

Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC)

Annual Report 2017-18



INTRODUCTION

This is the annual report of the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC) prepared for the School Board of Arlington, Virginia.

The FAC assists the School Board in the continuous, systematic review of school facilities and the biennial and long-range Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Members are appointed to two-year staggered terms, and may be invited to serve for up to three consecutive terms. APS staff actively assists the FAC in its work, as do liaisons from other Arlington councils and citizen groups. FAC meetings are held once each month from September to June. Additional work sessions are scheduled as needed. FAC members, who are seen as informed citizens, are regularly invited to serve as members of APS Building Level Planning Committees (BLPC), community and County groups, on special task forces such as the Career Center Working Group and also serve as Ambassadors to school communities on topics such as the biennial school bond drive. FAC members also assist at APS Community Forums, typically as small group facilitators. The members of the FAC seek to provide the School Board with a perspective that reflects Arlington County as a whole.

All FAC meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are posted on the APS website. Each meeting includes the opportunity for public comment, at which interested citizens are welcome to briefly address the FAC on issues of concern. Community groups may request an invitation to brief the FAC on topics of mutual interest.

This school year provided a variety of opportunities for the FAC to engage with APS staff and leadership, and collaborate with parents and community members in wide reaching public meetings. The FAC offered analysis and advice to the School Board on critical facility improvements, capacity and enrollment issues, and growth in the county, each of which impact the educational experience for our

children. Working closely with staff in Facilities and Operations, the FAC provided input into APS projects and planning efforts at all stages of development.

FAC INVOLVEMENT

Throughout this school year the FAC has been involved in a discussion around the impacts of our growing enrollment on our school facilities. As an advisory committee to the School Board, we aim to provide a county-wide perspective that puts each decision into the context of how it impacts the capacity and facility needs for the entire school division. We approached each issue through the lens of how APS can accommodate current and future growth within the limits of our budget and available space.

Projections show continued and robust enrollment growth, and it is therefore important to plan for our facilities needs in a way that prepares us for the future. We need to look for efficiencies wherever we can and investigate and invest in new ways of planning, building and operating that save time and money while maintaining the high quality of education for all APS students.

Every decision we make in the near term and the long term regarding land use and capital projects should be considered through the lens of how it impacts all of Arlington. As Arlington and APS grow there will be more demands on our current facilities and amenities and a necessity to create more capacity, common spaces and amenities for students while balancing the needs of all citizens in Arlington. Arlington County is fully developed; available space for new schools and other public facilities is limited and must serve our growing population's needs for schools and multiple other uses. We must therefore ensure that we are maximizing the use of our sites and not limiting our ability to grow programs and schools in the future.

We feel that APS should work to further develop a strategic, collaborative relationship between the Arlington School Board and the Arlington County Board and to develop a comprehensive and strategic long-range plan for land use and capital projects, which ensures that the needs for more schools and fields are considered in every planning initiative that the County undertakes. Collaboration is necessary to identify sites for new schools, to ensure that all sites are planned to allow for future growth, to find new ways to save time and money within the various planning processes, and to seek additional sources of revenue wherever possible.

Charge for the Career Center Working Group

The FAC worked with the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee (JFAC) to help draft the charge for the Career Center Working Group (CCWG). The background for the charge reads:

Given increasing pressures to maximize land use and meet community and school needs in a land-constrained County with a growing student population, the School Board and County Board decided to engage in a process to analyze, evaluate and plan how to optimize the site in the long term within the context of existing Arlington Public Schools (APS) high schools and the broader Arlington community.

The FAC supported the fundamental premise of the CCWG charge and the resulting process that has led to strategic and thoughtful planning of the site in a way that would allow for future growth and would create a school with facilities that would benefit the entire community.

Education Center Renovation

In the fall, we weighed in on renovation of the Education Center located on the Washington-Lee High School campus by advocating for flexible and adaptable spaces. We argued that it is important to be

mindful of common spaces because as we grow the educational needs of our students not only require classroom space but, also spaces for art and music, a gymnasium, cafeteria, library and space for other extracurricular opportunities for all students. We also advocated for creating more seats when given the option because spending the same amount of money for fewer seats would raise the cost per seat and would necessitate building additional seats at a different location at a later date, and at a higher price due to escalating construction costs.

