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Loudoun County School Board, Student Services Committee Meeting, Thursday, April 16, 2026

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[00:00:00] Good afternoon, everybody. It is 4.30. My name is John Pepper. I am the chair of the Student Services Committee, and I am going to call the April 16, 2025 meeting of the Student Services Committee to order. Along with me today, I have Ms. Carrie LaBelle of the Catoctin district and the school board chair miss April Chandler of the Algonquian district and with that we will begin this meeting if there is any and it

[00:00:38] doesn't look like there is we there is no public comment so we will skip ahead to item number three which is the approval of the minutes from our last student services committee meeting which was on March 19th 2026 I assume everyone has had a chance to view the minutes from last meeting are there any corrections or additions all right then I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes miss LaBelle I move to pass the approve the minutes from the last

[00:01:16] meeting in March 19th as written second thank you so the motion has been made by Miss LaBelle and seconded by Miss Chandler is there any discussion seeing none we will now vote on the minutes all in favor of approving the minutes of the March 19th 2026 student services committee meeting student services committee meeting please say aye that motion passes unanimously we will now move to our action items which is number four on the agenda starting with action

[00:01:50] item 4.01 on new policy 8425 student athlete extreme heat and protection and and I will entertain a motion on this item. Ms. LaBelle.

[00:02:08] I move that we pass policy 8425, student-athlete extreme heat and protection, as written.

[00:02:24] Is there a second? Second. Thank you. The motion has been made by Ms. LaBelle and seconded by Ms. Chandler. Is there any discussion on this action item? Mr. Ferry, I believe you have something to share about policy 8425.

[00:02:43] just a clerical um under line 38 uh letter e tier 5 87.5 and 89.9 you'll see next to the semicolon tiered four again so we need to remove the tier four it's a clerical mistake and then the rest of it should read no equipment and does not include the rest of that sentence no equipment during the entirety of that practice time uh so mr ferry for clarification yeah we are

[00:03:19] going to um will you make a motion to do this remove the line that says tier four uh parentheses 80 it's line 38 just the part that says tier four parentheses 85.0 to 87.4 degrees fahrenheit and the um colon after that start and begin with no equipment yes sir okay so i can i can bring it it back? No, I think we can just move to amend that. Does anyone want to make a motion to

[00:03:54] amend that? Ms. LaBelle. I move in this policy on page one, section A1.E, where it says tier 5, 87.5-99.9, 89.9 Fahrenheit, that we remove the following line, which says tier 4, all way through to the polling there a second any discussion leave this clerical error all right

[00:04:33] all in favor of removing that small section from line 38 in section a 1 e where it says tier 5 removing the portion that says tier 4 85.0 to 87.4 degrees fahrenheit please say aye aye aye that amendment passes unanimously we are now back to the base motion is there any further discussion on policy 8425. Seeing none, we will now vote. All in favor of moving this to the full school board as an information item, please say aye. Aye. Aye. That motion passes unanimously.

[00:05:13] Mr. Ferry, thank you for your work on that. Thank you for catching that clerical error that I don't believe any of us noticed the first time that we went through that policy. we will now move on to our next item this is item 4.02 this is also an action item on the approval of the student of updated policy 6640 emergency first aid CPR aed and diabetes management trained and certified personnel once again as an action item I will take a motion miss Chandler I move that the

[00:05:49] Student Services Committee accepts and approves new policy 8425, oh, no, updated policy 6640, emergency first aid, CPR, AED, and diabetes management, trained and certified personnel. Is there a second? I second.

[00:06:06] Thank you, Ms. LaBelle. The motion has been moved by Ms. Chandler and seconded by Ms. LaBelle. Is there any discussion on this item? And as a reminder, I believe, and Ms. Richards and you can grab me, this was just clerical to align with state policy for the number. Yes. If you can look at the red line document, this was a state code change impacting lines 19 through 22.

[00:06:28] The added language, this policy has gone through our policy review cycle and has received some advisory and community feedback. Thank you, Ms. Richardson. Any discussion? All right.

[00:06:46] Seeing none, all of those in favor of moving this policy 6640, the updated policy on emergency first aid, CPR, AED, and diabetes management, train and certify personnel to the full school board as an information item. Please say aye. Aye. That motion passes unanimously.

[00:07:05] We will now move on to our third action item, which is item 4.03, updated policy 8080 on home instruction or homeschooling. Once again, as this is an action item, I will entertain a motion. Ms. Chandler.

[00:07:22] I move that the Student Services Committee approves updated policy 8080, home instruction or homeschooling, and sends it to the full school board as an information item. I second. Thank you. That motion has been made by Ms. Chandler and seconded by Ms. LaBelle. Is there any discussion on updated policy 8080?

