of the incremental cost of the underground of the incremental because whatever the incremental the marginal cost increases and there are

[00:28:26] multiple options for the county to raise funds for so to speak so it's a it has a lot of options I'm glad it passed I've been believing from day one to go back with my statements and you know my testimonies before SEC here and back in Richmond that we should we should not leave any stone you know unturned to make sure that we protect our communities and whether it's two two-mile undergrounding, three-mile undergrounding, hybrid, whatever we call it.

[00:29:01] So that bill has passed and awaiting governor's review. Thank you. We appreciate it. I may have a few more questions, but I'll turn it over to Dr. Rashid for any questions you may have. Thank you, Chair Spence, and thank you so much for all these updates.

[00:29:17] I mean, I could really relate to a lot of them anywhere from the food allergy bill to African-American history to, I mean, mental health, child care, all of this. I mean, it's just, it's really important. And it gets really real when you guys talk about it.

[00:29:33] We often hear about it. But when you sit here and talk about it, it gets more tangible, I guess you could say. You know, I noticed with Governor Spanberger, she's headed in a new direction when it comes to education. I noticed things like she's emphasizing on academic excellence, expanded support for schools, inclusive policies.

[00:29:53] I was wondering, how do you see the state education policy evolving, especially when it comes to LCPS? Over the next few years, I didn't know who to ask. With each new governor, I think you have a

different tone and temperament on policies writ large across the entire Commonwealth.

[00:30:20] I think when Governor Youngkin, one of the very first things that he did was initiate a tip line for people to report on their teachers if they thought that they were teaching something that they shouldn't be teaching. I am pretty sure that underneath Governor Spanberger, that will never happen.

[00:30:39] And usually I am not one to speak in nevers or always because absolutes are usually not absolute. But I think I can be pretty confident about that. I think what you will probably see that we will return to is a focus on being able to establish the best learning policies for children across the Commonwealth to be able to prepare them for the very highly connected, complex world that we currently live in.

[00:31:10] I believe that you will probably also see a continued focus on career and technical education because we have determined and espoused for many years now that there are different paths to success for different people. And one of the things that I like to highlight is that since Dr. Spence arrived here, I know that that's an area that he is focused on as well.

[00:31:32] What with, I think, the second or third career and technical exposition, we're bringing businesses and students together. And that is so very important because we have an economy now that has a place for students who want to go on to college.

[00:31:51] But there are also economic opportunities for students who want to be able to work in the trades and get certifications in network engineering. And what I've really been proud of is that I think that Loudoun County has been on the forefront of embracing that.

[00:32:08] And I think that you will probably see an increased focus on those types of issues across the Commonwealth and from Governor Spanberger's team. Dr. Rashidi Femey, I want to expand a little bit on Delegate Reed's point about creating career paths.

[00:32:31] You know, I think we'll see more with the community college systems. I think that's extremely important. I know there are several programs. When I was with the NOVA team in their Loudoun campus, they updated me.

[00:32:47] They have special programs. I know you all work with NOVA, but I think there will be more investments and focus coming from that because to the point Delegate Reed made, I mean, not everybody may be interested in a four-year college, and that's not a bad thing.

[00:33:04] But you look at the number of job openings, you see the gap. The company's employers want to hire these skills, and they are well-paid jobs. But we have to have the pipeline of kids saying, hey, I can do this, go there, get the certification, get some internship, get some on-job training, and be fully employed and making good salary, and maybe down the road, they don't want to go to college.

[00:33:33] But we don't have to push. I think you'll see a lot more. I'm sure there will be other focuses on, you know, A, education, you know, what's going on with artificial intelligence and all of that, you know, new technologies. But that's pretty interesting stuff that's happening.

[00:33:52] If I can just add to that, to his point, it's like things like the Fast Forward program and the G3 program, which were started, I think, during the Northam administration, have been so resoundingly successful that we've had to add additional state funding to those for each of the years that it's been in existence.

