

Focus groups & community forums: summaries & key points

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Written input from current advisory groups & group chairs

Please note that the notes from in-person and virtual meetings are notes and summaries, not transcripts. Also, most notes are points raised by individual attendees at the meetings and do not necessarily represent the view of every person in attendance.

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NOTES FROM OTHER FOCUS GROUPS & COMMUNITY FORUMS

Existing Councils

ACTL Council meeting on 9/10: 20-25 attendees (mix of Council members and subcommittee chairs)

- Approx half the questions/concerns were about **recruitment**
 - Need APS to be involved in recruitment
 - Importance of under-heard voices
 - Advertising online isn't sufficient
 - Asking less-resourced potential members to attend two meetings (to be part of a council and a subcommittee) is a barrier
- Why only one person per school (Answer: School representation is one diversity category among several, such as demographics, experienced and new voices, etc)
- Level of surprise that ACTL Council members would need to apply for consideration on the Academics Advisory Council
- Selection process – how will it be conducted and can there be transparency

ACTL Internal survey (10 Council members participated)

Summary: (See full detail [here](#).)

Key concerns related to the organizational structure include:

- Scope that may be overly broad
- The value of subcommittees for sustaining volunteer engagement
- Alignment and grouping of focus areas
- Broader reflection of strategic priorities

Key concerns related to subcommittees include:

- Barriers to volunteer participation
- Relationship to APS and effective use of subcommittees
- Need for flexibility and responsiveness
- Desire for improved coordination and communication

ASEAC & SEPTA ad-hoc meeting on 9/29: 10 attendees

- Concerns about SWD/families not represented on each council (asked whether the Title 1 rep model had been considered for SWD, too)
 - Second suggestion for SWD reps in each, and those reps meet periodically as ASEAC
 - Another member said they weren't sure SWD seats were needed but that there needs to be deliberate mechanisms to address overlaps (ex: suspensions – which would fall under the Student Health & Well-Being Council –

- disproportionately affects certain groups)
- The group noted that SEPTA currently works to have SEPTA representation on other APS advisory groups
- Concerns about time commitments, especially with 1+ meeting/month
- Concerns about broad representation on groups
 - Suggestions: pay people for their time (ex of Seattle), childcare, dinner
 - Face to face recruitment is important – electronic is not sufficient
- An attendee suggested that it would be useful to guarantee representation on ASEAC from programs such as Shriver and PEP
- Need for onboarding
 - Uniform onboarding can help people move between councils
- View that people are motivated by specific topics

FAC meeting on 10/13: 14 attendees (11 members, 3 staff liaisons)

- Some concern about the size if Operations is at max member size
 - Will there be a meeting structure for a group of this size
- Q to be determined: 1/3 of parents to be from Title 1 schools
- Concern about overlap with JFAC
- Today the committees are autonomous...how will integration be achieved

SHAB meeting on 10/15: 14 attendees (11 members, 3 staff liaisons)

- Strong support for the idea of the charge
- Question/concern about whether this reduces the number of volunteers
- How do you gauge whether you are on track to success
- Budget – but are we losing the good input that BAC gives the Board during budget season
- Questions about what happens if the seats aren't filled
- Questions about process for council-suggested charges
 - Concerns there could be delays in council-suggested charges getting initiated
 - Maybe charges need a SB consent vote
- Will the dates/times of meetings be established in advance of the application process
- Discussion around whether students can vote – various members spoke in favor and against students being allowed to vote
- Staff should recuse themselves from some votes
- Desire for SB to respond to recommendations

BAC meeting on 10/15: 10 attendees

- Main overall theme: BAC members were strongly in favor of greatly increased coordination/communication between Budget and other Councils/work, AND they emphasized that having budget folks meet together with Andy monthly is the minimum

they need to have enough knowledge to be able to contribute effectively to other councils

