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Loudoun County School Board, Special Education Alliance Committee (SEAC) Meeting, Wednesday, September 9, 2026

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[00:00:18] Good evening everyone. Can we go ahead and grab a seat? Thank you and welcome to our 2026-2027 school year and first meeting for SEAC. Obviously I am your SEAC chair Erin Roselle Poe and I'm very honored to be here with all of you today. Before we jump into our kickoff event there are some

[00:00:53] delicious goodies all the way in the back if anybody has not seen them done by Laura Colossi over here she always provides such yummy treats for us so please help yourself yourselves um I was just speaking with Dr. Spence and it's truly hard to believe that we are in our fourth week of school it just feels like it's flown by it's amazing so also before I forget and we'll flash it again If you haven't done so, please scan the QR code.

[00:01:27] Basically, let us know that you're here. And then if you haven't had a chance, there are flyers on the back of the table, as well as if there are any public comments this evening, the sign-up is on the back as well. And at this time, we'll go ahead and get started with our superintendent, Dr. Aaron Spence.

[00:01:50] Well, good evening. So nice to be here with you. It's true that four weeks have felt very fast, but they've also in some ways felt very long, which is probably a bit like being married. I am very glad to be

here with you all. It's always a pleasure to spend some time with this team, with this group of people, the wonderful educators, parents, family members in the room. We, I think, really appreciate and need you to

[00:02:24] hear from me that we really appreciate the questions that you ask us. You know, when we start thinking about how we're meeting the needs of our kids. I mean, they're really important and meaningful conversations for us to get into. And I always want to just start the conversation with you all with an expression of gratitude because it really does make us better. It makes us better at our work. It makes us more empathetic in how we think about what we do for our kids.

[00:02:52] It helps us really hone in on the strategies that are important strategies for making a difference and the lives of the kids that we serve. And that, of course, is all kids, but certainly for this environment, our students with disabilities. And I'm proud of a lot of that work.

[00:03:09] And I hope that you are proud of a lot of that work. So I don't know how many folks are sort of newish to this group. Not many. Everybody's pretty. Just a few. It's okay. You can raise your hand. Welcome. We're glad you're here. Yes, we're glad you're here. So maybe you won't know some of this, but the other folks who've been in the room for a while will know some of the really good things that have been happening and I want to talk a little bit about that. I do want to celebrate growth. I do want to say at the outset as we're looking at kind of what's going on with the testing environment and what's going on at the state

[00:03:46] with accountability, we are seeing growth. So what we're doing is working in our schools but I also want to acknowledge without any hesitation and no excuse making that the gaps that we see in learning for our students with disability have remained far too far too high so we know there's still a lot of work to do and that's why we're here we're here to to attack that with vigor and with seriousness and to try to understand what else we need to be doing together to ensure that we're meeting the needs of the kids that we serve but I also know we don't define success only by you know what what's happening on those assessments I hope we don't define success for our children

[00:04:25] based on what's happening on our assessments, right? You know, we were talking about our own kids, and so I now have my last two. So those of you who have been with SEAC for a while know I have a lot of children. And my last two, I've got now a freshman in high school and a senior in high school.

[00:04:43] And I know, isn't that nuts? It makes me so sad. I don't longer have any kids in middle school or elementary school. But I'm thinking about my senior. As I say, we don't define our kids only by assessment. he does fine in school. His grades are fine. But he has, we've been talking, you know, the senior years when you start having these conversations about, a lot of conversations about what comes next. And he made this really interesting decision at the beginning of the summer. He came to us. He said, mom, dad, I, I'm not going to go to college. I said, okay, tell me more. He would be our first

[00:05:18] not to go to college. I said, tell me more. He said, I want to fly airplanes. And I met a pilot who said, don't go to college. There's another path. And he, and he started talking to us about that path and so this summer he started working on his private pilot's license and he's he's following a different path for himself and and really like that's the thing that we need to be doing for all of our kids right we need to be thinking about where are your passions and what is your pathway and how do we connect those things together and make sure that those opportunities exist here in our schools and that they exist for for all of our kids and that's why I remain again

[00:05:56] proud of the work we do in LCPS but really proud of the work that you all do to keep pushing us I'll give you just one example we celebrated last night at our school board meeting if you happen to be watching it without SEAC we're not building independent living labs or apartments which we are now building in our schools and and we had the chance to to hear from the folks at Rockridge last night to talk about not only to see what it looks like but to talk about the difference that it's making for the kids who are learning about independence and what it means to be out on your own and find your pathway in the world. But do that in a safe place where the adults around them

[00:06:36] can help them navigate some of those challenges. And I just thought, man, that is so cool and so exciting. And then as I was sitting there, I was like, oh good, I get to go to SEAC tomorrow. I'm going to tell them we got to see that. Because truly, it was the push that you all gave for us to be able to talk with our board during the capital improvement process and put those labs into the capital plan and make that a reality so something for for all of us to be to be proud about and then you know other other stuff that's going on that i hope you know about i know you know about but just to highlight the the view transition academy we had a presentation last

[00:07:12] night on our capital program and if you saw that presentation you saw the rendering of the transition academy and you saw the conversation if you if you like really firm budgets you won't love this part of it because we basically doubled the budget for the thing because of the programming that we want to put in there because after we said this is what we think it'll cost for the building we've literally doubled the budget to put the right programming in and we've done that programming by talking with our students by talking with you all with our parents and our families by

[00:07:46] talking with our educators and saying what needs to be in the world's best transition center and then we put that in writing and we said this is our plan and so we're going to find a way to pay for it and that's in our budget and that is going to open in august of 28 if you think about that that's amazing right so that's just you know not that far away and it's going to be world class and it's going to be the best transition center in the country and we're going to show other people how to do it 15 career pathways have been identified for that transition center opportunities for kids

[00:08:23] to come and learn with professionals, learn with business partners, learn with each other about how to go into the world and live a fulfilling life. And what a blessing that is for us to be able to offer that opportunity. But that does not happen without you all. SEAC was the impetus behind that transition center, pushing Tedra, who likes to push me, who likes to push the board, to say this is something we should do and and I say that to say what happens in here really does matter and so

[00:08:58] you know if you're frustrated at times and you will be I know you will be because I am if you're concerned at times because you will be if you're wondering why you after a long day of doing all the other things you do spend time coming in here to advocate for children just remember that what you're doing in here really matters and it is making a difference in our school division and it does help hold us accountable and it does help remind us that we need to really dig in and make sure that we're being the best uh that we can be and and that's through your advocacy

[00:09:35] it's through your policy uh and governance feedback it's through the way that you push us on budget i was just telling aaron we have a budget retreat with our school board next week so we're already starting the new budget process and we'll be talking to them about priorities and one thing I know every year is I'm going to hear from SEAC about some budget priorities and it's going to be about how are we

appropriately staffing our schools to meet the needs of our kids and we'll continue to try to prioritize that as we have done over the last three years budgets that I've been able to put together here in LCPS with our school board

[00:10:11] we have prioritized and we haven't met every need um and we won't meet every need this year because you know budgets are what budgets are and there's always choices um but we will continue to expand and to grow and to make sure that the programs that need to be in place are in place and that the support systems that are in place need to be in place for for our kids before i wrap up because i know we have a lot of other folks who want to talk to you um i do want to push to an advocacy agenda item for just a second.

[00:10:42] I haven't brought it up with you all yet, so I'm gonna bring it up now because it's really been weighing on my mind a lot. So if you're familiar with a program called E-RATE, so E-RATE is a federal program and it goes through the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission.

[00:10:59] It is a program that funds connectivity in schools. It's really like its sole purpose is to make sure that internet exists in schools. So it funds hardware, it funds broadband, It started several decades ago when it started, about 12% of the nation's schools had the internet, and now about 95% of our nation's schools have the internet.

[00:11:22] And it is really directly because of federal e-rate funding that that happens. There's a swinging scale of reimbursement ability that you get from e-rate, depending on how much your community is able to afford. So for Loudon, we're fairly blessed, as everybody here knows, and we get about a 50% reimbursement rate on our purchases.

[00:11:42] um there are districts and so this is an advocacy beyond our borders but it's something that i want help with there are many districts particularly in rural communities and across the commonwealth and across the country who rely solely on this funding for internet connectivity and um it is there's a proposed rulemaking that's going on right now they're seeking comment and they are considering narrowing dramatically the scope of e-rate or sunseting it all together and so i've having this conversation in our business community because I want us to imagine what it would look

[00:12:19] like to try to hire somebody who comes out of our schools having never had any meaningful experience with technology. That would be an awkward situation for our employers who rely on technology every day to solve their problems. But I think for this group, one of the things that struck me when I was talking with a friend about this the other day was what about our kids who rely on like adaptive devices? What about our kids whose modifications and accommodations require the use of technology to learn? What about the way we're trying to level the playing field with those technologies for our kids? What about the way we communicate, the way we develop

[00:12:54] IEPs? All of those things that we do that require. So I know we don't all love screens. We shouldn't all love screens all the time, but there are productive and responsible uses for screens. And for many of the kids that we serve, they're critical. And I worry deeply about our nation's children when things like this happen without a lot of thought. And unfortunately, one of the things we're seeing is that a lot of the decisions being made at the federal level about public education in particular are happening without a great deal of thought. And so what I want is for part of my job and my role I see is to make sure that you're aware of that, because there is an

[00:13:33] opportunity to offer comment. And you can go, if you just look up proposed rulemaking, FCC e-rate, You can go to the page where you can submit those comments, and I would just encourage you all to talk about that from an advocacy lens, Aaron, if you don't mind, about whether or not you want to submit comment on behalf of the students that we serve who may be impacted by that, not just here in Loudoun County, but across the Commonwealth and across the country, because our kids need us, and walking away from programs like that is not a solution to our problem.

[00:14:05] So anyway, with that, that was not the intention to come up here and do that tonight, but I was writing a letter to submit for comments over the last two days and since it's been on my mind I thought I would share it with you as well. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as the superintendent in Loudoun County. It's my fourth year now as superintendent which is just hard to believe but it is an honor and a privilege to serve here because of you because of our community.

[00:14:32] I tell people all the time I live and work in in the best community for education in the country not because of our schools but because of the people who live in and invest in our schools and that's you guys so thanks for everything that you do for us we appreciate you thank you so much dr spence and again we really do appreciate everything that you do for seac as well as for all of our

[00:14:59] students here in lcps next up i would like to welcome miss tedra richardson good evening how are you good did everybody have a nice summer thumbs up okay good good we have a room full of thumbs up. That's awesome. I hope your school year is off to a strong and meaningful start.

[00:15:29] It is wonderful to see you all for this kickoff meeting this afternoon. So thank you for being here. I'm going to share some happenings from across the Department of Student Services. So starting us off, our Office of Diagnostic and Prevention Services is launching a new professional learning experience for our educators, for our TAs, and it is called strong adults strong schools so we do a lot of focus and a lot of support on our students but we also have to take care of ourselves to be able to pour into them and so when you get this presentation you can click the link you can see what those experiences are going to be for our

[00:16:09] staff members throughout this school year so we're very very excited about this opportunity for them From the Office of Student Services, oh my gosh, we have a partnership with HealthWorks, Dr. Tanya Atkins, and she applied for a state grant in partnership with LCPS, and we were awarded the full grant.

