

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ACI Work Session
January 26, 2017

Item C-1-a

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, January 26, 2017, at 6:06 PM at 1426 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
James Lander, Member (arr. 6:14 PM)
Tannia Talento, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Linda Erdos, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Dr. Kristi Murphy, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management Services
Dr. Brenda Wilks, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services and Special Education
Kris Martini, Director, Career and Technical Education
Sam Klein, Supervisor, ESOL/HILT
Kate Graham, Coordinator, Pre-School Program
Cheryl McCullough, Supervisor, Gifted Services
Debbie DeFranco, Supervisor, Health and Physical Education
Elisabeth Harrington, Supervisor, World Languages
Sheri Furlott, Summer School Coordinator

Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)

Tina Kuklenski-Miller and Louisa Marinaccio, Co-Chairs

Ms. Van Doren called meeting to order and welcomed attendees. She thanked the committees for their commitment and acknowledged Ms. Kuklenski-Miller and Ms. Marinaccio for their work as Co-Chairs.

Career, Technical and Adult Education (CTAE)

Michael Shea and Alissa Cowen, Co-Chairs, presented the committee's recommendations. The first recommendation is for a full time staff position to create private and public partnerships and to develop a network of student work-based learning opportunities. The second is for structured coordination of college and high school credits between Northern Virginia Community College and APS to maximize approved options for students. The committee's last recommendation is to

ensure that bus transportation is available for academic opportunities such as field trips and work-based learning.

Acknowledging the financial impact of adding a staff position, the group discussed how to strengthen and increase opportunities for students who may not have access to internships. It was suggested that staff reach out to parents as contacts for possible positions, and Ms. Talento encouraged the group to pursue internship opportunities in the arts. The Board supported the second recommendation and encouraged collaboration with the Summer School program to provide additional opportunities for dual-enrollment. Mr. Martini provided additional information about transportation needs, confirming that the goal is to provide more flexibility in the opportunities that can be provided to students.

Early Childhood

Julie Lucher, Chair, presented the recommendations, stating that the first recommendation is to revise the Wellness policy to require a minimum of 30 minutes of unstructured recess each day. The committee's second recommendation is for better communication and a specific plan for the use of personalized learning devices. The third recommendation is to limit class time spent using personalized learning devices and to inform parents about the programs and activities that students use on the devices. Ms. Lucher also confirmed that the Early Childhood committee spent some time collaborating with the ESOL/HILT committee this year.

The Board discussed proposed changes to the Wellness policy and Dr. Wilks confirmed staff will revise the policy at the Board's request. The group recognized that increasing recess time needs careful review to ensure that it does not negatively affect instructional time. Also briefly discussed were the need for unstructured play and challenges with recess, such as the distance some students must walk to reach outdoor space. The Board supported revising policy to state that recess cannot be withheld and performing an analysis to identify best practices in providing unstructured play time. Staff confirmed that they are working on a database to track applications being used on personal devices and are incorporating technology into the resource adoption process. Dr. Natrass agreed to bring information to the Board explaining how applications are selected for student use.

ESOL/HILT

Zina Raoof, Chair, and member Anne Zebra presented the ESOL/HILT recommendations. The first recommendation is for a detailed analysis of the implementation of increased instructional and counseling support for ELLs and to hold a work session on this topic. The committee also recommended a roll-out plan for a comprehensive pathway document for ELL families that includes course sequencing and credit accumulation opportunities to support on-time graduation and post-secondary readiness for ELLs. The final recommendation is to create a team of ESOL/HILT, Early Childhood and ELA staff to strengthen early literacy and English language development instruction for ELLs with ongoing support provided in the schools.

The Board appreciated the committee's report. Mr. Klein affirmed that staff is working on increasing support for ELLs and will present an update to the Board. He spoke to the second recommendation, stating that Student Services and Instruction staff are working together to finalize the pathway document and strengthen information provided to new students. The group recognized that the document is difficult for newcomers to understand, and encouraged staff to include more

helpful information. Conversations with counselors are also needed to ensure students and families understand the information. Dr. Murphy looked forward to working with the committee to identify improvements to the document including how it relates to educational structures in other countries. Dr. Wilks confirmed that the Language Services Resource Center is expanding their involvement and support for ELLs, and all participants supported intercultural training to strengthen this work.

