

Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC)

Annual Report 2016-17



New art classroom in the McKinley Elementary School addition.

INTRODUCTION

This is the annual report of the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC) prepared for the School Board of Arlington, Virginia.

The FAC assists the School Board in the continuous, systematic review of school facilities and the biennial and long-range Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Members are appointed to two-year staggered terms, and may be invited to serve for up to three consecutive terms. APS staff actively assists the FAC in its work, as do liaisons from other Arlington councils and citizen groups. FAC meetings are held once each month from September to June. Additional work sessions are scheduled as needed. FAC members, who are seen as informed citizens, are regularly invited to serve as members of APS Building Level Planning Committees (BLPC), community and County groups, and on special task forces such as last year's South Arlington Working Group. FAC members also assist at APS Community Forums, typically as small group facilitators.

All FAC meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are posted on the APS website. Each meeting includes the opportunity for public comment, at which interested citizens are welcome to briefly address the FAC on issues of concern. Community groups may request an invitation to brief the FAC on topics of mutual interest.

This school year provided a variety of opportunities for the FAC to engage with APS staff and leadership, and collaborate with parents and community members in wide reaching public meetings, such as the recent series of public community forums on the CIP. The FAC offered analysis and advice to the School Board on critical facility improvements, capacity and enrollment issues, and growth in the county, each of which impact the educational experience for our children. Working closely with staff in Facilities and Operations, the FAC provided input into APS projects and planning efforts at all stages of development.

The past year's work and issues are summarized below, together with our observations and recommendations.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 1,300 HS SEATS

The FY 2017-26 [Capital Improvement Plan](#) (CIP) stipulated that APS begin planning for 1,300 new high school seats to be delivered by August 2022. In September 2016, the Advisory Committee on Instruction (ACI) began to develop a list of proposed instruction models for the 1,300 new seats for the School Board.

In order to ensure ACI and the School Board had the tools they needed to make a more fulsome and complete decision regarding the siting of the 1,300 high school seats, members of the FAC, led by Lois Koontz, established a subcommittee and moved to develop an evaluation of potential sites. This evaluation was completed between January and February of 2017 and because of this short timeframe, focused on APS-owned properties. In developing the list of properties to consider the group received input formally and informally from community members and referenced established reports from groups such as the South Arlington Working Group and the Community Facilities Study.

The resulting report highlighted not only the sites available, but the challenges associated with growth system-wide. These challenges include traffic, transportation, and parking; access to extracurricular activities and athletics, and a complete lack of “swing space” to house student populations on a temporary basis during capital projects. The report also concluded that while student population forecasts make it likely that Arlington will need a fourth high school, the complexity of building a comprehensive high school will require additional analysis and substantial planning.

Upon release of this report to the School Board and ACI, the FAC provided feedback to the Instruction team as they further analyzed the sites and options for the 1,300 seats, however, the FAC feedback was general in nature as it did not have data on proposed programs or the cost for the various options.



(Left) Washington-Lee High School and the adjacent Arlington Education Center were among the sites studied for the new high school seats. (Right) The Career Center, as photographed during a FAC walking tour, was among the other APS-owned sites that were analyzed by the FAC.

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION



New cafeteria and renovated classroom, Abingdon Elementary School

This was another year of intense activity to expand the number of seats available for the rapidly growing number of school-aged children through a combination of new construction, expansion of existing schools, and interior renovations.

Abingdon Elementary School

Construction has begun on the addition and renovation of Abingdon Elementary School. This work will add 12 classrooms and 136 seats while improving current shared spaces, including the library, kitchen and gymnasium. It also enhances pedestrian and vehicle access to the school. We understand from staff that the project is on schedule to be finished on December 2017.

While the construction work is intrusive and has proceeded through multiple stages, the staff are working closely with the construction team to maintain the school program in its midst. Throughout construction two grades remained in the school while the remainder of the students were housed in relocatables on the grounds. The students and staff of Abingdon have made the most of a disruptive situation, and this highlights the challenge associated with the lack of swing space available to APS. If the system had swing space for Abingdon, the students would have had a less disruptive space as opposed to attending school around a construction zone.



(Left) Renovated common areas in the Career Center, which houses the new Arlington Tech program
(Right) An addition onto McKinley Elementary School features new classrooms, common areas, and a new gymnasium with stage.

