

MEMORANDUM: Updated with APS Staff Responses

TO: Arlington School Board
FROM: Early Childhood Advisory Committee
DATE: June 12, 2023
SUBJECT: Report and Recommendations

COMMITTEE CHAIR/CO- OR VICE CHAIR: Maggie Slye and Meredith Jaekel

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Kate McKenney, Gail Gerry, Abbey Smith, Miranda Turner

STAFF LIAISON(S): Elaine Perkins and Cameron Childs

Background: The Early Childhood Advisory Committee works in collaboration with APS's Office of Early Childhood to ensure that students in Preschool-Grade 2 thrive. Our focus this year is educational equity; in particular we are interested in ensuring that Arlington's most vulnerable young students have access to APS's high-quality early childhood programs.

Per the National Council of State Legislatures in their paper, Closing the Opportunity Gap in Early Childhood Education, we are defining educational equity as providing all children sufficient access to the resources and educational rigor they need to be successful. This is different from educational equality, which is defined as providing all children access to early childhood programs independent of quality. Therefore, equity may mean **providing additional resources to certain families** to level the playing field.

In developing our recommendations, we reviewed preschool enrollments at all APS schools and cross-referenced that information enrollment projections, projected capacity utilization, and demographic data. In particular, we were surprised and concerned that 11% of APS's current Kindergarteners did not attend a local PreK program (this includes community programs, privately run preschools, and APS). We want to understand who comprises that 11% and understand the reason that the child did not attend school before kindergarten. Specifically, we would like to understand whether access to a program prevented families from enrolling their children. **We aim to ensure that all vulnerable families who would like their children to attend APS' excellent preschool programming have the opportunity to do so.**

- 1. Recommendation: Speak with all families of incoming Kindergarten students who did not attend a PreK program to understand if access (or lack of awareness of the available resources) impeded enrollment.**

- (a) Rationale:** We know that with high-quality early childhood experiences, people are more likely to have a higher income as adults, more likely to own a home, more likely to graduate from high school on time - and less likely to need special education or public aid. A recent [study](#) has shown that school readiness skills acquired by age 4 have a lasting impact on the students' academic performance through fifth grade.

Arlington has world class, well-resourced, values-aligned ECE programs and our committee wants to ensure that the children with the most need for our incredible programs have access to them. Currently, we have a significant number of students who did not have a PreK experience and we need to understand why. Did they not have a PreK experience because of a barrier we have erected, like transportation, lack of

awareness about free and low cost public preschool options, cost or language proficiency, or because they have chosen to keep their children at home in the preschool years? Our committee respects the decision of any family who makes the choice to abstain from enrolling their child in school before Kindergarten. However, we would like to understand whether all or some of the 11% of students who enter kindergarten without prior school experience do so because of some barrier to access. If it is due to lack of access, our committee would like to consider ways to ameliorate those barriers in future recommendations. The families that need the most, get the most.

Steps APS is already taking:

We want to recognize the Office of Early Childhood's remarkable ingenuity and advocacy that has resulted in such an impressive set of values-aligned programs and build on the successful foundation they've built to ensure that all of Arlington's vulnerable children can access our programs. We are, for example, very proud that APS provides a fee structure that includes a sliding scale for Arlington's families.

Due to APS's staff diligence and care, we know which types of programs 89% of APS Kindergarteners attend during their preschool years. The Office of Early Childhood engages in a range of outreach programming to make families aware of APS' array of preschool programming. APS holds annual Pre-K and Montessori Information Nights that are recorded for viewing on the Office of Early Childhood webpage. Recruitment events are held at housing locations, AFAC, and other community locations. In addition, the Welcome Center has daily open hours for application assistance from February 1st - April 15th with some evening hours available as well. Language assistance is available at the Welcome Center. Transportation is available for all eligible students in VPI who live outside the walk zone, students attending MPSA and for eligible students for the Early Childhood Special Education programs. The PK Campaign in the Parks will continue this spring and summer.

