

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ACI Work Session
March 7, 2016

Item C-1-c

The Arlington School Board convened on Monday, March 7, 2016, at 6:06 PM at 1426 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Nancy Van Doren, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
Barbara Kanninen, Member
James Lander, Member
Claudia Mercado, Deputy Clerk/Communications Liaison

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Connie Skelton, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Dr. Brenda Wilks, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
Wendy Carria, Interim Director, Special Education
Pam Farrell, Supervisor, Arts
Cathy Hix, Supervisor, Social Studies
Dat Le, Supervisor, Science
Sarah Minervino, Supervisor, Mathematics
Michelle Picard, Supervisor, English Language Arts

Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)

Ted Black, Co-chairs
Louisa Marinaccio, Co-chairs
Linda Arnsbarger, Co-Chair, English Language Arts
Jill Flack, Co-Chair, Student Services
Hanna Eun, Co-Chair, Arts
Alicia Guajardo, Member, Student Services
Mark Hill, Co-Chair, Mathematics
Tina Kuklenski, Chair, Science
Scott Nathanson, Chair, Social Studies
Donna Owens, Chair, Special Education
Paul Patterson, Vice Chair, Special Education
Ali Protik, Co-Chair, Mathematics
Lydia Robertson, Co-Chair, Student Services
Judy Rudman, Co-Chair, English Language Arts
Susan Scott, Co-Chair, Arts

Dr. Violand-Sánchez called meeting to order and welcomed attendees. She thanked the ACI committee members for their work on the different committees. Ms. Skelton briefly reviewed the process for Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) reports.

Dr. Murphy introduced Mr. Black and thanked him for his leadership as ACI co-chair and noted the importance of the ACI recommendations and budget proposals to the Board. Mr. Black introduced each committee and thanked them for their work and commitment. He also thanked the Arlington Public Schools staff for their continued support to the ACI. Ms. Marinaccio added that recent changes to the reporting timeline allow for the ACI to provide better feedback. She also shared a handout entitled *Alignment of Recommendations in Superintendent's Proposed Budget and ACI and/or School Board Priorities*, listing ranked and un-ranked recommendation from SY 2014-2015 based on priority.

Social Studies

The Social Studies Advisory Committee report was presented by Chair Scott Nathanson, supported by Ms. Hix. Mr. Nathanson thanked the Board for the opportunity to report and was proud to share he feels his son is being challenged at school which translates to the work being done by Social Studies. He added that critical thinking and analytical skills built into Social Studies make for a life learning experience. Mr. Nathanson presented the Board with two recommendations.

1. All Grade 4 and 5 teachers who teach social studies participate in a mandatory one day History-Alive! training by the end of 2017-2018 school year.
2. APS shall develop a sustained, systematic commitment to providing all schools and teachers the space and resources for effective multi-curricular integrated learning.

The first recommendation was presented in the past by the committee, and Mr. Nathanson reported that 62% of all school teachers have received this training and he encouraged the Board to make the training mandatory and expanding it beyond 4 and 5 grade. He added that History-Alive! training is critical to increase analytical and thoughtful thinking. In regards to the second recommendation, Mr. Nathanson stated that after listening to teachers and reviewing data, the committee believes this recommendation best addresses a way for all subjects to come “alive” in order to improve test scores and differentiate learning. The committee recommends integrated learning be mandated by the School Board.

Responding to Mr. Nathanson’s report, Mr. Goldstein asked him to expand on how Social Studies is building lifelong learners. Mr. Nathanson explained that Social Studies is expanding differentiation, using strategies at all grade levels, not just high school. Ms. Hix commented that Social Studies wants to inspire students by focusing on integrated learning to motivate and keep children engaged. The focus is to move beyond content and develop critical thinking skills. Dr. Violand-Sánchez asked for details on the units that are integrated. Ms. Hix described Understanding by Design as an example and explained it provides a framework with themes at all grade levels to expand ideas. Mr. Nathanson also explained that 51% of teachers are integrating Social Studies at the elementary level, supporting differentiation. Responding to a question, Ms. Hix explained integrated learning is a continuous work in progress, and Social Studies is systematically building best practices and consistency throughout the school system. She shared that one obstacle is the need for approval from administrators to implement integrated classes. Mr.

