

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
The Advisory Council on Instruction
Syphax Education Center
2110 Washington Blvd.

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

Present were:

ACI Leadership: Connie Skelton, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction. Co-Chair Patty Petroccione; Co-Chair Rebecca Hunter; Vice-Chair Karla Hagan, Karen Hunt, Ted Black, Judy Hadden and Tannia Talento.

ACI Membership: Jaim Foster, AEA; J. Egenrieder, Arlington Chamber of Commerce; Natalie Goldring, League of Women Voters; Bridget Otikoya, NAACP; Jim Egenreider, Northern Virginia Community College; Natalie Root, Teachers Council on Instruction; Joyce Suydam, AAUW; Susan Scott, Jefferson; Sarah Baker, Kenmore; Karolina Walkin, H-B Woodlawn; Ron Kampeas, H-B Woodlawn; Maria Abarca, Wakefield, Nancy Brown, Wakefield; Teela Murphy, Washington-Lee; Kyra Buchko, Washington-Lee; Barbara Kanninen, Yorktown; Rita Thompson, Yorktown; Dina Ramon, Abingdon; Thomas Cynkin, Arlington Science Focus; Tania Herrera, Barrett; Bridget Obikoya, Drew; Arit Essience, Hoffman-Boston; Whytni Kernodle, Key; Scott Milam, Long Branch; Terri Schwartzbeck, McKinley; Gretchen Davis, Nottingham;

Advisory Committee Chairs/Staff Liaisons: Mark Hill and Ali Protik, Mathematics Committee Co-Chairs; Scott Nathanson, Social Studies Committee Chair; Margaret Chung, Math Staff Liaison; Cathy Hix, Social Studies Staff Liaison

The meeting commenced at 7:06

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Skelton welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Administrative review:

Ranking – Prioritizing Committee Recommendations

Prioritizing:

After voting on each individual committee's recommendations at the time they were presented, ACI voting members are given the opportunity to compare contrast and weigh the relative merits of all the instructional recommendations. In determining which recommendations you give your highest priority, you may consider the cost of a recommendation in weighing that recommendation against others. You may rank the recommendations from one to ten. Ten being the recommendation that you support the most. All eligible ACI voting members may submit a ranking ballot.

Note the deadline is December 30th. Ballots and self-addressed stamped envelopes were distributed. Members who are not present at this meeting will receive a ballot by email.

Math Advisory Committee Report

A synopsis of report was reviewed. A thorough review of the process was provided. The committee was thanked for their hard work.

Recommendation #1:

Gather information on, and Study the Feasibility of, the “Flipped Classroom” Approach at the Secondary-Level and Assess Its Impact on Student Learning.

Recommendation #2:

Ensure Presence of a Full-Time Math Coach in Every APS Elementary School

Recommendation #3:

Continue to Devote More Time to Mathematics Instruction in APS Middle Schools.

Recommendation #4:

Require Licensure in Mathematics, as well as training/experience in second-language Instruction for All Mathematics Instructors for Secondary-Level Students Enrolled in ESOL/HILT Programs.

Question: I am happy this is a great report and I thank you. ACI considers math top priority and put your proposal to have full time math coaches in all schools, however the board brushed it off; they did not want to spend money, and this year they cut money. I support your proposal but think it will sink. What is an alternative? You are addressing question of achievement gap and it would be nice to see language for other students to spend time as well, so for all kids, respectful of their performance, and not just gap kids.

Response: Yes we did propose it 2 years ago and we know the achievement gap is a hot button. We are addressing this.

Question: With regards to flip class model, I am very excited and think it is a good use of class, and I like the reverse. But what about the 6 teachers who are already doing it; do they approve of this method? How did they decide to do it?

Response: It is a viable model. A lot of teachers who have attended conferences etc. have had experience, and are eager to implement a model.

We are doing a blended approach right now, and finding it useful for certain topics. It is flexible. It is exciting to see teachers who are using it. It is seen as a useful tool, not only mainstream, but other levels as well. Please refer to the report for further details.

Question: The original idea is that math coach coaches the teachers. So what is now happening?

Response: The model is to coach teachers. They are in the classroom, so can see strategies that were modeled and subsequently they build capacity within teachers. They pre-plan the lessons, work with teachers, and discuss further issues after the class.

Question: My question is regarding budget impact of class time. There is some research out there and I think there must be a lot being done currently. So I am wary about additional research and concerned about your strategy re staff time.

Response: You brought up some thinking that went behind the report. This is a hot topic. We believe the first stage is necessary to evaluate.

Question: My question is regarding disadvantaged students. How will you approach flip classroom to those who do not have access at home. Will there be additional library open time? The reality is not all families can afford home computers and Internet?

Response: We are waiting to see what comes out of the survey. If students who we target do not have Internet access at home, then we will lean towards the conclusion that we do not move forward with this approach. We need to research. Most students are likely to have a device, or access to a device. Why we think it is promising for Arlington is because most students have at least one computer to access at home, and parents and student can work together.

Response: We looked at the alternatives. Look at libraries as an option. Perhaps lectures can go on the DVD and have it shown on the TV at home. Students can come early, or stay after school. This is a good point. We are focusing this option on the secondary level. Another option is to use a cell phone to listen to lectures etc.

Question: I am huge fan of flip learning. My biggest concern is spending a lot of money evaluating the process. It is about using classroom time and adjusting accordingly. Perhaps you can have teachers conducting their own evaluating. In addition review surveys that might already have been done.

Question: Recommendation #4 – I do not see anything about Special Education? Is there special training on licensing?

Response: Good point. This is not what we are focusing on. We have to look at a co-teaching model. There is an amount set aside for teachers getting their dual license certification.

