

LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**ONE LCPS: FORWARD TOGETHER**

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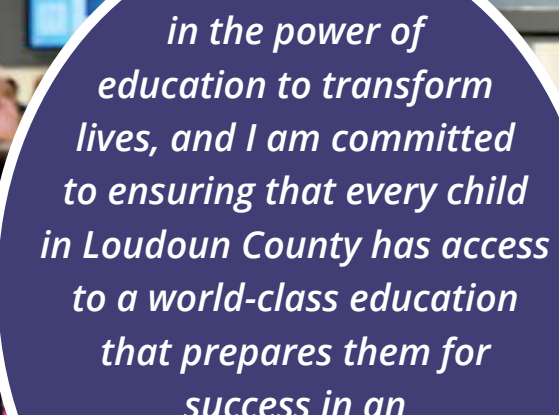
**Dr. Aaron Spence**

# Post-Entry Plan



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Loudoun County Public Schools





*"I believe  
in the power of  
education to transform  
lives, and I am committed  
to ensuring that every child  
in Loudoun County has access  
to a world-class education  
that prepares them for  
success in an  
ever-changing world."*

Aaron Spence, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

# Introduction by Dr. Spence

When I first came to Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) as Superintendent in the Fall of 2023, one of the questions I was most often asked was, “Why would you come to Loudoun County?” While this is a fairly routine question when someone moves into a new position, it felt especially important here in LCPS. It’s no surprise to note that our school division has faced significant challenges over the past few years, and I recognize their impact on the entire LCPS community. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional learning, forcing us to adapt to remote and hybrid models that tested our resilience and innovation. Alongside the logistical and academic challenges, the pandemic also affected the mental and emotional well-being of our students, staff and families. LCPS worked hard to navigate these unprecedented times, and we emerged stronger, even though it was not without its difficulties.

In addition to the pandemic, LCPS has been in the national spotlight due to contentious political debates and social issues that have affected our school division—and public schools across the Commonwealth and the nation. As I heard often this school year, there is a feeling that these debates have sometimes overshadowed the hard work and achievements of our students and educators, creating

a charged atmosphere that has, at times, challenged our sense of unity. Nevertheless, wherever I go in Loudoun County, I continue to hear members of our community express their pride in where they work and where they send their children to school, and they also want us to maintain our focus on our primary mission: educating and nurturing our students.

This past year has been a journey of listening, learning, and laying the groundwork for the continued success of LCPS. As I reflect on my first year as your Superintendent, the answer to the question, “Why Loudoun?” has become clear. Why would anyone not want to be in Loudoun County Public Schools? We are blessed with talented and dedicated educators, a community that invests in and supports its schools and children, and students who show us every day the boundless potential of what’s to come. The challenges we face pale in comparison to the opportunities in front of us, and I am filled with immense gratitude and optimism for the future of our school division.





Throughout my time in LCPS, I have been intentional about working to unify our families, staff and the community at large. To do this—to build trust and learn about the work of the school division—I implemented the One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan when I arrived in September. This plan involved visiting with stakeholders from all over Loudoun County, engaging directly with students, families, staff, and community members, and ensuring their voices were heard. Through these interactions, I gathered valuable feedback, began to assess the current state of our schools and departments, and worked to understand community and staff concerns. While I have had the opportunity to meet with members of this community in various settings, I especially enjoyed the staff and community listening sessions we hosted at each of our high schools. These sessions provided invaluable insight into the hopes and dreams we hold for our school system as well as practical, actionable ideas and suggestions about how we might leverage our strengths to address opportunities for improvement.

As noted earlier, building trust has been a significant part of my mission since joining LCPS. These listening sessions gave me the chance to hear directly from parents, students, educators and community members. Your input was candid, thoughtful and deeply rooted in a collective aspiration for excellence in LCPS.

So, what have I learned? Our community members and staff share high aspirations for the division. There is hope that our students can grow and develop into productive, prepared, and problem-solving adults within the safe and supportive environments our schools provide. We also aspire to foster a supportive, equitable, and collegial climate

and division culture that recognizes our educators for their expertise and hard work and lays the foundation for a deep sense of belonging and achievement in our schools.

Since arriving here, I have been inspired by the passion and commitment of the LCPS community. Together with our School Board, we will continue to build an educational environment where our students thrive and our staff feel valued. As I shared in my One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan, I am dedicated to supporting our shared work around excellence, belonging, and trust built on listening to one another. I hope this serves as the next chapter of that plan and as a foundation for the work we have ahead of us.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement. As I have said during our listening sessions, this is just the beginning, and I am excited about the great work we will do together. Each day, I think about how we can grow and be better at our work tomorrow than we are today. I hope the recommendations outlined in this report are a first step in that journey forward, together.

With gratitude,



Aaron C. Spence, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Loudoun County Public Schools



# Post-Entry Plan Foundations

*“Lead learners maximize the impact on student learning by relentlessly keeping the focus and conversation on a few goals and then developing a clear plan for achieving them.”* -Michael Fullan

When I began my superintendency in LCPS, I prioritized staff and community feedback to create an entry plan. I reviewed data from parents, students, staff and community members, examined documents and artifacts, analyzed processes and procedures, and assessed student achievement data to develop transition objectives. These six objectives guided my inquiry and exploration of LCPS:

1. Establish a culture of trust and transparency
2. Ensure unified governance by strengthening the Superintendent and School Board relationship
3. Prioritize school safety and student wellness
4. Support a culture of innovation and academic excellence
5. Provide an intentional focus on equitable programming
6. Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency

Aligning my exploration and objectives with the division's strategic plan, One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence, was crucial, so each part of the entry plan focused on one of our strategic plan goals:

- **Empowered Students** (Strategic Plan Goal 1)  
Students are at the center of our work - valuing all students' hopes and dreams and preparing them to make meaningful contributions to the world.

- **Exemplary Staff** (Strategic Plan Goal 2)  
LCPS teachers, administrators, and staff are the most important factor in helping our students after their parents; seeing that staff are esteemed, exemplary, supported, and accountable is vital to student success.
- **Enriched Division** (Strategic Plan Goal 3)  
LCPS must be aligned around our core educational mission for students and strengthen trust, listen humbly, value differences, and remain steadfast in ensuring every student is prepared to make meaningful contributions to the world.
- **Engaged Community** (Strategic Plan Goal 4)  
Parents, families, and our community must be a support, guide, ally, and partner; there is no one more deeply invested in the success of students than their families.

To move forward together, we need a compelling vision and direction. Our strategic plan outlines a vision for LCPS, and the post-entry plan, along with the Strategic Plan Aligned Actions, guides a conversation about how we will work together to reach our destination.

The One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence and the One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan gave me a holistic picture of LCPS. This post-entry plan outlines my findings, themes and next steps we will want to work on together to move us forward.

# A Note About Coherence

*"What we need is consistency of purpose, policy, and practice. Structure and strategy are not enough. The solution requires the individual and collective ability to build share meaning, capacity, and commitment to action. When large numbers of people have a deeply understood sense of what needs to be done - and see their part in achieving that purpose - coherence emerges and powerful things happen."*

(Fullan and Quinn)

As an educator, I've always believed that we must have focus and coherence in our work. What's important is that we have consistency of expectation across all schools and at all levels so that everyone is clear on what needs to be done. And, that work needs to be purpose driven and singularly focused on improving the experience that our staff, students and families have in our schools every day. If we have a clear vision and align our work, our engagement efforts, our expectations for teaching and learning, and our capacity building around that, our organization will thrive.

For that reason, it is important to point out that the work identified throughout this post-entry plan is not necessarily new work; rather, as noted above, the findings and recommendations here align with the six objectives in my entry plan and the four goals of the division's strategic plan. Taken together, the findings and recommendations point to areas on which we can really focus and begin to develop coherence, or that deeper sense of understanding of what needs to be done.



