

## **ORAL STATEMENT**

Thank you Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

Loudoun County Public Schools serves 80,000 wonderfully diverse students across 100 schools. We have a 97 percent graduation rate, and have six high schools listed in the top 20 in Virginia. Families choose Loudoun County because they value the quality of our public schools, which strengthen our communities and create opportunities for students.

I am especially grateful for the chance to highlight these results because we work so hard to ensure that every student, regardless of background or circumstance has a supportive, and high-quality learning environment, one that prepares them to thrive in life and contribute meaningfully to society. That promise is carried forward every day by LCPS' dedicated educators, engaged families, and a community that believes in the power of education.

I come to this conversation both as a parent of children attending LCPS and a very proud superintendent who sees the extraordinary care and commitment that exists inside our schools every day.

I want to be clear and say that LCPS, and I as the superintendent, operate within the law. As the Superintendent, it is my job to ensure that we follow federal law, state law, and locally adopted School Board policies. And we work with students and families to do so.

I also want to state clearly that we do not discriminate. Our hiring practices, instructional practices, and student support systems are grounded in equal opportunity and compliance with civil rights law. We are in education because we care about students, and part of that means ensuring an environment where all students can reach their full potential.

In truth, much of this work is about ensuring that students have access to rigorous coursework, removing barriers to opportunity, and working with parents to help prepare young people for their future. Those are the longstanding goals of LCPS that I, and my team, strive to meet every day.

Despite our efforts to do that, we also know there will be challenges. Schools are responsible for navigating complex and often personal situations involving individual students and families. As we do, it is critical that my staff and I know and understand the

governing laws and policies to ensure fairness for all students. When student-specific incidents occur, or disagreements arise, we work with parents to address them carefully. We take these matters very seriously.

Too often, the public narrative frames schools and parents as adversaries. That is not the reality I see in our community or in public education more broadly. As I mentioned earlier in this statement, I am a parent and believe it is critical that schools respect and listen to our parents as we work alongside them to educate our students. The overwhelming majority of parents and educators want the same things for our children: for them to be safe, academically challenged, emotionally supported, and prepared to contribute positively to their communities after graduation.

LCPS thrives when we work closely with parents to educate and support their children, and I know the teachers and leaders in our schools demonstrate that commitment through their actions every day.

LCPS is not perfect. No institution is. But the good ones understand that and address concerns. We work hard to ensure that the education we provide meets the needs of our students and their families. The work happening in our classrooms is practical, serious, and student-centered.

I appreciate the committee's attention to matters that impact students. It is important we keep them at the center of these conversations so that those of us working in education and in education policy can continue to ensure our students excel.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.