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Loudoun County School Board, Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting, Thursday, May 7, 2026

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[00:00:07] All right good afternoon everyone. I'd like to call this May 7th May 7th meeting of the Curriculum Instruction Committee to order. My name is Dr. Rasheed and I'm the chair of this committee so we appreciate your presence here today. And the purpose of today's meeting is to go over a few things. First we have to approve the minutes and then we have two information items which is the middle school schedule project overview and an update on social science and global studies.

[00:00:30] We do not have public comment at this time. So I'll go ahead and make a I'd like to entertain a motion to approve the minutes for April 6th. Do I have a second or do I have a motion.

[00:00:48] I move to approve the minutes from the April 6th meeting. Second. Thank you Mr. Svensson and seconded by Ms. Chernoff thank you so much. Okay and all those in favor say aye for the minutes. Aye. All right so they have been approved.

[00:01:04] All right so we'll move on to our agenda item which is 4.01 middle school schedule project overview I will turn it over to Miss Mildred Charlie Green director of middle school education thanks thank you dr. Rishi and good afternoon or good evening I don't see the time in front of me but good afternoon everyone and thank you for the opportunity to share with you the discussions we've been having around our middle school schedule we've been working with our middle school principals to review our

current schedule and the possibilities to enhance that schedule to be more student-centered today we are outlining our plan to conduct a structured

[00:01:41] division-wide review of the LCPS middle school schedule our goal is to study our current model gather input from key stakeholders and explore potential adjustments that better support students and staff this effort is grounded in feedback that we've received from our principals and our community additionally it is grounded in our commitment to ensuring student belonging we really to look at our schedule and ask ourselves some reflective questions about how can we best meet the needs of our students. Key areas of focus include our bell schedule, elective offerings, student support such as advisory and intervention, and ensuring teachers have meaningful time for

[00:02:20] collaboration. Ultimately, we aim to develop a division-level framework that provides consistency across schools while preserving the flexibility needed to meet each school's unique content. we began this work in march by engaging our middle school principals in a thorough discussion of our current middle school schedule together we identify current challenges and establish a clear set of priorities to guide this review as part of our march discussion all middle school principals

[00:02:55] completed a survey examining key aspects of our current schedule including structure service delivery for specialized programs and elective offerings several important themes emerged a A majority of principals, 56%, view the current AB schedule as workable but in need of refinement.

[00:03:14] There is no single preferred model that emerged. Principals are split between maintaining the AB schedule and moving to a daily schedule with others suggesting additional options. Most importantly, principals identified areas where the current schedule does not provide enough time, particularly for student intervention and for flexible creative scheduling to meet student needs.

[00:03:38] - Two key insights stand out from this feedback. First, our principals, many of them who are here tonight, are deeply committed to strengthening student experiences, especially by expanding access to intervention, enrichment, and a wider range of electives to meet the needs of all students.

[00:03:58] Second, they are equally clear that any changes must be carefully aligned with staffing realities. In other words, any meaningful change to the middle school schedule will have direct staffing implications, and the two must be examined together. This balance between innovation and sustainability will be central to our work moving forward.

[00:04:20] To ground this work, it's important to understand our current middle school structure. Across 18 schools, we serve nearly 19,000 students in grades six through eight. Under our staffing formula, students take eight classes in grades six and seven, and seven classes in grade eight, with a target class size that aligns with high school at 23.7 students.

[00:04:42] Middle school teachers teach six of eight periods, with the remaining time reserved for planning, collaboration, and working with students during their resource blocks. This results in an average student load of approximately 142 students per teacher, close to the state maximum of 150.

[00:05:00] At the same time, we have limited built-in time for our teacher leaders. Middle school subject area lead teachers teach a full schedule of classes, limiting their ability to attend leadership meetings during the school day, plan for department collaboration, and engage in mentoring and coaching conversations with department members.

[00:05:18] Some of these may be important considerations as we think about strengthening our systems to support middle school students and teachers moving forward. This slide provides a side-by-side comparison of a middle school and its feeder high school to illustrate how current staffing and scheduling structures differ across levels.

[00:05:37] We're using Smart's Mill Middle School and Tuscarora High School as examples. Both schools have similar class size targets of 23.7 students and comparable enrollment per grade level, 310 per grade level at Smarts Mill versus 352 per grade level at Tuscarora.

[00:05:56] There are, however, structural differences in how schedules are organized. Middle school teachers are assigned to teach 6 of 8 instructional periods, while high school teachers teach 5 of 8. This results in an average student load of approximately 142 students per middle school teacher and 118 students per high school teacher there are also differences in how staffing supports are allocated at the high school level additional staffing is provided to support department leadership for an example an allocation of 0.8 fte for department chair release time and core content areas middle schools do not have a comparable allocation within the current schedule

[00:06:34] in total staffing smarts mill is projected at 51 ftes full-time equivalents and tuscarora at 81.2 These totals reflect differences in enrollment as well as the way staffing is structured at each level. Overall, this comparison highlights key structural differences in scheduling and this is important context as we continue this reflective conversation. Based on the survey data and ongoing collaboration, our principal team identified three clear priorities for this work. One, to enhance

[00:07:11] and expand elective opportunities increasing student voice and choice. Two to strengthen intervention structures ensuring students have the time and support they need to succeed and three to establish a clear flexible scheduling framework that balances division-wide consistency with school level adaptability. These priorities will guide our next phase as we explore potential scheduling models and options. This time I'll turn it over to Mr. Slevin. Thank you. While we are still

[00:07:48] Still early in the process, the project team would like to share a few early options related to where we may be headed aligned to the priorities shared so far. One possibility to consider is adjusting the middle school staffing standard to appropriately staff the identified need for a flex period within the instructional day.

