Dear Ms. Caudle Hodge,

Thank you for your inquiry as to the progress the Division has made recently on three MSAAC priority topics. Staff have provided a detailed review of our progress on these topics below. Thank you for your service to LCPS as the Chair of MSAAC.

**Topic 1: Recruitment, selection and hiring of Loudoun County Public School teachers**

LCPS is in its second year of a recruiting program. In the first year of the program, two recruiters were hired. One recruiter focused on recruiting for shortage areas and one recruiter focused efforts on diversity recruiting, but recruiting diverse candidates is part of every hiring manager and every recruiter’s role. The number of candidates in teacher preparation programs both nationally and in Virginia has declined, and the percentage of minority candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs is not reflective of K-12 populations. LCPS conducted unconscious bias training for over 500 hiring managers in 2016-2017 in collaboration with a consultant. In 2017-2018, a second phase of this training for hiring managers was held with 243 participants. There is also a focus on university partnerships and campus visits to include increased numbers of HBCU’s and other diverse universities. This year a recruiter is having regular meetings with teachers who work with Teacher Cadet and Educators Rising program to try to encourage more diversity in participation. An enrollment effort to include videos, advertisements, teacher sponsor meetings, and HRTD classroom visits and career readiness presentations is being undertaken. A career switcher event is being held each semester and these events are shared with community partners such as NAACP and Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. LCPS has become the first Northern Virginia partner for Troops to Teachers. The veteran population includes more males and more minorities than the teaching population, so partnerships could increase the percentage of veterans, male, and minorities in classrooms. LCPS is also seeking Virginia Values Veterans (V3) certification. Finally, a strong effort to hire earlier is connected to diversity hiring. Because diverse candidates are in high demand in K-12 systems, being able to hire earlier may help increase diverse hires. More detailed information about these and other diversity hiring efforts can be found on the LCPS website in Board Docs under the February 26, 2018 recruitment strategic action update.

**Topic 2: Screening, referral, and identification of students for Gifted Education Services within LCPS**

The 2017-2018 school year was the first year of implementation of the LCPS EDGE Academy. Building on the EDGE (Empowering Diversity in Gifted Education) program in place at some elementary schools, the EDGE Academy is an after-school program designed to identify and support students who show gifted potential and are historically underrepresented in gifted education programs. Identification and selection for the program began with analysis of ability test scores including the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), which are administered to all LCPS students in grades 2 and 3, respectively. The NNAT is specifically designed to identify high ability among students who are historically underrepresented in gifted education programs. Special attention is paid to
students who have a significant discrepancy between the verbal and nonverbal batteries of the CogAT. This discrepancy is significant in that these students may be high achieving but are not recognized as such because of language barriers and/or a perceived lack of verbal skills. Next, student performance on carefully selected, high-level tasks completed with the guidance of a gifted resource teacher will be considered.

Topic 3: Unconscious bias and its impact on student selection, evaluation and support in our school system

As part of the professional learning designed to address Discipline Disproportionality, Pupil Services staff have placed an emphasis on effective classroom practices. For the current school year over 280+ teachers and administrators have been trained in the Classroom Systems of Behavior Specific Praise and Error Correction and 100 teachers and administrators are registered for the April 2018 final training. Features of Implicit Bias, specifically vulnerable decision points and neutralizing routines, have been embedded in the current error correction training, aimed at addressing behavioral errors in the classroom in a consistent and equitable manner, a direct effort that relates to our strategic action for Discipline Disproportionality. Results from the professional learning sessions indicate that approximately 98% of participants have learned a new Behavior Specific Praise and Error Correction Strategy and that they are Very Likely/Likely to implement the strategy within the classroom environment. Longitudinal data is currently being collected from the division and school-level sessions and results indicate that participants are utilizing behavior specific praise and error correction strategies in their classrooms and that they have seen an increase in positive school climate and a reduction in office referrals since using a new practice learned from the training. All resources have been provided online for teams and school leaders to use to support school-based practices within their schools.

Please let me know if you have any questions about these responses.

Sincerely,

Jill Turgeon
Blue Ridge District Representative to the School Board
Liaison to MSAAC