Career Center Expansion and Renovation

The FY 2017-26 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) identified funds for a capital project at the Career Center to create space that would allow the Arlington Tech program to grow to 600 students. A study to review the existing facility condition and utilization is underway. Staff are exploring options for future phased capital projects to accommodate up to 1,300 high school students in addition to Arlington Tech, Career Technical Education and other programs already located at the Career Center.

McKinley Elementary School

We understand from staff that construction on the addition and renovation of McKinley Elementary School is largely complete.

Fleet Elementary School

The FAC participated in the BLPC and PFRC process for the new Alice West Fleet Elementary School next to Jefferson Middle School. The FAC participants were pleased with the design of the new school. This design improves outdoor recreation opportunities and provides grade level access to the lower level of Jefferson. Additionally, the project as designed is within budget, including the underground parking. Construction is planned to begin this summer with the school opening in the fall of 2019.

This was the first project where the BLPC and PFRC worked together and met jointly. This process change seemed effective and should be considered for future projects.

Secondary School Interior Renovations

The work of renovating portions of Washington-Lee High School to make space for an additional 300 students will be replicated at Wakefield and Yorktown High Schools as provided for in the CIP. A similar study was done on Kenmore and Gunston Middle Schools and more than 60 additional seats will be created through internal modifications. The work on Wakefield, Kenmore and Gunston is scheduled to be completed by August 2017 and the work on Yorktown is scheduled to be completed by August 2018. These internal renovations will provide some capacity relief while APS continues to work on expanding the number of secondary seats to meet the expected number of additional students.

H-B Woodlawn and Stratford Programs at the Wilson Site

Planning and permitting continues for the new school at the Wilson site, which will provide seats for 775 students and will include innovative learning spaces for the H-B Woodlawn students and custom facilities to meet the special needs of the Stratford students. The County Board approved the Use Permit for the project with the temporary fire station and a small field between the building and North 18th Street. There are also 150 permanent parking spaces to be provided in the adjacent Penzance development. A separate Use Permit application to the County Board will be required if the School Board wishes to construct the parking structure after the temporary fire house has been removed. Construction has commenced with hazardous material removal from the existing building already complete. Construction is scheduled to be complete in time for the beginning of school in September of 2019.

New Middle School at Stratford Site

Planning continues to repurpose the former Stratford Junior High School building, currently used by the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs, as a neighborhood middle school, once the programs relocate to the Wilson site in 2019. Construction is expected to begin in early 2018 and is scheduled to be complete in time for the beginning of school in September of 2019.

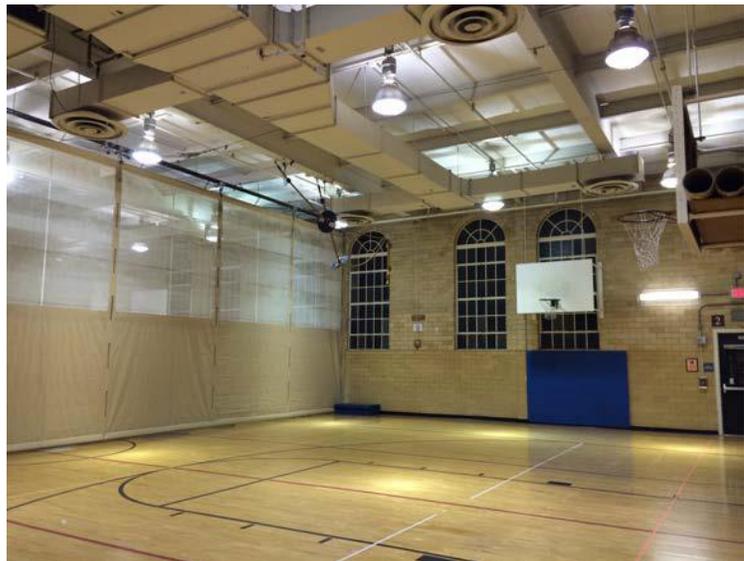
Construction Management at Risk

APS has begun to use a Construction Management at Risk approach for capital projects. This approach mitigates risks of schedule delays, poor quality construction and cost overruns and is not expected to add to the overall cost of our capital projects. As this approach continues to show benefits to APS, it should be considered for future capital projects.

HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Responding to projected overcrowding at Washington-Lee High School, APS initiated a high school boundary change process during the summer of 2016. As in previous years, the School Board and staff asked for the input from the FAC. For the first time, FAC input was considered during the early stages of the process: FAC members helped to define the framework, which included choosing the planning units that were to be considered for movement in the online boundary tool. Concerned with how best to engage all community stakeholders, the FAC invited the public to a discussion on community concerns and priorities; this event served as a model for the community engagement process subsequently led by APS staff. At the conclusion of the online boundary tool phase of the process, FAC representatives were invited to the discussion with staff on actual boundary change scenarios, using the data from the online boundary tool and the priorities that guide boundary changes according to School Board policy. Lois Koontz and John Peck represented the FAC. Once boundary scenarios were made public, FAC members served as ambassadors during the public outreach events, helping to explain the process and the various boundary scenarios to the public. It should be noted that the research on boundaries by the FAC High Schools Subgroup in 2016 was helpful during this process.

MINOR CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR MAINTENANCE



Window and lighting upgrades to Swanson Middle School's historic 1939-era gymnasium were completed this past year.

This year the FAC continued to be actively involved with the Minor Construction/Major Maintenance (MC/MM) operation, largely through its MC/MM Committee representative, John Giambalvo. Mr. Giambalvo noted that the APS MC/MM process compared very favorably against other similar project selection and prioritization models he had worked with over the years. The depth of knowledge by APS staff and effort they prioritized resources across the system, despite some unavoidable constraints, was especially impressive. This was achievable in part due to further growth in collaboration between a variety of APS stakeholders and County Parks and Recreation staff in developing a central grid for all summer activities in APS buildings (Summer school, community camps, etc.). This is critical to enable Maintenance project teams to get into the right buildings at the right times to optimize the volume of projects that can be completed over the summer.

The FAC representative noted the increased level of funding provided by the School Board over the past few years for MC/MM. This has directly enabled the execution of enough projects each year that many schools are seeing and feeling benefits, which in turn has increased trust in the more centralized structure used in today's MC/MM process. Projects emanating from central inspections, professional analysis, and Trade Supervisor cumulative records now account for over 95% of MC/MM projects each year.

The FAC also notes that the Maintenance Department has indicated that the current annual volume of MC/MM and Bond projects is on the cusp of its Project Management capability ceiling. This is especially true when considering the prime goal of keeping routine maintenance services/response times at established levels and when including significant relocatable and conversion work. Going forward, the Maintenance team will plan to separate the largest projects and include contracted project management costs in the budget for each project. The first examples of this will likely be the HVAC replacement projects at Gunston Middle School and Randolph Elementary School, which are so large and complex that they each need to be phased over a two-year period with dedicated on-site management.

Preventive Maintenance status for HVAC is at an all-time high, though challenges remain in attracting high-end technicians (as highlighted in the recent compensation study). Work on correcting the situation is ongoing between Maintenance and Human Resources teams.

The FAC would also like to take this opportunity to thank a staff member who has been particularly instrumental in making the MC/MM process more professional over the years. Mark Waszczak has been the MC/MM Program Manager for over ten years and is retiring with over 30 years' service to APS Facilities. He served with the FAC for eight years, and has been a central force behind over \$100 million dollars in improvements to APS schools. The FAC wishes him an enjoyable well-deserved retirement after all of his years of dedicated service to APS and its students.



(Left) Discovery Elementary School exterior. (Right) Thoughtfully designed environmental graphics throughout the school inspire learning and help explain the school's green features.

Green and Sustainable

APS continues its commitment to sustainability for new construction and existing school sites. This year, Discovery Elementary won two very prestigious national awards. Discovery was a top ten winner of the American Institute of Architects COTE (Committee on the Environment) award for innovative projects setting the standard in design and sustainability. Discovery also received the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools award and was cited as "a Net Zero eco-action learning accelerator." APS hopes to use Discovery's sustainability approach as a model for future construction.

On APS existing campuses, other important sustainable/energy efficient advancements have been made. The gymnasium LED lighting upgrade that started with Jefferson Middle School last year, continued this year and now includes Gunston, Kenmore, Williamsburg and Swanson's main gym and Washington-Lee's gymnastics and wrestling room. These lighting upgrades provide improved light quality, increase safety and reduce our energy costs. APS continues to roll out the water bottle filling stations at schools completing all the comprehensive high schools and most of the middle schools. This program has been well received and will continue this year. This January, APS signed a new Waste and Recycling Contract that will provide quantitative data for the first time, allowing schools the ability to track their waste and recycling stream. It can provide a learning experience outside of the classroom by reinforcing a student's experience at home.

PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR



The former Stratford Junior High School, which closed in 1978, will reopen as a new middle school in 2019 to serve a growing middle school population in the northern part of the county.