[00:08:09] As shown in this table, in order to reach that goal and remain budget neutral, it would require adjusting the target class size ratio from 23.7 to 26 for middle school. It should be noted that even though there would be an increase in overall class size the resulting average teacher student load would be reduced by 12 students so from 142 students to 130 students per teacher.

[00:08:34] Decreasing class size further will result in an increase in general ed teacher FTEs and would need to be weighed against other priorities of the school board in the development of the FY28 budget. We have also provided in this chart a comparison between Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudon from the Waby Guide in terms of their current class size ratio when it comes to allocating general education teachers.

[00:09:04] What does this do for us, these potential staffing changes? One, it would align middle school content teaching load with our high school counterparts. This is feedback that we received both from our principals and teachers and that is something of interest to our middle school communities.

[00:09:20] Number two, it would eliminate the middle school resource block from the middle school schedule in favor of an embedded time for intervention, enrichment, advisory, and other activities that come along with running a school in Loudoun County and activities that support our school environment such as interdisciplinary teams for example.

[00:09:46] We are also thinking beyond the master schedule when it comes to enhancing support for our middle schools. As Ms. Charlie Green mentioned while staffing is a consideration a driver of this change of why behind why we're having conversations about the middle school schedule is a need for better support for the instructional environment as well as intervention opportunities for our students.

[00:10:10] There is interest in potentially restoring the allocation of salt blocks in support of teacher leadership. This was a previous allocation that our middle schools had in the past to support the items that were mentioned earlier. We can consider expanding the allocation of math resource teachers to all middle schools to embed intervention support for math and make sure that it's guaranteed for each of our schools.

[00:10:34] Or finally, we could consider enhancing the allocation of differentiated staffing to be more responsive to student needs at the middle level. - So I'm gonna walk you through our current schedule and what a modified schedule might look like and talk about how changing some of these structures might meet some of the goals that this committee has laid out.

[00:10:58] And so the first schedule that you're looking at the screen is a AB alternating block sixth grade schedule that would be typical of a student in LCPS right now you'll see in first block they have English language arts and they have that every day so both first and fifth block the student has English language arts they have math science social studies as our core content areas and then they have an elective currently that elective is split between introduction to computer applications for a semester and art six for a semester we have health and PE and then every student is assigned to a resource for a half block and then an elective for half block which in sixth grade

[00:11:36] is music either band orchestra or chorus. Actually can we go back to that last slide. So I just want to some of those goals that we talked about I want to kind of just point out how this schedule inhibits some of those goals that our principals have laid out the first one is electives and giving students opportunities for choices and electives currently every student is assigned to introduction to computer applications, art and music.

[00:12:04] So there isn't really a lot of choice and flexibility in what elective students have at sixth grade. The second one is an intervention and time for intervention structures. Currently that would happen during resource for the most part. And at that same time, our teachers are on planning or working with their teams, interdisciplinary teams or CLT teams, and that can make it difficult for teachers to have the ability to work with students and give them that intervention time that they might need.

[00:12:32] And then finally, some flexibility in scheduling. And as you can see, the schedule is very well, is laid out in a very structured way. There isn't a lot of room for our principals to exercise some creativity and be able to modify the schedule to meet the needs of students. So those are some of the goals and some of the rationale for why we've laid out some of these changes.

[00:12:52] The next slide, our principals have shown some great innovation in changing their schedules around to meet some of these needs and so Ms. Buechler is over here but this is a sample of a schedule at

Trailside that has eight blocks every day with an embedded time for advisory intervention enrichment and meeting some of those needs of students currently.

[00:13:13] And so this is an example of what some of our students at Trailside Middle School especially are experiencing every day in their classes. So if we took some of those changes that we talked about earlier we just want to give you an example of a way a schedule might look in an alternating A day B day schedule.

[00:13:30] It's important to note that this is not what the schedule might be and we have great principals who are incredibly innovative and creative who will take this and change this and modify it and have it make sense in the context of their school. But here we've maintained the double blocks of ELA science and then we have an embedded everyday flex block that meets that would be time for intervention and work with students.

[00:13:55] This schedule also creates one block that meets every day. And so a principal might be strategic in that. And if a student for example might benefit from math every day we could schedule that student into math every day. Social studies health and PE and then an elective block that would be much more open to student choices and interests and needs and strengths.

[00:14:16] So this kind of addresses some of those goals and some of those issues that principals have pointed out by giving some flexibility and creativity in the schedule embedding intervention and creating opportunities for students to exercise some choice over the electives that they choose.