[00:07:41] I believe there's just a few small changes. Once again, is that correct, Ms. Richardson? That is correct. If you take your attention to the red line, the state code changes were added to lines 155 through 165 any further

[00:07:56] discussion by my fellow committee members seeing that is not from this code

[00:08:35] of Virginia so we could make changes to that reference okay then I move that we strike the word needy from line one hundred and four so it would probably need to actually be I have a question is there is there an actual difference

[00:09:13] between low come and income and needy is needy something different from low income bless you staff would recommend that we starting at line 104 that we make the change to indicate to low-income and students in need because parents could reach out and have a different need that's not necessarily

[00:09:43] affiliated with income but assistance with this process could still be helpful okay so that will be accepted as a friendly amendment then Miss Chandler okay so is there any further discussion on the change of the words needy students on line 104 to students in need okay so at this point we have a motion on the floor all those in favor of the amendment to change the words and needy

[00:10:19] students to and students in need say aye that change passes unanimously we are now back to the base motion is there any further discussion on base motion to approve policy 8080 Ms. Chandler at line 23 is there any reason why it only references parent because I notice in on line 10 and again on line 29 if we also include or legal guardian so I I'm just curious if there's a reason why it's not included in that was a clerical oversight for staff so we would support

[00:10:59] adding parents slash legal guardian okay 23 any parent or comma or legal guardian comma I second a motion has been made by miss Chandler to add the words or legal comma or legal guardian comma after the word parent in line 23 which is in section a2 of policy 8080 is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor of adding those words say aye aye that motion also passes

[00:11:38] unanimously and once again we are back to the base motion any further discussion on policy 8080s changes seeing none at this time we will take a a vote to move policy 8080 on home instruction and homeschooling as an information item to the full school board all those in favor please say aye aye aye that motion passes unanimously sorry I should have backed up and said the original amendment also passed unanimously so with that we are going to

[00:12:13] go to policy item 4.04 still an action item this is updated policy 8115 on individuals who may be admitted free and once again I will entertain a motion on this policy Miss LaBelle I move that we accept policy 81 15 individuals who may be admitted free for forwarding to full board there a second second thank you the motion has been made by Miss LaBelle and seconded by Miss Chandler is there any

[00:12:50] discussion committee members about policy the updates to policy 8115 okay seeing no discussion or changes to be made on all of those the committee in favor of moving policy the updated policy 8115 as an information item to

[00:13:30] the full school board please say aye aye that motion passes unanimously we are now going to move to action item 4.05 which is updated policy 8250 bullying prevention and education but before we make a motion miss Richardson I believe there may possibly be some changes to this item so before we discuss it I would love to hear what you absolutely I'm gonna pass it over to our amazing director of student mental health services mrs. Jennifer Evans last time I

[00:14:05] was here i shared that we had some feedback from a parent and so we took the opportunity to meet with that parent and really consider some of their feedback in addition to some of the code changes that you'll see if you look at lines 14 through 21 we now have a new definition of cyber bullying which is much more sufficient versus the one we had previously so we deleted our definition previously and then if you go to lines 60 to 61 we wanted to remove that section

[00:14:41] because we have another you look at prevention we have a section E so we wanted to move the responsibilities of staff to where it belongs so we did some restructuring and then if you look at 62 through 71 again that's requirements by code that were added where it talks about the incidents that need to be investigated and then specifically incidents of cyberbullying that occur outside of the school property between LCPS students are to be reported and addressed as soon as possible previously we didn't have anything about cyber

[00:15:17] bullying and then you'll see on 73 we had a guardian it's a different format so I don't know if that's a concern and then again with e we wanted to really define it as prevention and intervention versus just positive behavior and education and so you'll see that we took out beginning on the 86 through 90 that's again about investigation so it shouldn't be under the prevention section so moved that to

[00:15:48] see as I mentioned and then in F you'll see lines 114 to 127 really this is about the intervention and then the code required us to add section B which states that any student who was a victim of bullying or cyberbullying will receive a list of support services and resources available relating to reporting and seeking support after experience in an instance of cyberbullying or bullying including the mental health support services and any information necessary to access such support and then the lists need to be made available which are

[00:16:27] on our LCPS website. Thank you, Ms. Evans. You're welcome. Committee, given the significant number of changes that have been made to this document, we can make a motion to send this to the full school board, but I will also accept a motion to, as this is an action item, to have this return as an action item at our next Student Services Committee meeting so we have some time to digest it.

[00:16:54] I can just decide to do that even better. So as chair, what I'm going to decide to do is have this come back as an action item at our May student services meeting. I didn't realize I had that power, Ms. Chandler, so thank you. I'm going to have this come back as an action item at our next student services committee meeting just so we have some time to digest these changes and take a look at them.

[00:17:20] And knowing that where we are in the school year, I don't believe it's a tremendous rush to get this done. And May will be plenty of time. so we will then move on to item 4.06 which is revised policy 5310 special education and the deletion of policy 5330 special education student eligibility and transfer

procedures and so before I take a motion I know there's been some some kind of feedback and changes so miss Richardson would you please enlighten us as to all the great work your team has done on this yes

[00:17:58] Thank you for that. So you may recall last month we received extensive feedback from SEAC and MSAC specifically and a few of our community members. And again, we are combining policy 5310, which is special education, and policy 5330, which was eligibility and student transfer procedures.

