

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Item D-1-a

Work Session on Enrollment and Transfers for Schools and Programs

March 15, 2017

The Arlington School Board convened on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 7:32 PM at 1426 N. Quincy Street, Arlington, VA 22207.

Present were:

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Dr. Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
James Lander, Member
Tannia Talento, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Linda Erdos, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Paul Jamelske, Director, Special Education
Lisa Stengle, Director, Planning and Evaluation
Sarah Johnson, Integrated Project Manager, Planning and Evaluation
Helene Hartman, Data Architect
Zach Larnard, Planner
Meg Tuccillo, Facilities Consultant

Introduction

Ms. Van Doren called the meeting to order and introduced participants. Dr. Murphy reviewed the status of this initiative and encouraged the community to continue engaging in the process.

Ms. Stengle explained the purpose of policies and policy implementation procedures (PIPs) and reviewed the Board's charge for updating the enrollment and transfers policy. She outlined five goals of this update and described community input received. She then shared feedback and staff recommendations. These include providing transportation to neighborhood and option schools only, with transportation for transfers the responsibility of parents/guardians. Also suggested is that the Board continue to consider transportation waivers as a tool for balancing enrollment. For admissions to option schools, it is recommended that siblings be kept together in elementary school and the definition of twins should be expanded. At the secondary level, twins should be considered separately. It is also suggested that the difference between admission to an option school and transfer to a neighborhood school be clarified, with these processes detailed in the PIP.

Staff also recommends that an annual list be published showing seats available at option schools and which schools can accommodate transfers. Wait lists for neighborhood schools should not be carried forward from one year to the next. Board members felt this recommendation was confusing

and staff will revise the wording to clarify what is intended. The group recognized that current policy allows transfers based on capacity; however, at this time no transfers are possible as all schools are at their capacity limit. The group considered how capacity is determined and recognized that enrollment fluctuates throughout the school year. Dr. Murphy summarized the discussion and affirmed that the revised policy will increase flexibility in allowing transfers, which will help balance capacity.

The next recommendation is to standardize application and selection processes for option schools. These processes will be defined in the PIP and will support the goal of equitable access. Admissions procedures for elementary immersion schools will also be adjusted to ensure language balance. The group discussed how policy might affect the instructional model of option programs, and staff agreed to consider this as revisions are made to the policy and PIP. In particular, the group considered how proposed changes will affect the immersion options and how to clearly communicate what is being considered. Staff is analyzing the impact of the recommendation to remove guaranteed admission preferences. In addition, staff suggests looking at adjusting the H-B Woodlawn lottery so all elementary schools are allotted slots based on the number of 5th graders at the school rather than on the proportion of students in a neighborhood school attendance zone.

Prior to the next discussion, Dr. Murphy provided background information on the Futures study and the work of the Master Planning group. These efforts gathered community input on the instructional programs and future needs for students and the community. Dr. Murphy affirmed that the initiatives being undertaken are continuing efforts to look to the future to provide for an expanding school system. Dr. Natrass briefly reviewed current initiatives including efforts to identify the instructional focus for new high school seats. She then presented guiding principles for developing a set of K-12 options. Summarizing current program options at the elementary, middle and high school level, she presented an alternative model for K-12 alignment. This model would have two option zones offering equitable choices to students throughout the county. K-8 option zones would include all types of programs and all schools will have a STEAM focus. Dr. Natrass shared an example of a possible K-12 scope and sequence with this model and described choices that would be available to a student residing in either zone.

Responding to questions, Dr. Natrass confirmed that in this model, neighborhood schools would be available to all students at all levels, and options for other programs would also be accessible. The group discussed the STEAM approach, and whether there would be sufficient space to guarantee students a slot in the program they want to pursue throughout their school years. Dr. Natrass recognized that availability would depend on demand for the programs. Also discussed was how interest in option programs will be gauged and how to incorporate alternatives such as Langston in this model. A community feedback form will be used to begin identifying demand for the various programs. Board members were also interested in how the two proposed zones would be determined, and recognized factors that may influence decisions on the programs offered and where they would be housed. The Board recognized that there likely will be a roll-out over time needed for some programs. It was also stressed that the model and options available need to be clearly explained to families to ensure that they understand the choices before them.

Dr. Natrass then updated the Board on three options for the instructional focus for 1,300 high school seats that will be presented to the community for feedback. These are the Education Center, Kenmore and the Career Center, and Dr. Natrass explained how these options were selected. The Board recognized that with the expected continued enrollment growth, all three options may need

to be developed in the long run. Dr. Natrass then responded to questions about the sites, and Board members made suggestions to clarify what is being considered at each site.

Staff then outlined next steps to review, revise and refine the options presented. Community engagement meetings will be held and all materials will be posted on the Web site for review. The Board asked that opportunities for community feedback be ongoing as these processes move forward. Staff confirmed there will be community meetings and electronic options to give input on all considerations. Staff also agreed to update the materials presented, respond to questions and comments, and to continue to share information with the community as these processes continue.

Board members appreciated the work that has been done and the creative approach in looking to the future, and thanked the staff and the community for their efforts.

Meeting adjourned 9:04 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Arlington School Board