PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways

A Systemic Framework for APS Planning

August 2019
PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways
A SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR APS PLANNING

A Framework for Student Success
As Arlington Public Schools (APS) prepares for 30,000 students in 2021-22 and increasing enrollment over the next decade, a unified, consistent vision is needed to ensure multiple pathways for student success within our growing system of neighborhood schools and options. Keeping instruction and student well-being at the forefront of all planning initiatives, this vision serves as a roadmap for managing change—from new schools and boundary adjustments, to program moves and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities.

During the 2018-19 school year, APS developed a systematic framework for APS that aligns with the 2018-24 APS Strategic Plan and the Virginia Department of Education’s Profile of a Graduate, and is informed by the input of APS stakeholders and advisory councils/committees. This framework—the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways (IPP)—specifically addresses the Strategic Plan goal for “Student Success: Multiple Pathways for Student Success”:

Ensure that every student is challenged and engaged while providing multiple pathways for student success by broadening opportunities, building support systems and eliminating barriers. APS will eliminate opportunity gaps so all students achieve excellence.

• All students are academically challenged
• Access to personalized learning opportunities
• Multiple pathways to graduation
• Engagement in activities that reflect college and career opportunities and provide the opportunity to learn about and experience workplace expectations and career options
• Access to all curriculum, options schools, and programs without barriers

A Blend of Neighborhood Schools and Options
APS is committed to providing a blend of neighborhood schools and option schools/programs, with equitable access for all students. This long-standing commitment was reconfirmed in June 2017 when the School Board adopted and updated Policy J-5.3.31 which governs APS Options and Transfers.

Neighborhood schools are defined in the policy as having “attendance areas established by the School Board. Every student is guaranteed admission to the elementary, middle, and high school serving the attendance area in which the student resides.”

The IPP adds a definition and clear criteria for options schools and programs. “Arlington Public Schools educational options provide specialized and proven instructional models that support different learning styles while meeting APS core curriculum requirements.”

• Options are available via an application process to all Arlington students based on allocated space and specific program criteria.
• Options may also include:
  ▪ A unique philosophy,
  ▪ Staff with training, and/or
  ▪ Recognition by an outside agency

A Systemic Framework for APS
The IPP calls for making nine specific option schools/programs available across some or all school levels (Table 1). Some of the options exist today, and others would need to be developed.
Table 1. IPP Options Schools and Programs by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Elementary School For Grades PreK-5</th>
<th>Middle School For Grades 6-9</th>
<th>High School For Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montessori</td>
<td>One Full Capacity Program for Grades PreK-6</td>
<td>One program within neighborhood middle school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Baccalaureate (IB)</td>
<td>One Full-Capacity Program</td>
<td>One program within neighborhood middle school</td>
<td>One program within neighborhood high school</td>
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Implementing the IPP and Planning Long-Term

The following steps will put the IPP into operation.

- **Fall 2019**
  - The Superintendent will propose a revision to Policy J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers, adding the definition for option schools and programs.
  - APS will update PIP J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers, revising the list of options.
- **Planning & Evaluation** will convene working group with elementary school and high school principals to develop a plan for the 2020 boundary processes, that begins to align elementary and high schools with the vision in the IPP.
  - There will be an opportunity for the community to give input on program changes and moves among current neighborhood and option school/program sites.
- **December 2019** – The Superintendent will identify program changes and moves among current neighborhood and option school/program sites that would go into effect concurrently with new boundaries for Sept. 2021.
- **Spring 2020** – Priorities for elementary and high school capacity will shape the Superintendent’s proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2021-30.
• Spring 2020
  o Planning & Evaluation will convene a working group with middle school principals to develop a plan for the 2021 boundary processes (for 2022-23) that begin to align middle schools with the vision in the IPP.
  o Planning & Evaluation will post draft planning unit level projections for K-Grade 12, and seek input from the community.
• Spring/Fall 2020 – APS will conduct community engagement processes to changes boundaries for elementary and high schools
• Fall 2021 – New boundaries will take effect for elementary and high school, along with options that align with the IPP.
• Fall 2022 – New boundaries will take effect for middle school, along with options that align with the IPP.

THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE PREK-12 IPP

Overview
The 2018-24 APS Strategic Plan emphasizes inclusion, excellence, and innovation for students. This will be accomplished through the goals articulated within the plan, in which student success and well-being are supported through an engaged workforce, operational excellence, and strong partnerships. Specifically, APS will ensure that every student is challenged and engaged while providing multiple pathways for student success by broadening opportunities, building support systems and eliminating barriers. These pathways will occur in many ways that may include courses, co-curricular opportunities, and access to options schools and programs. The IPP seeks to define those pathways that students and families may choose to access through options schools and programs.