# Where We Want To Go

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared hopes and dreams align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Learning and Opportunities

HOPES AND DREAMS	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
Opportunities and Pathways	●			●	●		●			●
Love of Learning and Curiosity			●	●			●	●		●
Focus on Students and Learning	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Engaged Learning and Enjoyment			●	●			●	●	●	●
Programs and Offerings		●		●	●		●		●	
Equity and Equal Opportunities		●		●	●		●		●	●
Core Academics and Curriculum				●	●		●	●	●	

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared hopes and dreams align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Climate and Culture

HOPES AND DREAMS	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
Supportive Environment			●					●	●	
Belonging and Community	●		●						●	●
Mental Health and Support	●		●					●	●	●
Responsibility and Accountability				●			●		●	
Safety and Well-Being			●						●	
Voice and Empowerment	●			●			●		●	
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Connectedness	●	●	●				●		●	●
Climate and Culture	●		●	●				●	●	

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared hopes and dreams align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Career and Development

HOPES AND DREAMS	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
Real World Experiences and Application	●			●			●	●	●	●
Career and Technical Education				●	●		●	●	●	
21st Century Skills				●			●	●	●	
Preparedness and Readiness	●			●	●		●	●	●	●
Graduation and Success Metrics		●		●					●	
Citizenship and Civic Engagement	●			●			●		●	●

I began each listening session by asking those present to consider our collective hopes and dreams for our staff and students. We then asked participants to identify our strengths and our opportunities for improvement. These questions were intentional, because I believe that we must understand where we want to go in order to assess our strengths and understand the gap between where we are today and where we want to be. In my opinion, it is in this space that we can best understand the context for improvement.

The figures on this page show points of intersection between my six entry plan objectives, the division's four strategic plan goals, the hopes and dreams of our community, and recommended areas for improvement. For example, as will be discussed in more detail later, throughout the year, three broad areas of shared hopes and dreams for LCPS emerged: learning and opportunities, climate and culture, and career and development. As you can see each area of shared hopes and dreams from our community listening sessions is also reflected within the six entry plan (EP) objectives and within the four strategic plan (SP) goals.



The same can be said of each identified area of improvement.

I am not showing you these points of intersection to provide you with an in-depth analysis of each intersecting dot. Rather, I want to demonstrate that LCPS stakeholders' hopes and dreams, as well as suggested areas of improvement, align in different ways with each of my entry plan objectives and LCPS' strategic plan goals. This is excellent news!

There are clear opportunities to build a deep coherence here. Although my entry plan period has concluded, the alignment of what we have learned this year with the existing strategic plan validates that we are on the right track to ensure excellence for all of LCPS' students and staff. Continued diligence to track our efforts, adjust our actions as needed, and hold ourselves accountable for progress will ensure that we're moving forward together and in the right direction as we continue our work to make LCPS the best school division in the country.



# Areas of Improvement

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared areas of improvement align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Staff and Student Support and Growth

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
English Learner (EL) Support			●		●		●	●	●	●
Equity and Equal Opportunities					●				●	
Programs and Offering		●		●	●		●		●	
Opportunities and Pathways	●			●	●			●	●	●
Mental Health and Support	●		●					●	●	●
Professional Development and Learning				●		●		●	●	
Special Education Support			●		●		●	●	●	●
Differentiation and Individualized Learning			●	●			●	●	●	

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared areas of improvement align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Climate and Culture

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
Transparency and Openness	●	●				●			●	●
Consistency and Continuity	●	●				●			●	●
Leadership and Empowerment	●	●		●					●	●
Expectations and Standards				●	●		●	●	●	
Balance and Well-being	●		●			●			●	●
Compensation and Recognition		●				●		●		
Responsibility and Accountability			●	●			●	●	●	
Climate and Culture	●		●	●				●	●	●
Supportive Environment	●		●	●	●				●	●
Communication Skills	●						●			●

**Let's Analyze:** How do the shared areas of improvement align with our One LCPS: Forward Together Entry Plan and One LCPS | 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence?

## Division Resources and Policies

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4
Budget and Resources		●		●	●	●		●	●	
Learning Environment and Spaces			●	●			●	●	●	
Staff Retention and Recruitment						●		●		
Class Size and Individual Attention			●	●	●		●		●	
Discipline and Behavior			●	●					●	●
Policy and Governance		●	●	●	●				●	
Grades and Assessment Policies		●		●			●	●	●	
Administration	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Schedules and Time Management						●			●	

# Post-Entry Plan Information Sources and Insights

*"To cut to the chase, coherence consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work. Coherence, then, is what is in the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively."*

(Fullan and Quinn)

The voices of LCPS community members and staff were a top priority for me as I developed my post-entry plan One LCPS: Forward Together. To this end, I am grateful to all with whom I had the opportunity to meet and who also shared thoughts via our community listening sessions, a ThoughtExchange, and family and staff surveys.

From October 2023 through April 2024, our team conducted a series of 19 listening sessions with the LCPS community and staff to better understand our hopes and dreams for staff and students, what LCPS is doing well, and how LCPS might improve. As I have already stated, it is vital to me to establish a culture of trust and transparency within the LCPS community. These listening sessions helped me understand the culture and people in the community I am serving.

The sessions were generally well attended, including about 400 community members (noting that attendance was greater earlier in the school year) and about 775 staff across all 19 sessions. The feedback provided during the community listening sessions has been carefully documented, reviewed, and analyzed and is a foundational component of my post-entry plan.

Additionally, our team launched a ThoughtExchange activity on May 23, 2024, to all LCPS community members and staff to both validate what we heard in the community listening sessions and to provide our community the opportunity to provide additional feedback and rate the feedback provided by others. Almost 200 community members provided their feedback through ThoughtExchange.



In February 2024, our team distributed electronic surveys to LCPS parents and LCPS staff to collect data about the perceptions of our families regarding some of the school climate factors that influence student achievement. Questions addressed topics such as teacher-student interactions and relationships, rules and expectations, communication and school environment. Multiple parents and staff members, including 11,414 parent responses and 4,586 school-based staff responses respectively, responded to the surveys, providing yet another invaluable source of information for my post-entry plan.

I also launched several initiatives during my entry plan period, such as a Blue Ribbon Panel on School Safety and security, a communications audit, an educators cabinet, and the development of a committee to begin working on an instructional framework, to name a few. I continued to meet with various advisory groups throughout the year as well. And, the VDOE conducted an audit of our Special Education program. Taken together, these various sources of information provided opportunities for feedback and voice in numerous ways, and all of it has helped inform the recommendations at the end of this report.



## What We Learned through the Entry Plan Process

Before discussing those recommendations, however, let me summarize what I have learned. Themes from the community listening sessions provide the structure of my summary of what I learned across all the aforementioned opportunities and initiatives. The LCPS community is full of unique perspectives, and we are a county with a healthy pluralism of views. In many cases, readers will note that where some students, parents, teachers and others see successes, others see needs for improvement. Or, participants may have divergent views, even if they agree an area that is a cause of concern (bell schedules, for example). We welcome this diversity of thought as it helps us check assumptions and reduce bias, hold ourselves accountable, and prepare our minds to consider a wide range of solutions. But one thing is clear, our community and staff believe in our schools and their place as a central organization in our students' and families' lives. And our community and staff believe in the importance of public education and believe in our capacity to improve.