[00:34:13] And when businesses and employers come to us and they are advocating for more educational funding, oftentimes what they're advocating for is more fast-forward funding because that, as Senator Srini-Voson was saying, that is the direct pathway to being able to take a young adult and get them the right skills at the right time for them to be able to fill the jobs that are coming into the Commonwealth.

[00:34:40] You know, if you want my two cents, I think what we're looking at, and we only have four years to really make a lot of progress in expanding what we do in our education all the way from pre-K to college and carried in vocational skills.

[00:35:04] And I think right now what we need to do, you know, part of the problem we have right now is the fact that a lot of federal policies are hurting our ability to fund certain things. But what I'm looking at is, for example, I had a meeting at the Aviation Caucus with a community college that's focused on air traffic and aircraft and piloting and those kind of things.

[00:35:32] And I think, you know, I personally would love to see a little more of our community college specialize in certain things. For example, the Northern Virginia campus specialize more in maybe health care. Maybe another campus can specialize in, you know, cyber, IT.

[00:35:54] But that way we can really focus on how we bring these students up to where they can go out and get a job. You know, unfortunately, college is not the catch-all. You know, we need to really look at, you know, providing, not just providing a two-year degree, but credentials.

[00:36:15] Be able to, you know, have kids go to these community college and not just have to go out for a degree, but certificate. Something that they can use to help them get into the workforce. My grandson, for example, spent two tours, two enlistments in the Marines.

[00:36:36] and he got out due to medical because of cancer. But now that he's back in the workforce, it took him a year and a half just to do online training, get a certificate so that he could qualify for a job. And so now he's working for Amazon, and I'm thinking there's gotta be a better way to do that.

[00:36:57] And so what I'm looking at in the next three years after this year is opportunities where we can really expand the scope of what our schools are doing and how we can provide these kids, sorry, not kids, students, opportunities that, you know, we may not be able to have done before.

[00:37:17] You know, I was really not happy with, it seems like Yunkin and his supporters wanted to hold back our school systems instead of pushing them forward. And so I'm looking for us to be able to bring our school system farther down the road, providing what's needed for our students.

[00:37:39] And that, you know, and I talk about child care, I talk about making sure these kids are hungry, or not hungry, I mean, you know, and mental health, all of these contribute to their success. And so what we need to do is make sure that we provide a holistic platform for all these students.

[00:38:01] One thing I'm hoping with the new administration, with the new Secretary of Education, and the new Board of Education members to do at the state level is to make sure that we are proactive and we are ahead of the curve in our commonwealth about the impact of AI.

[00:38:21] This is going to be huge. If you read, we all use it. There's nothing we can do about it. Whether we realize it or not, we're going to get more and more into it. What does it mean to the entry-level jobs? I mean, look at the unemployment of college graduates right now, particularly in computer science, which was the major to take.

[00:38:44] It's high and it's going to grow. Look at the investor community. They're all saying we don't have hopes of getting any returns on the investments we made on some of these software companies because AI is just going to take over and be dramatically impacting them.

[00:39:00] So what do we need to do in middle school and high school to prep our students Whatever path they take, whether it's college or community schools or trade schools, what skills do they need to have? Because I think that wave is coming and it may come very fast.

[00:39:21] That's how technology progresses. And I think this is where the state and the school systems, because different school systems have different resources and abilities. That's fair. That's fine. But the state can come in, work with every one of the school systems as appropriate, provide the resources, provide funding, provide the leadership, so that we can work together, so that we don't leave any students behind.

[00:39:46] That's what worries me the most. Fast forward five years from now, the AA would be even deeper in our life. What does it mean in the job market? I think we need to be proactive on it.

[00:40:04] - Thank you, Senator Sinai Basin. I think that's a good segue to asking you all, and I'm cognizant the room is booked at 6:00 p.m. as well, so we'll be winding down shortly. But I wanted to give you all opportunity to talk about something that you didn't get done this year in the legislature, but you're looking forward to working on next year.