Question: I am uncomfortable voting without the numbers. There might be an evaluation out there. Question regarding #3...please tell me about this, what are we voting on?

Response: It is awareness; awareness to the parents and students. Look at money more holistically....it is hard to determine at this level the overall cost.

Question: Point out – recommendation re evaluation, first part does not have a cost. The last part talks about best practices, isn't that what the department of instruction is supposed to be doing? Presenting the best ideas, that is new in research.

Response: One cuts across all subjects. There will be further studies.

Question: My question is regarding recommendation #4. I would like to get clarification regarding the difficulty in getting license teacher. So I would like a sense as to why this is a problem.

Response: This was one of the first things I was asked to look into. It has been a regular practice, and as we looked at it, and studies the progress. Students come here with little language skills. We now realize that yes, this has to be the case, we need to make sure all core subjects need to be taught by a certified teacher.

Question: My question is regarding the budget, these teachers can be found within APS already, is that the case?

Response: We can get teachers from within or reach out. Sometimes we are able to hire a teacher that has dual responsibilities.

Question: Why doesn't the school do the obvious?

Response: We need to put it in as a recommendation. Focus at one school – if this is a recommendation that is approved, then we will then approach all schools.

Question: My question is regarding the flip classroom model. I have spent time with several leaders of schools. Challenges are needed to be implemented: access/content development/professional development. One interesting resource, is a program funded by the Gates' Foundation it includes flip classes and could help with the challenges.

Response: Great suggestion – please get in touch.

Question: I feel that the information should be consistent. I would like consistency with the budget numbers.

Response: Perhaps consider low impact, high impact. Numbers are not always accurate.

Question: I am piggybacking on the access concern. My concern with flip classroom is with students who have multiple kids at home using one station, so how long do the kids stay up? I do not see the issue being addressed. Second point is with on-line textbooks, with kids who have trouble visually, so they will be denied access? This group of students will be affected.

Response: There may be ways to provide access. For example in Jefferson, the library is open after schools some days, and math sub group meets.

Question: In terms of explaining things to students, it is absolutely important that adults know what they are doing, but do not know how to explain. It makes a huge difference. Can explain it quickly if it is explained in a way that makes sense.

Question re Swanson and point about devoting more time – why is it only Swanson that have awareness?

Response: It is across all schools.

Vote:

Recommendation #1:

Approve: 21
Opposed: 2
Abstain: 3

Recommendation #2:

Approve: 22
Opposed: 1
Abstain: 3

Recommendation #3:

Approve: 25
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 1

Recommendation #4:

Approve: 22
Opposed: 1
Abstain: 3

Social Studies Advisory Committee

A thorough review of the report was provided. The committee was thanked for their hard work.

Recommendation #1:

All teachers in Grades 3, 4 and 5 receive training in the History Alive! Teaching strategies by the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

Recommendation #2:

- (A) Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) should be developed for 3rd Grade by the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, and
- (B) The School Board should require PATs for all 3rd Grade students if state legislation suspends or eliminates the 3rd Grade Standards of Learning (SOL) exam for Social Studies.

Question: My question refers to page 7, both reading and writing is done in both classes. Immersion does not provide this opportunity.

Question: Connections is phenomenal. Regarding training for History Alive program: Is it a challenge for all teachers to get the training? Are there other options? Online? Other ways, so they can get it when it is needed.

Response: Learning is best when the students are immersed in it. It would be hard to replicate. Also some schools ask for training to come into the school and train all teachers. Every time we look at a strategy, we look at ways to look at other subjects and how they can be used.

Question: My question is regarding cross curriculum integration. Are you working at the admin level to work with teachers and integrate this in the classroom?

Response: Administrators are invited. We are making a very concerted effort to come together and have common projects. Looking at more ways to work together and cross to other subjects.

We have a number of other issues we are looking at but did not have the time this year.

Question: My question is regarding performance assessment class.

Response: We are interested in history and looking at big pictures. It will fit into what students are studying. It encourages students to look at maps etc. and be able to interpret and use critical thinking skills. Thus they will analyze the information we have them currently at 4th grade, and all secondary, and idea is to expand it.

Question: You say “if”? Is it only if standards change?

Response: Value of 3rd grade SOL – and getting them used to it....4th grade is much more content level.

Question: This report is very compelling. Is there a particular ethic component to it?

Response: History Alive is based on 6 strategies. It is necessary to make sure that everyone in the class speaks. The students argue their response. They are seen applying strategies to the content. Students need cooperative learning. History Alive began as a company teaching 6 strategies. Eventually it created materials that supported strategies. Materials were put in. We encourage teachers to incorporate strategies. Then they use the strategies for content lessons.

Question: You mention 4th grade content is heavy! Are you getting pushback from teachers?

Response: I am writing to teachers, asking questions, and getting data. Think you teach for understanding....not about covering facts, but teaching students to think. I think this is what we are accomplishing. We think more students will come out interested in history.

Question: Please can you describe an experience?

Response: If you teach this way, the students will remember the content. Experiencing it helps students to remember. Each child needs to be “in the moment”.

Question: How to better get the info to the kids to prepare them for the SOL’s. I am in agreement regarding the History Alive program.

Response: Referring to SOL pass rate, we have seen some progress. It is about engaging kids. The learning materials need to have meaning so the students can connect. We believe it is not about engaging but about improving their ability to learn history. At the state level, there has been increased focus. So we stay ahead of the game, and prepare students for the changes that will come. It is about application of knowledge.

Recommendation #1:

In Favor: 25
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 0

Recommendation #2

In Favor: 25
Opposed: 0
Abstain: 0

The meeting ended at 8:55 PM.