The 2017-18 school year will bring a great deal of work for Facilities and Operations as they continue a robust capital construction program while maintaining existing facilities. The FAC looks forward to continuing in its role as advisors to the School Board. We also hope to continue to support efforts of the APS staff to dive deeper into certain issues and to further improve communication with the public.

This coming school year should bring the completion of the Abingdon addition and renovation, the completion of the additional 300 seats from internal modifications at Wakefield and the additional 60 seats at both Gunston and Kenmore from internal modifications. Work will begin for the new Fleet Elementary School at the Jefferson site, the middle school at the Stratford site and the new home for H-B Woodlawn and the Stratford Program at the Wilson site.

These capital projects will require APS to look at boundary change decisions at the elementary school and middle school level next year. The FAC will prioritize engagement in these boundary changes and would like to support ways to improve this

process. In addition, FAC members are well positioned to provide assistance to staff whether it be to assist engaging with communities and PTAs early-on in the process to find out what physical restrictions may exist, or to assist with additional research and options and feedback on how those options meet the stated criteria.

As detailed above, the FAC provided an evaluation that helped to identify sites for the 1,300 high school seats outlined in the FY 2017-26 CIP. As part of that evaluation, the FAC recommended that APS initiate a process to look more broadly at the long-term needs of our school system should it grow to the anticipated 40,000 students. How many elementary schools, middle schools and high schools will we need to plan for if our school system continues with its current rate of growth? Beyond classrooms, a growing school system will also need to address transportation needs as well as needs for sports facilities, field space, and space for various extracurricular activities. During the 2017-18 school year, the FAC will support the efforts of the School Board to look at our broader facilities needs as part of the development of the FY 2019-28 CIP and with long-term planning in general.

The collaboration with the new Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC) and the County will be important in the coming years as we develop an idea about what facility needs are entailed in our long-term plans. Even with APS-owned sites we will need the County's efforts and attention to collaboratively and efficiently plan for transportation, sidewalks and joint use. We will work closely with JFAC for the siting of the second elementary school already planned in the CIP. We also expect to work with JFAC for any planning for a high school projects beyond the 1,300 new high school seats. Included with this would be finding opportunities for land acquisition that would provide effective means to support future facility needs.

This past year the FAC worked closely with Instruction and ACI especially on the decision for the 1,300 high school seats. The FAC continues to believe in and support the idea that the development of a long-term instructional vision will help in developing plans for the supporting facility needs. The FAC therefore plans to continue to strengthen this collaboration with Instruction in the coming year.

LIAISON ACTIVITIES

As in past years, the FAC continued to liaise with the County Council of PTAs (CCPTA). Lois Thomas Koontz and Laura Saul Edwards shared this duty on behalf of the FAC and attended all but one of the CCPTA meetings held during the 2016-17 school year. Given the heightened focus on capacity and capital projects as the school system's challenge with overcrowding intensifies, presentations made to the CCPTA focused on priority issues such as work to identify sites on which to build 1,300 high school seats by 2022 and recommended projects for inclusion in the FY 2019-28 CIP. While the CCPTA generally focuses on instructional and administrative issues, the representatives were grateful for FAC updates. CCPTA members from schools with ongoing capital projects added observations and suggestions gleaned from their firsthand experience that in turn were shared with the FAC. Given the growing number of capital projects in upcoming years and the importance of public engagement and community support in these efforts, it is expected that the FAC will continue liaison activities with the CCPTA.

FAC MEETING VENUES

The FAC continued its practice of regularly meeting at APS locations throughout the county to acquaint its members with representative school facilities, particularly those at the focus of current discussions. Each school's principal typically welcomed us and provided a tour of the building prior to the FAC business meeting, affording the opportunity to informally discuss how the facility's design and maintenance impacts the program of instruction.

This year the FAC met at the following locations:

September 12, 2016 – Education Center

The Ed Center is the venue of choice for the initial organizational meeting of each school year, and for special work sessions that are held as needed. It is being considered as a site to be used by APS for seats in both the short term and long term. The facilities staff conducted the tour and explained the permitting concerns related to educational use. These included the fire rating and the lack of adequate stairs or elevators. They also pointed out the challenges of the curved rooms for classes other than small seminars. The HVAC system is at the end of its life and inadequate for comfort currently. The working premise was that a renovation would cost nearly as much as building new, and would net far fewer seats. Recent evaluations suggest that the renovations might not need to be quite so extensive for educational use and could provide more than 500 new seats.

