

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Item C-1-b**

ACI Work Session

January 25, 2018

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, January 25, 2018, at 6:34 PM at 1426 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia.

**Present were:**

Barbara Kanninen, Chair  
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair  
Monique O’Grady, Member  
Tannia Talento, Member  
Nancy Van Doren, Member  
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

**Also present were:**

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent  
Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction  
Pam Farrell, Arts Supervisor  
Lori Silver, Interim ELA Supervisor  
Shannan Ellis, Interim Math Supervisor  
Dr. Dat Le, Science Supervisor  
Cathy Hix, Social Studies Supervisor  
Paul Jamelske, Director of Special Education  
Dr. Laura Newton, Director of Student Services  
Pam McClellan, Supervisor of Counseling

**Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)**

Tina Kuklenski-Miller and Meredith Purple, Co-Chairs

Dr. Kanninen welcomed the group and thanked the ACI for their commitment and contributions, and acknowledged Co-Chairs Ms. Kuklenski-Miller and Ms. Purple. Dr. Murphy appreciated the committee reports and thanked Dr. Natrass for her work with the ACI.

**Overview of ACI**

Ms. Kuklenski-Miller described changes implemented this year, including reducing the number of meetings, restructuring the recommendation process, supporting stronger collaboration between committees, and revising the role of the vice chairs. Ms. Kuklenski-Miller also outlined next steps and thanked Dr. Natrass and Ms. Van Doren for their support. Dr. Natrass then presented the revised recommendation process, sharing the new rubric that was used and explaining how to interpret the data. Board members asked about the diversity of the ACI membership and student participation on committees. Ms. Kuklenski-Miller confirmed that while there is some diversity and a few students participating, the leadership is working to expand participation by all groups.

**English/Language Arts**

Linda Arnsbarger and Judith Rudman, Co-Chairs, supported by Ms. Silver, presented the committee's recommendations. The first is to continue to build the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS), specifically providing literacy interventions for all students in secondary grades with a focus on fidelity, targeting student needs, intensive training and progress monitoring. Ms. Arnsbarger shared detailed recommendations of the specific types of support that are needed. The second recommendation is to adopt a rigorous secondary writing curriculum for grades 9-12 that incorporates best practices and ensures that students are college- and career-ready by graduation.

The group discussed staffing for ATSS. Dr. Natrass confirmed the Department of Teaching and Learning is working to address all needs, and stressed that ATSS is the responsibility of all departments. Ms. Talento asked how staff is helping students adjust to the elimination of the modified diploma option, and Dr. Natrass again confirmed that staff is working to ensure appropriate support is provided to all students. Also discussed were plans for curriculum writing for English/Language Arts and identifying who is responsible for initiating ATSS services, and if there is funding to support this work. Board members thanked the co-chairs for their report.

### **Social Studies**

Co-Chairs Heidi Gibson and Royce Sherlock presented the recommendations, thanking the committee members and staff liaison Ms. Hix. The committee's first recommendation is to support an increased focus on global education and citizenship, and the second recommendation is to continue support for the Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) in social studies instruction. Ms. Gibson noted the importance of global education to prepare students to be successful citizens, and the committee suggested three steps to develop resources and a plan to implement global education. The Chairs also explained that the committee endorses PATs because their use promotes skill building in collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity.

The group recognized that the IB programme supports global learning, but also acknowledged that it can be somewhat restrictive and not always adaptable to meet student needs. Ms. Gibson and Ms. Hix described how a global approach is being implemented in classrooms. The group also discussed meeting state requirements and explored the idea of developing a resource database. It was noted that these recommendations do not have a significant cost, and Ms. Hix and Ms. Gibson confirmed that staff will work to implement both recommendations in the summer and beyond.

### **Special Education**

After sharing background information about the Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC), member Wendy Pizer presented two recommendations. The first is to improve and increase consistency and uniformity of special education services implementation across the county, and the second is to require general education teachers and building level administrators to attain core competencies for the education of students with disabilities. The committee specifically supports creating Standard Operating Procedural Manuals for special education to be made available to both parents and staff. Ms. Pizer confirmed that this work will also benefit general education students.

The Board suggested incorporating expectations for special education instruction in school improvement plans, and agreed with the importance of manuals to help educate families and staff, asking that manuals be made available in multiple languages. Mr. Jamelske described documents

currently provided and agreed to work to expand the use of such documents. Ms. Van Doren noted that state changes to special education regulations made the previously available manuals obsolete. The Board supported developing a plan to update and translate these manuals.