[00:40:24] And maybe it is preparing, you know, bills that might help prepare students for the AI future that we're encountering. But I'm just curious if there are items that you all would like to flag for future. - One of my biggest concerns is the gun violence.

[00:40:44] And I'm working with an organization called Zero Now that we're looking at hoping prevent that. So that's something that I'm looking forward to that we implement in our schools. And at a college and high school level, I want to see what can we do to educate our students on what sexual assault really is, what is appropriate and inappropriate.

[00:41:13] I know it's a touchy subject. One of the questions I've asked students is, did you and your parents ever have a sit-down and talk about what is right, what is not. And I would say out of the 20, 30, maybe two have had those conversations.

[00:41:34] So what that tells me is that there's a lot of children, a lot of students going to college and in high school that are unprepared for any of those kind of discussions. And I want to make sure that education and knowledge is one of the biggest ways we can prevent these kind of things from happening, especially for our youngsters.

[00:41:57] There are, you know, the hunger, the hungry. I mean, there's so many things that we can focus on. And I think, you know, for me, if you just let me go willy-nilly, I could throw out 100 bills to bring, you know.

[00:42:14] But what we really need is guidance from the experts. I'm not going to sit there and say I know what the curriculum should or should not be. I am not going to implement anything just because I think it's the right thing to do. I want to be able to be consulting with the known experts, school system, school board, teachers, administration, on what really do you need, you know, instead of what I think you need.

[00:42:41] So those are the kind of things that I'm looking forward to. More discussion, and I would like the staff to take this back, that if there is any area, I would love to come and sit in and talk with the experts

on what we can do, what I can do to make these changes work.

[00:43:02] Thank you. The AI one is a top focus for me. I couldn't do much this session because it's developing. The data is just getting collected. We're finding more today than yesterday. So I think this summer, and I would love to work with you and whoever is the right person in your team.

[00:43:25] Number two, the meal program. We should never have a family or a kid, and we know it exists in our commonwealth and in different school systems. And whatever innovative way we can innovate, dream, come together with what other states are doing, we need to get there.

[00:43:48] You know, we have the resources, but not enough, obviously. So it's always a challenge, you know, with finding resources, but what can we do creatively? The third thing is the recovery school. I want to follow up with the school system. I know you guys have done good work.

[00:44:03] We were able to get some initial seed funding. What needs to happen? What are the best practices there? How do we take it to the next level? And finally, the career and technical education. I think that is going to be really important. And I know you have a good program, a wonderful director.

[00:44:22] As I said, I'm part of NCI. They are doing some innovative certifications and work with the Board of Education in Richmond to take it to the next level. So I think that, again, I have three items as well, and I think one of the top things that we have to address is we have to continue to address the teacher shortage.

[00:44:46] There is a shortage of qualified, certified teachers, not only in Loudoun County but across the Commonwealth, and so that means that we have to address recruitment, we have to be able to address retention, and for any of us who have worked in any type of environment, It's much easier to keep your current teachers or your current employees than it is to be able to recruit, train, and put new people in place.

[00:45:14] And that's the reason why one of the things that I've really been proud of is that over the last several years, I've been able to get money in the budget for the Reach Virginia, which started out here in Loudoun and is now providing teacher retention services across the Commonwealth.

[00:45:32] And they've had really outstanding results. And along with the recruitment and retention is also the pay. And the state plays a significant role in that. And so we need to be sure that we're continuing to stay on the forefront of that. The second item, and I know that we've talked about it a little bit, is going to be the CTE, the internships.

[00:45:53] And Senator Srinivasan talked about the artificial intelligence. I think one of the things that we all have to look at is how do we teach critical thinking to young students and young adults so that when they get an answer back from either the Internet or artificial intelligence, that they are aware enough to know that the answer is wrong and they need to ask more detailed questions.

[00:46:17] Because there is still a very important role for people to be able to do critical thinking and not just rely on the technology. So that's going to be a challenge for all of us. And the third thing is I've just now been recently appointed to the JLARC, the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission, and one of the things that had happened I think in the past is that JLARC reports would be done, they would be pushed out, and then they would become shelfware, which is that they'd go on a shelf somewhere and no one would pay any attention to them.