# Hopes and Dreams

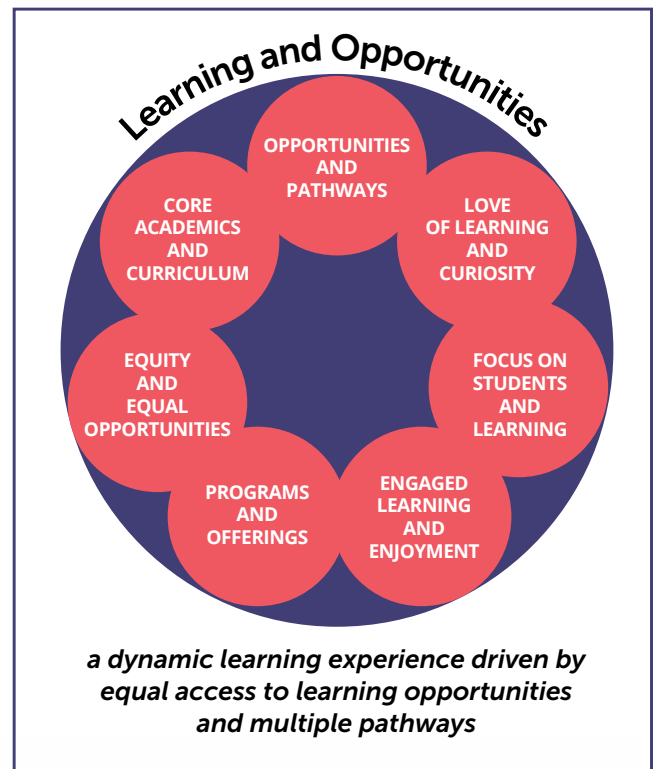
## *What are community and staff members' Hopes and Dreams for LCPS?*

Our community hopes and dreams that our students can grow and develop into productive, prepared and problem-solving adults in safe and supportive environments provided by our schools. Overall, they believe that LCPS can serve as a safe, welcoming space for equitable growth and development, with all parties focused on preparing the citizens of tomorrow. The LCPS staff similarly aspire for a supportive, equitable, and communal climate and division culture that simultaneously recognizes their expertise and hard work. Attracting and retaining staff at LCPS is a key goal of staff members, alongside regionally competitive salaries and benefits.

Further analysis revealed three broad areas of shared hopes and dreams for LCPS: learning and opportunities, climate and culture, and career and development. Although these themes are interconnected, examining them individually is useful as we chart a path forward. These themes cut across both comments offered by staff and those offered in the broader community sessions.

## **Learning and Opportunities**

Our stakeholders desire a dynamic learning experience driven by equal access to academic opportunities and multiple pathways. The figure below shows seven of the more frequently provided themes in this area.





LCPS stakeholders want:

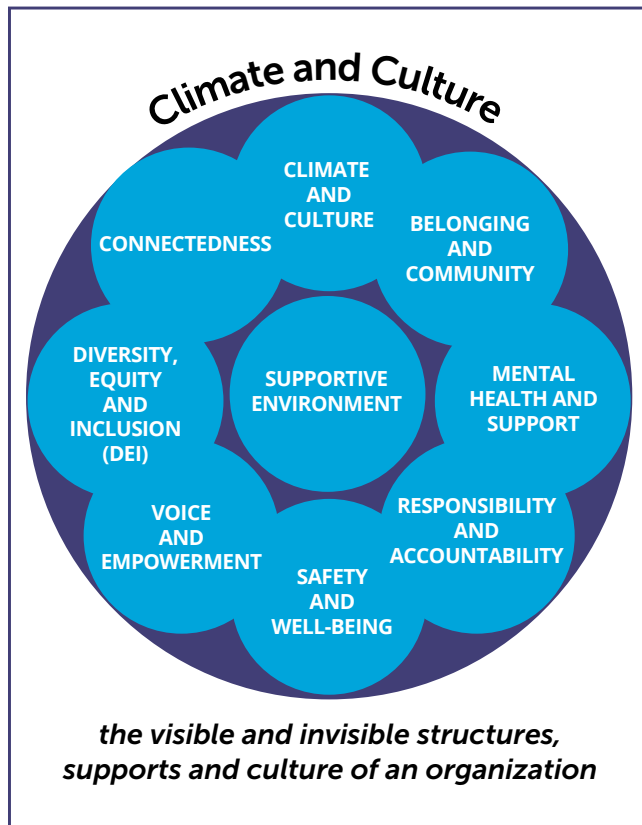
- Students to have **opportunities and pathways**, which provide access to academic and post-academic success through different modes and methods that are not “one-size-fits-all.” Additionally, they want students to be provided with time or opportunity to explore and understand these options.
- Students to have a **love of learning and curiosity** that persists and thrives alongside a pursuit of high grades or more tangible desires for career and post-secondary attainment.
- A tighter **focus on students and learning**. While the news of the day can divert attention, many participants stressed the importance of putting students’ learning experiences and outcomes first.
- LCPS to ensure strong **core academics and curriculum**, such as reading and mathematics, and explore different curricular approaches to teaching core academics.
- Students to experience **engaged learning and enjoyment**, creating instructional opportunities where students apply knowledge gained to concrete experiences and deepen their understanding and skills.
- LCPS to expand its **programs and offerings**. They desire LCPS to offer an array of academic, extracurricular, and other formal programs at schools so that students have similar opportunities at all—and not just some—schools. For example, some participants asked for more second language instruction and more support for the fine arts and CTE programs.
- **Equity and equal opportunities** for staff and students alike. This means fair and impartial treatment and access to opportunities for all students and staff.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, “Opportunity is the crucial word here. Not everyone is equal in all things, but opportunity should be.” Eighty-seven percent of community survey respondents agreed that their child’s teacher provides help when their child needs it. Furthermore, 95 percent of staff survey respondents agreed that teachers and other adults at their school provide students the support they need to succeed.



## Climate and Culture

Our stakeholders desire the strong structures, supports, and culture that support successful schools and organizations. The structures can be both visible (formal and easy to spot) and invisible (less formal and harder to see at first glance). The figure below shows nine of the more frequently provided themes in this area.



LCPS stakeholders want LCPS to model all aspects of positive climate and culture through its reactions to events and surroundings. Many participants shared comments that spoke to the overall quality and character of school life in broad terms.

More specifically, they want:

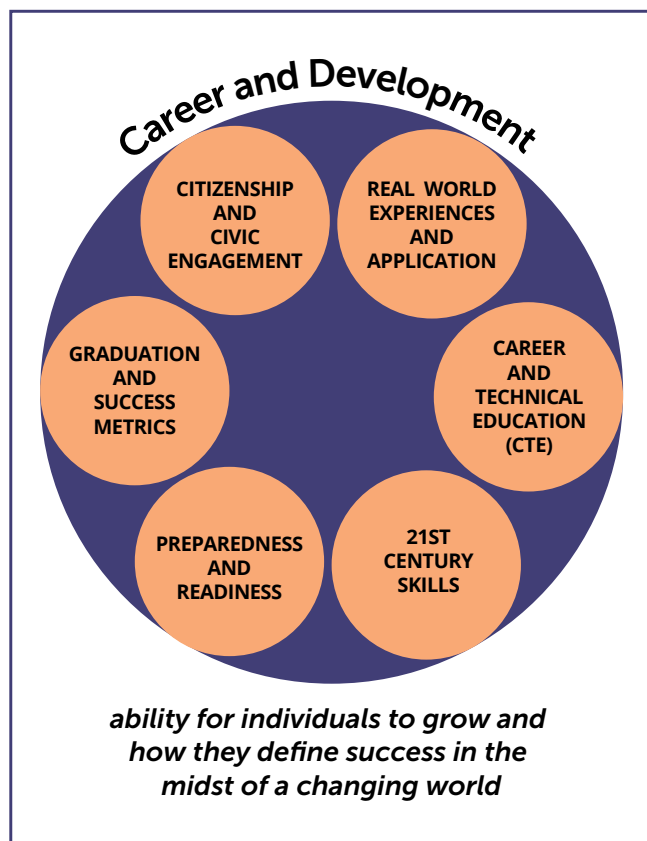
- All students and staff to have a sense of **belonging and community**, that despite individual goals, they are contributing to something greater than one's own self.
- All students and staff to experience **connectedness** and collaboration with their peers.