[00:16:31] We have two vehicles. You can see one of them there in this picture. We have one for free dental services and one for free medical services for our students in LCPS. We are so excited, so excited. Yes, yes, absolutely. And we will make sure that we have a kickoff experience and and a ribbon cutting. We got the vehicles a lot faster than what we thought we were going to, so we're super excited to get this up and running. We should have a soft start by the end of October,

[00:17:09] start of November, and we're going to start with a handful of schools out in the east, but we're really looking to expand this really to all of our regions across LCPS. Special education, our CIFs have really partnered with teaching and learning, and we now as a division have an LCPS coaching model, a cycle that we are working collaboratively with our friends in teaching and learning in partnership with the Department of School Leadership and really having meaningful impact in supporting our teachers,

[00:17:46] in providing mentoring, modeling, feedback, and really looking at our student progress. So we're excited about that. Student mental health services, we are going to start really looking at and logging

our responsive services. So certainly we can log into our student information system now.

[00:18:06] We can go to student conference logs and we can pull that information. but really having it all in one place by discipline so our school psychs our school social workers our school counselors and our student assistant specialists and really having meaningful planned and intentional dialogue around what is this data telling us what are the trends that we're seeing in our responsive services when we're meeting with with with students so we can better tailor and target our supports to students schools and families and then out of procedural support our

[00:18:44] school board was supportive of five additional mat training positions and we have had a huge impact with training to start this school year we got a lot of training done over the summer so people were well positioned to kick off this the school year safety is always a priority for us making sure that everyone feels safe within our educational settings, and so we're happy to celebrate that. Dr. Spence did preview a little bit of what's going on with our VIEW Transition Academy, but we are slated to host our second roundtable on October 2nd, and yes, this is the

[00:19:24] visual of what it will look like when all is said and done. It has been an exciting process. It has been overwhelming at times. There are details that have to be thought about that you don't always think of because we typically just get to walk into school buildings and everything is up and running and functioning, but we're building it from the ground up. Our focus for our round table on October 2nd is having our businesses that were there with us for the original kickoff in May of 2025 coming back to join us, and then we have a host of new businesses that

[00:20:03] are going to be joining us, and we have structured our time together to really look at these three bullets. Looking at curriculum and skill alignment, are we on track with what we have identified in our 15 pathways? Is it going to have meaning and purpose for our students once they age out of this opportunity that we're creating for them?

[00:20:26] work-based learning what are our new businesses and current business partners willing to commit so we're going to be having them to complete some commitment cards and give them the opportunity to ask those questions in a safe space maybe I don't know what it's like to work with a person with a disability we want them to be able and be comfortable to ask those questions to share what they may perceive as some challenges or how they might need some support from us to make sure that our students, once they enter the workforce, are successful. And then looking at those community and civic partnerships,

[00:21:06] just how can we build those sustainable relationships and onboard many more businesses for which our students can go out and join the workforce. I will say that your SEAC leadership team has been integral in adding businesses to those lists. I tell you one thing, you put SEAC on something and you guys are going to get it done. So thank you. Thank you. We definitely appreciate all of your support. We do have SEAC leadership that have been invited to the round table on October 2nd. So in addition to us sharing some of that feedback, I know that the leadership

[00:21:43] team will as well. Again, thank you for joining us this evening. Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your passion. Thank you for your care. And thank you for continuing to show up for not just your students, our students, but also showing up for us. Have a good evening.

[00:22:07] Next up, I'd like to welcome Ms. Nakia Purnell from the Office of Special Education. So I'm not snitching, but Liz was already trying to steal your picture to get more businesses. I told her Amy was in the back I wouldn't be approving that so Amy Liz will be coming to talk to you about the proper way to create communications to businesses thank you Liz always on the job always on the job welcome back welcome back welcome back are we ready are we

[00:22:47] ready are we energized so I just want to say welcome back last year we did so many good things together. We did a lot of work around belonging, connection, and our shared responsibilities. We had a lot of nice connection activities throughout last school year. It reminded us that belonging is more than simply being invited into this space. What do we call that? Breathe in the what? The gen ed air. It's more than just breathe in the gen ed air, right? Belonging means that

[00:23:20] we're being seen, heard, valued, knowing that our voice means something and that we can all make a difference no matter who we are. We talked a lot about that last year. It also means creating space for different experiences, different opinions, different perspectives, different ideas, different cultures, and just approaching those things with curiosity and, most importantly, respect, right? So this year, we will continue to build on that foundation. I will not be the doing the connection, sadly, but it will keep going.

[00:23:54] Our goal is gonna be continuing to grow SEAC as a true collaborative team. Over the last couple of years, two or three years, we have turned what used to be more of a debate and a lot of contention into friendships, partnerships. We fellowship here, we come here, we share treats, we share stories, we talk about our kids.

[00:24:14] So we truly have transformed this into a collaborative space and we wanna keep that momentum going because we wanna continue to see the seats get filled. You know, sometimes we would come in and the supervisors in SEAC would be making up the whole crew. So continue to invite your friends because our goal is to continue having more families, educators, administrators, community partners, and guess what?

[00:24:38] Children, children are a part of SEAC. We have children who are old enough to have a voice. They participate in their transition meetings. We wanna hear from them. They are the customer. So we'd like to see some children start filling some of these seats this year.

[00:24:53] And we're gonna kick off this year with some promises. I'm just gonna read them. We're gonna put them on some little cards and we'll share these promises. If you disagree, you can write your comments on the back and I may or may not have a comment box, but we shall see.

[00:25:08] So first connecting before we problem solve, which is why we always have that connection. We got a little busy a couple of times and the connection got pushed to the back, but we will make sure that we intentionally prioritize that connection because our relationships matter.

[00:25:25] Those strong relationships are what make a difference when we have to have those hard or courageous conversations outside of this particular environment. Creating space for every voice. Again, different perspectives is what strengthens our collective work. So every voice in this room matters and we will respect every voice in the room.

[00:25:44] Listening with curiosity. You know how we always tell our kids and our spouses, Don't listen to respond. I can tell you just trying to get your rebuttal together. This is not a debate. We are listening for

curiosity, listening to ask questions for clarification, listening to learn from one another because we learn something new every day.

[00:26:06] Moving from concerns to collaboration. How many times do I tell y'all when y'all bring a concern? Is it three or is it 3,000? Now, we care about three, but three isn't a division-wide problem. Three, we can go directly to the source.

[00:26:22] 3,000, that means we gotta get moving. We gotta delegate some teams. We gotta do some research. We gotta figure it out. So again, making sure we're not making mountains out of molehills, right? That we're really considering things and being intentional about where we put our energy because it's only so many of us to do the work and we don't wanna burn out focusing on things that all students and families don't benefit from that just benefit maybe one or two, right?

[00:26:48] or one area in particular, and not the entire division. And then building belonging through action. So again, the way we communicate, collaborate, and show up for one another is a part of the culture. We're not just modeling when we come here, but we're creating for the rest of the division in our schools because when they see us come together and they go, all those advocates, all those attorneys coming in, are they friends?

[00:27:13] Why are they laughing together? Because that's what we do. We can have spirited debates. we can have a courageous conversations, we can respect one another's difference of opinion, and then we can come together and collaborate and do great things like View Transition Academy, which we worked really closely together on and pushed across the line.

[00:27:31] So most importantly, we just want SEAC meetings to feel like a place where people know they belong and they know their contribution matters. So please continue to show up and bring a friend and bring a kid, it would be great to see kids here. So, a little bit of information.

[00:27:48] This is officially our first SEAC meeting. I would like to introduce our new assistant director, my twin, Bridget Gorey. She will be in charge of connecting moving forward.

[00:28:05] We also have two, oh, not two, four, double that. Four new supervisors who've joined our team. Jamar Brown, R.J. Hortzmeyer, Jessica Pellegrino, and Christina Schmidt.

[00:28:29] We have added such a wealth of knowledge to our team, such diversity, they all bring very distinct gifts. And so we have grown our team in such a special way and just very excited about that. We do also have an exciting new resource.

[00:28:46] It is not division-wide, but we've done a little bit of focusing on our TSI, So our targeted support schools and our comprehensive support schools that have been federally identified under ESSA, which you guys know is the Every Student Succeeds Act. So we've had some schools identified as TSI and CSI schools.

[00:29:05] So we have adopted Touch Math, which is a concrete multi-sensory approach to learning math skills, which a lot of our students need, basically pairing those numbers with those tactile and visual resources to kind of enhance the learning of our students and give them a different way to approach learning math.

[00:29:23] We will be closely tracking, again, this was grant funded, so we will be closely tracking this pilot this year, the outcomes and the growth, so that we can make decisions to move forward toward expansion in the future. So maybe there will be some opportunities during our specialized instruction

subcommittees where we might be able to see some of those resources so you can see what it looks like, feels like, maybe see some of those tactile resources.

[00:29:52] So that's really exciting news for the students in those identified schools. And then we have some new supports for school teams in a response to behavior. I know post COVID, we've talked a lot about behavior. Behaviors have changed.

[00:30:08] We say, we've never seen children like this. Those who have been around 30, 40, even 50 years are like, woo, this is a new breed. So again, in response to what teams need, especially with so many provisionally licensed teachers, contracted teachers, novice zero to three year teachers, we wanted to make sure that our office was being responsive with the support.

[00:30:32] While we already have a lot of specialized instructional facilitators, our coordinators, our specialists, our supervisors, myself and Bridget, lots of resources in our office that can come out and support. But we realized sometimes teams are just in crisis And they don't only need help with behavior, they need help with classroom systems.

[00:30:55] They need help with visuals. They need help with putting academics into place, ensuring schedules are into place, modeling, coaching. And so that's all hands on deck. So through taking all of the different specialized instructional facilitators, those who specialize in instruction, those who specialize in behavior, those who specialize in students in specialized programs, and bringing those teams together, we will be coming into schools for up to four weeks to help stabilize those environments and then move on to the next team that requires our help.

[00:31:28] So that is a new approach that we have started to be responsive to some of the behaviors that you guys have been reporting in your schools and buildings. And so we'll be also taking data on that. So if we wanna expand that, we might have a new budget ask, I'm not sure.

[00:31:46] but certainly we'll ask the act to support that request. Should we need that, then we know that you will. I do believe that is all for me other than look at this, we're serving 10,482 students with disabilities with 180 students in initial eligibility.

[00:32:07] So while they say things are stabilizing, we just keep growing and growing and growing. So we wanna make sure that we continue. this relationship, so we can continue learning from one another, teaching one another, lifting one another up, because we've got work to do. Do you see how many students this is? We still didn't hit 11,000. We almost hit it, so we'll see where we are by the end of the year, but I appreciate you all. I'm very excited to be here tonight. I'm so very excited to hear the policies.

[00:32:43] If I was, maybe I was kidding. I'm not sure, but I thought they would get a kick out of it. I don't see Craig. I thought he would laugh from the back, but he's not here. So you guys, Melissa, you'll have to text him and tell him I said that. All right. So who is next up? Ms. Rae Mitchell, Chief of Schools.

