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Loudoun County School Board, Student Services Committee Meeting, Wednesday, November 11, 2026

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- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): https://player.vimeo.com/video/1245703603?rel=0
- BoardDocs (School Board): https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon. It is 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11th, 2026, and I call this November meeting of the Student Services Committee to order. My name is John Pepper, school board member of the Dulles District, and I am the chair of this committee. And joining me today are Miss Carrie LaBelle of the Catoctin District and Miss April Chandler, school board chair also of the algonkian district we will begin this meeting with public comment of which there is none so we'll

[00:00:36] move directly to item 3.01 in our agenda which is the approval of the october 15th 2026 minutes of the student services committee meeting has everyone had the opportunity to review the minutes okay then i will take a motion miss chandler thank you chair pepper i move that the student services committee approve the october 15th 2026 meeting minutes i second that motion has been made by miss chandler and seconded by miss labelle is there any discussion seeing none all in favor of approving

[00:01:11] the minutes of the october 15th 2026 student services committee meeting please say aye aye that motion passes unanimously item four on our agenda as always is the powerpoint presentation placeholder for this meeting which means we will move to item five which is our action item tonight this was added late to our agenda based on what happened at the school board meeting last evening on this is item 5.01 it is revised policy 5170 on dependency prevention and education

[00:01:43] and i am going to entertain a motion before we go any further miss chandler I move that the Student Services Committee approve Policy 5170, Dependency Prevention and Education, and move it forward to the full school board.

[00:02:09] Is there a second? I second. Thank you. That motion has been properly moved and seconded. Before we go any further, I am going to let our Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. Richardson, explain the changes that were made to revise Policy 5170.

[00:02:27] Thank you, Chair Pepper. Appreciate that. So as you all are well aware, there were changes to state code that added time spent using on electronic devices such as computers and cell phones and smartphones that we need to indicate in policy their addictive nature and make sure that as a public school division we are providing education to our students.

[00:02:52] That then sort of led to the board really recognizing the previous title of substance use education no longer accurately fit. So staff do have a proposed name change before you from substance use education to dependency prevention and education.

[00:03:12] As Mr. Pepper has highlighted, as you know, the board, you all did have discussion last evening. Staff would like to reiterate that while the code language from 22.1-206 does contain the word abuse, it is noted that substance abuse in the field of mental health is increasingly viewed as stigmatizing language within the health care systems and behavioral health settings, and there is a growing movement to make sure that we're being thoughtful in

[00:03:46] using person-first non-stigmatizing language. So as discussed before the full board last evening, we are proposing that we substitute words like abuse and addiction with either use, misuse, or dependency. So I draw your attention to line five, where it previously said substance abuse. It now says substance use and conducive to learning. Then again on line 11, 12, sorry,

[00:04:21] line 12, we have removed and abuse, and it now reads to provide a curriculum and resources that emphasize substance use education and prevention of substance use, misuse, and dependency.

[00:04:37] And just as the copy was before the board last evening on line 27, you can see that we have removed substance abuse and replaced it with dependency. Thank you, Ms. Richardson. Committee members, do you have any comments?

[00:04:56] And before I say that, I have a series of questions I would like to ask, but I'm wondering if you have anything you'd like to start with. All right, Ms. Richardson, I'm going to ask this question, and I've got a series of amendments that I'd like to make to some of this language. But the first question is, on line 6, it starts on line 5, but it says on line 6 the word abuse.

[00:05:17] Would the word misuse make more sense instead of abuse in that slot? Staff would accept that amendment, yes. Okay, so let me begin with that. I move to change the word abuse on line 6 of the red line version to the word misuse.

[00:05:40] I second. Is there any discussion on that amendment? Seeing none, we will take a vote. All in favor of changing the word abuse on line six to the word misuse, please say aye. Aye.

[00:05:55] That motion passes unanimously. I'm going to jump ahead, okay? On line 15, I'm going to make a motion to remove the word underage before the words marijuana use.

[00:06:15] So the line would just read, to provide information and services for students regarding the public safety hazards and dangers associated with marijuana use. So rather than underage marijuana use, it's marijuana use in general, noting that there actually is no legal age of marijuana use.

