



**Arlington  
Public  
Schools**

# **Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL)**

## **Overview**

2023-2024



# ACTL Organizational Chart

**Chief of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Student Support**  
Dr. Julie Crawford

**APS Chief of School Support**  
Kimberley Graves

*Roles: Collaborate with CAO and the Office of Academics*

**Chief Academic Officer**  
Dr. Gerald Mann

*Role: lead point person for ACTL within the Office of Academics*

**Exec Dir of Curriculum & Instruction**  
Sarah Putnam

**Director of Curriculum & Instruction**  
Kerri Hirsch

*Role: support the CAO and ACTL Chair; liaison with departmental staff in service to the ACTL committees*

**Content Supervisors**

*Role: serve as staff liaisons to collaborate with committees and provide staff responses to reports and recommendations*

**ACTL Chair**  
Jenny Roahen Rizzo

*Role: Leads ACTL to provide input to School Board on teaching & Learning*

**ACTL Leaders**  
Vice Chair: Katie Cochran  
Co-secretaries: Anne Paris & Mike Cieslak

*Role: serve as leadership team with ACTL chair*

**APS School Board**  
Liaison: Cristina Diaz-Torres

*Role: serves as a liaison between the School Board and ACTL*

**ACTL ("the Council")**  
School & Community reps

**Role:**

- engage in discussion about teaching & learning at ACTL meetings and within their school or organization
- share on-the-ground perspectives on teaching & learning
- provide feedback & input on topics raised
- engage with and evaluate subcommittee reports and recommendations

**ACTL Subcommittees**

**Chair and co/vice chair:** lead committee work to develop reports and recommendations; represents the committee's work in SB work sessions and ACTL discussions

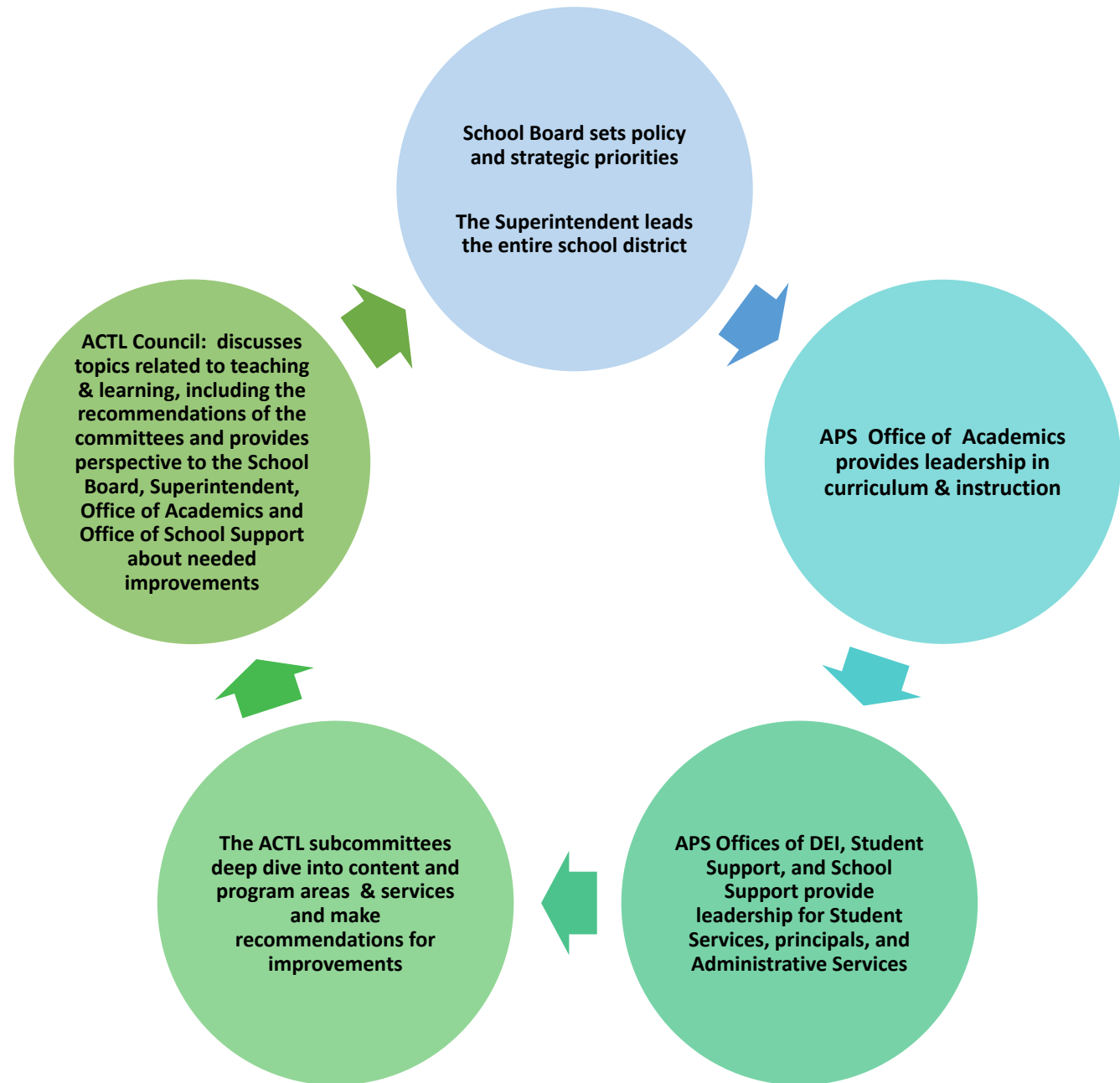
**Secretary:** assist with management of meetings, committee communications, taking minutes, etc.