- Idea proposed:: Having someone from each of the other councils come regularly to share with BAC
- One member raised the issue that if BAC members are out there, they can ask the other councils for ideas for cost savings
- A member said they wouldn't want to be the Budget rep on a council and there were several nods from other members (unclear whether that was just if BAC wasn't also meeting monthly, or if that would be the case regardless)
- the SB is very explicit each year in what the constraints are regarding budget for what they need to make recommendations
- One member raised concerns about councils advocating for themselves against each other
- One member : impossible now to know how much is spent on well being v facilities v etc....So while considering benefits and tradeoffs is the ideal, it's hard to make decisions between them
- Multiple members indicated structured guidance from the Board would be useful
- One member spoke strongly in support of aligning the councils to the SP priorities

BAC follow up input, sent via email from the chair

1. Concerns about “Budget Representatives” on Committees

- Unclear what role “budget representatives” would play on other committees.
- New volunteers likely lack the background to meaningfully contribute to budget discussions.
- Even experienced BAC members would need specific guidance or questions from the Board to engage effectively.
- Without clear structure or purpose, having a “nominal BAC person” on each committee may offer little benefit.
- Previously, BAC members attended other committees and reported back — not a perfect system, but it maintained communication.

2. Value and Function of the BAC

- Much of the BAC's work involves weighing financial tradeoffs when funding priorities compete.
- If this function is no longer valuable to the Board, dissolving the BAC might make sense.
- However, removing the BAC removes the “center of the web,” since funding affects all areas.
- The BAC provides a holistic financial perspective that individual committees cannot replicate.

3. Issues with Committee Structure

- The new proposed structure is confusing, seemingly trying to align with the Strategic Plan while making exceptions for Special Education.
- Suggestion: simplify to one standing committee per Strategic Plan pillar, plus Special Education (since it cuts across all areas and is mandated).
- Alternatively, eliminate standing committees entirely and instead create annual working groups based on current needs.

4. Lack of Direction and Guidance from the Board

- A major weakness of the current and proposed structures is the absence of clear Board guidance on each committee's agenda, expectations, and deliverables.
- Temporary working groups would likely have such clarity by design, but standing committees would not.
- Clearer communication and defined objectives from the Board are essential for all committees to function effectively.

5. Coordination and Communication Between Committees

- There's agreement that stronger connections among advisory committees are needed.
- The BAC should remain central, acting as the financial hub linking all other committees.
- Establish open communication lines between advisory committees and the BAC, while maintaining the BAC's broader fiscal oversight role.

6. Practical Concerns about Volunteer Capacity

- Volunteers already struggle to attend one meeting per month.
- Adding more committee assignments or meeting commitments is likely unrealistic and unsustainable.

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Existing Subcommittees

Social Studies meeting on 9/16: 6-7 attendees (half students, half adults)

- A member expressed that an important purpose of these groups is to point out places where APS could do better. Without a Soc Studies group, there may not be anyone paying attention to Soc Studies.
- SSAC has several students. When asked what motivated them to join, a student shared that she really likes Social Studies. She wouldn't be interested in a group that focused on other subjects.

Advanced Academics meeting on 10/14: 8 participants (approx half were Advanced Academics members, others were members or chairs of other subcommittees)

- Question about how the work of current groups isn't aligned to the Strategic Plan
- An attendee wants Math subcommittee to continue
- Concerns about loss of expertise of members
 - Reps on subcommittees spend years developing expertise
 - "3 year minimum on an advisory committee is needed to gain the knowledge to produce a quality product"
 - Ability to grow expertise will decline with new model
 - Quality of advice that SB receives will decline over time
 - Concerns about increased turnover
 - Appreciate time with content supervisor
- Comments on Strategic Plan
 - Needs to be agile
 - Should not be the sole driver
- An attendee expressed support for students and staff on committees
- Desire for independence:
 - An attendee feels subcommittees need independence
 - An attendee expressed that ACTL does not exist to rubber stamp School Board priorities
 - Advisory committees serve as an early warning system for SB
- Advanced Academics
 - Progress on meeting needs of Advanced learners has been in large part because of committee: ex is MS intensified courses
- Concerns about increased time commitment
- Concerns from multiple attendees about parents have available space to hear their concerns

- Specific mention of these as standing subcommittees:
 - Math
 - 4 core academics + Advanced Academics

English Learners meeting on 10/15: 5 attendees (all were EL teachers)

- Main overall theme: Feel it's very important to have EL representation in every council (*several* EL reps in each council, 1 is not enough to balance all non-EL voices). And, felt it was important for EL reps to also meet regularly with each other for info sharing and knowledge. We didn't clarify whether those meetings need to be as frequent as monthly.

