

Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)

BRIEFING REPORT



JANUARY 2020



Arlington
Public
Schools



ACI MID-YEAR REPORT

The Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) is composed of representatives from each school as well as community organizations who assist in reviewing the system-wide curriculum and instructional program and in developing recommendations for improvement. The ACI is made up of approximately 50 individuals appointed by the School Board who are familiar with or interested in instructional issues. Additionally, 15 curriculum-based advisory committees report to the council annually.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTION 2018-19 UPDATES

The ACI met throughout the first semester to delve into areas of focus for Arlington Public Schools. ACI opened its school year with a reception hosted by the School Board, with School Board Chair and Members, and Interim Superintendent and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, welcoming all members and introducing Staff Liaisons; all ACI members were given an "ACI 101" presentation by ACI leadership. Meeting topics included School Board and ACI priorities: Student mental health, with a panel of APS and APCYF staff and community volunteers; and Equity and Excellence, with a panel of APS staff. ACI members were introduced to curriculum-based advisory committees through ACI's first "Committee Forum," where committee chairs spoke for a few minutes each, followed by break-out sessions. ACI also heard non-recommending reports from Career, Technical, and Adult Education; Equity and Excellence; and Early Childhood Education. In addition, ACI participated in the APS policy review process, reviewing the Bullying and Harassment Policy as a group, as well as opportunities for advisory committees and ACI members to hear/read about and provide feedback on a number of other policies under review. Finally, ACI conducted its "Constructive Feedback Forum," where members discussed their school communities' thoughts and needs, and cross cutting topics in elementary, middle, and high school groups.

NEXT STEPS

Throughout the second semester, the ACI will continue its focus on APS' priorities. The timeline for 2020 includes:

JANUARY

- Constructive Feedback Forum
- ACI/Advisory Committee's School Board Work Session

FEBRUARY

- Gifted Services Advisory Committee NRY Report
- Social Studies Advisory Committee Recommending Year Report

MARCH

- Science Advisory Committee Report
- Standards Based Grading
- APS Budget Presentation
- Math Advisory Committee Report
- APS Budget Discussion
- School Board Budget Work Session

APRIL

- English Arts Advisory Committee Report
- Arts Education Advisory Committee Report
- One to One Study Update
- Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee Report
- CIP Report

MAY

- Advisory Committee on English Learners Committee Report
- World Languages Advisory Committee Report
- Discussion of Rubric Rating Results

JUNE

- Year-end Wrap Up, ACI Member Survey Review, and Planning for Next Year

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTION STATUS OF 2017-18 AND 2018-19 RECOMMENDATIONS

