

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Work Session #1 with the Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL) Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2021

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at 6:32 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Monique O’Grady, Member (Participated via Microsoft Teams from Atlanta, Georgia due to personal reasons)
David Priddy, Member
Claudia Mercado, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Bridget Loft, Chief Academic Officer
Sarah Putman, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Bethany Sutton, Chair, ACTL
Greg Eastman, Co-Chair, Gifted Services Advisory Committee
Carlisle Levine, Co-Chair, Gifted Services Advisory Committee
Meredith Jaeckel, Chair, Early Childhood Advisory Committee
Kate Merrill, Chair, English Language Arts Advisory Committee
Dan Marschall, Co-Chair, Career, Technical, and Adult Education Advisory Committee
Rosie O’Neil, Co-Chair, Career, Technical, and Adult Education Advisory Committee
Melody Starya Mobley, Chair, Science Advisory Committee
Dana Carr, Co-Chair, School Health Advisory Board
James Rives, Co-Chair, School Health Advisory Board
Sarah Cruz, Supervisor, Elementary English Language Arts
Debbie DeFranco, Supervisor, Health, Physical and Driver Education and Athletics
Dat Le, Supervisor, Science
Kris Martini, Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education
Elaine Perkins, Coordinator, Early Childhood

Dr. Kanninen provided introductory comments stating that this is one of her favorite work sessions, reminded everyone of the structure of the work session, and she briefly shared the process for Board consideration of the recommendations. Dr. Durán introduced the six committees and thanked advisory committee members for their work to ensure that APS provides a better service to all our students.

Gifted Services Advisory Committee

Mr. Eastman and Ms. Levine presented the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Institute open-enrollment, intensified English, social studies, and science courses at all middle schools, along with adequate supports to students, English language learners, and others who might need assistance to thrive in these classes.

Recommendation #2: Add a second Teacher Specialist staff position to the Office of Gifted Services to focus on supporting gifted services at the elementary school level.

Potential recommendation for next year: Ensure that Resource Teachers for the Gifted assigned to each school remain fully dedicated to supporting gifted services.

¹The recording of School Board meetings is posted on the APS Web site following the meetings.

Dr. Kanninen announced that a School Board Work Session on Gifted Services was scheduled for December 14. Ms. O'Grady inquired about the engagement of middle school principals on Gifted Services school needs and the Board briefly discussed the need and the funding of the proposed teacher specialist.

Early Childhood Advisory Committee

Ms. Jaeckel presented the following three recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Reverse the class size increases and return to 2018-2019 class sizes in kindergarten through second grade.

Recommendation #2: Fully fund 2 full-time salaried Early Childhood Special Education classroom assistants for each pre-k special education classroom.

Recommendation #3: Adjust the planning factor for reading.

The Board briefly discussed the need to add reading specialists in the planning factors and provide literacy support. Ms. Perkins briefly spoke about the compensation of added positions through tuition revenue.

English Language Arts Advisory Committee

Dr. Merrill presented the topics the English Language Arts Advisory Committee is discussing this school year which will shape the recommendations they present in the Spring. The topics included:

Topic 1: Aligned K-5 Elementary ELA Curriculum Adoption

Topic 2: Accountability Around Structured Literacy

Topic 3: Quantity and Quality of Student Writing in Secondary Grades

Topic 4: Class Sizes in Secondary English

The Board discussed creating more cross-curricular discussions among committees and departments to establish more opportunities for writing. They also discussed improving the alignment of literary curriculum materials.

Career, Technical, and Adult Education Advisory Committee

Mr. Marschall and Ms. O'Neil shared the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Fill the full-time Partnership Coordinator position to create and sustain a pipeline of work-based learning opportunities for students (NOTE: position is already in the APS budget).

Recommendation #2: Fund a CTE Teacher Specialist position

Mr. Goldstein inquired about the need for a Partnership Coordinator to meet quality CTE standards and Ms. Diaz-Torres requested to see information about where teachers need additional professional development to fulfill gaps in the areas of most need.

Science Advisory Committee

Ms. Moblely shared the following recommendations

Recommendation #1: A Renewed Emphasis on Elementary Science

Recommendation #2: Expand Outdoor Learning Opportunities for APS Students

Ms. Diaz-Torres continued to promote the need for engaged writing and encouraged Science and English Language Arts to collaborate on this front. The Board discussed expanding outdoor learning activities and integrating more Science to close the achievement gap.

School Health Advisory Board

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The following recommendation was presented by Ms. Carr and Mr. Rives

Recommendation: System-wide adaptation and implementation of the 2022 Virginia Standards of Learning for Driver Education, Physical Education, and Health/Family Life Education

The Board discussed the process that the School Health Advisory Board employs to determine priorities and its collaboration across committees. Ms. DeFranco spoke about the interdisciplinary connections being made to support the instructional curriculum.

To conclude, Ms. Sutton shared the process the different committees engaged in to produce actionable recommendations that were in alignment with the Strategic Plan and include diverse perspectives. She also spoke about working to increase cross-committee collaboration and implementing a rubric to rank recommendations. Mr. Goldstein, ACTL Board liaison, thanked Ms. Sutton for her leadership and the succinct recommendations presented to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Arlington School Board

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