English Learners follow up input, sent via email from the chair

- **The Advisory Committee on English Learners (ACEL) strongly believes that School Board Advisory Committee Working Group Option 2 is the more desirable choice. Furthermore, we believe that ACEL should continue to be a standing committee** to maintain the school system's focus on improving outcomes for English Learners (ELs), who comprise about 20% of student enrollment. EL families face unique barriers to participation, which include language access, cultural differences in educational systems, and immigration-related concerns, and are among the most vulnerable and underserved populations in APS. A dedicated committee ensures their needs receive consistent priority rather than being one of many competing interests in a large council where majority concerns will dominate. A dedicated committee helps to keep APS accountable to its strategic plan commitment to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps.
- **The School Board needs an advisory committee specifically focused on ELs as part of the system-wide effort to meet identified learning and accreditation targets.** The APS Strategic Plan sets ambitious goals: by 2030, 90% of students will meet or exceed proficiency on Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments, and all student groups will meet or exceed progress targets. The plan further states that 90% of elementary, middle, and grade 9 students will meet growth targets in Reading and Math.
 - In 2024–2025, ELs demonstrated proficiency rates of 47% in Math, 29% in

Science, and between 32% and 38% in Reading, History and Social Sciences, and Writing. These outcomes may reflect the ongoing challenge of developing academic language proficiency while simultaneously mastering grade-level content. Nonetheless, the data highlight the distance still remaining to meet the division's 2030 goals. Additional metrics in the Strategic Plan that require targeted monitoring include the College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicators (CCCRI), which help ensure that APS' English Learners are well-equipped to pursue a wide range of opportunities after graduation, whether in higher education, the workforce, or other paths.

- ACEL is also concerned about VDOE's new elevated SOL cut scores, and specifically how Virginia's new tiered system to classify schools primarily based on SOL scores will impact the accreditation of many Title I and lower-resourced APS schools. Because these standardized tests are only offered in English, our ELs are immediately disadvantaged, taking a test they will not fully understand with such large implications for their communities. We need an advisory committee dedicated specifically to English Learners as part of the district-wide initiative to support meeting these learning and accreditation goals. This committee should remain in place until achievement and opportunity gaps are significantly reduced or eliminated.
- Our committee has other substantial concerns:
 - There have been significant changes in program delivery for ELs in the past few years, particularly with the mandate to have students meet the four-year graduation target. While many English Learners have benefited from this encouragement, some continue to face challenges in reaching higher levels of English proficiency. Ongoing efforts to build teacher capacity in effective strategies for developing academic language and literacy remain essential to ensuring that all English Learners experience equitable access to high-quality, rigorous instruction. **A standing EL committee brings attention to the needs of these students who are silently not achieving their true potential.**
 - Within the larger group of English Learners is a distinct group of students referred to as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education), who have missed significant years of schooling and require targeted, multi-dimensional support. To ensure SLIFE thrive, the system needs to implement a clear and intentional pathway for them, with

structures that address their academic, linguistic, and social-emotional needs. **A standing EL committee to monitor their progress and advocate for appropriate supports and resources helps ensure that their unique needs are recognized and not overlooked within the broader EL population.**

- Our committee is unique in that we often lack direct representation from parents of current ELs. To ensure authentic advocacy for ELs and their families, we have taken the initiative to go to them—visiting schools to speak with students and teachers, and attending parent group meetings to better understand the challenges this community faces and how APS can provide stronger support. **Given that ELs represent a significant portion of the student population, it is essential to have a committee dedicated exclusively to their advocacy. Without such focus, their voices risk being overshadowed within a larger council.**
- We are aware that the advisory committees working in "silos" is a concern; we share this frustration and, in turn, **we recommend a system developed in which an EL committee reviews pending school board recommendations to assess their potential impact on EL students and families, or where knowledgeable EL advocates are involved in other committees from the start to provide input.** Even with these formats, we support a standing EL committee to share findings and resources, and to prevent EL advocates from becoming single tokenized voices that have trouble being heard.
- Following the DOJ settlement, having a visible, dedicated EL committee demonstrates APS's sincere commitment to supporting these students. **Integrating EL issues into a large general committee risks silencing their voices** and downplaying the significance of the concerns that led to federal intervention. Focus areas that originate from the School Board or that must be approved by a Board liaison, the process described in the Working Group slide deck, could limit the full ability of the EL community to raise areas of concern. **Our Advisory Committee for English Learners strongly recommends maintaining a standing EL committee, which is crucial for the ongoing progress and development of these students.**