2017-18 RECOMMENDATIONS

2017-18 RECOMMENDATIONS	STATUS AS OF JANUARY 2020 AND NEXT STEPS
ARTS	
Establish line item funding for Visual Arts supplies that is consistent for all middle schools.	Equitable allocation of resources between secondary schools continues to be a point of discussion. The Arts ACI committee is gathering information to be included in their 2019-2020 recommendation report.
Provide Physical Education Credit for Participation in Marching Band.	A pilot was considered, but after consideration it was determined that there are elements of the physical education curriculum that students would not have access to via participation in Marching Band. Therefore, APS has not moved this recommendation forward for further consideration.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	
Building on ATSS progress at the elementary level, effective ATSS literacy interventions must be available to all students in secondary grades as well, including the high schools, with a focus on fidelity, targeting student needs, intensive training, and progress monitoring.	The implementation of this recommendation remains active and on-going. ELA and ATSS are continually collaborating regarding the researching of up-to-date and research-based practices for supporting all students who are struggling in the areas of literacy, and to find the most effective interventions for our secondary students. Our offices also provide resources and training on those interventions, which will continue.
APS should adopt a rigorous secondary writing curriculum incorporation instructional best practices for grades 9-12 that is continuous from year to year, ensure that all students have mastered fundamental writing skills, and includes writing experience over the four years that reflect sufficient quantity, quality, and diversity to ensure that all students make at least a year of growth during each school year, and are college- and career-ready by graduation.	ELA has completed the task of creating APS English curriculum to align with the 2017 SOL, for grades K-12. The curriculum will continue to be supplemented with information regarding resources and effective instructional practices, based upon the feedback we receive from teachers, as well our division-wide progress monitoring of ELA instruction.
MATHEMATICS	
Ensure presence of a full-time math coach in every APS elementary school.	There have not been additional allocations for Math Coaches. There is now 1 out of 24 APS elementary schools with a 1.0 allocation. Principals continue to reallocate funding to create a 1.0 coach.
Apply selective Algebra I acceleration.	Due to the refinement of enrollment criteria there continues to be a decline in the share of middle school students enrolling in high credit mathematics courses. APS middle school students taking high school credit math (including Algebra I) fell to 58.5% for the current school year.
SCIENCE	
Provide additional funding for staffing and transportation needs at the Outdoor Lab to afford middle and high school students the opportunity to visit the Outdoor Lab.	Additional funding for one FTE was provided to the Outdoor Lab. This reinstated the slots for high school students. In addition, it retained the slots for middle school students, which would otherwise be eliminated. Funding for transportation to support double buses was also provided to the Outdoor Lab. The Outdoor Lab is currently serving over 10,000 students and plans to continue doing so. When possible, the Outdoor Lab will use double buses on certain dates to support double groups.
Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, provide funding and support for one full-time Outdoor Learning Coordinator to ensure that learners across all schools have grade-level appropriate outdoor learning opportunities and access to Arlington County parks and nature centers.	No funding was provided for the Outdoor Learning Coordinator position. However, the Science Office continues to partner with Arlington County Nature Centers to provide classroom-based programs for all elementary schools. This allowed Nature Center staff to work directly with first grade students on the animal characteristics unit.
Conduct an assessment of the consistency across APS middle schools of (i) science instruction differentiation and (ii) approaches to, and support for, independent science projects.	With collaboration and input from middle school teachers, the Science Office has developed a progression plan for teaching scientific research that will result in greater consistency across the middle schools. This plan will be finalized and shared with other stakeholders and is scheduled to be implemented during the 2021-2022 school year.
Provide funding and support for one full-time Sustainability Coordinator starting with the 2018-2019 school year.	Did not receive funding for this position due to budget constraints. The Science Office continues to collaborate with Facilities and Operations to support the Sustainability Liaison program, which can support some of the work proposed in this recommendation.

2017-18 RECOMMENDATIONS	STATUS AS OF JANUARY 2020 AND NEXT STEPS
SPECIAL EDUCATION	
Improve and increase consistency and uniformity of special education services implementation across the county.	This recommendation is supported by the most recent findings in Services for Students with Special Needs Program Evaluation (2019). ASEAC will focus on two recommendations for ACI- accountability and planning factors. At the January 2020 meeting we will finalize their recommendations.
Require general education teachers and building level administrators to attain core competencies for the education of students with disabilities.	The Department of Teaching and Learning continues to refine the Professional Learning Framework. Competencies in the larger areas of Connect, Create, Innovate are being flagged as “Must Know/Must Do” within a staff member’s 1st year in APS, within three years in APS, and long-term competencies within five years in APS.
SOCIAL STUDIES	
Increase the focus on global education and citizenship.	Embedded global and citizenship resources have been added to curriculum documents. The Social Studies Office has also promoted professional learning opportunities that teacher can participate in to increase their lenses on global education. We have suggested that a citizenship course, aligned to the Profile of a Graduate, be added as a professional learning option for teachers that would help them develop ways of embedding real life citizenship scenarios into their content.
Support Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) in Social Studies instruction and devote necessary resources to continue developing them.	The Social Studies Office has reviewed the offerings and increased the options for Performance Assessment Tasks. Professional learning sessions around the creation of PATs, and how to embed the assessment into instruction, have been offered.