[00:18:17] And those two policies left gaps within the overall process. so you will see that staff along with the feedback that was received we have now you now have before you on the red line bless you um a much more comprehensive policy that doesn't fully replicate regulations because remember that would just not be a good practice but we have in this updated policy we have now captured the purpose of special education evaluations

[00:18:55] eligibility and educational programming so the title has been expanded child find we have provided definitions for all children age 2 to 21 inclusive we've defined evaluations and re-evaluations there's a section for triennial re-evaluation eligibility we are a school division that chooses to use the disability category of developmental delay and so we define that by regulation then we have a section that goes over

[00:19:34] the individualized educational plan or iep we now have a new section that goes over the least restrictive environment we now have a section for placement we also discuss procedural safeguards we discuss prior written notices we define related services we also captured from the previous policy 5330 the process of students transferring into LCPS that are already eligible under the IDEA we also have a section on the role of parents and guardians we captured the

[00:20:13] process of amending an IEP and then we talk about the prohibited practices of harassment thank you miss Richards it's quite a bit committee members would love before we make a motion would love to hear your thoughts on the changes to policy 53 as well as 5330 in conjunction miss LaBelle I just want to

[00:20:45] look at triennial re-evaluation it says that special education services are we re-evaluated at least once every three years unless the parent in the school division agreed that a re-evaluation is unnecessary what would be some instances other than graduation that would cause that to be unnecessary sure so this comes directly from code or regulation so we have the up the obligation to come together at least every three years and when you come

[00:21:22] together as that triennial team, you can discuss about the students' present levels of performance, progress towards goals, how they're accessing their accommodations, and the team can choose to just simply do a review of records and document that for the triennial process.

[00:21:41] So you don't always have to choose the formal components that are done by our psychologists and educational diagnosticians. Is the review of records part, does it become part of the child's record?

[00:21:57] Yes. So that if we are looking at it and we say, oh, he's not had a triennial review, we can see that there, yes, there has been a review of records. Yes. Okay, thank you. Absolutely. Ms. Jailer. Thank you. I'd actually love to ask a few questions.

[00:22:14] So the term faith, is that a federal term? Yes, it is. So that's not something that we have any flexibility to change the use of, It's a federal term. Yes. Okay, and then I noticed, just doing a quick search,

504 does not exist within that policy.

[00:22:32] Could you explain to me just some of the nuances as to why it would not be included? Sure. So, 504, so that is Section 504 under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This particular policy is pertaining to students that are protected under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, which is specifically for students for special education.

[00:22:56] So 504, while it's a related process, they're kind of like cousins. They're not under this umbrella. I notice in the SEAC feedback there's a question about the term child study.

[00:23:11] Is that a term that we still use in LCPS? That is a term that we are currently talking about. So in regulations and in the IDEA, and when I say regulations, I'm talking about state regulations, the terminology of looking at whether we suspect whether a child has a disability is still called child study.

[00:23:35] In LCPS, I'm not sure of the time frame in which we changed, we refer to that exact process as the referral review team. We, as staff members, are currently having that conversation about going back to the terminology that can be easily found in regulations and in federal law, going back to child study.

[00:24:01] And so, because we do call it RRT currently, we did want this policy to accurately reflect how it's captured in the IDEA and in state recs. So staff's recommendation is to continue to use the language child study because it reflects what's in state regulation and federal law.

[00:24:22] Okay, that clarification is very helpful. Thank you. Is there any more discussion from members of the committee? I am happy to entertain a motion for this item, whether we want to move it to the full school board for discussion or whether we think we would like to bring this back as action.

[00:24:46] As the chair, I don't have strong opinions either way, but I would love to hear the thoughts of the committee. Okay, so I will entertain it since the committee has said that there doesn't seem to be any significant changes needed.

[00:25:04] I will take a motion. We do need a motion to send this to the full board. Ms. Lavelle. I move that we send policy, put on my glasses this time, 5310, special education evaluations, eligibility, and educational programming forward for review by the full board.

[00:25:24] There a second. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. The motion has been made by Ms. Lavelle and seconded by Ms. Chandler to move new policy or updated policy 5310 and the elimination of policy 5330 to the full school board as an information item.

[00:25:42] Is there any discussion on this motion? Seeing none, we will take a vote. All those in favor of moving updated policy 5310 and the elimination of policy 5330 to the full school board as an information item, please say aye. All right, that motion passes unanimously that is the end of our action item tonight. We will now move to our information items starting with information item 5.01 revised policy 8155 on Auto zone transfers and presenting this item tonight. I believe I'm waiting for

[00:26:23] is Mr. Kirk Dolson our director of the office of student services Take it away Mr. Wilson. Thank you, Chair Pepper. I appreciate the introduction. So tonight we're going to talk once again about 8155, current policy 8155, which is school assignment.