Lander asked the committee for recommendations on how to make progress to eliminate the same pockets of gap shown from year to year. Mr. Nathanson suggested the Board mandate integrated learning, and Mr. Black added that the second recommendation provides a solution to move forward. Board members were concerned with the lack of tracking progress and not understanding the direction the Board is asked to take. In addition, Dr. Kanninen and Ms. Van Doren expressed their support for History Alive and digital learning, and also support providing direction based on the recommendations. Ms. Hix confirmed that each new secondary teacher has History- Alive! training and she supported the same training for 4th and 5th grade teachers. Mr. Nathanson requested that the Board support integration and mandate it as a top priority. Dr. Violand-Sánchez and Ms. Van Doren looked to develop a culturally responsive curriculum that includes Arlington history, and Ms. Hix responded that local Arlington history will be reviewed in the summer. She also shared that students were fascinated by the February 2 desegregation event in Arlington!

Arts

The Arts Advisory Committee report was presented by Co-Chairs Hanna Eun and Susan Scott, supported by Ms. Farrell. Ms. Eun and Ms. Scott thanked staff and the Board for a successful school year and provided multiple recommendations as noted below in order to provide optimal learning opportunities for all students.

1. Establish line funding for Visual Arts supplies for all middle schools that is consistent for all middle schools.
2. Provide Physical Education credit for participating in the marching band.
3. Provide stipend funding for accompanists for all secondary choral programs.
4. Establish a county wide PIP to include standardized art and music class times and frequency including reinstating the policy 10 minutes in between classes for set up and transition at the elementary school level.

In reference to recommendation three, Ms. Skelton clarified that money was already provided in the budget. Dr. Kanninen expressed her concern that schools are not aware of the resources available to them and that this issue needs to be addressed in order for everyone to have equal resources. In terms of the second recommendation, she also stated that the Health and Physical supervisor felt physical education classes provided a separate set of skills. She suggested a pilot program based on the Arts committee recommendation. Dr. Violand-Sánchez inquired why it would be necessary to provide marching band credits in exchange for Physical Education classes. Ms. Eun responded that the committee is looking to extend flexibility and promote different opportunities. Ms. Van Doren shared her support for this recommendation and she expressed her frustration with the lack of flexible views on the Physical Education credit. In addition, Ms. Van Doren asked for Dr. Murphy to clarify the per pupil cost, which she believed to be \$9. Dr. Murphy assured Ms. Van Doren the he would follow up on the dollar figure. Ms. Van Doren suggested principals be encouraged to use the allocated art money for art purposes and to allocate fund based on the planning factors.

English and Language Arts

The English and Language Arts Advisory Committee report was presented by Co-Chairs Linda Arnsbarger and Judy Rudman, supported by Dr. Picard. They started their report by thanking the

Board for their support in literacy. The English and Language Arts committee shared three recommendations.

1. Ensure that the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS) is integrated into a coherent education framework for all students at all grade levels in all schools. Within the ATSS framework, effective interventions must be available to all students at all grade levels, with a focus on fidelity, targeting student needs, intensive training, and progress monitoring.
2. Develop and support a summer reading intervention program that provides targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to students at all grade levels.

Ms. Ansberger was concerned about the lack communication or public engagement about ATSS. She shared her disappointment in learning that high school students were not aware about ATSS and feels ATSS is not a highlighted priority. The committee strongly recommends adoption of new policy, increased district leadership, set expectations, and budget support. The recommendations focus on breaking down silos that currently exist in relationship to ATSS, to improve the process, and to make available effective interventions to all students. She explained that one way to show fidelity to ATSS and its effectiveness is to provide a systematic training of new interventions, and to create stricter guidelines, better oversight and measurable outcomes. She also noted a lack of intervention programs at the high school level and explained that it is harder to remediate high school students with poor reading skills. She added that statics show Standards of Learning exams are not being passed and some students are at a 25% or below reading level.

