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Loudoun County School Board, Specialized Program & Centers Committee Meeting, Thursday, August 6, 2026

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[00:00:08] good afternoon everyone my name is lauren schernoff and i am calling this specialized programs and centers committee meeting on august 6 2026 to order i am joined by my colleague miss donahue and mr pepper is out today so it's just the two of us uh welcome and we are glad you are here we do not have any public comment today so we will move on to item number three which is approval of the draft minutes from June 3rd, 2026 meeting.

[00:00:37] Ms. Donahue, do you have any additions or corrections? Thank you, Chair Chernoff. I was not present for the last meeting, but having reviewed the recording of the previous meeting, I'm satisfied with the draft minutes and that they adequately represent what transpired at that meeting, and I do not have any changes. With that, I will make a motion to approve the draft minutes for the June 3rd, 2026 Specialized Programs and Centers Committee meeting. Second.

[00:01:02] I have a second. All those in favor? I not opposed that passes unanimously to to zero. Well, not unanimously two to zero with one abstain. One not present. Mr. Pepper. All right. We will now move on to our information items. We have two very exciting presentations today to kick us off to get us back into the groove.

[00:01:23] Today we will start with 4.01, Family and Community Engagement, the FACE Office Resource Hub. And presenting today is Ms. Renee Dawson, the Director of Family and Community Engagement. She

is joined by Ms. Danielle Madler, the Executive Director of Loudoun Education Foundation, and Ms. Sarah Boyce, our Supervisor of Outreach Services, all from our Family and Community Engagement Office.

[00:01:44] So we are so glad to have you. The floor is yours. So good afternoon. I'm Renee Dawson, Director of Family and Community Engagement. And as was shared, I'm joined by two esteemed guests, Danielle Nadler and Sarah Boyce.

[00:02:00] We are presenting a collaborative vision for the LCPS FACE Resource Hub. This initiative builds on the work already happening across LCPS and the Loudoun Education Foundation to create a more coordinated and accessible system of support for students and families.

[00:02:21] So what is this FACE Resource Hub? The FACE Resource Hub would serve as a centralized referral-based system designed to respond to emerging needs that may create barriers to student learning.

[00:02:40] Through school-based referrals, the hub would help ensure students and families can access essential resources with dignity, consistency, and care. The model brings together complementary supports with LEF-Fueled continuing its established work to address food insecurity, while the FACE Resource Hub coordinates access to clothing, hygiene items, school supplies, and other essential resources.

[00:03:06] Together, these efforts would help schools respond to immediate needs so that our students can remain focused, engaged, and ready to learn. So why? Well, students cannot fully engage in learning when essential needs create barriers to their success.

[00:03:23] Research has consistently shown that when schools work alongside with families and community partners to reduce those barriers, students are better positioned to attend school consistently, engage in learning, and achieve stronger outcomes.

[00:03:39] One of Loudoun County's greatest strengths is its extraordinary spirit of generosity. And each year, community and business partners donate thousands of items to support LCPS students and families. The FACE Resource Hub would create an infrastructure to connect that generosity more intentionally and identify student needs with identified student needs across our division.

[00:04:03] Rather than individual schools independently locating, storing, and distributing our resources, the Hub would provide a coordinated system for receiving and inventorying and distributing donations based on school referrals and documented needs.

[00:04:22] For example, okay, if a community partner donates 1,000 backpacks, the hub could identify where those backpacks are most needed and coordinate their distribution across the schools. And this approach would help resources reach the students who need them, while also making it easier for our community partners to give in meaningful and impactful ways.

[00:04:48] So how would we do this? The FACE Resource Hub would operate through a consistent school-based referral process. And when an emerging student need is identified, dedicated school staff would submit a referral to the hub. The hub staff would review the request, coordinate those resources, fulfill that need, and support distribution back to the school.

[00:05:11] This closed-loop process allows us to track requests, to inventory, and to fulfill the recurring needs while helping ensure that resources are distributed efficiently and equitably and with accountability.

[00:05:29] And the great part of this is the co-location with LEF would allow both programs to leverage that shared infrastructure, Strengthen coordination and maximize available resources while maintaining our distinct programs and operations.

[00:05:45] And importantly, the FACE Resource Hub is designed to coordinate and strengthen, not to duplicate, the outstanding work that is already taking place across Loudoun County. The hub provides consistent, division-wide infrastructure that helps connect identified student needs with available resources, which is really important and exciting, making it easier for our schools and our community partners to really work together, helping to ensure that support reaches the right students at the right.

[00:06:19] So this data on the screen illustrates the significant and ongoing needs across Loudoun and reinforces why a coordinated, division-wide system of support is essential for our students and our families.

[00:06:39] The most recent ALIS data, which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed, from 2023, shows that a family of four in Loudoun County needs an annual income of approximately \$126,000 to meet basic living expenses.

[00:06:55] More than 34,000 households, or 24% of Loudoun households, live below the ALICE threshold, with rates approaching 40% in some communities. Within LCPS, 24.7% of our students are considered economically disadvantaged, and that equates out to about 19,000 individual students.

[00:07:19] Our family liaisons provide approximately 5,000 instances of support for our students every month. These needs are also reflected in the support provided through Loudoun Education Foundation. So I will now turn it over to Danielle to share more about LEF's phenomenal impact.

