



Your School Board



Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair



L-R: James Lander, Tannia Talento,
Nancy Van Doren

School Board Office
1426 N. Quincy St.
Arlington, VA 22207
703-228-6015
703-228-7640 (fax)
school.board@apsva.us

Residents who wish to meet with a Board member may do so on a walk-in basis during Open Office Hours on Mondays from 5-7 p.m. on days when school is in session. School Board members also meet by appointment with small groups of individuals to discuss issues or positions. If Monday is a holiday, Open Office Hours are held the following Tuesday from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

School Board Meetings:

Arlington School Board meeting dates, times, agendas and other information are available online at apsva.us/schoolboard.

Connecting...

...With Our Community

Over the course of the year, APS communicates with families, staff and the community on a variety of topics. The APS Mobile app is one of the tools we use to communicate with stakeholders.

The APS Mobile app is free to download from the Apple Store, GooglePlay and other app services. Just search for "Arlington Public Schools," download the app, and customize to your school.



Wakefield's Michelle Cottrell-Williams Named Virginia's Teacher of the Year

On Monday, Sept. 18, Wakefield teacher Michelle Cottrell-Williams stood at the front of the room with seven other teachers at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. In the audience sat her family, her principal Dr. Chris Willmore, Superintendent Dr. Pat Murphy and School Board Chair Dr. Barbara Kanninen. They were all waiting for Virginia Superintendent of Instruction Dr. Steve Staples to announce the 2018 Virginia Teacher of the Year.

It was a moment that resembled the Oscars. "We all had to stand up. It felt like Miss America," said Cottrell-Williams. "We are all hoping that they say our name. They had a sealed envelope and it said Region Four and I thought to myself; wait that's my region...the teachers next to me were so sweet and supportive." She continued, "I don't have words. It was amazing to think that what I do, my approach to my students, the way I feel about education, other people see that as something to be honored; to be passed along to other teachers. I feel a responsibility. It's definitely an honor."

Cottrell-Williams has been teaching for 11 years in Arlington as a social

studies teacher for grades 9-12. She earned her bachelor's degree from Utah State University and a master's degree from George Washington University.

Cottrell-Williams believes that education is not a "one-size-fits-all" arena. "Every year brings a different group of students, and they come with varying needs. I believe it is so important to give all students a safe environment in which to learn without negating their own backgrounds, cultures, and identities." She strives to be a teacher who embraces the differences of each student who walks through her door.

She regards the current educational system as a series of benchmarks, in the form of grades and standardized tests, that were developed to measure student learning and success. "I visualize it as a child's shape-sorting toy, but instead of many differently shaped holes, the holes are all round, a reflection of our society's desire to hold all students to some predetermined standard of what success is supposed to look like. But, our students are not all the same," said Cottrell-Williams.

Cottrell-Williams has spent the last decade developing a true passion for culturally responsive teaching. "I make it a priority in my classroom to include people from all walks of life, including the many racial, social, and religious groups that exist in our world. The learning activities I design are suitable for diverse learners, supportive of my instructional outcomes, and



cognitively engaging. I strive to make the curriculum interesting, rigorous, and relevant to the lives of the particular students I work with each year."

One thing she wants her students to know is that she is vulnerable and human. "In my classroom, I model vulnerability by letting students see my mistakes, my humanity, and showing them that even when we don't have it all together, we are still good enough. Each year, I explicitly teach about humiliation and shame, while giving them space to explore their own triggers. I teach my students how to celebrate their strengths and how to show empathy in times of need. We practice vulnerability and discover together that what feels like weakness in ourselves looks like courage in others. We experience the power that comes from hearing the words, 'Me, too.'"

To learn more about Cottrell-Williams and her career as an educator, subscribe to the *What's Up, APS?* podcast and listen to the Oct. 3 episode.

Cottrell-Williams will now represent Virginia for the 2018 National Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced at the White House next spring.



Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

Please get involved and "Engage with APS" to help APS address growing enrollment and future needs. Here are some of the upcoming opportunities for community participation:

- **Middle School Boundaries** – The Superintendent will make his recommendations on Nov. 14. There will be a public hearing on Nov. 30 and the School Board is scheduled to act on the boundary changes on Dec. 14.
- **The 2018-24 Strategic Plan** – Over the next year, APS will work closely with community leaders, APS families, and many important stakeholder groups to develop a new,

six-year strategic plan. Staff and community involvement is essential to the creation of a strategic plan in order to identify focus areas for school system improvement.

- **High School Seats at Education Center and Career Center** – A total of 1,300 seats will be added, 500-600 at each location. The program and instructional focus, design concepts, and potential high school boundary adjustments are among the considerations that will be addressed during discussions throughout the fall.



Final recommendations will be made to the School Board by December.

For more information, visit apsva.us/engage, email engage@apsva.us or call 703-228-6310.

Reorganization Creates Department of Teaching and Learning

Earlier this summer, the Departments of Instruction and of Student Services and Special Education consolidated into a unified department. In late September, staff unveiled its new name: the Department of Teaching and Learning.

The change in the department name represents the collective efforts to support students and staff within APS. The new department is made up of the offices of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; Curriculum and Instruction; Early Childhood and Elementary Education; Secondary Education; Special Education; and Student Services.

"As we seek to ensure that each student is safe, supported, healthy,

challenged and engaged, the work of the Department of Teaching and Learning combines our focus on academics with building high levels of community for students within our schools," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tara Natrass.

Mission

To ignite a passion for learning with equitable access and multiple pathways where learners connect, create and innovate.

Vision

All individuals continually strive for their best as learners and global citizens.



Check out the new podcast *What's Up, APS?*

Do you love podcasts? We encourage you to take a listen to APS' new *What's Up, APS?*, an inside look at Arlington Public Schools hosted by Communications Coordinator Frank Bellavia.

Each episode invites listeners to learn more about APS' dynamic teachers and their innovative approaches to learning inside and outside the classroom, as well as providing valuable tips and information on behind-the-scenes initiatives that ensure APS meets the needs of the whole child. Recent episodes feature teacher Kate Miller's PolarTrek to the South Pole; an inside look at the Global Village Summer

Program; teacher Jennifer Burgin's Explorer trip to the Galapagos Islands; a conversation with 2018 Virginia Teacher of the Year Michelle Cottrell-Williams; the new cuisine being served up in the cafeterias; and interviews with counselors to find out what families need to know about teen substance abuse. To listen to these episodes, visit apsva.us/podcast.

What's Up, APS? is available on iTunes and Google Play.

To ask a question about a previous podcast or to suggest a topic for a future episode, email apsnews@apsva.us.



Stay Tuned!

Our annual **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Literary and Visual Arts Contest** begins this month, with entries due in December. Winners will be announced in January.

Contest details and topic(s) will be posted online later this month at www.apsva.us/mlkcontest.



DRIVING CAREERS.

ONE HIRE AT A TIME.

Join Arlington Public Schools and jump start your career. Now hiring Bus Drivers.

Questions? Email Corey Dotson at careers@apsva.us.

Mark Your Calendars

NOVEMBER



Timeframe for applying for a transfer to a neighborhood middle or high school (if space is available) or to apply to a countywide option school or program (AP Network, Arlington Tech, H-B Woodlawn, Immersion, or International Baccalaureate). **Through Jan. 19**



Veterans Day
No School



Superintendent Presents Middle School Boundary Recommendations



Thanksgiving Break
Through Nov. 24
No School



Public Hearing on Middle School Boundary Recommendations

DECEMBER



School Board Action on Middle School Boundary Recommendations



Winter Break
Through Dec. 29
No School

JANUARY



New Years Day
No School



Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
No School



Last Day to Apply for a transfer to a middle school or high school, or for a countywide option school or program.



Kindergarten Information Night
Washington-Lee HS, 7 p.m.
(Snow Date: Jan. 29)