

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Work Session on English Learners Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2022

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, at 5:31 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Vice Chair
Mary Kadera, Member
Dr. Barbara Kanninen, Member
David Priddy, Member
Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Dr. Gerald Mann, Chief Academic Officer
Terri Murphy, Director of the Office of English Learners
Sam Klein, Supervisor of the Office of English Learners
Stephen Ross, English Learners Data Coordinator

English Learners Presentation

Dr. Durán began by explaining that the purpose of the work session was for the Board to better understand English Learners (EL) and the available services to the almost 9,400 EL student population. Noting that EL students' needs have not been met accordingly, Dr. Durán appreciated the opportunity to discuss and reflect on opportunities for improvement for their success.

Dr. Mann thanked the EL team for working hard on the presentation. Ms. Murphy reviewed the agenda, and Mr. Klein shared an overview of the EL program. It was noted that every APS school serves EL students and spoke about Students with Limited and/or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), students who usually arrive during their high school years. He described the EL Services' eligibility process and reviewed the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screener to assess EL students. In detail, he presented two different assessment reports, explained the contrasts, and explained how teachers utilize the results. Mr. Klein noted the differences between the Standards of Learning (SOL) and WIDA, pointing out that WIDA assesses proficiency to demonstrate the language learning progression.

Ms. Murphy informed the Board that the American Institute for Research (AIR) would be retained as the five-year plan consultant. She shared the roadmap and explained that engagement, data analysis, staffing, and the program models were top priorities in formulating the plan. She revealed that the five-year plan draft would be available for review in December for further stakeholder engagement. She described the program models for language instruction for elementary, middle, and high school students and their work to increase EL achievement through curriculum, professional development, and data analysis through EL Data Locker. Ms. Murphy concluded by explaining the action steps of the five-year plan.

Furthermore, Mr. Klein reviewed the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement timeline and presented the accomplished work of the past three years. He explained the specific components of the DOJ Training Requirements and the plan for teachers with incomplete training hours. He then presented the Virginia Department of Education Federal Program Monitoring (VDOE FPM), which monitors the allocation of funding and ensures schools comply with using the Title III funds.

¹The recording of School Board meetings is posted on the APS Web site following the meetings.

Dr. Durán thanked the presenters and hoped the presentation gave the Board more insight into the EL Program and the challenges being faced. He expressed the importance of knowing every student by name, need, and strength. He explained that the five-year plan would help solidify the next steps. He also stated that the State of Virginia does not allow students to do SOL testing in their native language; if they did, it would identify what content the EL student knows in their native language.

School Board Discussion

The Board thanked the staff for an exceptional presentation. They discussed data, assessments, the five-year plan, the Bilingual Family Specialists, the Budget, and the DOJ Settlement. They asked if any data showed what SLIFE and students under Level 6 were doing post-graduation. They were informed that the students self-reported this information and would need further investigation. The Board inquired about accommodations for assessments and the communication plan for the students, parents, and teachers. The Board and staff discussed SOL assessments and how they are not an accurate assessment tool for EL students, therefore conversing about what other metrics could measure their success. In addition, the Board examined the five-year plan and the work being done with AIR to formulate it. The Board suggested hosting different focus groups to get accurate information for the plan. Board members commented on the staffing of the Bilingual-Family Specialists and their support in the major languages. Moreover, the Board discussed the budget and the different funding.

In conclusion, Dr. Durán spoke about some of the standardized measures in place for EL but specified that more mastery of the content results needs to be shown when reporting to the Board. The Superintendent noted that EL students are measured by progress and proficiency, and their progress might be best assessed through WIDA.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.

ATTEST:

Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Arlington School Board

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