[00:07:35] Thanks, Sarah. Danielle Nadler, Loudoun Education Foundation. And one of our in-house programs, so much of our support, as you all know, we raise funds, we go after grants, and then LCPS is actually providing that service. But Fueled is one of our programs that we have staff and we provide direct service.

[00:07:54] We currently serve 64 school sites, that's about approximately 7,000 families, and the support includes 300,000 food items, these are stats from last school year, 36,000 snacks, 2,000 pounds of fresh produce, thanks to our growing partner in Middleburg, and 5,000 hygiene products.

[00:08:13] Together, these numbers demonstrate the scale of the need and the importance of building a coordinated, sustainable system of support. So behind each of these numbers is a student or a family navigating a challenge that can affect a child's ability to come to school ready to learn.

[00:08:37] Each month, our family liaisons across our schools support approximately 5,000 students and about 3,100 families with various needs such as food, clothing, school supplies, housing, utilities, health care, and connections to community services.

[00:08:53] Across LCPS, our 98 both full-time and part-time family liaisons serve as trusted connections between our schools, families, and the community. They listen without judgment, help families navigate complex systems, and ensure they do not have to face difficult circumstances alone.

[00:09:11] Over this past school year, our family liaisons logged more than 71,000 hours of support for our students and families. Much of this time was spent navigating resources and connecting with community

partners to find solutions for family basic needs. But these hours also represent far more than just transactions.

[00:09:30] They are moments when a family received help, a student gained access to something essential, and a barrier to attendance, engagement, or learning was reduced. Our family liaisons make this work deeply personal, but the scale of the need needs a coordinated system in order to support them.

[00:09:47] LEF's Fueled Program has established a strong foundation for addressing food insecurity across LCPS. We're really a leader in this space. There are smaller groups that provide meal bags and snacks, and we're so thankful for them.

[00:10:04] Often a church might serve three schools. LEF's Fueled Program serves more than 60, and we really are a leader in this space. We we communicate with them regularly to ensure there's not duplicated services and to ensure that all 100 schools are Served by a student food provider LES field program has established a strong foundation Through we can meal bags in school pantries break boxes, which are meal kits over long school breaks and other resources We're really helping thousands of students and families each week and the resource hub would build upon the successful

[00:10:40] infrastructure and broaden our coordinated response so one of the things that we really wanted to do was to gather data and information about how we're supporting currently so the development of the face resource hub really began with listening we gathered input from staff who work most closely with students and families every day including our family liaison school social workers the McKinney Vento team and the school counseling coordinators And as you can see in this illustration, what we heard was remarkably consistent.

[00:11:19] Across roles and schools, staff identified many of the same recurring needs, including food assistance, school supplies, clothing and shoes, hygiene items, transportation and housing support, and connections to health-related resources. So what this illustration also shows is the breadth of the needs that our schools are helping students and families navigate every day.

[00:11:44] So while the specific need may look different from one student or school to another, the feedback reinforced the need for a more coordinated and consistent way to respond. And these identified needs became an important foundation for the proposed FACE Resource Hub and really kind of helped shape the model we are sharing with you this afternoon.

[00:12:07] So one of the most important things to understand is that this initiative, this project is not about creating new services. Our schools and community partners are already doing extraordinary work every day to support students and families.

[00:12:24] The challenge is that those efforts often depend on individual school processes, local partnerships, or available resources. So as a result, students and families may have different experiences accessing support across the division. So the FACE Resource Hub would really give us an opportunity to build the infrastructure that connects those existing efforts through one coordinated, equitable, and division-wide system.

[00:12:51] It doesn't replace the great work that is already happening. It strengthens it. So as Renee already mentioned, we really wanted to make sure that the FACE Resource Hub was not developed in isolation. So it is a deliberate result of planning, a planning process designed to ensure that the model reflects both research and the realities within our school and our community.

[00:13:12] We began by gathering feedback from staff members who work most closely with our students and families every day, including our family liaisons, McKinney-Vento, school social workers, to better understand the needs that they see across the division. We complemented that work with site visits and research into successful resource hub models that exist around our region to identify effective practices and lessons learned.

[00:13:38] Using those findings, we developed a comprehensive project charter that incorporated stakeholder feedback and the expertise of community partners, including our friends at LEF. We then presented the concept to Cabinet to refine the vision and ensure alignment with division priorities. And finally, we have planned to convene a cross-departmental work group to help guide our planning, implementation, and our long-term sustainability.

[00:14:00] Each of these steps has helped us to shape a model that builds on existing strengths, reflects stakeholder input, and provides the infrastructure needed to support our students and families through a coordinated, division-wide system. So the goals of the FACE Resource Hub are centered on access, coordination, and student success.

[00:14:24] Our first goal is about accessibility to essential resources. So we want to ensure that our students and families across LCPS have timely access to the food, items that they would need, clothing, hygiene products, things like that. Our goal, too, would be to build a coordinated community support system.

[00:14:42] And what we've learned through our interfaith luncheon that we had our first annual interfaith is we really, from our community partners in that, is that it would be helpful to have a coordinated community support system in place to strengthen collaboration within LCPS, LEF, our businesses, nonprofits, and faith-based partners.

[00:15:05] Our goal three is to reduce barriers to student success. It's such an important one that we're incredibly passionate about because reducing those barriers to success will help with attendance, engagement, and academic success by connecting our kids with essential resources and community supports that they need and deserve.

