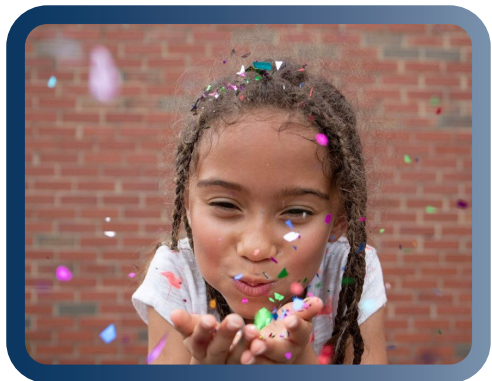


EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

BRIEFING REPORT



DECEMBER 2019



Arlington
Public
Schools



EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Extended Day Program provides quality out of school time child care services to over 4,200 children each day. With programs operating at 31 schools, over 450 staff offer children daily Developmental Asset-building activities that reflect the priorities of the APS 2019-20 School Board Action Plan, with a focus on student success and well-being.

With an annual budget of \$12.9 million, the program is almost entirely self-supporting, raising revenue through participation fees. Operating under the auspices of the APS Department of Finance & Management Services, the Extended Day Program's major services include:

- Before and after school care at 24 elementary schools and the Shriver Program
- After school care at six middle schools
- Before and after school care at the elementary summer school locations
- Fun and interesting indoor and outdoor activities that integrate Developmental Assets
- Partnerships and collaborations with APS and community groups
- On-going Fitness, Literacy, STEM and Community Service activities
- Daily homework support & after school snack

BRIGHT SPOTS

An ongoing theme for Extended Day staff is to “be that person” in the lives of every child by building trusting, supportive relationships. The email excerpt below is from the counseling staff at Claremont. It is one of many examples from across APS that illustrate the positive and critical role the Extended Day staff play in the lives of children, every day.

“I just wanted to share with you that students are reporting that they see extended day staff as ‘Trusted Adults.’ We are focusing on Bullying prevention and we ask them this question during lessons! Please express our gratitude to both your lower- and upper-grade team members.”

PROGRAMMING

Staff and students work collaboratively to plan activities and events that reflect the interests of the children and provide unique opportunities and experiences. Each site also selects a handful of Developmental Assets, which are intentionally integrated into the daily programming. In addition, special guests (often parents) are invited to enhance activities by sharing their expertise, skills and knowledge through presentations and participation with the children.

Collaboration between Extended Day sites has been very successful, particularly with middle school Check-In programs participating in, and often organizing and leading, events with adjacent elementary school programs.

Partnerships with community organizations and agencies have also provided numerous exciting and unique opportunities, including:

- Girls with Goals (soccer clinics)
- Cities of Stories (art/literacy)
- RE-Set (engineering/STEM)
- 4-H (gardening/health & nutrition)
- BOKs (health/fitness)
- AFAC (community service)

Literacy and STEM continue to be a central focus of each Extended Day program, with regular activities and events that support classroom initiatives. Supervisors and staff have enjoyed frequent opportunities to meet with Eileen Hanning, the developer of WETA's Start with a Book program, for workshops and guidance to enhance their literacy initiatives.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Extended Day remains committed to professional development, with over 8,000 staff hours dedicated to growth and learning opportunities each year. Over the past year, mental health has been an area of focus and, in collaboration with the Arlington Out of School Time Council, staff have participated in numerous professional development opportunities including Darkness to Light training and other trauma-care-related workshops.

It's also understood that to provide the highest level of care to the children and families, Extended Day staff must first take care of themselves. In this regard, supervisors and staff have participated in a series of Mindfulness workshops, led by former APS teacher Erin Sonn, designed to promote social-emotional regulation, cognitive clarity, and overall well-being.

Site-specific professional development is presented at each program regularly, with staff schedules adjusted to allow for on-site learning every Thursday. County-wide professional learning opportunities are regularly provided through the Extended Day Central Office and staff frequently participate in learning opportunities offered by the Out of School Time Council and local agencies and organizations.

WHAT WE LEARNED

REGISTRATION LOTTERIES

In May 2019, enrollment lotteries were conducted for the first time. The lotteries were in response to feedback from parents who felt the previous registration process (first come, first served) was not equitable and placed many families at a disadvantage due to limited access to computers, work schedules and other factors.