History
APS has a history of providing a high-quality education to students while providing families with choices for their child’s learning experience. This includes a rich history of options schools and programs that meet the specific learning needs of students:

• 1968-1977: Montessori was added to Drew for three, four, and five-year-olds and Arlington Traditional School was created
• 1978-1987: need information on options schools and programs here
• 1988-1997: Speak to Futures planning process here
• Need information in this section on options programs and schools including immersion history and H-B Woodlawn, ATS, International Baccalaureate

Additionally, APS enrollment has grown by 40% over the last decade, representing rapid, significant growth, and will continue to grow, making efficient use of resources a priority to ensure safe, healthy and supportive learning environment. Figure 1 illustrates APS enrollment growth over the years, as documented on September 30 of every year:
With this growth, numerous community groups have provided guidance that has been incorporated into the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways, including:

- **Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) Mid-Year Report 2016-17**: The ACI met throughout the first semester of 2016 to delve into areas of instructional focus for Arlington Public Schools as well as providing input on the instructional focus for the new high school to be completed in 2020. This led to the recommendation that different school models should be a factor when future options are considered. With key performance measures in place for each program, APS can determine whether efforts are furthering the strategic goals and, therefore, whether they should be expanded, modified, or re-thought. Planning and implementation of educational programs and options should include:
  - a K-12 continuum of programs and pathways for participating in educational programs and options,
  - inclusion of all types of student learners within all academic opportunities and options,
  - measurement tools to evaluate school and program success in accordance with the APS Strategic Plan,
  - utilization of school design, location, diversity and curriculum focus to increase achievement of all students, and
  - comprehensive communication tools that identify all opportunities and options through the development and posting of school, specialized and choice programs.

- **Facilities Advisory Committee**: [Insert specifics here]

- **Master Planning Report (2015)**: Developed by the master planning committee, this report recommends potential future learning directions for APS and its students.

- **2018-24 Strategic Plan**: As stated previously, the 2018-24 APS Strategic Plan speaks to multiple pathways to success for students through high-quality options for PreK-12 instructional models within and beyond neighborhood schools.
• Profile of a Virginia Graduate: The profile of a Virginia Graduate supports students in achieving high academic standards while also demonstrating workplace skills, a sense of community and civic responsibility with a career plan aligned with their interests and experiences (Virginia Department of Education, 2018).

Finally, in 2017, the School Board updated Policy J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers that describes the school division as a system of neighborhood schools complemented by options: “Arlington Public Schools provides a range of learning opportunities to respond to the interests and needs of all students through a blend of neighborhood and option schools/programs and equitable access for all students.”

By including a blend of neighborhood and options schools and programs, APS is able to:
• provide access to options throughout the county,
• build diverse school environments,
• keep boundaries more closely aligned with neighborhoods, and
• complement the neighborhood schools with instructional models that meet the needs of the diverse population

These resources, as well as the information gathered when reviewing options for the 1,300 high school seats, have been combined with an analysis of the current state of APS to develop the IPP.

The Process to Develop the IPP

The history of APS sets a strong foundation for the division as the student population increases and families continue to show an interest in neighborhood schools as well as options schools and programs. In 2016, APS was planning for an increase of 1,300 high school seats as well as for the opening of new elementary and middle schools. This prompted the need to consider APS as a school division with complementary neighborhood and options schools and programs that meet the diverse needs of its student population. Historically, the instructional focus for new schools and programs had been decided by working directly with the neighborhood community, which provided for an option that appealed to that particular group, but may not have met the needs of the overall division.