Ms. Van Doren asked about the committee's involvement on the English and Language Arts textbook adoption. Ms. Ansberger explained that the committee had been involved but had yet to see the materials. Mr. Lander asked about collaboration of Student Services, English/Language Arts and the Department of Instruction and the different integration approaches. Ms. Arnsbarger stated that collaboration at the school level is very difficult and some teachers do not have reading instruction, and Ms. Rudman noted that each school provides different training opportunities. Dr. Picard added that central office staff facilitate communications at the school level but concurred that coordinating training is a challenge and will continue to improve. Mr. Lander noted that adjustments are needed in implementing interventions and the School Board will engage in further review. In addition, he was concerned about the increase of students identified with dyslexia. Ms. Ansberger shared this concern and added that ATSS intervention is not occurring due to lack of teacher training. Mr. Lander encouraged staff and the Board to collaborate on changing the landscape of intervention implementation in order to solve the problem. The group briefly discussed the reading and writing SOL scores, and Ms. Picard noted that there has been a progress at the younger grade levels and noted differences in staffing at the high school level. In closing, Dr. Kanninen noted she would like to see a better focus in writing and a process for integrated learning, and she encouraged the committee to have this conversation.

Mathematics

Co-Chairs Mark Hill and Ali Protik presented the report for the Mathematics Advisory Committee, supported by Ms. Minervino. Mr. Protik first thanked committee members for their diligent contributions to the report. He let the Board know the mathematics committee was mindful in creating a concise report that included a careful budget estimate for the following three recommendations.

1. Provide support, mentoring, and resources to teachers interested in using “Flipped Classroom” approach.
2. Ensure employment of a full-time Math Coach at every elementary School; and
3. Increase transparency of math teaching methods in communications with parents.

Mr. Lander suggested making algebra mandatory for students in 7th and 8th grade and viewing algebra as a gateway course that will help students qualify for future opportunities. He shared his concern about parent engagement strategies and Mr. Protik shared that parents are being taught strategies used in the classroom so they can support student learning. Ms. Minervino added that Title I schools hold math academy nights, where families attend to learn math strategies and receive face-to-face interaction with teachers. She also explained how students learn to use apps and then teach parents how to use the app. Mr. Protik clarified that the strategies mentioned by Mr. Minervino are not intended to replace instructional strategies. Dr. Kanninen expressed her concern regarding the cost of the recommendation for a full-time coaches at elementary schools.

Science

The following four recommendations were part of the Science Advisory Committee report made by Chair Tina Kuklenski-Miller, with support from Dr. Le.

1. Provide teachers, students and schools with the necessary administrative support, resources, training, and planning opportunities needed to efficiently and effectively practice integrative learning to enhance and deepen learning in both science and other subjects.
2. Implement APS policy requiring 7th and 8th grade students to conduct an independent science research project. In order to overcome perceived obstacles related to this policy, increase support for integrating Science, English Language Arts, and Math curricula.
3. Provide funding and support for one full-time Sustainability and Outdoor Learning Coordinator (SOLC), starting with the 2016-2017 school year.
4. Fund School Garden/Outdoor Classroom infrastructure through min-grants.

Dr. Kanninen was concerned that, as not every student has support at home for science research projects. She asked for more detail on how to make sure that every 7th and 8th grader has the support to complete every step in the research project. Ms. Kuklenski-Miller explained that science teachers are responsible for integrating other subjects and coordinating team work. Dr. Violand-Sánchez inquired about thematic units and the practical application at the middle school level. Ms. Skelton explained that this approach has been used previously, and teachers are returning to these best practices because they are successful in creating collaboration. Dr. Kanninen asked about the difference between the SOLC position recommendation and the proposed position for the Outdoor Lab. Ms. Kuklenski-Miller explained that the SOLC coordinator would analyze the best use of land space for educational purposes, and would examine how teachers and students can safely study outside while using the outdoors in a scientific and artistic way.

Special Education

The report was presented by Chair Donna Owens, Vice Chair Paul Patterson and the Ms. Carria. Ms. Owens thanked the Board for the opportunity to make recommendations as a state mandated

advisory committee. The Special Education committee made the following three recommendation to the Board:

1. Formalize a policy commitment to, and increase resources for, the Arlington Tiered System of Supports (ATSS) to ensure its continued successful implementation.
2. Adopt a policy statement reflecting APS' commitment to providing a well-supported inclusive education for all students, and commit resources to realize this vision through a well-conceptualized and data-driven implementation plan.
3. Reduce the current staff:student ratio for school psychologists from 1:1,650 to 1:650 and social workers from 1:1,650 to 1:650 to support the implementation of APS' Strategic Plan, Goal Five, and bring APS in closer alignment with national recommendations for best practices.

