

**Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)**  
**Minutes**  
**April 4, 2018**

**Members Present**

**Co-Chairs:** Tina Kuklenski-Miller, Meredith Purple

**Staff Liaison:** Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning, Dr. Tara Natrass

**School Board Liaison:** Nancy Van Doren

**Vice Chairs:** Donna Owens, Michael Shea

**Committee Chairs:**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chair</b>		<b>Co-Chair</b>		<b>Staff Liaison</b>	
<b>Arts</b>	S. Scott/H. Eun	x	Karen Lewis		Pam Farrell	
<b>Career, Technical</b>	Alisa Cowen		Michael Shea	x	Kris Martini	
<b>Early Childhood</b>	Julie Launcher				Elaine Perkins	x
<b>English</b>	Linda Arnsbarger		Judith Rudman		Shannan Ellis	
<b>ESOL/HILT</b>	Anne Zebra	x			Sam Klein	
<b>Gifted Services</b>	Dan Corcoran	x			Cheryl McCullough	
<b>Health/PE</b>	Jana Meltzer				Debbie DeFranco	
<b>Math</b>	Mark Hill				Sarah Putnam	
<b>Science</b>	Nina Nichols				Dat Le	
<b>Social Studies</b>	Heidi Gibson		Royce Sherlock	x	Cathy Hix	
<b>Special Education</b>	Paul Patterson	x	Wendy Pizer		Paul Jamelske	x
<b>Student Services</b>	Jill Flack		Judy Hadden	x	Laura Newton Pam McClellan	
<b>World Languages</b>	Sara Aramendia				Elisabeth Harrington	

**Community Representatives:**

<b>Association</b>	<b>Member</b>	
<b>AEA</b>	Ingrid Gant	
<b>Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council</b>	David Remick	
<b>American Association of University Women (AAUW)</b>		
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>		
<b>Civic Federation</b>		
<b>County Council of PTAs</b>	Mahender Dudani	
<b>League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)</b>	Bob Garcia	x
<b>League of Women Voters</b>	<b>Natalie Goldring/Seema Jain</b>	x
<b>Special Education PTA</b>	Nick Walkosak	
<b>Teachers Council on Instruction</b>	Shannel Hoyer	x

School Representatives:

Schools - Elementary	Representative		Alternates		Non-Member Reps	
Abingdon	Nate Hardy					
Arlington Science Focus	Mary Schmergel					
Arlington Traditional	Geva Lester					
Ashlawn						
Barcroft	Lahn Nguyen					
Barrett						
Campbell	Nathan Zee					
Carlin Springs						
Claremont	Adrienne McQuillan	x				
Discovery	Susan Spence		Kristin Grigorescu			
Drew	Brian Haynes	x	Evan Thomas			
Glebe	Laura LoGerfo	x				
Hoffman-Boston						
Jamestown						
Key	S. Westerlund	x				
Long Branch	Caroline Rogus	x	Lisa DeMarchi			
McKinley	Valerie O'Such		Susan Marcantoni			
Nottingham	Gary Steele		Kevin Dezfulian			
Oakridge	Laura Henry					
Patrick Henry	Mansi Kothagi					
Randolph						
Taylor	Dana Milburn	x				
Tuckahoe	Kelly Alexis	x				
<b>Middle Schools</b>						
Gunston	Eduina Martins-Roy					
HB Woodlawn MS	Brian Haynes					
Jefferson	Lanh Nguyen		Lisa DeMarchi Sleigh			
Kenmore	Anne Oliveira		Lora Strine			
Swanson	Maureen La Piana		Ellen Greer			
Williamsburg	Dan Corcoran	x				
<b>High Schools</b>						
HB Woodlawn HS	Celia Boddington					
Arlington Career Center	Alisa Cowen					
Langston						
Stratford						
Wakefield	Arminda Valles-Hall		Sonia Rosen			
Washington-Lee	Kyra Buchko					
Yorktown	Martha Chow	x	Christine Van Kirk			

**7:10 p.m. Call to Order:** Co-Chair, Tina Kuklenski-Miller

Tina let everyone know that the approval of March minutes will occur at the May meeting. Tina then introduced Rosa Briceno, Family and Community Engagement Specialist.

**7:11 p.m. Family and Community Engagement (FACE):** Rosa Briceno, Family and Community Engagement Specialist for the Department of Teaching and Learning

Rosa introduced members of the FACE Action Team and explained that the team is slightly different than other advisory committees within APS. She then had ACI members try an exercise to get to know each other at the meeting. ACI members paired up to answer a few questions:

1. Share your name, the school or program you are affiliated with, and something you like to do with your hands, and
2. Review one of the elements of the Family and Community Engagement rubric and discuss your experience with that particular area.