- (b) **Budget:** We anticipate this recommendation will be budget-neutral because there is already APS staff that leads data collection efforts; this is merely a matter of devoting that existing resource to this specific question. If it's not possible to devote existing staff members' time to surveying each of the identified families, we recommend that APS leverage a consultant, which we anticipate could cost \$20,000-\$35,000. (220 families x 1 hr for scheduling and conversation = 220 hrs x \$100/hr flat rate = \$22,000). Based on what we learn from this survey, we will put together a series of recommendations to help remove any identified barriers, which could include additional costs or could be supplemented by increasing the cost of APS's early childhood programming for upper middle class and wealthy families.
- (c) **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Per Priority 1, Bullet 3: *Invest in improving support for students with disabilities, English-learners, and Black and Hispanic students, based on current and historical data.*
- (d) **Committee Vote:** Number of members voting: 3, Number of votes in agreement: 3

Staff Update: This recommendation was addressed in the Spring of 2023. The 244 families who reported “no preschool experience” on their enrollment forms were sent a survey regarding PreK program access and participation. 88 families responded to the survey. During their 4 year old year, 81% of current Kindergarten students received care from a parent/guardian or family member during the week. 18% of respondents indicated their child participated in a PreK program or were enrolled in a Childcare Center/ Family Home Childcare.

The survey also inquired about families' reasons for non-participation in PreK programs and potential barriers to their access. The information below summarizes those findings.

(Note: families were able to select more than one option so total percentage is above 100%)

- 30% of families indicated family preference as a reason for non-participation
- 26% of families indicated the cost of childcare/PreK as a reason for non-participation
- 2% of families indicated transportation as a reason for non-participation
- 33% of families indicated minimizing exposure to Covid-19 as a reason for non-participation
- 7% of families indicated they were not aware of PreK programs available through Arlington Public Schools or Arlington County
- 21% of families elected “other” as a reason for non-participation and indicated the following explanations: elected to homeschool, no PreK programs available where they lived at the time, family logistics due to other non-school aged children, lack of childcare if child was dismissed from school early, not being accepted into their PreK program of choice

2. Future Recommendations Under Discussion:

- 1) **Making a Decision about Universal PreK:** We believe that all families who want to have a high-quality preschool experience for their child should be able to access one. Universal PreK has been discussed sporadically in Arlington for many years, with no decision made. We want to understand the barriers to Universal PreK and explore if there is political will to make it a reality for Arlington’s families in coming years.

Staff Update: The Early Childhood Office supports continued dialogue and research into this future possibility. We are also working closely with our partners in the county child office and Early Head Start/Head Start through our Ready Regions collaboration.

- 2) **Including PreK students in a school’s overall “Planning Factors.”** Many of our students may not have access to the social emotional and academic resources they need, particularly counselors, social workers, and interventionists, because preschool enrollment is not considered when allocating those positions. This may not seem like a big deal at a large school with preschool enrollments of 9 or 12 children. But for several of our schools with large preschool enrollments, this is a significant equity issue. For example, 15% of Hoffman-Boston’s students aren’t considered in the planning factor allotment and it’s 18% at Carlin Springs. This is inequitable and may be contributing to the achievement gaps we see at both of those schools. We know this topic will impact the budget and will spend time this spring exploring the financial need.

Staff Update: The Early Childhood Office supports including Pre-K students in the upcoming Planning Factor Study that was approved this spring. As planning factors are potentially adjusted as a result of the

Planning Factor Study, the Early Childhood Office supports the inclusion of PreK students in a school's planning factors to ensure access to comprehensive supports and services for our youngest learners.