[00:14:31] On the next slide we have some of the potential uses that a school might have for that embedded time in their day we've talked about some of these already but to really give teachers time to work through MTSS to build a solid advisory program that supports student social and emotional learning to provide enrichment opportunities for those students who need them and embed club meetings in the day to create that sense of belonging that we know is so key to student learning to in the bottom are some opportunities that schools might have to use this time in creative ways.

[00:15:02] So they might do that intervention time whole school. They might do that by grade level. They might create a strategic daily block to give students some level of consistency and routine every day and more. We know our principals will come up with some great ways to use that time and to really support student learning and support teachers and their needs by having this time built into the day.

[00:15:27] - Thank you Jeff as Ms. Charlie Green shared we surveyed our principals in one of the areas where there is probably the greatest opportunity for enhancement are our elective offerings CTE specifically. There has not been re-envisioning of our programming we're doing at the middle school in quite some time.

[00:15:43] This is some of the feedback that we've received from our principals and we've looked at areas of strong interest across all 18 of our middle schools. I was pleased to see some of this feedback because there's so much alignment our expansion plan for example health and medical sciences culinary arts engineering and stem encoding computer science are all areas that we are looking to expand at the high school level and so there's significant alignment between the middle school offerings and perception and what we're looking to do at the high school level i just want to point out these aren't necessarily brand new courses but maybe opportunities for enhancing existing courses existing programming or maybe even combining some of these so for example cyber security and app development could

[00:16:22] easily be a project lead the way course that could be offered as a nine weeks a semester or a year-long opportunity um jeff i don't want if you i don't know if you want to lean into some of the other options but from a ct perspective we see some significant alignment to the work that we're doing at the high school level and opportunities for growth just one that i would point out is world languages we know we have strong world language programs and we also know there's been a lot of interest in enhancing those those programs and thinking about other languages and and other opportunities that we might be able to bring into the middle school level.

[00:16:55] - Thank you. Next slide. This is just ideas under consideration for electives. Some of the schedule changes that Jeff and Neil and Ms. Charlie Green shared are that these schedule changes may open up new possibilities for how electives are structured accessed and chosen.

[00:17:13] These four areas specifically strategic use of the double blocked English grade six course. The current double block creates a potential space to embed targeted supports within the schedule. These four that are underneath this could be where schools have flexibility based on their community or their students specific needs.

[00:17:31] For example maybe students who need additional English support that double block is retained. Maybe where students need combined English and math support that is an opportunity for flexibility and autonomy for our schools that need it. Maybe that's an opportunity for gifted services or maybe to Jeff's point that's sort of an opportunity for students to take additional CTE electives or other electives at that level.

[00:17:52] We are also exploring a wheel of elective offerings. We think at grade six there's an opportunity for us to give more exposure and exploratory options where students are maybe getting a wheel rotating through disciplines. They might get some PLTW maybe some visual and performing arts maybe some world languages.

[00:18:10] So that exposure could be for more informed decision making for grade seven and grade eight elective offerings which is only going to better prepare them for their high school course offerings and their special program selections. At the center of this is greater student choice. We're putting students I think at the center of this decision making by removing some of the current elective requirements.

[00:18:30] We're giving students more choice in designing their pathways and thinking about their skills their values their interests to select the courses that they want both at the middle school level and the high school level. Most importantly and I think this is where I'm leaning into from principal feedback is it allows us to think about new course options.

[00:18:48] From a CTE perspective we piloted a program this year where schools could offer Tech Ed 7 which is a semester long or if they wanted to they could offer two nine week long PLTW courses. I think this new model allows greater flexibility based on your community needs and where your students interests are. Thank you.

[00:19:12] So some discussion areas and our next steps you can see from this graphic the key milestones for this project. To date we have completed the principal survey and engaged and discussions to review those findings.

[00:19:29] We're currently working with the Schedule Steering Committee to evaluate potential options for scheduling structures and electives. By June, we anticipate having initial proposals ready to share for

community feedback. This feedback process, which will continue through the summer, will help inform any potential budget and staffing considerations that we have in the fall.

[00:19:53] After we refine this proposal, we will work with the Department of Digital Innovation and our school counseling team to prepare any necessary updates to course planner in advance for the course selection process in January of 2027.

[00:20:10] And implementation of approved changes would begin in the 2027-2028 school year. So initial feedback and proposal review. Gathering input from students and families is an important part of this process.

[00:20:29] We are planning to partner with our communications office use thought exchange to collect feedback from students and families. This will allow stakeholders to share perspectives on what is working well and in the current schedule as well as their priorities for electives and student supports and the overall middle school experience. Following this process we plan to engage our advisory committees including the SEAC, Gifted Education Advisory, MSAC and Loudoun Education Alliance for Families to review and provide additional feedback to inform any refinement.

[00:21:08] Success Matrix. As part of this work we are identifying metrics that we can use to evaluate the impact of any potential changes.

