

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Advisory Council on Instruction Work Session
January 31, 2019

Item C-1-a

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, January 31, 2019, at 6:36 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Tannia Talento, Vice Chair
Monique O’Grady, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present was:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Teaching and Learning
Wendy Pilch, Director, Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Cheryl McCullough, Supervisor, Gifted Services
Elaine Perkins, Coordinator, Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Elisabeth Harrington, Supervisor, World Languages
Kris Martini, Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education
Sam Klein, Supervisor, ESOL/HILT

Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order and announced that Dr. Kanninen and Ms. Van Doren were unable to attend as they were out of town. Mr. Goldstein and Dr. Murphy welcomed attendees and provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda.

Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) co-chairs Meredith Purple and Dana Milburn provided a brief update. They shared changes implemented this year, such as strengthening relationships with other advisory groups, use of a rubric to evaluate and rank recommendations, and support for school representative communications. Also shared were topics presented at meetings to date and plans going forward. Ms. Purple and Dr. Natrass then described the rubric and process used to evaluate recommendations and the data provided to the Board for the work session.

Gifted Services Advisory Committee (GSAC) Report

Dan Corcoran, Committee Co-Chair, assisted by Ms. McCullough, presented the recommendations of GSAC. The committee is recommending APS offer an intensified English 7 Pilot Course at all middle schools, and he described the concerns that this recommendation is meant to address. The committee is also recommending a Teacher Specialist staff position in the Office of Gifted Services. He noted that this staff member would augment the work being done by Ms. McCullough and strengthen the gifted program throughout APS.

Board members thanked the committee for their work. Responding to questions, Mr. Corcoran provided additional information on the survey data on whether students feel challenged, and confirmed the pilot course being recommended is meant to address this concern. Dr. Natrass also updated the Board on staff work to develop an additional 8th grade ELA course. Staff responded to questions about gifted staffing and the support that the new teacher specialist would provide. Ms.

Talento noted the concern about tracking and unconscious bias affecting student enrollment in challenging courses, and commented that a teacher specialist could help address that concern. The group discussed how to gather more meaningful data about rigor in the classroom and Dr. Natrass confirmed that staff is working to revise the survey to gather more useful data. The group also briefly discussed why GSAC is recommending a pilot course at all middle schools, as well as discussing dual identified students and ensuring that special needs students receive gifted services with the most beneficial support.

Early Childhood Committee Report

Alison Acker, Chair, and member Meredith Jaeckel, assisted by Ms. Perkins and Ms. Pilch, presented the recommendations of the Early Childhood Advisory Committee. Ms. Acker described the committee's work and presented the first recommendation, to develop a strategic plan for ensuring access to equitable developmental opportunities to address opportunity gaps. She explained that the goal is to strengthen awareness and access to services for all Arlington families. Ms. Jaeckel presented the next recommendation, to expand and align the continuum of educational models in early childhood education, specifically co-teaching and inclusion, to meet the needs of all Pre-Kindergarten to grade 2 learners. This should include providing professional learning, dedicated planning time, and the use of universal design, and Ms. Jaeckel spoke to the importance of this approach.

The Board appreciated the thoughtful recommendations and recognized the importance of ensuring that all families know about and have access to the early education opportunities in Arlington. Responding to questions, staff described inclusion opportunities in place in APS and through partnerships such as The Children's School/Integration Station. The group also further discussed efforts to provide early childhood learning opportunities and to strengthen communication about what is available. Staff explained funding sources for pre-kindergarten, special education and VPI, and how expanding opportunities as recommended could be funded. It was recognized that how the expansion of opportunities would affect staffing needs and space utilization in the schools and that these factors need to be considered.

World Languages Committee Report

Dr. Frederick Jackson, Chair, assisted by Ms. Harrington, presented the recommendations of the World Languages Advisory committee. Dr. Jackson provided a summary of world language programs in SY 2018, then presented the committee's recommendations. The first is to administer the National Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) to all students enrolled in at least 3 years of language instruction in grade 5, in addition to current testing in 8th grade immersion and high school levels IV and above. The second recommendation is to implement increased Spanish instructional time in grades K-2 and to subsequently transition to an evenly balanced 50-50 use of instructional time in grades 3-5 in elementary immersion programs. The final recommendation is to support collaboration between instructional areas, especially between World Languages and Social Studies. Rationale for these recommendations were described, and Mr. Jackson presented the cost of the recommendations. Ms. Harrington shared staff feedback on the second recommendation.

