**4.7.21 ACTL Meeting Questions**

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)**

1. How is the equity lens being looked at for learning recovery within APS and, in particular, using summer learning opportunities to help close some of that gap that was widened by COVID?  Summer school will serve as an opportunity for students who demonstrated academic difficulty throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Elementary students will be eligible for summer school based on the following criteria:

* students struggling to access virtual learning
* Rising K-5 who have not attend or who have evidenced little to no growth
* Any EL 1 or 2 student
* Any students with an IEP

 Secondary students (grades 6-12) who either failed or earned a D in one or more core classes needed for either promotion from 8th grade to 9th grade or seniors needing to pass one or more core classes required for graduation.  These classes include English, mathematics, science, and social studies.  Additionally, the following students will be eligible for summer school:

* Students with an IEP
* All EL students level 1-4 who did not demonstrate expected language growth

1. Is the plan to have 100% of school equity audit / assessments completed before the school yr ends? or before next yr begins?  Recently we had to pivot from the original plan as the school year winds down after hearing from the equity team facilitators.  We will focus on training the facilitators on the use of the tool this Spring.   The goal now is to establish building and systemwide benchmarks when we return in the Fall for each building that we will calibrate as a division-wide equity team.
2. How will Equity and Excellence Coordinators be integrated into these plans?  What are the plans for the office? OEE Coordinators are in all of the secondary meetings, some of them are leading the efforts of the Equity Teams, and others are participating as members of the Equity Teams. DEI and OEE meet often and plans from DEI are shared ahead of time so that they can help drive the equity work in each of their buildings. OEE Coordinators are experts in their buildings that can provide support and be thought partners to their colleagues. Recently, as part of the Superintendent’s reorganization plan OEE will soon join DEI effective July 1.  We are excited for this merger and how it will systematize the work moving forward.

1. What kind of accountability will there be if the equity goal (e.g., closing the sped/non-sped gap by 5% per year) is not met? Is there any accountability measure at the school or administration level if progress is not made?  The slide was an example of how data is used to determine gaps that need to be addressed and closed.  It was NOT  the APS metric simply an example of calculation.  Nonetheless, APS needs to set gap closure  goals to close the achievement/academic gaps.  APS will be adding the Office of School Support to senior leadership for the 2021-22 school year.  This office will work closely with building level administration to develop and implement short and long-term goals and objectives to address each of the seven performance standards identified by the Virginia Department of Education.  Progress toward accomplishing each goal and objective will be reviewed on an annual basis.

1. How is the equity office addressing the inequity across elementary schools - non-immersion elementary schools have 20% less learning time than immersion schools? **DTL answered at meeting**

1. Are influencers designated by building and/or program and how have they been selected?  How can someone still get involved? Each building developed their Equity Teams differently. There was an interest form provided which some schools utilized to recruit members and influencers. In the DEI toolkit, there are recommendations for how to choose Equity Influencers and team members.  For those interested in becoming involved in a specific school-based equity team, please review the DEI website [here](https://www.apsva.us/diversity-equity-inclusion/equity-teams/) and contact the Equity Influencer in the school.

1. Is there a plan for training(s) for APS advisory committees?  This would be helpful to align priorities and have a similar lens. The Equity Literacy Institute provides free mini courses which we have utilized to train members of the Equity teams who are not staff. This training is available to anyone who would like a primer on Equity and Equity Literacy. They can be found [here.](https://www.equityliteracy.org/equity-literacy)

1. There is still general confusion over the difference between equality and equity.  How are you helping to educate everyone that equality and equity are not synonymous? October 12, 2020 Division-wide training by Dr. Paul Gorski and the Equity Literacy Institute focused on defining and understanding the difference between equality and equity. Additional training has also been made available through the other workshops that were available on Oct. 12 these are available to staff on Frontline. In addition, a cohort of administrators, equity influencers, and equity team members attended the Equity Literacy Institute’s Racial Equity Facilitator Training.  Additionally, we are beginning  to message around “educational equity” by using the VDOE definition of educational equity.   This is where our focus is as a school system.

“Educational equity means there is no predictability of success or failure that correlates with any social or cultural factor - a child's educational experiences or outcomes are not predictable because of their race, ethnicity, linguistic background, economic class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical and cognitive ability, or any other socio-political identity marker.” - Elena Aguilar, *Coaching for Equity*

1. Equity is such a big and important issue and it's something that I hope as a community we can work together on with the expectation that the schools can't do it alone. Partnerships are important.  How is APS engaging in external partnerships?  APS agrees that it will take a village for educational equity to be actualized.  The number of external partnerships that APS has are too numerous to list from nonprofits, county, youth, families, residents, community leaders in government, philanthropy, education, and from the corporate sector.  APS is looking to build a network of community leaders and system changers striving towards a shared vision of upward mobility.  Together, our network can close disparity gaps and improve outcomes for young people.  The Office of DEI has created and will continue to create external partnerships for collective impact.

