

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget Work Session #6 and
Work Session on Homework & Communications of Student Progress Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2023

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 5:34 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Vice Chair (Arrived at 6:01 PM)
Mary Kadera, Member
David Priddy, Member
Bethany Zecher Sutton, Member
Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Durán, Superintendent
Dr. John Mayo, Chief Operating Officer
Dr. Tyrone Byrd, Interim Chief Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Dr. Gerald Mann, Chief Academic Officer
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Management Services

Budget Work Session #6

Ms. Peterson presented the updates to the School Board's Proposed FY 2024 Budget. She discussed the additions, reductions, and changes to the budget since the March 20 presentation. She stated that the budget was balanced and provided the status of the reserves with the new changes.

The School Board discussed the new high school positions of the Student Success Specialist and the Dean of Students. They considered if the Dean of Students may be better served in Middle Schools and whether to implement this position before the Student Success Specialist position. The Board also discussed the need for interpreters during Parent/Teacher Conferences and the use of reserves.

In conclusion, it was mentioned that the Committee of the Whole meeting tentatively scheduled for May 9 and 10 was canceled.

Work Session on Homework & Communications of Student Progress (6:07 PM):

Also Present were:

Sarah Putnam, Executive Director, Curriculum and Instruction
Keisha Boggan, Principal, Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Meghan Neary, Assistant Principal, Ashlawn Elementary School
Keith Knott, 3rd Grade Teacher, Innovation Elementary School
Anne Stewart, Social Studies Lead Teacher, Yorktown High School
Dr. Tracy Maguire, English Teacher and Department Chair, Yorktown High School

Introduction and Presentation

Dr. Mann began the work session by providing an overview of the meeting agenda and leading the Board in a moment of reflection on their grading experiences as adults and how they are motivated to achieve success or growth. He then reviewed the School Board Grading Policy revised in June 2022 and discussed the growth and expansion of equitable

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

practices. Dr. Byrd discussed the connections of grading practices to diversity, equity, and inclusion training, including Implicit Bias Training, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equitable Practices. Moreover, Ms. Putnam shared the opportunities for professional learning for staff during the 2022-23 school year and reviewed equitable practices in APS. In addition, the Board heard from teachers and administrators about their experiences with standards-based grading, no late penalty, and minimizing the impact of formative assessments, retakes, and redos at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Furthermore, Ms. Putnam shared student perspectives on the grading, retakes, and late penalties. She then presented the timeline for the Policy Implementation Procedure (PIP) revision in 2023 and shared about the elementary and secondary PIP updates currently under consideration. To conclude, Dr. Mann discussed the next steps in the grading policy and PIP process, and thanked the staff who attended the work session.

School Board Discussion

The School Board members thanked the staff for sharing their experience with the process. The Board highlighted that two different but relatable topics were discussed: standard-based grading and equitable grading practices. It was emphasized that with the shift in the grading policy and grading practices, students could develop accountability, build life skills, self-advocacy, and time management. Board members noted that colleges in the United States are not caught up to a different perspective on grading and usually impose firm deadlines. They also discussed that high school students need to be prepared with the skills to navigate college and they expressed concerns about students' post-APS life, whatever it may be, and what success may look like for them. Dr. Durán shared that a challenge for students going to college is not being prepared to take courses in college from a content level; they often have to take remedial courses. Dr. Durán hoped that with the new process, students leaving APS would be content prepared. The Board also discussed other concerns related to the successful implementation of the standard-based grading such as the timeline, change in behavior, the responsiveness of teachers to this change, and informing parents. It was mentioned that it might be helpful to engage with teachers who were not on board with the new grading method to reconsider their relationships with students. It was noted that teachers are taught to be teachers but are not taught how to grade within the equity practices framework. The Board requested that teachers update CANVAS so students know where they stand on grades and can advocate for themselves. Lastly, Mr. Goldstein thanked attendees for a very educational presentation and courageous conversation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

ATTEST:

Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Arlington School Board

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