

MEMORANDUM

TO: ACI

FROM: Arts Advisory Committee **2017-2018**

DATE: November 20, 2017

SUBJECT: Recommending Year Report

Report approved and submitted by these voting, Arts Advisory Committee current members:

Chair: Susan Scott

Members: Catherine Celestino, Marna Louis

The Arts Advisory Committee focuses on arts education in Arlington Public Schools, including instrumental and vocal music, visual arts, and theater arts Pre-K through 12th grade.

Our group's recommending year report has two parts:

1. Update for ACI on continued APS delays to implement two past, approved Arts Advisory Committee recommendations (**providing PE credit for marching band and a consistent and equitable middle school budget line item for visual arts supplies**) described below
2. Update on APS arts issues to continue to monitor

Key background --

For over a year, the Arts Advisory Committee has been in discussions with past and current ACI leadership regarding why these approved recommendations have not been implemented and committee members have talked to APS school board members one-on-one. This week the committee also sent a letter to APS leadership asking for both a written explanation of the delay for implementing these approved recommendations and a clear statement of next steps towards their implementation.

PART 1

ACI Approved Recommendation #1: Establish line item funding for Visual Arts supplies that is consistent for all middle schools.

Rationale: APS provides a consistent budget for Visual Arts supplies in elementary schools, but not for middle schools. Currently there is a wide gap between monies supplied to one middle school vs. another (ranging from \$3.98 - \$8.33 per student). Fairfax County Public Schools collect fees for Middle School creating a dollar amount per student of \$15.00 per wheel, \$25.00 per semester or \$50.00 per year, Loudon County Public Schools have set per pupil dollar (\$) amount of \$14.56. Results from a recent survey by the ACI Advisory Council for the Arts, an overwhelming majority of APS visual arts teachers are spending \$100 - \$500.00 of their own money to purchase materials to

teach their classes and must rely on additional funding from PTA, asking for donations and/or applying for grants. Through this recommendation, we hope to provide a baseline of equitable funding for visual arts supplies for all middle schools.

Status: Although recommended by the ACI and approved by the school board the recommendation was not put into the APS budget in 2016 or 2017 - continuing to create inequity amongst MS arts funding.

2011 – 2017 Strategic Plan Alignment: Aligns particularly with Strategic Goals #1 (Ensure That Every Student is Challenged and Engaged) and #4 (Provide Optimal Learning Environments), but by systematizing Visual Arts education across schools, it would also reduce achievement gaps in Arts (#2).

Budgetary Implications: It is recommended that a minimum of \$9.31 per student enrolled be allocated for MS art funding. It is recommended that the \$9.31 be redirected from FY16 MS Instructional supplies having a **\$0 impact on budget**. This recommendation aligns with the dollar amount per student in elementary school.

Past ACI votes: Yes-15, No-0, Abstain-1

ACI Approved Recommendation #2: Provide Physical Education Credit for Participation in Marching Band

(Nov 2017 update – This recommendation was approved in Jan/Feb of 2016 and was to create a pilot at Yorktown High School in the fall of 2016. That was not implemented although APS staff were instructed to work on it to create a workable program for the following year. In the winter/spring of 2017, APS staff moved forward and the Arts Advisory Committee was told all APS high schools would offer this program in the fall of 2017 which did not occur.

Rationale:

Past report language included only for background -- The Advisory Committee for the Arts would like to recommend that APS award Physical Education credit for Marching Band, beginning with the 2015/2016 school year. The committee proposes that two semesters of Marching band, taken over a two-year period, be substituted for one full year of PE and that Health curriculum be delivered online. Marching band is a course taught by APS faculty for a grade and is a part of the APS Program of Studies, unlike other athletic programs. High school students in Arlington Public Schools face many academic requirements and have limited flexibility in their schedules. They are often unable to take elective courses because of scheduling constraints. The burgeoning school-aged population in Arlington and increasingly crowded schools in the county exacerbate these scheduling constraints. Allowing P.E. credit for Marching Band would alleviate crowding in high school P.E. classes, free up classroom/gymnasium/field space, and give school administrators as well as students increased flexibility in scheduling. In addition, the policy change would give students a chance to explore other interests while insuring that their physical education needs are fully met. One APS faculty member recently observed, “As classes are constantly added to the curriculum, it would make sense to have Marching Band cover the P.E. requirement.”

It is in the best interest of our students to allow them to meet P.E. requirements through Marching Band, eliminating redundancy and broadening their academic opportunities while insuring that their health and physical education are superb.

Virginia requires the following:

Amount of Required Physical Education: The state does mandate physical education and health in grades K to 7. There is a mandate for high school physical education, but it does not specify the grade or year of participation in physical education during a student’s high school tenure.

High School Physical Education: The state requires two credits of high school physical education for a student to graduate.

***The state of Virginia **does** permit school districts and schools to allow students to substitute other activities for their required physical education credit, based on local district policy.*

Status: Pam Farrell, Arts Education Supervisor and Debbie DeFranco Physical Education Supervisor are designing a course to be piloted at all three high schools, available Fall of 2017.

2011-2017 Strategic Plan Alignment: This recommendation aligns particularly with APS Strategic Goal #4 (Provide Optimal Learning Environments), as adoption of this recommendation would ease overcrowding in physical education classes by having Marching Band students fulfill the P.E. requirement outside the regular school day (Marching Band practices and performs after regular school hours). Specifically, the Goal #4 Desired Outcome stating, “APS aligns needs and resources,” will be addressed by this recommendation.

Budget Implications: This recommendation has **\$0 impact on the budget** and possibly could have a positive effect on lowering PE class size and staffing due to a dually enrolled model.

Past ACI vote: Yes-15, No-1, Abstain-0

Part 3

February 2017 Arts Advisory Committee list for arts issue areas for ACI to consider monitoring now and in the future:

1. Monitor any proposed MS Block Schedule and the negative impact it could have on arts electives. Specifically, maintaining researched best practices to ensure daily instruction which includes cross-grade and ability groupings. In 2018, the Arts Advisory Committee will follow up on concerns regarding how Gunston Middle School is implementing their instrumental music instruction following the school’s switch to block scheduling in the fall of 2017.
2. Monitor varying effects on “equity” in art program provision across Pre K-12 programs at all APS schools and make information/spending levels more transparent to parents/public including varying funding levels for visual arts supplies in different secondary schools.
3. Monitor any future Virginia Board of Education proposed legislation requiring Virginia middle schools to offer yearlong CTEA courses which are (Career Investigation courses) to be taken one time during middle which could impact continuity of arts’ curriculum.

4. Look at expanding having accompanists at the elementary level for choral music.
5. Similarly, investigate the possibility of a planning factor change for secondary orchestra due to increased enrollment.
6. Support a Fine Arts Program at the newly proposed high school without cutting access to arts courses at the three high schools.

Arts Advisory Committee members 2017-2018

Chair: Susan Scott

Past Chairs -- Hanna Eun and Karen Lewis

Members: Catherine Celestino, Marna Louis,

Member Observer: Karen Dunlap

Pam Farrell (Arts Education Supervisor and liaison to the Arts Advisory Committee.)