1. Can we get more info on the equity audit tool?  Will the tool include curriculum specific evaluations? DTL is currently reframing the curriculum using Cultivating Genius as a platform and this work will move forward and be specific to curriculum.  DEI will use a rubric based tool that is designed to foster dialogue and deeper collaboration amongst equity leadership teams to assess current climate, instructional practices, and policies through the lens of ten high leverage equitable practices.  By using the rubrics, teams identify strengths and weaknesses and clarify targets  with clarity in identifying direction for planning next steps and actions.

1. What is your office’s view on the relationship between diversity and equity?  Diversity is the presence of differences within a given setting and is multidimensional. Diversity refers to the range of an individual’s unique identities and more broadly all the characteristics that exist in a group of people. Common educational identity categories referenced when discussing diversity commonly include race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, neighborhood, language status, special education needs, academic performance and potential, record of achievement, community or civic engagement or interest. To name a few examples.  A person isn’t diverse, they are unique.  Diversity is about a collective or a group and all of its intersections.

Equity is a principle of fairness and is an approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities because equity recognizes that we all don’t start from the same place because advantages and barriers exist.  Thus, this acknowledgement of imbalance uses equity to correct the imbalance.  Diversity and inclusion are both outcomes. Equity is not.  Equity is a process.

**Dept of Teaching & Learning (DTL)**

1. SUMMER SCHOOL: Interested in what % of the ARP funds are going to expanded learning time like summer, afterschool and additional learning supports to help close the achievement gap (generally, and also specific to COVID). AND, based on the budget slide tied to summer school, how is the additional summer school funding being directed? As far as I can tell to date, it appears that the hours are the same this year as in past years... Can you provide more info on how many hours/day and for how many weeks kids will get? And how are students affected by the opportunity gap being prioritized beyond those with IEPs and ELLS. (Lastly... is the money going to the teachers to stem burn out... or going to increasing hours for kids?

APS will use approximately 20% of the American Rescue Plan funds allocated to it for summer school, which amounts to about $4 million. The elementary summer strengthening program will last four hours a day and will run for four weeks. The secondary summer school program will be composed of two three-hour sessions (students may take one or two classes) and will run for five weeks. Student eligibility for summer school is based on the following criteria:

* EL 1 and 2 students
* EL 3 and 4 students who did not demonstrate appropriate language acquisition progress this school year.
* Students with IEP’s
* Elementary students who demonstrated the equivalent of basic or below basic on reading and math screener assessments
* Secondary students who earned a D or E in courses they need to be promoted from 8th grade or to graduate.

The $1,000 incentive for staff who are willing to work in person is meant to increase the number of teachers who are interested and qualified to teach summer school in-person so that we are able to provide summer school classes for our most at-risk students.

1. BUDGET: Are middle school extracurriculars and late buses still on the chopping block? The Board has not signaled they are considered reducing extracurricular activities and late buses for middle schoolers at this time. The Board will vote on the FY 22 budget at their meeting on 5/6.
2. SUMMER SCHOOL: Do we know why teachers seem reluctant to teach in person? I thought you also mentioned that they found distance/hybrid pedagogy more exhausting than in person, which would make me believe they'd be more eager to do in person. The delivery of instruction and interventions via distance learning and via the concurrent model has required teachers to fundamentally change their pedagogy and to adapt their learning activities to the digital platform. This change has exhausted teachers to the point that the vase majority of them have indicated that they will not apply to teach summer school.
3. BUDGET: Is the elimination of funding for APS students’ tuition at TJHSST included in the SB budget, or has it been shelved? Why wasn’t the cost of those kids to come back into APS added back? While the elimination of funding for APS students who would be rising 9th graders at TJHSST was proposed as a potential reduction for the FY 22 budget, the Board has not yet signaled an interest in including this reduction as part of the final budget.
4. FALL RETURN: Do you have any idea how many families/studies will likely choose full virtual learning in the Fall? Can anybody opt for it or are there going to be specific requirements, for example health concerns for the child? There will not be a prerequisite (such as health concerns) for families to choose to participate in the K-12 Distance Learning Program for the 21-22 school year. This spring, the percentage of families who are choosing to remain in the distance learning model ranges from 39% of elementary students to 42% of middle school students to 51% of high school students. (See [Learning Model Enrollment Data](https://www.apsva.us/school-year-2020-21/learning-model-enrollment-data/)) We expect far fewer number of families to express interest in the Distance Learning Program for the 21-22 school year. The survey window for families to express their interest in in-person or the Distance Learning Program will be open from 4/19-4/30.
5. FALL RETURN: Will APS guarantee all students will have in person teachers? There should not be students in school with virtual teachers in the Fall. There should not be any concurrent learning which has been hard for both teachers and at home students. If offering a full time in-person, should be full-time and all in person. And then the Distance Learning can be a completely separate path with different teachers. APS is offering two instructional models for the 21-22 school year – an in-person model and a separate K-12 Distance Learning Program. In both models, students will attend synchronous classes five days a week. The school day will return to its pre-pandemic length of approximately eight hours a day. Concurrent learning will only occur for some AP, IB, dual enrollment or selected specialized secondary electives classes. See these [FAQ’s](https://www.apsva.us/school-year-2021-22/faq/) for more information.
6. Have you considered bringing these groups - those being offered summer school - back in-person four or five days this school year? So there is less to make up/recover this summer? We still have 25% of this school year left. Students with disabilities enrolled in countywide special education programs have been attending four days a week in-person since March. We will also be able to transition PreK students enrolled in the hybrid model to four days a week in-person as of Tuesday, 5/4. Furthermore, we have been able to transition 1,788 students from distance learning to in-person for two days a week since February 1st. Unfortunately, due to operations challenges, we will not be able to transition any other students to in-person learning four days a week.
7. SUMMER SCHOOL: Can APS share guidance with parents on how eligibility for recovery services will be administered? How does this differ from summer school? Extended School Year? Can you please clarify each group, opportunity and how students/families access.