For seven schools, where registrations exceeded capacity, children who registered between April 1 and May 15th were entered in a random, double-blind lottery. The process was completed without a hitch. However, subsequent feedback was mixed. Many parents praised the process as it provided equity in terms of access and enrollment probability. However, some felt the uncertainty of enrollment was overwhelming. Extended Day is planning several parent forums to receive additional feedback and suggestions for the upcoming spring registration.

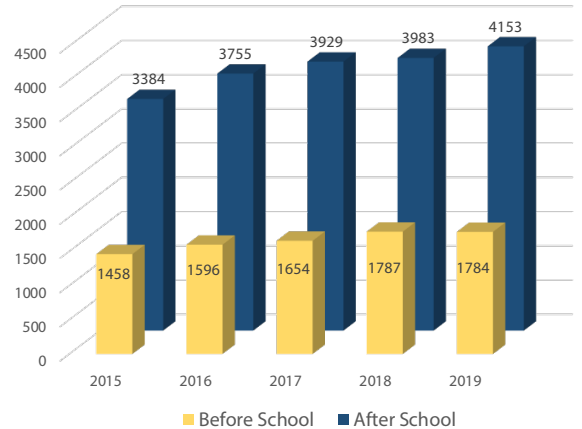
DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT

ENROLLMENT

Extended Day enrollment typically comprises 30-35 percent of the overall elementary school enrollment. The middle school Check-In programs tend to have around five percent of the school enrollment. Thus, as APS enrollment increases, Extended Day enrollment also grows.

In the last five years, Extended Day enrollment has increased about 23 percent. As of September 30, 2019, the after-school enrollment increased 4.2 percent from the same time last year. Enrollment for the before school session is virtually unchanged from a year ago.

Extended Day Enrollment 2015-2019 (measured on Sept. 30 each year)



MOVING FORWARD

BUDGET/FEEES

The Extended Day program is almost entirely self-supporting, raising operating revenue through participation fees. In the event operating expenses exceed revenue, Extended Day receives funding from the County through the transfer to APS. In addition, Extended Day annually transfers about \$300,000 of its revenue to APS to offset in-kind support from the school district.

Leslie Peterson, the assistant superintendent of Finance and Management Services, met with each member of the School Board to explain the nuances and challenges of the Extended Day budget, including the APS policy that funds collected from activity fees, including Extended Day, must be “used solely in accordance with the purpose for which such funds were collected.” The funding stream is particularly relevant today as solutions to accommodate more children may involve new, and significant, expenses. A consideration for the future could be using surplus funds from prior years to fund new initiatives to resolve capacity issues.

TRANSPORTATION AND SATELLITE PROGRAMS

Extended Day is currently piloting an initiative in which children from Claremont, a school with a significant wait list, are transported to their neighborhood schools, if slots are available at that location. It is a promising option that is being expanded to provide service to more families. It could potentially be an option that provides relief to other schools. However, as APS enrollment continues to increase, fewer schools have the capacity to accept students from other sites.

Recently, another alternative was suggested that is worth consideration: collaborating with the Department of Parks and Rec to request community center space after school for Extended Day. However, there are logistical and financial challenges, including:

- having to add bus routes to serve the community centers
- children changing bus routes (because their home route doesn't serve the destination)
- increased ridership on certain buses
- conflicts with community programs scheduled at the facility
- space constraints at community centers for Extended Day storage
- transportation staff and costs

The creation of “satellite” programs would also have a significant budgetary impact, requiring Extended Day to add a supervisor, assistant supervisor and staff at each site. These costs could be offset, at least partially, by the increased revenue from the additional students participating.



STAFFING

Extended Day staffing is determined by staff-to-child ratios. Thus, the steady enrollment growth has resulted in a significant increase in staffing needs. Currently, Extended Day employs almost 500 staff. But, in addition to space constraints, recruiting and retaining staff to accommodate the growing enrollment has become a significant challenge. Staff turnover is on-going, with a significant number of Extended Day staff leaving to accept other positions in APS.

Extended Day participates in local career fairs and other recruiting opportunities; partnerships with local organizations and universities are also being cultivated as recruiting tools.

LICENSING OPT-OUT

In April 2018, a change to VA Code allowed school-sponsored child care programs to opt-out of the VA Department of Social Services (DSS) licensing requirements. The change was prompted by confusion and contradictions between school district and DSS standards and regulations. APS Extended Day chose to opt-out and received confirmation from the state in September 2019.

As a condition of the opt-out, Extended Day has developed a set of standards, based on the DSS licensing requirements, and self-monitoring procedures and checklists. Supervisors also utilize the Arlington Out of School Time Council's Quality Assessment Tool to ensure best practice.