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Loudoun County School Board, Student Services Committee Meeting, Thursday, June 18, 2026

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon everybody. My name is John Pepper. I am the chair of the student services committee and I call the June 18th, 2026 student services committee meeting to order. Joining me today as always are my colleagues Miss Carrie LaBelle from the Catoctin district and Miss April Chandler school board chair from the Algonquian district.

[00:00:27] We will begin the meeting with public comment, of which there is none, so we will move directly to the draft minutes from the May 21st, 2026 Student Services Committee meeting. I assume that my colleagues have all had the opportunity to review these minutes, and I will entertain a motion to approve them.

[00:00:49] Ms. LaBelle. I move to approve the minutes from the May 21st meeting of the Student Services Committee. Ms. Chandler. Second. That motion has been made by Ms. LaBelle and seconded by Ms. Chandler. Is there any discussion?

[00:01:05] Seeing none, all those in favor of approving the draft minutes of the May 21, 2026 Student Services Committee meeting, please say aye. Aye. That motion passes unanimously. We will now, as I mentioned in the previous meeting, move ahead from four, which is just the PowerPoint presentation, to five, which is our action items.

[00:01:28] the first action item on the agenda is revised policy 8160 exception to school assignment due to attendance zone change and I will take a motion for this policy Ms. Chandler let's see I move that the student services committee consider revision revised policy 8160 exceptions to school assignment due to attendance zone change and send the policy to the full school board as an information item Is there a second?

[00:02:05] I second. Thank you. That motion was made by Ms. Chandler and seconded by Ms. LaBelle. Is there any discussion on revised policy 8160? Ms. Chandler. Thank you. It's been a little while since we talked about this, so I just want to make sure that my understanding is in the right place.

[00:02:28] So the only significant change to the policy is defining how long the period of late requests will be um in play yes ma'am and so that will be 60 days and i think we learned a lot about the process and really it's been a long time since there's been a significant rezoning we learned a lot in the process this year could you tell me a little bit about how we plan in the next round to make sure that we don't have so many emails going into spam and and better can better communicate

[00:03:03] with families so we will continue to work with razzzy on communication and i think there are enhancements to the survey platform itself that will help alleviate that we will also do additional messaging through the schools and through our emails i believe a lot of the confusion this past year had to do with how the messages were coming as who they were from and so that has been resolved I believe it's now a LCPS in the name title itself so that should help

[00:03:41] alleviate it but we'll continue to message we will probably actually talk about this during the attendance zone change process to to say that in certain amount of time they will and if you haven't received or you're wondering to reach out to us so we will continue to communicate thank you so much for that clarification any further discussion I do have a few very just short questions because I I was not part of the full board we went through this process last

[00:04:18] time and it has directly I've seen the kind of downfall of this is we've had many many many appeals hearings on 81 60 when the survey goes out it only the survey itself only went out to those individuals who went out to every student who was affected by the zoning changes. Is that correct or is it just those who were juniors or how did that work? So we survey all eligible students so in this instance we sent a message to

[00:04:52] rising seniors because they did not have to move so if parents wish for those students to go to their new assigned school which we had a couple they reached out to us but we we sent messaging to rising juniors as well as rising sophomores based on board direction because they asked us to expand the process we only noticed the parents that didn't go to the students we noticed the parents both parent one and parent two their contact of those students who lived in the zone and were currently attending said school if you had special permission and you were attending

[00:05:29] independence which was not in the boundary process we did not survey because they're not there And so we did message that way, and then we provided the list of students to each of the principals so at the counseling level they could do a quick check if they ever had a question so that they could bounce families to us too, which we discovered did happen.

[00:05:50] Perfect. I appreciate that. Was a response required from every student or was it only required from those students who wanted to remain at the original school and not go to the new school? It was only

those who wished to request to remain.

[00:06:10] If you anticipated your student was going because they had an incoming freshman, then they did not have to respond. Okay. I wonder, and this is just a thought, and I'm not saying, because it would probably be a lot more work on your part if a response one way or the other would be required, and that way we could catch those who kind of fell through the cracks, because I feel like that is what's driving a lot of what has happened was just a lot of people.

[00:06:33] I think the survey also had a title that wasn't abundantly clear as to what the survey was. So just a couple of changes. I think this is good policy. I just don't want anyone to fall through the cracks. All right. With that, any other questions?

[00:06:52] All right. All those in favor of sending revised policy 8160 to the full board as an information item, please say aye. Aye. That motion passes unanimously.

[00:07:07] We will now go to Action Item 5.02, which is Revised Policy 5340 on the Safe and Supportive Removal of Students, and I will take a motion for this policy. I move that we send the Revised Policy 5340, Safe and Supportive Removal of Students, in the educational setting to advance to the full board at their next meeting.

[00:07:39] Is there a second? Oh, second. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. That motion was made by Ms. Lavelle and seconded by Ms. Chandler. Is there any discussion on new policy 5340, Ms. Chandler?

[00:08:03] So I, again, will probably mention this when we talk about it in front of the school board as well. I love the process that we took to create this policy together. And I just found it to be a very effective use of time, and it was great to have lots of invested parties who have strong opinions on this policy at the table, and I found that experience to be very valuable.

[00:08:31] I'm just looking a little bit at some of the official SEAC concerns that came back and thought it might be helpful if we talk through some of the concerns and recommendations. So in looking at their recommendation, number one, to modify line 17 and add the designated supportive area or the removal of the students from the instructional setting, leaving a student in the instructional setting for the purpose of de-escalation and regulation of the students, regulation of a student or students.