[00:33:03] Come on down. Good evening, everyone. Thank you for inviting me to my very first SEAC meeting ever. Yay. So I was invited to just give an overview of my department, which is the Department of School Leadership or DOCEL as we're commonly known as and we work very closely

[00:33:42] alongside the Department of Student Services as we support all of the students in LCPS. So I have five departments in DOCEL. We have three level offices. We also have the Office of School Administration and then we have the Office of Athletics and Student Activities. So in the slides that you're

going to see, I'm just going to go over some names or show you who the directors are and the executive principals. In the event that you as parents and or employees will have

[00:34:19] contacts with the different people in these departments, you will have the most contact with the level offices and at times the Office of School Administration. While the Office of Athletics and Student Activities supports all students, you probably won't have as much contact with that office as some of the others. So in the Office of Elementary Education, we have a new director this year, Kevin West, and we have four executive principals. We support 60 elementary schools and the two charters, and we have a virtual distance learning program for elementary students

[00:34:59] that that office also supports. For middle school, we also have a new director, Ms. Mildred Charlie Green, and we have one executive principal, which is Ms. Robinson. We have 18 middle schools, and we also have students in our virtual Loudoun program at the middle school level. And then in high school, our director, Ms. Nettie Gonzalez-Sales, we have two executive principals, and they support the 18

[00:35:33] high schools and the six alternative programs, such as TAPE, which is the alternative education program, RISE, which you may be familiar with, Academies of Loudoun, all of our non-comprehensive school sites, Robie, and the VIEW Transition Academy will be a part of that, that we will support in our level offices as well. And we also have students involved in the virtual Loudoun program. The Office of School Administration, Ms. Dana Scanlon is our director, and we have a supervisor, Dr. Jefferson, and we have one hearing officer, Ms. Williams, who you may be

[00:36:13] familiar with, who is our former ombuds, and she's now in the Office of School Administration. That office works very closely with Ms. LaBelle, with our Student Behavior and Accountability Committee. The Office of School Administration handles all of our discipline and our hearings for all of our students and again they also work closely with the office of special education when we have students that are found to be in violation of something and they're special education students so that is another office that works very closely with osc and then our office of

[00:36:49] athletics and student activities our director is mr derrick ferry dr zara ismali is over our athletic trainers and John Petura is one of our supervisors and then Miss Chewy who is also new is for student clubs and activities. So again all of our students that are involved in any intramural sports at the middle school level are freshmen, junior varsity and varsity athletics at the high school level and then all of the clubs that we have in schools are supported by this particular office. So we do a lot of things to get student interest involved in our schools during

[00:37:28] the school day and after school. And we are also having two other people that are not necessarily a part of an office, but they support DOCIL, and that's Mr. Hudson, who is our coordinator for Parent and Stakeholder Services. So if you've ever filled out one of those Let's Talk or OnFlow submissions depending on what is submitted it comes to our office and he triages those and works with the various departments to get you responses that you need in a timely manner and miss hamilton is also fairly new so she is the coordinator that supports all of our summer

[00:38:07] programs and after school programs which will be expanding from elementary to middle and high school for the summer of 2027 so that is an overview of the department of school leadership again we because we support all of our schools and all of our students we collaborate with multiple departments to ensure that our students are getting the support that they need and we are going to be working a lot closely

a lot closer sorry with special education this year as miss Richardson and I have weekly meetings and we're looking at how to better

[00:38:46] collaborate to make sure that we are being proactive particularly for our students with disabilities thank you everybody for your overviews and also being here for the kickoff portion at this time we've gone ahead and identified all of our school board members by their districts but at this time I also want acknowledge a few of our school board members that are here. We have Carrie

[00:39:22] LaBelle, who's our liaison. And then also up here with us this evening is Miss April Chandler. She is our chair of the school board. Do we have any other school board members in attendance this evening? Okay, thank you both for being here.

[00:39:42] Carrie, would you like to come up?

[00:40:01] I may have been here for three years, but I still haven't gotten any taller. I don't understand it. It seems to go this way, not that way. I don't know. I don't want to go over things that everybody's been telling you about so far. The only thing that I have to add is welcome back. I am so happy to see so many faces in the room this month. This is great. And I hope we continue to grow.

[00:40:27] The other thing that I want to say is that I spent about two and a half hours with Ms. po the other day and we discussed a lot of initiatives and hopefully we'll hear about them at other meetings and get some stuff underway so I'm going to I know you've had a lot of introductions and a lot of speaking so rather than go over what everybody else has talked about I'm gonna say I'm so glad we're all here thank you and really quickly April would you like to say a few words since

[00:41:04] you're here right well I mean it's the introductory meeting it's the kickoff meeting right how could i miss it i'm so honored to have the opportunity to serve as the chair of the school board and as the alternate for SEAC it is so meaningful to be in service to our community and and please know that not just myself but all of us are here in support of your students we work for you and we're here in support of your family so if you ever need anything don't

[00:41:41] don't hesitate to reach out. So I'm just happy to be here. Thanks so much. And family resources, Leanne.

[00:42:12] Welcome back everyone. I am Leanne Kidwell. I am with Family Resource Services and I echo what everyone said. It's great to be back and great to see so many faces. So I just wanted, since it's our first meeting and some of you may not know me, just to tell you what I do. I am at the Historic Douglas High School in Leesburg and I'm a resource to parents. I'm a resource to teachers. I'm a resource to the community. I am a special ed teacher by training, and most of my experience is with special ed students. But what I do are

[00:42:46] really three-prong. The first thing I do, and the most important part of my job, is direct service. So you have a question. You have a concern. You can give me a call. We can meet virtually. We can meet in person. I can send resources. So anytime. The next thing I do are workshops and I'll talk about our upcoming ones in a minute. I have the workshop flyers in the back. So please feel free to take all the materials. Oh, and then I'm sorry. And then the last thing I do are referrals. So if

[00:43:24] you have, I need maybe a disability friendly activity for my child after school, I can give you some resources. So that's basically what I do in a nutshell. And these are my upcoming events.

[00:43:40] The first one is on Monday, this coming Monday, and it's, we're mandated to provide a child find mandate. So this is really geared towards pediatrician, daycare centers, and homeschool parents to let them know what Child Find is about. The next one is diploma options. We usually do this in the spring, but we're doing it in October this year. And the really exciting thing that I wanted to point out is this is going to be a virtual. The one on Monday will be here in person at the admin building. The one in October for diploma options is a virtual, and we had much

[00:44:20] success last year with doing virtual workshops so we're going to continue that into this year but what we're going to do is we're going to do an in-person follow-up the following week at Douglas so you go home and and you're overwhelmed by all the information and you think about it and it's like no there's just one more thing that I really need clarification on you're more than welcome to come the following week and see the presenters in person and ask your questions. So that will be for most workshops that we offer this year. There will be a follow-up

[00:44:56] session the following week. And then this is how you contact me. If you don't follow us on Facebook or Twitter, I really strongly encourage you to because not only do I put our workshop flyers, but I put community events. In the back, Pete C. is having a what is an IEP in 504 and a great session next week at Woodgrove High School. So that's posted on our Facebook page and our Twitter and I have the hard copy of the flyers. And then our website, I don't have a mouse so I don't know

[00:45:35] if I'm going to be able to do this. I don't do well with not having a mouse. I really just kind wanted to go to our website and just point out a couple of things to you if you've never seen it. So if you look at the top, there's a 2026-2027 workshop. And if you click on that, that is just a quick and easy way to see all the lists of the workshops that we're having this school year. And it links directly to the registration. All the registration are live for the whole school year.

[00:46:05] So if you want to register for Kindergarten Connection, which is always very popular, yes, Lori, you can register for today. Now I've got to go back. I apologize. And then this button, the Workshops and Events button, that lists the most immediate workshops coming up.

[00:46:29] And it gives a full description of what those workshops entail. So it's just the flyer that you would see. But it gives the description and more information. And then the other thing that I'm responsible for is I maintain the tutor list of LCPS employees.

[00:46:47] And I don't know how to go back, so I apologize. Technology is, oh, thank you. Here? Sorry. Right there? Oh, thank you.

[00:47:05] Thank you, thank you, thank you. I can just go here, and then I can go back. I'm a dinosaur, so, you know, technology is not my thing. I need the E thing. And then I maintain the tutoring list of LCPS employees, and we transformed it about four years ago into a searchable database.

[00:47:30] Before, it was just an Excel spreadsheet that you had to kind of wade through. But this is for teachers that want to tutor after school. There is a fee involved, and you would negotiate fee and times with a tutor. but it has a list of subject matters areas that they live in and you can put in your criteria and it will pop up with a list of tutors and then the last thing that I wanted to point out was I make

[00:48:04] sure that every workshop that we have is listed so this these are current workshops there's nothing in the list now because we haven't had any workshops, but on Tuesday, we will have the Child by Mandate workshop under special ed presentation. So if you miss a workshop, if it's virtual and I've

recorded it, not only will the PowerPoint be there, but the recording will be there. And then when the mental health series, the mental health conference, and I also post the SEAC meeting. So they're on the SEAC website, but they're also on my website. So that is kind of what Family Resource Services is in a nutshell.

[00:48:42] If you have any questions, concerns, just want to reach out, please feel free to call me. And let's see if I can get back to, I'm not going to be able to get back. So, oh yes, thank you.

[00:49:05] Oh my goodness. Thank you all for supporting me. I feel very appreciative. So, like I said, I'm at Douglas. My email address, my phone number, please get in touch with me. I'm happy to help. Thank you. Thank you so much. And now let's bring

[00:49:30] up Ms. Bridget Corey. I'm so excited to be here tonight. And I have the privilege of doing connection, which is just so important. With the foundation that we did last year, we are just going to continue to grow this year together. And we know that there's so many different expertise and perspectives in this room, and we want to continue to celebrate those.

[00:50:05] So we also have that common goal of we want to celebrate what our kiddos can do, and I am passionate about that. So tonight we're going to get a little active. Yes, there is dancing if you'd like to. I know I'm looking at some of your faces, and I'm realizing that that might not be where you want to go but we are going to connect through music so just so you are aware we are going to listen to a song and we for each song you are going to go around now for all of you

[00:50:38] chatty Cathy's you only get one word okay you're gonna read the prompt I know I know who I was looking at and we have one word you're going to read the prompt you're going to give one word this is then as a group your table is going to come up with the word you agree upon and put it down on a piece of the um cardboard the cardboard what is it notebook no cards look i can't remember

[00:51:06] today so that is the challenge that we have so our first song you're gonna see see are you ready and i'll make sure this works i practiced before can you guys hear it digging is allowed too

[00:51:37] There's some footpath, and I see it, like Nakia, and you don't want me to.

[00:52:41] What is one simple thing we can do to better support one another? You get one word, go around, and then as a group, you're going to decide what you're going to put in your card. You have about three minutes. Three. I know, but we needed to give time at the most.

[00:53:57] I know, I could use the time around here. I know. I know. Hey, guys, about one minute. Is everybody ready? Everybody has it.

[00:54:13] One word down. Okay, song number two.

[00:54:25] Gosh, you might listen to this one longer.

[00:54:57] Come on, let me hear you. See, in our students, that deserves to be celebrated.

[00:55:21] One word, one word, and then as a table group, decide.

[00:55:42] You got them too? Good. I got them too. Yeah, we're good.

[00:56:06] That's why. If you're good, thumbs up.

[00:56:28] Thumbs up. Okay, we're moving. Song number three.

[00:57:28] Okay, guys, what is one thing we can do better to make sure our students' voices are heard.

[00:57:46] They're cheating. They said more than one word. I heard it. We have to just explain what we mean by this one word. I'm teasing, I'm teasing. You guys are good at this.

[00:58:07] Yeah, okay, we got the third word. Okay, last but not least.

[00:58:22] Okay, well, really I should have framed the question a little bit different

[00:59:13] because this is going to be the best year. So what is one word we want every student, every family member, and every staff member to feel? Guys, did you go around? Okay. Well, we might even have time for our last activity, guys, because you are really good.

[00:59:31] Okay, look at your four words. Okay? Right. Look at your four words. What I'd like for you guys to do is to look at the first, the word that you feel is the most important and we'll share out right now tonight.

[00:59:48] And if you think about it, what we are looking at is supporting one another, right? Leaning on me, leaning on each other, making sure we are all there. And we believe there's so much capability in our children.

[01:00:04] And last, we want to give a voice because we do such amazing advocacy for them. And we are going to celebrate for sure this year because there are so many great things going on. So let's share some of the things you would like to do.

[01:00:19] So let's do what I'm going to pick a group, if you don't volunteer, because I am that person who voluntolds people. So who would like to share the words? Oh, thank you. Can you share all of them, because they're kind of fun?