New Elementary School at Reed

The planning process for the New Elementary School at Reed was different from previous processes in that for the first time a Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) was given a charge by the School Board. This charge directed the BLPC to look at options with a high, medium and low cost. A major obstacle on the site (an 84" drainage pipe above which the building may not be constructed) directly impacted the design of the building and the layout of the site. This led to four different design options that were considered by the BLPC. The BLPC and Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) had a strong preference for the "Integrated Option". The FAC advocated for looking at the decision through a matrix that not only included community concerns but also took into context the overall seat needs of APS and the constraints of our budget. When the "Integrated Option" was estimated to cost \$6 million over the approved \$49 million for the project we urged the School Board to consider the pressures of enrollment growth and acknowledge that these pressures force us to ensure every decision reflects a prudent use of our fiscal resources, our available land and our bonding capacity. We urged the School Board to consider the long-term impact of finding the additional \$5-6 million to fund the Integrated Option, and the precedent that this sets.

Elementary Planning Initiative

We worked with staff on developing considerations and giving feedback for the Elementary Planning Initiative. The FAC generally supported the process and the directly related effort to identify and implement operational efficiencies in transportation. We also supported the process, which looked system-wide, considered nearly all schools and boundaries at once instead of piecemeal, and took a broad look at the locations of our neighborhood schools and elementary-level option programs.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

We participated in two work sessions to provide input on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Framework, discussed the CIP extensively at several of our monthly meetings and gave a lengthy statement on the CIP at School Board Work Session #3. The outcome was to identify a one- to three-year time frame in which we thought consideration should be given for adding capacity at the elementary school, middle school, and high school levels. We did not propose options because we felt that options should be evaluated once the amount of funding that will potentially be available within our bonding capacity for all our planned and needed projects is understood. The FAC strongly advocated looking at the seat needs for all levels in the CIP and recommended that the plan describe solutions, including potentially creative solutions, that would yield additional seats on time and on budget.

Future Facilities Needs Report and Sub-Committee

We convened a sub-committee and spent several months discussing and writing a *Future Facilities Needs Report*. This report aimed to illustrate what our future facilities needs would look like if APS continues to grow to 35,000 students, 37,500 students, and 40,000 students. Student enrollment growth has increased pressure to make decisions that account for future growth and the challenges of both space and budget constraints. We are entering a period in which school siting and capital building decisions must be made with a more thorough understanding and appreciation of their broader impact

on the entire County. We believe that systemic changes will be necessary as we continue to grow, including construction of facilities located on properties not currently owned by APS.

We concluded that we need to further strengthen and integrate long-range planning by establishing a greater partnership between APS and Arlington County. This report identified potential APS seat needs in a growing school system. The solutions for how we manage this growth will be found in planning: planning for new school seats as well as a growing need for field space and common spaces for all of our schools and community members. It is important to begin to identify potential sites now, and to understand how we as a community can position ourselves to make forward-thinking decisions.

Policy and PIP Sub-Committee

A subcommittee met several times to discuss the BLPC Policy Implementation Procedure (PIP). We suggested and advocated that the BLPC PIP create clear parameters for cost, context, how the project fits into the seat needs of the entire school division, and clearly defines expectations for community input.

Minor Construction/Major Maintenance

This year the FAC noted a good level of professional maturity of both the Minor Construction/Major Maintenance (MC/MM) project selection process and the related committee participant experience to such that the bulk of the work was achieved in a single meeting with some on-line discussion and ranking following. John Giambalvo continued as the link between FAC and MC/MM.

The FAC noted the consistently high level of MC/MM funding provided by the School Board even in this challenging budget environment and sees this as support of the FAC's strong push not to lose sight of protecting, maintaining and improving existing facilities due to increased emphasis on adding permanent seats. Another encouraging factor is that the majority of chosen projects continued to emanate through a professional process consisting of central inspections, professional analysis, and trade supervisor recommendations.