[00:06:36] Okay, so I move on line 15 to remove the word underage before the words marijuana use. I wonder, are you leaving in the second one that says underage drinking? Yes, ma'am. Okay.

[00:06:53] I've put a motion on the floor. It does need to be seconded. Second. Thank you, Ms. Chandler. Any discussion on the removal of the word underage before marijuana use in line 15? Seeing none.

[00:07:09] All those in favor of removing the word underage before marijuana use in line 15, please say aye. Aye. That motion passes unanimously. My next motion. I move, and this is a little company, I move in line 20 to remove the words, to remove the word

[00:07:34] and before the term alternative nicotine products and remove the word gambling. If someone will second, I will happily speak to this. I second. Okay, you don't, so thank you for seconding the motion. Gambling does need to be in here according to state code. However, in section three, it is really truly it makes more sense that this is about if you read it the whole section three it

[00:08:13] says to educate students about the health and safety risks of using tobacco products nicotine vapor products alternative nicotine products and gambling so gambling doesn't fit with the other three i am purporting after making this change that i will make another motion to put gambling in its own separate section miss chandler um i appreciate um your perspective i i find myself though wondering if the most important clause in this section isn't addictive potential because i

[00:08:50] think that is really the idea that ties all of these issues together um so i mean just in terms of from a legal code perspective i mean you know we could have another section just related to gambling but for for me the underlying issue does seem to be the addictive potential is i and i appreciate your concern i will also note that the addictive potential thereof is is in the same stuff with drug use it is in the same stuff um as electronic devices so every section that talks

[00:09:24] about each thing has the addictive potential thereof so in and i i appreciate your perspective So in my mind, it's these things that go together and they depend to thereof, these things that go together and they depend to thereof, and these things that need to depend to thereof.

[00:09:41] Ms. LaBelle. I was going to create its own, I was going to give it its own section. Ms. Chandler. I'm really just trying to process, and then I'm starting to look now at Section 2, around Line 14, and wondering if we're going to parse it out in a certain way with 3, do we then, I mean, so here,

[00:10:11] We're talking about providing information and services for students regarding the public safety hazards and dangers associated with marijuana use, drinking, impaired driving, prescription, and synthetic. I don't know. I just somehow it feels like then there are going to be two sections that are about, well, types of substances.

[00:10:32] And I appreciate that you see gambling is different, right? But so then do we need to maybe make a section that's about, I mean, if it's something that we feel strongly enough that it needs to be parsed out and we're going to separate gambling because it's a different type of addictive potential, then do we need to mirror that throughout the rest of the policy?

[00:10:55] I'm just like trying to make sure we've got the right approach. Right. And I'm very torn. I'm very torn on this, right? I'm struggling with like, so for me, realistically, if I'm looking at what you're saying, I almost would put the tobacco and nicotine stuff up in two because those are substances, whereas gambling is this esoteric, it's an activity.

[00:11:22] Well, that's fascinating. Yeah, it's an activity. So then could I ask staff, is there some other, like perhaps we're really in the weeds here in this, we're into the semantics, but when I look at these types of addictions or, um, addictive potential, is there some difference in how the brain responds that would cause categorization or are there just addictive potential? And so then, I mean, it's just

[00:11:59] like a broad category. Thank you, Ms. Chandler, for that question. That is a great question. Um, So while I would say that your brain would respond differently to opioids and different substances, I think it's really, I draw you back to what you said, it's about the addictive potential.

[00:12:22] Staff would not be opposed if the committee did make the recommendation to group the items that are listed in the policy by substance versus those that are activities that could be addictive in nature. I can tell you that this policy was last before the full committee prior to two committees, right, two committees ago, fall of 2023, and we hadn't had any state code changes at that time.

[00:12:51] And so just to be very transparent, gambling was then added as a state code change. And so you see staff added it very quickly where we thought it would fit. And then most recently was the state code change of the addictive nature of electronic devices.

[00:13:09] And so that did get separated as its own item. So to rearrange the information that is in the policy, staff would be open to that. I'm curious. Chair Pepper, do you find that you might be agreeable to something that would categorize the substances together?