[01:00:37] I think that's great. All right. So for the first one, uplift. For the second one, perseverance. For the third one, wait time, which is super important. Which I didn't give any of. I wrote it as one.

[01:00:55] It's one word. The other way it was be quiet. It's also two words. But we have to be quiet in order for them to speak or think, and then valued.

[01:01:11] Perfect. Another table I'd like to share. So we've said that our word was belong, belonging, because in order to listen and feel heard, you have to feel a sense of belonging, and also to put in some grit and have opportunities to engage, you need to belong.

[01:01:44] Yes, thank you, Jess, because you were going to be called on. So we had lots of words that I'm going to share out from our group, but I think our overarching favorite word, and correct me if I'm wrong, was love. Because we just want everybody to feel loved at school.

[01:02:03] But for question number one, empathize. I didn't follow directions for number two, but humor, because I think it's important to laugh. Number three, advocate. And four, love. Yep. Thank you, guys.

[01:02:23] Kara looks ready to do that. Hi, friends. Okay, Byron looks more ready. Okay, I'll try to one-up you a little bit. So our overarching word was belonging.

[01:02:42] I think we've heard that throughout, right? And we felt like if we have everyone feel like they belong, then we can accomplish the other words we came up with, which is building relationships overall

through listening. We recognize that students are very resilient, Even though we think we're the resilient ones, they come to school every day, ready to go, despite what they may have to overcome.

[01:03:08] Another thing we heard about, talked about is we have ask, meaning ask students what they want, talk with them, see what they would suggest or to get their student voice. Those are our four. Thank you.

[01:03:25] I think the table over there would love to share where Ashley is. So, Jess, we also had a lot of words as well, and some of our words were similar to yours, Jess, but our overarching one was grace, and then we also had resilience, self-advocacy, and honor to honor, similar to what you were saying, Byron, honor what our students want and what they're going through and doing, so.

[01:03:55] - Wonderful. Any other tables you'd like to share? Oh, right here? - Okay. - Wonderful. - I'm back in. - Maria? - It's my first meeting. I didn't know I was gonna get to share my goodness.

[01:04:11] so for the first one we had listen the second we had resilience we really liked our third word which was amplify and then last we had included thank you so we did not follow the rules were you talking to I was going to say and Lucy were you talking to okay so we our first one was

[01:04:47] be present then we said um honor communication attempts thank you exactly i told you we didn't follow the rules i know um perseverance and our last word was um valued valued okay so um i think we were in agreement we really loved every one of these we had understand as our first word perseverance as our second word listen and then the last one was for the best year would be

[01:05:24] confident yes super thank you all so much please we're going to collect the cards so we will have another activity and you have homework because again a long time educator we have to give homework we were we are going to be developing an anthem for this year that we are going to develop together so some of these words are going to be part of that so let's i'm going to collect them and next time we're going to take these words and we're going to get them. And then eventually we have some very talented supervisors who have a musical background and I'm not one of them. So we are

[01:06:04] going to put it to music and then hopefully we will hear our own song together. So thank you very

[01:06:09] much. And I'm so excited to be here for this wonderful night. Well, let's go ahead and take

[01:06:45] a quick break. What do we say about five minutes? Get back here at 7 20 and go ahead and get started

[01:13:01] into the business portion of our meeting. Jen's here. I know. Okay, let's go ahead and get started with the business portion of the meeting.

[01:13:23] At this point in time, there is a QR code posted once again. If you have not scanned the QR code, please do so at this time.

[01:14:05] All right, and this is just an overview of the agenda. The agenda is also in the back if anybody would like a hard copy of it. All right, so SEAC is state mandated and our role is to advise the local school division of needs in the education of students with disabilities, participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of students with disabilities, submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of students with disabilities in the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board,

[01:14:43] assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of students with disabilities for educational services, review the policies and procedures for the provisions of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board, and participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan.

[01:15:06] And since this is the first meeting, I write it all for you guys. At this time, I would like to go ahead and introduce our SEAC officers and liaisons. So, again, I'm Erin Rosalpo. I am your chair. We have our SEAC Vice Chair of Planning, Laura Colossi, who's also the one responsible for the goodies.

[01:15:29] Our SEAC Vice Chair of Membership, Tom Ketchum. Our SEAC Vice Chair of Communications, Marsha Kelly. She is not here right now. She's at a back-to-school event, but she does send her regards. Our SEAC Secretary, Katie Rosenbrook.

[01:15:47] And, of course, our past chair, Shanaz Khan. our SEAC liaisons, the Director of Special Education, Nakia Purnell, School Board Liaison, Carrie LaBelle, and our School Board Liaison Alternate, Ms. April Chandler.

[01:16:07] So at this time, I'd like to go ahead and admit our virtual attendees. Do I have a motion? All in favor? Okay.

[01:16:24] Our virtual attendees are approved. Our June meeting minutes were sent out by Marsha a few days ago. I hope everybody had a chance to review them and everything looked good for everybody. So if we are good, do I have a motion to approve the June meeting minutes?

[01:16:44] Second. All in favor? Okay. Now we are going to go ahead and meet our SEAC members. And so at this time, I'm going to turn it over to Tom. We can do a roll call while we introduce people.

[01:17:02] So we're going to do a roll call, but instead of just present, if you would just do a quick introduction of yourself and try to keep it relatively short. Carrie Adams, we're going to bring you the mic too.

[01:17:24] Sorry, stuffing my face from Laura's delicious treats. I'm Carrie Adams. I am the mom of a third grader at Little River and also a three and a half year old. This is my second year as a member of SEAC, but I did some volunteer work with that before I became a member and was very active in getting the playground initiative for our kiddos in LCPS.

[01:17:52] Elizabeth Crotty, who was here. All right, we'll call her back. Jen DiDonato who is virtual. Jen DiDonato. I've been a CF member for four years here. I have a seventh grade son in LCPS who has an IEP and has some disabilities. Excited to continue to make some differences around here and I think that's all you mean right? I'm usually a lot louder. I

[01:18:29] wish I could be there in person. I have some health things but I'm going to be back next month pause and interrupt you uh marcia kelly of course is not here at the moment so tom oh marcia kelly is here no oh liz is back all right liz it's your turn hi guys um my name is liz crotty um i am now no role except for a voting member which is fantastic um i've got three kids um with iep

[01:19:04] So I have been on this journey for a while, but I love getting to know all of the other parents and all of the staff and working with you all. And I am now a special education teacher in my second year. And I teach kids with multiple disabilities, which is absolutely my heart and my passion.

[01:19:29] So it's really nice to meet you. See you all. And I am Tom Ketchum. So serving as the vice chair of membership. I've been here on the committee, I think this is my fifth year. I have four twice-exceptional children, one who graduated college, one who is in college, one who is in high school, one who is in middle school.

[01:19:51] So I don't have any more in elementary school anymore, but we've got to cover the gambit otherwise. Shanaz Khan. I'm Shanaz. I'm the SEAC Pass Chair. I have one left in LCPS, two are college and beyond.

[01:20:11] He's a junior at Rockridge. So, yep, I'm excited to kick off this year. Rosina Katak. I'm Rosina Katak.

[01:20:29] I have been a SEAC member. I think we're on double digits now. I can't remember. That's been so long. I have four children in LCPS. One is about to leave, two with IEPs, and I just bother all the other SEAC members.

[01:20:48] I am the co-chair of the transition committee with Stephen here. Laura Colossi. Okay. Hi, I'm Laura Colossi, your resident SEAC Baker. I have two kids in LCPS. I have a kindergartner and a second grader. Second grader is the one with a disability. I'm really looking

[01:21:16] forward to the year ahead. Mary McClintock. Alicia McFadden. Hi, I'm Alicia McFadden. I think this is my third or fourth year on SEAC. I am a speech pathologist and the owner of CSDC Therapies in

[01:21:45] Ashburn. Craig Metz. Hello, everyone. I'm Craig Metz. I'm a parent of three students with disabilities. I don't even know how long I've been doing this. That's not a good sign, is it? But I am also the co-chair of the Policy and Compliance Subcommittee. Stephen Meyer. Hi, everybody. I'm a retired LCPS

[01:22:21] teacher. I taught pre-algebra to students with disabilities at Harper Park. And I retired three years ago, and I heard Dr. Grubbs, I'm sorry, I heard Dr. Spence in his listening sessions say that he wanted to create CTE and pathways for everybody. And I said, that's something my students don't have? How can I get involved? And his office said, join SEAC. So I did. So I'm SEAC's representative

[01:22:57] to Dr. Grubb's programs to expand CTE for all of our kids, including in the transition program and outside it. I'm co-chair of the transition committee. And thank you all. Catherine Moran.

[01:23:18] Hi, I'm Catherine Moran. I am a mom first, always. Our youngest graduated from Riverside, or exited, I should say, last year. So we're in our first year full-fledged adulting.

[01:23:44] Yeah, this is my fourth or fifth year with SEAC here. I did chair another counties for about eight years um and my sixth year is a cast teacher former project search teacher and former middle school transition fun stuff so i love being here i love seeing what's happening i love being part

[01:24:08] of the conversation so excited kelly ralston who is virtual i want to say it again kelly are you with us you might be muted or maybe away from her desk uh erin rizalpo i'm erin rizalpo i'm your

[01:24:41] current SEAC chair. I think this is actually my third year on the EC committee. My oldest is 20, if that tells you anything. He has his plethora of disabilities, and my youngest is a sophomore over at Briarwoods with an IEP as well. I don't know. I just truly appreciate this community, people coming together with their different stories, and then also just the true collaboration that I do see happening within families and LCPS, so.

[01:25:13] Catherine Rosenbrook. I'm Katie Rosenbrook. I am a special education teacher, and I am, been on the committee, I think this is year eight or nine, and that's me.

[01:25:33] I don't have any kids in the system. I'm just your token teacher. She's also our rock star secretary for so many years, and she's like, I don't know, I appreciate everything you've been doing. Melissa Waugh. Hello, everyone. I am Melissa Waugh. I am the parent of two Broad Run High School graduates, and they both had IEPs, but although my kids have matriculated on, I also am a special

[01:26:12] education attorney representing families in Loudoun County Public Schools, which is why I get to stay on board and have fun with you guys, so that's me. Thanks. Sakina Zarbush. Oh, she's done. Oh, okay.

[01:26:33] and kelly it looks like you may have rejoined yeah i'm sorry my microphone wasn't working i had to log back in um i'm kelly i have three kids my youngest is uh nine and is twice exceptional and i've really enjoyed my couple years on this um committee learning a lot from everyone so that's our current roster we do have some uh available positions in the voting members of seac so there is uh some information on the back table as well as on the website and how to apply we do have a

[01:27:13] couple of applications that we're considering but if you're interested in serving as part of SEAC would strongly encourage you to apply because we never know sometimes when some of those positions will open uh I would also just cover that last bullet point we are starting this year with the vast majority of our schools having confirmed SEAC reps which is great we're looking to confirm the rest of those, which we'll hopefully do in the next month. Okay, so on to public comment. So, SEAC uses public feedback to inform our work and to advise school board on special education needs.

[01:27:52] We focus on system-wide issues rather than individual concerns or specific situations. Please do not use a student or staff's name. Verbal comment may be given. Please complete and submit the comment form tonight. Make sure you follow up with our SEAC secretary with your written comment and the written comment may be read either by the author or myself, SEAC Chair, and we ask that you limit your remarks to three minutes, but I do not believe we have any public comment tonight.

[01:28:20] Okay, so I'm going to make this short and sweet, since I know we do have a little bit of a discussion for policy, but updates for SEAC. Right now, we are going to be discussing our advocacy needs this year.