Science meeting on 10/16: 6 SAC attendees + 2 chairs of other subcommittees

- A member noted that there can be different reasons why someone would join an Academics Council vs a subcommittee (eg, a SAC member noted they were on ACTL in their role as a parent rep for their school, and they had joined SAC because they are an astrophysicist)
- One member felt there should be more spaces for SMEs in proportion to parents/other
- One member was concerned that there would be turnover in charges and turnover in members each year and that that was too much turnover at once
- Importance of onboarding
- Chair noted that the North Star of SAC is student outcomes

Chair of Science Advisory Committee email

The WG should consider modifying their proposal for the Transition Plan to include a one year confidence building walk-through of the proposed scheme/process/plan for the annual work cycle that includes: School Board development of its “charge, expected products, & schedule”; recruitment; SOL results; Academics Advisory Council plan of work (before Nov); SOW to Advisory Committees; Advisory Committee work plan; and Advisory Committee work and product generation in time for School Board input to and support of the budget decisions for the following year. This confidence building step should be done before discontinuing any ACTL “subcommittees.” Its success and what we learn from it will demonstrate its workability, greatly enhance a smooth transition, “buy-in” by important participants, and ultimately acceptance of these new working arrangements.

Student Services on why subcommittee should continue

(Read full input [here](#))

Excerpts:

WHY SHOULD THE STUDENTS SERVICES COMMITTEE CONTINUE TO EXIST?
ACTL Advisory Committee on Student Services (ACSS), October 2025, by Unanimous Vote

The current advisory committee structure enables parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members to come together to advocate for students’ specific needs. ACTL’s council and committees both provide helpful input for APS, in complementary ways.

If there are specific issues with subcommittees, we would request the opportunity to address them while keeping the subcommittees intact.

The Student Services Advisory Committee’s focus on students’ mental, social, and emotional well-being is becoming increasingly vital, given alarming statistics both nationwide and here in Arlington.

We believe a committee dedicated specifically to students’ mental, social, and emotional well-being is crucial, whether within ACTL or a well-being council.

Mental, social, and emotional well-being and physical well-being are broad categories that often attract very different people with distinct training and perspectives. We acknowledge some significant overlap and have previously sought to collaborate with SHAB, but we also feel concern that mental, social, and emotional well-being needs might be de-emphasized in favor of physical health or other issues in a big council, especially given a deliberately limited number of well-being council members, resulting in a limited number who prioritize mental well-being and social-emotional learning/well-being.

We believe that community discussion and advocacy regarding the need for sufficient Student Services staff should continue. These specialized professionals provide essential expertise in serving both students and entire schools, performing (among other things) specific testing, interventions, and staff training.

Finally, we have several projects underway that we believe will contribute to student mental well-being, and without cost to APS, combining our ideas and subject-matter access with APS information and further staff access provided by our staff liaison. Our work continues to align with and adhere to the Strategic Plan, as have our past recommendations and contributions, and some is in collaboration with other committees.

Student Services Committee (ACSS) members were asked very recently how the work of a well-being council would differ from that of ACSS, given the Strategic Plan's well-being pillars. We would agree that all of the well-being priorities and performance objectives, as well as most of the strategies and indicators that flow from them, are primarily or entirely about mental, emotional, and social well-being, or at least have components thereof. But there are physical health concerns, too, which as we know are SHAB's focus. "Student Safety," for instance, should have mental, social, emotional and physical components.