3) **Funding two CLASS specialists for the district.** Beginning in the 2023-2024 academic year, all PreK classes in APS are required to have at least two CLASS observations each year as mandated by the Virginia Department of Education. APS currently has 93 PreK classes which would require a minimum of 186 CLASS observations; this is nearly triple the current requirement. CLASS is a scoring system used during classroom observations to evaluate the quality of adult-child interactions. Each classroom observation cycle consists of a 2-3 hour classroom observation, the writing of a summary report and a meeting with the classroom team to discuss and review the observation. Following the observation cycle, data from the observation must be entered into a state system for review. In order to be in compliance with the VDOE CLASS observation mandate, the addition of two teacher specialist positions, devoted specifically to CLASS, is required and would need to be funded. While the CLASS observations are a VDOE requirement, the observation cycles and work associated with CLASS is directly aligned with the APS Strategic Plan. Priorities 1 and 2, student success and well-being, and Priority 3, bullet 2, are at the forefront of the CLASS observation requirement. The CLASS observation cycle was developed and implemented to evaluate the quality of adult-child interactions and programs in order to promote continuous improvement. These continuous improvement efforts are exemplified through professional learning opportunities for staff and focused efforts on student success and well-being.

Staff Update: The Early Childhood Office appreciates the support of ECAC and through the budget process has been approved for an additional early childhood CLASS specialist. This specialist will assist the Early Childhood Office in completing the state mandated CLASS observations and will positively impact instruction by providing meaningful feedback and coaching to all early childhood classroom teams.

3. Appendices

APS Preschool Enrollment, October 30, 2022

OCTOBER 31, 2022 MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY																						
This data reflects student membership in the official APS student information system as of 4:56 AM on Monday, November 7, 2022. Any changes made after that date/time are not reflected in this report.																						
School Name	Grade												K-12 Total	Preschool					PreK-12 Total			
	K	Mont. K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	Mont.	VPI	Spec. Educ.		Dual Enroll	Peer	Total
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL																						
Arlington Elementary School	120		125	117	116	113	103								694	15	7	2		24	718	
Alice West Fleet Elementary School	81	9	82	94	105	91	76								538	33	24	6	4	66	604	
Arlington Science Focus Elementary	95		100	102	80	83	86								546			1		1	547	
Arlington Traditional Elementary	96		120	96	96	114	100								622	45				45	667	
Ashlawn Elementary School	95		95	71	96	82	91								530	11	9	2		22	552	
Barcroft Elementary School	67		61	89	61	68	81								427	32	12	2	8	54	481	
Barrett Elementary School	85	2	72	84	86	86	73								488	9	29	8		46	534	
Campbell Elementary School	63		66	63	63	63	62								380	34				34	414	
Cardinal Elementary School	120		115	107	115	123	126								706						706	
Carlin Springs Elementary School	81	3	88	73	72	79	83								479	16	40	16		14	565	
Claremont Elementary School	92		81	111	94	100	88								566	60				60	626	
Discovery Elementary School	70	1	66	81	75	93	102								488	26	4	1		31	519	
Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School	65		77	66	62	82	58								410	20	24	1	11	56	466	
Escuela Key Elementary School	95		111	99	90	90	102								567	29				29	616	
Glebe Elementary School	85		87	100	80	74	97								523		4		5	9	532	
Hoffman-Boston Elementary School	78		94	83	82	93	61								491	45	22	1	7	76	566	
Innovation Elementary School	77		77	71	74	71	71								441	17	10		10	37	478	
Jamestown Elementary School	55	9	78	87	79	80	71								439	28		11	5	3	481	
Long Branch Elementary School	61		70	67	55	66	63								382	60				20	442	
Morlesboro Public School of Arlington		58	70	74	78	62	51								393	107				107	500	
Nottingham Elementary School	49		71	65	71	54	81								391		6	1	12	19	410	
Oakridge Elementary School	97	1	117	112	107	100	104								638	16	17	9		42	680	
Randolph Elementary School	59		62	67	62	67	66								383	28	5	2		35	418	
Taylor Elementary School	76		84	103	86	90	85								524		2	1	9	12	536	
Tuckahoe Elementary School	70		72	71	69	69	72								423	7	3	14	24	24	447	
ELEMENTARY TOTAL	1932	83	2141	2133	2054	2093	2053								12489	235	458	166	20	97	13465	
PRE-K PROGRAM																						
Integration Station																	36	2		38	38	
PK Speech C @ Fleet																		10		10	10	
PK Speech N @ Discovery																		8		8	8	
PK Speech S @ Drew																		8		8	8	
PRE-K PROGRAM TOTAL																		36	28		64	64