[01:28:39] My goal is to have those finalized and a game plan set that we'll be pushing out to our SEAC body. And again, to echo the sentiments of Dr. Spence and everybody else this evening, it takes all of us advocating the same message, the same purpose.

[01:28:56] So please, please be on the lookout for that email when it comes out. Again, I'm hopefully going to be having it to our SEAC body within the next week or two. Our SEAC priorities still remain similar to what they were at the end of last year.

[01:29:12] So, yes, this is the year where the new cut scores for those SOLs start. And I know there is a little trepidation in the community about what that's going to mean. So, we are going to make sure that everybody is in the now about that. Disciplined data, specifically the MDR components of it, that continues to be flagged on SEAC's radar.

[01:29:34] bullying, we still get reports of that from all grade levels, K through 12. Of course, our reading and math interventions is still a hot topic. And of course, the transition center. And now we're going to go into our Did You Know? I'm going to have Melissa Waugh come up. Whoops. Oh, you guys get double dose of me tonight. Sorry. But I was asked to do a little quickie presentation for Did

[01:30:13] You Know? on what that, Did You Know? that accommodations and modifications apply to VHSL athletic and academic teams uh let's see okay and uh under both the idea and section 504 school districts must provide students with an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and non-academic services the idea regulations mandate quote each public agency must take steps, including the provision of supplementary aids and services determined appropriate and

[01:30:52] necessary by the child's IEP team. Note, not the coaches. It's the child's IEP team to provide non-academic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities and non-academic and extracurricular services and activities may include athletics.

[01:31:20] Additionally, the IEP must include any supplementary aids and services that the student will need to participate in an activity should the student choose to do so. For example, providing a sign language interpreter for a cheerleader who is hearing impaired. This would be reflected in the accommodations and services sections of LCPS's IEPs.

[01:31:41] And so I did a little snippet there. I know these IEPs are really long, sometimes 30, 40 pages, we may not all be reading every single little word, so I just wanted to highlight this part, but this is a standard language in all the LCPS IEPs, this particular section is on the accommodations page, and I just want to point out the part that accommodations or modifications provide access to non-academic and extracurricular activities, it says it right there on our IEPs, and educationally related settings. Accommodations, however, and modifications based solely on the potential to

[01:32:16] enhance performance beyond providing equal access are inappropriate. So while the law provides our kiddos with this opportunity for equal opportunity to participate, there are limitations to this and I'll provide a little more detail on that in a second. The second part of the IEP where we talk about non-academic and extracurricular services and whether they're required or not is in the services section of the IEP and it looks like this. Unfortunately I got a bad example because it said no. I just realized like oh I guess I should have said yes I got a bad example but

[01:32:50] anyway. Oops let me go back. So for students that have a section 504 plan but no IEP the 504 team does not have to meet with the student when a student wants to participate in athletics the coaches and so for that's different right under IDEA with IEPs is the IEP team that decides the accommodations all right but for our section 504 kiddos for example the coaches could simply consult with the student or the student's parents or the student's teachers to determine what reasonable

[01:33:26] accommodations are necessary for an equal opportunity to participate however keep in mind that Section 504 and its regulations also apply to students with an IEP, right? So think of the old Venn diagram, right, where you got the big circle is 504 and then a little circle inside of it is IEP, right? So our IEP students are still covered by Section 504. And those regulations state that a recipient that operates or sponsors interscholastic, which would be VHSL, club or intramural athletics shall provide to qualified handicapped students an equal opportunity for

[01:34:01] participation and the office of civil rights has opined that this right of equal opportunity does not mean every student with a disability has a right to be on an athletic team and it does not mean that school districts must create separate or different activities just for students with disabilities such as unified sports teams but if they do create like we do thank you thank you LCPS that we have unified sports teams here, but they do have to provide them with the same supports and services that they provide to other athletic teams. OCR went on to state some students

[01:34:36] with disabilities may be able to participate in an athletic activity without the need for any intervention or action by the school district. For other students with disabilities, in order to ensure equal access, the school district must make an individualized inquiry to determine if reasonable modifications can be made or aids and services be provided to that student that would allow those students an equal opportunity for participation. And here's some examples. They're the best. Examples of such modifications and aids and services include using a light along with a

[01:35:11] starter pistol so that a deaf runner can compete and assisting with the administration of needed medicine like insulin so a student with diabetes can take part in an after-school gymnastics club. As we've said before, OCR, providing this equal opportunity does not mean compromising student safety, does not mean changing the nature of selective teams.

[01:35:36] In other words, students with disabilities have to compete with everyone else and legitimately earn their place on the team. It does not mean giving a student with a disability an unfair advantage over other competitors or changing the essential elements that affect the fundamental nature of the game.

[01:35:55] So, districts must provide reasonable modifications that are necessary to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in athletic programs. However, districts may deny participation in an athletic program when the district shows the modification would represent a fundamental alteration to that athletic program.

[01:36:16] And the example OCR gives, which I thought was kind of funny, was such as adding an extra base in baseball. Okay, they don't have to do that. That's not required. Under Section 504, districts and school athletic associations, like the HSL, must ensure students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.

[01:36:34] However, state athletic associations are not required to modify qualification standards for competitions if the requested modification would fundamentally alter, you've heard me say that multiple times today, the essential nature of the event. This means that an association has no obligation to set different qualification standards for students with disabilities so that they can compete in those events.

[01:36:58] And for those of you who don't know, the Virginia High School League, or VHSL, maintains eligibility and standards for play in 27 sports, 14 for girls, 13 for boys, and in 12 academic activities like robotics and debate.

[01:37:14] And these provisions or requirements for equal access to be able to participate apply to all of those. And if you want more information, VHSL, they have a handbook on their website. There are not a lot of exceptions that are in that handbook, but one of them is there is a requirement to be able to participate in VHSL sports or activities.

[01:37:36] The student must have passed five subjects used for graduation in the preceding semester, but it does provide an exception in their handbook if that previous semester the student was confined for

illness. There's also exceptions for students whose IEP requires them to take something other than five classes, which we know that happens.

[01:37:54] So there are some exceptions within the handbook itself, but not a lot. And so if you run across concerns for your student about whether they are being given equal access to participate in a sport, what VHSL recommends is that you go first to the coach of the team and explain the situation.

[01:38:13] I did notice, correct me if I'm wrong, that we have this Office of Athletics and Student Activities. That would probably be a pretty good second step here in LCPS on where to go if you have questions or concerns. All right. Thanks, guys.

[01:38:35] Okay. Our SEAC subcommittees, policy and compliance. I think we are a TBD for our next meeting date. Meetingful inclusion, they are going to be meeting the third Wednesday of the month, 6.30 p.m. virtually.

[01:38:54] Specialized reading and math, we are actually meeting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. virtually, right? Okay. And then transition is in person September 30th at 10 a.m. So next month we'll have some quick little updates for you. Oh, really quickly before I forget, there was an email sent out and I've gotten some responses, but if you as SEAC members can just let me know which subcommittee you're going to be supporting this year, I would greatly appreciate it.

[01:39:27] And then again, to reiterate some of the live training that Leanne was so kind to share with us, this one is through PEATC, September 19th, 2026, from 8 to 11. You can go to PEATC's website and register right there. And then again, here is the one that's happening next week here locally at Woodgrove High School, Cracking the Code, 504s and IEPs.

[01:39:48] Our next SEAC meeting will be back here October 7th at 6 p.m., and we are going to be discussing FOIA, both local and state, As well as we're going to have a great update from our state SEAC rec. And now I'm going to call our policy subcommittee to come back up.

[01:40:22] And I will take full responsibility for the oversight. But we do actually have a date and time for our next policy and compliance subcommittee. It's actually going to be Wednesday, September 31st at 6.30 p.m. These are done virtually. Oh, my gosh.

[01:40:39] Did I say 30th then? No, 30th. Thank you. So anyway, but we do encourage anyone to come and attend. They are long.

[01:40:55] I will warn you ahead of time. Make sure you've provided dinner for the kids and have child care. But they are very, very interesting. They're super substantive. And getting more ideas and perspectives into the mix is always a value. So please, even if you're not technically on the committee, it's open to the public.

[01:41:13] Anyone can come and attend these meetings. Okay, so let's get started. so the first uh four uh policies here um school division status school board norms protocols and violations sick leave and bereavement leave we did look at these as a committee and decided we had no recommendations to make to these um for those of you that are new to SEAC you may be like why is SEAC reviewing something about sick leave and bereavement leave um we do review all the policies that the school board is reviewing many of them do not have any

[01:41:50] applicability to students with disabilities in our community but you would be surprised how many that on the face of it do not so but these four we reviewed and said do not have anything applicable to our committee so our recommendation from the subcommittee is no recommendations so do you want to talk about or move on to a motion motion second could you at least tell us what

[01:42:18] the motion is please moved and seconded the motion is to adopt the policy subcommittee's recommendation of no recommendations for these four policies is there any further discussion hearing none all those voting members who uh please raise your hand and say i who wish to say aye aye opposed nay are there any abstentions uh who is jennifer i and kelly ralston i motion

[01:42:58] you hear it unanimously okay and so we only have one other policy but it is kind of a biggie for our community policy 8155 the out-of-zone school transfers we actually had several concerns with this one and a couple of recommendations so I think maybe should we go one concern at a time yeah please go ahead this one's going to be just a bit unusual and the reason is we have some things for which we have a concern we have a recommendation we're ready to go but there were some things for which we were looking for the answer, but the question we couldn't in the

[01:43:35] documents that we had quite find the answer we were looking for. So there is a concern coming out of the subcommittee that is really a question. And based on what answer comes forth to that question, we may decide that we want to make a recommendation or decide that we don't. But what we did not want to do is make a recommendation based on our assumption or interpretation of what it said we wanted to ask for some clarification so that's kind of a little unusual we haven't I don't believe we've worked that way before but in this case there were some things that were in the document for which it just wasn't clear what the answer was and so we figured that the best

[01:44:10] way to do it is to have an open discussion and ask. Okay so let's start with concern number one LCPS administration has identified instructional suitability that process as the preferred process for students with disabilities in unique circumstances.

[01:44:28] And while the administration stated these transfers will remain available for our kiddos, they have been removed in the proposed revisions to policy 8155. So our concern is that we keep a clear pathway for transfers when another school may better meet a student's academic, social, emotional, physical, or disability-related needs.

[01:44:51] So what we're recommending is pretty simple. Just don't delete it. if it ain't broke don't fix it uh so let's not delete paragraph b regarding instructional suitability from the original draft and there was a little bit of discussion of this last night at the school board meeting where someone asked where's instructional suitability and they said well it's actually now all throughout the document and from an editorial perspective if you look at the red lines that is kind of editorially true but in the editorial process the essential part we're interested in got lost and we have been told when we've discussed policy 8155 in the past we

[01:45:29] have been told repeatedly by lcps staff members that the instructional suitability kind of the core essential thing that is really important is its flexibility that it's it is the catch-all for all the weird cases that come and apply to our community of interest when we talk about special education, you hear the word all the time, individualized. Individualized is saying we are basically looking at all the rules and we are making special exceptions to the rule based on this individual circumstance. And that's kind of fundamentally in conflict with an idea of

[01:46:05] I'm going to enumerate the cases that are allowed and that's it. So the original instructional suitability was very vague, almost too vague. And in fact, sometimes we had given the feedback to the board we'd actually like some more definition it got revised in last year's 8155 and unfortunately some of the revisions were counter to that objective but when we go back to what it is we were trying to do here it's to have a process where we can simply say here is a unique weird situation let's ask the question is transferring the student re you know a reasonable and a timely

[01:46:44] solution for that particular situation and any time that we try to sit down and say these are the only allowed cases, we will have students with disabilities, with mental health concerns that will fall through those cracks there. And so maximum flexibility is the key to this recommendation.

