

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Item C-1-b

Work Session on Homework & Communications of Student Progress

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 6:34 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice-Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Monique O’Grady, Member
David Priddy, Member
Claudia Mercado, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Bridget Loft, Chief Academic Officer
Brian Stockton, Chief of Staff
Ty Byrd, Director of Secondary Education
Kelly Dillon, Teacher, Yorktown High School
Tony Hall, Principal, Washington-Liberty High School
Sarah Putnam, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Erin Russo, Principal, Discovery Elementary School
Dr. Lori Wiggins, Principal, Gunston Middle School

Introduction

To begin, Dr. Durán shared that the purpose of the work session was to start the process of updating the grading policy to define, clarify, and codify equitable grading practices across the school system to ensure that students have a consistent grading experience. Ms. Loft then led the discussion by asking those present to share their experiences with grading.

Current Policy and Practices

Mr. Byrd presented the revision schedule of the School Board Policies I-7.2.3.34 Communication – Student Progress, Program, and Grading and I-11.2 Homework slated for May of 2022. Mr. Hall explained the current high school grading practices. Ms. Putman shared about the standards-based grading practices, and teacher engagement to develop equitable grading practices, and she provided feedback from the Student Advisory Board on homework and grading.

Equitable Grading Practices

Ms. Wiggins explained how Gunston Middle School implemented the equitable grading practices adapted from the book study by Joe Feldman, Grading for Equity. In addition, Ms. Dillon provided additional practices implemented such as no extra credit, re-dos and retakes, and ungraded formative assessments. This was followed by Ms. Russo eloquently speaking about grading practices at Discovery Elementary with the end goal to have students demonstrate mastery and a growth mindset.

Moreover, Ms. Wiggins, Ms. Dillon, and Mr. Hall shared about the grading and homework practices at their schools and purposeful work happening to identify moving students from an archaic grading system to an approach that focuses on the deep mastery of subjects. Ms. Loft ended the presentation by outlining the policy revision timeline.

School Board Discussion

Ms. Loft guided the conversation by asking the Board to consider:

- What specific elements the Board is looking for in the revised policy and PIPs that would help provide parents with a meaningful, consistent, and accurate picture of student progress district-wide? (Homework and Communication of Progress)
- How can our homework and grading policies support our commitment to align with APS' core value of equity?

The Board discussed the grading system with staff providing clarification on the equitable grading scale, providing support systems for students, securing the appropriate technology needs to move forward with a different grading scale, and addressing the need for a consistent grading mechanism across the school system. In addition, they discussed educating parents on the possible grading change and its implementation and finding opportunities for growth as the policy revision moves forward.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Arlington School Board