

Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL)

Informational Session August 20, 2025

This slide deck was prepared by ACTL for the August 20, 2025 informational session. It is intended solely to raise awareness about ACTL and highlight the work we do. The content is for informational purposes only.

Objectives

- Increase your understanding of ACTL
- Understand the mission of ACTL and its role within APS
- Know how to engage with ACTL and become a member
- Ensure an understanding of the work of ACTL for the 2025-2026 school year

Agenda



ACTL Information Session Form

<https://tinyurl.com/ACTLAug20>

Introductions

What is ACTL?

Why be a part of ACTL?

How do I get involved?

2025-2026 Topics for Discussion

Questions

Introductions - APS



Kathleen Clark, APS Board Liaison

Dr. Gerald Mann, Chief of Academics



Sarah Putnam, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction



Kerri Hirsch, Director of Curriculum & Instruction



Introductions - ACTL Leadership



Jill Abbott, Chair

Mike Cieslak, Vice Chair Subcommittees



Ginnie Gordon, Vice Chair Engagement

Heather Toronjo, Co-Secretary



Sasha McNickle, Co-Secretary

What is ACTL?

Policy

Policy - [Policy B-3.6.30](#)

Overview

Assists in the continuous systematic **School Board Advisory Committees** review of various aspects of the teaching and learning program and in the **development of recommendations for instructional improvement.**

In addition ACTL, reports findings, develops recommendations to address findings, and provides feedback on initiatives to improve instruction.



What is ACTL?

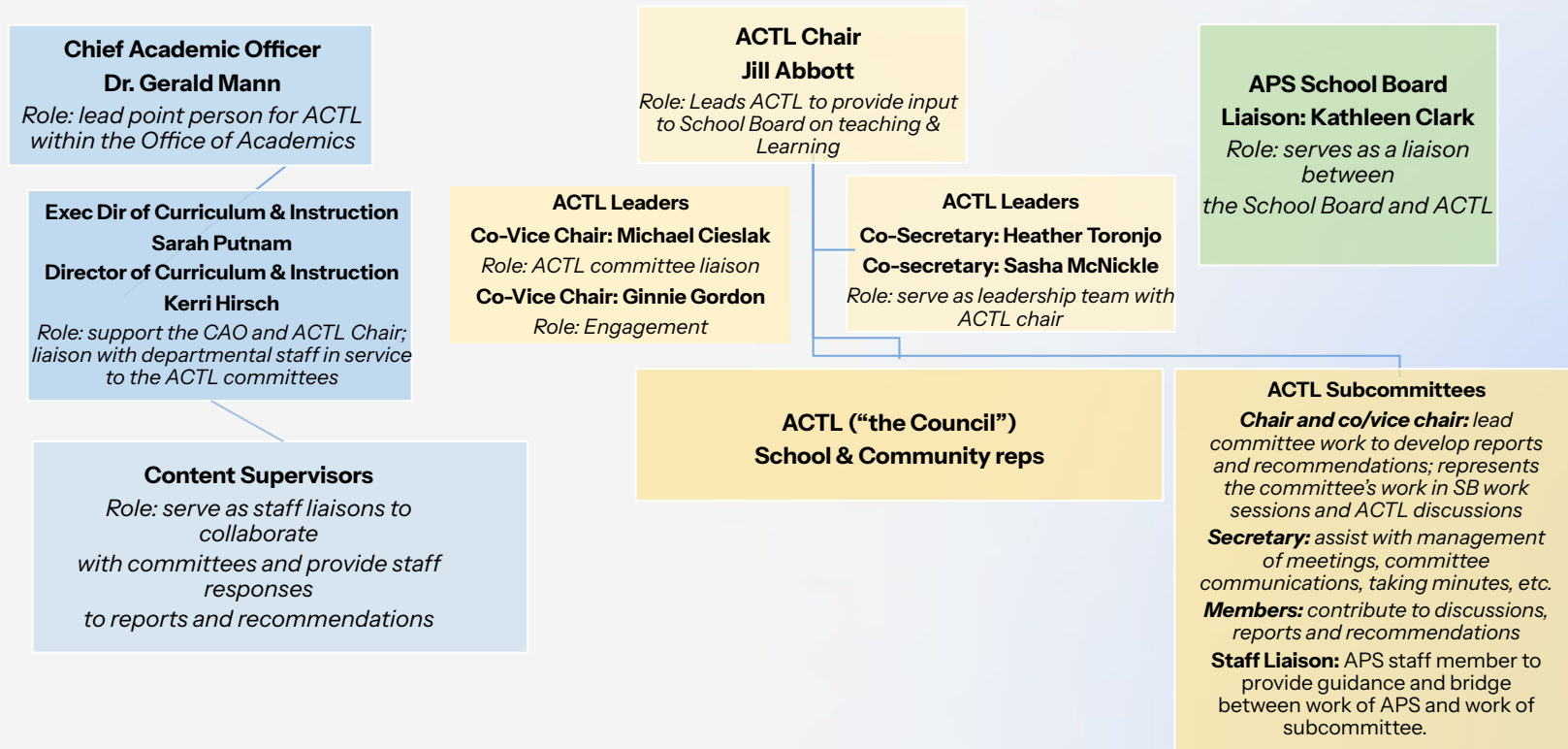
The Council's work includes:

1. **Reviewing and making recommendations** to improve policies and policy implementation procedures, curriculum content, curriculum delivery, and student outcomes;
2. Making recommendations for and **providing input into the development of new programs and practices**;
3. **Assisting the School Board in providing** the community with **information concerning academic programs**; and
4. **Reviewing instructional topics** from time to time as determined by the School Board.

