

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board and Superintendent Retreat
August 19, 2016

Item C-1-g

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, June 30, 2016, at 1:01 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
Dr. Emma Violand-Sánchez, Member

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Claudia Mercado, Deputy Clerk

Call to Order

Ms. Van Doren called the retreat to order and introduced discussion of the Board's approach to their work. Roles of the Board and Superintendent were considered with a focus on how to improve processes and strengthen programs. Core beliefs and commitments were reviewed, and the group discussed how these values as well as the Strategic Plan inform the Board's work. The group considered various approaches of Board oversight, and recognized that different schools and students have different levels of need. Board members agreed with a model that blends performance/empowerment and managed instruction, as it provides flexibility to address areas of concern. The group also recognized some areas need more focus, and supported taking a 'big swing' in the coming year to address the most significant challenges. Looking at roles and responsibilities, the Board confirmed their role is to lead through policy development while the Superintendent's role is management. Specific functions discussed included Board meetings, administrative support, and policy development and oversight. The group agreed to focus on manageable meetings that address areas related to the Board's priorities.

Ms. Van Doren called for a brief recess at 2:15 PM. The Board reconvene at 2:25 PM.

2016-17 School Board Priorities

Dr. Kanninen reviewed the draft priorities, which are organized by areas of focus, ongoing initiatives, and topics to be monitored. The overall goal is to define the Board's focus, which will also provide guidance to staff. An earlier version of the priorities addressed cultural responsiveness, and Dr. Violand-Sánchez asked that it be added back to the document. The group discussed the suggestion and agreed to add as a priority "review and revise policies to address instruction, diversity, differentiation, admissions and transfers, and boundaries." The Board then discussed literacy, recognizing that it has been an area of concern and a priority for some time. It

was agreed that literacy should be the focus of the ‘big swing’ this year. The draft priorities were finalized and will be brought forward for information and adoption at upcoming meetings.

Mr. Goldstein and Dr. Violand-Sánchez shared a proposal for a diversity working group to develop principles that create a common understanding and guide next steps. Board members recognized that cultural competency is already incorporated into instruction, and considered the need for a working group. They reviewed benefits and concerns about the proposal, such as membership, goals, and how diversity is defined. APS already lists diversity as a core value, and there is a broadening acknowledgment of diversity throughout the community. The consensus was to continue to consider diversity and how best to recognize and support the diverse population.

Board Calendar and Agendas

The group briefly discussed structuring agendas to reflect the Board’s priorities. Also considered were moving some ACI committee reports from Board meetings to a work session, and how to best utilize the Superintendent’s Advisory Committee on Elimination of the Achievement Gap. Board members made suggestions for work session topics, considered how to implement the focus on literacy, and discussed how addressing the achievement gap can be tied in to instruction. Board members supported focusing Board agendas on topics that relate to the priorities, as well as hearing updates on items that received additional funding in the FY 2017 budget.

Dr. Murphy presented information on staff work plans for 2016-17 and shared a draft of the three to five year plan that will guide the Board and staff’s efforts. Outlining the policy review initiative, he shared background information and asked for Board feedback on policies of interest. Board members suggested that Policy 25-2.2, Enrollment and Transfers for Schools and Programs, needs to be considered, and the group recognized that revising this policy will require comprehensive community conversation. They also discussed the role of the Board in this process. Dr. Murphy confirmed that the Board will be well informed as the review moves forward.

The Board took a brief break at 4:50 PM and reconvened at 5 PM.

Budget planning

Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations, and Tameka Lovett-Miller, Acting Budget Director, reviewed the FY 2018 Budget time line. They also discussed how the Board can work with staff and the Superintendent to provide budget guidance. Additionally, the group reviewed the revenue sharing agreement with the County Board. This included reviewing the history and past experiences with revenue sharing, and options for moving forward.

The meeting adjourned 6:00 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Arlington School Board