Our bottom line on organizational structure is that it would be a false choice to say that ACSS or a similar committee, in order to be part of a well-being council, could not continue to exist as a subcommittee of that council, too. If a well-being council truly will work on the elements of mental, social, and emotional well-being and physical well-being, so much the better. But we feel fully convinced that a specific mental, social, and emotional well-being committee needs to exist also, both because of the amount of work involved, and as protection for mental and social-emotional health in case the council's leadership ever leans far towards the physical side of well-being in its concerns and interests. We still believe our students need for us to have the capacity for more work than just a large council will be able to achieve; we believe this is crucial. Feeling concerned and dedicated to the mental, social, and emotional health of Arlington's students, we ask that all standing committees, including ACSS and SHAB, continue to exist.

Student Services comments on proposal

(Read full input [here](#))

Excerpts:

COMMENTS ON WORKING GROUP'S ADVISORY RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL

ACTL Advisory Committee on Student Services (ACSS), October 2025, by Unanimous Vote
A big thank you to the talented group who have contributed time and talent:

1. It is clear that quite a bit of work and thought has gone into this project. Our committee members appreciate your efforts.

2. We are very pleased to see personnel and operations included in the new advisory proposal. Currently, there is no ACTL-like structure for community input regarding personnel. While the FAC and J-FAC have done excellent work, other aspects of operations are frequently identified by community members as weak and in need of attention as well. We thank the working group for this inclusion, and regardless of other changes, we strongly support adding advisory roles in these areas.

3. We also gratefully welcome the idea of deliberately recruiting students and staff members on all committees. The reality checks that these diverse groups can provide each other will be invaluable, and the intentional inclusion of these populations will break down silos. In the past, committees have not always been encouraged to include staff beyond their designated liaisons, so this represents a genuinely positive and appreciated improvement.

Below are our questions/concerns:

We recommend a candid and thorough evaluation of what will be lost and gained, as well as which needs are currently met and which may no longer be served by the proposed changes:

1. Rationale: could you specify more clearly which issues these changes are intended to address and explain the methods by which they will do so? This information will assist both us and the public in better assessing the proposed changes and understanding their reasoning. Most importantly, how will our students benefit from these proposed changes?

2. A straightforward analysis of what will be sacrificed and why this loss still constitutes progress for our students, including details on how the lost elements will be replaced.

3. It is important to recognize the value of the existing subcommittees and their contributions. Why would we take a step backward by removing them? How do we plan to make up for the loss of recommendations that have benefited our students over time?

We worry that diversity, involvement, and viewpoints – as well as the focus on important issues and needs for children – could decline instead of improving. Additionally, enthusiasm to serve and the positive results/impact on students might both diminish:

1. Requiring that committees/subcommittees consist mostly or entirely of main council members leads to fewer people participating and contributing in two ways:

2. Having School Board members select council members raises the following concerns:

a. Assigning recruitment and selection duties to School Board members adds to their already heavy workload.

b. Relying on only five people to recruit advisory members appears to narrow the range of perspectives and reach rather than broadening it.

c. Since advisory members are already approved by the School Board, the Board already makes the final decisions.

d. This selection process may feel less welcoming and inclusive, potentially creating an exclusive atmosphere.

e. We seek clarification on whether representation will continue to come from every school and

civic organization.

f. Those of us who have worked hard to recruit diverse members for ACTL and various committees know how challenging this is. Many efforts have already been made to attract members from diverse backgrounds. How will this new structure significantly improve the success of the search for diverse members?

g. All of the above said, if School Board members want to help with recruitment, the current and future structure certainly should allow for their involvement.

3. While it is important to ensure that the advisory committee's work aligns with the School Board's priorities, having the School Board primarily or exclusively define the topics presents some drawbacks:

4. Eliminating the standing subject-matter subcommittees and relying solely on the two councils (Academic and Well-being) to address all the needs currently managed by these 15 subcommittees—and only through council members—raises several concerns:

a. How can we ensure that the critical topics and student needs previously handled by the 15 subcommittees will still be adequately addressed within just two large, potentially cumbersome council groups?

b. In the new proposal, might there be unproductive competition between different academic subject-matter issues/student needs because of a scarcity of time/ focus? Similarly, might mental/social/emotional vs physical student well-being needs compete for focus?

c. We suggest considering how to keep the newly-created silos -- dividing academics from well-being -- from having any detrimental effects.

d. If subcommittees must be composed of council members only, expertise would be lost when council members cannot dedicate time to both the council and a related subcommittee, assuming subcommittees exist in the new structure.

e. Under this new structure, communities like SEPTA, which seek representation on multiple committees relevant to students with disabilities, may find it more challenging to maintain adequate representation.

f. Staff liaisons provide important info/reality checks/access to other staff, and facilitate answers to staff-related questions for each subcommittee, and also should be kept.

