

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** School Board  
**FROM:** Pupil Services Advisory Committee  
**DATE:** January 23, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Non-recommending Year Report

The Pupil Services Advisory Committee (PSAC) reviews the services offered by school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and substance abuse counselors, and makes recommendations for changes or improvements in these services.

### **Current Year Activities:**

The activities of the committee for this year included:

1. APS and PSAC orientation and information for new and continuing Committee members. Eight of the twelve members of the Committee joined within the last year. We thank the previous Co-chairs (Emily Hunt and Sarah Jackson) and the long-serving committee members from previous years.
2. Reports and review of 2012 Arlington Youth Assets Survey, APS 2012 Community Satisfaction Survey, APS 2012 Senior Survey, and 2012 Pupil Services Academic and Career Planning Report.
3. Committee member discussion and prioritizing of APS Pupil Services programs and services where data or other input from students and/or parents have indicated needs for additional services, program revisions, or improved coordination or communication of services and programs.

Since the PSAC focused on recruiting and re-building the Committee last year, we did not make recommendations, as scheduled. Our 2011-12 report provided an update on previous recommendations and we do not have pending recommendations to report on this year.

Our review and discussion of APS Pupil Services reports and surveys of students, parents, and counseling staff, as well as the experiences of committee members and others, indicated a need for review and consolidation of APS academic planning information, documents, websites and web tools, and other planning resources. We will specifically study the pathways our rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders and middle school students take through the academic planning process and the services, programs and information available to them. We are concerned that APS academic planning expectations, options and information are not clear to many parents and students in late elementary

or middle school. We will also work with staff to seek solutions to the problems our students and parents report in not being aware of certain programs such as dual enrollment courses, 504 rights (services and/or accommodations needed by students with disabilities), or the APS Career Center programs that may be the right answers for individual student needs.

Although we are using the phrase “academic planning,” we interpret it as broadly as possible: where the APS rising 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents utilize counseling and services to address the needs of any aspect of academic life, including emotional and behavioral preparation, to make long-term academic, college-preparation and career decisions. As our middle schools encourage students to challenge themselves academically, we plan to also look at how our middle schools communicate academic expectations and the academic support services available to students.

As we focus on the transition from elementary to middle school, we hope to explore ways to introduce greater academic planning consistency and coordination between schools. In our efforts to advocate for Pupil Services programs that best serve all students and families, the PSAC and staff liaisons are seeking to find the “happy medium” between (1) services and programs that are unique to particular schools and (2) central office “standards” that cut across all schools and “competencies” for all personnel.

**2011-2017 Strategic Plan Alignment:** The PSAC’s two areas of focus, (1) review and consolidation of APS academic planning information, documents, websites and web tools, and other planning resources for students, parents, and staff, and (2) strengthening of the middle school academic planning process through greater academic planning consistency and coordination between schools, both strongly support **Goal 1. Ensure that every student is challenged and engaged;** and **Goal 2. Eliminate achievement gaps.**

**Committee members:** Erin Beckles, Jill Flack, Kateri Gajadhar (student member), Mary Lopez Garelli, Alicia Guajardo, Judy Hadden (Co-chair), Linda Hardy, Emily Hunt (student member), Janis Johnson, Lydia Robertson, Jean Waterbury, and David Welker (Co-chair). Dan Dixon has attended PSAC meetings as an interested, involved observer, and Dominique Lopez Piper (student) has also joined us when possible, and has reviewed Committee documents.

Our APS Pupil Services staff liaisons are Marcia Jackson, Supervisor of Counseling, and Jeffrey Carpenter, Director of Pupil Services