[00:21:23] These include how staffing is utilized to support elective access and intervention structures. Principal perceptions of schedule flexibility and alignment to school priorities implementation of dedicated time for advisory intervention and enrichment student access to a broader range of elective opportunities and indicators related to student experience such as the sense of belonging these metrics should lead to measurable gains in student achievement including standardized assessments such as the

[00:22:00] SOLs and measures of academic progress the map assessments as well as decreasing trends in the number of students requiring intervention. Final slide highlights several ongoing questions that the project team continues to explore.

[00:22:19] We welcome any feedback or considerations the committee would like to share. And we're happy to take questions that you may have at this time. Okay this was a quite a loaded item.

[00:22:35] There's a lot there's a lot. And I appreciate everybody putting this together. It's quite quite a lot of information coming at us. I know it was just an example but I just had a question about in the beginning when the example was used for Tuscarora High School and I believe the elementary school but in that situation and I know it's just an example if it's under capacity which it is does that match up with how does that match up with like other middle schools or high schools like what if we're over capacity for example or just on the brim.

[00:23:08] I was just curious when I saw that example. So the key factor on this table to determine the relationship between top line and the bottom is the number of students. Everything else is pretty consistent across all middle schools.

[00:23:24] So it doesn't really have anything to do with capacity. It's more of you have 900 students or do you have 1200 students that's going to impact your bottom line in terms of your general education FTEs. So capacity generally does not have anything to do with staffing.

[00:23:40] DIRECTOR HARRIS: OK. Thank you. And then for towards the end of the presentation or more towards the middle, I saw the sample schedules. And again, I know a lot of them were just used as examples. I think Watson Mountain Middle School with, I believe, his principal Compton, he uses a different schedule where I think Friday is kind of like a combo of-- I don't know if he's still using it, but it's like a combination of a whole bunch of blocks, like A's and B's all together.

[00:24:09] And I think when I went to meet him, he said that it kind of helped a lot because the students felt that they touched base with a little bit of everything so that when it came for the weekend they're not like oh I got an A day on this day and a B day on a Friday and then they forgot everything about the A day by the time by the time Monday came. So was that considered in something like this or how would that fit into something like this or will we just change it overall? So I know the schedule at Watson Mountain has evolved a little bit so I'm not sure if one of my middle school colleagues can speak on what Mr. Compton is doing at Watson Mountain this year.

[00:24:43] So he did pivot or the school did so they're offering an A day A B C D and not the E day anymore. So it's still going 1 2 3 4 but then backwards 8 7 6. All right thank you for that.

[00:24:59] Not the meeting every day. All right thanks so much. I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues. Any questions. I bet you guys have some. Yeah. Mr. Svensson. Sure I'll start off. Just this very exciting presentation you know looking at the schedule that's currently in place.

[00:25:15] It's still the same as when I was in middle school at LCPS. So exciting to see some changes for our students. And I had one variety of questions. I'll start off with it's my understanding that at the middle school level a department lead or head still teaches the same number of blocks as someone who's not a department lead.

[00:25:35] And that's not the same for their high school counterparts. And under this proposed change would the department head at the middle school level have an additional to kind of work on that instructional planning. There are multiple proposals embedded in this.

[00:25:51] We don't have any recommendation at this point. The intent of this presentation was to seek feedback from the committee 0.8 times 17 schools does add up to a significant budget item and we understand there needs to be trade-offs.

[00:26:07] We were just trying to illustrate there's multiple ways to add support to our middle schools and we eventually need to come up with a recommendation against competing priorities and we need our community and our principals to help us make those decisions. that makes a lot of sense um one question i was thinking that folks may have when they see you know why can't uh health and physical education be an elective spot i believe that's a state requirement in virginia through 10th grade to have health mp is that right so i guess the state the state requirements have to change to give us a little more flexibility if i know i could imagine

[00:26:44] some students wanting to so this was actually a topic at a regional instructional leadership meeting i was in attendance this morning and there's actually um competing guidance in terms of the requirement for health and PE but as you may realize when i say it there are many things that we embed within that health and PE time including FLE some additional standards that are required at the state level so any change to how we approach health and PE would need to be addressed in that context so it is there are options but it would be somewhat complicated

[00:27:17] that makes sense um and another question before i i turn over to my colleagues is on the world languages piece is there the ability to start you know the first level of a of a core language you know spanish one or something at the sixth grade level under this new model is that a possibility or is that something that's not really being considered for this change it would be more likely um an exploration year of languages and then still seventh grade would be you know the intro to that we uh for for next year we created a new course exploratory languages

[00:27:55] that is meant to expose students to all of the languages that are taught in lcps with the hope that that gives them some exposure and some knowledge as they make a choice with a language that may follow them all the way through high school so we have that course currently embedded in seventh and eighth grade for next year because of some constraints with the schedule if we were able to i think most principals would say sixth grade is a is a better place to put that as a exposure to students so that in seventh grade when students first make their choice to take a world language they have some background and information to draw upon when they make that decision.

[00:28:31] DIRECTOR DEWOLF: Thank you. DIRECTOR HARRIS: That's really exploratory. I mean I wish we had that growing up. You could make a decision better on that. Yes Ms. Chernoff. DIRECTOR HARRIS: I will date myself because I was a child of the wheel and here it is again.