[00:15:30] And our fourth goal is to strengthen family engagement and connections. And we would do that with increasing families' access to school and community resources while also strengthening those relationships between families and schools and community partners. Together, these goals will help us move from individual responses to a more consistent, equitable, and coordinated division-wide system.

[00:15:55] So our goals define what we hope to accomplish, but the question is, how do we get there? And these six strategic priorities provide the roadmap for implementation and long-term success. Together, they strengthen the entire system of support for students and families by coordinating resources, streamlining operations, leveraging community partnerships, and expanding equitable access.

[00:16:22] And the result is a sustainable infrastructure that enables LCPS to respond more efficiently today while building capacity for the future. And most importantly, this approach allows us to maximize existing partnerships, reduce duplication of efforts, and create new opportunities for family engagement, volunteerism, and student learning.

[00:16:49] Based on all of our research, our stakeholder feedback, and site visits to established resource hubs, we thought it was really important to select a closed-loop operational model because it is efficient,

effective, responsive, and accountable. This process is intentionally simple.

[00:17:07] Our schools will submit requests based on identified student and family needs. The hub will then fulfill and deliver these resources directly to the schools. Our school staff will then provide feedback to confirm that their need was met and it has made an impact on their students. The items that schools could request might include things like clothing, school supplies, shoes, hygiene items, and winter apparel.

[00:17:30] This operational model allows us to track requests, inventory, response times, fulfillment times, recurring needs, and outcomes, creating a coordinated, data-informed system that consistently and continuously improves support for our students and our families.

[00:17:48] So co-location strengthens this partnership, and it's something we were very excited about from the very beginning of this project. One of the greatest strengths of the model is the opportunity for the FACE Resource Hub and the Loudoun Education Foundation to work side-by-side while maintaining our distinct roles and responsibilities.

[00:18:09] The FACE Resource Hub will coordinate school-based referrals and fulfillment and delivery, as you've heard about in previous slides, and outcome tracking, while LEF would continue to lead its outstanding and amazing work in fundraising, donor engagement, and the FUELD program.

[00:18:27] By co-locating our operations, we can leverage that shared space, volunteers, logistics, infrastructure to improve coordination, maximize our resources, and better serve students and families. And most importantly, this partnership builds on the strengths of both organizations, creating a more connected and sustainable system of support without changing the unique mission of either organization.

[00:18:52] While I've shared this LCPS perspective, I'd love to invite Danielle to share what this partnership means for LEF. Certainly, and I didn't write notes for this, so I'll just talk it off the cuff. Currently, LES Field Program operates out of a warehouse in Leesburg, the back of a Walgreens, and it works.

[00:19:11] It's kind of a makeshift warehouse, but that will be – our lease ends December 2027. I'm not sure if they're flattening it or remodeling it, but for whatever reason, there's no more space for us. And it's gone well, but as we were chatting about timeline, the frequency in which our teams work together, it's constant.

[00:19:33] And LES Fueled Program, right now the family liaisons can request and order food via an app. We have a smooth system. But when it's beyond, when it's needs outside of Fueled's purview, outside of that pantry meal bag, we make sure to pass on the request.

[00:19:51] And, of course, you all are getting your requests from your family as well. So just the idea of being in one shared space, again, as Renee said, we would still continue fundraising on our own. We have two staff members that we would continue to pay for. But that collaboration, that conversation of, hey, we've gotten requests for school supplies, us too.

[00:20:11] Let's come up with a game plan together. It really, there's a lot of potential there for not duplicating services.

[00:20:25] And so one of the really exciting things about the FACE Resource Hub is the aspect of this model having the opportunity to leverage both the strengths within LCPS and the generosity of our

broader community and volunteer opportunities that will emerge out of this partnership and this new resource hub.

[00:20:42] Our students will be able to participate through work-based learning and service learning experiences, while our businesses and nonprofit organizations, such as our faith-based community, volunteers, and donors, each have meaningful ways that they can contribute to the resource hub. Together, this community-supported model expands our capacity, strengthens our existing partnerships, and creates shared ownership of student and family success.

[00:21:11] We are presenting two options for consideration, With the primary distinction being the level of school-based support each model provides. So both options include a coordinator who would oversee hub operations and build relationships with nonprofits and business partners to coordinate those donations, resources, and funding opportunities.

[00:21:38] He's a program assistant that would provide the day-to-day administrative and logistic support for the hub. And our current part-time financial analyst would move to full-time to manage grants, funding, and purchasing, and the financial operations that would be associated with the hub. Our option one is this recommended approach is because the distinction is we have three specialists associated with this.

[00:22:03] And each specialist would serve approximately 33 to 34 schools. Okay. Um, allowing them to build strong relationships with the school teams and develop a clear understanding of the needs within their assigned region. So they would each have a region with about 33 or 34 schools in it.

[00:22:23] They would conduct school needs assessments, help coordinate and distribute resources and serve as each school's primary liaison to the hub. Okay. The regional structure keeps the work closely connected to the schools and supports more timely and consistent responses and strengthens coordination across the division.

[00:22:43] And for planning purposes, we've also provided estimated costs projected through FY32 so the board can see the anticipated longer-term investment associated with this model. Now, these projections do not include the transportation support for delivering resources to schools, as that support is already incorporated into the staffing standards for our facilities team.

[00:23:07] The remaining positions, and I've talked about those, the program assistance. So this one, I just want to point everyone's attention. The key distinction for this one is there are three specialists that would be regionally responsible for 33 to 34.