[00:26:43] You have before you a couple of items that we'll talk about, but first I'm going to draw your attention to the board and the chart before you. So this is an update just for the committee's information. You see on this chart the total number of applications that we have received as of Tuesday of this week

that's broken down by each level in the approved column you also see the pending column which those are the applications that we still have pending for either approval or denial in the approved column just so you are clear that includes students who are who have been renewed it also

[00:27:23] includes in the students of employees so that's why that those numbers might look a little larger than you might first have thought in the denial column that also includes all of the Department of Student Services denials as well as the current school board denials so that's inclusive of those and then in the voids just so you're aware the voids can include families whose students are program placed and applied for special permission who then were contacted and said you don't need to go through this process because you're being program

[00:28:00] pleased as well as families who decided to remove their applications and have not yet been approved or denied so just so there's clarification there and then the over capacity school applications those also will include renewals and voids because the school was in fact over capacity so just for clarification Mr. Dulse, before we go any further, can I just stop for to see if the board has any questions?

[00:28:31] Absolutely. Does anyone have any questions on the data? I have a quick one. So my question is, the approval, does that also include students who were kind of elected to continue to stay after rezoning?

[00:28:51] So, for example, students are- It might. Well, no, that would have been done by 8160 policy. Okay, so that's not 80. So, for example, a student at Light Ridge here. Ms. Tate and I have been working very closely alongside with Ms. Richardson on making sure that we do have tight alignment within what is an approval for 8,160 and what is an approval for 8,155.

[00:29:15] I would be remiss if I didn't say that, yes, there were constituents who applied for both. And we tried to keep it very much in alignment with if it was a boundary change, they were going to have to go through the 8160 pathway. If they were denied, they may have applied for special permission, but more than likely they would have been denied because the school was overcapacity.

[00:29:41] Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Nelson. Anything else on board members or committee members? Sorry. Mr. Nelson, please continue. Okay. This is just information for you all as committee members, and then I think it pertinent for the full board to see this. What we did is we researched the locales that are most like us. Obviously, Fairfax and Prince William are the ones that jump out closest to us. And this is just information on how they approach these processes. They're significantly different in the

[00:30:19] fact that you will see some of the bullets. In Fairfax County, you just see the number of students is quite large. The number of out of zone transfer requests they get on average is about four to five thousand per year and their approval percentage is 96 percent but that's a very small number in comparison to the total number of students within their division. We typically get about four thousand and we are right around 81,000 students. Fairfax have, so schools

[00:30:54] in Fairfax may deny a transfer due to a discipline or attendance or academic performance issues, the school board is not involved in that transfer process or the appeals process and there currently is not a corresponding policy associated with the regulation, it's all through a regulation.

[00:31:12] In Prince William County again they have approximately 88,000 students, three to 4,000 of their special permission or transfer for requests, transfer requests are for specialty programs. So all of their high schools, I believe, have a specialty program attached to it. Those approvals are about 65 to 70 percent,

and then they have about 1,500 to 2,000 extenuating circumstances, and about 85 percent of those requests are approved. And again, families can apply for a transfer within 30 days

[00:31:48] of moving to the county the school board is not involved in the transfer process or the appeals process and they have a corresponding broader policy associated with their regulation so that is just information for you all as a committee if you would like us we can certainly share that with the board at a given time any members any questions on this data and what it means thanks thank you so what I'm seeing is at least in Prince William County they

[00:32:27] can't transfer simply because they want to is that correct I would say there's a more specific reason why a lot of so a lot of the reasons are because they want to go to a school that might have a specific program associated with something that they're interested in that's obviously the specialty program The extenuating circumstances might miss a little fall into the category that you're talking about because they want to or because of other Reasons transportation close to mother's home. Correct those kinds of things correct siblings in this school. Not that one. Correct. Gotcha. Thank you

[00:33:09] So before I move on trip I just would like to recognize we do have two principles in our audience this evening and I think it would be helpful in some way shape or form for you to hear from them I would like to just walk you through our first attempt at really at truly coming up with a new policy for that we've we've renamed 8155 and then if you saw fit to maybe hear from the principal perspective on the impact of

[00:33:42] the current policy 8155 I have just so you know shared the draft with these principles so they were able to look at it and see it before if that would be something you would entertain I think it would be a great asset to you all as a committee thank you mr. Wilson I I am definitely willing and would have happily listen to what our principles have to say about the impact of the policy I do want to say and this really is to kind of everyone in the room as we begin our look at the revision of policy 8155 we are are very cognizant of the

[00:34:20] issues related to our current policy 8155 and and some of the changes that might be necessary I want to say really to everyone that this is our very very first look with fresh eyes as an attempt to revise this policy and I want to encourage my fellow committee members those in the room those who are listening at home or watching our meeting to understand that right now we're just being introduced and it's just kind of a chance to ruminate I do not plan on moving this forward as an action item in any way at our next meeting we really need some time so please everyone take that let's see

[00:34:59] what's what's what's offered let's hear from our building principles and with that I will let you begin mr. goals so I'm just going to give you the broad over overview and highlights of the newly revised policy 8155 which we have titled out-of-zone school transfers so obviously the change in title and the removal of special permission throughout in our opinion clearly defines the requests for out-of-school zone transfers we have listed and enumerated explicit reasons for a family or student who may request an out-of-zone

[00:35:35] school transfer we've also removed the stringent timelines for the application processes but we've kept a renewal deadline that deadline date remains and And that mainly is for staffing purposes. And then we've also included an out-of-zone school transfer form.