[00:28:49] So we've been through a full cycle Mr. Svensson and now we're back. So as everything does I am overjoyed and thrilled to be having this conversation. I think that the friends in the audience agree from the feedback that I have received at least and I'm really grateful that you're here and the head nodding is appreciated so we can confirm that I want I have a couple of questions.

[00:29:14] I want to start at slide 10. So I have heard feedback from middle school teachers about the discrepancies between high school and then looking at the Tuscarora schedule also. I think seeing it side by side like that really draws the attention I guess it's the other slide seven that slide in particular particular draws the attention to the equity issue in my mind so I'm glad to see it laid out like that I think it makes it clear that some adjustments are definitely made need to be made and then when you go to slide 10 I guess my question and maybe the principals have our and the teachers have already spoken to this feedback

[00:29:53] is do they feel like lowering the total number of students that they would see throughout the day is a good trade-off for the a little bit higher class size do you have a sense for what the feedback is on that so we are at the beginning stages of our conversations and so certainly we have had heard the feedback related to the difference between middle and high school where we are seeking feedback and where our conversations will continue our what are our competing priorities we know that a discussion of the schedule is important

[00:30:32] certainly timely and we also know that priorities will have to be established and perhaps some difficult trade-offs will need to be made and so we don't have any specific feedback on whether that particular trade-off is one that they are willing to explore but we are happy to have those conversations and we'll continue and share that information outward yeah from go ahead and just to be transparent in this we are working with our labor relations team to engage with our bargaining unit around the changes proposed for the middle school schedule okay so in terms of how the engagement with teachers is going to be as we move into our first year of our of our contract with bargaining unit we're

[00:31:09] still establishing process for for gaining teacher people. Okay I appreciate that nuance I am curious because I mean on its face less kids feels like a reasonable trade off for a little bit higher class size especially comparatively but I would be very I would be curious about what that is if we were to keep the class sizes as low as they are now which would significantly decrease the students they see every day obviously what I believe that would be a pretty hefty lift in our budget do you have any insight on that so it would per one student in the target

[00:31:46] class size ratios to go from 26 to 25 it would be approximately five million okay five million dollars roughly one student per class increase if you went from 26 to 25 it would be five to six million down to 24 it would get up northwards attendance that's pretty significant cost so so again part of this conversation let's encourage a trade-off yay part of the conversation is what are some like what are some things that could be considered for trade-offs we're still early in the process there's gonna be some difficult conversations I'm not

[00:32:22] in my head looking at my middle school principal yeah which kind of takes me to slide 12 which is you brought up about possible add-ons of expansion of math resource teachers and enhance differentiated staffing. So I know just in the last couple of months I've gotten feedback from middle school just about some staffing standard communications and some tough conversations I think that have had to happen around the realities particularly around SPED and different other areas.

[00:32:53] So would these also be budget impact. I mean expanding math resource teachers and enhancing differentiated staffing would be a budget impact. be a budget impact and these are these are illustrated if like if nothing changed which I don't think we're at that point I think there is a there is a will amongst the group to find some ways to make some changes to where we're headed either other options to attack the needs for flexibility and meeting the needs of students like dedicated interventionist for example for math we probably have would you say five schools that have a math resource

[00:33:28] teacher budget it so adding 12 positions that would be a big budget item but depending on where things fall out in terms of where we head it may be an option for us to consider and recommending. Yeah and I know you're asking for our feedback now so for me that's going to be another trade-off conversation because I don't think we can reduce the class size and spend the five million to go down each one and do all of this so I think framing those conversations for feedback in a trade-off way would be helpful for me in terms of you know potential budget decisions I certainly want to go on the record and say I think middle school deserves attention the next

[00:34:06] budget cycle I think we're seeing that I think with what just happened with the staffing standards and sort of wanting to make this more student driven I can't think of a better way to spend our budget money than it is more student centered so I will own that myself additionally when we look at these schedules my my question with the next steps I appreciate the timeline so thank you for that my question is what does next year look like because I've been to quite a few middle schools that are already playing around with these flex blocks and mixing math and you know language arts every day and doing really creative schedules.

[00:34:45] So what is the what are the parameters for our principals in this next year in a budget neutral situation while we move towards this model. I'll start and then I'll turn it over. My understanding is we're really looking at this impacting school year 27-28 we have allowed a level of flexibility under the support of the middle school office so I'll let speak to how they're speaking with their principals about that and thank

you for acknowledging the creativity of our principals we rely on our principals who are awesome leaders to know the needs of their community and meet the needs of students within the parameters that are set and so we are having conversations about things that

[00:35:23] we can do that our budget neutral we are very grateful to the two principals have piloted a different schedule and so we'll continue to have those conversations in the next year but our goal is Mr. Slevin said is the following school year looking at it I appreciate that and then just to circle back to the wheel I love the idea of exploration it served me very well as a student I remember that yeah it's a lot of wheels turning what my fear is with the wheel is that kids might miss out I mean you're gonna the arts that you're gonna hear me talk about the arts because that exploration sometimes you don't know you

