ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Work Session on Educational Technology – APS Device Working Group Recommendations Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2026

The recordings of School Board meetings are posted on the APS Website following the meetings. Regular meetings are also broadcast on Comcast Cable Channel 70 and Verizon FIOS Channel 41.

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 9:04 a.m. at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:
Bethany Zecher Sutton, Chair
Miranda Turner, Vice-Chair
Monique Bryant, Member
Kathleen Clark, Member
Zuraya Tapia-Hadley, Member (Participated virtually using Microsoft Teams due to personal reasons from Arlington, Virginia)
Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk of the School Board

Also present were:
Dr. Durán, Superintendent
Catherine Ashby, Assistant Superintendent of School & Community Relations
Dr. Julie Crawford, Chief of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Student Support
Kimberley Graves, Chief of School Support
Dr. Gerald Mann Jr., Chief Academic Officer
Christine Smith, Legal Counsel
Brian Stockton, Chief of Staff
Andy Hawkins, Business Officer
Sarah Putnam, Executive Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Jacqueline Firster, Supervisory of Digital Learning

Introduction/Presentation

Dr. Durán thanked staff and the Devices Working Group for their work. Noting that since the COVID-19 pandemic, technology use increased significantly, he emphasized the need to restore a better balance by ensuring devices are used intentionally to support instruction. He explained that the recommendations would help guide Arlington Public Schools (APS) toward a more purposeful approach to technology use.

Dr. Mann then provided an overview of the proposed two-year implementation plan, including the timeline, budget, key focus areas, and overall recommendations for moving the work forward. Ms. Firster discussed the instructional rationale for the recommendations, observing a shift toward more passive technology use in classrooms. She explained the need to pause and realign technology use with instructional goals, academic outcomes and findings from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). In addition, she summarized the research supporting learning-centered technology practices and instructional guidelines.

Ms. Putnam concluded by reviewing the Device Working Group's process, which was guided by research, stakeholder feedback, and data-informed decision-making. She shared input from parents, principals, teachers, and other stakeholders, highlighting common themes such as clear expectations, flexibility for educators, and consideration of equity and developmental differences. She also summarized the working group's recommendations, including broad support for consistent guardrails across all grade levels, no consensus on device models for grades K–2, conditional support for grades 3–5 based on instructional purpose, and stronger alignment for grades 6–12 with clear expectations for device use and supervision.

School Board Discussion

The School Board thanked staff and the Devices Working Group for the comprehensive presentation and recognized the significant work that went into developing the recommendations. Board members discussed the role of technology in supporting teaching and learning, including the educational benefits of digital devices, opportunities for differentiated instruction, and the importance of intentional, age-appropriate technology use. The discussion also explored the balance between digital learning and traditional instructional methods, including handwriting, drafting, problem-solving, and research, particularly in the elementary grades.

Additional discussion focused on the use of technology to provide immediate classroom feedback, support STEM instruction, promote digital citizenship, and enhance data collection for instructional planning and IEP implementation. Board members also discussed limiting screen use in grades K–2, content filtering, potential behavioral impacts associated with reduced device use, support for educators during implementation, curriculum adjustments across grade levels, and considerations for selecting and evaluating pilot schools. The Board requested that the presentation be updated to include additional information in the appendix, including the membership of the Devices Working Group, meeting schedule, and topics discussed throughout the process.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

ATTEST:

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Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk
Arlington School Board

Bethany Zecher Sutton, Chair
Arlington School Board