[00:35:54] We are working on a draft of that form specifically for the medical, emotional, or social adjustment reasons. The only thing other than that I want to point out is that in the draft policy of the now entitled out-of-zone school transfers, we did not define the type of employees.

[00:36:14] If you look at the red line version, it does differentiate between full-time employees and then co-curricular employees. So that would be something that, again, sometimes principals will call our office, myself or Ms. Carpenter, and ask that question.

[00:36:34] Things about like part-time bus drivers, substitutes, coaches. So those are things that we might want to just consider moving forward. But in the draft policy, there's not a delineation. It just strictly says LCPS employees like to add now is now a good time for Mr. Dolcin to hear from our

[00:37:13] principals or is that really the next I think that would be yes excellent so if you would kindly introduce so we have Mr. Fitzroy from Sterling Middle School and Dr. Ryan Hitchman from Light Ridge High School. Um, Mr. Fruit, they can if Dr. Hitchman and Mr. Fruit both want to come up there's there are seats available because you're not watching on Channel One. Dr. Hitchman's been

[00:37:49] trapped by chairs and is working his way around slowly. Good afternoon everyone. Mr. Dulce said Fitzroy Fruit, proud principal at Sterling Middle School. Mr. Dulce and I had a conversation earlier this week or last week. I know that Mrs. Carpenter and I, who by the way we go back 19 years and so Gabriel always give it straight no chase and the policy is in such a way that it's very limited to

[00:38:29] what Mrs. Carpenter and Mr. Dalston can do. So even if there are times that they see some of the pleas that we as principals share with them, they have to abide by policy. I will share with you that the policy as it currently exists can be unfair to some schools, more so. There is more of an impact on a school like Sterling Middle School. For example, as Mr. Dalston shared, the date, I believe, the number for middle school was 604 approved so far. Currently, Sterling has 128 of those.

[00:39:01] That's 21% of all transfers so far. If those 604 transfers were equally distributed for the 18 middle schools, each middle school would have 33.5. That's right, I was doing it over there beside Mrs. Chernoff.

[00:39:19] So we have 128. Another impact that it has on us is over the course of the three years I know since I've been on board, we have lost approximately 133 incoming sixth graders to other schools.

[00:39:35] That is raw numbers that affect our staffing. If those students were currently at Sterling Middle School, our projection next year, which is 884, we would be around 1,013, 1,017. That's a fourth AP. This year, for example, I'm looking at a 5.8% FTE cut, reduction.

[00:39:56] I would have been gaining teachers, not losing teachers. And a school like Sterling Middle School, the only Title I middle school in the county, we need more, not less staff. So there is an unfair impact in schools, especially on the eastern side, what I want to show you.

[00:40:18] Thank you, Mr. Frew. Dr. Hitchman. All right, so Ryan Hitchman, principal over at Light Ridge High School, worked with Mr. Frew before, so it's nice to see you again. So in looking at the policy and speaking with the changes, the out-of-zone transfers, I think, really articulates a little bit better than the special permission that has been granted in the past as a school that we tend to get a lot of special permissions at Light Ridge.

[00:40:51] and going through a boundary readjustment process that we just went through. Yes, there was a survey that was sent out, but there were some concerns with who received the survey, what was the survey sent to. I agree with what Mr. Frews said about staffing. This is, you know, we, as a principal, whenever we receive our staffing, we tend to receive it early, but there's a lot of students that are moving back and forth.

[00:41:16] They're being granted special permission, and it does impact not just our staffing, But each one of those staffing, that's a person. That is a human being that is at our school, who has built connections within our community and our school, and for Mr. Furu to have to go ahead and go to those people and say, okay, well, I'm sorry, but due to special permission, you can't say that, but due to some of these changes, some of the things that are in policy, he has to go to those teachers and say, you know, you need to kind of, unfortunately, we have to involuntary de-staff.

[00:41:51] It does put principles, and in looking at Light Ridge, it does have an impact on our staffing. It has an impact on programs. It has an impact on what we can go ahead and services that we can provide to our students.

[00:42:08] We also have some space concerns over at Light Ridge. While we do have eight learning cottages that were added this past year, as we have more programs being placed in and special permission, we are running into kind of a space concern. And I just want the board to go ahead and consider that in two years, there's going to be a brand new high school that's going to be opening.

[00:42:31] There's going to be new boundary readjustment process that is going to occur. So in looking at this revisions, this policy, I do think out-of-zone transfers more clearly articulates what special permission is. I speak with Gabriel quite often, and there are circumstances that do occur with some of our students, and some students have, there are definitely some special needs that are out there and some special circumstances that are out there that I do believe our hands are kind of tied with the current policy right now.

[00:43:04] I also know that we do have staff members who do have children that do go to other schools or staff members that I have at Light Ridge. I have 12 couples at Light Ridge High School, and I kind of like having that family atmosphere.

[00:43:22] But when you have a husband and wife or spouses working together, it does have an impact on what schools are close by to us. And it does put, you know, principals sometimes in a difficult position when you have an elementary school right there on your campus. But, you know, depending upon what the policy is, that that couple may not be able to bring their child or have their child go to that elementary or that middle school that is close by.