[00:23:23] So when we move to option two, you will see that distinction. So for option two, the overall structure remains the same, but the key difference is the number of regional specialists. This option would have two specialists rather than three, and those specialists would support 50 schools as opposed to the 33 or 34.

[00:23:44] They would have the same core responsibilities in terms of conducting needs assessments with the schools, coordinating and supporting the distribution of resources and serving as the primary hub liaison for the schools they support while this option reduces the overall staffing cost the larger number of schools assigned each specialist would mean less capacity for individualized school support relationship building site visits and ongoing needs assessment that difference in capacity is one of the primary reasons

that we are really looking at option one as our recommended as with option one we have our projected cost

[00:24:21] all the way through FY 32 to provide a longer term view of investment and the transportation would be the same that is incorporated into the facilities team staffing standard and the reason we're distributing to the schools is as we've shared in our earlier part of our presentation transportation is a barrier to our families so we want to make sure we're shipping to the schools ultimately both of these options provide the infrastructure necessary to operate the hub the distinction for consideration is the level of school-based capacity

[00:24:55] that we're able to provide across the division and the proposed timeline here reflects the deliberate phased approach to building a face resource hub we begin by establishing a strong foundation through planning partnerships staffing operational systems before launching services and expanding support across the division as the hub matures our focus shifts to strengthening partnerships expanding family engagement and using the data to drive continuous improvement and building this sustainable model

[00:25:30] that can grow alongside the evolving needs of our students and families by moving thoughtfully through each phase we can really take some time to evaluate our progress learn from the data see where we have trends and needs which we have hunches obviously from our current work but the hub will allow us to ensure that it is a lasting resource that strengthens our schools and our partnerships in our community. Ultimately, the FACE Resource Hub really is more than a place where resources are stored. It's a place where partnerships are activated, barriers are reduced,

[00:26:09] and our community comes together to ensure that every student and every family has the support that they need to succeed that we are open to questions wow hard to see a downside here from my perspective um i want to thank you so much and i think dr spence for putting this on my radar months ago um sort of just some beginning conversations i'm very grateful to be at the table with lef and sort of following their journey in terms of their needs and obviously the work i

[00:26:45] think it goes without saying but i will say it anyway the work that your team with face and the family liaisons and the interfaith luncheon and all the things that your small but mighty team does do not go unnoticed. And I know you're working overtime to meet the needs. To me, this just makes sense. When I'm not wearing my school board hat, I help run a ministry through a nonprofit. And so I know the struggles of working smarter, not harder. Also coming from my Title I background, We know that our family liaisons spend most of their time meeting individual niche needs.

[00:27:21] And so one thing I want to also point out that I think will be a plus is the opportunity, the cost that you're going to save for the family liaisons to do work of engaging families in how to get engaged in their school, how to set up a conference, how to know what to do with reading to your child at night, how to get on your high school sports team.

[00:27:42] All the millions of things that are logistically part of a school life that sometimes get dropped because we just need to meet basic needs so that kids can learn. And so for me, when I came on the board, those were some of the preliminary conversations we were having even about how can we use leveraged technology to try and meet some of these needs.

[00:27:59] So I'm more than a million percent supportive of moving in this direction. I'm excited to have it come through our committee and hopefully move it to action to the full board. I do have a question. In terms of your regional specialists, I know you said you're sort of preliminary.

[00:28:21] Obviously, you want option one, and I think having 50 schools per person would be insane, personally. But having three, 33 schools is a lot. Would you consider looking at the needs and thinking, I mean, we have high-density areas of need, I know, for sure, in Sterling and Leesburg, where I represent.

[00:28:38] So would you be open to some people having more schools or less schools based on how that ebb and flow works with resources? Absolutely. One of the things that we wanted to do in the presentation was just to give an overview so that you could see we know and recognize and we go through all of our data, these are the schools that we know have more need.

[00:29:01] And so we would absolutely be open to making sure that we use that data to kind of adjust the way that our specialists are supporting and who they're supporting. based on need thank you and just based off of that i'm going to give an ask for you as well to get me the numbers for what it would take for five okay just to work our numbers down i i know that in these spaces sure add seven sure um let's start with five um let's start with five and see

[00:29:37] if we can get that down a little bit i i know in these spaces the needs are the work is hard it's hard. It's, you know, it's taxing not only on the physical in terms of the delivery and the sorting of supplies. And I mean, there's physical work that goes into this. But there's also the mental load of making sure that people have what they need emotionally to make sure that they are supported when you know that those physical needs exist. And so sometimes we start out at a deficit and then people get burned out. And so let's just look at what it would take to do more.

[00:30:10] I would appreciate that. So I will pass the mic to my colleague, Ms. Donahue, and I'm just really appreciative and very, very excited to see where this goes. Thank you, Chair Chernoff. Thank you, Ms. Dawson, Ms. Boyce, and Ms. Nadler for the excellent presentation.

[00:30:28] I love talking about how we're going to reduce barriers to student success. I'm thrilled to hear about these ideas. I do have a couple of questions, and they are coming from a place of me not being very good at envisioning, like, non-tangible things.

[00:30:47] So when you were talking about this face hub, I was having a hard time telling, like, are you talking about, like, a physical building or multiple physical locations or systems or all of the above?