As indicated in last year's report, the volume of projects has the potential to slightly outpace the Maintenance Department's internal project management staff and resources. This situation has been exacerbated as a larger portion of time of the indoor air quality specialist (who formerly managed some MC/MM projects) is now dedicated solely to issues concerning leaks, mold, asbestos, lead, etc. Part of the solution is the use of the construction manager adviser term contract, under which a project manager was contracted to work alongside Design and Construction and Maintenance project managers.

The Infrastructure Bonds that continue to be approved by Arlington voters enable APS to fund so many of these important MC/MM projects. Additionally, FAC endorses merging of the HVAC, Roofing and "Other" categories into a single stream to afford greater flexibility/adaptability of use. This has enabled both Randolph and Gunston major HVAC projects to proceed simultaneously; these projects are being run by a project manager from Heery International, who was contracted to work with APS under the construction manager advisor term contract. The same project manager has successfully completed the new APS central office relocation to the Syphax Education Center.

As a follow up to last year's report, the ongoing HVAC funding stream and support from the Human Resources team have yielded a significantly improved staffing situation for Maintenance during this past year as pay rates for Senior HVAC Technicians were adjusted to become more competitive in the local

market. As a result, APS has seen an increase in applicants and hired some well qualified Senior HVAC Technicians for the first time in a while.

Maintenance Services has a very busy summer ahead. Besides approximately half of the Gunston and Randolph HVAC projects (these are both on two-year time lines and also include lighting and ceiling upgrades), synthetic turf play areas will be installed at two schools, Barrett and Science Focus, where natural grass simply cannot be sustained due to the volume of use. New playgrounds are also planned for Arlington Traditional and Arlington Science Focus schools. New cooling towers will be installed at Drew and Claremont, and two major rooftop units at Tuckahoe will be replaced to solve long-standing issues. Waterproofing needs at Williamsburg and Tuckahoe will also be addressed to improve indoor air quality.

Food services is receiving a good share of this round of MC/MM funding, including upgraded ovens at several elementary schools and modernization of walk-in freezer/refrigerators at Drew and Claremont, while Jefferson is receiving a complete school kitchen make over.

Security improvements also continue at relocatable complexes where security installations will be enhanced to levels comparable to the main buildings. Camera and radio enhancements and upgrades are also planned for multiple schools.

The safety program to provide stand-alone pebble sheds for gasoline and other combustible materials continues, as sheds will be installed at the last four elementary schools this summer.

While the HVAC is being replaced at Gunston this summer, the school will also be repainted and receive new carpet and tile floor finishes.

These are just a few selected highlights from a list of over one hundred projects to be completed this summer. These projects will be achieved while APS fully accommodates all summer school and camp needs. FAC acknowledges that only extremely detailed inter-departmental collaboration and planning make this all possible in such a brief window of opportunity. A full report will follow next spring.

Liaison Activities

As in past years, FAC members served as liaisons to committees, councils, BLPCs and working groups.

- County Council of PTAs (CCPTA): Lois Thomas Koontz and Laura Saul Edwards
- Career Center Working Group (CCWG): Colleen Pickford
- Reed Elementary School BLPC: Miles Mason

CAPTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Abingdon Elementary: The multi-year, multi-phased project to renovate and expand Abingdon concluded and was celebrated at a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony featuring a wide display of talented performances by Abingdon students.

Alice West Fleet Elementary: Design concluded and construction began on Arlington's next elementary school, highlighted by the Building-Up Celebration featuring students from the Patrick Henry Elementary School.

Arlington Career Center: Design concluded and construction began on a summer 2018 project to prepare for continuing enrollment growth at Arlington Tech, while the site received much discussion among the Career Center Working Group and during the FY 2019-28 CIP as a site for future high school seats.

Education Center: Project planning and consultant selection began for renovations at the Education Center to provide additional seats.

Interior Modifications: Construction work concluded ahead of the 2017-18 school year to add student capacity at the Arlington Career Center, Gunston Middle School, and Wakefield High School and design work concluded with construction beginning to add student capacity at Yorktown High School.

Major Building Infrastructure Improvements: Design concluded and construction began on a complete mechanical system replacement at Gunston Middle School and complete mechanical and electrical system replacement at Randolph Elementary School.

Reed Building: The public engagement process began for the project to create a new neighborhood elementary school at the Reed site, the design phase is ongoing.