5. Each ACTL Advisory Committee was established because it addressed a set of ongoing and essential student needs, and this remains true today.

ACTL chairs joint letter

(read full letter [here](#))

Excerpts:

It is the consensus of the undersigned chairs that we not only strongly support Option 2, which allows for standing subcommittees; but we feel that ALL CURRENT SUBCOMMITTEES SHOULD CONTINUE TO STAND UNDER ANY NEW SUPER-COMMITTEE STRUCTURE.

- Subcommittees can respond more quickly when issues arise. They offer greater flexibility to conduct work without needing to secure a majority agreement from the entire council.

- Subcommittees representing specific student populations (such as Students with Disabilities, English Learners, CTAE, Dual Language, and Advanced Academics), ensure that the unique needs of these students are not overlooked. We are concerned that a generalized council with 60+ members would lack the capacity to prioritize these students' wide-ranging concerns. A standing subcommittee structure can more effectively guarantee diverse group representation by enabling parents, guardians, community members AND students to actively participate in the subcommittees that represent their interests; thereby making it easier for them to advocate for their own specific needs compared to an academic council, which has significantly fewer available positions.
- Moreover, when considering efforts on behalf of students with disabilities, we recommend that ASEAC be granted more flexibility in its structure. Given the rapidly changing environment at the U.S. Department of Education, especially within the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, ASEAC will undoubtedly need a flexible framework to ensure educational rights of students with disabilities.
- We fear electives such as Arts and World Languages, Dual Language programs, Early Childhood Education, EdTech; and even Social Studies — a core content course lacking the same protections in the Strategic Plan as ELA, Math, and Science — would be eliminated first because these programs are not explicitly detailed in APS's Strategic Plan through no fault of their own. Therefore, they would likely NOT be prioritized annually by an Academic Council.
- It takes time for new members to acclimate to committee work before they can begin making sound policy recommendations, something that may not be possible in a large, 60+ person council.
- Even if you designate one person to represent Title I schools, English Learners, or disabled/neurodivergent individuals, our marginalized communities are not a monolith and one person cannot adequately represent all members based solely on their proximity to disadvantaged populations. We appreciate the Working Group's efforts to prioritize volunteer diversity; however, this current approach can be problematic. APS needs to enhance its efforts to identify systemic solutions that incorporate diverse voices into policy deliberations without tokenizing them. Subcommittees can also contribute more to recruitment efforts.
- SHAB and the Student Services Committee address overlapping yet distinctly different needs, each of which is broad and warrants dedicated attention. Transitioning Student Services to an entirely wellness-based council also overlooks the committee's curricular involvement (recently regarding Social Emotional Learning, or SEL) in its research and advocacy for an SEL audit to be conducted by CASEL, the leading organization in the field, and the resulting recommendations prompting APS to integrate SEL into its curricula. This ongoing process directly supports the Strategic Plan criteria on behalf of our students and helps them develop the "Five C" skills essential to Virginia's Profile of a Graduate and in the APS Strategic Plan.

Eliminating any one of our subcommittees would reduce volunteer participation, weaken institutional knowledge, undermine the credibility of the advisory process, and risk overlooking key student needs. Instead, APS should strengthen communication and coordination to maximize the subcommittees' value to the School Board. Indeed, Option 1 reduces staff participation by 40% and parent and community participation by 95%. (We are happy to share our calculations if there is interest.)

Chair of Social Studies subcommittee input

(Read full input [here](#))

Excerpts:

This document aims to provide a historical overview of APS' Social Studies program from the 1950s to today, explaining not only WHY Social Studies is an essential core subject; but also, why our advisory subcommittee should continue to exist within any new organizational structure.