- All students and staff to be **responsible and accountable** - that is, answerable - for their own actions.
- All students and staff to use their **voice and be empowered**. This desire translates to having the ability to be heard and their concerns valued, and to make decisions for themselves or others when appropriate.
- LCPS to embrace **diversity, equity, and inclusion** within all of its administrative and school walls. Participants shared comments about DEI as both values and actions that promote representation and participation of different groups of individuals.
- LCPS to create a **supportive environment** that ensures physical, personal, and psychological well-being, while preventing discrimination, intimidation and bullying.
- All students and staff to have the necessary **mental health** support to ensure their psychosocial well-being and to prevent and/or treat mental health conditions.
- LCPS to ensure the emotional, physical, psychological, or social **safety and well-being** for all of LCPS' staff and students.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, "The climate and culture, specifically a supportive environment, stands out as essential." Ninety-one percent of community survey respondents agreed that their child is being taught to respect people of different cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Furthermore, 98 percent of instructional staff agreed they have the knowledge and skills to ensure that their lessons and materials are inclusive and represent their students, the school community, and the world.

## Career and Development

Our stakeholders express a desire for students to grow and achieve success, however an individual might define it, amid a changing world. The figure below shows six of the more frequently provided themes in this area.



- All students to be **prepared and ready** for what comes next in their journey, be it from elementary to middle school, or high school to post-secondary, along with other social, emotional, or character goals.
- LCPS leadership to closely examine **graduation and success metrics** to ensure the community is kept informed of how students are progressing toward graduation through markers such as retention rates and academic performance.
- Students to express **citizenship and civic engagement** in behaviors, attitudes, and actions that reflect a concerned and active membership in the community.

LCPS stakeholders want:

- Students to have **real-world experiences and application**, or practical instructional and co-curricular “field” experiences that enable students to see how they can apply their skills and knowledge.
- LCPS to offer robust **career and technical education** programming that integrates core academic knowledge with professional and occupational skills that prepare them for life after high school.
- Students to have the social, executive, emotional, technological and other skills that prepare students for work in the **21st Century**.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, “We desperately need to change education for our children to coincide and thrive in the new world.” Seventy-eight percent of community survey respondents agreed that their school offers a variety of pathways to success. Furthermore, 91 percent of staff survey respondents agreed that teachers and other adults at this school connect what students are learning to life outside of the classroom.



# What Is LCPS Doing Well?

In addition to identifying and understanding these hopes and dreams, it was also important to try and understand what we are already doing well. Approaching the work through a strengths-based lens, understanding where we are already succeeding as a school division helps us build on those strengths to take on our challenges. LCPS, Virginia's third-largest school division, is a welcoming, safe, affirming and academically rigorous public-school division serving more than 82,000 students across nearly 100 schools. Over 13,000 LCPS employees engage in supporting teaching and learning in those schools that produces an overall graduation rate for all students of 97%. The division's workplace excellence has been recognized by Forbes' list of America's Best-in-State Employers.

The LCPS community and staff underscored a positive outlook on the overall effectiveness and supportiveness of the school system, highlighting significant areas where the organization excels. As a division, LCPS is doing a lot of things right! Below I summarize some of the most frequently heard sentiments.

## **Academic Opportunities and Programs:**

Overall I heard positive perceptions of the academic opportunities and programs offered by LCPS, highlighting the division's commitment to providing diverse, rigorous, and inclusive educational experiences that prepare students for future success. The LCPS community and staff appreciate the variety of extracurricular programs offered and specialized programs such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Programs that foster 21st century skills are highly regarded. The Virginia Department of Education conducted a review of special education in LCPS. Multiple strengths were identified including use of a program that allows general and special education students to participate

jointly in music; use of technology, including assistive technology devices, throughout the school division; good instruction and rigor of content and differentiation in most schools with students being aware of processes and procedures; and, teaching of reading to students below grade level at the middle school level.

## **Professional Development for School Staff:**

Overall, LCPS professional development is perceived as robust, well-structured, and highly beneficial to educators, contributing significantly to their professional growth and instructional effectiveness.

Professional development sessions are valued for their quality and relevance. They are diverse and address multiple pedagogical skills and innovative teaching practices, and LCPS demonstrates a commitment to ongoing development and improvement for their educators.





### **Technology Integration:**

The feedback I collected reflects a strong positive sentiment regarding the integration of technology in the school division. Access to devices, support systems, professional development, and innovative programs contribute significantly to a modern, effective and inclusive educational environment. Technology support ensures students and staff can use digital tools effectively, parents appreciate the increased community and transparency fostered by technology tools, and LCPS is continually looking for ways to improve technology integration, ensuring they stay current with advancements and best practices.

Additionally, we have established an Artificial Intelligence (AI) workgroup comprised of staff from across the division. The purpose of the workgroup is to provide common learning experiences around AI and to generate AI guiding principles.

### **Communication and Engagement:**

Overall, I heard a strong positive response to the division's efforts in communication and engagement. The emphasis on transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness enhances trust and collaboration among all stakeholders, contributing to a supportive and informed educational community. Of note, communication from the central office and school administration has improved, LCPS makes a concerted effort to communicate and celebrate achievements, and community engagement through listening sessions and open feedback forums is appreciated. We have so many people passionate about family engagement in this school division—many of whom belong to the Family Engagement Workgroup. They put together a “Welcoming All Families” handbook through cross-departmental collaboration, which was well received. Lastly, our communications audit revealed that we have a highly experienced communications team who is working hard to rebuild trust in the community. The community is energized by a new superintendent and a new school board and sees it as an opportunity for a fresh start and positive change.

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA):**

Overall, LCPS stakeholders perceive a strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. The various initiatives, programs, and practices are positively received, and there is an acknowledgment of the continuous efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, regardless of student background. LCPS has implemented DEIA initiatives, such as equity leads in schools; makes continuous efforts to identify and address areas where equity can be improved; and prioritizes engaging with parents and the community on DEIA issues.

### **School Improvement:**

Additionally, our school and central office leaders are committed to the continuous school improvement process. With the support of the School Improvement Office, each school develops a detailed School Improvement Plan (SIP) focused on closing achievement gaps and improving instruction for all students. Schools are committed to the development of the SIP.



### **Safety and Well-Being:**

The LCPS stakeholder input that collected reflects a high level of satisfaction with the division's efforts to promote safety and well-being. Comprehensive measures and proactive communication strategies contribute to a secure, healthy and supportive environment for all students and staff. The presence of School Resource Officers in our secondary schools and other security personnel is appreciated and helps maintain a safe environment; schools provide healthy meal options and prioritize physical activity as part of the daily schedule; parents and staff appreciate clear updates and information on safety-related matters; and, access to mental health resources is highlighted as a strength. In fact, mental health resources in LCPS have extended to better service students, schools and staff through multiple actions.

The Blue Ribbon Panel overwhelmingly recognized the positive, forward-leaning, and strategic approach to security that has made LCPS one of the nationally recognized "gold standards" in K-12 security. The Panel's assessment of LCPS' safety and security was positive overall. The Panel determined that LCPS is a leader in K-12 safety and security not only at the state level but also nationally. The Panel recognized the Division of Safety and Security's organizational structure, enterprise-wide communication, standardization of security expectations, and strategic approach to security and training. The Panel also recognized the proactive and robust approaches taken by the Department of Digital Innovation in cyber security and the Department of Student Services in student mental health support.

### **Quality of Staff:**

I heard overall high regard for the quality of LCPS staff. The combination of professional expertise, dedication, innovation and a supportive attitude contributes significantly to the positive educational experience and outcomes for students. LCPS emphasizes hiring high-quality teachers and administrative staff who are committed to student success; staff strive for strong and positive relationships with their students; school and

division leaders are effective, supportive, and visionary; and, staff exhibit a high level of professional expertise and continuously seek to improve their skills through professional development. Regarding staff compensation, the FY25 budget included an average 6.5% pay increase. And, while health premiums will increase in FY25, the benefit package LCPS offers continues to be very competitive.