Stratford Site: Design concluded and construction began on Arlington's next middle school at the Stratford site; planning work was also concluded by a special committee to determine appropriate ways for commemorating the site as the first public school in Virginia to be racially integrated.

Syphax Education Center: Between late-March and early-May all APS central office staff and the School Board relocated from the Education Center on North Quincy Street to newly renovated space at the Syphax Education Center at Sequoia Plaza, joining colleagues in the Department of Teaching and Learning who relocated there five years ago. For the first time in many years all central office staff with the exception of Facilities and Operations are consolidated in one location. The new space has been designed specifically to encourage collaboration between staff with ample informal as well as formal meeting and break out spaces. Vacating the Education Center allows it to be renovated for instructional use in accordance with the School Board's Capital Improvement Plan.

Wilson Site: Design concluded and construction began on the new secondary school at the Wilson site, highlighted by the Building-Up Celebration featuring students from both the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs.

FAC MEETING VENUES

The FAC continued its practice of regularly meeting at APS locations throughout the County to acquaint its members with representative school facilities, particularly those at the focus of current discussions. The principal of the school typically welcomed us and provided a tour of the building prior to the FAC business meeting, affording the opportunity to informally discuss how the facility's design and maintenance impacts the program of instruction. We looked to find locations and schools that had recently completed capacity generating projects, or were currently being considered for new capacity or capital improvements.

This year the FAC met at the following locations:

September 11, 2017 - Trades Center
October 16, 2017 - Wakefield High School
November 13, 2017 - Arlington Science Focus Elementary
December 11, 2017 - Gunston Middle School
January 8, 2018 - Trades Center
February 12, 2018 - Abingdon Elementary School
March 12, 2018 - Career Center
April 9, 2018 - Oakridge Elementary School
May 14, 2018 - Kenmore Middle School
June 11, 2018 - Syphax Center



RECOMMENDATIONS

The FAC recommends planning and decision making that fully acknowledges the pressures of our past, current and projected enrollment growth in a land-constrained, fully-developed county and look to identify new approaches in planning and operating with the goal of finding efficiencies in cost and in use of space, while maintaining the high-quality school division and educational facilities at APS.

We recommended a strengthened collaboration with the County to look for ways to reduce the time it takes to build new capital projects from five years to four, and a further investment in long-range planning initiatives for siting new schools and school amenities for our growing student population. It is critical to begin identifying sites for new schools and to consider sites or amenities for school use in every sector plan the County undertakes.

We urge the County and School Boards to initiate a Sector Plan for the Carlin Springs Road/Virginia Hospital Center Site/Kenmore area so that APS can fully utilize the Kenmore site, ensure that the VHC site is considered for school use, and traffic concerns affecting Kenmore Middle School and Carlin Springs and Campbell elementary schools are fully addressed.

As our enrollment grows we will need to not only create new “seats” or classroom spaces for students but, we will also need to create additional common spaces. We recommend compiling an inventory of our existing common spaces and analyzing how these spaces are affected by growing enrollment and affect the overall seating capacity of our schools.

We urge you to recognize that APS and the County will need to work together to find solutions to growing APS enrollment. As the County grows, school decisions will impact all of Arlington. It is important that as we plan, we engage as one community to foster understanding that we are all in this together, and that money and space required for individual school projects should be balanced across the needs of all of Arlington, all of our schools and of the broader community. We recommend assembling a group of members from the other advisory committees (FAC, BAC, ACI, ACTC, and JFAC) to study the costs and pressures of enrollment growth and identify ways of addressing each issue through a division-wide investigation.

PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR

The FAC will make it a priority to support the School Board in the investigation, implementation and the communication around the above recommendations.

We made it a focus this year to illustrate the critical importance of planning for our enrollment growth with the clear recognition that both our budget and available space are limited. This year we were faced for the first time with a Capital Improvement Plan that showed Arlington Public Schools has neither the financial resources nor the land at this time to build for all of our projected seat needs. Exceeding the longstanding 10 percent debt limit to acquire necessary funding would raise the unsavory specter of placing the county’s AAA bond rating at risk, while imposing an onerous burden on the school division’s operating budget that would inevitably short change some needs and adversely impact instruction. Moreover, with no reduction in construction labor costs expected, and a fluid trade situation that could lead to higher prices for steel and other essential building materials, the hefty price tag associated with meeting projected capacity needs through construction alone is a pressing concern that cannot be dismissed.

