

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Work Session on the Instructional Program Pathways
October 27, 2020

Item C-1-d

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, at 6:03 PM. This meeting was held by electronic communications due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, using Microsoft Teams.

Present were:

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
Tannia Talento, Member
Nancy Van Doren, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Bridget Loft, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Arron Gregory, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
Lisa Stengle, Executive Director, Planning and Evaluation
Jonathan Turrisi, Director of Strategic Planning
Sarah Johnson, Integrated Project Planner

Ms. O’Grady called the work session to order and announced that the meeting was being held electronically due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency. Dr. Durán introduced the work session, confirming that the primary goal of the Instructional Program Pathways (IPP) is to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. He confirmed that the IPP reflects the Strategic Plan and APS policies, and presents a holistic approach and instructional vision to ensure equity and access, as well as to help manage enrollment growth.

Ms. Loft provided an overview of the current visioning process for the IPP and areas where Board feedback is requested and noted challenges and limits with the IPP that need to be addressed. She outlined goals of the IPP, which are to clearly define the role of neighborhood schools, to provide a comprehensive list of instruction programs and options, and to ensure equity and access in all programs. The IPP will also promote demographic diversity, aid in managing enrollment, and ensure multiple pathways to student success.

Mr. Turrisi presented the rationale for retitling the initiative and highlighted programs and options not found in the original IPP that will be added to help promote increased awareness and diversity in all programs. He also described proposed revisions to program criteria, evaluation components, and options and transfer choices. An audit of current instructional programs is currently underway, and Mr. Turrisi explained how this data will inform continued work on the IPP. He also described community engagement and how the IPP will inform the Arlington Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. After sharing the timeline for this work, Mr. Turrisi highlighted School Board policies that will be updated to reflect changes resulting from the IPP. Ms. Loft then summarized the School Board’s role in overseeing this work.

Board members provided feedback, encouraging staff to carefully consider new programs before adding them to the IPP, and suggested that the English Learner program should be listed as a separate program rather than as part of the general education experience. Also discussed was the audit process and staff capacity for this work, as well as how the IPP will inform staff work going forward. The group also discussed how equity should guide the IPP, the importance of creating a document that is easily understood, and whether lessons learned from the current virtual learning experience can be incorporated into the IPP. The Board appreciated that the IPP will provide a clear understanding to students and families of multiple pathways to success.

Ms. Loft then shared initial input from instructional leaders on the framework, and five priorities that were identified: use of the renovated Education Center, locations for alternative and special education programs, the role of neighborhood schools, possible changes to strengthen English learner programs, and a vision and location for middle school seats. Ms. Loft explained that the IPP represents a dynamic, fluid process which will take additional time to fully develop. Mr. Turrisi then provided information about each priority and additional work to be done to address the priorities.

The Board appreciated the additional information provided. Ms. Loft confirmed an update on the IPP will be presented in late winter and will include additional instructional models to be considered. The Board encouraged staff to consider previous work done on addressing capacity and student needs. The group also discussed how the priorities identified by instructional leaders tie into the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan and how instruction should remain at the forefront of this work.

In closing, Board members appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback and to discuss this important work. Staff looked forward to continuing this work with the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Arlington School Board