

Memo to: Arlington School Board
From: Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC)
Re: Revisions to Policies A-5, Arlington Public Schools Priorities, and B-4, School Board Meetings
Date: 24 July 2024

The FAC welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on School Board policies that are being reviewed for revision. We invite your consideration of concerns and recommendations we have with policies A-5, Arlington Public Schools Priorities, and B-4, School Board Meetings.

A-5, Arlington Public Schools Priorities

The FAC believes that a key component of the School Board's priorities policy is missing. It is concerning that none of the strategic plan priorities specifically point to the significance of well-maintained facilities and assets as important to educational success and teacher retention. We recommend addressing this omission under priority "Operational Excellence," as follows:

"Priority: Operational Excellence

Arlington Public Schools will plan and implement efficient, effective, and sustainable system-wide operations to support student, and staff success, and maintain facilities and assets consistent with Arlington community expectations and budgetary constraints~~our community's success.~~"

Also, with regard to the sentence above, the recommended word change seeks to clarify the phrase "community's success," specifically with regard to the identity of the referenced "community" and what metric would ascertain "our community's success." "Community" could mean "Arlington" citizens generally or "APS" specifically. If "community" means the "APS community," please clarify who in the APS community is left out of "students and staff" categories. If "community" refers to the Arlington community generally, the proposed text would better reflect what the expectation for success is. Certainly, this is the message FAC has received from "community" members who have contributed to our deliberations.

B-4, School Board Meetings

There are several sections that touch on areas of FAC interest: lines 92, 159-167, 172-175, and 239-242. We support these aspects of the policy with the exception of the last. This section covers "minutes." While no edits have been proposed, the text of the current policy begs for clarification. It states that no minutes are required to be "taken at ... committees ... appointed by the School Board except where the membership of any such ... committee ... includes a majority of the School Board." This statement suggests that FAC, which is a "committee appointed by the School Board," does not need to record minutes because a majority of Board members have never attended a FAC meeting. To clarify what we believe is the intent of the policy, the FAC suggests edits as follow:

"Minutes are not required to be taken by the School Board at deliberations of study commissions or study committees, or any other committees or subcommittees appointed by the School Board except where the membership of any such commission, committee, or subcommittee includes a majority of the School Board. This does not alter requirements for minutes to be taken by commissions, committees, or subcommittees for their own public records."

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please contact Cynthia Hilton, Acting Chair, FAC, if you have any questions.