### **Facilities:**

The LCPS community and its staff are overall satisfied with the division's facilities and resources. The emphasis on maintaining modern, well-equipped and safe environments contributes significantly to the quality of education and overall experience for students and staff. School buildings are described as modern, clean and well-maintained, providing a pleasant learning environment; the technology infrastructure is robust, ensuring reliable internet access and the smooth operation of digital tools and devices; facilities are equipped with modern safety and security features; LCPS is proactive in planning for future growth; and, efforts to secure funding and allocate resources effectively are noted and valued.



**Sense of Community:**

Overall, I heard feedback that reflects a strong and positive sense of community within LCPS. The emphasis on inclusivity, open communication and supportive relationships creates a welcoming and collaborative environment where students, staff and parents feel valued and connected. Strong partnerships with parents and the community enhance academic programs and provide additional support for students; efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming environment are recognized and appreciated; schools engage parents and community members in various ways; schools work together with local organizations, businesses and stakeholders to support educational initiatives and student success; and, the administration's efforts to engage with the community and address concerns contribute to a sense of trust.

**Student Success and Support:**

There is a strong commitment to ensuring student success within LCPS. The combination of high-quality teaching, comprehensive support services, innovative programs, and a positive school culture contributes to the academic and personal achievements of students. Students achieve above-average test scores and perform well in assessments; teachers are dedicated to student success, often going above and beyond to support their academic and personal growth; initiatives aimed at closing achievement gaps and providing support to underserved populations are valued;

and, students have access to various pathways that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for higher education and the workforce.

**School Board Governance:**

When nine new board members were elected in November of 2023, we were able to take time to provide a comprehensive orientation and onboarding process that spanned over multiple weeks. Board members were able to develop relationships and begin to work together. Once in office, we held the first board retreat in many years, allowing the board to engage in work to establish their norms and working agreements. Foundational relationships have been built with each board member and these are further developed through daily, weekly and monthly individual meetings and "board tours"—where administration familiarizes board members with upcoming board items and initiatives.

**Budget Development and Collective Bargaining:**

Schools have adequate non-staffing resources, the county fully funded the FY25 School Board Adopted Budget (the last time the budget was fully funded was for FY16), and we developed additional flexibility in staffing and staffing supports for schools. The Legislative, Audit and Policy continues to work towards the adoption of a resolution for collective bargaining, something which the previous school board voted to move forward and for which the Loudoun Education Association (LEA) advocates.





# What Areas of Improvement Are There?

While we have much to celebrate about LCPS, staff and community members rightly set high expectations for the school division and are not afraid of calling attention to areas needing improvement. The LCPS community frequently commented on increasing students' access to opportunities, such as academic programs and extracurriculars; and, modifications of division policy and priorities, such as budget, special education support, grading and assessment and discipline. The LCPS staff centered their areas of improvement on competitive pay that would attract and retain qualified professionals, English Learner support, as well as changes to division schedules and start times, grading and assessment policies, and needs for additional access to professional development and division consistency and continuity.

Further analysis revealed three broad areas of improvement for LCPS: division resources and policies, student and staff support and growth, and climate and culture. Although these themes are interconnected, examining them individually is useful as we chart a path forward. These themes cut across both comments offered by staff and those offered in the broader community sessions.

## Division Resources and Policies

LCPS stakeholders would like to see improvements in the ways LCPS allocates and manages resources, and how LCPS develops, applies, and evaluates policies to support our learning objectives and treat individuals equitably. The figure below shows nine of the more frequently provided themes in this area.



LCPS stakeholders want:

- Increased clarity and consideration of fairness as **budget and resources**, including staff positions are allocated, throughout LCPS. While identifying resource gaps was common, a recurring specific concern was how staffing ratios were often blunt instruments that did not consider varying levels of student need. Of note, we will revisit the budget process at the next School Board retreat. On the other hand, while it was often noted that LCPS has abundant resources for teachers, staff noted that it would be helpful to streamline access to these resources.
- Reduced **class sizes** and more **individual attention** for students. A number of participants also spoke to concerns about overcrowding at some campuses.
- Bright, modern and updated **learning environments and spaces**, including classrooms and outside environments, that support more flexible or hybrid learning models. Some participants identified challenges at older buildings, such as accommodating newer technology, or concerns with classroom space and HVAC.



- Increased **staff retention and recruitment** to ensure that students benefit from experience and that mid-year disruptions are avoided. We want the division to be able to attract and retain staff talent and not depart to neighboring schools with better pay and benefits. Of note, at the next School Board retreat, we will continue to explore key topics including compensation philosophy.
- Improved **discipline and behavior** systems. Many participants believed that students felt there were no consequences to their actions because of lax or inconsistent policies. There was significant concern about increases in behavioral issues, particularly at the lower grades, and staff expressed the need for more support in this area.
- Clarity on division **policy and governance**, generally. While many participants expressed a desire for flexibility, they also understood that the system-wide courses of action or principles should guide staff and student activities.
- **Grades and assessment policies set** expectations which are unclear, with many participants concerned about re-take and exam policies. During my Community Listening Sessions, I heard parents and staff share observations based on their experiences with grading and assessment, particularly around the 50% floor, formative assessments and retakes. My staff is gathering feedback from staff and students to learn more specifically about their concerns regarding these three issues within the policy. Of note, there was significant conversation not just about grading but about the number of assessments with which our staff and students are expected to engage, with hopes that we can streamline these expectations to increase instructional time and use assessments that matter most to teachers and families.
- Re-alignment of the **administration** or school administrators' role, policy and actions to support teachers and students.

We have already started this work; central office staff has worked to reimagine the school improvement planning process to make it a more collaborative process among school leadership and central office staff.

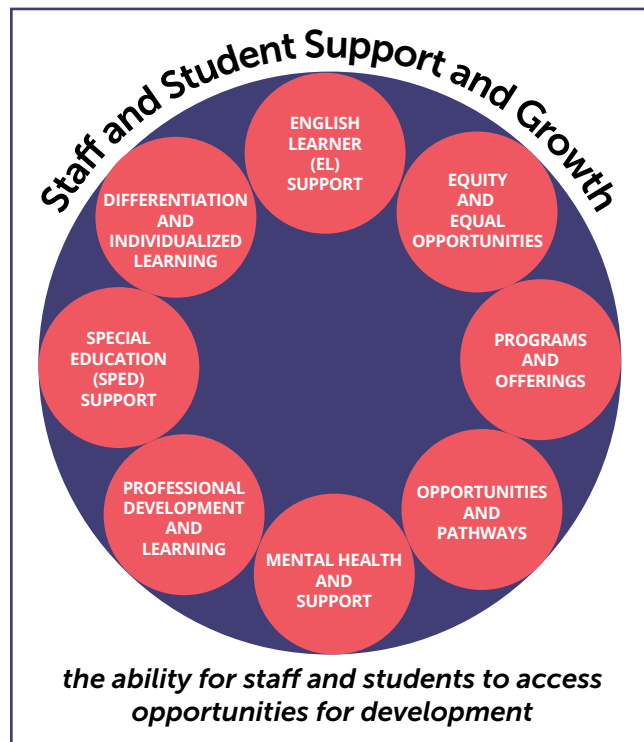
- **Schedules and time management** that allow for more collaboration or planning, or increased flexibility. Participants cited concerns about start times and challenges with making up days missed for extreme weather. Others did not care for block scheduling, and conversations at the elementary level centered on recent changes to the schedule that made their jobs more difficult.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, "More of our financial resources should be focused on making LCPS the number [one] destination for teachers in NOVA." One area of improvement voiced by community member respondents to the survey was consistency in expectations from all teachers at a school. Staff member survey respondents felt that schools could better plan and implement actions to address student group differences in discipline data.