[00:43:47] So I do think that, you know, in LCPS, we do value our employees. We value, we want to be a place where people want to be. So I think that that is also something to go and look at as well. If you're an LCPS employee and you live within Loudoun County, we want to keep the 12 couples that I have.

[00:44:07] I want to keep that 24 teachers to allow them to go ahead and have some special permission, sorry, out of zone transfer for those staff members. I think it's something that's easy to do, but that's just something I'd ask for a consideration. So thank you. Thank you, Dr. Hitchman. And it's so interesting because I think both of you are kind of on the opposite ends of a coin and you feel it the same way, right?

Like Mr. Frew, you're trying to keep the staff that you have, you know, and then Dr. Hitchman is not trying to have his school overextended and his people hidden out in cottages in the back of really a relatively

[00:44:45] brand new school. And I've seen Light Ridge. I've not been to Sterling yet, but you guys are both doing amazing jobs. And I feel your pain. I think that a lot of us on the board, and I don't mean to speak for everyone, but we kind of recognize that these are issues, right? And so with that, I'm going to open up the floor to comments from my fellow committee members to share their thoughts on where we are. Mr. Fru, do you have a question? Of course. So, you know, one of the things that I was talking to my admin team today, and, you know, we proudly display one LCPS, right? But the policy

[00:45:22] as it's currently constructed says that some schools are better than others so i can now school shop and live in sterling but i hear trail side is better i hear and these are feelings as i said over the past three years i have lost 34 58 and 41 sixth graders who have never stepped foot in my building have never met me have never spoken to me have never seen the gains that we have done over the past three years but whatever is out there in the ether about sterling middle school that's what parents are going by it's not based in reality and so uh as dr hitchman on the other

[00:46:00] side rightfully say then mrs buechler over a trail side is getting all that extra folks coming uh to her so that's where if we're truly one lcps and we do value what's going on in each of our schools uh i think the policy right now is allowing parents to school shop thank you for sharing that Committee members, Ms. LaBelle.

[00:46:25] I have to agree with you 100%. Having done this last year as well, school shopping is a big item. Everybody wants to go to the other school. They may be 1% or 2% higher, points higher on SOLs and all of these other issues that are coming up.

[00:46:45] I know that one year, Emmerich had 90 out of district, not district, yeah, extra special permission students. That totaled, if you look at a limit of 25 students per class, that would be five extra classrooms.

[00:47:08] So it's not right. And all our schools, I always tell all our people that all our schools here in LCBS are good schools. But they don't get the message sometimes. Ms. Chandler.

[00:47:23] Well, I will say, Ms. LaBelle, I really love that perspective, and I agree with you completely. All of our schools are great schools. I really appreciate both of our principals who are here today to share their experience with you.

[00:47:39] It resonates with me that you're at both ends of the spectrum. When I came onto the board in 24, I hated this policy. having gone through a couple cycles of appeals I have grown to understand why some people like it I still struggle with many many aspects of it including where it grew out of but I think it's a big change and so and I guess before I go into the big change part I will also reflect on my experience as a parent I

[00:48:18] don't realize I don't think that many community members realize that when you're in an overcrowded school you lose lots of opportunities in terms of scheduling and curriculum because you have to dedicate that space first and foremost to the courses that are required and so so i know our daughter had an elective in mind for four years and she got to be a senior and there wasn't room for that elective so it wasn't an opportunity that she was able to take advantage of there are a lot of things I think about this process that cause complications for everyone and I'm always a little bit surprised out of our

[00:48:57] 79,000 students at the number of students who are actually engaging in this now that's not to say their concerns aren't important so I guess I like to have all of the information to weigh and I know kind of want to just I don't want anyone to think that I'm suggesting this or have fully thought it through, but I would like to have the information so I can weigh it more carefully.

[00:49:27] Has anybody talked about offering some sort of legacy status to families that have been in special permission or approved in special permission now? Just because it is a big change, this policy has been in place for a really long time, and it's not necessarily that many families if we look at what was approved this year our students 24 2,470 students could we offer them a path to staying where they are if they wanted to and how could we do that and what would the impact be on the schools so we have explored what it would look like if

[00:50:03] let's just say if the board decided to take special permission away we would not be able to stop the process we talked about it phasing it in and really would probably most likely be a three-year phase in so if you're you know your your current ninth graders your current sixth graders were in and that this does align with policy currently those students would be able to stay at those middle schools and those high schools and then you would think about you know possibly not offering it to kindergarten first and second grade but

[00:50:38] your third and all of the elementary school students that are currently there would be phased in but then you know your third fourth and fifth graders would be able to finish out and then you would kind of kind of have a level set so we explored that and we at least Miss Richardson and I and Miss Carpenter and Miss Mason the four of us sort of came up with that idea that that would make the most sense if we were making major changes to this policy to keep you know people sort of where they were with the understanding that if you're at the middle school you're not going to

[00:51:15] be able to go to the high school and I think to Mr. Frew's point that is the biggest concern that we deal with in the office of student services with parents is they assume that if they are in a feeder pattern they get to go to the next level and that is what Mr. Frew is dealing with is that and if you look and I'm just going to point this out because we did put this in in very plain terms In the fresh copy, line 52 and 53, it specifically says parents may not apply for an out-of-zone

[00:51:53] school transfer for students who have not yet attended, and in quotes, I put set foot inside their future assigned school for that purpose. Now, yes, there are extenuating circumstances, but again, 90% of the students that Mr. Frew is referring to need to be at Sterling Middle School.