[00:31:02] You mentioned infrastructure. I was hoping that you could explain a little more what you are, what you're envisioning. That's actually a great question. And we are talking about a physical building that could store all of our materials, supplies, resources.

[00:31:20] Many of our schools are trying to find spots in the gym, on the stage, in different areas to store. So this would be a centralized hub, a location, a physical location where for LEF's field program, our need is 2,000 square feet of warehouse space.

[00:31:42] And then I can't remember the total amount that you were thinking for your team, but a loading dock. Amazon for free, by the way, delivers our meal bags every week to the schools. So that's Amazon trucks that come to that warehouse that right now is, it's a deck.

[00:32:00] It's really a makeshift loading dock, but a real loading dock where they could come and. So this would be like a joint warehouse. And would there also be office space in the same building? Yes, we would definitely have office space so that all of our people that would be there would have a spot where they could work, workstations, things like that.

[00:32:19] because our goal is, and one of the exciting things that we did talk about was incorporating our work-based learning students into this. This is a great opportunity to kind of connect, and then the volunteer programs that we have. So we would have to have the ability to meet, to plan, to organize, to train, and all of those things.

[00:32:39] And so would LEF move, and your offices are currently here in admin, would your offices also move to this new space? It would only, in this proposal, it would only be our fuel team, which is two co-coordinators. We definitely see the value of our fuel team working closely with some of the FACE team, but we also, as you know, see the value of our three other team members working alongside the teaching and learning team on the fifth floor.

[00:33:04] So do you have a sense now of, are you going to be looking for the schools to build a facility, or are you going to be looking to buy a building, rent a building, rehab? Likely be looking for leased space. The team has done some preliminary inquiries in looking, the facilities team, and have identified some possibilities.

[00:33:25] But, you know, we sort of pump the brakes on that until we want to make sure we don't go too far down that road before we've got board. Makes sense. So you'd have the office space there, but then your staff would be going out into the community to spend time in the schools, right?

[00:33:44] That's what we're talking about. Well, I think it's two parts. So the staff would actually be there because they have to put, like, hygiene kits together. They have to sort. They have to distribute. They have to do all of those things. But I think the specialists, it's important for them to be in the schools, having conversations.

[00:34:01] What are your specific needs? What are the times of year that you have bigger needs? We know that at the beginning of school, many of our schools have these needs. So they would be doing basically, like, inventories and having strong connections with the schools that they support, coming back to the hub getting all of those materials together and then making sure we distribute it out to the schools um do you have i think ms chernoff was alluding to the same thing that i'm trying to get out with my next question um because i had written down do you have numbers on where the need is originating from um as ms chernoff was saying like yes we have 100 schools

[00:34:40] it would not surprise me to hear that there are certain needs that you all meet coming from every school. But I imagine the need is higher in some schools. And I'm wondering if you have that information by, you know, is it by geographic area? Is it by grade level? Like, where are you seeing the greatest pockets of need? Yeah, that's a great question. And I think the short answer is there's need everywhere, as you alluded to, but there are certainly higher pockets of more concentrated need. Geographically is really probably the best indicator to be able to see that.

[00:35:12] You know, if you take a look at our numbers and percentages of economically disadvantaged families, Those are a little bit more concentrated in certain neighborhoods within the school division. However, I will say that I think one of the exciting things about this FACE Resource Hub is that we do have

needs everywhere. And so while sometimes we're really focusing our efforts on specific pockets or populations, we know that there are still families and students in every single one of our schools who are experiencing barriers and may have a need.

[00:35:39] And so the Resource Hub would allow us a centralized area to make sure that the needs are being met no matter where the school is. And so we can ensure that we're really sharing the benefit of these donations or the items, you know, based on where the needs are the greatest.

[00:35:57] That absolutely makes sense. If there's a way to provide us with some numbers, some concrete information about where you are putting the most resources without jeopardizing any student privacy or family confidentiality, I think that would be helpful, at least for me, if you're asking us to decide on approving a model that involves two specialists versus three specialists, I think having that information might be helpful. Or five. Or five, or eight, or however many we're going to be asked to approve, that that would be helpful. And then

[00:36:35] the other question I had was about physical and mental health services. I feel like I heard a mention of that somewhere in the presentation, but is that something that you anticipate, like helping the community with finding referrals if they're in need of referrals for mental or physical health services?

[00:36:56] So one of the things that we have talked about is how we can provide resources to be sent out to our family. So every student or family that receives something from us will have a list of information and referrals. That's where we have this great opportunity to really kind of synthesize our partnership with some of these organizations.

[00:37:18] So they will get some information about here's where you can go for this, here's where you can go for that. So we will be able to provide that to our families. But in terms of us providing that, it would probably be through referral-based. I did not anticipate at this point that we're actually providing the medical care yourselves, But I'm glad to hear that that is something that families could seek out through you as well.

[00:37:46] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Donahue. While you were talking, I had one more question. Do you anticipate that the space would be able to house, like, parent meetings, events, things where people could come in and have a central – I know, like, Head Start does, you know, their orientation night and their family nights, and they have people coming in.

[00:38:03] But while they're there, they're getting backpacks and books and things like that. Is that something you envision as well, or is it purely just warehouse storage? So that actually, I love that question, because part of our plan we have projected out, like a five-year plan of where we'd like to see it.