## Staff and Student Support and Growth

LCPS stakeholders would like to see increased and improved opportunities for students and staff to develop. The figure below shows eight of the more frequently provided themes in this area.



LCPS stakeholders want:

- To better ensure that **equity and equal opportunities** are provided for students and staff, with many participants noting a lack of options or quality experiences at certain campuses compared to others.
- Different **opportunities and pathways** for student academic and post-academic success. Many participants spoke to concerns about students and families not knowing about existing opportunities or how to best leverage them.
- Robust academic, extracurricular or other formal **programs and offerings** across all campuses. Families and staff often expressed the need for pathways for students to explore their passion across schools. While existing programs are

appreciated, there was a sense that more are needed.

- Teachers must be better positioned to offer alternate ways for students to learn and complete tasks based on the student's abilities and interests, broadly defined as **differentiation and individualized learning**. Teachers want to be trusted as professionals in this regard and asked for flexibility within the curriculum to meet student needs.
- Better **English Learner (EL) support**, whether through tutoring or direct instruction that ensures students who are learning English can master the language quickly and access quality instruction across all subject areas.
- More integrated **Special Education** that promotes staff collaboration and meaningful plans for students with disabilities. Participants want to ensure that accommodations are provided for individual differences but that students with disabilities are engaged in classroom instruction with all their peers.



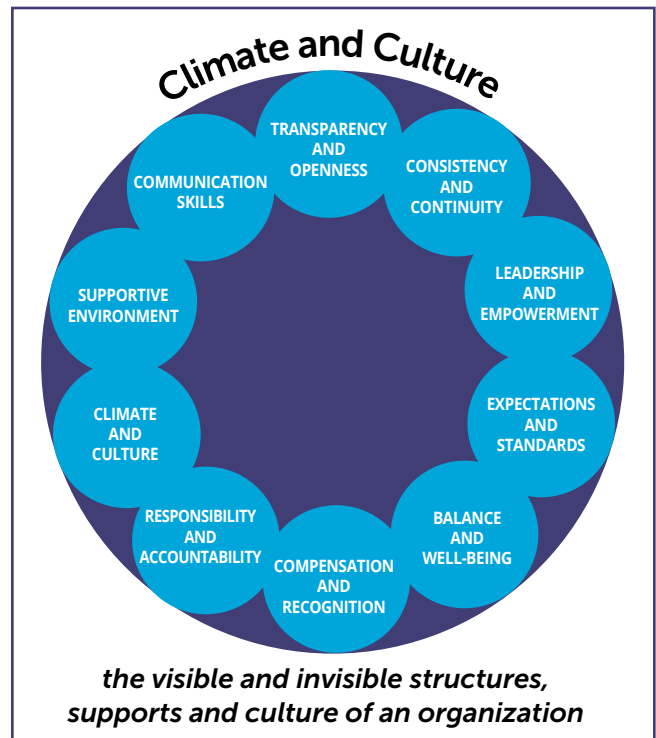
- Improved or expanded **mental health and support** resources to ensure psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental health conditions for staff members, students and family awareness. We are already making significant progress on this and have identified several immediate and short/long-term recommendations for consideration for continuous improvement.
- **Professional development and learning** opportunities for staff members that are efficient, targeted to specific roles, and relevant to ensure up-to-date knowledge and help staff advance to fill critical roles. During my Community Listening Sessions, staff shared with me how we are fortunate to have resources to support students and staff. We need to continue to be responsive to staff needs from a professional learning lens, and staff would like to know exactly how to have their learning needs met with division support.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, “It takes a village to support and educate our students and LCPS teachers and students need more people in their village.” Community member survey respondents scored that their child’s teachers could explain their child’s learning expectations with more clarity. Staff member survey respondents rated a need for division-level professional development that helps staff members meet student needs with a lower score, which demonstrates a key area of improvement.



## Climate and Culture

Like the Hopes and Dreams section of our listening sessions, our stakeholders called attention to the ways in which our structures, supports and cultures that support successful schools and organizations need improvement. Climate and culture can be both visible (formal and easy to spot) and invisible (less formal and harder to see at first glance). The figure below shows 10 of the more frequently provided themes in this area.



LCPS stakeholders offered comments that spoke to the need to create a strong **climate and culture** including overall quality and character of school life in broad terms.



LCPS stakeholders also desired:

- Greater **transparency and openness** in communication between LCPS administration with all stakeholders, especially regarding being aligned, consistent, and honest in the actions taken about specific challenges or issues.
- Improved **communication skills** of administrators, staff, teachers and students that support individuals in working with each other and create transparency, trust and openness. Teachers and other staff want to be treated as professionals and know what is expected of them.
- Increased **consistency and continuity**. Many participants noted that LCPS does not suffer from a lack of initiatives or strategies, but it was often difficult to see how they were connected or applied broadly for all students or staff.
- High and consistently applied **expectations and standards** for staff, administration and students that support a culture of continuous improvement.
- Development of a culture of **responsibility and accountability** that supports high expectations. This was particularly true for staff and parents around students, with the desire for policy and direction that holds students accountable for their decisions and accountable for learning.
- **Leadership and empowerment**, so that increased trust is created, and authority given to individuals who have responsibility to make decisions and take action on behalf of themselves or others. For example, teachers often expressed the desire to be trusted more to make decisions about student learning.
- **Compensation and recognition** for staff that reflect the value they provide to our students and our community and reward staff for making a difference. Of note, we will be working with the board on a comprehensive salary and benefits analysis to help inform the direction of the LCPS compensation package. Additionally,

it is likely that LCPS will delve into compensation-related issues as the collective bargaining process unfolds.

- Increased **balance** in the level of effort expected of staff, students and others to promote well-being. Many participants identified concerns with the pressure they felt to achieve certain outcomes at the expense of time for family and outside pursuits.
- Increased or improved physical, personal or psychological aids to staff, students and family members to ensure a **supportive environment**.

**FEEDBACK** gathered from the ThoughtExchange and the annual survey are in alignment with these areas. For example, one respondent to the ThoughtExchange said, “[Climate and Culture is the] foundation for everything else.” Community member survey respondents identified the process for enrolling their child in specialized programs and clubs as an area of improvement. Staff survey respondents agreed that there is insufficient non-instructional time to complete required tasks such as lesson planning and grading.





# Next Level Opportunities - My Recommendations for Moving Forward Together

*"There is only one way to achieve greater coherence, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress, and continuous correction. All of this requires the right mixture of 'pressure and support': the press for progress with supportive and focused cultures."*

(Fullan and Quinn)

I spent the past nine months learning about LCPS by meeting with students, staff, parents and community members. I am impressed with our community's commitment to strong schools that prepare our students, provide opportunities and a well-rounded education. I kept hearing sentiments of deep admiration and appreciation toward our teachers, school administrators and staff. I have witnessed firsthand their dedication to our students, our community and their craft. It truly takes a committed and united village to raise a child and we are so fortunate to have that here in LCPS.

In this document I have described what I learned through listening and engaging in the Entry Plan actions, audits, reviews and community listening sessions. In this section of my post-entry plan, my aim is to provide you with what actions we might want to consider first that will move us forward. As you have

read, I've learned a lot about LCPS. My learnings provide a substantial basis for the formation of these next level opportunities. However, it is important that I do not recommend a laundry list of next level opportunities. Trying to accomplish too much at once can lead to confusion, burnout and lack of progress—and quite frankly runs counter to the concepts of focus and coherence.

It is also important to recognize that the larger categories described earlier in my post-entry plan (e.g., division resources and policies, climate and culture) represent my learnings from multiple data sources. These larger categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive and any next level recommendation we make could fit in multiple categories. To offer clarity and to ensure coherence, then, I am returning to our strategic plan's goals to frame my top priorities for LCPS' next level opportunities.





