

Joint Committee to Study the Future of Public Elementary and Secondary Education in the Commonwealth

Subcommittee #2: School Leadership and Student Outcomes

Summary of 6/15/17 meeting

Quorum Present: Senator Favola (chairwoman), Delegate Hester, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Smith, Ms. Neale (on behalf of Mr. Barrack, VASSP).

Summary:

The School Leadership and Student Outcomes subcommittee held its first meeting of the 2017 interim on Thursday June 15, 2017 at 10:00am in House Room 1 in the Capitol. The Committee took up three agenda items:

1. Presentation: Carlin Springs Elementary School:

Corina Coronel (principal), Meghan Neary (teacher), and Carol Sabatino (community schools coordinator) presented to the subcommittee an overview of the unique programs, services, and approach to education at Carlin Springs Elementary School in Arlington, a school with a high Hispanic (67%) and free and reduced price lunch eligibility (79%) student population. The three presenters first discussed Carlin Springs' various identities: as a neighborhood school (most students in the school reside in one particular apartment complex in the area), a 'high flying' school (based on its track record of closing achievement gaps), a professional learning community (based on the practices and commitments of school leaders and personnel, such as dedicating time every school day for teachers to meet and plan together), and a community school (Carlin Springs serves as a hub for the provision of a wide variety of services for students and their families and has employed a full-time community school coordinator since 2005, funded until recently with federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant funds. It is the only independent community school in the state of Virginia). The presenters then discussed the best practices in the Carlin Springs school community that have led to high and generally improving student outcomes on state standardized tests across student subgroups:

A. Integrated student supports: opportunities for personalized learning, a school climate of safety and trust, and health and mental health supports for students and their families such as a monthly family market, family case management, and direct mental health treatment.

B. Expanded learning time and opportunities: 68% participation (84% in grades 3, 4, and 5) in after-school and summer enrichment programs that compliment and build on academic activities and support English language development. Examples include a gardening club and a Real Madrid program that combines soccer and mentoring.

C. Active family and community engagement: Triannual academic parent-teacher team meetings, opportunities to interact with and learn from the principal over coffee, and 'participa en mi educacion,' a six week leadership and skill building program for immigrant parents that includes over 12 hours of total training.

D. Collaborative leadership and practices: Decision making is shared. Responsibility for successes and failures is shared.

The presenters attribute success to date to unity in belief in the school's mission. They concluded by noting that moving forward, teachers and school leaders would like to focus on implementing teacher preparation leadership programs that are more aligned with the unique features of Carlin Springs and that involve more time in the classroom.

2. Discussion: SB 1500 (2017):

Several audience members testified in support of Senate Bill 1500 (Favola), a bill that would have established the School Health Advisory Board in the executive branch to advise the General Assembly on pending legislation concerning health policy that affects elementary and secondary schools:

Lilla Wise, Arlington County Schools: It is very difficult for the General Assembly to tackle very emotional health-related issues during its short general session. It would be beneficial for this board to be established to take an objective look at such issues to determine whether it is feasible to place these burdens on schools.

Becky Bowers-Lanier, Virginia Association of School Nurses: The knowledge that it takes for school nurses to perform a wide variety of tasks is immense. Teachers don't need to be saddled with such things. Trained professionals are necessary. Bills relating to school health policy shouldn't be decided on the fly. There needs to be a forum (potentially modeled after the Joint Commission on Health Care or the Commission on Youth) to vet these bills in an objective way.

Kathy Burcher, Virginia Education Association: It is inappropriate to use instructional staff to take care of serious medical situations. The Commonwealth needs a thoughtful and strategic approach to school health legislation and the VEA supports the establishment of the School Health Advisory Board.

Bev Lammay, Henrico County Public Schools (written comments): Noting that school personnel are already dealing with the full spectrum of student medical needs, HCPS supports a thorough study of health and medical mandates that have been placed on public schools in recent years, with serious consideration of funding for full-time licensed medical professionals in each school.

Jo Ann Burkholder, Director of the Office of Student Services, Department of Education: School health issues are often considered by the General Assembly in isolation. The School Health Advisory Board could take a holistic look at these issues. This would allow the Department of Education to be strategic in its approach to school health policy.

Tracy White, School Health Nurse Specialist, Department of Education: Students have so many health needs that interact with other needs, and efforts to address such needs often become

siloes. The School Health Advisory Board would be a wonderful opportunity for collaboration and for receiving information from experts in the field. The School Health Advisory Board would help the General Assembly make informed decisions and mitigate unintended consequences.

Mike Asip, President, Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education:
Discerning the proper provision of services will ultimately help teachers to teach.

David Bailey, Virginia School Board Association: VSBA supports the bill. Mr. Bailey also noted that the Virginia School Counselor Association would applaud this effort as well.

Mark Flynn, Norfolk Public Schools: NPS supports the bill and is currently working on a 25 page set of student health policies.

Subcommittee members agreed to consider amendments to the bill in advance of the next meeting, including an amendment that would require guidelines for appropriate treatment practices in schools.

3. Discussion of September 14 meeting priorities and work plan:

Subcommittee members agreed to place three items on the agenda for the 9-14 meeting:

1. Discussion of high quality professional development and mentorship.
2. Discussion of teacher shortages that includes the perspective of teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth.
3. Continued discussion of SB 1500.