[00:13:33] And then, I mean, I haven't really wrestled with this very much to have decided on a category myself, but the non-substance type addictions, so could gambling go with time spent on computers, cell phones, and smart devices?

[00:13:54] I'd be amenable to that, Ms. LaBelle. I think that we just both, or several of us, agreed that gambling is an activity and certainly the time spent on computers are activities, so I think that gambling would fit better with that.

[00:14:13] I think that the tobacco products deserve their own category and that the hallucinogenic substances and drugs should have their own category. I think if you grouped it that way, that would make sense.

[00:14:29] Leave one alone, leave two alone and then put gambling down with computers and smart devices.

[00:14:52] I could see that. Thank you, Ms. LaBelle. I could be amenable to that change as well. I would also not be against putting the tobacco products with the drugs because they are, in my mind, it's substance abuse and then activity.

[00:15:11] The way I see it is the first group that we're talking about, alter perception, alter your mind. They're mind-altering things, whereas the tobacco is a health product, mostly. I see where you're coming from with that.

[00:15:30] I just wonder if we couldn't capture it in a more concise way. I mean, I do see that they are nicotine-related, but prescription medicine impaired, I mean, I don't know.

[00:15:58] I mean, it feels as if the categorization could be broad enough to make it simpler. So are we on a motion? I can't remember if I'm on a motion. Did I make a motion to move gambling? Okay, I'm going to withdraw that motion, okay?

[00:16:15] I will withdraw the motion to make life easier, and instead I'm going to make a new motion, okay? I am going to make a motion to make number two read as follows.

[00:16:28] It is going to say to provide information and services for students regarding the public safety hazards and dangers associated with marijuana use, underage drinking, impaired driving, prescription, synthetic, remove the comma after synthetic, and hallucinogenic drug use,

[00:16:56] the health and safety risks of using tobacco products, nicotine vapor products, and alternative nicotine products, and the addictive potential thereof.

[00:17:17] Would you accept a friendly? Yes. Please help me. Okay. So I move that we change at line 14 to provide information and services for students regarding the public safety hazards and dangers associated with marijuana use, underage drinking, impaired driving, prescription synthetic and hallucinogenic drug use, but taking the comma out. Did I get that?

[00:17:51] then after synthetic then yeah right hold on hold on hold on let miss chandler finish please okay tobacco products nicotine vapor products alternative nicotine products and then let the rest of the sentence read and the addictive potential thereof okay i wasn't sure about the education but yep i second that that is a friendly amendment i'd like to go back to the comma, if you will. Actually, that's a friendly, it's a friendly amendment, but it has not been

[00:18:28] seconded. So thank you, thank you, Ms. LeBell. But no one seconded the original amendment. So we're good. We're good. I'll second. Okay, perfect. Thank you. Yes, accepted as friendly. Ms. LeBell, let's talk about the comma. Well, let's talk about the comma. If you have more than three, generally, you have a long line and you put a comma in after the last one before the end.

[00:18:57] And I will tell you that Ms. Donoghue is... So I think... Peaky uni about comments. So it should be back. Yeah, I actually don't think this comma after synthetic should be there because it's a classification of two types of drugs.

[00:19:15] So we're separating all the independent clauses. I'm a believer in the Oxford comma, but this is not an Oxford comma. For those of you who are not on video, Mr. Dolson in the back, the English teacher, is fist-pumping me. So what you're saying is it's synthetic, hallucinogenic, that's a category to get it.

[00:19:34] It's a category. So why is the and in between them? Because technically in the first part, they, it was, I don't know. There we go. I think technically the first. Ms. Richardson. Synthetic drugs are man-made and hallucinogenic drugs naturally occur, yes.

[00:19:53] So it's synthetic and hallucinogenic, they go together, right? So both of those categories together. So we should not have had a comma after synthetic. All right, now we're clear. Any further discussion on the smooshing of these two together?