The IPP provides a roadmap for the instructional programs for APS, developed by staff and community members, to best meet the needs of students and families as APS continues to grow. Specifically, the IPP provides a systemic framework for a blend of neighborhood schools as well as options schools and programs that supports alignment of future instructional, capital, and planning initiatives. The recommendations included within the IPP will also provide guidance for the Arlington Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan (AFSAP) and the CIP. This work provides a framework from which to make decisions as APS proposes new facilities or undertakes boundary processes.
The process for developing the IPP took place over the course of the 2018-19 school year in which Department of Teaching and Learning staff partnered with staff, students, and community members to draft recommendations for instructional programs to address the continued growth within APS. The development included a review of the resources listed above as well as School Board Policy J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers and Community Questionnaire results from the spring of 2017 as well as the spring of 2019. The team who worked on the development of the draft framework included: principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, parents, and staff from multiple departments including School and Community Relations, Planning and Evaluation, Administrative Services, Facilities and Operations, and Teaching and Learning. Specifically, the process included:

- **January-March:** Developed draft with representatives from staff, advisory groups and schools
  - Internal team with staff from central departments, instructional leaders, school administration & teachers
  - Visioning sessions/draft review with APS advisory groups, including ACI and FAC, Parent Representatives from every school

- **February-June:** Provided information to APS families and staff
  - Frequent updates via School Talk Engage, Friday 5, NewsCheck and social media
  - Weekly updates (English/Spanish) through school Ambassadors, PR Liaisons and Bilingual Family Liaisons, Two updates to the CCPTA
  - “What’s Up, APS?” podcast episode discussing the IPP with principal, teacher, and central office staff members involved in this work
  - Regular updates to Engage webpage www.apsva.us/prek-12-instructional-programs-pathway-ipp/

- **April-May:** Gathered stakeholder input on working draft
  - Nearly 1,600 responses to online community questionnaire in English and Spanish on draft framework
  - Community Open House (with bilingual staff), and emails to engage@apsva.us
  - Online video in Spanish on IPP process and questionnaire, and meeting with Spanish-speaking parents
  - Principal input at Administrative Council

- **June:** Refine elements, using the input received, and share with School Board
  - Final draft of PreK-12 IPP by staff
  - School Board Work Session (June 11)
  - School Board monitoring report (June 18)
Defining Neighborhood Schools

APS defines neighborhood schools as those schools with geographic attendance areas established by the School Board. Every student is guaranteed admission to the elementary, middle, and high school serving the attendance area in which the student resides.

Defining Options Schools and Programs

In addition to neighborhood schools, according to the Policy Implementation Procedures for the Options and Transfer Policy (J-5.3.31), APS also provides options schools and programs for students that:

- Provide equitable access for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- Provide a rational and transparent process for admission, which is differentiated to support the integrity of the instructional models.
- Offer early childhood opportunities.
- Adjust enrollment levels as needed.

The IPP further defines options schools and programs as:

- APS educational options provide specialized and proven instructional models that support different learning styles while meeting APS core curriculum requirements.

Options are available via an application process to all Arlington students based on allocated space and specific program criteria.

Options may also include:
  - A unique philosophy,
  - Staff with training, and/or
  - Recognition by an outside agency

Options schools and programs provide students with opportunities to be immersed in an area of interest, engage in learning in an instructional model that aligns with their learning styles, and allows for choice in educational experiences.

Recommendations

In addition to further defining options schools and programs, the IPP framework provides recommendations for schools and programs that ensure high-quality educational opportunities at all schools, while providing for complementary instructional models at options schools and programs. The opportunities include:

- a variety of entry points to APS options schools and programs;
- PreK-12 articulation, where appropriate;
- a clear message of access for all families and students; and
- multiple pathways for student success.

All schools and programs throughout APS, including neighborhood and options schools, provide students with high quality educational opportunities. Each school supports the mission and vision of APS:

**Mission:** to ensure all students learn and thrive in safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments

**Vision:** To be an inclusive community that empowers all students to foster their dreams, explore their possibilities, and create their futures
Additionally, all APS schools ensure the implementation of:
- high-quality instruction
- a comprehensive curriculum that includes core subjects and specials
- opportunities for exemplary projects
- alignment to the Virginia Profile of a Graduate

Finally, the Teaching and Learning Framework provides the foundation for these experiences across APS and includes the Instructional Framework which defines the evidence-based practices that guide teaching and learning experiences throughout the division. The framework defines expectations across grade levels, classrooms, and content areas in order to foster inclusive environments.

In addition to the learning experiences provided within our neighborhood schools, APS wants to ensure that students who benefit from specialized instructional models are also able to access those opportunities. Additionally, the community questionnaire results from both 2017 and 2019 indicate an interest in options programs and schools, particularly at the secondary level.

Currently, APS offers options schools and programs in the following proportions:

Insert enrollment percentages from slides 32-34 of the School Board work session

Based on the 2017 and 2019 community questionnaire results, interest as measured by applications for options schools and programs for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, and teaching and learning considerations, the recommendations developed by the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways team include an increase in secondary options as well as one addition to the elementary programs. The instructional models recommended comprise evidence-based, proven instructional models and align with the proposed definition of options.

