

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Work Session on Gifted Services Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2023

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 5:30 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Vice Chair
Mary Kadera, Member
David Priddy, Member
Bethany Zecher Sutton, Member
Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Dr. John Mayo, Chief Operating Officer
Michel Hodge, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

CALL TO ORDER AND CLOSED MEETING

Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order and *moved that the Board immediately convene in a closed meeting to consider as many as 12 appointments, 2 changes in position/salary, 5 resignations, 3 resignations with prejudice, 1 termination, and 1 retirement as authorized by Virginia Code 2.2-3711(A)(1)*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Priddy, and it was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Ms. Kadera, Mr. Priddy, and Ms. Zecher Sutton voting affirmatively.

The closed meeting adjourned at 5:55 PM and the Board reconvened in an open meeting.

Mr. Goldstein moved to certify that pursuant to 2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia, to the best knowledge of each School Board member, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting just held, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening this closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. The motion was seconded by Mr. Priddy and was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; Mr. Priddy – Aye; and Ms. Zecher Sutton – Aye.

The Board took a recess and reconvened at 6:32 PM.

Also present were:

Sarah Putman, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Kerri Hirsch, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Cheryl McCullough, Supervisor of Gifted Services
Katherine Partington, Specialist of Gifted Services
Amanda Dempsey, Young Scholar Specialist of Gifted Services

Introduction

Dr. Durán started by stating that the objective of the meeting was to learn about the Gifted Services work in APS, the plans moving forward, and to provide the community with an understanding of the APS commitment to students. He spoke about the work to challenge gifted students to help them meet their potential but acknowledged that some

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

changes needed to be made. Ms. Putnam introduced the Gifted Services staff and acknowledged their work with the schools and gifted students.

Gifted Services

Ms. McCullough spoke about the Talent Development Model, the philosophy for the Education of Gifted Students, and the foundation for APS gifted services. She presented an overview of the Gifted Services staff, data on the population of students who receive Gifted Services, and she spoke about the types of support the Gifted Services Office provides to the Resource Teachers for the Gifted (RTGs). Furthermore, Ms. McCullough presented budgetary recommendations for consideration to continue to support the district and schools to equitably meet the needs of every student. Ms. Partington shared a comparison of surrounding divisions and the national average of identified students in Gifted Services. She addressed the specific services students receive and explained how APS Gifted Services addresses disproportionality in identification. Moreover, she explained the resources available at the district and school levels and the support for professional learning for teachers. Ms. Dempsey talked about the Young Scholars Model and the work of the RTGs, as well as the professional learning opportunity available to teachers to learn about the Young Scholars Model.

School Board Discussion

The Board thanked the Gifted Services Office for an informative presentation. The School Board discussed concerns about only having one RTG in each school, the population of gifted students in schools, and the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program. They mentioned the disconnect and distinction between professional learning and planning, recertification points, and other professional learning requirements for teachers. They also inquired about the role of the new Professional Learning Director and the support for gifted teachers. The Board also discussed the new middle school intensified courses and the involvement of Gifted Services in this initiative. Ms. Putman clarified that a student does not have to be identified as a gifted student to take intensified courses. In addition, the Board requested clarification on why students are identified as gifted in Music and Art in some schools and not others, the identification of gifted students in different ethnic groups, the talent development model, and about the system-wide problem being experienced in Synergy in scheduling students and using the master schedule.

In response to the discussion on RTGs, Dr. Durán noted this topic would be addressed in the planning factor study. He also highlighted that the focus needs to be on supporting all students, not solely on one group of students.

Conclusion

In closing, Ms. Putman and Ms. Hirsch both thanked the Gifted Services team for their hard work on the presentation. Mr. Goldstein echoed his appreciation and added that it was a productive discussion. Dr. Durán also thanked the Gifted Services staff and their work towards supporting staff and the needs of students. He concluded by noting that APS will continue to advocate for creating systems for all students and meeting their needs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

ATTEST:

Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Arlington School Board

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