[00:09:07] Could you speak to whether or not staff has a position on that? Certainly. Thank you, Mrs. Chandler, for that question. So when drafting the policy, truly, and working with last year's Student Services Committee, we were really looking at individual students and not necessarily those incidences that might happen when we have to leave an individual student in a space and then remove the classroom.

[00:09:36] Because that sometimes does happen. We do have notification processes when that happens for the students, the families of the students who did have to leave their classroom space because there was a friend that was in distress so the focus of this policy is on individual students now certainly should it be the will of the committee that we consider adding some additional language to also capture those circumstances where we leave the the individual student but then have to clear the other students could possibly fit within this policy, but I just know that the original

[00:10:16] lens was on individual students. Sorry, Chair Pepper? Sorry, same thing. I just wanted to let you know your microphone wasn't on. Oh, thank you.

[00:10:33] And it wasn't me doing this this time. I know, I know, I know. Okay, and then could we talk about the second recommendation to under Section H, Line 91, after future policy revisions add repeated or patterned use of safe and supportive removal involving an individual student shall trigger an administrative review to determine whether additional supports interventions evaluations and revisions to the student's plan are necessary is that something that would happen anyway there we go so would it naturally happen i would like

[00:11:09] to say yes might we need to be more prescribed in that happening i would also say yes again we staff have drafted a regulation but have not previewed that regulation with you all because we weren't sure what changes you might make to the actual policy. So I would think that that is something that we would spell out in regulation as part of the practice, how this policy is implemented. Certainly we welcome the feedback. Now again, if it's the will of the committee to add something about if we see a pattern of three or five, you guys would, you definitely

[00:11:47] would need to talk about what constitutes a pattern. We typically, when looking at behavioral incidences, we do a pattern analysis. You're looking at the frequency, you're looking at the type of behavior that triggered the need for the removal to determine whether it truly is a pattern or are they isolated in instances or would you simply be looking at there's been three safe and supportive removals

[00:12:19] there's been five safe and supportive removals regardless of what initiated the need for those removals from the educational setting that is certainly something that the committee could consider and I do think it would be beneficial for us to give guidance to our school-based teams Ms. LeBell, do you have a follow-up on this?

[00:12:43] Yes, I do. Thank you. I was there when they were discussing this at the SEAC meeting, and they also were concerned with how many do we say two, five, seven? And, again, they were also naming the same issues that you named.

[00:13:01] Is this because of the trigger? Is this a different behavior every time? Is it a different time of day, I think they brought up? You know, are they doing it always the same, you know, like at 10 o'clock in the morning or 2 in the afternoon? So that was something else that they were very concerned about.

[00:13:18] So I think if we go ahead and talk about patterns of behavior, that we need to be very clear about this because I think a lot of people could misunderstand and then misuse, not intentionally, but still misuse it.

[00:13:34] So that would be my recommendation to look at that very carefully. I would like to ask another follow-up question, and really just for clarifying purposes. There could possibly be a situation where one instance of safe and supportive removal of students could trigger additional – is that correct, Ms. Richardson?

[00:13:58] Absolutely. I would think that we would be looking at the nature of what triggers the need for the removal as to whether or not we pull together an educational planning team. to sit down and really look at the additional needs of that student.

[00:14:16] Absolutely. So, committee, what do we think about adding something like this and or the specificity that needs to happen? I think it would be prudent to add verbiage that says that they need to look at the when, where, and why,

[00:14:46] And we can adjust the language any way we need to of the beginning of a crisis so that they, you know, are aware of that. And then pull together a team, if there has been more than one of these, to look and see if something needs to change in it.

[00:15:08] Is this the beginning of a pattern? You know, all the things that we just talked about needing to know before we made a determination of what the pattern is. So we need to put that verbiage in there, tell them what they should be looking at before they make any sort of decision about a pattern.

[00:15:26] I agree with you on some of this. I think if I'm reading recommendation two correctly, what it says is repeated or patterned use, right? So shall trigger an administrative review to determine whether additional supports or interventions or evaluations.

[00:15:46] So I think that by saying it's going to trigger the review, I think the analysis piece is in that as to, you know, is it a time of day? Is it a certain trigger? Is it, you know, a day of the week? Is it – it's raining outside. So, you know, it could be anything, right? So I think it's written – what I don't like about this, I think, is what Ms. Richardson kind of was alluding to.

[00:16:09] in that there's a little bit of vagary and repeated or patterned use, right? We need to really spell out. And for me, I'm going to say this, I've worked in education, but I'm not an expert. I don't know, is three the appropriate amount? Is five the appropriate amount?

[00:16:28] So maybe I'll ask you all, as you all are the experts, what do you believe would be an appropriate amount? Certainly. As a practitioner, I would say that three instances of needing to be removed is indicative of a pattern right and so then that would trigger us to sit down and look at you know the antecedent the actual behavior and then that follow-up sort of consequence or what we put in place those supportive measures that we put in place I think for implementation for staff it's cleanest if it's if the

[00:17:07] committee would consider three removals would then trigger the need for an an educational planning team to come together to look at the what, the when, the where, and try to get to the root cause of the why.

[00:17:23] Taylor, do you have something? I agree. I think I would be happy with that suggestion. I would like to make an amendment. Okay. Okay? So what I would like to see, and I'm going to make an amendment, and you guys can second take it at your word, we can discuss it, is under Section H, after future policy revisions, I would add three uses of safe and supportive removal involving an individual student shall trigger an administrative review to identify repeated or pattern usage

[00:18:00] and determine whether additional supports, interventions, evaluations, or revisions to a student's plan is necessary. I'd be happy to second that. So I have made a motion that has been seconded by Ms. Chandler and Ms. Richardson-DDB to state that again.

