

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Item C-1-f

Work Session #1 with the Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, April 15, 2021 at 7:04 PM. The 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
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Reid Goldstein, Member
David Priddy, Member
Claudia Mercado, Deputy Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Cathy Lin, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Bridget Loft, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Dat Le, Supervisor, Science
Sam Klein, Supervisor, English Learners
Kelly Krug, Supervisor, ATSS
Kris Martini, Director, Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Sarah Putnam, Director, Curriculum and Instruction
Heather Rothenbuescher, Supervisor, Special Education
Lori Silver, Supervisor, English Language Arts

Ms. O’Grady explained that the Board was hosting two work sessions with the Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL) and meeting with seven subject area committees at each work session. Each committee provided the Board with an executive summary of their recommendations prior to the work session. The following committees then presented their recommendations:

English Learners Advisory Committee: Jared Peet, Chair; Sam Klein, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: Empower EL Families: Maintain all Office of English Learner staff positions in order to strengthen Tier 1 instruction through professional development for all educators, based on the recommendations from the WestEd Program Evaluation, that will increase academic rigor, sustained quality interactions, and purposeful language practices in all classrooms.
- Recommendation #2: Strengthen Teaching Through Professional Development: Continue professional learning for Bilingual Family Liaisons (BFLs) as it relates to family needs during the pandemic.

Ms. Diaz-Torres noted that the recommendations were focused on central staffing and inquired how they would provide direct student support. Mr. Peet explained the importance of central office

staff and how they play an integral part in engaging families. Mr. Priddy and Mr. Klein spoke to professional learning for Bilingual Family Liaisons.

Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee: Nick Walkosak, Chair, and David Rosenblatt, Vice Chair; Dr. Kelly Krug and Heather Rothenbuescher, staff liaisons

- Recommendation #1: Provide identified COVID Recovery/Compensatory Services, and ensure they are provided within the general education setting to the greatest extent possible.
- Recommendation #2: Provide a School-Based Virtual Model in the 2021-22 School Year.
- Recommendation #3: Continue to implement and monitor inclusion, consistency, and accountability.

Dr. Kanninen spoke to recommendations #1 and #2 and supported ensuring that the virtual model is inclusive. Ms. O'Grady talked about recovery/compensatory services and Mr. Rothenbuescher explained the process to continue to provide services and meet IEP goals.

English/Language Arts Advisory Committee: Kate Merrill, Chair and Cloe Chin; Lori Silver, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: APS should adopt new resources for ELA curriculum in grades K-12 to align with the science of reading and should immediately halt the use of any resources aligned to balanced literacy, including the Lucy Calkins Units of Study, Reading Recovery, and Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) programs.
- Recommendation #2: APS should provide significant professional learning in structured literacy as a “stop gap” until a new resource is adopted to replace Units of Study.
- Recommendation #3: APS should require that all schools implement the Step Up to Writing Program. This should include targeted professional learning for teachers.

Mr. Priddy inquired how changes to new resources for the ELA curriculum has impacted professional development, and Ms. Diaz-Torres asked how APS will support the youngest learners throughout this transition. Ms. Silver explained some of the strategic planning currently taking place to ensure appropriate supports are ready for next school year.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Advisory Committee: David Remick, Chair; Kris Martini, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: Provide a full-time staff person to continue to develop opportunities with the community and make connections to schools.
- Recommendation #2: With the pending reorganization of the Department of Teaching and Learning the CTAE advisory committee is advocating that the CTAE advisory committee stay intact with CTE, Arlington Community Learning (Adult Education), and REEP.

Dr. Kanninen requested a brief update on how CTE students are doing this school year and asked for more information on recommendation #1. Ms. Diaz-Torres spoke about recommendation #2 and the need for synergy between Arlington Community Learning (Adult Education) and the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP). Mr. Martini spoke about the importance of workforce preparation and some of the innovative strategies teachers are using with students.

Early Childhood Advisory Committee: Meredith Jaeckel, Chair; Elaine Perkins, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: English Language Arts and Arlington Tiered System of Support should work together to articulate and make readily available to the public equitable processes for seeking and securing ATSS reading interventions.
- Recommendation #2: In support with ELAAC (English Language Arts Advisory Committee), ECAC asked APS to proceed swiftly with the planned English Language Arts new resource adoption to support a shift to structured literacy instruction.

Mr. Goldstein inquired about budget implications related to the proposed recommendations. Ms. Perkins spoke about professional development and cross-departmental collaboration to maximize resources. Dr. Kanninen expressed the need for a robust ATSS implementation.

School Health Advisory Board: Vera Cardinale, Chair, and Ann Marie Douglass, member; Debbie DeFranco, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: Implement Outdoor Lunch as the Primary Venue for Safe Dining
- Recommendation #2: Update APS Mask Policy to Require Universal Adherence
- Recommendation #3: APS-coordinated in-person meet-ups outdoors for Social Emotional Learning so all students can have a periodic opportunity to reconnect with their teachers, counselors, and peers in a safe, structured environment.
- Recommendation #4: APS should assist more with Ergonomics given overuse of screen time and synchronous learning.
- Recommendation #5: APS should prioritize the development of outdoor learning spaces within our schoolyards.

Mr. Priddy expressed support for outdoor learning spaces and asked about the availability of outdoor learning spaces at the schools. Ms. Diaz-Torres appreciated recommendation #4 and shared concerns about students' physical wellness.

Science Advisory Committee: Jason Papacosma, Chair; Dr. Dat Le, staff liaison

- Recommendation #1: Support the Science Program in conducting a comprehensive evaluation of curriculum delivery and student learning experience, performance, and outcomes by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status
- Recommendation #2: Apply an equity lens to how APS implements independent projects
- Recommendation #3: Strengthen the execution and progress of elementary nature-based learning
- Recommendation #4: Raise the bar of consistency across the science curriculum, ensuring that best practices in science instruction are identified and expanded
- Recommendation #5: Strengthen and standardize ACTL-DTL business relationship

Mr. Goldstein and Dr. Le detailed information about the timeline for the Science Program evaluation. The Board also conversed about finding new ways to expose students to experiences like the Outdoor Lab, encouraging outdoor learning, and science-led projects.

In closing, Rebecca Hunter, ACTL Chair, thanked all committee members for their work to support instruction at APS. Dr. Durán and Ms. O’Grady also thanked the committees for their recommendations which will help achieve meaningful and consistent instruction across APS.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Arlington School Board