**Members:** contribute to discussions, reports and recommendations

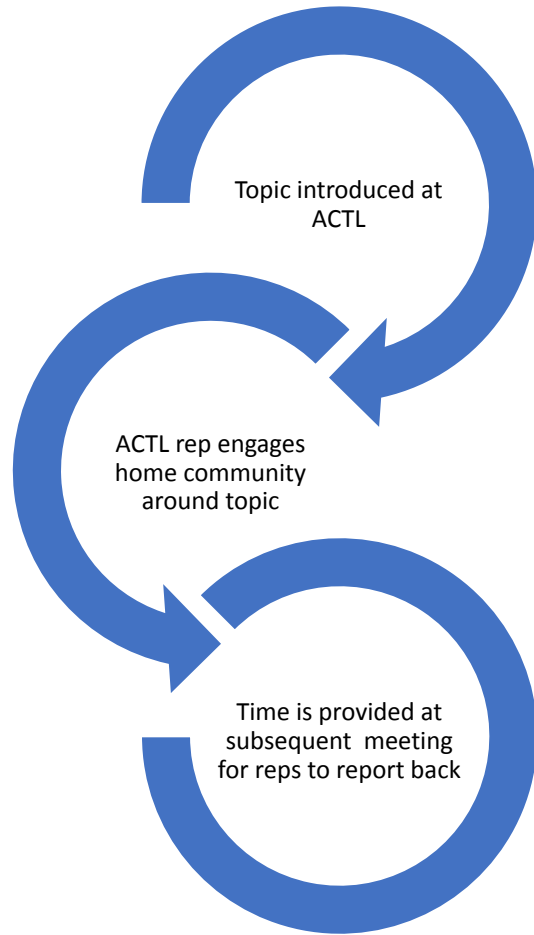
# Who/what is ACTL?

- The ACTL Council is made up of **representatives from each school** who assist in **reviewing system-wide curricula and instructional programs** and in **developing recommendations for improvement**.
  - 1 rep from each elementary
  - 2 reps from each of the comprehensive middle and high schools
  - 2 reps from HB Woodlawn (1 middle; 1 high)
  - 1 rep from each of the other programs
  - additional representatives from community or affiliated organizations
- ACTL **helps bring parent and community voices to the table** to share valuable input about student learning to the School Board, Superintendent, Office of Academics, and Office of Student Services.
- We strive to create space for **learning more about APS priorities and initiatives—broadening the range of well-informed parents—while also surfacing ideas and concerns from school communities**.
- **ACTL includes 13 subcommittees, focused on particular areas of teaching & learning, who engage with the School Board and report up through ACTL annually.** The School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) & the Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC) also collaborate with ACTL in any recommendations they are developing that involve teaching & learning.