[00:18:20] You think you got it? Okay. Any discussion on the amendment? Seeing no discussion, all of those in favor of the amendment, please say aye. Aye. That amendment has passed unanimously.

[00:18:37] Does anyone have anything additional they would like to discuss? Ms. LaBelle. Thank you, Mr. Pepper. One other concern, and this might need a whole separate policy or discussion among the board, is that it's one of our classes that are out in the community.

[00:19:01] They are community-based, not within the school, and they have a problem where a child needs to be removed from the rest of the group. we don't have any specific direction for those teachers for

actions to take.

[00:19:21] It might be that one is out someplace with a student doing job observation, job work. The other teacher has the others in a classroom, so there's still only one teacher there. If anything happened in either place, out in the community or in the community classroom, as it were, we don't have any direction for those people.

[00:19:44] Do we need to write it into this policy, or do we think we want to look at something totally different because the actions available to our teachers that are teaching in community locations are different, totally different than what you would do in a school?

[00:20:07] So noting that this policy is titled Safe and Supported Removal of Students from the Educational Setting And assuming that those students who are on a community, I want to get the terminology right here, but for those students who are in a community-based program are technically in an educational setting, I feel as if this may fit into this policy, but I'm also going to once again ask our experts who are practitioners in the field to weigh in on this.

[00:20:40] Certainly. Thank you very much. All of our community-based programs still fall under our LCPS policies because they are our LCPS students. So we have memorandums of understanding with all of our community-based partners, like our CAST program that's out at Lansdowne or at Salamander, those working through Did Lake.

[00:21:00] We have partnerships, right? And so we also make sure that they have appropriate staffing. So there's a teacher, a job coach, and oftentimes a TA. So no one adult is left alone should a student go into crisis. They would still follow the same expectations by policy and by practice and training even in the community-based setting for our students. And we have had incidences that have happened where students have, you know, gotten a little overwhelmed and dysregulated and we've had to

[00:21:33] remove them from that task. And we do so safely within our programs that are out on their CBIs. Thank you for that. It was a question. There were two teachers there that actually did have community-based educational settings, and they felt like they really didn't have any specific guidance. Who did they contact? The principal, the special ed department.

[00:22:05] So if maybe we need a little more clarity to them, I don't know if it needs to be in policy, but certainly communication would help them. Certainly happy to take that concern back to our transition team, and we can make sure that we provide that explicit training again to our transition teachers and our job coaches.

[00:22:22] So just for your awareness, should something happen in the community, they are to call a building administrator immediately, okay? All righty. Thank you. Anything further from the committee? Okay. This time I will call the question. All of those in favor of sending this as an information item to the full school board, please say aye. Aye. Aye. Aye.

[00:22:47] That motion has passed unanimously. That is the end of our action items for this meeting. We will now go to our information item, which is revised policy 81. Mr. Kirk Dolson, the director of the office of student services for a presentation.

[00:23:09] revised policy 8155 thank you very much chair pepper I am going to ask mr. Richardson so we have the policy as redline you all have seen it I will more than likely probably be speaking to you if you

have questions from the non redline policy because it's very red but go down to slide 32 so I've got just got a couple of data points and some scenarios that I want to run by the committee and then some suggestions and then we will certainly entertain any questions that you might have this is our data as of this morning for the

[00:23:48] approvals and numbers of applications for the 26 27 school year so for next school year the one thing that I will draw to your attention is kindergarten we are still processing kindergarten applications for special permission because they open we begin looking at them really June first and we do have some appeals pending at the end of this month so those numbers are going to fluctuate a little bit as might some other numbers but for the most part those numbers are pretty solid so you can see that we had a total of thirty nine hundred and eighty five applications which is very close to what

[00:24:27] we have been getting every school year since I've been in this role and then the number of approvals is 2948. That does include renewals, so those students that are just simply being renewed as well as new applications. So the next slide really just kind of gives you a couple of ideas for you to ponder and think about. So we are really trying to shift away from, I will say, special permission language and move into out-of-zone school transfer language. One of the

[00:25:02] big pieces of that is the term renewal, because we were able to simply, if you were a first grader at Countryside Elementary School and you wanted to remain at Countryside Elementary School and there was space, all you had to do was renew and you were allowed to stay and remain at Countryside all the way up until fifth grade. One of the things that we are suggesting is that we take renewals out of the policy and we put it into regulation. And instead of using the term renewal, We consider other words such as exception or prior approval or continuation.

[00:25:38] And I'll get into the really specific reason as to why here in just a moment. We also are suggesting that we place the provisions, I just said that too, the special permissions for approved grade levels in Regulation 8155. And then we would like to approach a phased in approach with timelines in the regulation as well.

[00:26:01] So, again, moving out of special permission and phasing in the out-of-zone school transfer process. And with that, I'm just going to throw out to you all three different scenarios that, I'll be honest with you, the directors that are here with me and I sort of came up with, my team and I came up with, and I pitched it to the directors on Tuesday.

[00:26:25] And so this is the first time that many people have seen this outside of the Department of Student Services. We had talked about some of this. A couple of you had asked how you envisioned this. This is the first set scenario that would get us to out-of-zone school transfers the quickest, which would be starting with kindergarten, first, and second grade.

