



Loudoun County Public Schools Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ASHBURN, Va. - Leaders in Loudoun County Public Schools are advocating for broader notification of suspected overdoses in their communities. Senate Bill 498, which is currently in front of the House of Delegates, would require school division superintendents to notify parents of any school-connected suspected overdose within 24 hours. LCPS leaders support this legislation and have been complying with a similar expectation issued to school divisions in Governor Youngkin’s Executive Order 28. And, leaders have also asked that the bill be expanded and offered draft language that seeks clarification on how community notifications will occur if overdoses are not school-related.

“The opioid epidemic is a community issue and deserves a community response,” said Loudoun County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Aaron Spence. “If we can understand how and when we might notify our community of non-school related overdoses, not only would parents, decision-makers and the community be more aware of what is happening in Loudoun County, this would allow for easier information sharing among responders,” Spence said. “For example, there have been a number of juvenile overdoses in Loudoun County over the last year that are non-school related. Without the expanded reporting we are talking about, our parents and community would not necessarily know that. It’s important we share when this happens in our schools—and also when this is happening outside of our schools and in our community—so that parents are able to have those important conversations in their homes with their children.”

Dr. Spence has also spoken with county leadership as well as community partners about the need for awareness and prevention and has been a leading voice on the need for a recovery school program in Loudoun County to serve students struggling with substance use disorders. “I see this opportunity to expand communication as a part of a broader community approach to addressing the ongoing epidemic of substance use in communities around Northern Virginia and across the Commonwealth.”

National organizations tasked with addressing the opioid crisis, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are stressing the need for data tracking and information sharing as part of any community's successful strategies. The [CDC's Overdose Prevention website](#) states:

"Timely, high-quality data help public health officials and other decision-makers understand the extent of the problem, focus resources where they are needed most, particularly among populations disproportionately affected by overdose, and evaluate the success of overdose and substance use-related harm prevention efforts. Recognizing the importance of data, CDC is helping jurisdictions track overdose-related morbidity and mortality as well as use data to inform prevention activities."

April Chandler, Loudoun County School Board member and Chair of the Legislative, Audit and Policy Committee, said community-wide notification is a great next step in fighting the opioid crisis. "Our community has seen the effects of overdoses, and not only in our schools," Chandler explained. "Loudoun County deserves a community-wide response based on proven techniques that raise awareness and strategically utilize valuable resources to prevent future overdoses. Research points to the success of efforts like these in other localities across the U.S."

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