[01:47:03] And the new language that was put into the draft, this social emotional adjustment, is in fact quite limiting. And it's this weird combination of the original instructional suitability plus some of the restrictions of special permission, plus some implementation language that appears to have come from Fairfax County public schools. And all of those constraints and all of those definitions end up working counter to the actual objective here. So because there's likely to be a bit of

[01:47:42] discussion on these, I would propose that we take these one concern slash recommendation at a time so we can open the floor to discussion in case. And again, for those who are new under the Robert's rules of order which we try loosely to operate under um is uh that you we can take amendments from the floor so if we got it wrong let us know if we forgot something important let us know um the bulk of our work is done in committee but the whole point of what why we do this and why we bring all this to you guys as a membership is because this we are speaking as a group not as individuals but as a group this is what our community believes and recommends also might

[01:48:21] add one more the sense we are getting is the school board wants to get this enacted and done and so one of the other reasons for this recommendation as it is is because it's easy to implement implementation wise to say let's just take this thing that's already in force and policy and let's just do that for this year while making the other changes that the board wants to do trying to get into the weeds of defining a whole new process whole cloth at this stage in where it appears the board wants to be doesn't appear to be consistent with the schedule the

[01:48:56] board wants to have so with that being said uh can i hear a motion to adopt the concern one and recommendation one for policy 8155 thank you second all right and we can open the floor to discussion now okay hearing none uh all those in favor of adopting concern one and recommendation one for policy 8155 say aye aye those opposed nay any abstentions all right jen

[01:49:35] aye kelly aye okay concern one recommendation one passes unanimously okay yep sorry um one quick point of order is just to explain for those who may not know this is the previous special permission policy that we used to have here in Loudoun County public schools it is now being called the out of zone school transfers which probably makes a lot more sense but um yeah just so people are clear what policy we're talking about okay thank you all right moving on uh concern number

[01:50:13] two the policy needs to specify how the appeal process works if the school board is not the entity to receive the appeal the appeal needs to be to a party independent from the party that made the initial decision to deny the transfer request so we're just asking for more clarity in how this appeal process actually plays out and let's make sure that it's not the fox guarding the hen house um you know that there

be somebody else um coming back that the families can appeal to besides the parties that made the initial decision so our recommendation then two is to keep the deleted

[01:50:50] language at line 157 uh to preserve the appeal process captured in policy 2350 this was a topic of some discussion at last night's school board meeting it does appear some of the members have Some of the members want to have the school board do it, some do not.

[01:51:13] There was a comment made by one board member that we trust our staff. And I think it was interesting because this is not an attack on the staff. This is not a we distrust the staff. And certainly the board has to trust the staff.

[01:51:31] That is not why we would advocate for appeal to the school board. I would give three reasons. The first is actually to help the board make informed decisions. When you sit on those appeals, you get to see how the policy-making decisions and the budget decisions and the methodological decisions you make play out in actual students' cases.

[01:51:56] And especially this next year, when we're going to make a pretty transformational change to the system, it will help the board in the almost, I don't want to say inevitable, but In the likely event of a revision a year from now, based on what we have learned, we would hope that that be an informed decision.

[01:52:18] The second reason is to avoid groupthink. For better or for worse, our school administrators, you know, they've spent their careers in schools. That is their perspective.

[01:52:33] And it's a valuable perspective, and I don't doubt their expertise. but sometimes when everybody on that committee has the exact same background that can lead to decision making that is not ideal and so the independent part is an independence of background and independence of perspective so that we just have a fresh pair of eyes on the problem looking at it a little bit differently and then I forgot off the top of my head what the third reason I was thinking of is i guess yeah well anyway um but all all very good points so um if i hear a

[01:53:12] motion to adopt concern to and recommendation to we can get to the discussion portion is there a motion thank you kate thank you all right and so now we're opening the floor to any discussion about concern to or recommendation to and you don't have to be a voting member to raise discussion by the

[01:53:36] way okay tell us what you really think um okay but hearing no discussion let's move it along so all those in favor of adopting concern two and recommendation two say aye aye um again the voting members uh not yeah that are opposed nay okay any abstentions jen aye kelly kelly aye

[01:54:15] great so concern two recommendation two passes unanimously moving on concern three um we had a question, what is meant by, quote, exhausted all school-based resources, end quote, at line 105 of paragraph C3B? And who makes the determination of when all resources have been exhausted? We are questioning, is there any ability to consider whether this is a time-sensitive situation that requires a transfer prior to all resources being exhausted? And, you know, our example is a heart-wrenching one but you know a student for example who's being bullied

[01:54:54] and is expressing suicidal ideations so that our committee decided would be an example of a time-sensitive situation and it just may not be appropriate that all event school-based resources be

exhausted before an out-of-zone school transfer could be made now arguably if instruction right thank you great minds think alike if the instructional suitability piece you know remains in that could be a viable alternative in that situation but again we just want to make sure that language in these policies don't have unintended consequences that could really be

[01:55:31] harmful not just for students with disabilities but for any student and then this quoted language creates a bar that is not well defined and that parents and school staff may not know what it means and would impede solving time sensitive problems so again we don't have a recommendation to go with this one um but it is a concern that we have with the language as as written sorry no please after the subcommittee meeting i found more information that is relevant the the language in the policy appears to be kind of the language from the currently enforced 8155's instructional

[01:56:11] suitability except it actually cites the regulation and the regulation actually does define what those things are. However, many of these things, there's an assumption inherent in this list of school-based resources that must be exhausted. These effectively address a mental health problem that has happened which is one but not all of the relevant circumstances leading to questions like if this is just not relevant to my circumstance, do we still have to go through all this? So this is

[01:56:47] probably something that could end up being a regulation implementation level detail, but it is something that we need to end up with a definition on because the highest level concern was if this is a barrier that has to be gotten over before action can be taken, people should know what the barrier is and the barrier should not be reasonable. Or it should be an unreasonable barrier um or irrelevant barrier uh you know one of the things we talked about in the subcommittee of you know what's an example that's not a mental health issue that might you know precipitate a need

[01:57:22] for a transfer to a different school um what if for example a student has very specific medical needs and a nurse to be able to meet those needs isn't available at that school and so the student would need to be transferred to another school but that has nothing to do with mental health And it's not the greatest example, but the point is there can certainly be other reasons, particularly for our population of students, where a transfer would be necessary and need to be timely that is not necessarily mental health related.

[01:57:53] And to get back to your example, for example, because this does happen. The bullying problem is a very real problem that we really need to be. This is one I hope that the board really wants to make sure that we're handling bullying right. When we get to the point where there is suicidal ideation, when we get to a point where a competent mental health professional, like a clinical psychologist, a licensed professional, has written that letter saying, this student has to get out of this school, and this student is in a mental health crisis.

[01:58:24] I mean, I don't understand why we don't just say, why don't we just do that and then come back and fix things later. The more hurdles we put between the requested resolution and the student child, the more we risk having a very bad outcome.

[01:58:40] Okay. So do I hear a motion to adopt concern number three from the policy and compliance subcommittee to policy 8155? Anyone want to make a motion? Anyone?

[01:58:57] Excellent. All right. So now we can open the floor to discussion. Is there any discussion, questions, concerns? yeah so um i think we're also identifying the fact that when you have that kind of

language in there it leads to uneven application of the policy more than anything or not i shouldn't say more than anything it's one of the many severe problems of that so since i had to not read the resource uh

[01:59:32] that you read craig should we make an amendment which would actually identify a recommendation to cite the language that better defines that?

[01:59:47] So that's a question to you. We could come up with a recommendation or we could leave it as a concern. And whatever the consensus of the group is, is fine. But there were some other pieces to this, and this is why the concern is what it is. Like, for example, who makes that decision?

[02:00:02] You know, if someone in administration just really, really wants you to check every single box before they're willing to make a transfer, that could be very different than someone in administration is saying, well, I'm going to interpret this in the way that's going to get the outcome we want. And, and so part of this does come down to implementation and, and that's where this does get hairy, but exhaust all school-based

[02:00:33] resources as wording. I don't think it sat real well. It just, yeah, it was a concern. Um, any other discussion, any discussion from the floor? I actually, if that's okay. Yeah. Can you hear me?

[02:00:49] Go ahead, Jen. Hey, I see you turn. You know, I just wanted to put, it's not just that, I mean, especially just for learning purposes, right? Like, my son has dyslexia, and it is a lot of effort and work for him to read and continue to go.

[02:01:06] And I don't want to wait an entire year before I, quote, unquote, exhaust all things, because it is so hard to make progress, let alone if you lose an entire year because of issues with academic suitability. So, you know, I think there is outside of mental health and outside of others, there are really real situations why we would not want to, I don't like that wording, right, either, exhaust all, you know, that just seems like too high of a bar.

[02:01:36] Right. And one of the other pieces of this discussion that came up was, is there a way to say, this isn't going to work? Is there a way to look at the situation and say, it is not reasonable to expect that this process is going to work and it's going to take a lot of time. In this particular set of circumstances, it just doesn't make sense.

[02:01:56] Yeah, and I know we didn't talk about a recommendation, but it just popped in my head. I mean, even something as simple as adding reasonably exhausted all school-based resources might actually just address our concern with just one word. You know, it's about reasonableness.

[02:02:15] If folks wouldn't mind, should I just read the list so you can get an idea of what the list looks like or you want to read? Is it long? I mean, I don't want to drop this out. Okay, but you know. Student support plan has been put in place and signed by all parties.

[02:02:31] Unified Mental Health Team has been notified prior to request, as appropriate, and a plan has been developed to address parent-guarding concerns. Parents' guardians provide evidence of social-emotional mental healthful safety or other expressed concern to include a letter from a certified mental health provider, if applicable, or other evidence justifying a relocation to the requested school.

[02:02:50] Conferences with school administration have been held and documented prior to the parent request to relocate. Other school-based alternatives have been discussed by the school-based team and the

parents, guardians, and/or students have been and implemented as appropriate, and a program is available to support the student at the requested school.

[02:03:10] So at the very least, there are several team meetings and processes that would have to be gone through, and at least as this is written, there's not a control gate where someone can say, is this reasonable given this unique circumstance? Which all kind of ties back to that first recommendation about wanting the system to be as flexible as possible because when we're talking about students with disabilities when we're talking about mental health it is all of these unusual situations that really do need to be looked at in the unique facts for that unique case so i would just add to clarify for everybody that

[02:03:48] didn't have the benefit of looking at the list as i just did so that's the list that did define what exhausted all school-based resources used to be defined as now it's not defined and so I think I would feel like we should offer an amendment to add a recommendation to define what that means. That is one possible approach. The other possible approach is to kind of look a different direction and ask, should there be, you know, should there be a list like this, or is the

[02:04:24] idea of a list that must be gone through, or, you know, perhaps like a decision tree that must be gone through, is it an inherent bad idea? And I'm not sure we know the answer to that. Folks, thoughts Yeah, well, so we could make recommendations in the alternative. I'm a lawyer. I'm used to arguing in the alternative. You know, so one recommendation could be that there is a better, I guess, more inclusive, beyond mental health issues definition of what these, all these school-based resources are.

[02:05:02] I think Craig makes a good argument that, again, we're boxing ourselves in. Now we're boxing ourselves in even more. And so an alternative recommendation could also be or add the word reasonably prior to the word exhausted, and that gives some flexibility to the staff, whoever it is.

[02:05:24] Again, we don't know who that is, but maybe if we identify who that is, that person would than have some discretion to determine what's applicable. 'Cause again, the things that Craig read, you guys could tell that really was mental health based. And there are definitely gonna be situations for our population of students that that's really not gonna be applicable.

