

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Item D-1-a

School Board Work Session on Equity and Inclusion Policy Development and
Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Policy Implementation Procedure
Development
February 26, 2019

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at 7:03 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

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

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Lisa Stengle, Executive Director, Planning and Evaluation
Erin Wales-Smith, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Sarah Putman, Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching and Learning
Dr. Laura Newton, Director of Student Services, Teaching and Learning
Brianna Cobbins, Director of Employee Relations, Human Resources
Heather Rothenbuescher, Supervisor, Special Education
Sam Klein, Supervisor, ESOL/HILT
Pam Farrell, Supervisor, Arts Education
Pam McClellan, Supervisor, Counseling Services
Deborah DeFranco, Supervisor, Health and PE
Dr. Jeannette Allen, Director, Administrative Services
Judy Apostolico-Buck, Principal, Barcroft Elementary School
Maureen Nesselrode, Principal, Campbell Elementary School
Brianna Milton, Director of Counseling, Gunston
Liz Matthews, Classroom Assistant, Patrick Henry Elementary School
Antoinette Waters, Teacher, Wakefield
Nick Walkosak, Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
Tauna Szymanski, Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee
Liana Tadesse, Student
Ethan Hemmings, Student
Karen Cruz, Student
Elliot Shear, Student
Phillip Wince, Student

Celeste Clark, Student
Emrys Jones, Student
Quincy DuBois, Student
Lily Matthews, Student
Bolormaa Vasquez, Parent
Altanchimeg Dugersuren, Parent
Monica Lozano Caldera, Equity and Excellence Coordinator
Wilson Ramirez, Teacher

Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Dr. Murphy described work underway on these policies and the policy implementation procedure (PIP) and Dr. Natrass then highlighted the meeting objectives, confirming it will be an opportunity to hear different perspectives in breakout discussions. She described how the policies and PIP will support key elements of the Strategic Plan and confirmed this work continues ongoing efforts to address equity, inclusion and the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students. Ms. Putnam briefly outlined professional learning that relates to this work, and described the ‘lenses of difference’ that make up aspects of equity. She shared questions to be considered in the discussions that focus on achieving educational equity. Dr. Natrass then provided a reference document for the breakout sessions.

Board members participated in discussions with staff, parents and students. Reporters for each table then reported out on the discussions.

Mr. Luttrell summarized the discussions about an equity policy. The main theme heard was how to draft a policy that is actionable and not just a vision statement, and the groups also discussed the difference between Policy and a PIP. Also considered was how staff should be included in the policy, as they will be tasked with helping to achieve equity for all students. All participants agreed it is important to have a clear definition of equity and that the difference between equal and equitable needs to be clearly delineated.

For the inclusion policy, Mr. Klein confirmed very robust conversations that considered whether inclusion and equity should be separate or addressed in one policy. The discussions also focused on how to make the policy actionable, and what information belongs in policy and what should be part of the PIP. Finally, the groups discussed whether inclusion is a philosophy, a culture, or a policy, and how to build it into day to day actions.

Ms. Farrell reported on the transgender and gender nonconforming student PIP discussions. Participants felt that all staff who interact with students should receive training, as well as training for students and parents. It was also felt that ongoing assessment should be done to ensure that the training is translating to student experiences. The counselor’s role was considered as well as the need have a common vocabulary that ensures a common understanding. Additional topics discussed were respect and confidentiality, and the inclusion of language on gender expression and identity. The groups also discussed easy and equal access to facilities for all students.

Dr. Natrass presented the proposed timelines for the policies and PIP and recognized that the timelines may need to be adjusted based on the complexity of these topics. She then outlined the basic steps in the policy development processes.

Board members appreciated the many participants, the conversations that took place, and the variety of voices that were heard. They agreed that there is much work still to be done and the need to keep looking at how these policies and PIP relate to each other. Board members noted the importance of policies in communicating values, and the need to achieve a shift in culture and mindset to ensure that all students are treated with respect. Also noted was the need to hold APS accountable, and how to measure the outcomes of this work. Board members encouraged more input from the various communities, and recognizing that there is significant work still to be done, suggested that more time is needed to fully develop the policies and the PIP.

In closing, Dr. Murphy appreciated the deep, rich conversations that took place, and agreed that the timelines for the development of the policies and PIP may need to be adjusted to complete this work.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Arlington School Board