APS currently has the following division-wide options schools and programs in place:
When considering the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways, the process included the review of the current options listed above, as well as additional offerings described in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts</strong></td>
<td>A focus on drama, visual arts, and music through integration and interdisciplinary study throughout the school day that is standards-based, taught by certified arts specialist teachers or teaching artists, and includes sequential arts curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic</strong></td>
<td>A democratic school is built around three pillars including self-directed learning, self-governance, and caring community. Students are empowered to define their own, personalized educational program and work collaboratively with school faculty and staff to determine course offerings and their own class schedules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early College</strong></td>
<td>Early Colleges are partnerships between secondary and postsecondary schools and/or businesses where students can earn both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree, or up to 2 years of credit toward a bachelor’s degree, for little or no cost to the student, as early as ninth grade. The model is known for providing a small learning environment to enhance a student’s education experience and is generally structured to provide students the academic and social preparation needed for college and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EL</strong></td>
<td>In EL, students learn by conducting “learning expeditions” in which learning is active and public through formal structures of presentation, exhibition, critique, and data analysis. Students apply their skills and knowledge to real world issues and problems to make positive change in their communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hybrid High School</strong></td>
<td>Students engage in a blended learning model that includes online learning with some degree of control over time, place, path and/or pace and some face to face instruction.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### International Baccalaureate

A focus on community service and international issues with a prescribed instructional program that includes the possibility of an internationally accepted high school diploma.

### Language Immersion

An educational model in which students develop high levels of speaking, reading, writing, and listening in two languages.

### Montessori

Montessori education, based on the work of Maria Montessori, is an interdisciplinary, multi-age approach to learning. Students work independently and cooperatively in a prepared environment which allows students to work at their own pace. Montessori teaching materials are designed to promote habits of concentration, initiative, persistence, and discovery, while the Montessori philosophy and community emphasizes respect for others, peace, and creativity.

### Museum

Through extensive partnerships with local museums, arts centers, and government organizations, students interact with these community resources for an enhanced learning experience that transcends the classroom walls. Students are provided the opportunities to create products that demonstrate their understanding of standards, transforming the school into a museum of student work.

### Project-Based Learning

Students investigate and respond to authentic, engaging, and complex problems, questions, and challenges.

### Traditional

The primary emphasis is on a traditional education that includes teacher guided instruction in self-contained classrooms; emphasis on basic education in the academic areas and cross curricular connections; regular homework assigned at all grade levels; and emphasis on the arts.

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Following the review, staff recommend the following options be considered within the IPP framework:

**Elementary Schools**

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM**

In addition to the current options schools and programs at the elementary level, the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways team recommends the addition of an elementary International Baccalaureate (IB) program at a site that would be open to all students.

**Rationale:** The IB program is an evidence-based, globally recognized program that provides students with a rigorous, inquiry-based academic program. Randolph Elementary School currently implements a strong Primary Years Programme (PYP) (Elementary International Baccalaureate program) and it is recommended that the program remain in place for the neighborhood school. An additional PYP program would allow students who live outside of the Randolph neighborhood to access the program and potentially access IB from elementary through high school.

**Middle Schools**

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM**

In addition to the current options schools and programs at the high school level, the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways team recommends the addition of a middle school International Baccalaureate (IB) program at a site that would be open to all students; this would include a program within an existing middle school site similar to the model that is in place at Washington-Liberty High School.
**Rationale:** The IB program is an evidence-based, globally recognized program that provides students with a rigorous, inquiry-based academic program. Jefferson Middle School currently implements an IB program, however, with the increased growth in our student population and their current capacity, they are no longer able to accept students from outside of the neighborhood who are interested in the program. It is recommended that the IB program remain at Jefferson Middle School and that seats either be set aside there, or, that another middle school program be authorized so that students who live outside of the Jefferson neighborhood are able to access the program and potentially access IB from elementary through high school.

**FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM**
Additionally, it is recommended that APS add a fine and performing arts program to the middle school options as a program within a current or future middle school. The program would include a focus on drama, visual arts, and music through integration and interdisciplinary study throughout the school day that is standards-based, taught by certified arts specialist teachers or teaching artists, and includes sequential arts curriculum.