...

SSAC has been operating under this Advisory Council framework for at least fifty years. The historical

records start in 1975, when the first social studies recommendations were made alongside other programs

(pp. 8-9). Our committee continued its work through the 1980s, 1990s, and to the present day. (Subcommittee recommendations from 2016 to the present are available [here](#) and [here](#)).

Reviewing past

recommendations shows that SSAC has consistently advocated for:

- Dedicated social studies instructional time (1989, pp. 12-13), which resembles our current Instructional Time PIPs (p. 6); also noted in 2021 (p. 10), 2022 (p. 16), and see

Recommendation

#2 from 2025. We plan to revisit instructional time again this school year.

- A global education that reflects the history of our entire community (1989, pp. 2, 14, 31-32); a 2017 recommendation; 2020's recommendation called for an equity audit across all programs). Look out for this year's recommendation on this topic as well.

- Integrating social studies learning across programs (1989, pp. 12-13, 2016 recommendation, p. 8, 2025 Recommendation #2); and this will also be addressed in the upcoming recommendation this year.)

...

Will SOCIAL STUDIES REMAIN a Priority: APS' Strategic Plan

Social Studies Instruction Enhances Literacy Outcomes

Potential Effects of State/Federal Legislation/Directives on Local Social Studies Instruction

What is Occurring "Outside:" Social Studies needs True Advocates

Dual-Language Immersion sub-subcommittee input

(See full input [here](#))

Excerpt:

While the current structure successfully serves the DLI community, the DLI Sub-Committee is providing the below options for different ways that a group of parents, teachers, staff, and DLI supporters can provide feedback and advice to the School Board.

Option one: Maintain DLI Sub-Committee The DLI Sub-Committee provides valuable insight and recommendations to the School Board. If the School Board decides to maintain some

standing committees, the DLI Sub-Committee should be considered for retention. Members on the Sub-Committee represent parents from four APS schools (Escuela Key, Claremont Immersion School, Gunston Middle School, and Wakefield High School). Topics discussed are those relevant to all dual language immersion students and teachers, plus English Language Learners and teachers.

Option two: Alternate structure Members of the DLI Sub-Committee believe it would be advantageous to APS that there be a group of parents, teachers, and staff who support DLI to access information and present the unique needs of the program to the School Board. Other school districts, including local school districts, have adopted various styles. APS's DLI program would benefit from a group of parents, staff, and teachers that could discuss topics relevant to the DLI program, seek parent feedback, and provide presentations or trainings to parents. This alternate method can allow for families who cannot commit to the formal ACTL sub-committee structure, including meetings at locations other than Syphax, babysitting during meetings, not requiring quorums, and parents choosing which meetings to attend based on the agendas or presentations. This method would likely attract a more diverse group of parents, representing different socio-economic classes, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

Option three: School Board liaison and/or additional representative on the ACTL Council Given the high enrollment numbers for the DLI program, a school board liaison for an immersion parent advisory committee might be helpful. Alternatively, or in addition, a secondary immersion representative on the ACTL Council could provide helpful representation.

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Other Focus Groups & Community Forums

APS Cabinet meeting on 9/16

Administrator Focus Group on 9/30: 5 attendees

Community Focus Group on 10/3: 3 attendees

Administrator Focus Group on 10/7: 2 attendees

Community Forum on 10/8: 2 attendees

Teacher Focus Group on 10/9: 1 attendee

Aggregated responses:

- Q: Clear alignment with SP priorities?
 - There is the intent to do that, will be achieved if tasks are clear and showcase the SP priority
 - Not always true in the work of (sub) subcommittees
 - Clear articulation for 4 priorities aligned; not for student-family-community partnerships (JT explained the broader lens of partnerships throughout all Councils); articulate expectations and accountability of the partnership component
 - The way in which SB responds to recommendations (accept, modify, decline) is key so the advisory councils see the impact of their work
 - like the personnel Council (most value from the realignment)
 - It's aligned BUT Academics should have larger weight (where is technology, science, we shouldn't be giving the minimum to students.) SOLs are a measure of growth but it is unclear how SP priorities are supported, funded, etc.
 - – is there a home for advanced academics in the new structure?
 - supported the idea of specific charges
 - Overall proposal is good