## **Arts**

Chair Susan Scott presented the report, reviewing the committee's work over the past several years and appreciating support from Arts Supervisor Pam Farrell. The committee is again recommending the establishment of line item funding for Visual Arts supplies that is consistent for all middle schools, and continues to recommend that students receive physical education credit for participation in Marching Band. Ms. Scott shared background information about these two recommendations which have been brought forward in past years as well, and shared committee concerns that the recommendations have not yet been implemented.

Board members appreciated the committee's efforts and encouraged the committee to continue to work with staff to address their concerns. Ms. Talento specifically spoke to issues with implementing the marching band recommendation, and encouraged further exploration of options.

## **Science**

Co-chair Nina Nichols presented four Science recommendations. The first and second relate to outdoor learning. They are to provide funding for staffing and transportation so middle and high school students can visit the Outdoor Lab, and to fund a full-time Outdoor Learning Coordinator to ensure access and learning opportunities for students at County parks and Nature Centers. The committee also recommends assessing differentiation in science instruction and reviewing how independent science projects are offered in middle school. The final recommendation is a joint recommendation with the Advisory Committee on Sustainability to fund a full-time Sustainability Coordinator starting in 2018-19. Ms. Nichols also highlighted the difference between the roles of the Outdoor Learning Coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator.

Dr. Kanninen appreciated support for outdoor learning but noted budget implications of the recommendations. Dr. Le described current efforts to expand outdoor learning and to develop relationships with local nature centers to provide additional opportunities. Ms. O'Grady asked about on-site outdoor learning, and Ms. Nichols confirmed that the Sustainability Coordinator would implement such opportunities at individual schools. Also discussed was supporting students with independent science projects and developing partnerships with community groups. Ms. Van Doren spoke to strengthening the curriculum as it relates to science projects.

## **Student Services**

After describing the membership and staff support, co-chairs Jill Flack and Judy Hadden presented three recommendations, informed by Youth Risk Behavior survey data. First, the committee recommends increasing the number of counselors in elementary schools to bring the counselor-to-student ratio to 1:1371. The second recommendation is to continue to increase the number of school psychologists and social workers to better support the social, emotional and mental health needs of students. The final recommendation is to address the growing need for critical substance

abuse prevention and intervention services in secondary schools and programs by adding one full-time substance abuse counselor at all secondary schools and programs.

The Board discussed the current ratio of students to counselors and Ms. McClellan provided information about the number of counselors in APS schools. Noting that many counselors also have additional non-counseling responsibilities, she commented on the challenges of ensuring that these staff have the capacity to focus on counseling. Dr. Newton spoke to the importance of early education and interventions to support children and help avoid later issues, and Board members encouraged counselors to work with staff and families to better identify and address issues. The group recognized that all staff members need to be able to identify and address student needs.

### **Mathematics**

Mark Hill, Chair, supported by Math Supervisor Shannan Ellis, presented two recommendations. The first is to ensure that there is a full-time math coach at every elementary school. Mr. Hill noted that this not only would support struggling students, but also will strengthen support for all students. Recognizing the costs, the committee suggests phasing in these positions. The second recommendation is to offer Algebra I in middle school only when appropriate. The committee acknowledged that not all students may be ready for algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, so asked that instruction focus on ensuring student success.

The group discussed the effectiveness of math coaches, and Ms. Ellis described how coaches support learning to meet individual student needs. The Board encouraged staff to continue to ensure appropriate opportunities are provided to students. Ms. Ellis then described hands-on experiential learning that is implemented in classrooms. Also discussed was how to provide students with appropriate math opportunities and Ms. Ellis reiterated that mathematics instruction is focused on identifying student needs and providing appropriate opportunities and instruction.

### **Closing Remarks**

Dr. Murphy thanked the committees, the staff and the Board for the hard work and meaningful conversation. Ms. Kuklenski-Miller thanked Ms. Purple for her work as co-chair, recognized concerns expressed by the committees and encouraged them to continue to work with the ACI and the Board to address those concerns. She also asked the Board to continue to provide feedback on the recommendations, and thanked all of the committee members who participated.

The meeting adjourned 9:23 PM.

### **ATTEST:**

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Melanie Elliott, Clerk  
Arlington School Board

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Barbara Kanninen, Chair  
Arlington School Board