[00:38:20] And when we get to that third year is when we want to start offering the parent classes and things like that. And in our conceptual thinking of what this place could be, that's why we don't want to have fixed furniture so that we can move things out of the way in case we want to have chairs and we can have parents come in and do trainings and things like that.

[00:38:40] That's where we can engage our partners to come in and offer some of those classes for them, whether it's something on finances or planning or a part of our family academy that we already have in place. So that is in our five-year plan should this move along.

[00:39:01] I appreciate that. All right. I think that wraps up our comments and questions, and thank you so much for being here. This is very exciting. We will move this item to action at our next Specialized Programs and Centers meeting to get it to the full board for approval, and then we will see where it goes.

[00:39:18] Thank you so much. All right. We are going to now move on to item 4.02, and we have a presentation today on special programs, and we just have a quick update on elementary school special programs and also admissions windows for our other special programs.

[00:39:37] And presenting is Ms. Katie Clark, Director of Academic Programs, and I will let you take the floor. Good afternoon. Today I will be providing an update regarding our special programs with a particular focus on elementary school, exploring some potential options, and detailing a missions window for the upcoming 26-27 cycle.

[00:40:06] To frame our discussion this afternoon, we'll begin with School Board Policy 5115, which defines special programs and academies as district-approved offerings that provide specialized learning experiences beyond the standard curriculum.

[00:40:28] These programs are designed to support specific student interests, talents, and instructional goals while expanding educational opportunities for our students. Currently at the elementary level, we have our Spanish dual language immersion program.

[00:40:44] We do have some school-based initiatives such as project-based learning and our charter school models that integrate arts into the instruction. This afternoon, I'll share some community feedback, review regional approaches, and discuss potential future opportunities that could expand specialized learning experiences for elementary students.

[00:41:05] So as we consider future program development, it is always important to understand the interest and priorities of our families. Results from the 2022 Community Survey demonstrated strong interest in several specialized elementary program options.

[00:41:25] As you can see displayed here, the highest levels of interest were our dual language immersion at 56%, world language academies at 54%, and fine arts academies at 43%. These findings provided valuable insight into the types of programs families would like LCPS to explore.

[00:41:44] Since this initial survey in 2022, we have started and have a successful dual language immersion program at two of our schools. And as you know, we're currently getting ready to open our third this school year at Leesburg Elementary. Last fall, we conducted a follow-up survey to reassess community interest and identify emerging priorities.

[00:42:07] As you can see here, this is the provided updated feedback from families and other important data points as we evaluate potential future elementary programming opportunities. So of the families that responded, each of them have a little bit different response rate because parents could choose.

[00:42:26] Within these options, 82% of that 2,846 responded that they were interested in STEM. 58% of those respondents said arts, audio, video, technology, and communication.

[00:42:43] 40% said dual language immersion and diving a little bit deeper there. There was higher interest in Mandarin and then French. And then lastly, our IB primary years program was at 27% interest out of those number of respondents.

[00:43:01] These findings help ensure that any future planning remains responsive to current family interests and community needs. So we have examined specialized elementary program offerings in neighboring school divisions. As you can see here, Fairfax County Public Schools offers arts and science magnet programs.

[00:43:22] And we were fortunate enough recently, some of us, to visit Hunter Woods Elementary School, where we saw this program in action. As you can see, Fairfax, Montgomery, and Prince William, like us, all offer dual language immersion programs. But you can see some offer multiple different languages.

[00:43:40] Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery County, Maryland, and Prince William all offer the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. And lastly, Arlington and Fairfax both have Montessori programs. This regional benchmarking provides valuable context as we evaluate possible opportunities for LCPS and helps us understand the range of specialized learning environments available to students across the region.

[00:44:07] So based on community feedback, current research, and regional trends, here are some potential areas that have emerged for future consideration. So the first there is a fine arts academy focused on arts-integrated learning experiences.

[00:44:27] Next would be to expand our already established dual language and global studies opportunities, including maybe additional languages. A STEM or STEAM academy emphasizing on engineering, innovation, and robotics. potentially expanding. We already have the diploma program for IB and are adding the career program, but maybe adding the primary years program at the elementary level. And lastly, looking at a Montessori program centered on child-driven, individualized. At this stage, these concepts are exploratory in nature. We don't have any proposals, but these are intended to support

[00:45:06] future discussion regarding elementary special program opportunities here in Loudoun County public. So before we move into our next portion regarding emissions, timelines, and logistics for the coming year, I would like to just pause and ask for any additional questions or have any additional discussion about elementary programming. I'll pass it to Ms. Donahue to kick us off.

[00:45:34] Thank you, Chair Chernoff, and thank you, Ms. Clark, for the first half of the presentation. I had a couple of questions. First, my first question was with regard to potential elementary options. It certainly is helpful seeing where the interest is from the families in our community, but we also need to know from your staff perspective, which of these options would be most realistic for us to move forward with as far as what do you perceive to be the availability of

[00:46:07] space needs and staffing needs that we could realistically meet? Not that I expect an answer right now but as part of the discussion going forward yeah absolutely space at the elementary level is definitely at a premium as you know we moved two of our dual language immersion programs from regional to to those school priority models so absolutely we would definitely want I know Kevin West is here this afternoon from the elementary office so we would definitely need

[00:46:42] to bring some feedback and potentially bring a proposal depending on everyone's involvement. And then I was, I love the idea of a fine arts school. I've heard since I was campaigning back in 23, various families supporting the idea of a fine arts academy at the high school level.

