

Catoctin District Newsletter

March 2024

The views contained herein reflect the views of the individual School Board member who is the publisher of this newsletter and may not reflect the views of the Loudoun County School Board and/or Loudoun County Public Schools.

Kari's Corner

On March 22nd, I had the joy of attending a very special screening of [Unafraid](#), a film featuring one of our local residents as he moves from the world of education into the real world of independence. Creator Ethan Weitz highlights the profound impact that one of Tree of Life's programs has on the lives of individuals with disabilities in Loudoun County and focuses on one such young man, Sam Mason. I truly feel this is a film that all parents of Special Needs students should see.



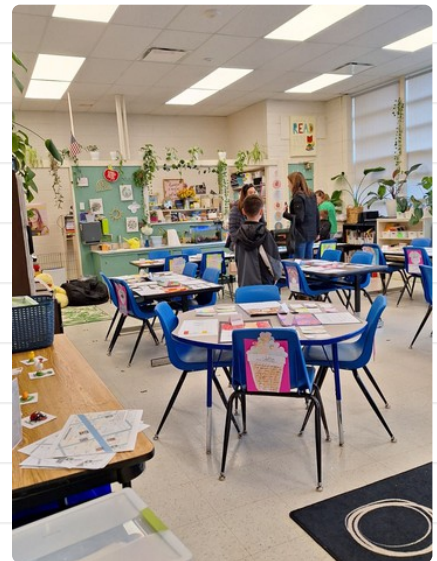
The [program](#) highlighted in the film supports individuals with disabilities, elementary-aged through adulthood, and their families. Under the leadership of Cindy Welsh, participants can engage in a variety of activities, including field trips, crafts, sports, dances, and games. Participants also have access to job training, employment assistance, and independent living training. Families can receive respite services, advocacy assistance, and, most recently, assistance in locating independent-living housing. This program is a vital resource for our county, and I am so grateful that it is available for families in Loudoun.

As always, should you ever need to contact me, I can be reached via email at Kari.Labell@lcps.org or through Let's Talk any time. I will also be holding office hours at Purcellville library on the last Thursday of each month from 7:00-8:30 PM.

Month at a Glance

Middleburg Community Charter School LEO Night

Earlier this month, I was invited to the Middleburg Community Charter School's LEO night by chairman of the board Vito Germinario. I found out from principal Steve Robinson that LEO stands for none other than the brilliant Italian polymath Leonardo Da Vinci. Together with fantastic, knowledgeable teachers and staff, the project-based curriculum at MCCS offers a lively and diverse learning experience that is on display four times a year on LEO Night. This particular event marking the end of the third quarter offered samples of student work, games, and music. The event culminated with the principal and house leaders excitedly announcing the start the town-wide scavenger hunt, with parents and students teaming up to solve the student-generated questions on their clue sheet and visiting local merchants in on the hunt! I was truly impressed with the creativity and camaraderie that was involved in this fun, interactive event. Be sure to check out and like the MCCS [Facebook](#) page to learn more about the history of this, the first public charter school in Northern Virginia, and their innovative educational program.



School Board Updates

Several important policies were up for discussion and as action items in committees this month. At our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting, we were presented with feedback regarding policy 6640, Emergency first aid, CPR, and AED. The policy is not up to date with current diabetes management practices in schools as outlined by ADA and VDOE, and LCPS did not have seizure training mentioned in the policy, so changes were proposed to required training and staffing. The Policy and Compliance subcommittee made several suggestions, and I'm glad that we are taking the time to ensure that this policy covers best practices and greatest safety measures for our schools with these health concerns.

At our Student Services Committee meeting, we again had several speakers who came forward with concerns about policy 8040, which was up for discussion on our agenda. I share the concerns about the safety and discomfort of students that so many have voiced from both sides of this issue, and as we discussed the timing of the planned focus groups, it became clear that this route could mean quite a long and tedious process before questions are resolved. I suggested we consider alternatives, because both sides of the community are looking for answers sooner rather than later. We will be discussing this further at our April 16 meeting, and I look forward to working with my fellow committee members to get this resolved in a timely way that takes ALL students into account. This policy has been at the center of a great deal of strife and upset for both parents and students in our county, and I want better for the families that we represent.