## Strategic Plan Goal 1: Empowering Students

*Students are at the center of our work - valuing all students' hopes and dreams and preparing them to make meaningful contributions to the world.*

**I have identified five next level opportunities focused on empowered students.**

1. Students and their families need to be supported to navigate and explore the multiple pathways and unique opportunities that we do and will provide at LCPS campuses now and in the future. As students advance through their academic careers, teachers and counselors should work with them and their parents to explain options, what the prerequisites are for those options, and how those options will help them attain graduation and post-secondary success. We should gradually release more control so that as students progress in school, they are at the center of making informed choices. We should continue to refine our college and career readiness platform to track each student's goals and progress and allow us to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn about and explore the different pathways available to them.



2. We should revisit our curriculum and instructional practices to ensure we are consistently teaching using evidence-based approaches (such as for foundational math and literacy skills), providing students with rigorous and appropriately challenging materials, and exposing them to content, views, and perspectives that balance time-tested foundational texts and culturally relevant and current voices. We should re-align assignments and assessments for students, and our evaluation practices for teachers, to reinforce our desire to instill a love of learning, problem-solving and critical thinking skills to prepare students for whatever paths they choose. It seems clear that we want academic excellence, and we want students to demonstrate mastery. We want them to be able to talk about how they are progressing and what they need to do to be successful. And we want them to be accountable for doing that work. What models allow all these things to be true? That is the question we are exploring as we continue to develop the Instructional Framework and its accompanying resources. This framework should help us answer these questions and identify the research-driven instructional practices that must be present in our classrooms. This conversation must also help us address questions about which assessments matter most—which assessments help us understand student progress in real time to make appropriate adjustments and instructional decisions, and what assessments help us communicate in robust and meaningful ways about student progress. If we accomplish this, the picture of what learning should look like will become clear in practice.

**3.** We should re-examine our alternative pathways, career-technical education, and other valued, unique programs like HAMSCI (Health and Medical Sciences Academy) and the Academies of Loudoun, to determine whether these programs have suitable space to meet current and anticipated demand from students and families as well as whether they are geographically distributed evenly across our neighborhoods. When certain models appear successful and/or oversubscribed, we should find ways to expand them or replicate them on additional campuses. We must also engage in a robust conversation with our community partners, employers and higher education to identify the most needed workforce development opportunities, and pursue those with vigor. I have talked about the need for a “big tent” when it comes to workforce development. We should invite everyone interested in this conversation into the room, identify the opportunities in front of us, and create explicit agreements about the experiences our students will have—all with an eye to expanding these opportunities across our schools and providing pathways for our students to highly skilled, well-paid industries with high demand for labor.

**4.** Students need to be educated on digital citizenship and held accountable when they make mistakes. We should set clear policies on personal device use, including cell phone usage during the school day, and the appropriate use of emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), when completing assignments. These policies should not decide between an outright ban or complete permission but should allow students to know when they can use technology and when they should not. We

know that there will be times when individual schools and classrooms will make different determinations, that might even vary based on time of day or the activity (recess vs. direct instruction vs. project work, etc.) but these should be guided by a consistent school board policy. With 1:1 computing now in LCPS post-pandemic, we must ensure appropriate instructional uses of technology and support for our staff. We must continue to identify the best uses for technology in our classrooms and ensure our practices mirror best practices in the broader world—and strike the right balance around engaging learning with and without these tools.

**5.** As we chart a path toward more individualized and differentiated learning, we need to find ways to break down silos that can exist between classroom instruction and specialized support for students with disabilities, English language learners and newcomers. We should deepen our engagement with our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks and explore increased use of best practice co-teaching models, flexible academic schedules to maximize a student’s time in the classroom and opportunities to engage with their peers. We need to further support all teachers in providing strong instructional delivery and reduce the burdens of administrative tasks so that they have more time for collaboration and differentiation. I am also recommending a comprehensive Special Education audit to look beyond the findings of the VDOE and identify additional opportunities to support our staff, families and students. Finally, special education staffing and hiring should be a priority in the next budget.







## Strategic Plan Goal 2: Exemplary Staff

*LCPS teachers, administrators, and staff are the most important factor in helping our students after their parents; seeing that staff are esteemed, exemplary, supported, and accountable is vital to student success.*

**I have identified four next level opportunities focused on exemplary staff.**

1. We understand that teachers and staff need balance between their professional and personal lives. They also need balance within the school day. We need to have an honest conversation about schedules and identify ways we can support our educators to achieve a balance between teaching and supporting students and having the time needed to plan for instruction and accomplish other tasks. We should also explore how online platforms and new AI tools can reduce the burden on our teachers. And, while we don't want to move away from a value of prioritizing mastery over mere completion, we should revisit grading and assessment policies to reflect the burden that these expectations may place on teachers. Policies must provide clear and consistent direction around these practices and should be centered in a conversation about the purpose of grading and the purposes of giving assessments. We should consider setting guidelines that allow for some teacher discretion, and we should standardize the way in which teachers communicate grading and assessment expectations to students in

middle and high school at the beginning of each course. Finally, we must pay closer attention to the issue of student behavior. This is driven in part by concerns around consistent application of discipline policies across schools; however, the most significant concerns revolve around the need for placement of our most challenging students in alternative settings, and the need to address the most significant behaviors in our elementary grades. For the former, we are already taking steps based on funding in the FY25 budget to evaluate and open an alternative setting for secondary students. We need to dive more deeply into elementary behaviors, building on what we already know works and identifying best practices to support teachers, staff and students with these challenging behaviors. There may be budget implications for this work (e.g., the need for more behavior analysts in our schools, or for research-based programs like Behavior Intervention Support Team), and administration and the School Board should consider these carefully moving forward.



**2.** We should continue to evaluate and improve our hiring practices to ensure we are attracting candidates that reflect the students we serve and critical positions at campuses do not go unfilled. We should examine the support we provide to recent hires and explore ways to make sure recent hires are connected to their principals or supervisors, master teachers, grade or subject matter teams, and their newly-hired peers. We should set a clear goal to meet or beat national averages on staff retention for teachers, counselors, nurses, translators, paraprofessionals and other staff. We must also understand that retention is as much about culture and climate as it is about compensation. We have a dynamic team of talented educators. It is remarkable to see the difference they make in our students' lives every day. Our job is to understand what they need, get them what they need, remove barriers in their way and then watch them thrive. Educators who are empowered to work this way, centered in collaborative and supportive learning cultures, are more likely to stay in the profession.

**3.** We should ensure that all staff have access and choice in professional development

that is relevant to their position and experience. When possible, we should move mandated and/or compliance-related training to asynchronous-learning platforms to make them easily available, so that in-service days can be dedicated to deeper learning and collaboration between building teams or content areas. Professional learning structures should be designed so that every employee knows exactly where to go to have their learning needs met, and so that every employee sees opportunities to grow and lead in ways that are meaningful to them.

**4.** Although compensation is not the only key to retention, there is no doubt that it is important. As funding and policies allow, we should examine our compensation packages to ensure that all staff can afford to live in our community and are rewarded fairly for their work and for professional advancement. A compensation study to know where we stand today will be important as we move forward. We should also explore benefits that enable more of our employees to find housing near their campuses, such as working with local government agencies and developers to build housing for teachers.





## Strategic Plan Goal 3: Enriched Division

*LCPS must be aligned around our core educational mission for students and strengthen trust, listen humbly, value differences, and remain steadfast in ensuring every student is prepared to make meaningful contributions to the world.*

### **I have identified three next level opportunities focused an enriched division.**

1. We should scrutinize our budget through the lens of equity and equal opportunities, ensuring that each school is equipped with the funding and resources to address the needs of our students. Beyond mere enrollment counts, allocations of positions and/or funding to schools should consider varying levels of student needs, including variation in the need among students with disabilities, English learners, newcomers, and/or other communities of interest. Each school allocation should be designed to staff schools with a sufficient level of classroom teachers, special educators, counselors, interventionists, instructional specialists, teaching aids, and more, while allowing for a degree of autonomy for school leaders that wish to explore flexible staffing arrangements. While we know that budgets will never be infinite, increased transparency in how funds are allocated will position our School Board to advocate for more resources from the state or to propose new local measures when funds fall short of the level needed to support the community's goals for its school system.