# ACTL contributes to a cycle of continuous improvement within APS



# How ACTL Can Engage Around Critical Topics



## *What we will do:*

- Provide information about key topics
- Allow time for Q&A on each topic
- Bring appropriate staff into the room
- Listen for emerging themes, areas of concern, potential solutions

## *What you will do:*

- Ask thoughtful questions; seek more information; assume good intention
- Strive to represent the varied needs and perspectives of your community
- Engage with your community to learn more
- Participate in bringing summary input back to the conversation

# Topics for this year

## LITERACY / ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Such as:

- Literacy strategy for secondary students
- Elementary CKLA
- Differentiation
- How teacher load affects ability to provide meaningful feedback to students on writing

## TEACHER LOAD

Such as:

- Substitute teachers
- Ability to provide differentiation
- How teacher load affects ability to communicate student progress

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Instructional Vision

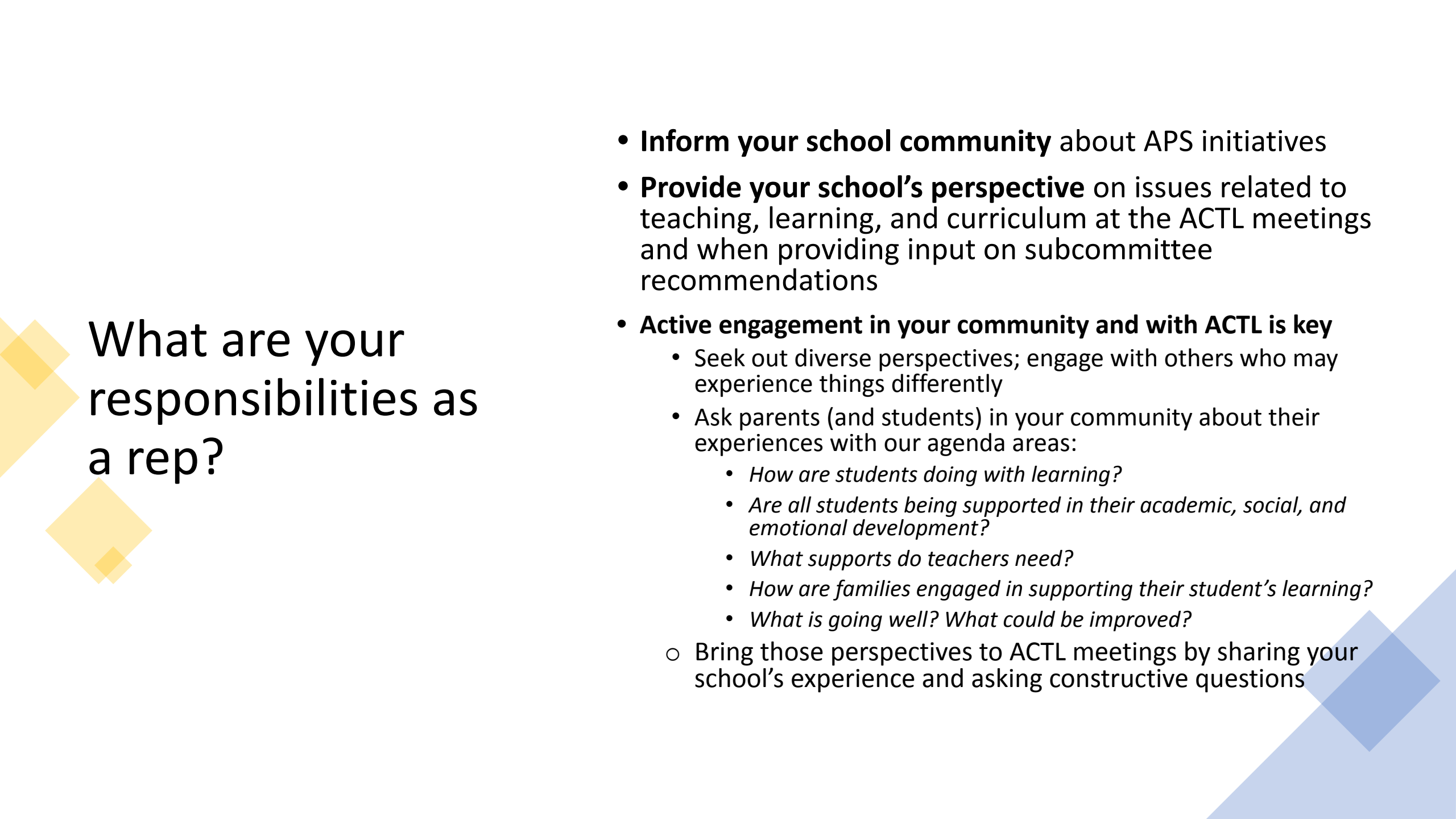
Educational Technology  
(complement/supplement the new EdTech  
Advisory Committee