Board members appreciated the committee's work, and Ms. Harrington and Dr. Jackson responded to questions about the recommendations, confirming that there are several school divisions that follow the recommended instructional model. The group considered the staffing impact of increasing

Spanish instruction in the immersion programs, and staff provided additional information on the recommendations related to testing. Other topics of interest included what testing has been done in the past and the differences in learning to read between native English speakers and English language learners. The group then had a more in-depth discussion of the budget implications of the recommendations, and Dr. Natrass described next steps to evaluate these recommendations and determine how they might be implemented, considering feasibility, timeline and budget. Dr. Murphy, Dr. Natrass and the co-chairs also provided an overview of how all ACI recommendations are considered, incorporated into upcoming budgets, and tracked once they are implemented.

Career, Technical, and Adult Education (CTAE) Committee Report

David Remick and Alisa Cowen, co-Chairs, assisted by Mr. Martini, presented the recommendations of the CTAE Advisory Committee. Ms. Cowen spoke to the importance and value of CTAE courses and recognized how these address new Virginia Profile of Graduate requirements. After confirming that CTAE has been working on the APS Works project for many years, Ms. Cowen stated that the committee is recommending that APS provide a full-time staff member to support this initiative to manage current, and develop new, internships and apprentice opportunities for students with local businesses and organizations. Ms. Cowen spoke to efforts already in place, and the benefits of implementing APS Works. Mr. Remick commented on how this recommendation would benefit APS and the community.

The Board appreciated the report and recognized the challenges of finding partners willing to offer students work-based learning opportunities. Dr. Natrass explained how internships and apprenticeships are currently managed and how this recommendation would better support and help grow the program. Mr. Remick and Ms. Cowen also commented on how important it is to make these opportunities available to students throughout their secondary education as they explore and learn about different occupations. The group discussed how this recommendation would go beyond the Senior Experience or Senior Project for students. Mr. Martini provided more information about specific opportunities in place, the staff involved, and efforts underway to organize this information. He also spoke to efforts to work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify areas of need as well as additional opportunities for students.

ESOL/HILT Advisory Committee Report

Anne Zebra, Chair, presented the recommendations of the ESOL/HILT Advisory Committee. The first recommendation, developed based on feedback from students and parents, is to change the ESOL/HILT course titles and descriptions so parents and students better understand the content and instructional levels of the courses, and will make the coursework and sequencing more clear and accessible. As part of this effort, it is recommended that English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels and a brief definition of the levels are included in students' records, and that the acronym HILT be eliminated. The committee's second recommendation is to add a full-time Early Childhood Specialist to the ESOL/HILT Office in the Department of Teaching and Learning.

Ms. Talento stated her support for the first recommendation, commenting that this change will also help teachers better understand and address student needs. Dr. Natrass provided information about the state change in reporting requirements related to WIDA level 5, confirming that students at this level will continue to receive needed services. She agreed to provide the Board with additional

information concerning this change, described the new terminology, and spoke to implementation of the change. Dr. Natrass also responded to questions about current ESOL/HILT staffing and how services are currently being provided, as well as collaboration that takes place between ESOL/HILT and other departments. Ms. O’Grady stated her support for the first recommendation, which will support students and their families. Staff responded to specific questions about the ESOL/HILT program and delivery of services at all levels, but particularly for preK - 2 students.

In closing, Dr. Murphy and the Board talked about the process to consider ACI recommendations and how to identify those recommendations that should move forward. Ms. Purple shared some perspective on the expectations and the role of the ACI in this process. It was confirmed that the Board historically hasn’t voted on which ACI recommendations to implement, but has provided direction to the Superintendent on recommendations they would like to see go forward. Board members confirmed their appreciation for the reports and work of the committees, and reassured the ACI that although the Board may not be able to implement every recommendation, they do acknowledge and value the committees’ work. In closing, Mr. Goldstein reviewed three topics that staff will provide additional information about, and Dr. Murphy confirmed that an analysis of the recommendations will be done and shared with the Board based on cost, timeline and other relevant factors. Mr. Goldstein thanked the ACI leadership and members, the staff, and the community for their efforts and participation in this work session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Reid Goldstein, Chair
Arlington School Board