

EP. 28 IPP

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

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Welcome to Episode 27 of the What's Up, APS? Podcast. I'm Frank Bellavia with School and Community Relations. We are talking about the instructional ways of think process that we are undertaking this spring. Joining me on the phone today we have assistant superintendent of teaching and learning Karen Andrews of student services to honor the principal New Directions. Katie a seventh grade teacher at Williamsburg Middle School and I want to thank you all for joining us this afternoon.

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Thanks Frank. Why don't we start with you and just right off the bat what is the pre-K 12 instructional programs halfway right.

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So the pre-K twelve instructional program Pathways is really to help us do a couple of different things. One is to define what we mean when we talk about options or options programs within AP. So currently we have options such as Montessori options such as Arlington Tech and what we're really looking at as we create new schools and we do school boundaries as to really think about how do we define those options. What makes an option distinctly different from what we already are offering in all of our neighborhood schools.

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So the first part of this work is really to define that. How are our options different from what's happening in neighborhood schools. And then the second piece is really to then develop the vision for these instructional pathways so that students can enter into various options whether it's in kindergarten or in middle school or in high school that we have pre-K 12 articulation where it's appropriate. So some students may want access to an IEP program from kindergarten all the way through 12th grade.

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Are we currently doing that if that's needed and if not how do we make sure that that's something that's in place for a P.S. and that we make sure that whatever our pathways are very clear to our families and that people coming into AP ask or who have been in AP can easily access information about what options we have as well as information on our neighborhood schools.

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So how did this come about. Why do we need it and when.

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What's the timeline for being

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one of the reasons that we're really working on this right now is because there are a lot of elements that are coming together at once specifically we have the new AP s strategic plan that will take us through 2024. Part of that plan is that we have said we will increase high quality options for pre-K 12 instructional models both within and beyond our neighborhood schools. So our strategic plan really is laying out our

work for the next six years as a school division. And with that we also have boundary processes that are taking place.

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We have an updated options and transfer policy. We are opening new schools over the next several years because of the enrollment growth that we have taking place. And it really is important to us as a school division that we have an equal opportunity of access to the various things available to our students. And so those are some of the operational things that are all coming together at once. The other piece really has a lot to do with what's happening in teaching and learning and our shift in schools overall with the profile of a Virginia graduate.

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There is a focus on communication and creative thinking collaboration critical thinking we want to see those things and all of our schools. And so again then if we have options how are those different rates. This is what we want to see whether it's project based learning or focus on the five C's that I just spoke to. How then will that be different from some of our neighborhood schools and what makes it a distinctly different experience first.

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Can you talk about who's involved in developing the ICC. What's the role of teachers as and why it's important to.

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The IEP has been a collaborative project between counselors principals assistant principals coordinators of various departments and teaching and learning. Teachers have been part of that. We've had members from school and community relations planning and evaluation and other parts of AP like transportation that all play a part in helping students activate and participate in these different options. The role of teachers in this has been having those of us who are in the classroom everyday with students talk about what programs have been how those programs work with students and also looking at moving forward with many of the things that Terry talked about of increasing numbers profile of a graduate.

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How do we continue to provide a higher level of quality education for all students but also be very strategic about thinking through this and having that input from those of us who in that day to day with the students and feedback.

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What's the principal's perspective in this. How does a principal sit in and the overall community.

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I think process is important to us because we know that students succeed in different ways and so some students might need more structure and support others may do better in the bigger wider open classroom area. Some do well in college type atmosphere and so we know that all students learn but maybe not all in the same way and not on the same day. And so we want to be able to provide options where we can help each one of our students succeed and really support the hotel talking about the assessment process.

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Will it lead to any changes in the number of locations or programs or current U.P.S. option programs. One of the changes that part of this process.

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So our goal is to have the framework developed by June and through that development really thinking about how will this play into future decisions for U.P.S.. So as we are opening new schools as we are thinking about boundary processes. Part of what we want to be able to do is say okay we're opening this new school in 2021. How does it fit within what we said in the pathways if we've said for example that we should have three different types of an option and currently only has one of those is we're opening a new school.

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Does that new school fit to maybe increase from one to two to eventually get us to the three. So as we're doing this work we're really thinking about where do we want to be as a school division 10 years from now and how is we're moving forward in making decisions in the future will we be able to use this framework to help us with that decision making. We've done some of this work before. Over the last couple of years as we were thinking about the education and what's happening with the Education Center additional seats right that we are putting there over the next several years and we worked with the Washington Lee community to think about how this could look and we worked with the broader community and that was a thoughtful helpful process.

