

Summary of the July 15 Meeting: Elementary School Planning 2019-2021

The meeting provided context for the upcoming boundary and CIP processes to accomplish the following:

- Balance enrollment across the district
- Be efficient with resources
- Ensure schools have the resources needed to support our schools, our instruction, and our students

Principal concerns about the upcoming processes

- How to follow through on the best course of action for the district despite external pressures
- The need for school staff to receive information prior to its public release so that principals will be better prepared to talk about issues with their communities and clarify misconceptions
- The very important need to receive accurate and timely data that can be shared with the community
- The need to maintain option program instructional fidelity
- Keep information/data updated so that all staff have the correct information to share with the community

There was also a suggestion that staff look at how other districts address similar enrollment growth.

Overview of documents that guide planning processes

- The 2018-2024 Strategic Plan
 - One goal is to focus on student success through multiple pathways to student success
- The PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways (IPP)
 - The IPP supports the Strategic Plan goal and will be used to:
 - Guide the development of long-term planning for Arlington Public Schools (i.e. Arlington Facilities & Student Accommodation Plan (AFSAP), Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
 - Provide the instructional framework for considering programs and identifying priorities before opening new schools and beginning boundary processes
 - In June 2019, the proposed definition of an “option” is as follows:

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 allotted space and specific program criteria.*

Options may also include:

- *A unique philosophy,*
- *Staff with specific training, and/or*
- *Recognition by an outside agency*

*(*Note: Sentence may be deleted if found to be repetitive with the relevant policy.)*

- The Arlington Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan (AFSAP)
 - Reviewed the projected gap between elementary students and seats over the next decade and the gap between projected elementary students and future seats in School Year 2023-24 and the areas in the county that would be most impacted.
- School Board Policy B-2.1 on Boundaries

Enrollment Management Tool: Boundary Change

Reviewed the boundary considerations in the school board policy:

1. **Efficiency** – minimizing future capital and operating costs.
2. **Proximity** – encouraging the relationship between schools and the community by keeping students close to the schools that they attend so that they can walk safely to school or, if they are eligible for bus service, so that bus ride times are minimized.
3. **Stability** – minimizing the number of times that boundary changes affect an individual student who has continued to reside in a particular attendance area, and minimizing the number of students moved to a different school, within a school level, while achieving the objective of the boundary change.
4. **Alignment** – minimizing separation of small groups of students from their classmates when moving between school levels.
5. **Demographics** – promoting demographic diversity.
6. **Contiguity** – maintaining attendance zones that are contiguous and contain the school to which students are assigned.

A visual was shared to show the proximity of schools adjacent to the new ES at the Reed site. Principals then discussed which considerations should receive the highest priority, then indicated their preferences by placing dots under each category. Demographics received the most dots (53), followed by proximity (27), efficiency (22), contiguity (9), stability (1) and alignment (0).

Additional considerations suggested by principals:

- The financial impact of building moves (7)
- Transportation and traffic impacts of boundary changes (even when a school is within a walk zone, some parents choose to drive their children) (5)
- Impact of switching neighborhood schools and option programs (4)
- Consider making the New ES at the Reed site an option school (4)
- Bell times (0)

Following that exercise, staff talked through a hypothetical map that illustrated what school boundaries for the district could look like if a boundary was created for the New ES and there were no program moves. The map was for discussion purposes only to show the cascading impact that creating a new school attendance zone could have on other schools.

Program moves to balance enrollment

Staff shared the waitlist for the ES option programs and the number of applications from Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish speaking students to the two immersion programs, in discussing any potential program moves that could help address the needs of the district, which include:

- Imbalance of seats across the district (e.g., Rosslyn corridor)
- Need for 50-50 student enrollment for immersion programs
- Uneven waitlists for option programs
- Placement of Special Education and PreK classes
- All schools within attendance zone (ASFS)
- Minimized travel time for students to neighborhood schools
- Bringing more PreK Montessori classes together
- Finding swing space like that previously available at the Wilson Building (the Heights).

Principals were then asked to discuss and develop some possible considerations to use when deciding upon moving programs, and they shared the following ideas:

- Move immersion programs closer to areas with a large number of native-Spanish speaking students
- Create upper and lower elementary schools: K-2 and 3-5
- Have only one school calendar (not modified)
- Add more and different option programs
- Align start times for immersion schools
- Create another IB program and a H-B Woodlawn program at the ES level
- Open a consolidated PreK program (Early Childhood Center)
- Create a PreK-Grade 8 Montessori campus

Questions and/or Issues Raised

Staff said they would follow up on these questions if possible:

- Did staff consider the new housing development at Washington Blvd and Kirkwood?
- Are other sites in Rosslyn being considered?
- Will the new school at Reed relieve overcapacity at McKinley and Ashlawn?
- Isn't part of the boundary policy that once you've been part of a boundary move, you can't be moved again?
- Is there any discussion about the Buck property?
- Has a decision been made about the high school seats at the Ed Center?
- Is there any thinking about opening a PreK Center at Reed?
- Has putting two schools together in a lower and upper elementary set-up been considered? Would this help the numbers?
- What is the schedule for renovations/refreshes?

Principals noted that swing space was desirable. Those who remained in their buildings throughout construction noted that it was a negative experience and others noted that the smaller schools could not accommodate students while construction was underway.

Next Steps

- Staff will use the input from principals about boundaries and the most feasible program move considerations, as well as their concerns about the process, and create hypothetical scenarios that reflect that information.
- The What-If scenario maps, CIP process and transportation impacts will be discussed at the next meeting on August 8, from 12:30-2:30 p.m. in Syphax Meeting Room 452.
- Assistant Principals are invited to the August 8 meeting

The final ES Planning Meeting will be on Wed., August 21 from 2-4 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room (Syphax).