Meetings, minutes, emails, communications, etc. are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)



How does ACTL fit in with APS?



What are Subcommittees?

- 13 standing subcommittees
- Meet regularly
- Create recommendations to the school board to strengthen programs.
- Reviewing the system-wide curriculum and instructional program and developing recommendations for improvement

Subcommittees

Advanced Academics and Talent Development

Supports Arlington's advanced/gifted students in grades K-12.

Arts Education

Supports the continuous improvement of arts education for Arlington Public Schools students.

Career, Technical, and Adult Education

Supports the continuous improvement of CTAE for Arlington Public Schools students.

Dual Language Immersion

This committee promotes the goals of dual language education and is committed to strengthening the K-12 DLI program. Subset of EL.

Early Childhood Education

Supports the needs of students in grades Preschool-Grade 2.

Subcommittees

Educational Technology

Supports the effective use of technology to advance student learning and the improvement of teaching practice through digital pedagogy.

English Language Arts

Supports the continuous improvement of English language arts education including reading, writing, speaking, and listening for Arlington Public Schools students.

English Learners

Makes recommendations to improve the instruction of students learning English.

Mathematics

Supports the continuous improvement of mathematics education for Arlington Public Schools students.

Science

Supports the continuous improvement of science education for Arlington Public Schools students.

Subcommittees

Social Studies

Supports the continuous improvement of social studies education for Arlington Public Schools students.

Student Services

Supports the social-emotional health of all Arlington Public Schools students.

World Languages

Supports the continuous improvement of world language education for Arlington Public Schools students.

Relationship of Subcommittees and ACTL

- Each year, the subcommittees explore their areas of focus in detail and **develop recommendations for improvement.**
- The subcommittees **bring their recommendations to the ACTL 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.
- 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.
- School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) and Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC) work closely with ACTL.

2024-2025 High-Level Accomplishments

- Provided **input across 12 subcommittees** to support the development of recommendations to the School Board.
- Collected feedback from the Arlington School Communities on the **use of cell phones and personal electronic devices** policies and pilots and compiled a summary report for the School Board.
- Listened and learned about the **AI Pilot and “Year of Generative AI Exploration”**; gathered input from the Arlington School Communities and prepared a summary report for the School Board.
- Submitted input and recommendations for the **Superintendent’s evaluation** for Standards 3, 6, and 8 to the School Board.



Why be a part of ACTL?

- Ensure your school's voice is being heard
- Communicate initiatives in Arlington Public Schools with your school
- Learn more about teaching and learning in Arlington Public Schools
- Have a voice in important conversations at the board and district level
- Make a difference in Arlington Public Schools
- Bring your expertise, a different perspective, and make an impact



How do I get involved and what is required?



1 **Meetings**

- Monthly: first Wednesday (typically), 7:00pm-8:30pm, Syphax Center
- Read materials prior to meeting
- Attend meetings regularly

2 **Active Engagement**

- Key to ACTL = Connecting with your community
- Share ACTL information with your community
- Gather feedback, input, suggestions from community
- Share that information with ACTL
- Complete surveys

3 **Ensure your school PTA knows you are signing up**

Want to learn more? Or serve as your school representative?

Email Ginnie Gordon

ACTL.Membership.APS@gmail.com



2025-2026 Topics for Discussion

ACTL Focus

Purpose: To engage APS staff and school communities in meaningful dialogue, gather input, and provide summary reports to inform the School Board.

ACTL Focus Topics

- Artificial Intelligence
- Executive Functioning

2025-2026 Topics for Discussion

Additional Topics

Purpose: To learn from APS staff and other experts about key initiatives, ask informed questions, and communicate relevant information back to your school community.

ACTL Spotlight Topics

- Writing Instruction
- Literacy
- History Curriculum
- Mathematics

2025-2026 Topics for Discussion

ACTL General Topics

Purpose: To learn from APS staff and other experts about key initiatives, ask informed questions, and communicate relevant information back to your school community.

ACTL General Topics

- Year of Transition – School Board Advisory Working Group updates, changes, and opportunities for input
- Standards of Accreditation process and results
- Board Legislative Package
- Other topics that arise – e.g., Summer School Feedback

Questions?

Jill Abbott

ACTLchair@gmail.com

Please complete the form
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