



LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Ashburn, Virginia 20148
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Eric Williams, Ed.D.
Superintendent

March 9, 2018

Dear Members of the Special Education Advisory Council,

I am writing regarding the work of Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) in the area of behavioral interventions and support.

As you know, LCPS advocates a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach to addressing the needs of all students, including students with behavior challenges. In emergency situations, LCPS authorizes the use of seclusion practices to manage student behavior within very specific guidelines. The statement of philosophy that accompanies these guidelines notes,

All children have the inherent right to be treated with dignity and respect, and school personnel bear the responsibility of ensuring that our educational programs, policies, and procedures safeguard this right and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes a climate for success. This right extends to all children, including those who require more specialized behavioral and educational supports . . . When managing student behavior, physical restraint and seclusion are safety procedures used as a last resort when appropriate alternatives have failed and the student is an immediate danger to him/herself and/or others.

When a situation occurs in which LCPS guidelines are not adhered to, LCPS takes the matter seriously. Our practice is to review concerns, and to address the matter appropriately if our guidelines have not been followed. LCPS acknowledges that there have been instances in which the guidelines have not been followed and LCPS apologizes for each of these instances.

LCPS is committed to further promoting consistent adherence to LCPS guidelines. The Office of Special Education is taking additional steps to promote and monitor adherence throughout the division to the best practices and requirements set forth by the guidelines. These efforts include or will include additional training regarding the guidelines, announced and unannounced site visits to assess practices, enhanced focus on communication with parents, and the solicitation of input from teachers and parents regarding how to better support our teachers and students.

LCPS initiated contact with the Virginia Department of Education in late February to provide information regarding this matter. LCPS requested that the Virginia Department of Education conduct an audit of our practices relating to seclusion and restraint. This request preceded the recent letter from state legislators on this topic. We are pleased that the Virginia Department of Education has agreed to our request that it conduct an audit of our practices in this area.

I am working with the School Board Chair and Vice-Chair to schedule a School Board work session regarding behavioral interventions and support.

We greatly value our collaborative relationship with SEAC. SEAC consistently provides valuable feedback by sharing commendations and identifying areas for improvement. We look forward to continued collaboration with SEAC to promote safe, supportive, and positive learning environments.

Sincerely,

Eric Williams, Ed.D.
Superintendent