Gifted

Co-Chairs Beth Dowd and Meredith Purple presented this report and the committee's three recommendations. These are to provide intensified course offerings open to all students in all core subjects in middle schools, to add a teacher specialist position to the Office of Gifted Services, and to improve and increase consistency and uniformity of gifted services implementation across the county. Ms. Dowd spoke to the teacher specialist position, confirming that this would increase the efficiency of the work and would also address the needs resulting from the growing enrollment throughout APS.

Staff has seriously considered adding intensified courses in middle school, and Dr. Natrass noted that advanced mathematics and World Languages classes are offered. She stated the top priority is to ensure students are challenged through differentiated instruction and confirmed Gifted staff is focused on building enrichment into the curriculum using cluster groups and support from Resource Teachers for the Gifted. Noting the recent evaluation by Dr. Joyce Van Tassel-Baska, Ms. Purple stated the committee's support for Dr. Van Tassel-Baska's recommendation to offer intensified courses. The group discussed challenges and benefits of the current instructional model and whether this approach can meet all students' needs. Dr. Natrass confirmed staff has significant concerns about intensified courses as they can lead to tracking which can negatively impact students, and she agreed to provide additional information on differentiated instruction in APS.

Health/Physical Education

As the Chair was unable to attend the work session, Ms. DeFranco presented the Health/Physical Education (HPE) committee's recommendation, which is to reduce class size for secondary HPE classes, as they believe that will better serve students. Ms. DeFranco confirmed that current class sizes are within the required Standards of Quality.

The group briefly discussed this recommendation, and Board members were interested in exploring additional opportunities to receive credit, for example by participating in a personal trainer or yoga program outside of the classroom. Ms. DeFranco confirmed staff is exploring the possibility of granting credit for students who participate in marching band. Ms. Van Doren noted that students participate in smaller group activities in some PE classes and she asked if this addresses class size concerns. Ms. DeFranco stated that crowding is thought to be more of an issue at the middle schools, and she shared a few examples.

World Languages

Thanking staff for their support, Dr. Rick Jackson, Chair, presented five recommendations on World Languages. These are to include the earned Virginia State Seal of Biliteracy on transcripts; to implement consistency and equity in sharing best practices in language instruction throughout the division; the addition of two FLES Instructional Coach positions to support language programs;

to offer World Languages opportunities to all sixth grade students; and to expand support to address needs in the K-12 immersion programs and the program of Spanish for Fluent Speakers in grades 6-12.

The Board discussed the effectiveness of immersion and possible expansion of the program, and Dr. Jackson agreed to provide data on student performance in world languages to help inform decisions and improve instruction. Acknowledging concerns with literacy development for some second language students, Ms. Harrington spoke to instructional approaches being implemented to address this issue. Also discussed was ensuring equity across the schools, and there was some interest in pursuing hub schools. Board members supported expanding language opportunities such as American Sign Language (ASL) in middle school. The group also discussed the importance of ensuring that students with disabilities receive necessary accommodations and support in language classes. Ms. Talento suggested exploring awarding certification for ASL interpretation and Dr. Jackson confirmed staff is looking into certification opportunities for various language skills.

Summer School

Nicholas Walkosak, Chair, presented the recommendations. The first is to revise the courses and catalog to better meet student needs. As part of this recommendation, the committee suggests prioritizing courses for students in need, coordinating with the Parks and Recreation Department so parents can better coordinate scheduling activities and remediation if needed, adding flexibility to elementary signup, and creating a parent survey to assess the effectiveness of Summer School and determine improvements for the future. Additional recommendations are to identify a teacher or principal to oversee Summer School; create a pilot ESOL/HILT session for new non-native English speaking students to give them a head start for adjusting to school; and overhaul the Summer School budget projections to better reflect costs.

Dr. Natrass described efforts to build the Summer School team to strengthen administration and instruction. She confirmed staff is working with Parks and Recreation to better align registration deadlines, and staff is working to increase dual enrollment opportunities. The group also discussed the program budget and supported efforts to increase accuracy. It was suggested that an alternative payment plan could be offered to families who have difficulty affording summer school. The group also recognized challenges in ensuring that students who need additional support are able to take advantage of summer school.

Ms. Van Doren thanked Ms. Marinaccio and Ms. Kuklenski-Miller for their leadership and passion in support of education. Board members thanked all of the participants and committee members for their work and commitment to APS.

The meeting adjourned 9:02 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Arlington School Board