Planning factors study

APS Legislative Package

Social-Emotional Learning

Policy revisions, as needed



## What are your responsibilities as a rep?

- **Inform your school community** about APS initiatives
- **Provide your school's perspective** on issues related to teaching, learning, and curriculum at the ACTL meetings and when providing input on subcommittee recommendations
- **Active engagement in your community and with ACTL is key**
  - Seek out diverse perspectives; engage with others who may experience things differently
  - Ask parents (and students) in your community about their experiences with our agenda areas:
    - *How are students doing with learning?*
    - *Are all students being supported in their academic, social, and emotional development?*
    - *What supports do teachers need?*
    - *How are families engaged in supporting their student's learning?*
    - *What is going well? What could be improved?*
  - Bring those perspectives to ACTL meetings by sharing your school's experience and asking constructive questions

# Get to Know Teaching & Learning at Your School



EXPLORE SCHOOL ACTION PLANS



LEARN MORE ABOUT PROGRAM EVALUATIONS AND WATCH MONITORING REPORTS IN SB MEETINGS AS WELL AS SB WORK SESSION DISCUSSIONS



EXPLORE APS DATA AND VDOE / SOL DATA



ASK QUESTIONS AND SEE WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE!



## 3 critical lenses to consider

### [APS Strategic Plan Goals and Mission, Vision & Core Values](#)

Mission: To ensure all students learn and thrive in safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments

Vision: To be an inclusive community that empowers all students to foster their dreams, explore their possibilities, and create their futures

Core Values: Excellence \* Equity \* Inclusivity \* Integrity \* Collaboration \* Innovation \* Stewardship

### [School Board Priorities, 2023-234](#)

**Priority 1:** Deepen our focus on ensuring student well-being and academic progress for all students.

**Priority 2:** Recruit, hire, retain, and invest in a high-quality and diverse workforce to ensure APS is the place where talented individuals choose to work

**Priority 3:** Improve operational efficiency and continue efforts to realign all operational systems and infrastructure with industry best practices.

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Improve and implement equitable learning environments for all students. (Read the [APS Equity Policy](#))

How can you  
learn more  
and engage  
with your  
school or  
community?

- In breakout rooms,
  - Individual think time; generate a list of ideas. (2 min)
  - Introduce yourself and your school.
  - Person whose school/group comes first alphabetically begins (e.g., Abbington, Barret, SHAB, Wakefield).
  - Participants share one idea. Continue round robin until ideas are exhausted.
  - As a group, share your favorite 2-3 ideas with the large group.



# Examples of How can you learn more and engage with your school or community?

- **Ask the PTA for a dedicated time slot on each meeting agenda** to share what you are hearing at ACTL and ask questions related to our agenda areas;
- Develop a **small focus group or committee of diverse individuals** who are willing to engage with you on a regular basis – in conversations or electronically – to provide feedback on teaching & learning;
- Use **short/informal surveys** with your school or community to solicit feedback;
- **Visit other parent groups** like the Padres Latinos to discuss teaching & learning topics.
- Communicate about academic topics via multiple channels – **school FB pages; WhatsApp groups; etc.**
- **Meet with your school administration/staff** to get their input on agenda topics and their sense of parent experiences/awareness/etc..