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Part of what we also want to be able to do is look at our work systemically. So instead of when we open a new school say well what should the option or the program. Should this be a neighborhood school or should it be an option that we're not making those decisions for individual schools as they're opening. But we have a plan that guides us for the next 10 years to say here's what we want. As a school division now how do these new schools or how does this boundary process fit into that.

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Let's talking about elementary middle and high school but what about other programs like Langston Arlington Community High School your program new directions. How do those fit into this process.

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So it's very important to be able to offer families and students options to succeed. But I think it's also important that they know

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where those options are what the options are. How did they get into those school summer referrals. Some are not. And so it's important for us to make that known. And then once we know what's best for families and for students then we can direct them and since we're growing and growing very fast we're trying to be proactive on that and get ahead of it. And so we want to make sure that we have the options available for all the families that we serve here. And so for some that would be a small instruction for some it may not be for some.

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We have programs like these so help for those that need second language learners. We have programs for our students have decided they're working they need to work a job and work the education around their

job. Maybe they want to come back and get their diploma because they didn't get it when they were a teenager. And so we just won't be able to help every student succeed from kindergarten to 55.

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So we're talking about the 2012 instructional programs Pathways Back in the community involved in this process for getting no information has been made available online.

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The AP's Web site and there have been a series of emails sent out containing information three different sets of the process. There has also been a committee of staff that has met. Starting in January in February the school board had a work session. Then in March principals and other staff groups met through the Advisory Council and a couple of programs also met. Then the committee that started in January came back together in April and then there will be a meeting coming up for the community to learn more in just a few days.

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How can families share their thoughts and questions about the IEP. As you just mentioned there's a debate coming up on April 30.

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Well community members can access a questionnaire that's available online in English and Spanish at a PSV a U.S. slashing gauge through May 13th. And also they could write to engage at P.S. the US and then as you mentioned there's a community open house on April 30th and will host that from 7 to 9 Kenmore Middle School and the cafeteria and community members are invited to drop in at their convenience and learn more about the IEP process and ask questions and share their input.

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The event will include bilingual staff and information on the IEP process. The elements in forming it such as the strategic plan and the Virginia profile of a graduate as mentioned earlier as well as AP has options offered today and potential for the future options. And lastly community members at this event will have the opportunity to provide input on the initial working draft definition of options within the IEP framework.

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I mentioned that questionnaire opens on the 22nd runs through May 13th is available until May 13.

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Is one of the back room ones something to you about the profile of a graduate is the committee using that the framers of the state set to help define some these pathways or is it just kind of guiding

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the profile of a graduate is something we want for all students within AP us.

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And so what that is doing really not just in AP US but across the state is shifting the focus of education overall. So thinking about the fact that yes our students need content knowledge they also need

opportunities to build workplace skills. They also need opportunities for career planning. They need opportunities to engage civically within our community. And again going back to those ideas of what is it that you do with the content knowledge right so we can get information anywhere now.

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With all the technology that's available. So education is shifting into the idea that is much more about what do I do with that information. So how do I communicate that information. How do we think about it really critically. How do I consider what the perspective is with this particular idea. And so the profile of a graduate is actually guiding what is the work that we want to be doing in classrooms for all of our kids. What do we want those learning experiences to be. What this is about really is what is the instructional approach or the instructional model that fits best for some students and their learning styles braid or their philosophy.

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So Montessori has a different philosophy than what a neighborhood public school in Apex or anyplace else in Virginia would have. And so we want to provide those opportunities. There are students who benefit greatly from having a bilingual experience and we want to ensure that our students who are interested in that have that opportunity. So there's this foundation within the profile that we want all kids to have and that all of our students are learning the same curriculum right through Virginia. We have the Standards of Learning. Everyone is doing that.

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It's more about what is the distinct instructional approach that we would be providing with these options and his chip was saying whether that's a smaller environment for some students who really thrive on a smaller environment where there are other students who being in a neighborhood high school have all of the things that we think about when we think about comprehensive neighborhoods and high schools really thrive. So what we're trying to do is get a balance. What are the options. What are our neighborhood schools and how do we make sure that all of our students can access those things through the processes we have in place.