[00:36:00] even want to play the trumpet until you play it. So I want to make sure what I would like to ask for next after this from later on is just a list of courses that are required. Like is typing still required? Is tech ed required if we're going to be and what are the mechanisms that we could move? I just don't have a fulsome understanding of what is actually required versus what we can play with I mean is it required for sixth graders to do all three of those arts blocks do they have to have a semester of art like so I'm not asking for those details now but if I could get a clearer sense of what those levers are

[00:36:39] that we could pull in terms of how those different exploration options could work I would appreciate it. Yes and we do we would for the public and the committee this will definitely be an agenda item early in the fall August probably September October and I would just say we'll get that to you but Loudoun County is very prescriptive more so than the state in terms of what students take and that's one of the things that we're hearing feedback from we want some more flexibility but we want to make sure we're taking a balanced approach so we'll make sure in the presentation but also in conversations with board members to have that information more readily

[00:37:16] available yeah and I see some of our content people here and I'm sure you're working with them as well and again just in the context of trade-offs and what kids might not get is really an important part for me as a board member to understand because I think a lot of times we talk about I'm going to take this track I'm going to take this track but that means you're not doing something else.

[00:37:36] And so I want to make sure we are being equitable and we're offering we're not limiting kids by allowing them to explore if that makes sense but that sounds counterintuitive. Again fully support this shift very excited to see it play out and thank you so much for your work.

[00:37:52] Okay we're getting short on time so we will move on to the next item, 4.0 to an update with social science and global studies. So I'll turn it over to Dr. Jeff Rounsey, director of academic programs, thanks.

[00:38:08] - Thank you, Dr. Rashid. I'm actually gonna turn it over to Danielle Graham, who is our supervisor for social sciences and global studies to walk you through some of the exciting things that our social science and global studies does for our students and teachers every day. - Good afternoon, thank you.

[00:38:25] I'm excited to share some updates in social science and global studies regarding instructional supports, legislation and student opportunities so first really going to talk about instructional supports and this will include supports for the newly adopted instructional resources as well as support for teaching sensitive and controversial content we are gearing up for the rollout of our new instructional resources

access has been shared for teachers to begin to prepare for next year I believe the email started almost the day after you all approved these resources and so professional development planning has started we're looking for optional sessions to offer in June for teachers if they want to

[00:39:05] dive in before summer some feedback has shown that August can sometimes be a little late but we will also have professional learning in August and beyond to support teachers with this the print copies will also be delivered this summer we split it across June and July so we have AP and elementary delivering first with AP set to deliver teachers tend to plan different enrichment assignments and things and elementary we have consumables for students that are packaged a particular way so feedback was there was a little bit of nervousness about that so we are delivering that one earlier to allow for extra time as well

[00:39:41] in terms of sensitive and controversial content a lot of work has been done over the past five years regarding the teaching of sensitive and controversial curriculum standards in fact policy 5420 was mentioned by mission off at a recent board meeting it is pretty robust and has several regulations attached we have continued to build out additional resources and supports for teachers pictured here is our landing page one thing that this has really done is it's provided consistent language and clear communication we no longer send out specific approaches to each and every current event or thing that pops up

[00:40:20] instead we have this clear framework that is articulated in the policy that teachers coaches and administrators have all been trained on and provides clarity when we speak to all stakeholders I've actually used our framework to talk to our teachers as well as parents about instructional approaches so in terms of legislation there was quite a bit of legislation this year involving social studies but this update is really regarding those that have implications on course sequencing there was a bill Senate bill 427 House Bill 182 allows quote-unquote the African American history course or

[00:40:58] AP African American Studies to substitute for world history one or world geography for graduation credit as defined by the bill and this applies only if the course is available and the student passes an approved assessment so we have it available at a lot of our high schools currently and it directs the Board of Education update the regulations ensuring no verified credit world history or world geography would be required so because of some of this language we're seeking clarification still from the Virginia Department of Education regarding for example the African American history course is this referring specifically to the coded state course we have a local course we

[00:41:37] aligned it with local history it's an honors course with a capstone so we just want to ensure all of those things count before we proceed the other thing is there's in the bill used to the term graduation credit and verified credit interchangeably and we're trying to verify kind of which which one implies and then approved assessments are actually still being determined in some of the Virginia Department of Education committees right now. So just in a holding pattern really till we have some clarification there.

[00:42:05] Once we do we will know how to proceed. Okay. So for this final part I'm going to spend some time talking about the extracurricular opportunities in government civics and law. Starting really with specific civics and law opportunities and then expanding more to leadership in a more general sense. So this year the Loudon Chamber hosted the second National Civics Bee. We have partnered with them and we helped promote the event.