[00:26:50] So, in this scenario, the red X's for kindergarten, first, second, sixth, and ninth grade students who are on special permission at their school, they would not be able to renew for the 26-27 school year.

[00:27:07] If they want to remain, they would need to use the out-of-zone school transfer process or return to their zoned school of attendance. Mr. Pepper. Yes. I think I just need clarification, if that's okay. Yep. So, for example, a second grader is at Countryside, but they are zoned for Sterling.

[00:27:29] I'm just picking two schools because they're nearby. So a second grader is at Countryside. They've been at Countryside for kindergarten and first grade and second grade. Right. They would no

longer be, and even if there was space, they would no longer be able to attend Countryside for third grade.

[00:27:47] They wouldn't be able to renew. They would have to reapply using the out-of-zone school transfer process. OK. This is a it's a different process. So what process would they have been on in the first place? They would simply have to renew. And if so, they say they applied in kindergarten, perhaps, and through 80 through the auto zone.

[00:28:06] What was a different name? But so they applied in kindergarten through the auto zone transfer process. They would just now they just have to check a box and they renew. What you're saying is now they would have to reapply. Because we're we're really trying to get, again, that provision of and I'm just going to say this, Like once I'm in the school, I get to stay there for the duration because we have a lot of families that have been on special permission outside of their elementary school and they've never attended their zone school of residence.

[00:28:38] So, again, this is this is these are just scenarios for you all to consider and ponder in. So, again, those that student that you were talking about, if they were not approved, they would then have to return to their zone school of attendance.

[00:28:54] Students not approved to remain via the new out-of-zone school transfer process will, like I said, have to return to their zone school of attendance. The third, fourth, seventh, tenth, and eleventh grade students would be able to remain at their special permission approved school if and only if they renewed or using that other, the exception, the other verbiage that we had just talked about in the previous slide.

[00:29:21] And they did that process during the appropriate window. Traditionally, that process has occurred during the month of February. Actually, yes, the month of February. So the 1st of February to the 28th of February, we ask for everyone to renew. And if they do not renew, then they go into, they have to reapply for special permission.

[00:29:42] So it really isn't deviating too differently from the traditional process, but with the exception of kindergarten, first, second, sixth, and ninth grade. Recall that 5th graders and 8th graders moving from elementary to middle and middle to high are not guaranteed space availability going to the next school, as many of our secondary schools are over capacity.

[00:30:11] So again, yes, Ms. LaBelle. Sorry. It's okay. I don't know what's wrong with that microphone today. The last policy, the first policy we did today said that if they had a sibling at the other school and they wanted to go to the same school as their sibling, that they would be allowed to do that.

[00:30:32] Is that based on space or just because the sibling's there? If we go back to the first policy we looked at today, that's what concerns me. So, you correct me, 8160 is different than 8155.

[00:30:50] it is only the sibling provision is only for rising seniors within 8155 currently there is a sibling provision that would allow a younger sibling to be considered if that school is over capacity so many times some of you and your colleagues have come and said how are we hearing this student yet I have other constituents that have not been able to go through the appeals process and that's because we'll use I'll use Eagle Ridge Middle School for

[00:31:27] example Eagle Ridge Middle School is over capacity there might be a current seventh grader that is in that school that will be a rising eighth grader and they have an incoming sixth grader who would

be considered because of that sibling being there currently in the new out-of-zone school transfer siblings are not considered part of that that provision we would not consider siblings to be a reason for allowing a student to attend a school out of their zoned school of attendance.

[00:31:59] Yep. Okay. So, again, in this scenario, each subsequent school year adds an additional grade level in which renewals are no longer an option, out-of-zone transfers become required to remain at the school other than the zoned school of attendance.

[00:32:23] And then, like I said, in this scenario, the out-of-zone school transfer process becomes fully implemented during school year 3031 in the next slide you see a little bit different here for 2627 we would be implementing kindergarten first sixth and ninth grade students who are on special permission at their schools would not be able to renew if they want to renew they would have to apply via the out of zone school transfer process or return to their zone school of attendance and

[00:33:00] And then students not approved to remain via the out-of-zone school transfer process would return to their zone schools of attendance. Here, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 10th, and 11th grade students would be able to remain if they renewed through the particular process that we outlined earlier.

[00:33:27] And in this scenario, the out-of-zone school transfer process becomes fully implemented by 31-32. And then finally, the last scenario is just starting with kindergarten, 6th, and 9th grade. Same process as before.

[00:33:45] However, in this scenario, the out-of-zone school transfer does not become fully implemented until school year 32-33. I will take any questions that you might have.

[00:34:08] Committee members. Committee members, would anybody like to begin? Because I'm happy to start rolling. I had my first question already. Okay. I will happily roll. I know we're not on video. I know this meeting is being recorded audio.

[00:34:25] This is my – I didn't use the red line. I usually use the red line version, but there is a lot of red, so I went with the black version. I've made a tremendous number of notes on this policy. I would love to go through them. I'm going to begin with Mr. Dolson's presentation, because I think it's kind of applicable.

[00:34:46] When I see this kind of phasing out of the ability to, for a better lack of a term, we're just going to use renew today, is that okay? So for the phasing out of the renewal process, I actually see that as having almost more end up on the school board's plate in terms of the appeals process.

[00:35:05] Because I feel like you are, and maybe I'm wrong here, and you can say, you know what, Mr. Weber, you're completely wrong, and that's totally fine. I feel like now we're putting many, many more kids through the appeals process as opposed to before when it was you check a box and it auto-populates your school for the next year.