October 18, 2016 – Career Center

The FAC was able to observe the specialized facilities serving the multiple programs housed at the Career Center. The tour focused on the different special areas of study currently offered and on plans already underway to maximize the use of existing space. The facilities staff discussed the rare ability to build on top of the building while occupied due to its style of construction. The staff plans to use the Construction Manager at Risk approach for design and construction to both control cost and avoid permanent hiring of specialized staffing. For this and other projects, the engagement of a program manager will lend surge capacity and expertise as needed. This will be essential as we anticipate bringing online two new schools and modified additions to schools online at the same time in the near future.

November 14, 2016 – Long Branch Elementary School

Long Branch Elementary School sits on 2.3 acres, which is roughly half the size of the next smallest elementary school site. This makes Long Branch the most space-constrained campus of all our Arlington schools. Long Branch currently has two relocatable classrooms that are located on County property, and APS must seek County approvals and permits in order to place additional relocatables on this site – which will significantly impact the available open space for students. Current projections show the Long Branch student population is expected to continue to grow by approximately 25 students per year.

December 12, 2016 – Randolph Elementary School

As with many legacy properties that have seen multiple additions, Randolph Elementary School has struggled with multiple, aging HVAC systems. This has been compounded by a leaking roof which has caused damage to ceilings, walls and floors. Additionally, improper grading on the exterior has resulted in flooding in the library and doorways. The PTA president was able to point to mitigating steps including putting the library bookcases on wheels so that they can be moved out of the way of the flooding. They are also in the process of retrofitting better lighting in the hallways and providing for a secure entryway. The changes to school entrances are being rolled out for security, and they are resulting in the need to reconfigure the main office in this case, like others. The needed repairs to the roof will be addressed first and then the HVAC will be updated and made uniform and effective. This project will entail work staged over several summers requiring the school to continue to cope with serious facility challenges in the interim. The state of this school's facilities has placed considerable strain on the teachers and administration.

February 13, 2017 – Abingdon Elementary School

The Abingdon school is undergoing tremendous change and improvement, which is discussed earlier. Thoughtful use of colors and themes tied to the academic and cultural focus of the school were evident to the FAC members who toured the school.

As noted above, the staff have had to work hard to balance the disruption of the construction while maintaining regular school operations.

March 13, 2017 – Reed School

The Reed School is slated to be fully developed into an elementary school. Before that, however, it will temporarily house the Stratford Program (currently at the Stratford building) to allow for work to begin for the new middle school at Stratford. The Children's School will be relocating from Reed School to make room for the Stratford program and the future elementary school.

April 17, 2017 – Arlington Trades Center

The Arlington Trades Center is used by APS for facilities staff offices, bus parking, and warehouse storage. Under the newer direct-delivery practices for ordering materials, much of the warehouse space can be made available for other uses, including storage for summer school and special needs programs. This space is also being considered as a potential location for additional "white fleet" parking, which will make more space outside for bus parking. Currently, there is not enough space to park the existing fleet of school busses. APS is temporarily using County space for bus parking, but must relocate from that space to make room for ART bus parking.

May 8, 2017 – Stratford Building

The Stratford building is currently used for the H-B Woodlawn Program and the Stratford Program. The students in the Stratford Program will be temporarily relocated to the Reed School to allow for more extensive renovations to and an addition to the Stratford Building in preparation for opening as the new middle school. Additional facilities will be built into the current library to allow for family and consumer sciences classes. Lockers will be updated and ultimately, the existing murals will be removed. The work in the H-B Woodlawn part of the building will be staged around the existing program.

June 12, 2017 – McKinley Elementary School

The FAC's final meeting of the year was held at McKinley Elementary School to monitor the results of the recent construction and modifications that expand and enhance the school.

CLOSING

The FAC encourages the School Board to continue to do its best to further communication with the public about the changes to our facilities and to our school system that are a result of our growing student population. It is important to listen to public concerns. APS needs to continue to work to better and more fully explain the true impact of school decisions and how those decisions impact Arlington as a whole. The FAC encourages APS to continue to “show their work” and to fully explain to the public how and why they reach decisions and why other alternatives were not chosen. The FAC hopes to help in this process by providing research and feedback that will best enable the School Board and APS to be able to show that they based their decisions on data that supports the most efficient and effective use of money and space, and how each of those decisions fits into a long-term plan.