[00:42:32] We hosted the Bee at Brambleton Middle School. What is truly great about this opportunity is this is not your typical bee with like rote memorization of facts about government. Student entries actually

they have to submit an essay to enter and this will help determine the top 20 and then the top 20 compete in that trivia style contest for a few rounds and the audience actually gets to play along which Mr. Slevin and Mr. Roundsley and I are all former history teachers so we were having having a blast with that and that gets them to five finalists and then the top five pitch to the judges a community issue that they would like to tackle and how they may resolve it so we're actually

[00:43:12] very excited for our top three to compete in the state finals and the winner of the state finals will compete in the National Bee in DC so we will keep you all posted on how our students do. I know, fingers crossed. Another opportunity we have is for our high school students. Youth in Government Day has been a long-term partnership with local government. It used to be a full day program. They've moved to a half-day program. They found that it helps with enrollment. Our juniors and seniors get to do things like meet our board of supervisor members, learn about the different departments, observe a live meeting, participate in panel discussions, and have lunch with their district

[00:43:49] representatives. We partnered with them our teachers nominate students to participate or encourage them to fill out the form. We our office promotes it sends reminders and we also provided insights to accessibility. This is something that requires like a level of transportation so we've tried to help kind of how do they get more signups and things of that sort. So that's been something that is continuing. A newer collaboration which I believe sorry is a couple years in is one we have with the Leesburg Courthouse and the Loudon Law library. So some of our neighboring counties have had similar programs for years, courthouse tours, so we were excited to bring this opportunity to

[00:44:27] Loudoun a few years ago. The Leesburg Courthouse Tours program is a field trip opportunity. They've primarily targeted our eighth grade civic students but we have had some law themed clubs also participate. The theme of the day is rule of law and the students get a tour of the courthouse, get to meet different departments, interact with the judges, and even take part in a mock trial. They end the day at the law library where they get to see some really important historical documents. Loudon has done an incredible job with a lot of their historic preservation, so it's just a really great opportunity. The only thing is the scalability because they can only take 30 students, so we're

[00:45:07] trying to figure out how we can expand this opportunity given the size of the program. Moving to more leadership in general and globally and in their community, we have some other opportunities. I know that several of you have attended the Loudoun International Summit.

[00:45:23] We are 14 years in at this point. I think year 15 coming up. It is a week-long event in the spring, about 10 days actually, where students from across the world meet for a cultural exchange. And they discuss UN Sustainable Development Goals, participate in workshops. The opening ceremonies have a keynote speaker. This year's keynote was an alumni, a former global ambassador themselves which was very exciting I mean this culminates in the global share fair where students are talking about how they are tackling that global issue in their local community and then they had the closing ceremonies at Dominion

[00:46:00] High School this is a homegrown program this started at Dominion High School and has continued to expand so we're excited to continue to support the work the teachers are doing with that we have we will be onboarding our new global education content specialist who we hope to help expand opportunities in global education for students k-12 this can be through supporting the expansion of the loud and international summit and other events connecting with organizations to expand opportunities

within the United States we know travel isn't necessarily something all of our students are able to do for a variety of reasons or

[00:46:38] international travel that is identify opportunities for connections with the curriculum there are lots of places we can embed this and then expanding opportunities for affiliated clubs. We have some really robust model UNs in Loudoun. So we have ones that are really successful and we have ones that I know we're trying to are seeking to expand. They will collaborate with the AGLS coordinator to build out unique opportunities for that program and provide just consistency and clarity to international travel and exchange programs to open up access. I think the more teachers know the more clarity we have around it the more likely those opportunities will be for students. In terms of that there will be some

[00:47:18] potential budget enhancements we will be requesting one is compensation for the teacher sponsors related to the Loudoun International Summit these teachers have been sponsoring this on their own time for years now so we're really hoping to be able to support them we also feel this will help with expansion we're at five schools this year and we think that that will continue to expand if there are some ways to compensate our teachers transportation costs associated with the expansion of international exchanges, moving students around on a bus, taking them to D.C., those things all do.

[00:47:52] And as we continue to expand things like the Loudoun International Summit, moving students around so that they can connect with each other. Support for event activities like speakers, workshops, and those materials. And then event spaces to just support greater numbers of participants. So these are just some of the things we're thinking about.

[00:48:09] The Loudoun International Summit is one example, but we have a lot of other great things going on around Loudoun. So how do we continue to support teachers in offering those opportunities? Additionally, another partnership we kind of have is with the George C. Marshall International Center. They have an ethical leadership program that Loudoun students participate in.

[00:48:28] This leverages lessons from the life and example of George C. Marshall and are centered around ethical leadership. They have a summer camp that they offer, which is a four-day event for high school students, as well as they're very frequently on the teacher workdays. They have ethical leadership workshops for students.

[00:48:44] And they also have a conference. They're also collaborating with our AGLS coordinator, Chelsea Northman, to offer ethical leadership sessions to AGLS students. And just some other notable programs.

[00:49:01] The Senate Page Program, we have had former Senate Pages come in and actually share information about navigating the process with Loudoun students. Usually we have a packed house when we have that room and space, just because it is something that not a lot of people always know about.

[00:49:17] that we put out there to middle school students. We have former pages come, answer questions, talk about the things that they do. So that has been something that we have done. In terms of Loudoun 250, so I am the chair of the education committee for the Loudoun 250 commission.