[00:35:26] I also worry about, you know, we have a lot of students just in terms of continuity's sake, being able to finish out the school they're at. You know, you start a kindergarten, you start a first grade, you know how school works, you know the processes, you've got the transportation lockdown.

[00:35:44] I worry that just stopping that process is bringing a trolley that's moving pretty efficiently to a screeching halt, if you will. So it gives me a lot of pause to think about that. What I would like to do is instead discuss the different pieces of what was written in the proposed 8155 and see how we can massage those and also take thoughts from my fellow committee members as well, if that's okay with you all.

[00:36:17] So I'm going to begin with line one. And there's a word in there that says actual. Is there a reason that we wanted to find it? I want to ask about this. Why does it not just say residence? Why does it say actual residence? Is there a difference?

[00:36:36] Could this possibly be referring to two parents who share a child with different addresses?

[00:36:55] So we do have, exactly that is what came to mind. We do have families that have shared custody agreements, and so we look at the residence being where the student resides at least 51% of the time.

[00:37:18] That student may go back and forth between school to homes. There may be times where the student is in, you know, with one parent one week and another parent the other week. But the actual residence, there is only one residence in our student information system.

[00:37:36] And so that would be the residence of the zone school of attendance where that student actually attends school. Would it be helpful to clarify rather than saying actual to the other residents stated in the student information system?

[00:37:55] We could say something like primary residents if that makes more. That's more helpful than actual residents. All right. I didn't mean to start on line one, but it was a great place to start. I actually think that when we have section A on definitions, A1 and A1A can be realistically combined into a single paragraph because it's a little bit contradictory.

[00:38:28] If you read A1, the very first line says a school that is over capacity is a school where the number of students exceeds the building-based capacity. But then you go down to A1A, and it says that elementary and secondary schools are defined as overcapacity when 85% of the published base capacity.

[00:38:44] So those two statements are contradictory. The first sentence says basically it's over 100% of capacity is overcapacity, but then further down, it says it's 85%. So I was doing some work on my own.

[00:39:02] Now I've got to pull it up. I'm going to ask you for just a minute of grace here while I open up the combined that I put in just for this section. I did not use the link. So I would have combined them and I would like to know my fellow committee's thoughts as well as your all thoughts because we're just in information. We're having a discussion right now where section A is just called overcapacity school buildings because that's really the only definition we're really defining here.

[00:39:33] and it says a school building is designated as being overcapacity when the number of enrolled students exceeds 85 percent of the building's base capacity in order to allow for enrollment variation and or managing instructional spaces and resources. At the elementary school level, the 85 percent capacity factor applies to both the entire school and individual grade levels.

[00:39:59] School buildings that are overcapacity lead to challenges like overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and strain on facilities that impact both teaching and learning conditions. And I think that just summarizes those two paragraphs into what that is. Hoping, and I'm happy to share this with everybody, that that is amenable and much more clarifying than a sentence unless you know of a reason why these are two separate paragraphs.

[00:40:31] And maybe there's a back reason as to why that's different. I'm happy to share that with you all. It's just kind of a clarification of the definition of what overcapacity means. My next question, I've got a whole document here. It's not that bad, though. My next question is all the way down on the non-red line copy.

[00:40:49] It is in B, and then there's a section about the order of priority. What does the phrasing, students remaining at the reassigned school who would be doing so by regional placement within the school division, what does that mean?

[00:41:07] So can you clarify which line you're looking at? It's line 42, 42 to 43. Line 42? Yes. Okay. So regional placement is when we have families that move in during the school year, and they're – I'll just use Ashford Elementary School, for example, because that's the one that I recall most recently.

[00:41:30] And they have a third-grade student and a fifth-grade student, and there is no space in those third-grade classrooms. They have to be regionally assigned to the nearest elementary school for that third grader, and transportation is provided, and we do our best to place that student to the most local elementary school, and that is what a regional assignment is.

[00:41:54] Is there another policy that defines regional placement? I don't believe so, no. Okay. So do we need to add a definition of regional placement in this? Because that was – I understand what it is from a school perspective. I understand what regional placement is from a school perspective, but I think it gets a little muddy in that section of the policy if we don't define what that means.

[00:42:20] So that's another note. Ms. LaBelle. Another question I have. Your example, you said there's a third and a fifth grader. If there's room in the fifth grade, the fifth grader would stay at his homeschool, correct? That is correct. And the third grader would be regionally placed.

[00:42:35] Now, would they have first priority to get back into their homeschool over anyone else, Even somebody who is continuing, maybe they were in second grade and they're being allowed to stay for third grade.

[00:42:51] I think that was one of the scenarios we might have looked at. So with the regionally placed students. I would have to ask our Office of Elementary Education about that because what ends up normally, what comes to light when we look at this is we look at then the number of third graders at that school that are on special permission.

[00:43:10] So this policy itself causes that regional placement because the family has moved in, purchased a home, and is expecting to have both of their children attend that elementary school. And one can and one cannot because we might have seven or eight third graders at that school that are on special permission.

[00:43:34] So what we're saying is the proposal of having to reapply rather just continue as we have had in the past for special permission or out of zone students now could simplify the matter because if you put in the third grader whose family moved in over the summer, they could deny one of the other.

[00:44:05] So that would help that process. Okay, thank you. Yes, ma'am. That third grader that was regionally assigned to, we'll say, Newton-Lee, for example, would automatically return back to Ashburn Elementary School and would be a part of the rising fourth grade class for the next school year.