[00:47:02] So I was pleased, although a little surprised to see it on this list, and I wondered if there are pros and cons for starting a program like that at the elementary level. and potentially those students not

having further space to go forward when they get to middle and high school versus starting that program at the high school level.

[00:47:23] I'll start, and I'll see if Ms. Clark has anything to add. I would invite us to think more about, not an immersion, an integrated approach to arts. So, for example, when we visited an elementary school in Fairfax, in many ways the elementary school looked just like a standard elementary school.

[00:47:47] The difference was the intentionality to integrate the arts into the curriculum. And while it's easy to say we're going to do that, we actually need to support our teachers in doing that through curriculum that they could actually use, through equipment they could use. And in some cases, some additional staff, for example, this particular school had a dance studio.

[00:48:09] And so it depends on the scope. Like it goes back to those levers we want to pull when we think about special programs. If you want to go really big to the point where we need to think about where these kids are going to end up in middle school, that's going to take a lot of staff, and that's going to take a lot of space, and it's going to be pretty complicated, and we can do that if that's what the board wants.

[00:48:28] But if we're talking about immersion, if we're talking about a twist on our traditional elementary approach with a focus on the arts, there are additional resources that would be needed, but it would be more of kind of the identity of the school, like this is how we do things. So that would be a broad answer.

[00:48:45] I'm not sure if that's helpful. All right. I'm going to try not to geek out, but I am so excited about this conversation. I'm so grateful to be having it. I think it's timely, and I feel like a little bit of an unfair advantage because I did get to go on the visit to Hunter's Woods.

[00:49:06] I also started my teaching career there, so I taught in an arts immersion school. And I really strongly feel that it is a gap that we have here in Loudoun, and I think it's one that we could fill relatively easily in terms of making it more of an integrated approach.

[00:49:24] Additionally, I've been to Middleburg Charter several times and seen how they've integrated the arts through their model. Obviously, that's different than the traditional public school model, but they've been able to do that, and those kids funnel mostly into our middle schools and high schools as well. I have also heard interest for Fine Arts Academy at the high school level down the road, and I think it would make sense for us to lay, if we were even thinking about that through our expansion programs, I think it would make sense to start in elementary and see how that goes.

[00:49:54] One of the things that was really encouraging to me on our visit was, and you said it felt like a normal, typical elementary school, but what was really great is the access that the kids had to, you know, strings and band and things at a much younger age.

[00:50:10] And so for me, it's really about priming the pump for interest, much like we're, you know, using the RISIC model and looking at career connectedness and thinking about where do I fit. I think this gives kids an opportunity to see, is the arts for me? Is this something I really want to funnel to? Because we know electives are at a premium in high school.

[00:50:28] And so some kids start out in the arts, but then other things take priority. So if kids can have that exploration at a younger age, I think that that would be just an incredible legacy to leave behind as a board member, but also just an amazing opportunity for our students.

[00:50:46] So I'm going to be a little more direct and ask if it's possible for us to start thinking about potential regional models for an arts integration focus in our elementary schools here in Long County Public Schools and have that brought back to our committee at some time in the near-ish, I know that takes time, future for us to consider where we really could look at the logistics and look at the staffing and look at the potential budget impact.

[00:51:12] And just, you know, from a perspective of can we do this and is it something we want to do, I think that that would be a really good use of our time. On a side note, I would also love to learn more about the primary years program for IB.

[00:51:28] I think that makes logical sense considering we're investing so much in it at the high school level and it seems to be in high demand. So for me, those are two things coming from this that I would really love for us to explore further as a committee. So we can certainly bring that back.

[00:51:46] If we were to bring back an IB update on primary years, would it make sense to include just information on the middle years program as well and kind of do? Yes, sir. All right. Thank you so much for that portion. I guess we'll move on to the next part.

[00:52:04] All right. Moving into more of the operational aspects of our special programs, we just want to give a quick update for the community on our special program timeline for the 26-27 cycle. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge our new admissions coordinator.

[00:52:22] Unfortunately, she's not able to be here tonight, but Jacqueline Royster has been hired, and we're super excited about her joining the team, and we can't wait to see the innovative ideas she'll bring to our admissions and outreach team. So our process begins with outreach and awareness activities, followed by a missions window, and then concludes with the formal enrollment windows for each program.

[00:52:45] This timeline is designed to ensure that students and families have ample opportunity to learn about the available programs and successfully navigate the application process. So one exciting, and we've already spoken about this, but we're going to just mention it real quickly, one exciting addition to our outreach efforts this year is the Middle School Future Ready Lesson, which will be delivered on November 12th, which is the same day that we'll be doing our Academies of Loudoun Testing.

[00:53:12] This initiative is a collaborative effort among academic programs, the Career and Technical Education team, and school counseling. The lesson is going to be designed to ensure student awareness of special programs while helping students explore their strengths, interests, and future pathways using the SchoolLinks platform and the RIASAC career interest framework.

[00:53:35] Our goal is to provide students with meaningful opportunities to connect their interests and aspirations to the special programs available within LCPS. That will be for all middle school students, 6th, 7th, and non-testing 8th graders.

[00:53:51] We also will have it available for those eighth graders who are testing for them to view. But our goal really is to start that outreach earlier so students, as they move up throughout their middle school career, really know what they want to apply if they want to apply in eighth grade for those high school programs.