\*\*\*Above all – please seek out a variety of individuals/groups so that we continually are bringing diverse perspectives into our conversations.\*\*\*

# What are the ACTL subcommittees?

Committee	Chair	Vice Chair (or Co-chair)	Secretary	Staff Liaison
<b>Arts</b>	TBD			Pam Farrell
<b>ASEAC</b> (Arlington Special Educational Advisory Committee)*	Paige Shevlin	Jennifer Wheelock	David Siu	Dr. Kelly Krug & Angie Close
<b>CTAE</b> (Career, Technical & Adult Education)	Rosealena O'Neil	Dan Marschall (co-chair)	Lida Anestidou	Kris Martini
<b>Early Childhood</b>	Maggie Slye	Kate McKenney		Elaine Perkins & Cameron Childs
<b>Educational Technology</b>	TBD			Dr. Amy Jackson
<b>ELA</b> (ELACC)	Mike Miller	Kate Merrill		Gabriela Rivas (elem) & Sarah Cruz (secondary)
<b>English Learners</b> (ACEL)	Amy Graham			Sam Klein & Terri Murphy
<b>Gifted Services</b>	Carlisle Levine	Greg Eastman (co-chair)	Sherri Oliver	Cheryl McCullough
<b>Math</b>	Todd Truitt	Greg Eastman		Shannan Ellis (elem) & Carl Seward (secondary)
<b>Science</b>	Kristen Parsons			Dat Le
<b>SHAB</b> (School Health Advisory Board)	Alison Babb			Debbie DeFranco
<b>Social Studies</b>	Caroline Rogus	Nate Green		Terrell Flemming
<b>Student Services</b>	Adora Williams	Kirstin Pickle (co-chair)		Dr. Darrell Sampson
<b>World Languages</b>	TBD			Elisabeth Harrington
<b>Immersion Sub-subcommittee</b> (of English Learners (ACEL)): March 2023 - June 2024	Paula Cordero Salas	Rachel Berkey		Wendy Bermudez

# What is the relationship between the ACTL Council and the subcommittees?

Each year, the subcommittees explore their areas of focus in detail and **develop recommendations for improvement.**

The subcommittees **bring their recommendations to the ACTL Council for discussion.**

The subcommittees **discuss their recommendations directly with the School Board** in public work sessions.

The subcommittees **recommendations are formally submitted to the School Board** from ACTL.

Dec/January: recs with a *budget* component or on the *Program of Studies*

May/June: recs for *general practice* changes, *policy* changes, or the *School Board's Annual Priorities or Budget Direction for the following year*


The **School Board determines what action it will take on each recommendation.**

Subcommittee chairs may attend ACTL meetings and contribute to the discussion of topics in that setting.

**Reps to ACTL are welcome to also join a subcommittee** – and we encourage you to share information about the subcommittees to your school communities.




# Expectations for Engagement in ACTL Meetings

- Attend meetings regularly
  - Review background materials in advance
  - Come prepared with input from your community
  - Support each other by actively listening and staying engaged
  - Model a culture of respect, professionalism, and openness to new information and differing ideas
  - Share using full information (avoid acronyms, first names, insider-speak)
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# Meeting Dates & Logistics

September 13 – virtual via Zoom

October 4 (tentative: “social half-hour” starting at 6:30 pm)

November 1

December 6

January 3

February 7

March 6

April 3

May 1

June 5

Meetings will be held in person unless otherwise noted:

Syphax Building, 2110 Washington Boulevard

2<sup>nd</sup> floor School Board conference rooms (254/256/258)

*If you need to participate virtually, please Mike Cieslak, ACTL Co-Secretary, prior to 5 pm on the day of the meeting. ACTL members may participate virtually for up to two of the in-person meetings.*





Stay in  
touch!

Jenny Roahen Rizzo, ACTL Chair

[ACTLchair@gmail.com](mailto:ACTLchair@gmail.com)

Vice Chair:

Katie Cochran

Co-Secretaries:

Mike Cieslak & Anne Paris