[00:49:32] And so we arranged this year for a mobile museum to visit for five days. LCPS was able to have five of our schools attend. And they already, I believe, have us on the books for next year. And not only that, not only was it the Loudoun 250, or the Virginia 250 mobile, the other great thing about it is the

Heritage Farm Museum actually had, all of our local historians came out and set up revolutionary themed stations so that the students were able to visit things to learn all about life during the revolution.

[00:50:02] And then finally the extreme journey history camp is something that we've is a group we've partnered with for a while. This camp blends outdoor activities with visits to historical sites and a culminating project on what students have learned so they visit sites like Monticello, Mount Vernon.

[00:50:22] We have supported this with transportation we've provided venues for final projects and actually many of our teachers have served as instructors and actually directors of the program. Miss Graham so before I turn it back to you Dr.

[00:50:38] Rashid I just we don't get a opportunity to talk about social studies all the time. You actually have three former social studies teachers up here but I just I just want to take a moment to acknowledge Miss Graham. We are very fortunate. She is a dynamic state and local leader when it comes to social studies instruction in the state of Virginia. She went over some of the guidance she's developed over the years very quickly but people come to us quite frequently for how are you handling this particular topic. How are you navigating this issue in your community she has presented at multiple multiple national conferences as a local leader in terms of history and partnerships that we have so just

[00:51:15] publicly we're very we're very fortunate to have miss Graham on our team and her at the helm for social studies and any questions you have she'll be she'll be great at answering those but just a note of appreciation all right thank you again once again a very loaded item and she does everything with a smile you know on her face which I really I really admire and I'm so excited to hear all about you know the how we're going to incorporate the Senate bill 427 the the graduation credits topic and then it was great and I attending it with you guys the national civics B I didn't do well when I did that as an audience when

[00:51:52] I think it was the QR code I did really bad they did wonderful so that's okay that's all right yeah you guys you guys made it yeah yeah you took it home you took it home and the loud and international summit was fantastic to attend so again I I really see a lot of the stuff I am a little bit of a history buff but not as great as you guys not as great as the masters but I do understand that international travel is an issue even within the arts it's been it's coming up a lot lately so we do want to make sure that our students have that awesome opportunity before I turn it over my colleagues just keep note of the time this meeting does run technically till 5:00 p.m. but do you

[00:52:31] have any questions or comments yes mr. Spencer thank you so much for the presentation Miss Graham I wanted to ask and thank you I've discussed this offline with you as well via mr. Slevin about our how our curriculum addresses local government and how our students are learning about government Loudoun County it sounds like the youth in government day is a great way for our students to get hands-on experience so to speak in that way and I think there's also a project in which the students will be able to pick an issue that's important to them and advocate to maybe a legislator but it could be a board of

[00:53:10] supervisor or a member of the board of supervisors are there other I guess allowed in specific elements to our curriculum or those kind of the allowed in specific pieces and then we teach local government in a little more general way and I ask because I have a constituent is very passionate about building awareness among adults in in Loudoun County about engaging with our local government and advocating for issues they care about and curious about what the the base is for our students graduating from LCPS. Absolutely so one of the things I will say with our civics and government curriculum is we tend to be you know teachers ask about pacing and things when we give out curriculum we

[00:53:50] tend to be very flexible with civics and government in particular in terms of where they place things because sometimes if it's an election year that's gonna make a huge difference in the order in which they teach things and how students are engaging in that I know a lot of our schools have students researching for elections they'll have students researching all of the candidates in that election and platforms and this takes on a variety of forms depending on the school in our government classes there are there is usually an activity where they are advocating for an issue and reaching out to a legislator so these are I will say it's done more in the form of the authentic projects I know the document I think I sent you had more about what

[00:54:29] the standards were and that actually starts all the way in in elementary school in some capacities when they start in kindergarten and first grade with my community we really have them looking to who are our community helpers and and who do who does make an impact that's great thank you so much and thanks for your leadership on the loud and 250 it's exciting to see our students have the opportunity to engage this year and all the America 250 and looking for that continuing in the fall as well so thank you I'll keep it tight for the chair's recommendation but i did just want to thank you for your work your passion really

[00:55:05] shines through i'm excited about the new curriculum i am very appreciative of policy 5420 i think it has put some incredible guard rails i know other divisions are looking to that policy to model in this day and age where things are can be contentious and uh to your point mr svensson just ask my eighth grade daughter how much she liked talking about the leesburg school board race when they had to mock vote at Harper Park and she was like are you gonna win so that was super fun and I did by the way but I didn't have an opponent so anyway I also wanted to thank you I feel like one of the things I love

[00:55:44] about you Miss Graham is that I always come with questions and you answer them in your presentation so my question was about the International Summit and the compensation because we've been hearing from those teachers we're obviously very excited that Heritage High School is deeply engaged in the work this year to prepare for next year and adding them on so you have answered all my questions and I just think it is a delight to hear about all the amazing work that you are doing and don't want to undersell that thank you all right so I guess we're done with this item thank you so much any other comments any new business all right our next meeting is scheduled

[00:56:19] for June 4th mark your calendars and if there's no other further business we have adjourned the meeting thank you



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