[00:20:11] Smooshing's a good word. I know, we're going to be doing here. Okay, all in favor of the change to combine those all into number two. please say aye. Aye. Okay, so that passes unanimously. I am then

going to go forward and am looking for an amendment from somebody on the committee, it could be me, about how to incorporate gambling into what will now be new number three. We'll make all the numbering at the end there. How to incorporate gambling into the new number three. Anyone have an idea on how

[00:20:50] we get gambling in there, knowing that the actual, the current sentence says to educate students about the time spent using electronic devices such as computers, cell phones, and other smart devices and the addictive potential thereof. If I may. Ms. LaBelle. I don't have a motion. I just have a thought.

[00:21:05] Okay. And then we can mush it or smush it as you please with or without a comma. We need to establish the fact that we're going to be talking about addictive activities such as.

[00:21:24] So in there somewhere. I appreciate it. I think I know where I'm going. Okay. That helps. All right. I'm going to make a motion. Good. I move to have the next section read to educate students about the addictive potential of gambling, time spent using electronic devices such as computers.

[00:21:53] sorry take that back to educate students about the addictive potential of gambling and the time spent using electronic devices such as computers cell phones and other smart devices i second the motion sounds good any discussion on that motion all in favor please say aye aye aye with that i have one more motion and it is just to renumber the sections so that um the section on um the one that we just

[00:22:32] did will now be section three and the last section that starts to establish support prevention intervention services will be number four may have a second second okay any discussion on the renumbering all in favor please say aye aye that passed unanimously we are now back to the main motion which is the passage of revised policy 5170 is there any further discussion on revised policy 5170 seeing none we will take a vote all in favor of sending revised policy 5170 back to the full

[00:23:09] school board please say aye aye aye aye that motion passes unanimously i thank you all for that uh fun exercise in grammar and stylistic policy writing we will now move to our information items there is only one information item on the agenda tonight it is 6.01 it is revised policy 8440 on student athlete sudden cardiac arrest and presenting this tonight is our director of student of Director of Athletics and Student Activities, Mr. Derek Ferry.

[00:23:43] Good evening. So obviously this policy is under review because of biannually, we must review it. And we noticed that there was a change in state code or a new code added under 22.1-271.9, which requires every public elementary and secondary school to develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan or an athletic emergency response plan.

[00:24:14] The plan must address the sudden cardiac arrest or other life-threatening occurrences on school grounds or during school-sponsored athletic practices, competitions, or events. So as we go on, you'll see the red line version, 17 through 39, starts addressing these.

[00:24:33] The next part that it also requires is to establish a cardiac emergency response team and procedures for activating the team, also coordinate emergency response procedures with local EMS protocols, conduct an annual practice drill, address AED placements and routine maintenance, which we've been doing for years, and ensure AEDs are clearly marked and accessible

[00:25:03] at all athletic events. This past year, we had to purchase a number of new AEDs to make sure that we could respond within three minutes of a cardiac emergency. So you will see several new AEDs as you walk around our high school athletic fields. Staff and training, the next part is the staff and training and communication and annual review. So require appropriate staff training and first

[00:25:35] aid, CPR and AED use. That is also a required licensing when you're a teacher up for renewal or establishing your teaching license for the first time disseminate the emergency response plan to relevant members of the school community that would include your ems team and review and revise each plan annually to ensure effectiveness and alignment with current best practices we will continue to collaborate with local ems providers to integrate the plan into the community's ems

[00:26:09] system the obviously the biggest change to this policy is the addition of the cardiac emergency response plan or the athletic emergency action plan currently we only offer athletics interscholastic or intramural at the secondary level we do have clubs and other activities that do happen at the elementary school level that would actually fall into this category as well i'm available for any

[00:26:41] questions? Committee members, are there any questions? So we will bring this policy back at our next meeting as an action item. Thank you, Mr. Ferry. All right. Next on our agenda are two discussion items. The first discussion item is on the December 17th, 2026 Student Services

[00:27:18] Committee meeting quorum. Ms. Richardson, please lead us off. Thank you, Chair Pepper. Yes, Historically, I would say the last several Decembers where the Student Services Committee has been scheduled to meet on the third Thursday of the month, we oftentimes have not had quorum because that is the Thursday just before the start of winter break.