[00:44:24] So now we get to the fun, and this kind of goes contradictory to what Mr. Dolson presented. Where I think that we run into a lot of issues with special permissions or out-of-zone transfers is the point when a student is switching grade levels.

[00:44:54] Because what we don't do, and it is written in our policy now, is we don't automatically ensure that a student who is going from elementary to middle school and middle to high school has the right to

continue at the school in the pyramid to which they chose to go and instead has to go back to their initial area of assignment.

[00:45:12] I would like to hear from my fellow members of the committee. I would like to hear from you all what your thought is on that. Because for me, I am a big believer in continuity.

[00:45:30] I think continuity is great for children, their social-emotional well-being, their social-emotional health. I would like it, at least for me, and now I'm not speaking for everyone, if a student has entered a pyramid or a new school for whatever reason, they should be able to continue with their peer group through graduation.

[00:45:55] So I'm going to open up the can of worms. So I definitely will say that is going to be at the will of this committee to determine because it was November 2025 where the previous student services committee said we no longer want that to happen.

[00:46:15] So there was lots of discussion last fall about putting very strong language that indicated that just simply because you were an eighth grader at Riverbend, that did not mean that you automatically matriculated to Pot Falls, right?

[00:46:33] And so the committee had conversation about it. I am sure that my colleagues also have some opinions about that. Again, the directive of the board that was voted on December 16th was really to overhaul this process because we value all of our schools.

[00:46:54] And we really wanted to have very limiting, extenuating circumstances for which we considered out-of-zone student transfers. If we, and continuity is important, absolutely, we're educators.

[00:47:10] Of course it's important. But it's also important to go to your school of residence. Can I back out in a caveat, and then I'll take commentary from my colleagues? The reason I would like to have that in there is because what I would like to see is I would like to really tighten up the rest of the policy so that our out-of-zone school transfers are really truly limited to what we have in the past called instructional suitability,

[00:47:43] or as a benefit to staff who may want their child to attend the school or a nearby school to where they are employed or as kind of a backfill to what we were talking about previously with AD160 and rezoning and just kind of finishing out where you were.

[00:48:06] I really would like to get away from this idea of I live here, but I don't want to go to that school. And I think that when we started this discussion and we brought in Mr. Frew, and we brought in Dr. Hitchman, I think that's a lot of what they were driving at was where they're struggling and where those schools that are either way under capacity or way over capacity are struggling is it's because students are choosing just not to go to that school, and it's not because of instructional suitability, and it's not because they were rezoned.

[00:48:40] So I'm going to now take the thoughts of my colleagues and see where we are on this. Ms. Chandler. This is one that I struggle with a lot. And I've probably talked around it a little bit as we've had these conversations over the past two years.

[00:49:00] I'm just going to lay it on the table, right? This policy exists as it is today in 2026, dating back to 1970 because it was created to defy desegregation. That's the reality that we live in.

[00:49:18] I should know from a historical perspective, we're the last division to desegregate in Virginia. We are now one of the most diverse school divisions in the country, and certainly in Virginia.

[00:49:36] And that's a lot of change in a short amount of time. And yet, I still struggle because I sit on the panels for three years and hear the perspectives of the families who may not have had that information, who are entrenched in the system.

[00:49:55] And so I will say, I am very much in favor of changing. I want us to be cautious and take a very thoughtful approach because it is a 50-year-old policy, just about, that, I mean, I do take heart.

[00:50:14] It's not a significant number of students who are embedded in this system. I think, but, you know, when we had talked about it in terms of at the end of the last term with the previous school board, it had been, let's communicate with families. Let's take feedback.

[00:50:31] Let's make sure that we do this in a certain way. And I find myself still open to that because I am torn when people say, you know, whatever the case may be when they come to make their appeals. People have a lot of different reasons for doing this. I know when we talked about it the last time that it was not necessarily something that staff felt open to, just letting the people who are in the system now stay where they are, go through the cluster, and never let it happen again.

[00:51:02] Like, it's no longer an option anymore, but if you're hearing it, so what do you think? I mean, I know it's a lot to say. When you say it like that, I hear you. Like, it's an awful lot for me to say this is a 12-year shift. I don't want to do that.

[00:51:20] But, you know, I do appreciate the graphics and having the ability to sort of think through these scenarios, but I just want to be clear for the record that two things can be true at once, and I really struggle with the idea of how we got here, and yet I want to make sure that we treat our students and families with respect as we unravel it.

[00:51:46] I appreciate everyone's comments, and I'm going to speak to you from experience. I spent a long time changing a perception of a school, and I'm not going to name the school because that's unfair.

[00:52:02] I put my heart, I encourage my staff to put their heart into teaching every kid that walked through our doors. And the perception, not the reality, but the perception of many of the students and the families that attended that school and that were part of that school was that they were less than.

[00:52:23] They weren't as important. So we got less than. I fought for a lot of the things that were put into that school.

[00:52:31] And for us to continue to build a climate where we would then encourage people to, because they live in that zone school of attendance, to go to the neighboring cluster and never set foot as a professional educator, I really would caution us to think and be very, very thoughtful about what that might say to certain schools, certain people who work in those schools, and certain people who lead those schools.

[00:53:08] To your point, I would also not want to ever send that message to any student, especially when we consider who we are serving in these schools. Ms. LaBelle.