[02:05:44] And those are a lot of steps and a lot of time and a lot of meetings to get through before we can give relief to a student. - Fully agree with exactly what you said, but I think even taking it a little bit further with reasonable, but also appropriateness, reasonable at the end of it reasonably exhausted all school-based resources where appropriate and even going as far to say and viewed on a case-by-case basis because then it's very broad allowing that you know so you're still getting that verbiage but you can come through you know

[02:06:23] my kid has physical disabilities and we are you know we do special permission or out of zone school transferring but it's you know a totally different situation than a mental health situation so I think by making that more broad each school and you know and it gives the parents that ability to say back like this isn't appropriate this is not reasonable for what my request is to kind of push back in that way just so reasonable and appropriate so a potential amendment would be to make a recommendation that we add the terms reasonable and appropriate prior to the word exhausted yeah

[02:06:59] or reasonably exhausted reasonable and appropriate it's great yeah and then even going to so far to say as viewed on a case-by-case basis, you know, and I'm, maybe that's too much, but just to give that, that leeway. What if we changed the word to exhaustive and made like reasonable efforts made to

explore alternatives, right? Like something like that. The word exhausted kind of is killing me too. Yeah. Jen, could you please repeat yourself? Um, it didn't come through very clearly.

[02:07:38] Sorry. I was just saying, what about another word other than exhausted? Like that word is giving me a bit of, you know, Ajana as well, like if we said, like, made reasonable efforts or reasonably explored alternatives or reasonably, right, I think there's other words other than exhausted that we might be able to use here to demonstrate that we're talking about, like, reasonable good faith efforts where appropriate, you know? I agree with you. Exhausted is a legal term, and it's basically saying you must do everything else first, and that, I think, is at its essence

[02:08:17] not what we want. But this kind of gets back to what do we recommend in that, you know, when we talked about special permission in the past, one of the things that we've brainstormed is trying to make the process a little bit more of a collaborative interaction with administration instead of a yes, no, to be able to come back and say, hey, have you tried X? And I wonder also whether an approach like that may be helpful here, that maybe it's, you know, you can apply, but they can come back and say, given the circumstances, we would like you to try this first. What do folks think

[02:08:57] about an approach like that? I would just raise again that without a list, it basically creates the space for all of the appeals that are going to happen. And all of the appeals are going to center around, well, was it exhausted? Was it appropriate? Was it reasonable? And all of those kind of loose words are the points, the friction points, on which most of those appeals will come.

[02:09:25] Right. And I'm hearing a consensus that exhausted is probably not where we want to be. Can someone offer alternative wording, or what would we do instead? What about, you said, made reasonable efforts to explore, alternative, and then you could put a list if you wanted something like that.

[02:09:52] Reasonably explore? Is that what it was? Well, I mean, explore may not be quite good enough here. I may be reasonably utilized or reasonably tried reasonable temp yes absolutely i just want to ask a question and i just wanted to ask a question and i don't know if we can get a response or not but

[02:10:24] in these situations is there another alternative other than this process thank you for your question shanaz i appreciate it um i think it's important to know that the internal process is staff we review every single request individually it's while yes policy guides our practice at the heart

[02:10:58] of what we do is students and so we don't take it lightly if a parent has reached out with concerns whether they have shared the appropriate documentation we reach out to make sure that our questions are answered we meet with parents we meet with principals we meet with teachers we meet with school leadership we make sure that we have done our due diligence because we don't take the changing of a student from one school to another especially when you're talking

[02:11:33] about after the school year has started lightly and so while yes the policy has this list we can center any and everything that is presented to us, and we do so thoughtfully. We take our time. Sometimes we go back to it multiple times before we make a final decision. We take the time again to process with other offices. We'll circle back with parents sometimes. Sometimes we have them come in and meet with us because information is not clear that has been presented. So anytime a

[02:12:09] parent raises a concern and it is brought forth to my department, which oversees 8155, which is currently school assignment, every situation is reviewed with a lens of thoughtfulness because at the heart of it, we're not only considering the concerns of the parent, we're looking at the impact to the

student. And that's for any student, not just students with disabilities, but any student whose parent has brought forth a concern about, I really would like to consider a change in school assignment because of these factors. We want to make sure that the transition for the student is

[02:12:48] smooth. We have to consider the social and emotional impact of it. We have to consider the transportation impact. We have to consider their siblings. We have to consider what activities they're involved in. We have to consider their peer connections. So we're not just sitting up on the fourth floor making decisions randomly and willy-nilly. We dig into student information to make our decisions and then follow up with clear communication to our families as to why

[02:13:24] something might be denied. And under the current policy, families also have the ability to appeal to the school board under 2350 thank you so this is why i love this setup because we can collaborate all together the bits and pieces of our community um so what you were describing tedder it sounded to me a lot like the instructional suitability of olden day of before right this policy is am i interpreting what you're saying correctly and then if so is kind of the idea behind this change and

[02:14:03] why that specific instructional suitability language was taken out is because the idea is to now make what used to be special permission that almost was by default, right? If there was room, you could move, and no one's judging or evaluating the importance of your choice to move your child, right? That was pretty much what we had before. So is the idea to make the entire policy really to function more like instructional suitability used to?

[02:14:30] exactly you will see in the newly proposed policy there's no time frame where you know special permission had that window for application and so truly the spirit of this entire policy which was the direction of the board back on december 16th 2025 was to do an overhaul that really made the entire policy feel like instructional suitability even under the current policy when we're considering an IS request. We're still asking for information because again, why isn't the question that we're

[02:15:07] asking ourselves, why aren't we really trying to dig in and repair a relationship or rebuild a relationship with our homeschool? So even under the current process, if you say it's for child care, we're going to look at that information. We're going to ask the questions. We have to figure out the impact to transportation, we have to factor in siblings, we have to factor in the impact to the actual student.

[02:15:35] If you say it's for social and emotional needs, we asked parents for the opportunity to speak to therapists and counselors because we really want to understand, could we possibly be doing more harm than good by supporting a request to change a school?

[02:15:52] Again, I go back to the statement that Mr. Dolson shared last evening, we believe in all 100 of our schools here in LCPS. And just like any relationship, because oftentimes it is a perception of something happened, I wasn't communicated with, maybe it's an anticipation of something that's gonna happen, why aren't we embracing and supporting our community in valuing their home schools?

[02:16:24] And I'm not here to say that sometimes we don't have extenuating circumstances, because we do. We do. We're humans, and sometimes folks make mistakes, and we need to work to correct that, and sometimes the way to do that is to consider a change in placement or change in school assignment.

[02:16:42] But at the heart of most of what crosses our desk on an annual basis, it is a perception or possibly the reality of a fractured relationship. It was an allegation of bullying that I didn't feel was addressed appropriately.

[02:17:02] But again, it goes back to a fractured relationship of did you work with the building principal? Did you work with the assistant principal? Have we sat down to really talk about how can we repair things at your home school so that your child stays in their community and in their feeder pattern with their community peers?

[02:17:25] Because regardless of whether we move your child or not, we still have to go back and work on the relationship. And all that sounds great. But it sounds like there's what you're describing is tons and tons and tons of discretion.

[02:17:44] And unfortunately, I take the part we're at right now, the way this is worded, that's taking away, in my humble opinion, your discretion. Because in your discretion, we may not need to do the 13 things that were listed or whatever it was, you know, in the previous special permission policy to define all school-based resources, what that meant.

[02:18:06] And so is that actually narrowing your discretion? Because now you're going to have to check boxes that may be irrelevant. And is that what we want? Sure. Just as Mrs. Adams described, right, you know, in her situation, some of those factors aren't relevant.

[02:18:23] So certainly we sort of scan through which are the factors that are relevant and which aren't. So I do feel like we still have that discretion and the ability to work collaboratively with families to figure out, have we exhausted all measures at the home school?

[02:18:40] And are you willing to go back and work on a relationship? In the interest of moving this discussion forward, there was a proposal on the floor that we add the words reasonable and appropriate school-based resources.

[02:18:56] Would adding those two make this more flexible enough that we think that it would be better? I think perhaps perfect is the enemy of good, but I think that we understand that there's a problem and I think there's an intent to add flexibility. Would those words get us to better?

[02:19:13] after the word put them after the word exhausted instead of exhausted all reasonable and appropriate school-based resources is there a general consensus that might get us where we wanted to be based on the discussion okay um after exhausted all okay so we would have a recommendation um three uh that we add the words um that after exhausted all we add the words reasonable and

[02:19:52] appropriate and then school-based resources so that's the that's what's on the table do we hear a motion to amend might be getting too deep and it's getting late yeah but I think this does address the concern yeah good work people okay so do we need a motion so we didn't have a base motion to amend yet did we correct we will have a motion as to adopt the Concern 3 and the Recommendation 3.

[02:20:28] All right, so we need a motion from the floor to adopt Concern 3 and new Recommendation 3. Well, we're in discussion on Concern 3. So now we need to amend, like I said, loose Robert's Rules of Order.

[02:20:51] Okay, so what's the final word? Someone's making a motion to do what? So I make a motion to amend the wording in Policy 8155 to add the words reasonable and appropriate after exhausted after the word uh all okay um any further discussion on the amendment hearing none all those in favor to the amendment say aye aye opposed nay

[02:21:31] any abstentions jen aye kelly aye okay the amendment passes unanimously and so now we need to vote on the whole thing or did that include? Yeah, so now we need to vote on adopting concern three with the newly amended recommendation three.

[02:21:53] All those in favor say aye. Aye. Opposed nay. Abstentions. Jen. Aye. Kelly. Aye. Okay, the last two should be pretty easy. Concern four, at paragraph C, line 61 to 63, we're concerned about the statement that a student may not apply to transfer for students who have not yet attended or set foot inside their future assigned school.

[02:22:22] First of all, as we talked about before, I'm worried that that is narrowing discretion in the process that Teter described for us. But what about an elementary student who was moved due to bullying, but is then forced to attend their zoned middle school with those same bullies the next year?

[02:22:41] So if they are required to set foot inside, there's no discretion to prevent that outcome. what if the problem that precipitated the transfer has to do with the cohort of students versus the particular school or the school staff and the problem follows the student as matriculating into primary schools? What happens when a family has had a negative overall experience at a school and a younger sibling is later assigned to attend that same school? So these are some concerns that have come up with within our community and have been raised before and so concern four is just really raising the concern is this really what we intend and does it have unintended consequences

[02:23:20] by requiring that the student has to have attended their new school before they can be moved to another school all right go ahead so we didn't propose a recommendation but now that i look at how we worded it it sure does lead pretty clearly to a recommendation doesn't it and certainly based on the previous discussion about flexibility do we want to make a recommendation to just ask the school board to strike the set foot inside which that was a discussion that did come up at the school board meeting yesterday it does sound like there's already some discussion on that point

[02:23:59] so delete that are you suggesting delete that whole sentence for students who have not yet attended or set foot inside their future assigned school that delete that that be the recommendation yeah okay uh do i uh let's see hold on we gotta okay let's just we're gonna cut to the chase uh Can I hear a motion to adopt, concern for, and new recommendation for, to delete the phrase for students who have not yet attended, quote, set foot inside, end quote, their future assigned school?

[02:24:40] I know. Thank you, Liz. Thank you. I was, we were just trying to save time. Sorry. But I know I love you.

[02:24:56] I went to spend the whole night with you. But that sounded weird. Just take that back. Anyway, whatever. So it's getting late. Oh, my gosh. We can do it either way. We can, yeah. So if you wanna keep your point of order, we will go back and make two motions or we can just move forward on this one.

