

September 2008

Welcome to ACI!

We are delighted you have agreed to serve as a member of the School Board's Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) during the 2008-2009 school year, and we look forward to our first meeting on Wednesday, September 10. You will find in this letter, and attached to it, useful information which will provide an overview of ACI and its work, and will be the start of practical guidelines through the year's activities.

### Background

- The ACI itself is an umbrella committee made up of one representative (and an alternate) from each elementary school, two representatives from each secondary school, and representatives from several community organizations. Each school selects its ACI member through its PTA, as a PTA position, and the School Board appoints members for a two-year period. The School Board appoints the advisory committee members for one-year terms. Advisory committees may have up to 20 members. Each advisory committee chair and the ACI Co-Chairs try to ensure there is good representation from across the county.
- The purpose of ACI is to provide the School Board community input and feedback for instructional planning of the school system. We assist in the continuous systematic review of various aspects of the instructional program and in the development of recommendations for instructional improvement, including recommendations for the introduction of new programs. We also conduct studies of instructional topics from time to time as determined by the School Board. Attachment 1 describes School Board advisory committees in general; Attachment 2 explains the purpose and operating guidelines of the ACI specifically.
- The Advisory Council on Instruction is an umbrella committee to which 14 curricular/program advisory committees report. The 14 advisory committees include Arts Education; Career, Technical & Adult Education; Early Childhood Education; English Language Arts; ESOL/HILT; Family and Consumer Sciences; Foreign Language; Gifted Services; Health & Physical Education; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; Special Education; and Student Services. Each of these committees participates in the School Board's reporting process every year, either by presenting recommendations for instructional improvements in its subject area (one year), or by presenting a status report of its activities (the following year). The advisory committee first presents its report to the ACI, which considers and votes on each of the recommendations, and, later, to the School Board. Attachment 3 is the reporting schedule for 2008-09.
- In response to the School Board's request to identify ways to have a more efficient process and a more informed discussion among ACI advisory committee chairs, School Board members, and staff about advisory committee recommendations, a new procedure was piloted last year. Based on the positive feedback on this pilot, we will replace "ACI Night" with a School Board Work Session this year. The work session will occur after ACI has had a chance to consider, deliberate, and prioritize all the recommendations and the staff has had an opportunity to formulate their responses to the recommendations. The work session, scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2009, will include an opportunity for chairs of committees making recommendations to make a

brief presentation to the Board members. This will be followed by a discussion among Board members, staff, and committee chairs. All work session documents are publicly available, minutes are published and approved by the Board, and the sessions are open to the public who may wish to observe.

### Schedules

- Our first meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 10, 2008**, at the Education Center Annex / Syphax Building, 1439 North Quincy Street (Attachment 4 gives directions and map). At 6:30 p.m., the School Board will host a reception in the lobby preceding the meeting; then the meeting itself will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. The agenda is attached. Please note that the earlier starting time for this meeting only.
- Attachment 5 lists the meeting dates for the year. In order to respect everyone's time, the meetings (after September 10) begin promptly at 7:30 p.m.; our goal is to finish no later than 9:30 p.m. During these monthly meetings (twice monthly during February and March), we learn how the school system works and how ACI fits into that process; we hear reports from committees which are not presenting recommendations this year; and we consider and vote on the specific recommendations of the advisory committees which are recommending this year.

### Staying Up-to-date

- Reports from prior years, current year reports, minutes, and agendas are available on the ACI website: **[www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory\\_groups/aci](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory_groups/aci)**.
- Many of you have served previously on ACI and already have a three-ring ACI notebook with much of this general material in it already. The electronic attachments are for you to add to those notebooks as desired to keep them current. At the September 10 meeting, we will have notebooks for those of you who are new to ACI; these are for you to keep, adding updated pages as the year progresses and into future years.

In a subsequent message, we'll forward additional materials for your use during our year of work together. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or suggestions that may arise at any time.

Thank you for serving with us.

Sincerely,

Marjie Shapiro, ACI co-chair (703.998.5586) <marjorie.shapiro@fda.hhs.gov>  
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### Attachments

1. Policy on School Board Advisory Committees (general)
2. Policy on School Board Advisory Committee on Instruction (specific)
3. ACI Reporting Schedule 2008-09
4. Directions to the ACI meeting site
5. ACI meeting dates for 2008-09
6. Agenda for September 10, 2008