[00:52:12] I really appreciate that clarification. I did notice that. And I'm just curious if there has been, or if you could share with us perhaps what the consideration was for not wanting to see if someone's in a cluster and they've really committed.

[00:52:30] And I mean, I think this is one of the things I would say over time, hearing from students who are engaged or entrenched in this process, that it would be, I mean, disruptive. We hear it when we talk about boundaries and change boundaries, right?

[00:52:47] when you're at that age as a teenager you're so like just socially and emotionally your social network is so incredibly important to you in a way maybe it's outsized just developmental and developmentally appropriate um i'm wouldn't anticipate that families would want to be able to continue

through on that sort of cluster pathway if they're entrenched or have been there maybe since kindergarten um for whatever reason um and again still assuming that we were to take

[00:53:24] away the the special permission choice piece but in that transition period would you consider allowing that legacy some sort of legacy opportunity for families that were entrenched in cluster if they had already like say they're approved this year or the last year whenever that may be so i think that is a and this is something we should like researching it's a i'm going to be very frank it's a board decision and it's the culture and climate that you as a board want to

[00:54:00] instill in this system i feel as though the pattern of that staying in the that that's that's what i feel like we need to move away from because of what mr fru shared i was the as a former principal of Parkview High School I feel and can understand his pain I lost staff every year when Riverside opened I lost an enormous amount of staffing because kids wanted to go to the new school much like what mr. Hitchman is so this is

[00:54:36] not in just a now thing this has been a I mean this happened in 1970 and you made reference as to why and the why is still the same why I'm just it's one of those things. I really appreciate that. And it's the same way. But I think it's in just trying to weigh our choices. It was important for me to ask that question. I can add, you know, it's having

[00:55:13] gone through a boundary adjustment. And once again, this board is going to be taking this up shortly. We have this year, I have students that are currently in 10th grade. They have a sibling that is going to be in ninth grade next year and they are going to go to school up the road if they live in a certain area because that is what the boundary adjustment process is if we were to continue with that legacy it is something that's it's just going to continue because i have families that have three four five kids honestly and it would just continue once again that does have

[00:55:51] an impact on staffing it has an impact on who is working within what school and as we are going to be opening up a brand new school in a few years that school is probably going to be under capacity and once again you're going to have the same thing is going to occur whenever we open lightridge now we open up during covid so no one was in school at that time but we did have students oh you're under capacity so if you have the means get your child to lightridge we're able to go and do that

[00:56:25] but not have the means to that then that wasn't it weren't able to so uh i do think that this is knowing what we have coming up in a couple years and even with the middle schools having you know brambleton right now with only eighth grade having watson mount with six and seven this is just i i appreciate the board taking this up because it is going to be a not going to it's going to be a a topic of discussion whenever parents are out at various establishments around the county.

[00:56:57] Ms. LaBelle. One of the other things that really bothers me is as parents move into the district, and they may even move in over the summer, they find that the school where they're expecting their children to go, that is closest to their neighborhood, is already at capacity or over capacity, and this hardly seems fair.

[00:57:20] As I said back to the Emmerich, we had students that were there, 90 of them, and we had other students that live in the area that were pushed out because they couldn't come. That's not right to me. That just doesn't sit right.

[00:57:37] We all like to go to our own local schools, but it's not happening. I'm going to finish up the discussion, and I appreciate everyone's thoughts on this as we really begin this discussion. For me, you know, when I was, and I'm new on the school board, right?

[00:57:57] When I was running, a lot of parents would be like, why is it not 100%? And I'd say, I don't know. And as you dig into the history, the history is, Mr. Dull says, right, the history is still the same history, right? History hasn't changed as to why this policy is here and the way that people are trying to take advantage of it. For me, there's a couple things that I really like about what we're doing.

[00:58:17] And some of it goes to what Hitchman was saying about Lightridge. know having your students attend your school or a school near you is a huge employment perk I absolutely love that and it's something that we should offer our employees and whether you know that that's teachers or full-time staff members whether it extends down to coaches and bus drivers that's something for the committee to consider as we build this policy so I absolutely love that piece I think it's crucially important as a recruitment retention one LCPS tool to have that in there I also recognize that you know we have academies

[00:58:54] you know global linguist and studies is opening dual enrolled dual language immersion so there are going to be some circumstances where students are placed in other schools I also know that when this policy some of the rezoning that just happened there are students who are going to want to finish up their career at whatever middle of high school they're at the one area that I just in my brief experience would love to see changes and it's not for the students who have chosen right to go to a different school for whatever reason but students placed on instructional suitability I would love to see it as they transfer levels if they

[00:59:34] can remain because a lot of students are there for their instructional suitability reason that might be a social emotional issue and so they were having social emotions they're having struggles at a certain school with a peer group and now they've built a new successful peer group at a different school and like I said those all have to come through student services so So there's a little bit higher level of documentation than just saying, you know, the 85% rubber stamps as you go.