[00:53:24] Thank you. I spent a lot of time on committees, as did Ms. Chandler, and heard all the different reasons that people were changing schools. And I'm still amazed at one point when a woman was actually proud that she had sent her children to different schools than their homeschool every single year.

[00:53:51] And they weren't always the same one school. They were other schools. So she was like testing them all. And it occurred to me that her children never got to know the other children in their community.

[00:54:07] That's sad. I almost think of that as abuse in that sense. You're not allowed to know these other children, even though we live among them. And so I don't like the idea of being able to choose your school.

[00:54:24] And again, like Mr. Dolson said, I am aware in my district of a school that is considered less than, that the registration is always lower. They're never overcrowded.

[00:54:39] They lose students every year to other schools in the area, and it's just not right. I think that we have to put a cap on this for those reasons. You have a good school because it is a Loudoun County public school.

[00:54:57] It's not less, and in many cases it might be more. Who knows? But if you don't give it a chance, you'll never know. So I think we have to put a cap on this and move forward with removing the special permission and limiting out-of-school transfers.

[00:55:15] So I think this kind of goes to the larger question, right? I think that as a committee, we recognize what this policy has done to our schools. And yes, there will still be reasons to attend a school.

[00:55:35] Instructional suitability, student health is a huge, mental health particularly is a huge reason for that. But we have mechanisms through our LCPS administration to handle this. The question is, if we do this, begs the larger question, what does the rollout look like?

[00:55:56] When do we stop the process? And are we going to do it for families who are in the system? Or is it really it's kindergarten next year, there's no renewal, then it's first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, to allow the students continuity?

[00:56:15] So that's the kind of larger question where it's at. So I think those are the proposals and the scenarios that we set forward. And I think that is really something for this committee to consider how you all would see this process working.

[00:56:36] When you look at the numbers just by what we had on slide 32, you can see that, and again, those are very new numbers, so they might go up a little bit. But you can see, basically, the number of families that would be impacted.

[00:56:54] And this is division-wide. This is not based on one certain cluster. So we're looking at approximately 280, maybe 300 first graders, if you think about that, that is across the entire district. Now, again, they might be highly contained into one or two schools.

[00:57:16] There were definitely some. We had a lot of younger students that were wanting to return to one school because of an attendance zone, not issue, but, you know, just a change. So there were a lot of, there was one elementary school that had a lot of requests to return back.

[00:57:34] Many of you sat on the appeals recently, and there were a lot of those students that came forward. But again, you know, we have currently right now, we have less than 100 ninth graders that are on special permission at all of our high schools throughout.

[00:57:53] Now, part of that, and to Mr. Pepper's point, part of that is because of we don't really, we try to say you need to go back to your zone school because once you go through middle school, it does not

guarantee you. And currently we have eight, I'm sorry, 15 of our high schools that are closed for special permission.

[00:58:10] So we have really held tight to, I should say, you all as board members have held really tight to that sort of rule of thumb that if the high school is closed, there really isn't a reason for you not to attend your school of attendance because high school is really an opportunity for you to thrive in a new environment and or join friends that you don't know, get to know them, get to know your neighborhood buddies, neighborhood friends and be able to do high school you know with with your neighborhood colleagues I will say so the reason I gave you this this

[00:58:49] information is for you to consider the impact that it might have on the different scenarios one of the other things that I just want to mention about about appeals yes we have talked about the appeals process we are the only I shouldn't say the only we are one of the few school divisions that really depends on the board to be a part of the appeals process for something like this.

[00:59:16] In our neighboring jurisdictions, it really is between the administrators and then it would be between myself and Ms. Richardson to make the final decision. So it is not something that the school boards really weigh into.

[00:59:32] - Mr. Dills, I appreciate those thoughts tremendously. As I look at these scenarios, I know it's a slower rollout. I would lean towards scenario three. That's just my opinion.

[00:59:46] Knowing that as we get to 31, 30, as we get into the 30s, which boggles my mind that we've been talking about those years, as we update this policy, you're going to see fewer and fewer and fewer students renew for a better, like I said, for a better lack of the term, fewer and fewer students renew because fewer and fewer students are going to be granted the permission to go.

[01:00:14] And really the only reason that they're there is instructional suitability or as a perk of employment. And possibly, we haven't even talked about the child care exception that's noted in here, which I wanted some thoughts on as well. Does anyone else in the committee have information?

[01:00:32] Ms. Chandler? Well, two things. I would like to capture in policy, and I will bring forward amendments if I need to at the next meeting. I would like teachers and staff employees to have the opportunity to have their kids go to the schools where they work if they want, potentially even in the cluster, because I think that's one of the few perks that we can offer our staff that is a convenience for the staff, but also probably returns in dividends many times over in productivity, because that convenience makes a big difference.

[01:01:09] I do just want to make a clarifying statement about that those are staff that are Loudoun County residents. Yes. We do have many staff that live outside of Loudoun County that would love for them, but this is not. Okay. I completely concur.

[01:01:24] Thank you for that clarification. Yes. Especially when we look at out of state and how our schools are funded. That makes perfect sense. I don't want to make any assumptions. So sometimes I ask very, like, targeted, you know, I just want to make sure that I'm understanding the scenarios correctly.

[01:01:46] So I'm going to ask literal questions. So in terms of any scenario, if there's a red block for that grade, that means the only students who would be eligible to move schools would be out-of-zone transfers only.

[01:02:02] So any grade in any scenario that's red, only out-of-zone transfers. If it's yellow, that means there are no renewals. So if somebody had gotten, if it's white the year before, that's when it changes and they go back.