Therefore, with a clear-eyed focus on the future, the FAC proposes to advocate for new approaches to addressing capacity needs with initiatives on multiple fronts because APS cannot and should not be expected to solve this problem on its own. The guiding principle for the FAC from this point forward should be to get the most use out of APS and County resources in the quest to generate additional capacity, while supporting instruction and ensuring that new school facilities are built only as needed. This is a community issue that demands a holistic response.

The FAC will make it a priority in SY 2018-19 to assemble and analyze data and other relevant information on the following topics and proposals, with assistance and input from the relevant APS and Arlington County advisory bodies, and community groups:

Reduce Time it Takes to Build a New School

The FAC urges the School Board and County Board to set a goal of reducing the time it takes to complete a new school from five years to four years. FAC will work with APS staff and help to facilitate a conversation with the County on permitting and other cost- and time-saving measures and also continue exploring ways to reform BLPC and PFRC processes for APS capital projects. It is expected that the forthcoming APS report on the cost of APS capital projects will offer useful insights into achieving this goal.

We would like to further understand the role of permitting and Use Permit conditions. There is only one time of year that a new school can open; delays caused in receiving approvals and permits increase costs and risks a cascade disruption to students as many projects are currently linked to others. As a public school division, APS cannot turn away eligible students or delay their instruction for lack of seats to accommodate them. This is precisely why there is urgency to this situation that FAC believes cannot be addressed solely through conventional means such as capital projects.

Identify Sites for New Schools

We hope to work with JFAC to begin identifying new sites for schools and to investigate utilizing alternatives to typical capital projects such as office buildings and community centers. In the FAC *Future Facilities Needs Report* we illustrated what our future facilities needs would look like if APS continues to grow to a division with 35,000 students, 37,500 students, or 40,000 students. The illustration below points out that if our enrollment grows to a 35,000-student division (which is a real possibility within the next 15 years) we would need to identify sites for 3 more elementary schools, almost two more middle schools and another 1,200 high school seats, or half of a full sized high school.

Scenario:				35,000 Students			37,500 Students			40,000 Students		
School Level	Typical School Size ⁵	% Students ¹	Capacity ³ (2024)	# Students	Deficit ⁴	# Schools Req'd ⁶	# Student ²	Deficit ⁴	# Schools Req'd ⁶	# Students ²	Deficit ⁴	# Schools Req'd ⁶
ES	725	46%	13,809	16,154	(2,345)	3.2	17,308	(3,499)	4.8	18,462	(4,653)	6.4
MS	1,000	23%	6,368	8,077	(1,709)	1.7	8,654	(2,286)	2.3	9,231	(2,863)	2.9
HS	2,200	31%	9,565	10,769	(1,204)	0.5	11,538	(1,973)	0.9	(2,743)	2200	1.2

Source : <https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Future-Facilities-Needs-Report-and-Cover-Letter.pdf>, page 5

It is important to begin to identify potential sites now and to understand how we as a community can position ourselves to make forward-thinking decisions. Identifying future sites for schools can save time and therefore money in the planning process. Understanding the number of available sites and the number of sites that may be needed can also help direct a community conversation to investigate new and innovative sites and ways of building.

Work with JFAC to Initiate a Sector Plan for the Carlin Springs Road Area

We would like to work with the School Board, the County Board and JFAC to initiate a Carlin Springs Road sector plan that would enable APS to fully utilize and optimize the Kenmore Middle School and Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) sites and address long-standing traffic issues affecting Carlin Springs and Campbell elementary schools. We feel that it is critical to plan to fully optimize the 32.2 acre Kenmore site by investigating feasible solutions for all modes of transportation in the area. We also would like to ensure that the VHC site is considered for school use.