**Summer school** is available to all elementary students – EL, general education and students with IEP’s – who have demonstrated a lack of proficiency in literacy and numeracy and to all secondary students who are earning D’s and/or E’s in courses needed for promotion from middle school or for graduation.

**Recovery Services** – are available to students with IEP’s whose IEP teams have determined that they **experience** learning loss that will need to be recovered for several hours over the summer. In general, recovery services will occur in the afternoon, after summer school sessions and will be delivered by a special education teachers.

**Extended School Year (ESY) –** Extended School Year services are provided to eligible students who require instructional or support services beyond the regular 180-day school year to maintain proficiency levels in critical skill areas from one school year to the next. Critical skill areas include muscular control, physical mobility, self-care/self-help, impulse control, basic communication, social interaction, and basic cognition. IEP teams determine whether students with disabilities are eligible for ESY.

1. Summer School - Will you adjust summer school hours and/or rigid attendance criteria to recognize that not all students will return to classrooms without anxiety or other issues. Worried that if a student misses 4 classes and then fails out of summer school they will be even more depressed at continued failures. And they will have lost the opportunity to catch up on academics. APS will consider adjusting attendance criteria for students who may demonstrate a need for this flexibility.
2. SUMMER & FALL: Are you going to survey families again about 5 days in-person vs virtual learning? For Summer School? For Fall? The survey window for families to indicate their preferred model for the 21-22 school year is now open – its last day is Friday, April 30th. Families of students who are eligible for summer school will be surveyed regarding their preferred model when they are contacted about their child’s eligibility.
3. CURRENT RETURN: Is there any data about who is going back to school vs going/staying in hybrid broken down by race, socio-economic, etc… ? Will this be part of Dr. Duran’s presentation? If not what plans are there to understand who is staying virtual and why? Please see current Learning Model Enrollment Data on the APS website at this [link](https://www.apsva.us/school-year-2020-21/learning-model-enrollment-data/).
4. FALL RETURN - Could APS provide the community with the updated numbers of how many kids can be accommodated in each classroom by school with the new 3 feet physical distance recommendation so we can understand the limitations to bring kids more days to in-person learning this academic year? And in that line, how will you accommodate 5 days a week in the Fall? Are you expecting the rules to relax more or the real problem has to do with transportation? It is important to note that the reduced distancing only allows for 2-3 more students per classroom so it is not a significant change per class. Because most elementary classes still require two classrooms per class, half of the grades in on two days still require 2/3 of the rooms available. There are some schools with the capacity to move certain groups to four days, but it is not possible at all schools. Transportation is a major barrier in a shift to more days of instruction. The routes were designed to address two-day return, 11 students, shorter elementary school days and driver availability. With respect to driver availability, COVID has brought an additional challenge to a pre-existing challenge.  The routes are not the same on Tuesday/Wednesday and Thursday/Friday because the students are not the same and come from different places.  To have run the same routes both days requires far more buses/drivers (that we don’t have) and resulted in a lot of empty buses if we did have the resources. Other divisions planned routes differently and others have much bigger fleets to absorb additional routes.

While we anticipate that there may be more relaxation of social distancing requirements in the fall, we are basing our planning for the start of the 21-22 school year using the current parameters of three-foot social distancing.

1. FALL RETURN: Is there an existing virtual school program with the state of Virginia? How would APS Distance Learning differ? What does APS mean by Distance Learning option? Will there be concurrent learning like in hybrid now?

Many districts, including APS, use Virtual Virginia classes to serve distance learning needs. The separate APS K-12 Distance Learning Program slated for the 21-22 school year will differ from Virtual Virginia in that classes will be taught by APS teachers. More information about the K-12 Distance Learning Program can be found in these [FAQ’s](https://www.apsva.us/school-year-2021-22/faq/).

1. SUMMER SCHOOL - In the past a student is pushed out after 3 absences or tardy arrivals. Would be ideal to keep them enrolled and attending as best they can for the 4 weeks. Re-entry to the different school environment will be challenging for many students and they shouldn't be punished for adjustment issues. APS will consider adjusting attendance criteria for students who may demonstrate a need for this flexibility.