**Rationale:** This is in response to the community’s interest in increased choices at the secondary level.

**High Schools**

**HYBRID HIGH SCHOOL**
In addition to the current options schools and programs at the high school level, the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways team recommends the addition of a hybrid high school at a stand-alone site. The hybrid high school would closely reflect a college experience for students in which students would engage in a blended learning model that includes online learning with some degree of control over time, place, path and/or pace and some face to face instruction. Students would be in traditional classes 2-3 days per week and be working on an internship, group projects, etc. either on or off-site on the other days.

**Rationale:** APS currently has several alternative high school models for students that include access to semester-long courses, additional resources, and smaller school and class sizes. As students' needs as learners shift and APS works to prepare students for college and career, a hybrid high school would appeal to students who are interested in a less traditional high school model including students who need flexibility with their schedules, those who are interested in smaller school and classes, and students who may have anxiety in a more traditional environment. The hybrid high school could be a blending of some of the current secondary programs within APS. Finally, this is in response to the community’s interest in increased choices at the secondary level.

**FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM**
Additionally, it is recommended that APS add a fine and performing arts program to the middle school options as a program within a current or future high school. The program would include a focus on drama, visual arts, and music through integration and interdisciplinary study throughout the school day that is standards-based, taught by certified arts specialist teachers or teaching artists, and includes sequential arts curriculum.

**Rationale:** This is in response to the community’s interest in increased choices at the secondary level.

**EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL**
Additionally, it is recommended that APS add an Early College program to the high school options as a program within a current or future high school. Early Colleges are partnerships between secondary and postsecondary schools and/or businesses where students can earn both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree, or up to 2 years of credit toward a bachelor’s degree, for little or no cost to the student,
as early as ninth grade. The model is known for providing a small learning environment to enhance a student’s education experience and is generally structured to provide students the academic and social preparation needed for college and beyond.

**Rationale:** Many districts are incorporating Early Colleges into their pathways for students to provide access to college-level courses as well as the opportunity to earn a degree while still in high school. Within APS, Arlington Tech is currently providing a significant number of dual-enrolled courses that could be bundled and grown into an Early College program. The program could also be developed as a program within a neighborhood high school with a developed partnership with a college or university. This is also in response to the community’s interest in increased choices at the secondary level.
PreK-12 Recommendations

If each of the recommendations listed above were implemented within APS, the following choices would be available to all families through a lottery application process:

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW WAS COMMUNITY INPUT COLLECTED? IF THERE WAS A SURVEY, WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

Between Apr 26 and May 16, an online questionnaire was used to gather community feedback on their interest in current option programs, possible new option programs and the entry grade for option programs. Nearly 1,600 responses to online community questionnaire in English and Spanish on draft framework

- Parent/Guardian of PreK: 104
- Parent/Guardian of ES student(s): 953
- Parent/Guardian of MS student(s): 394
- Parent/Guardian of HS student(s): 260
- Parent/Guardian of student(s) in Neighborhood Schools: 266
- Parent/Guardian of student(s) in Option Programs/Schools: 360
- Parent/Guardian who do not have students in APS: 67
- Parent/Guardian of Pre-K student not yet enrolled in APS: 197
- Staff: 169 (11%)
- Students: 54 (4%)
- Arlington Resident without school-age children: 47 (3%)
- Other: 19 (1%)
- Community Open House (with bilingual staff), and emails to engage@apsva.us
- Online video in Spanish on IPP process and questionnaire, and meeting with Spanish-speaking parents

This input was used to gather feedback on interest current APS option programs and potential new options, and what the entry grade levels should be for each option program.

In addition, community input was collected via email messages through Engage and at a visioning session with parent representatives of every school.

Question: Is a breakdown of the survey responses needed? There are charts in the work session presentation (see page 38).

HOW WAS FACULTY/STAFF INPUT COLLECTED? IF THERE WAS A SURVEY, WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

See answer above.

WHAT WILL THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP AN OPTIONS & TRANSFERS POLICY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES (PIP) LOOK LIKE?

APS is not developing a new policy but the recommendation is that the policy be updated to include the definition of options provided in the IPP. Once the policy is revised, the PIP will be revised accordingly.

WHEN WILL THAT WORK BE COMPLETED?

Fall 2019

WHAT SCHOOL BOARD ACTION IS NEEDED?

By Oct 2019: Include definition of options in Options and Transfers Policy
HOW WILL APS DEFINE THE OPTIONS THAT ARE AVAILABLE?

- Include list of options programs in Policy Implementation Procedures Staff By September 2019
- Consider recommendations during boundary process

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- See page 2 of this report