2. To reinforce our desire for positive school climates and cultures, we should create new spaces or leverage existing non-academic activities in the school year and school day for teachers, students and other members of each campus community to connect and build bonds with each other. We should administer regular, research-validated surveys (such as Panorama) of students, parents and staff to gauge their sense of belonging and whether they feel they have agency and voice in the decision-making processes at school. We should empower principals, teacher leaders and students to demonstrate leadership in addressing areas of concern and coming up with proactive solutions, and we should provide clear and understandable platforms to capture this work (such as the work we have done with various advisory groups and with ThoughtExchange, or by using platforms like My Voice). We should provide individuals with role-alike professional learning communities that meet regularly to collaborate, embark on shared learning, and provide a safe space for having vulnerable conversations in a supportive environment.





**3.** To continue to uplift safety and security as a top priority, we will work with the School Board and our schools to implement many of the recommendations from the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Safety and Security that I commissioned at the beginning of the school year. All 11 recommendations are below, and our responses to the recommendations are in italics.

- a. Prioritize school-level participation in safety and security and threat assessment training. *We plan to set expectations for training of school staff and be specific about who from the school must attend.*
- b. Ensure that School Resource Officers and Unified Mental Health Team representatives participate in every threat assessment, as required by Virginia law, code 22.1-79.4, Threat assessment teams and oversight committees. *We will comply with this recommendation as is required by law.*
- c. Add a digital analysis to all serious and very serious threat assessments. *We will work to identify a platform with expertise in K12 security to support this effort (We will only use publicly available information for any assessment).*
- d. Ensure that there is Wi-Fi coverage throughout the entire school building, including hallways. *We will assess this and implement this recommendation as needed.*
- e. Expand the Security Operations Center's (SOC) square footage and create a full-time supervisory position solely dedicated to managing it. *We will explore any space issues for the SOC but do not recommend a new position at this time.*
- f. Add security personnel coverage to elementary schools. *We are revisiting the concept of regional School Security Officers to cover elementary schools within each planning district—something discussed with the previous School Board. We will also bring forward recommendations for hiring Allied Security Officers or Assistant Security Officers in*

*all elementary schools. An assessment of our visitor management protocols should be conducted first. We are not recommending the addition of School Resource Officers to every elementary school at this time.*

- g. Create a formal alternative education site to allow for enhanced security measures for high-risk students. *We are working to open an alternative education site for secondary students through our budget process in the next school year.*
- h. Create a basic cybersecurity/social media best practices and mandate completion for key stakeholders within LCPS. *We plan to implement this recommendation.*
- i. Assess public safety radio coverage within schools and address any gaps. *We will support the county in conducting this assessment.*
- j. Increase security personnel coverage for after-school events. *We will explore flexible scheduling for School Security Officer coverage (note: large events are already covered).*
- k. Have the school board label the Division of Safety & Security as a Law Enforcement Unit. *We are not recommending this at this time.*





## Strategic Plan Goal 4: Engaged Community

*Parents, families, and our community  
must be a support, guide, ally, and partner; there is no one  
more deeply invested in the success of students than their families.*

**I have identified three next level opportunities focused on an engaged community.**

1. We should renew our focus on our family engagement strategies. We should begin by identifying the common touchpoints for families with school staff and identify promising models in our schools and across the division for resolving concerns, whether that is more formal or informal meeting opportunities with principals and teachers, leveraging school-based parent liaison positions, or continuing to ensure the division ombuds office is well-understood as a resource for our community, staff and families. We should examine and ensure there is a forum at each campus by which parents can participate in decision-making processes and continue to support those same opportunities at the division level. We should

provide support from the division to assist principals in communicating important information about their school and the division. Additionally, we should consider trainings, materials and guides that can be provided to parents to help them coach their students on successfully navigating academic and social challenges. Importantly, we must centralize our family engagement efforts. A family engagement workgroup currently exists as a touch point for the various efforts across schools and departments. With existing resources, I intend to create an Office of Family and Community Engagement that brings many of these functions together to make it easier for families and community partners to access the resources they need to engage with LCPS.





2. Just as we set high expectations for students, we should set high expectations for ourselves. We should track and report our progress towards goals representing multiple, robust measures of success. We intend to work with the School Board to identify the priorities for progress monitoring. At a minimum, we must think about how to report whether all students have access to the opportunities we provide. We must seek to better understand how well graduates are faring academically, financially and socially, and see if they persist in post-secondary programs or careers related to specialized tracks. We should collate and curate information from the state and our own data sources to present performance information by school and specialized program in an interactive dashboard that is easily accessible to the public. In general, an understandable, accessible monitoring system needs to be in place. The data we analyze at the division level should be shared as a through line with the board, and we should expect our principals to be looking at this data as well in more targeted ways. Leveraging a re-imagined school improvement process, data will be a driver for instructional decision making and resource allocation at the school level to ensure each student has what they need to succeed in LCPS. The board might consider seating a Performance Monitoring Committee to create clearer communication and expectations between administration and

the board about what data is monitored and what actions should be taken as a result of that learning.

3. To reinforce our values of creating a culture of trust, openness, and accountability, LCPS administration and the School Board should use our meetings to thoughtfully address our biggest challenges and concerns. We must not shy away from difficult topics, and we must work together on strategies to structure conversations around these issues in ways that remain productive. We will examine how we provide information in school board agendas and meeting packets to continue to ensure the information is accessible by parents and members of the community, and that they understand when they have other, less formal opportunities to help craft policies or procedures through ongoing deliberative processes. We will name solution owners (including myself or other cabinet members) and communications-team points of contacts for each major initiative. The owners will report progress on these initiatives, including progress monitoring and resolution of concerns, and communication team members will ensure that they are collecting and presenting perspectives from multiple stakeholders, including those who cannot attend School Board meetings, so there is openness and closure in our communication on issues that are important to our community.





# Closing

As we conclude this important chapter of listening and learning, I am profoundly moved by the collective aspirations shared by our community and staff for the future of Loudoun County Public Schools. Our hopes and dreams reflect a deep commitment to creating an environment where every student can thrive academically, socially and emotionally. It is clear we all share a vision of LCPS as a place of dynamic learning, robust support and equitable opportunities for all. Together, we envision a school system where students are prepared for the next steps in their academic journeys and are equipped with the skills and values necessary to become the productive, compassionate and innovative leaders of tomorrow.

Throughout our discussions, one theme stood out above all others: the power and potential of our community. Our community and staff members have expressed a heartfelt desire for a school division that embodies a sense of belonging, collaboration and mutual respect. This shared vision for a positive climate and culture—where every individual feels valued and empowered—is not just a dream but a tangible goal that we are

committed to achieving. Insights gained have highlighted the importance of fostering an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and every voice is heard. By prioritizing mental health support, safety and well-being we can ensure that our schools are safe havens for growth and development.

As we move forward together, let us build on the strengths that have already made LCPS a beacon of excellence. Our commitment to academic rigor, professional development and innovative practices will continue to drive our success. The strong partnerships we have fostered within our community, along with the dedication of our outstanding staff, provide a solid foundation upon which to build even greater achievements. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead, guided by the unwavering belief that our best days are yet to come. I am confident that we will realize our collective hopes and dreams, creating a brighter future for every student in Loudoun County Public Schools. Thank you for your trust, your passion and your partnership in this journey. I look forward to the great work we will do as a community.







**ENGAGE • EMPOWER • ENRICH**

**[www.lcps.org](http://www.lcps.org)**

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