APS Enrollment of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch, October 30, 2022

		TOTAL	PERCENT
	TOTAL	ELIGIBLE	ELIGIBLE
	STUDENTS	STUDENTS	STUDENTS
ABINGDON	720	293	40.69%
ASHLAWN	552	95	17.21%
BARCROFT	481	360	74.84%
BARRETT	534	400	74.91%
CLAREMONT	626	173	27.64%
DISCOVERY	521	15	2.88%
DREW	464	347	74.78%
LONG BRANCH	404	128	31.68%
CAMPBELL	414	189	45.65%
GUNSTON	1103	406	36.81%
ALICE WEST FLEET	682	219	32.11%
HOFFMAN BOSTON	567	263	46.38%
GLEBE	537	70	13.04%
ARL. TRADITIONAL	667	232	34.78%
JAMESTOWN	481	22	4.57%
JEFFERSON	1013	426	42.05%
KENMORE	968	497	51.34%
ARLINGTON COMMUNITY	1381	478	34.61%
CARLIN SPRINGS	568	425	74.82%
CARDINAL	706	45	6.37%
ESCUELA KEY	616	201	32.63%
NOTTINGHAM	410	19	4.63%
OAKRIDGE	680	215	31.62%
SCIENCE FOCUS	460	68	14.78%
MONTESSORI	500	138	27.60%
INNOVATION	478	172	35.98%
RANDOLPH	418	313	74.88%
HB WOODLAWN	790	96	12.15%
SWANSON	1031	181	17.56%
TAYLOR	536	43	8.02%
TUCKAHOE	447	12	2.68%
WAKEFIELD	2372	939	39.59%
WASHINGTON LIBERTY	2687	654	24.34%
WILLIAMSBURG	783	19	2.43%
YORKTOWN	2208	318	14.40%
DOROTHY HAMM	858	164	19.11%
TOTAL	28663	8635	30.13%

APS Enrollment Projections, SY 23-24

Attachment A, Table 1 - Enrollment Projection for 2023-24 (Grade K to 12)

