

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Joint School Board/County Board Work Session
December 3, 2019

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 6:36 PM at 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Arlington, VA.

Present were:

School Board

Tannia Talento, Chair
Monique O'Grady, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
Barbara Kanninen, Member
Nancy Van Doren, Member
Cintia Johnson, Interim Superintendent
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

County Board

Christian Dorsey, Chairman
Libby Garvey, Vice Chair
Katie Cristol, Member
Matt de Ferranti, Member
Erik Gutshall, Member
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Kendra Jacobs, Clerk

Also present were:

Robert Ruiz, Arlington Public Schools Principal Planner
Elizabeth Hardy, Arlington County Dept. of Community Planning, Housing and Development

1. Opening Remarks

The Chairs welcomed attendees and reviewed the agenda. Mr. Schwartz and Ms. Johnson acknowledged the collaboration that has taken place between Arlington County Government (ACG) and Arlington Public Schools (APS) and looked forward to continued collaboration.

2. Presentation: Arlington Public Schools and Arlington County Government Collaboration and Data Sharing to Inform Schools Projections

After summarizing the work of the 2015-2017 Community Facilities Study, Ms. Hardy described how APS and ACG have collaborated in recent years. She reviewed how ACG develops and refines their processes and forecasts, which are based on a land-use model. After describing features of the land-use model, she outlined variables that influence the data and guiding documents that inform forecasts. She then outlined housing tracking information, population forecasts, and other data shared by the two entities, such as the 2018 Master housing unit database and the housing unit forecast. She also outlined changes that have been made to improve data used in the forecasts and projections.

Mr. Ruiz reviewed factors contributing to enrollment growth, such as projected resident birth, residential housing growth, and differences between incoming student cohorts and exiting cohorts. He shared the Fall 2019 student enrollment snapshot and birth projections through 2029, and he explained that the birth forecast model has been recalibrated to increase accuracy. Projections for new housing were shared, and Mr. Ruiz described how APS calculates student generation rates for different housing types. Factors that contribute

to enrollment growth by school level were also presented, and the enrollment projections timeline was shared. In closing, Ms. Hardy stressed the importance of the 2020 Census and the data it provides that informs projections and forecasts.

3. Questions and Discussion

Board members appreciated staff work and collaboration and looked forward to the new census data. The group discussed data sources and recognized that certainty goes down for projections for outyears. Mr. Ruiz agreed to explore developing an indicator of ‘level of confidence’ for projections. Also discussed was how to predict peak enrollment growth, and staff agreed to continue working on developing more robust projections. Demographic patterns such as generational shifts in population were also noted. Ms. Hardy described the land-use model’s 5-year increment approach and how County Board actions on development affect forecasts. Also discussed was how renovations and new housing units inform projections.

Mr. Ruiz explained how student generation rates and planning units are used to determine school boundaries. The group also recognized generational changes in housing choices and staff further described how adjustments to projections are made. Also discussed were how the County manages density, as well as challenges APS faces in adding capacity. Mr. Dorsey confirmed that the County will work with APS to look at publicly owned sites that may be repurposed and used more efficiently by both entities. Ms. Talento appreciated the County’s commitment to help address growing enrollment. Dr. Kanninen encouraged having the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC) participate in this work.

Members of both Boards acknowledged that timelines for capacity needs vary at the different school levels, and population growth varies across the County. Ms. Garvey encouraged exploring creative approaches to add capacity such as increasing choice/option programs or developing a campus with multiple schools on less crowded sites. Ms. Talento appreciated these approaches but acknowledged the impact they would have on transportation. Ms. Cristol also commented on transportation and infrastructure challenges and encouraged a long-term approach to managing growth. Ms. O’Grady thanked the County for the ART Bus pilot for students and looked forward to additional collaboration. Other approaches to instruction that could lessen capacity issues were briefly discussed, and Ms. Johnson commented on initiatives such as the Profile of the Graduate that may help with capacity needs. The group also acknowledged the importance of and need to focus on preschool and early education as the school division continues to grow.

In closing, Mr. Dorsey and Ms. Talento thanked staff for their work, and both Boards looked forward to continuing to work together to achieve the mutual goal of ensuring that all students in APS get the best education possible.

The meeting adjourned 8:12 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Tannia Talento, Chair
Arlington School Board