Ms. Owens strongly advocated that these recommendations need commitment from the Board and emphasized that consistency is key in their success. She also added that the committee is analyzing student schedules and reviewing trends for intervention and differentiated instruction. Her hope is to move forward with the five-year roll out and analyze data to serve students accordingly. Ms. Owens noted that inclusion is about creating a philosophical shift and moving away from teaching special education kids in separate classrooms. She added these recommendations aid in creating a school system that is state and federally complaint.

Dr. Violand-Sánchez encouraged the committee to be mindful of the amount of time English Language Learners require for instruction. Mr. Lander expressed his concern about breaking down special education silos and correctly identifying students who need intervention, and encouraged thoughtful decision-making and implementation. He also noted that cultural shift happens over time and he hopes to see a shift from the administrative level to the classroom level. Ms. Owens suggested an outside consultant could help to coach and implement inclusive model, and assist with communications and engagement. Mr. Lander supported this recommendation which could also help identify gaps and open lines of communication. Dr. Kanninen requested details on the budget implications and Dr. Violand-Sánchez agreed the Board needed to know what is allocated for inclusion. In addition, she inquired about support being provided to immigrant and unaccompanied minors, who have many learning needs. Ms. Carria agreed to crosscheck information and analyze data. Ms. Owens reminded the Board that ATSS supports all students and students do not have to be special education to qualify for services. Ms. Van Doren requested talking points regarding ATSS and inclusion, so that everyone is referring to the same information. In addition, she encouraged collaboration with Arlington County's Department of Human Services so families can better take advantage of the resources they provide.

Student Services

The report was presented Co-Chairs Jill Flack and Lydia Robertson, committee member Alicia Guajardo and Ms. McClellan. Before presenting the recommendations, Ms. Robertson appreciated the progress in academic planning and emphasized there is a stronger communication guiding aspire to excellence in the right direction and supporting the well-being of the whole child. The Student Services Committee made the following three recommendations:

1. Require all teachers and administrative staff to receive high-quality, low-cost mental health training, to equip them to recognize, refer, and support students with mental and emotional issues. Incorporate this requirement for all new hires and into APS teacher/administrative recertification (five-year cycle).
2. Support the Office of Student Services' budget proposal for funding to increase support across all schools by improving social worker and school psychologist-to-student ratios with a goal of reducing the ratio from 1:1650 to 1:650. This represents an increase of 18 psychologists and 22.5 social workers.
3. Expand the reach and impact of current information, programs, and opportunities for students, families, and the community to access youth social-emotional and mental health/resiliency resources, and develop new resources and accessible formats in collaboration with community partners.

Board members requested additional information on outcome measures and Dr. Violand-Sánchez asked for further details on practices to help students reduce stress and anxiety. Ms. Carria let the School Board know that staff relies on monthly data for assessments and accountability. She added that the ATSS framework assists in addressing the social emotional side of learning and provides different levels of interventions. Student Services is also looking at more extensive professional development for teachers and staff. Dr. Kanninen appreciated recommendation number three which focuses on addressing the needs of the whole child and aligns with the Whole Child Working Group. Ms. Guajardo suggested creating a link on the APS homepage so families have better access to information and resources related to social-emotional and mental health/resiliency. Dr. Murphy stated he would follow up and collaborate with the department of School & Community Relations.

At 8:30 p.m. the Board recessed and reconvened at 8:43p.m.

In closing the work session, Mr. Black encouraged the Board, committee members, and staff to be open minded to be able to equip students with life skills, integrity and dignity that will help them navigate life. Mr. Black concluded by thanking committee chairs for their leadership.

Dr. Violand-Sánchez thanked Ms. Marinaccio and Mr. Black for their leadership and passion in support of education.

The meeting adjourned 9:28 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Arlington School Board