Inventory and Understanding of Common Spaces

As our enrollment grows it is important to understand the pressures on our existing common spaces especially through the use of relocatable classrooms. Our capital and capacity generating projects should not just look to add “seats” but, increase or amend common spaces. We propose the creation of an inventory of common spaces in all school facilities including outdoor play and field spaces. This will provide helpful and necessary information for space maximization, additions and other capital projects undertaken to increase capacity. We would also like to explore how this information could be used to

identify and refine capacity at each school, and how it affects the number of relocatable that may be added at each site.

We also think it will be important to review educational specifications and re-inspect schools to ensure that classrooms are fully used for instruction during the entire school day, and to study ways to intensify instructional use of existing facilities.

Transportation, Parking and Innovative Uses of Space

APS should look closely at ways to find efficiencies in transportation and new solutions for parking. Transportation efficiencies are important not only to our operating costs but also to our capital costs, when capital resources are spent to build parking spaces instead of essential seats. The FAC will seek to investigate potential solutions including ways to incorporate regional transit (Metrobus and ART buses) for secondary students in a dependable, cost-effective and safe manner.

The study of transportation diversification for our secondary schools to include ART, Metrobus and Metro may be the key to addressing perceived and real inequities among our high school facilities and programs. Given a growing divergence in population sizes, facilities and programmatic content among our high schools, only with improved transit options, can we offer all students the opportunity to choose the program/school that best fits them. The current geographic alignment driven by bussing districts will become politically and perhaps morally unacceptable if schools do not offer equitable experiences.

The FAC will also advocate for efforts to reduce the number of required parking spaces. APS should continue to engage with the County to discuss Use Permit conditions for parking and should explore the idea of not building parking for students unless it is necessary for instructional purposes.

We hope to investigate ways to reclaim space/land through innovative intensification of uses. Building up and utilizing rooftops and/or terraces for outdoor recreation, instruction and green space has already started at Fleet Elementary School and the H-B Woodlawn facility on the Wilson site in Rosslyn. In land-starved Arlington, building up (not out) and utilizing rooftops is a promising development representing a viable substitute for land acquisition. APS should consider as part of long range site plans converting existing parking lots at schools and other school system facilities into underground or semi-submerged parking structures with usable rooftops.

Collaboration and Innovative New Ideas

It will be a priority for FAC to examine new ways to add or grow capacity and to think creatively and collaboratively. All assumptions should be subject to review and we should be open to new and innovative ideas to address our seat needs within our budget and space constraints. In the spirit of collaboration, and with the understanding the benefits of incorporating broad perspectives as we seek solutions, we support working with other advisory committees to study costs and pressures of enrollment growth and constraints on capital construction (both space and monetary). This group would focus on considerations that would include new approaches to transportation, as well as instructional options and core offerings and making the most efficient use of our current facilities and amenities. FAC advocates for casting a broader net because it is fully expected that new approaches to addressing the capacity crunch will include non-capital options to a larger degree than in previous years. We support the investigation of finding division-wide operational options that maintain or enhance educational opportunities for all students.

Assessment of Special Education Facility Needs

The FAC will work with staff to obtain data for the projected growth of the APS' students with disabilities and assess what impacts that projection will have on facilities supporting the APS' countywide programs. We will work to identify those schools, which are both projected to have significant growth and which host countywide programs to flag instances where there may be the temptation to transfer a countywide program and put in place long range plans to try to avoid disruptions. We will also consider ways to assess the facilities needs of these students and how those needs might be impacted by the projected growth of this segment of the student population.

CLOSING

The FAC encourages the School Board to lead the community in acknowledging the pressures of our enrollment growth and continue to do its best to further communication with the public about how this impacts our facilities and our entire school system. We urge you to look for efficiencies in planning, building and operating and for ways to reduce costs and save time while at the same time maintaining the high quality facilities and excellent educational standards we expect of our school system. APS needs to continue to work to better and more fully explain the true impact of school decisions and how those decisions impact Arlington as a whole. The FAC encourages APS to continue to "show its work" and to fully explain to the public how and why they reach decisions and why other alternatives were not chosen. The FAC hopes to help in this process by providing research and feedback that will best enable the School Board and APS to be able to show that they based their decisions on data that supports the most efficient and effective use of money and space, and how each of those decisions fits into a long-term plan.