[00:46:48] The JLARC report on K-12 funding, which I think was 22 or 2023, we've gone through and we've done some work on those 14 recommendations, but I think we owe it to ourselves to be able to circle back periodically and ask ourselves, how many of those have we completed, and for the ones that we haven't completed, what do we still need to work on so that those stay fresh in our mind?

[00:47:12] And that's one of the things that I will commit to do as well now that I'm part of JLARC. So I think it's those three things, and I think it's also very important, as I think both Delegate Martinez and Delegate Srinivasan said, we have to continue to do these types of discussions because, again, you're the subject matter experts.

[00:47:31] We need to be able to maintain the lines of communication, so you come tell us in an environment what it is that we can do better to make it so that we can better educate our students for the future. So I think it's all of those things. So if I may have a go back, the Elliot Reid had touched on it, and it was retention.

[00:47:56] One of the things that I tried on the Leesburg Town Council when I was there, I've done it for over 20 years, was trying to find a way to have our police, our town workers and stuff, live in Leesburg.

[00:48:12] But if you can't afford to live in Leesburg, you know, so they're living out of state. And so how do you retain people to live here? Provide them a way to afford a house. And I would love to see if there was some way we could work out a program.

[00:48:33] I just had a bill pass about first-time homebuyers getting a break on their water and sewer connection fees. And first-time homebuyers. If there's a way, especially our younger teachers, find a way to have them stay in our locality.

[00:48:53] Because when you work where you live, it's a lot easier than having to commute an hour just to go to work when you can find a job somewhere else. So that was part of what we need to look at. And the direction we move in will be the direction you want us to move in and see what we can or cannot do on it.

[00:49:11] Thank you. Thank you all. think that's a great place to end because thank you all for the work that you've done on affordable housing this session because that is so important to recruiting and retaining our teachers here so whether it is the workforce housing bill that you worked on delegate reed or the accessible dwelling units um senator srinivasan or senator perry's bill on the home ownership and and rental assistance um that's all really important to our teacher um retention so thank you all and i just want to reiterate what i said earlier that we really are appreciative in Loudoun to have such a supportive delegation.

[00:49:46] And Mr. Sutton, I'll turn it to you if there's anything else that you wanted to say before we conclude. I know. Thank you. I know we only have like three minutes, but I at least wanted to be able to say this because I think it's really important, and I know Mr. Anderson and I have talked about this.

[00:50:05] This is a really, really, really great, and it's so wonderful that as we get through this session and we're preparing for the next session because it doesn't it ain't like six you know we don't have like five months off and then we prepare for the next session I think it's important for for everybody to understand whether you're here or not that we have valuable partners and I think something like this highlights the the fact that regardless of topic whether it's school

[00:50:41] climate curriculum local flexibility some of the amazing things that we've talked about today I've worked Joel and I have had an opportunity to work with everyone here it is these folks help this division and help this county to to carry really meaningful and in a lot of cases immediate impactful things and I think it's really important that at least for me to say it's been a wonderful year and thank you for working with us thank you for the service that that you've provided hopefully we've given a good service to you and thank you for your commitment

[00:51:21] to students and families in loud and county and i think that's that's i guess my last one minute i stalled as long as i could thank you mr sutton um yes and i look forward i know we all look forward to having those conversations that we we referenced during the course of today about looking forward to next year what what can we do to help our students families and educators here loud and so I know this is this is not the last we will talk about all of these items so with that we'll move from our legislative update to new business do we

[00:51:53] have any new business no new business we'll move on to adjournment yes well we'll go ahead please mark your calendars for our next meeting and if there no further resistance I'll entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting - Motion to adjourn the meeting.

[00:52:13] - All right, I will second that motion. All those in favor say aye. - Aye. - Aye. - All right, see you next time. Thank you everybody.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com