For weekly updates and news from our district and LCPS, follow me on Facebook using the button below.

Community News

Congratulations Across LCPS!

Lillian Hackett from Woodgrove High School, who auditioned for American Idol this month and was given the Golden Ticket for the Hollywood round of competition! Wishing her the best of luck on her next auditions!



Woodgrove High School senior Prescott Noll, who won the Willowcroft Science Scholarship along with his science teacher, Matt Young!

Mrs. Katie Schroeck, a 4th Grade teacher from Round Hill Elementary School, who was this month's Spotlighting Heroes IN Education (SHINE) Honoree!

Reyhan Haider from Freedom High School, Diya Ghosh from Riverside High School and the Academies of Loudoun, Abhigya Goel from Riverside High School and the Academies of Loudoun, Chetana Gunawardhana from Broad Run High School, and Jagadeepam Maddipatla from Rock Ridge High School, five student finalists from the LCPS Regional Science and Engineering Fair who will be competing in the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair this May in Los Angeles!

Oviya Amalraj from J. Michael Lunsford Middle School, for winning the 42nd Annual Loudoun County Regional Spelling Bee!

Woodgrove High School varsity wrestling, for becoming the first wrestling team from Loudoun County Public Schools to win a state championship, and Woodgrove varsity girls basketball team for earning the program's first state title!

Woodgrove High School boys basketball, for winning the 2024 Cardinal Basketball Officials Association Sportsmanship Award, which recognizes a team in Northern Virginia for their positive sportsmanship throughout their season. The Wolverines were also the Catoctin Regular Season and Conference Champions!

Rock Ridge Performing Arts Sensory-Friendly Performance

Rock Ridge High School Performing Arts has an upcoming sensory-friendly relaxed performance for their Frozen musical on April 27th from 11:00-12:00PM. This will be a wonderful opportunity for families with special needs to have a less stressful way to enjoy this experience! You can learn more about the event and Rock Ridge performances [here](#).



Relaxed performances are specially adjusted sensory-friendly shows, designed to create a theatre experience that is welcoming, judgment-free, and inclusive of children and families with a wide range of sensory, learning, and communication differences, including, but not limited to individuals on the autism spectrum, as well as young children and anyone who might benefit from this relaxed environment.

**TICKETS FOR THIS
PERFORMANCE
ARE DONATION
BASED AND SOLD
ONLY AT THE DOOR
ON A FIRST COME
FIRST SERVE
BASIS**



Relaxed
Performances

**APRIL 27TH TH FROM
11AM - 12PM.**

**THE LOBBY WILL
OPEN STARTING AT
10:15 AM SO YOU
HAVE TIME TO MEET
YOUR SEAT!**

Upcoming Events

The following are important events and holidays, and the dates and times for board meetings, as well as for the committees that I serve on. School board meetings are every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at the administration building, located at 21000 Education Ct. in Ashburn. All meetings and events can be found on the LCPS calendar link below.

April

April 2

Specialized Programs and Centers Committee meeting 3:30-4:30 PM

April 3

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting 6:00-8:30 PM

April 4

End of 3rd quarter

Listening session with the Superintendent 7:00-8:30 PM @ Briar Woods

April 5

End of 3rd quarter student holiday

April 9

Second Tuesday school board meeting 4:30-10:00 PM

April 10

Holiday (Eid al Fitr)

April 18

Student services committee 5:30-6:30 PM

Listening session with the Superintendent 7:00-8:30 PM @ Loudoun County High School

April 22

Student Behavior and Accountability Committee meeting 6:00-7:30 PM

April 23

4th Tuesday School Board meeting 4:30-10:00 PM

April 25

Office Hours with Kari at Purcellville Public Library 7:00-8:30 PM

May

May 1

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting 6:00-8:30 PM

May 7

Specialized Programs and Centers committee meeting 3:30-4:30 PM

LCPS Calendar

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Erin Dunbar

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