

**Arlington Public Schools
Advisory Council on Instruction
Evelyn Syphax Academic Center**

Wednesday 9 October 2013

Present were:

ACI Leadership: Patty Petroccione and Rebecca Hunter, ACI Co-Chairs, Connie Skelton, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Karla Hagan, Ted Black, Judy Hadden, Tannia Talento, Jennifer Vogel, ACI Vice Chairs.

ACI Membership: Meredith L. Ayala, Northern Virginia Community Collete; Natalie Root, Teachers Council on Instruction; Nate Hardy, Abingdon; Maura McKinley Tell, Arlington Traditional; Chris Ditta, Barcroft, Samara Weinstein, Barrett; Timi Kenealy, Drew; Sarah Zevin, Henry; Melanie Hall, Jamestown, Scott Milam, Long Branch; Terri Schwartzbeck, McKinley; Gretchen Davis, Nottingham; Susan Land, Nottingham; Susan Scott, Jefferson; Susan LeFande, Williamsburg; Karolina Walkin, H-B Woodlawn; Ron Kampeas, H-B Woodlawn; Alisa Cowen, Arlington Career Center; Maria Abarca, Wakefield; Nancy Brown, Wakefield; Rita Thompson, Yorktown, Natalie Goldring, League of Women Voters (by phone).

Advisory Committee Chairs/Staff Liaisons: Nadine Asef-Sargent, Special Education.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm. Ms. Petroccione welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered everyone an opportunity to state their name and the school/committee they represented.

She also welcomed Natalie Goldring who attended by phone.

Admin Details:

A review of the ACI website was provided, encouraging all to visit the Arlington Public School section where documents are constantly being updated.

In addition, it was noted that the calendar for all meetings is on the APS section of the ACI website.

Ms. Skelton presented an overview of Arlington Public Schools using a power point presentation. It was noted that the Arlington public school system is growing at a phenomenal pace. There are a tremendous number of new apartment buildings in the county and families occupy this new space.

An overview of the demographics was presented, noting the numbers have been relatively stable.

The superintendent and executive leadership team was reviewed, noting the executive roles.

The 2011-17 APS strategic plan was discussed, noting the mission and vision strongly focuses on the growth and achievement of the students.

The federal accountability was discussed, noting the measurable objectives have scored successfully this year. It was noted that 3 schools are focused schools; they did not meet the required categories, however the leadership staff are working with the schools in order to score successfully. The improvement plan used currently is successful, noting it is based upon a UVA model. In addition those schools that have succeeded based upon a 3-year average are also a focus and work is provided to improve their accountability.

There are currently only two diploma types: standard and advanced studies. A strong support for all schools is instructional. Leadership teams go to each school, and work on ways to provide assistance.

There was discussion on the interactive system provided online used as a benchmark. The teachers use them for planning purposes. The grade is used to identify how effective the teacher is; this is not a way to grade the students.

Question: With regards to teacher evaluations, there were concerns with some teachers.

Response: This year a new evaluation was used.

Question: Are there specific measurements?

Response: We worked together and set standards to measure by. All groups made their own standards.

Question: What is the probationary time period, 3 or 5 years?

Response: The probationary period is for up to 5 years. Dr. Murphy stated it was on a case-by-case basis, for a maximum of 5 years.

PRESENTATIONS:

Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services, provided an Information Services update.

He noted the updates to the information system and the completion of providing wireless systems in all schools. The final wrap up is expected by the end of October.

The new system is designed to protect the students, disallowing bad sites and providing control over what is accessible through the wireless system.

Question: Will the wireless system in this building be restored?

Response: Yes, it will be complete. Note that guests have different access than students.

Question: What about proxy sites. Is this something you can clamp down on?

Response: We are also upgrading the proxy services. This will provide more control. Note that if students access their cell phones, there is nothing that can be done to

control the sites they access. If they download over the wireless system, the school maintains control. There is a plan to work on educating parents on social media and ways to control.

Question: Please reference your approach to schools with high disparity ratios.

Response: More money has been put into the IS department, so that the ratio of 1 computer for every 4 students is reachable. In addition, additional resources provided [supports schools piloting] new devices related to instruction. The recycle program makes available computers in good condition which can then be made available to families within the loaner program.

There has been a lot of progress with regards to the data and gathering the information into one system. Training for all teachers will be provided. The 2-face system; one for parents and one for students, will be available. The student face will be rolled out in November.

Question: Teachers are still giving out assignments – will this be integrated?

Response: Yes, it is all about training, and we are providing the training, along with the right tools required. Training will be provided in increments and ongoing.

Gathering the data has been critical. The data is now in a “data warehouse”. This can now be used in all areas as students progress throughout the school system.

Question: Can a teacher pull up all of a student’s data since Kindergarten?

Response: No, not right now. The data was separate. But within time, it will be available.

Question: With regards to the SOL grades, are they broken down in categories? This was incredibly useful.

Response: Please provide me with more information and I will see what is needed to do this type of report.

Question: Who is responsible for teaching interface?

Response: We have a system and are still working on putting it into place.

Question: How are facilitators trained?

Response: it is a challenge. Note that taking a class is difficult. We are now looking at training and also facilitating with students with special needs.

Question: What about languages?

Response: This is a challenge. We are constantly looking at how they are taught. We have been used to online providers, but it is not the ideal way to teach languages. The teacher has to be a Virginia certified teacher. Distance learning is a possibility.

Question: What about sign languages?

Response: An online course is in the works.

Question: with regards to the Advisory Committee on Technology: have you put out an announcement for people to join?

Response: It is on the web. There are certain areas we want to focus on.

John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities & Operations provided a facilities update.

Mr. Chadwick provided an extensive review of the new high schools opened this school year. A video on the opening at Yorktown was shown to the committee. Also, information and photos of the Long Branch renovation were presented.

Question: With the new building, will the enrollment change?

Response: We are watching it very closely. The effect on the students has been remarkable. The students enjoy the new facility, and it is making a difference. It is gratifying to see the response from the students' perspectives.

Question: Discuss your approach on new construction.

Response: We do not build to any specific curriculum, as it is evident that its focus could change. When addressing a need for renovation, all areas are addressed, and a review on what the school is missing and what its needs are is put together. We are careful to make sure we improve the entire school, addressing all the areas of concern.

Question: With regards to technology, is a wireless system put in during the initial construction?

Response: The information services and instruction departments have standards and they are applied and updated for each school. Wireless services are provided in the open common spaces outside.

Everyone's attendance was thanked. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Next Meeting: October 23, 2012

Syphax Education Center/ Rooms 101/103

2110 Washington Boulevard
