

Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI)

MEMORANDUM

January 2014

To: Arlington Public Schools Board Members
Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Connie Skelton, Asst Superintendent of Instruction

From: Patty Petroccione and Rebecca Hunter, Co-Chairs
Advisory Council on Instruction

Subject: ACI Summary and Priority Rankings for 2013-2014 Committee Reports with Recommendations

On behalf of the Arlington Public Schools Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI), we are pleased to provide you with the 2013-2014 Priority Ranking of ACI recommendations. Since ACI committees make recommendations on a two-year cycle, this ranking ballot consists of seven (7) of the fourteen (14) committees which presented reports with recommendations during this cycle. The remaining seven (7) committees will provide reports of ongoing and planned study, activities and concerns during the second half of this cycle (January - May 2014).

We recommend that when the School Board and APS Senior Staff meet in the coming months to consider plans, particularly budget plans, that these ACI recommendations be consulted as a key document for developing priorities.

Twenty-one (21) recommendations received a majority support vote from the ACI membership to move that recommendation forward. Upon completion of all reports presenting recommendations, ACI members were asked to rank their top ten recommendations from this list of twenty-one that were approved. Scores were tallied to produce an overall score for each recommendation, thus allowing the rank ordering reflected on the ranking documents. This is the identical process that has been used in past years' ranking of recommendations.

We note the following themes that recur across recommendations and subject areas for this year:

- Implementation of the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS) has been highlighted as both the highest ranked of all recommendations this year, as well as universally supported among the committees. ACI believes implementation of this quality support has the potential to reach all APS students through consistently applied, proven research-based strategies and interventions.
- ACI has prioritized the imperative of improving system-wide communications that better inform all APS families with regard to instructional programs, counseling opportunities and operational initiatives. Specifically, the need for development of district wide guides, clarified policy statements, status reports and more broadly distributed information on all of APS programs, has been a noted recurring recommendation.

- Consistent with previous years, ACI continues to support instructional programs that are equitable across schools, consistent in implementation and, where possible, inquiry-based and cross-disciplinary.
- ACI remains keenly interested in improving access to and reporting of comprehensive and detailed student data. This interest is driven by the desire to gain a deeper understanding of student outcomes in order to prepare concrete and targeted recommendations that are responsive to student needs and in line with the strategic plan. ACI recognizes and appreciates APS' continued investment in this area through the implementation of Synergy and will continue to work closely with staff to fully realize the new capabilities.
- ACI continues to strongly support teacher professional development including ensuring goals that align with system-wide instructional priorities

ACI continued to develop guidelines for focused discussion during our meetings. A result of previous years commitment to this goal has been increasing collaboration and joint recommendations between and among advisory committees, increasing committee recruitment, cooperating in the request for and use of data as part of committee work and other enhancements to the ACI structure and schedule. This year the ACI reset the recommending calendar to an October through January schedule with the goal of providing the School Board the committee recommendations by the end of January closer to the annual budget cycle. This improved alignment was endorsed by the ACI, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and, informally by members of the School Board. The ACI recognized that this calendar transition added additional pressure on this year's recommending committees to prepare and present their work in a shortened time frame. All the committees performed well and addressed the challenges admirably.

We welcome the opportunity to review with you the recommendations of this year's seven recommending committees during the Board work session on Thursday, January 30, 2014.

Thank you for your support for and consideration of ACI's work.

Attachments:

2013-2014 Priority Ranking

2012-2013 Priority Ranking