[02:25:17] We'll do it that way. Okay, so we're going to make a, I need a motion to adopt concern four. Thank you, any discussion? All right, and we had discussion from the floor to add an amendment to our base motion to amend concern four to add a new recommendation four to strike the language for students who have not yet attended, quote, set foot inside, end quote, their future assigned school.

[02:25:47] Can I hear a motion, she made the base, we made a base motion, now we're making a motion to amend what came out of the committee to add the recommendation.

[02:26:03] To amend concern four to add a recommendation to strike that language. So we need a motion to amend. Okay, do I hear a second?

[02:26:21] Is there any discussion about the motion to amend our concern to add a recommendation to strike that language? This is where you can say, that's a stupid idea, no, we're not gonna do it.

[02:26:38] That entire quote, for students who have not yet attended, quote, set foot inside, end quote, their future assigned school, to strike that entire portion. And I would say in support of my motion, the reason to strike that, of course, is to just, again, give additional flexibility to staff. It doesn't need to be constrained in that way.

[02:26:55] They can decide that. Is there any positions contrary to that? Why that's not a good idea to strike that language. I know we've had a lot of discussion on this, so I do want to just say that I am a huge supporter of, people attending you know students attending their homeschool and then we're gonna have different situations that are very unique for our students and I am just gonna put this on record that I feel that our unique situations

[02:27:29] for our students never falls in this policy and so I feel like that this is not a policy while I you understand this this is a policy which was special permissions before I just feel like we have so many unique situations that there should be a separate process for our students who are going through the system who have these unique situations so I'm just going to put that out there on record because I've been saying it for many many years

[02:28:04] now this is not our the policy that our students should fall under so I just want to say yeah and I think there was such a great clarification that really this policy is an expansion of instructional suitability that's all about and meant as we've discussed for at least over a year now about flexibility and i think that's you know with both of these new recommendations we're trying to make this policy more flexible so it is appropriate for our kiddos in all of our unique and individualized situations that can be assessed with flexibility by administrative staff okay any

[02:28:42] other discussion about the amendment all right i'm hearing none all those in favor of adopting the amendment to add a recommendation to strike the language for students who have not yet attended quote set foot inside in quote their future assigned school say aye aye those that are opposed

[02:29:03] one okay any abstentions one two two abstentions okay jen aye kelly i'll abstain and the three abstentions okay i who's keeping the quorum is that does that pass with one opposition and three

[02:29:32] abstentions do we have enough note three kelly abstained do you sure you have every right to vote oh abstaining then so you're abstaining okay got it so we have four abstentions so did someone has

[02:30:01] to do the math for me because i don't even know how many people are here okay so it so it does pass okay so we're going to add the amendment all right and then we have to uh vote uh to accept concern was it three no sorry four uh we have to adopt concern four with the newly amended recommendation all those in favor say aye aye those opposed abstentions one two three four

[02:30:40] jen aye kelly abstain okay so same thing uh except we have five abstentions okay last one concern five at paragraph cb3 we are questioning why the term medical was deleted there are situations where a student may need to be moved we've talked about this before for medical reasons such a student

who needs a nurse in a school building or maybe the student needs to be closer to necessary private therapy that's not available in the stone school area so these are just

[02:31:18] some things that our committee had thought of and so again there's no recommendation that came out of committee but this concern to pass on about why that term medical was deleted uh what should we do that in discussion okay so do i hear a motion to adopt concern five second okay is there any discussion about this question or maybe an answer as to why medical was deleted um from the policy and maybe not that's okay no thank you

[02:31:55] for the question um medical was deleted after speaking with our student health services team we other than certainly there could be a circumstance where there's brand new carpet in a building and it flares someone's asthma response sure we would consider moving a student but outside of those very very minimal sort of opportunities that present themselves if a student needed a nurse we would make sure we assigned a registered nurse to that school location we wouldn't move the student to access a nurse.

[02:32:31] If a student, again, needed to be closer to, you said in the example was private therapy, that would still somewhat fall under our consideration of childcare, like how many days per week is this taking place?

[02:32:46] What sort of impact is that to the student? Does that impact their mental and physical well-being? So even with the removal of medical, we can still consider all of these circumstances. But again, we would focus on bringing the resources to the student in their home school instead of relocating the student unless there is truly an extenuating circumstances that a building is causing a student to be medically ill.

[02:33:23] Thank you. Sorry, I'm still writing. Okay. Any other discussion about concern five? Go ahead. Based on that answer, do we want to continue to raise this as a concern or did that resolve that concern?

[02:33:47] I think, in my opinion, I think that resolves it.

[02:33:58] I guess, you know, I understand and I appreciate the further definition of why it was removed. But as a parent of a very medically complex child, I feel like parents should have that ability to have that verbiage in there.

[02:34:15] And I don't necessarily understand why it would be removed when there are a few, like you said, there are very few, but those of us that feel that have that right and that need, that's eliminating it. So I don't understand if it is such a small population, and I know it is, you know, but there are medically complex kids in this county that I feel like having that ability to have that verbiage in there is important.

[02:34:45] So to me, it's almost kind of like a little dig that it's removed because I am the parent of a medically complex kid. So even if the staff's interpretation of this is that it's not needed because the other stuff takes care of that situation, what I am kind of hearing too, and based on the fact that we raise this concerns ourselves, is perhaps a parent who doesn't know that that's the staff's interpretation and is just plainly reading the policy would not know.

[02:35:17] and that might be why it might still be something we want to add back in not that we're really truly changing how staff will do things but we're also making sure that everybody understands and we see this with the school staff too we see that oftentimes the school staff don't know what all they can do with policy and then you know admin is like oh yeah we have a process for that so helping to communicate that

this is a way that that could depending on the unique circumstances be used. And my question would be what's the harm of leaving it in? Like what's the harm

[02:35:51] we're trying to prevent by taking it out? Staff did not recognize or identify any harm with leaving it in. We thought it provided clarity. At this point the newly proposed policy has been presented to the board as information and so truly you all are doing your due diligence to craft your recommendations and responses so that the school board can consider them when they go to take action on the policy on September 22nd.

[02:36:25] So you have two board members here now. I know that they will also, all nine will receive your written information and they can consider it. Staff don't have, we have not recognized any harm if the word medical remains.

[02:36:42] One thing is when we're making sure to write or redo the recommendation that our concern is very clear in writing that and probably need a little help in writing the concern that goes with the new recommendation now.

[02:37:00] Well, there's no recommendation, which was going to be the exact next question I was going to ask. Okay, well, I mean, if we are thinking of adding it back in or recommending that. Yeah, this is exactly what I was telling everybody about how we were going to ask some questions and get some clarifications and then discuss. And it does sound like we are moving towards a consensus that we would like to add a recommendation.

[02:37:20] All I'm saying is that if we do decide, then there should be a very, very clear concern to go with it. That is that though we understood that medically was taken out, here are the reasons why we really feel that it should be back in.

[02:37:37] So that it's clear to school board members. Yes. And Shanaz, how would you like to change this language? Well, I mean, so we asked the question, we got an answer, and then we had, there are situations, so I think, so right now, kind of how the concern stands, since we've received an answer, we could delete, you know, the question, but, you know, the concern is there are situations where a student may need to be moved for medical reasons, and so the recommendation would be leave the term medical in.

[02:38:11] It seems pretty simple to me. That's fine. That's fine. Okay. Okay. so uh can i hear a motion to amend concern five to add a recommendation that we leave the term that we delete at at the question and add a recommendation that the term medical be left in so moved so i'll make a motion that we remove line one of the concern and add a recommendation

[02:38:47] to keep the term medical in second anybody i can second that thank you uh is there any discussion hearing none all those in favor of amending concern five to delete that first bullet point and to add a new recommendation to leave the term medical in say aye aye opposed nay any abstentions

[02:39:15] Jen? Aye. Kelly? Aye. Okay and now we need to vote on the full package deal here to adopt concern five and newly with the deletion of the first bullet point and newly amended addition of a recommendation to leave the medical in. So all those in favor of adopting that say aye. Aye.

[02:39:47] oppose nay any abstentions okay so that full package pass also passes unanimously oh sorry jen sorry kelly aye thank you yeah so that was it i wanted to add one from the floor this is one i forgot to

ask on the subcommittee but it was discussed at the school board meeting yesterday and it is a question of differences of opinion among the school board but i think it actually

[02:40:25] very much affects our community of interest, and that is the provision with respect to renewals. So today, this has changed a few times. It used to be, I think a couple 8155s ago, middle school and high school students could simply renew and stay at the school they were assigned to, and I think maybe it was 5th to 6th, and then the current 8155 appears to be you can just renew.

[02:40:55] In microphones, it's starting again. I think the discussion, it was primarily between me and Mr. Pepper. My concern is if you can just renew without us taking a look at it, somebody could get in in second grade, go all the way through to high school.

[02:41:16] And it reminded me immediately of the lack of triennials. We get up to 11th grade and all of a sudden none of this stuff is appropriate because we haven't looked in all these years. so my thought and his last comment to me was um what if what if so you're suggesting we should do child find every year no i think that child find is your initial application if we were going to compare the two and that maybe because they could come in any time during the elementary years or middle school years or even high school years but whenever it's time for a transition to

[02:41:54] the next grade, perhaps we want to do a look-see to see how things are going. Is this working for you? Do we still need this as an accommodation? And it's for all students, not just special ed kids. I'm not talking about that. But any child that has been in that system, it might be they're getting therapy and maybe they don't need to be in this school anymore. Maybe they would like to be in their homeschool with their neighborhood friends but we need to at least take a look to see how it's working and that was my point so we're

[02:42:28] looking at fifth grade going to sixth grade and eighth grade going to ninth grade and that would be in addition to you know being able to renew at any point like 11th to 12th and staying in their homes in the school that they're in. So that would be what the discussion started to be about, but we had to stop.

[02:42:57] My read of the current policy draft is there is, in this new policy, only renewals for 11th and 12th graders. That is a very significant cutback from the current renewal regime. Ms. Chernoff had in her amendment, she added the other two transition points, elementary to middle and middle to high. And I think that that is a good thing. But again, before we make it automatic renewal, I think we should take a look at it just because I know from working with triennials that

[02:43:33] it can get buried. So that was what the discussion was about. And we haven't finished it yet. We're going to talk some more at the retreat. Right. So looking from the perspective of students with disabilities, an issue that we have run into over and over and over and over again is anytime there is a transition of the student from one team to the other. It's a big coordination effort, and it is often the case that there is some loss in that process. And so, in general, transitioning to

[02:44:06] another school is a bad thing for our community of interest. We've also talked, of course, a lot about the value of personal relationships, friendships, peer groups, etc. And one would hope, for example, if a student was moved due to a problem, and they are in a new school, and the problem is no longer happening that we would not be eager to put them back in the situation or the peer cohort in which it was happening so one approach that we could take would be to support one of the amendments that are kind of already being posted another would be to make our own

[02:44:44] recommendation so do we have a formal recommendation at this time considering we haven't voted on the transition part yet you know but i do think that we need to raise this concern at the least should we decide to add transition from you know fifth to sixth and eighth to nine and then make your recommendation that way in case it happens because we haven't done that yet well i i think since the big old hook is about to come out and take me and craig out um to the parking lot um i

[02:45:21] think we need to table this discussion i'm sorry craig but i think we need to table the discussion and just let it go right there. So I'm going to turn it over to Eric. Let me know what you decide. How's that? And the hook is taking us out. Thank you, guys. All right. Everybody, thank you for coming out. I know it's late.

[02:45:37] Thank you for hanging in there. We appreciate you. We'll see you next month. And if you're interested in joining us at EC, we are headed over to Clyde's.



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