[00:27:43] So staff just wanted to confirm with our current committee members that we are good to go for December 17th at 4.30. Or do we need to consider another date in December? Committee members, what is your availability on Thursday, December 17th?

[00:28:01] If there's any potential that we could have the meeting earlier, it might be useful. Okay. Ms. Chandler, allow me just a moment to check my, I have to check my schedule.

[00:28:17] That is the, hold on one second, Ms. LaBelle. December 17th, unfortunately for my work schedule, the earliest I can make it is 4 p.m. Are there any other, wait, I'm sorry.

[00:28:35] You know what? I need to remember I'm not sharing this meeting. Ms. Chandler. I'm sorry, everybody. Thank you, Chair Pepper. Would the committee be open to potentially meeting on another evening? I know, I don't know yet how I'm going to get my child home from college, and I might actually need to drive.

[00:28:58] Okay. So, yes, I, yes, there is, so, yes, Ms. LaBelle, there is also an IB celebration that evening. I will let the committee know, and this is very selfish of me, but I'm going to say this, is that I coach Scholastic Bowl in December and January, and that's when all of our matches are on Mondays and Wednesdays. And so it's a very short season, but it's a very tight season.

[00:29:31] And trying to get my other committee meetings in spreading around it, I am likely, I just, I'm trying to check 17 things at once here. I just replied to an email about another committee, so allow me.

[00:29:48] December 10th would be the other evening that would work for me. It's the Thursday before. I know there is likely also going to be an audit committee meeting that evening, but I would be able to on

December 10th, if needed, I could start that meeting as early as probably 2.30 or 3 p.m.

[00:30:13] if we wanted to go earlier, if the room is available. No, and there's also an attendance zone meeting that evening at 6.30. December 10th is going to be a big crowded meeting, which is fine.

[00:30:28] I'm happy to go early on that evening if needed. And the room is available. Why don't we just leave it? And if I have to participate remotely, I will. Okay. We will leave it for now, Ms. Richardson. Okay. Thank you. All right. We're going to keep it on the set.

[00:30:45] From now, we're going to keep it on the calendar for the 17th. Our next item is another discussion on the proposal of a new start time for the January 21, 2027 meeting. Ms. Richardson.

[00:31:03] Yes, January 21, 2027 is right around the corner, and the board is scheduled to have a budget work session that afternoon, which starts at 430. So staff are interested in the availability of the committee members to start the meeting at 3 o'clock so that we could be done by 4.

[00:31:22] affording you all the opportunity to grab some dinner before the budget work session begins on the 21st so a couple things before we begin miss chandler oh i have a couple things so we are not 100 certain of the makeup of the committee come january so i don't know if we are able to discuss possible start times come january i will let you know that um should i still be on this committee and or chairing this committee that date does not work for me and so we'll have to find a different date in january all together um i have some travel that i will unfortunately be away for on

[00:32:00] the 21st committee members ms chandler thank you for raising the concern that i also shared but i would also be available um i mean we'll figure it out yeah so yes we unfortunately we cannot make any january decisions until we shuffle the deck if we shuffle the deck committee members is there any other new business is there any new business seeing none oh miss labelle do we want to bring

[00:32:38] up the business of the registrars now in terms of bringing it forward we can discuss it if you'd like to discuss it it is not gonna there's no action we can take I'm not sure we would be the appropriate yeah I mean although it was brought here it was brought here so we can ask you can ask a question about absolutely go ahead mr. Bell please begin I think mr. Richardson told us that you have a budget line to correct the problem with the Registrars is that what I heard. Thank you for the question. Yes

[00:33:18] The office of student services, which is mr. Dolson's team Has put forward a new budget initiative for FY 28 to reclassify school-based registrars And where would their classification end up? See we scared him out of the room. Please allow mr. Dolson to join us Good evening. Thank you for that question. Mr Bell. It would raise them from a level six to a level eight. Okay, thank you. Thank you for that clarification. I know that we've heard quite

[00:33:58] a bit actually about registrars at both Student Services Committee and at the full school board. Committee members, is there any other new business? All right, seeing none, I am going to adjourn this November 11th, 2026 meeting of the Student Services Committee, and we will see you on December 17th. Thank you.



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