

Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction

April 10, 2025

Draft Minutes

7:02 Welcome, Vanessa Olson, Chair Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction

Bylaws were adopted

March Minutes were approved.

Presentation/Q&A- Dr. LaTanya McDade, Superintendent PWCS

A brief overview of Prince William County Schools.

- We are seeing a dip in enrollment. The cohorts that are leaving are larger than the cohorts that are coming in. For example, birth rates are dropping.
- We continue to be the most diverse county in Virginia and the 10th most diverse county in the nation.
- Even as we see a dip in enrollment, our numbers are increasing for those students who have additional needs such as English Language Learners (ELLs).
- Last year we had a 94.3% graduation rate
- We are seeing a drop in chronic absenteeism.
- We are outpacing the state in most categories for the SOLs, for science we are equal to the state.
- We have reached our CTE goals- 19,186 total credentials have been earned.
- We have 1.89 Billion operating budget
 - Decreasing student to teacher ratio for ELLs (state mandated)
 - Increasing Special Education Teachers
 - Increasing the number of Behavioral Specialists
 - Increasing the number of Elementary Math Coaches
 - Increasing instructional coaches
 - Adding a Dean of Students at the Middle and High School level to address behaviors. We are also working to norm procedures across all schools so that the code of behavior is applied consistently.
 - Adding elementary safety officers
 - VCU Residency program
 - Adding social workers
 - Adding a Transportation Liaison

- Increasing the number of school bus attendants.
 - Increasing funding for the PWCS student teacher program
 - Large investment in HVAC systems.
- If there is additional funding from the state we will work towards reducing the student counselor ratio, supporting elementary science labs, vape detectors in the middle schools.
- We are working on a contingency plan if there is a change to federal funding. We are expecting 48 million in federal funding. It primarily covers Head Start and the food support.
- We are working on the development of the next Strategic Plan-
 - Keep the 4 key commitments, the goals will change
- Hot topics-
 - Behavior- We are fully aware of the challenges with behavior. We are working on training with administrators on aligning responses to behaviors. We are auditing school on behavior to see if there is alignment. We are adding the dean of students to assist with consistency. We are seeing an uptick in race related infractions. We are putting in specific language on how to handle these situations. We are also working on training for students.
- Q&A
 - Was a question about changes to grading policy
 - This will be presented at the April 23rd School Board Meeting
 - Question about High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM)- Who determines what meets the definition of HQIM and where to teachers find these.
 - The state determines the HQIM. The adoption of new resources is coming. We can not move ahead of the state. We have these resources for Language Arts. We should have resources for Math next year and the state is working on adopting resources for Social Studies.
 - In addition to Federal Changes to funding there are changes to DEI practices coming from the federal government. Where are we in relation to these changes?
 - What we do in relation to DEI is based on federal mandates (Ex Titles 4, 6, and 9). We have not changed our practices. To say we are doing away with DEI would mean we are not in compliance with the law. There are questions about this certification. This certification states that we are following federal law and that is what we are doing. We are the most diverse county in our state. We can not say we are not addressing diversity in our population. EVERY FAMILY SHOULD FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG.

- Is there a plan for rezoning.
 - The school board is responsible for overseeing rezoning. We recently adopted new policy that addresses rezoning. It may be time to have this conversation to address balancing numbers in schools across the division.
- It was mentioned that central office is doing audits of schools on behavior. What about schools that are not filling out forms.
 - There is a report that we can pull that shows us information about the number of discipline infractions a school reports. Data is mandatory. We can not address what is going on if we don't collect data.
- Have you looked at the number of transfers that are going into a school as an impact on numbers, specifically at the elementary and middle school level.
 - There is a capping program if needed.
- Why not a dean of students at the elementary level?
 - We did not have the data to justify the investment at this time. We need data to justify the need
- What are we doing to match the diversity of staff to the diversity of the student population?
 - The workforce nationally is predominantly white and female. That is the population that we are pulling from.
 - We are hiring international teachers through the Participate program to help increase diversity. We have seen an increase the diversity of our staff from 28% to 34%
- Question about holding teachers accountable and disciplining them as appropriate even with the teacher shortage.
 - We do discipline teachers and dismiss teachers ands necessary. We have a whole legal process that we follow if they violate procedures.

Work Session- Annual Report

Group discussion was held amongst council members and potential topics were identified. Members voted on the topics to be included in the report.

SACI 2025 Report Topics

- I. Commendations
 - a. Emphasis of parents as partners/ expectation of all schools having a school advisory council and representation on SACI

- b. Emphasis on Student safety and emotional wellness
 - c. The strategic plan and data driven decisions
 - d. Specialty programs
 - e. Providing students with specific, individualized support
 - f. All students having the opportunity to take national exams such as the SAT and ACT
 - g. Trade programs being integrated and not stigmatized
 - h. Summer discovery program
 - i. Gifted program
 - j. Transparency of the Capital Improvement Plan and the emphasis on HVAC systems
 - k. Dual enrollment
- II. Advisory councils
 - a. Additional training for schools and for parents
 - b. Continued focus as a priority to keep momentum and increase participation.
- III. Curriculum Updates (Commitment 1)
 - a. Communication with parents on the curriculum and providing families with information on tests performance.
 - i. Including instructional practices such as 7 steps and 5E model.
 - b. Training and support for teachers with the new curriculum
 - i. Training on curriculum and the use of the new High Quality Instructional Material
 - ii. Time for teachers to plan and prepare high quality lessons on this new material.
 - c. Grading policies/practice
 - d. How are students who are not classified as Gifted, or Special Education continually challenged. Are “average” students taught at their levels?
- IV. Mental health (Commitment 2)
 - a. Continued concerns about behaviors and the impact on other students in the classroom
 - b. Clarification of the mental health/SEL instructional curriculum
- V. Family Engagement (Commitment 3)
 - a. Communication- Continued efforts to maintain an information repository that describes various digital platforms and tools accessible to students and parents, and also provides novice-level tips and videos for parents. This could be a landing page for parents – A parent university—that includes information on curriculum, who to contact if needed. All in one place.
- VI. Teacher support- (Commitment 2)

- a. Supports for teachers
 - i. Classroom management
 - ii. Participate teachers
 - iii. Time for teachers to plan, perhaps a rotating or regular planning day for pd and planning
 - iv. Planning opportunities not requiring them to miss class
 - v. Supports for teachers with behaviors, especially for special educational students.
- VII. Budget and CIP- Commitment 4)
 - a. Clarification of continued impact of federal funding changes
 - b. What is being done to mitigate the needs of unbalanced enrollment at schools
 - c. clarification of the per pupil funding model, especially for economically disadvantaged, Ells, gifted, special education.
- VIII. Additional Topics
 - a. Better understanding of the family life curriculum
 - b. Dual enrollment
 - c. Impacts of technology on instruction-
 - d. Supports for special populations of students
 - e. Grading policy
 - f. Clarification of the Gifted Program Curriculum.

The Report writing committee will meet April 22 at 6:30 on Zoom.

Next month we will adopt the annual report and hold elections for officers.

9:00 Meet Adjourned.