	Enrollment Projection: Grade K to 12													Grade K-12 Total	2021-22 School Year Estimate: PreK					Total	
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		VPI	PreK SPED	3&4 Mont	Comm Peers	PreK Total ²		
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL																					
Abingdon Elementary School	135	117	117	115	116	114									714	16	8	0	0	24	738
Alice West Fleet Elementary School	100	92	89	101	96	93									571	32	6	34	6	78	649
Arlington Science Focus Elementary	98	116	119	108	94	86									621	0	0	0	0	0	621
Arlington Traditional Elementary ⁷	96	96	120	96	96	114									618	48	6	0	0	54	672
Ashlawn Elementary School	89	94	94	71	93	81									522	16	16	0	0	32	554
Barcroft Elementary School	78	65	66	92	61	72									434	32	15	0	8	55	489
Barrett Elementary School	93	95	78	90	96	98									550	28	20	17	0	65	615
Campbell Elementary School ⁷	72	66	65	59	65	62									389	48	0	0	0	48	437
Cardinal Elementary School	111	129	115	104	113	123									695	0	0	0	0	0	695
Carlin Springs Elementary School	90	82	85	67	67	79									470	44	30	17	18	109	579
Claremont Elementary School ⁷	96	85	74	97	83	93									528	64	0	0	0	64	592
Discovery Elementary School	71	77	66	82	77	99									472	0	8	30	0	38	510
Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School	70	68	72	66	65	79									420	28	42	0	14	84	504
Escuela Key Elementary School ⁷	96	98	101	92	81	84									552	32	0	0	0	32	584
Glebe Elementary School	91	88	90	101	81	74									525	0	7	0	7	14	539
Hoffman-Boston Elementary School	101	80	100	87	87	91									546	52	35	0	7	94	640
Innovation Elementary School	71	83	76	73	74	66									443	16	14	0	14	44	487
Jamestown Elementary School	84	64	82	70	74	81									455	0	16	34	3	53	508
Long Branch Elementary School	67	70	65	67	55	61									385	16	6	0	0	22	407
Montessori Public School of Arlington ^{1,7}	50	60	68	74	78	63									393	0	8	111	0	119	512
Nottingham Elementary School	61	57	75	63	77	52									385	0	14	0	14	28	413
Oakridge Elementary School	106	113	119	121	113	109									681	16	8	17	0	41	722
Randolph Elementary School	65	57	60	60	60	66									368	28	14	0	0	42	410
Taylor Elementary School	77	98	82	116	88	91									552	0	7	0	7	14	566
Tuckahoe Elementary School	74	74	69	74	70	70									431	0	14	0	14	28	459
Integration Station ¹															0	0	54	0	0	54	54
Elementary School Subtotal	2,142	2,124	2,147	2,146	2,060	2,101									12,720	516	348	260	112	1,236	13,956

Projected Capacity Utilization

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
-- PROJECTED CAPACITY UTILIZATION --
SCHOOL YEARS 2022-23 TO 2031-32**

SCHOOL ¹	Relocatable Classrooms in 2021-22	SY2022-23 Spring Update				SY2022-23 Fall 2021 Enrollment Projections			
		Capacity	Projection PreK-12	Permanent Seats +/-	% Utilized	Capacity	Projection PreK-12	Permanent Seats +/-	% Utilized
Abingdon	4	725	739	-14	102%	725	782	-57	108%
Alice West Fleet	0	752	628	124	84%	752	628	124	84%
Arlington Science Focus	6	553	500	53	90%	553	509	44	92%
Arlington Traditional	0	684	676	8	99%	684	706	-22	103%
Ashlawn	4	684	561	123	82%	684	561	123	82%
Barcroft	8	460	487	-27	106%	460	484	-24	105%
Barrett	4	576	581	-5	101%	576	597	-21	104%
Campbell	3	436	438	-2	100%	436	438	-2	100%
Cardinal ²	0	747	690	57	92%	747	650	97	87%
Carlin Springs	4	585	590	-5	101%	585	590	-5	101%
Claremont (Immersion)	7	599	661	-62	110%	599	628	-29	105%
Discovery	0	630	508	122	81%	630	508	122	81%
Dr. Charles R. Drew	0	674	474	200	70%	674	460	214	68%
Escuela Key (Immersion)	8	465	621	-156	134%	465	602	-137	129%
Glebe	4	510	520	-10	102%	510	537	-27	105%
Hoffman-Boston	0	566	585	-19	103%	566	583	-17	103%
Innovation	4	653	483	170	74%	653	447	206	68%
Jamestown	0	597	505	92	85%	597	525	72	88%
Long Branch	4	533	386	147	72%	533	386	147	72%
Montessori Public School of Arl.	0	463	519	-56	112%	463	527	-64	114%
Nottingham	5	513	396	117	77%	513	399	114	78%
Oakridge	8	674	658	16	98%	674	666	8	99%
Randolph	2	484	456	28	94%	484	455	29	94%
Taylor	6	659	523	136	79%	659	506	153	77%
Tuckahoe	4	545	430	115	79%	545	450	95	83%
Integration Station ⁶	0	54	60	-6	111%	54	60	-6	111%
ELEMENTARY TOTAL	85	14,821	13,675	1,146	92%	14,821	13,684	1,137	92%