- Q: Membership structure
 - ○ Academics: specify/articulate the 1 parent/school expectation
 - ○ ASEAC: 1 staff (it's the law; additional staff could not be voting members)
 - ○ No business connections (JT showed membership breakdown in appendix; may need to communicate that better)
 - ○ Operations AC: smaller in total numbers; more voices from facilities and other locations in the County increase staff #
 - ○ Be clearer about who could qualify as Title 1 reps (eligibility, be more inclusive so that more schools qualify)
 - ○ The membership number - if we are not able to secure membership in a certain group (parents/students/community reps/staff/SME) - can the membership number move to other groups (some groups may be over represented)
 - ○ Personnel - Staff may be leary of speaking their truth, fear of retribution. Staff say something that gets back to Supervisor, Superintendent
 - ○ Operations - good balance of members
 - ○ Staff Membership in all committees - consider staff membership to include members with institutional knowledge and new to APS to solicit everyone's voice/feedback
 - ○ Suggest 4:1 ratio for Staff:Parents on Personnel
 - ○ having 0 SMEs presents poorly
 - ○ 1 parent/school is one perspective only, yet schools host multiple ways of thinking
 - ○ 10-16 parents are not enough (should have a larger weight) especially ASEAC (using Academics as a model)
 - ○ Concerns about a situation in which all the members of a council would be new in

a given year. Wanted there to be some institutional knowledge in a committee. Don't change all the members each year.

- Suggest 4 year term limit rather than 8
 - 2 meetings each month is too many
 - Suggest 1 staff member from each school level
 - SpEd services vary across school levels
 - Concerns that Academics is too large, could become a griping session. Too many parents, advocacy for their student/school becoming focus
-
- Q: Will this achieve expected membership composition
 - Having staff is key, yet time commitment will be challenging. Appealing will be to have specific tasks with deliverables
 - Great evolution to include staff
 - Getting staff members to serve will be biggest challenge followed by students
 - consider stipend
 - Wide representation beyond staff would require simpler language in marketing that should also include the impact of the recommendations of these committees
 - Just providing space for different voices won't be enough
 - important to ensure certain schools are not over represented
-
- Q: Interested in serving?
 - Potentially generates interest
 - Package advisory councils to show how cohesive the new system is
 - Add community reps and SME's showing efforts to capture diversity of thought
 - Making clear what councils will do and impact their recommendations will have (be heard, create changes in response) will help generate interest.
 - Awareness of impact advisory councils is not clear. Does not feel they have an impact currently.
 - Alignment with the Strategic Plan is not going to be a strong draw
 - Access to APS staff is a value that could draw people in
-
- Q: Subcommittees
 - One attendee felt standing subcommittees should have similar membership balance as Academics Council. Another felt subcommittees should be mostly parents.
 - Standing ones provide feedback regularly
 - Some current subc's can merge; messages get diluted because there are so many of them
 - Option 2 because standing subc's are key, while ad hoc only if/when needed
 - Participants were very science-savvy and stressed that importance, along with soft skills/critical thinking coming from civic engagement/social studies
 - Real concerns caused by having only ad-hoc subcommittees. Leads to decrease in voices, number of people involved
 - See value in some standing subcommittees

- Some subcommittees every other year
- Like Ad-Hoc idea to be agile and respond to needs
- Not valuable to meet to just to meet
- having clear mission is key
- Which ones:
 - Standing: Special ed
 - Standing: English learners
 - Standing subcommittees should exist in time-sensitive, expertise-heavy areas like: Facilities/Capital Planning, Special Education, ELs, Health & Safety
 - Need expertise/continuity (keep advanced academics, science and create/add technology (all 3); english learners; math). They can have specific foci (SB charge) but keep their expertise and be able to look broadly to their subject Maybe some consolidation makes sense (immersion, dual language, english learners)
 - option 2 with standing subcommittees - Math, Science, ELA, Technology, Advanced Academics, EL
 - ELA, Math, EL, SpEd, Social Studies