[01:02:22] If it's white, then they would still be able to renew. They would still, so if it's white before. So we're really trying to, so it's really more, and I would say if you look at scenario three, we are really trying to do a slow roll in this, And we are really trying to be, I would say, respectful of what was and slowly get into what we would like it to be.

[01:02:48] And I'll be honest with you, I prefer either scenario one or scenario three from a professional standpoint because it is we are coming together as a you all are coming together as a committee. And then you're coming together as a board and saying this is what we believe and we are going to do this.

[01:03:06] Or, to Mr. Pepper's point, we are going to use scenario three and we're going to do this and make it as good as we can throughout the process, realizing that, you know, there are a lot of, and again, we haven't talked about all of the questions that you have, but there are a lot of somewhat what-ifs.

[01:03:26] The delineation between what is or what is currently and what we would like this to be isn't too far off. Some of the expectations that we would be asking families to show really are some of the reasons that we do approve special permission. So child care is one of them that we do take into consideration.

[01:03:44] And they never make it to an appeals because if a parent can really prove either to my office or to Mrs. Carpenter that this is why we go ahead and approve that internally. So I agree with what you just said, Ms. Chandler and Mr. Pepper, that you will begin to see less of these, I think, through appeals.

[01:04:04] because they will be able to, will be able to really explain the why behind this. And in some cases, when families see, okay, this is not going to be something we're going to be granted, they're going to commit to attending their school of residence.

[01:04:20] Okay, so can I, I'm going to try to state this in a different way that I'm seeking understanding. So the last year that anyone would be able to apply for special permission for fifth grade under scenario three is 31, 32.

[01:04:36] It would be, yes, 31, 32. Okay, so effectively anyone who starts school in 26, 27. On special permission. Wouldn't necessarily be eligible for special permission. Are you talking about fifth grade or are you talking about kindergarten?

[01:04:56] In 26, 27. Yes. Special permission is effectively not available. Well, correct. Perhaps they would do out-of-zone. Yeah, they would have to do out-of-zone school transfer, yes. Okay. Yes. Thank you.

[01:05:12] Approaching this time. I have a few more questions if you are okay indulging me. All right I'd like to go to line 105 and the not red line version the clean copy. Sorry lingo Section D where it says out of his own school transfers may be approved for rising 12th graders who have previously attended the request to school

[01:05:50] Is there a reason that's in there isn't that automatic? It's not automatic, but so we wanted to put it in there Is it because of the process we just talked about? It is, but we always, and again, I would say, I'm just going to go not rogue here, but just say I have always looked at fifth grade, eighth grade, and twelfth graders as if they've been in that school for, you know, sixth, seventh, and then they're trying to return for eighth grade or they've been there, you know, all the way up through, like, fifth grade.

[01:06:24] Same thing with seniors. We're not going to ask those students to leave. And it's something that we've felt very strongly about, especially if you attended your junior year, that you remain there for your senior year. Where would there be a situation where a student has gone to 9th, 10th, and 11th, and then all of a sudden they can't go to their out-of-zone school?

[01:06:50] So we have a lot of requests if something has happened at the school for them to attend another school. And that school may be a school that's overcrowded or overcapacity. That's sometimes a different process that we would ask that family to go through.

[01:07:07] But I can't think of a specific scenario where they would not be permitted. This is just a safety valve, basically. It is. Just to make sure, okay. I'm okay with that then. All right. And then lastly, when we get into the clean copy, into section E1.

[01:07:28] E1 begins on line 161. I think combining 1A and B just would clarify things a little bit.

[01:07:45] They're almost the same thing. They don't need any changing. I think they just would fit nicely together. And then can I just get a little clarification on what was C starting at 172?

[01:08:03] That just kind of just putting rules and regulations in place for students with IEPs and 504s. Like, I don't, I'm not sure. I wasn't sure about that section, about the rescinding of an out-of-zone school transfer, and then, so Ms. Richardson, can you just clarify that for me?

[01:08:27] Absolutely. So our previous committee had a lot of concern that the special permission process was not equitable for students with disabilities. On its surface, I could understand that, but it all goes back to the staffing standard, okay?

[01:08:46] So for general education, what, that's 1 to 25, sometimes higher than that. But our staffing standard for LCPS, for cross-categorical, not talking about specialized programs, but for cross-cat students, it's 1 to 10. That doesn't make it not equitable.

[01:09:05] That is the reason, really the driver behind how and why our special educators are able to provide specially designed instruction in such an impactful way. And so it was mentioned several times that, you know, I think students with disabilities aren't able to get into special permission.

[01:09:26] And it's like, yes, they can, but either you want us to maintain our staffing standard of 1 to 10, or you want us to raise our staffing standard as a board. That way we would be able to approve more students with disabilities who put in special permission requests.

[01:09:43] So that's why the previous committee added this particular language. Thank you for that clarification. I just was curious about it because it seemed like it was a policy on rescinding out-of-zone transfers and then they started with the special education stuff.

[01:09:58] I was like, it could be in two places. That, thankfully, committee is all I have. It's a kind of walkthrough of 8155. Does anybody have anything else about this policy? Okay, so we will bring this back at our next meeting for action.

[01:10:16] That meeting will actually be in August. I'm going to quickly look up the date right now. So I don't have unless someone has it in front of them August 20th is the date for that meeting So we will now move on to item six new business community members anybody have a new business Seeing none. I will adjourn this June 18th 2026 meeting of the student services committee We are in recess in July and we will see you in August and enjoy the day off tomorrow



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