Comings and goings

Although I have been a member of the school board for two 4-year terms, I have never used a newsletter format. However, since I was appointed on December 15th, 2021, I have done a lot of outreach that I would like for you to know about.

I visited the new North Star building in Leesburg, which houses the nursing program and the adult education program, but is mainly for students who require an alternative learning program. My purpose of visiting was to meet with the principal, Mrs. Ahrens, and the Chief of Schools, Mrs. Mitchell, to get assurance that, with the transfer of students for disciplinary reasons, there is adequate staffing.

I also went to the Academies of Loudoun to give a presentation on parrots to the juniors and seniors enrolled in the veterinary science classes. The lecture included information about their possible veterinary needs, breeding, and care of parrots in captivity. I also gave each student in the class a copy of a book I recently wrote, titled “Why Parrots? Why Aviculture?” The teacher got one, too.
Another thing I have done is met with Mr. Lacey, the principal of Leesburg Elementary School, to discuss differentiated staffing. Differentiated staffing usually includes an additional reading teacher, English language teacher, or instructional facilitator in the classroom to better instruct students.

Recently, some other members of the School Board and I met with the Board of Supervisors on Harrison Street to defend our budget presentation.

I went to support the students at Rock Ridge High School, where they were having auditions for the All-District Chorus.

In addition, I had a phone conversation with the principal of Smarts Mill Middle School, Mr. Waldman, about his concerns of losing staff that supported his mental health team.

One Saturday, I was invited to attend a BINGO fundraiser at Hillsboro Charter Academy. That school is one of two charter schools we have and both schools have "open enrollment ". The other school is the Middleburg Community Charter School. As Loudoun County students may attend either school, each Board member has a stake in their success. My wife and I were especially glad that we attended as I won one Bingo Game and a Door Prize, so my little investment of time and money paid off. The fundraiser was a big success. It was a fun evening as we were joined by Mr. & Mrs. Serotkin and Mr. Hoyler.
Some Things I Have Been Working On

I was appointed as the Chairman of the Discipline Committee. We have had two meetings, so far, where we produced policies affecting students and staff. I also serve on several other committees, including the Equity Committee, the Finance and Operations Committee – which also meets once a month – and the Communications and Outreach Committee.

The Department of Instruction has approved the offering of the International Baccalaureate program at two different schools, but this has not yet been codified by the School Board. One of those schools has tentatively been assigned to Heritage High School, but the cost involved in offering the program has not yet been determined. I met with Jeff Adam, the principal of Heritage High School, to discuss the IB program. I am more in favor of continuing offering Dual Enrollment classes to students, which will be far less costly to the county and would allow more students to participate than a selective IB program would. Students may earn credit from an IB program, but they will earn credit from successfully completing a Dual Enrollment course.

I have voted in favor of the additional stipend for the performing arts programs in the F23 budget and will work to maintain it as part of the budget during the Budget Reconciliation.

I will get back to you for sure after the Budget Reconciliation so that I may give you a clearer picture of what lies ahead. For questions or concerns, please email me at Tom.Marshall@lcps.org