Rosa explained that the building relationships piece of this activity is an example of what FACE does. Rosa said that the foundation of high impact family engagement is to build trusting relationships and connections. When this is achieved in the community, they are able to work with families in achieving the common goal of student success.

Rosa then shared a video that includes an overview of FACE. The link to the video will be available on our APS website. Before the question and answer period, Rosa asked everyone to please fill out an exit form for reflection. A question and answer session then followed.

**Question:** When do FACE activities occur?

**Answer:** Activities are usually customized to family availability. Sometimes we have meetings in the mornings. Teachers volunteer from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm for evening events. Friday meeting times have been requested by most families so we try to have most of the events or meetings on Fridays.

**Question:** An ACI member asked if there is any information or recommendation on how to diversify committee groups.

**Answer:** Rosa recommended to do activities like the one we did for this meeting. Building trustworthy relationships helps members to feel included. Another helpful factor is to take a *Parent Leader Facilitation Training*.

Tina Kuklenski-Miller, ACI Co-Chair, mentioned that earlier in the year Meredith and Tina were informed that FACE may want to be a part of ACI as well as a stand-alone parent group. More information will follow regarding the new group.

**7:48 ACI Policy:** Tina Kuklenski-Miller, ACI Co-Chair

Tina discussed how difficult it was working on ACI structure for the last two years. She is somewhat perplexed about the process, starting with the direction both the School Board and the Superintendent wanted ACI to work toward. There has been a push toward the goals and objectives the School Board has versus the traditional structure of ACI. We are all trying to find a balance.

In that process, we are looking at what things have been working, and what things have not. For example, PTAs have stated that moving to one meeting per month instead of two could help in recruiting representatives from some of our schools. Additionally, Tina explained the role of vice chairs. Historically, there were vice chairs who were assigned to certain committees, who were the voice between the ACI and committees, and the chairs did not have to come to the ACI meetings. But then there was a period of a couple years where there was not much happening with the vice chair position. So, we decided to give the vice chairs a specific area to reflect on and work directly with the committee chairs and educate us all on specific topics and goals that the School Board and Superintendents' office recommended. There has been some push back on this process.

Moving forward on the ACI policy, Tina said she misunderstood by thinking that the ACI policy would be getting revised soon. The School Board is not ready to deal with the ACI policies at this time. However, there is a draft ready and the board will have it when it comes to the revisions. So for now, there are no changes to the policy and we are moving forward without revisions at this time.

Tina asked if there were any changes or comments.

Meredith Purple, ACI Co-chair, commented about how we will move forward with the current policy. She will be sending out a survey in May/June to ACI to gather information on what ideas the group may have for next year, and if there are any structural changes of ACI needed to be made for an easier work flow.

**Question:** Can you articulate what you mean when you say we are going to operate under the old policy? Can you clarify that, as we have been working under the old policy this year?

**Answer:** We have been working more on the priorities of the school board and less organically as we have in the past – it is not one in the same. I think the way forward is figuring out a balance in how we do our work. We have been advised that committees are to create the subject matter recommendations in the way they feel most comfortable to do so at this point. Also, people are appointed through the school board and there are no changes to that.

**Question:** What are we going back to – two meetings per month? Membership?

**Answer:** Important that you voice what your needs are, look at ways to give us time to do our work, time to dig into the reports, timing of reports throughout the year, etc. What we wanted to do tonight was for Tina and me to hear some things from you all – it was clear that some people wanted to say some things. When the school board is ready to hear from us, they will have the comments from ACI to review.

**Comment from ACI member:** We don't have enough time. I would highly recommend we need clarification on the ACI process. We need a broader group of people to come together to get something set up. I would like to have smaller groups of people to start before including school board members and other APS staff. The larger meeting can include all, but only after the smaller groups come together.

Tina asked the ACI group if what everyone is wanting to do next year is to have the ACI meeting be a discussion group after the smaller working group meetings get together on topics?

**Comment from ACI member:** It would be nice to do both meetings. The larger ACI meeting can be about discussion, raising issues and concerns. The smaller working groups can take the information and create suggestions on how we function. Information has been brought up in pieces to the group.

Meredith asked the group if we can try to electronically start conversation to then follow up as group?

**Comment from ACI member:** Historical perspectives – It would be nice to hear from older ACI members and how we worked before. This would be beneficial for a new member, where they have a starting point with historical experiences.