2018-19 RECOMMENDATIONS

2018-19 RECOMMENDATIONS	STATUS AS OF JANUARY 2020 AND NEXT STEPS
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	
Provide a full-time staff person to continue to develop opportunities with the community and make connections to schools. APS CTE Staff will invite Arlington County Government-supported programs to join the APS Works initiative.	The job has not been posted as of (12.27.19). Staff continues to make connections with businesses to develop work-based learning opportunities for APS students.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	
APS should develop a Strategic Plan for Equitable Development Opportunities to address the opportunity gaps present before kindergarten.	ECAC recognizes the positive work of multiple community agencies and committees and looks forward to partnering with other committees including: Equity and Excellence and ELA. ECAC has reached out to Child Care Initiative (CCI), Early Childhood Subcommittee of the APFYC and Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) to help us advance our work in this area.
Expand and align the continuum of educational models in early childhood education to meet the needs of all Pre-Kindergarten-2 learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For SY 19-20, APS expanded the Community Peer Program to 13 classrooms allowing for additional pre-k seats for students without disabilities and in so doing increased inclusive placements for students with disabilities. • ECAC welcomes further dialogue with administrators regarding ensuring a continuum of special education services is available to students with disabilities at all elementary schools. • ECAC supports continued professional learning for LEAs and new SSCs regarding ATSS and effective reading and math strategies.

2018-19 RECOMMENDATIONS	STATUS AS OF JANUARY 2020 AND NEXT STEPS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS	
<p>Make student English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels and corresponding coursework and sequencing more clear and accessible to parents. We propose to include the ELP level of each student in ParentVue. Also, we recommend that the acronym "HILT" be eliminated from all course labeling in favor of using WIDA levels, which are the levels that the state of Virginia uses for ELP.</p>	<p>The name change has been completed with the changing of the office name, course titles and job titles. The last component to be completed is the course titles on report cards, which will take place in the 2nd semester of this year.</p>
<p>Add a full-time Early Childhood Specialist to the ESOL/HILT Office in the Department of Teaching and Learning. While there is currently a part-time employee in this position, there is a strong need for a full-time employee to coach and educate all early childhood teachers on effective and appropriate instructional strategies for Dual Language Learners (DLLs).</p>	<p>This was not allocated in the FY 20 budget.</p>
GIFTED SERVICES	
<p>Pilot an intensified English 7 course, open to all students at the middle school level.</p>	<p>At this time, there are no intensified courses in ELA at the middle school.</p>
<p>Add a Teacher Specialists staff position to the Office of Gifted Services.</p>	<p>This position has been requested as a part of the FY 2021 budget staffing request for consideration by the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning.</p>
WORLD LANGUAGES	
<p>As part of the yearly official APS Monitoring and Evaluation of World Language programs, so as to monitor learning success and equity of learning opportunity, the national Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP test) should be administered to all students enrolled in language class in grade 5, in addition to continuing to test in 8th grade immersion and high school levels IV and above.</p>	<p>The Supervisor of World Languages has requested additional funds to account for STAMP testing based on 7 additional schools having now completed FLES kindergarten through grade 5.</p>
<p>Enhance and improve the learning of Spanish and English literacy and help close the achievement gap in elementary immersion classes through implementing increased Spanish instructional time in grades K-2 and transitioning subsequently to an evenly balanced 50-50 use of instructional time in grades 3-5. Begin this program at the kindergarten level. Start this year to assess baseline understanding of the concept of literacy in kindergarten and to assess progress in the development of Spanish reading skills in the second or third grade of Spanish-English immersion for comparison with the third grade English Reading SOL.</p>	<p>APS has sent faculty the last two years to participate in a national Dual Language Conference and has arranged for collaborative work between the two elementary immersion schools to build a framework to instruct literacy in both languages. Elementary immersion teachers are planning and collaborating to intentionally provide proficiency-based instruction in Spanish language arts. In addition, teachers of Spanish for Fluent Speakers have also changed the focus on instruction with a framework that emphasizes Spanish language arts instruction.</p>
<p>Support the Social Studies Advisory Committee initiative to prepare globally competent APS graduates. World Languages and Social Studies should collaborate to create complementary lesson topics and joint activities for curriculum development that will prepare APS graduates for successful career and community engagement in a diverse world.</p>	<p>In partial response to a Fall 2018 WLAC recommendation to build synergies across the curriculum by having world language teachers and curriculum writers collaborate with teachers of Social Studies and other subjects, several steps have been taken to introduce reading materials in Spanish in immersion and Fluent Speakers classes that focus on science and social studies, and the Wakefield high school immersion program provides 9th and 10th grade students with instruction of Biology and Chemistry in Spanish. Other similar cross-curriculum opportunities are also being sought. In addition, Summer school 2019 had a Spanish Global Villages enrichment program.</p>