[00:54:12] So here for our eighth grade students applying for the Academies of Loudoun, including the Academy of Engineering and Technology and the Academy of Science, applications are going to open on

August 24th and they're going to close on noon on October 15th. One important change this year is that all applications will only be considered complete once both the student and the parent or guardian approve approval have been submitted in the system through student opportunities. In addition to improve accessibility and reduce barriers for families, the admissions

[00:54:48] testing is going to be administered for the first time at every middle school during the school day on November 12. So again, that's going to align with our future ready lesson. One more thing there is we are sending out postcards to all 8th grade families that are going to go out so that everyone is aware of this window when it opens and knows they can apply. Next, the winter admission cycle for grade 8 students includes all of our other programs, ACCESS, Academy of Global and Linguistic Studies, the Health and Medical, the IB, the Navy, hopefully the Army. We're still waiting for

[00:55:24] official approval. These applications will open on December 1st, just like last year, and they're going to close on January 14th. A new enhancement this year allows eighth grade students to indicate interest up to the two lottery-based programs. That's going to be in addition to applying to AET, AOS, and Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology. So technically they can apply to five, they can apply to those three merit-based programs, and then two lottery programs as well. The same admissions window applies for our high school students interested

[00:55:59] in ACCESS, MATA, and Advanced AET. For students applying to Advanced AET, the admissions process includes an assessment component similar to AOS and AET, and that date will be administered at Academies of Loudoun on January 23rd. These programs continue to provide advanced and specialized pathways for students seeking opportunities aligned with their academic goals and career interests.

[00:56:23] Next for our youngest learners, we have our dual-language immersion program. That interest window always aligns with kindergarten registration to be determined and will remain open through March 19th. Families with rising kindergarten or first-grade students for the 27-28 school year will have the opportunity to express interest in participating in this program.

[00:56:49] We currently have our dual-language immersion at three elementary schools through two distinct enrollment models. So Leesburg Elementary and Potomac operate on a school priority model that focuses on servicing students within their attendance zones.

[00:57:05] And then we have our Sanders Corner Elementary School that operates on that regional model, providing opportunities for both zoned and non-zoned students to participate in the program. These varying models allow us to balance community access while meeting local enrollment needs as well.

[00:57:22] So on to our third phase is our actual enrollment. The enrollment window shown here represent the final stage of the admissions process. When students receive offers, they will formally accept placement in their selected program.

[00:57:39] For secondary students, it's important to note that students may participate in one special program. This ensures students can fully engage in that specialized experience they have selected while allowing equitable access for other applicants. Students offered admission will be required to officially accept their placement through the Student Opportunities Platform during the designated enrollment window.

[00:58:02] You'll notice that enrollment windows are kind of staggered, so our high school and middle school enrollment activities will occur hopefully late February, early March. We'll make sure our website is

updated when those offers are going out. Emails are sent to students and parents regarding their placement.

[00:58:19] And then you'll see our elementary dual language immersion enrollment will take place in early April following that interest and lottery process. These timelines help schools, families, and programs and program staff plan appropriately for staffing, scheduling, and student placement for the upcoming school year.

[00:58:39] With these timelines and processes in place, our goal remains to provide a transparent, equitable, and accessible admissions experience for all students. So thank you for your time this afternoon. I think we're right on time. lcps remains committed to providing a diverse range of educational pathways that support student engagement achievement and future readiness i appreciate the boards especially this committee's continued support of special programs and would be happy to answer any final questions you may have thank you miss clark miss donahue i was wondering if you could just give us a brief overview of what

[00:59:19] we offer in terms of helping parents and the community get access to the information about what the programs actually are in terms of what your team does do we do open houses at the different programs if you could speak to that just briefly great question I should have probably included that in here so I included the one additional for the students that we're doing but we do hold two special program fairs in September typically at two different locations we're actually going to try a Saturday location this year so we have the Thursday locked in it's September 17th in the evening from 6 to 8 at Heritage High School and we are finalizing our

[00:59:57] other location it's going to be in the Sterling area either at Potomac Falls or Parkview a little bit later on a Saturday we're really trying to change that up but that all of our program coordinators are at those events we do an overview in the auditorium we kick off we really go through the process and then parents can stay and rotate through as many programs as they would like to attend with their students that's open to anyone in the community they can come out to that we also go typically to all the committee meetings and present on all of the different programs let's see act msac all of those committees

[01:00:34] typically we are invited and do a presentation I'm trying to think what else we do back to school nights at middle schools we do yes there are field trips and high school for high school students to go see, and I think what else for parents.

[01:00:55] Obviously, we have our websites for each program, and we are sending out postcards just in case emails are overwhelming. Hopefully, we'll catch families and students' interest through the traditional mail as well. I'm not sure if I caught everything, but that's the majority.

[01:01:11] That sounds like you're very busy getting the word out, so I appreciate that, and I don't think I have any other questions so i think that that we're good for for this i'm especially appreciative to moving to the two choices for the lottery thank you for being responsive to some of that discussion from our last committee meeting in terms of just people understanding that when you say you want to do it you're taking a slot and then you have to wait list down from there so i'm be anxious to see if that builds in some efficiencies for us and some better selections so um thank you all so much so with that um is there any new business there is not so we will be

[01:01:50] adjourning our meeting uh this thursday august 6 2026 specialized program centers and centers meeting is adjourned have a good evening



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