**Comment from ACI member:** We are so very lucky to have so many people be part of ACI, we need to keep them all year long. Sure we will have drops, for those who stay, we want them to feel engaged and feel like their ideas matter, we do not want them to feel intimidated about ACI.

**Comment from ACI member:** Historical experiences are valuable. Top down versus bottom up is one of the balances that we will need to work on. Also, talk about a model on how we can communicate with other schools.

**Comment from ACI member:** I am new to ACI this year and was on the Early Childhood committee for a few years. It seems like for at least three out of the six ACI meetings, the conversation is about how ACI works. I don't really know what we are supposed to do here. This is not the best investment of my time. I am not sure if and how I am impacting. I have read about topics we have discussed and it seems like what we have talked about here at ACI is not being heard at all.

**Comment from ACI member:** Being new to all this, what I found frustrating last year when I would raise questions about things, I would get, we have already discussed this, let's move on. I hear all these great recommendations, they all get passed, and then I look for action at the school level and I don't see them. It has me thinking about what am I spending my time on. My last child is graduating in two years, will any of these recommendation have an impact on her? I feel the biggest problem that no one is addressing is the that schools are way too overcrowded. I have seen personally, teachers not willing to assign more papers, because who wants to read 100 papers in one week. There isn't that acknowledgement that we are getting larger. I am seriously thinking I may not come back next year if we don't see even little changes in how our recommendations are treated.

Meredith explained that the recommendations ACI brings forward are completely advisory. The school board can do with them what they want.

**Comment from ACI member:** I enjoy coming to these meetings, I appreciate all the presentations that APS brings to us. This is very valuable information but I think that it squeezes time from out meetings. If we can add a few extra meetings throughout the year, where one meeting can be all about issues and another meeting where we have presentations. Also when we talk about committee reports, it is important to talk about them during non-recommending years to get all the questions answered before the recommending year when the reports are written.

**Comment from Vice Chair, Donna Owens:** We have so many sub-committees that work outside of the monthly meeting. I feel that is where the work is being done. We need to really get our expectations of detailed. We can't do everything in three hours, what are the expectations we have in our 3-hour meeting?

**Comment from ACI Member:** What is the impact? Can data be gathered – statistically, recommendations made over the past number of years and exactly how many resulted in anything being implemented. And do we see what the school board voted on?

**Meredith:** We actually ask that of the non-recommending committees. That information is tracked.

**Dr. Natrass** stated that we have the information on the status of the last three years of recommendations.

**Nancy Van Doren** stated that the school board does not vote directly on ACI recommendations. But APS and the school board are listening and are influenced by the work of ACI. The work that ACI does is so important and so valuable because there is input from representatives from each school and department. It's just difficult to quantify the work ACI does when it comes to direct recommendations or changes in the School System. This group is a very valuable, true advisory committee to the school board and to APS.

**Comment from ACI Member:** As a school rep, one of the best things ACI meetings do is get ideas from other schools to take to others. In the past, there was letter the school board wrote regarding what ACI had accomplished in the previous few years. ACI is not the place you come to see overnight solutions. We learn about issues and build solutions. I don't think we have a representative from every school. That needs to change.

**Comment from ACI Member:** A new member shared her story and how she feels ACI has made changes to policy.

**Nancy Van Doren:** If ACI is planning on asking for any waiver to any aspect of the policy it needs to happen as soon as possible, one of the difficult processes is appointing new members to ACI, the sooner you get those names, the better. One of the toughest parts of recruiting is waiting too long to get names in. By policy, the Board must appoint names in July for the next school year. The process of gathering information for such a large group is very time consuming and waiting until the last minute makes it very challenging.

The waiver that was put out for consideration was to have the School Board appoint only the committee chairs, vice chairs and co-chairs. This way, people can join at their will. The tracking of members is a huge job within itself. It would be good to consider not having to appoint all the members.

Meredith asked if anyone is in favor of asking for the waiver so we don't have to appoint all members? It seems like a non-issue. I am not sure if people want to we move forward with that?

**Question:** Is there any benefit to being appointed?

**Answer:** Nancy Van Doren – When the school system was a lot smaller, it was easier to appoint members. It seems like now it is more difficult now than years ago; especially regarding FOIA.

Meredith is going to do an electronic survey– not really policy stuff, but how we are going to organize ourselves.

This month's update on the Strategic Plan. The final draft is on our Engage page on our main APS website. We want to hear from ACI if the buckets are right? Look for anything. Please get in touch with Meredith if you have any questions. This is the last opportunity for public input.

**9:20** - Meeting adjourned