[00:59:58] But outside of that, it really is what Mr. Frew said, right? We are one LCPS. All of our schools are good schools. Just like what Ms. Chandler was saying, right, if your school is over capacity, you're limited in what they can offer. Well, the same thing if your school is under capacity because you might not have enough students to run a class.

[01:00:16] You might not have enough students to have a certain club or a certain team or a certain, you know, a person who's certified to do something really special. So it cuts both ways, and we need to make sure that we give all of our students the same advantages no matter what part of the county they live in, what part of the county they grew up in.

[01:00:35] And a lot of that is making sure that students go to our homeschool. And my last thought that I want to leave you with as we really dig into this is really about timing. I know this policy is brought up now, but we have something pretty special coming down the road in about a year and a half or so where we get to redo all the middle and high school boundaries in LCPS.

[01:00:57] and so if we can align the implementation of this I know there's going to be a delay in rollout right because we we really do need to let students finish where they're at if they've changed something I do

believe it but if we can align a rollout a really kind of a new robust policy that basically says and I don't want to say instructional suitability or bust but you know instructional suitability special program or bust I think that that's going to go a long way into to kind of tamping down and getting us closer to those numbers maybe the Fairfax County has right where it's four

[01:01:32] percent instead of you know twenty percent or whatever it is so I thank you guys for bringing this and we will continue miss Chandler thank you I would like to ask staff is it fair to say that some of the percentage changes that have occurred over the last year have added a hardship hardship to managing this process oh I'm sorry yes so has it can you repeat your question I'm sorry has Has the change from 90% capacity to 85% presented a hardship for the staff in terms of managing the process?

[01:02:12] I would say no, because we haven't seen a huge increase in the request. I mean, we've seen more of the voids, but I would say we've not seen an influx of complaints or wonders why, other than, I mean, Ms. Carpenter, would you agree with that?

[01:02:30] That's good. Okay. I would not say that that has been, it's been a heartache for us at all, no. Chair Pepper, do we anticipate having this come back? I'm going to have this come back. I would like this to come back really as a discussion item, if possible, at our next student service meeting, because I think where I would like to go with this, and I know that we're still working on 5340, which is our next item on the agenda today.

[01:02:57] I really truly believe this is going to require a series of work sessions to get this policy right, and so I'd love to have it come back as a discussion item so we can talk about where we want to go and how I want to tackle it and give this a chance for us to get it right.

[01:03:16] Thank you, gentlemen, for your time. I know it's after hours, maybe not a high school, not a county, because you guys have whatever. So on that, we have one more item on our agenda. It is our work item, information item 5.02. Just an update on our work sessions on Policy 5340 and Ms. Richardson.

[01:03:35] Thank you, Chair Pepper. Appreciate that. Just an overview. We have already had our first work session, which was highly successful. lots of fun and yes we had snacks we have our second work session next Thursday April 23rd at 4:30 here in room 102 a and B I do want the committee members to note that we will have two additional advisory members joining us so we will have two participants from leaf that will be joining us next

[01:04:08] Thursday Ms. Monique Buckley and Mrs. Sarah Lee Bonit will be joining our work I have already sent the presentation from the first work session I've sent them some information to look at and so they will be ready to jump into the work when we meet again next Thursday here's a high-level overview of the summary of the first work from the work work session and our review of 5340 sections a through D so some of the observations are clarity and consistency are needed

[01:04:46] really would like for us to prioritize the focus on de-escalation strategies first maybe going back and revising some of the definitions that are in the policy, looking at environment structures and supervisions, and then the overall tone of the policy. A lot of the feedback was indicating that the policy had more of a negative tone than a positive tone, so that's something that we'll need to work on. Impact, making sure

[01:05:18] that we're clear in documentation and transparency, a shared understanding of really what safe and supportive removal of students should look like, feel like, sound like. Making sure that the policy is

accounting for the risk of misuse of this policy.

[01:05:40] And then, of course, consistency and implementation concerns. We are a large school system in just making sure that our professional learning that rolls out to our staff and our administrators really make sure that we're fully aligned lastly recommendations so looking at some of the criteria for use and further built up building that out documentation making sure that this policy also highlights what are the prohibited practices making sure that our professional learning is based on

[01:06:18] real-life scenarios to help our staff be able to walk through and and and practice and then coming up with some decision-making frameworks for our schools to be able to utilize and that's my update thank you board members any questions looking forward to next Thursday as we dive into the rest of the policy and I I had mentioned just so that committee members are aware that as we finish up our work sessions there may be an additional one just to go over the finalized policy so just have that on your agenda with that we move to item 6

[01:06:51] which is new business is anybody on the committee of any new business seeing none it is now 5:37 p.m. and I will adjourn the April 16th 2026 meeting of the Student Services Committee thank you all



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