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So we do talk a lot about equal access to apply. Knowing that we have waitlists for a lot of our options programs but balancing those options with our neighborhood schools to make sure all of our kids can thrive in whatever schools that they select with an AP Yes.

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What have you heard from community today. There's been a visioning session that included reps from all. What sort of things they've said.

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So we have worked closely with the advisory council on instruction and we met with them in February and that group actually has a representative from every school as well. And then we had a community meeting with representatives from each of the schools where we shared some of the drafts of our definition of options. Those we're trying to define what really makes a school distinct from a neighborhood school if it's going to be an option as well as what are the kinds of options we may want to consider within AP.

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And so as we've looked at the definitions we have talked some about making sure that people know that all of our students are taught the same core curriculum that if we are going to implement an option that is really important to our community that it is distinct and that it's evidence based that we know that it will be successful for our students and also making sure that people do understand that a lot of the work is based on our capacity and specific criteria. Chip was saying whether it's through a recommendation to a program or an application process that we're currently using and then talking with our community about.

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So what are our current options that we have available and what might some additional future possibilities be. So people have thrown ideas out there like finding Performing Arts or having an early college program or a museum school and what those might look like if we were to implement them and APF. So the next steps in our process excuse me are really to build

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what the demands might be an API so the questionnaire that was referenced earlier is a way that we're going to be able to do that to say here all of the things we're considering. Are you interested in that. And if so at the elementary level the middle school level or the high school level so that we get that balance right.

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Coming up with those different models you mentioned we see a model or you mentioned immersion and things like that.

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What would be the steps to put those into play to actually make those a school for our students or an instructional model for students.

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Oh tomorrow we're going to open up the school part of what the staff team has been looking at as we've been doing this work. Our first was the evidence base behind it to make sure that whatever we would be implementing instructional has a solid foundation behind it. And then looking at what are a lot of those processes that need to be in place first where he met the staff and what's the vision for this particular option what do we want that to look like within apex and then getting into things like professional learning for teachers.

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What are the kinds of materials that may be different. When you talk about immersion you have to have resources in multiple languages and so what would that look like and kind of mapping those things before we ever put a program into place within a school. And then some of the other things that are coming out of this conversation are also what are the impacts on AP US operationally. I'm thinking about transportation. Thinking about what are the application and admissions processes to our particular options. All of those things would have to be considered before we actually get into that.

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Now we're going to implement it with our students well down the line.

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Something that's happening in the next year or two.

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Yes and as we've talked about before it is part of that as we're opening new schools as we're considering boundaries. If this is the framework that we're laying out and we said we really think that our students would benefit from having something like a museum school and I'm not saying that that's on the list we haven't finished all of our engagement right. I say this at every meeting. Nothing's been decided but if we were to do that then thinking about our new schools thinking about the boundaries is there a place where Museum School would fit as that new school is being opened. And then as you said what are the steps that we would need to take to get that implemented as the new school is starting to roll.

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And there's a lot that goes into that as we've noticed following the opening of a new middle school here. There's a lot that goes into that.

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So community members if you're interested there is an open house on April 30th. Kenmore Middle School from 7 to 9 p.m. it's brought by your convenience that they we'll have a number of staff there to talk about that. Community members even staff can also find information on the engaged Web site. A lot of us engage click on the IEP tab and then you can find all the information on that. And our questionnaire Janette referenced earlier starts on the 26 that runs through survey 13 so it looks like there's a lot of opportunity coming out for community members families and staff to get involved and see what's going on and also offer their opportunity their input.

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Yes and we will also be talking more about the pre-K twelve IEP at the ECI meetings so the advisory council on instruction will be talking about this again on Wednesday May the 1st and that will again include someone from one of our schools.

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I want to thank all of you for taking time out of your afternoon to come in and talk about the IEP. I know there's a lot going on in all the different meetings in the different parts of Massachusetts.

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It's quite a process and getting them from planning a language for helping to put this together.

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Do you have any other questions you can e-mail staff engage@apsva.us and staff will respond to your e-mail and we'll see you next week at our April 30th open house at Kenmore Middle School. And again thanks for listening to the Atheist podcast you can find us on. Tune in stitcher Google Play an Apple podcast or wherever you get your or your podcasts. And if you have a feature topic you want to hear please e-mail us at apsnews@apsva.us thanks a lot.