

The Educational Specifications/School of the Future Subcommittee of the Long Range Educational Facilities Work Group invited the community's feedback on ***DRAFT ACPS Elementary School Educational Specifications*** as well as ***DRAFT ACPS Middle School Educational Specifications*** developed during the Subcommittee's work since its inception in 2012. Comments were received from June 5 – 23, 2014, and will inform the final versions of the documents.

Via Comment Board

Margaret Wohler, June 8, 2014

I'm a commissioner on the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. Please be aware that Alexandria has few mid-size performing arts spaces available for reasonable rental to our city's arts community. Arts groups must frequently rent space outside of the city; let's keep this income source here. If school auditoriums could have public entrance access, that wouldn't compromise school-wide security and just allow passage for the audience to the auditorium, rentals could remain more reasonable for arts groups. These spaces are currently heated, air-conditioned, cleaned...and frequently empty. Please consider performing arts rentals when designing these publicly funded spaces; thanks. Separate issue: as an avid cyclist, too, please consider adequate bike parking and safe bike lane access to school entrances; thanks!

Amy Thomas, June 8, 2014

As a community member who attended a number of the working group's meetings over the last year, I'd like to say that at first I was skeptical that the wide range of opinions and ideas and needs of our students could be drafted into a document that made sense. At one meeting, I learned that nearly three dozen different groups were interviewed about the use of space in our elementary and middle schools. The collective ideas of stakeholders now reads like a catalog from which future changes can be prioritized and RFPs can be drafted for construction, goods and services (this kind of document already exists for the high school and was used in the TC renovation).

I see that the range of information covers the most-requested practices of everything from entrance design to placement of public spaces. This document will be an easy-to-use and easy-to-adapt framework as schools plan future changes.

My questions and concerns were addressed. Thank you.

Jimm Roberts, June 6, 2014

Missing from the well-organized, eloquently worded draft ACPS Middle School document is persuasive data affirming the need for the avant garde interior renovations of middle schools. Although I did not plow through all 116 pages, what I did read led me to believe ACPS is on the cusp of another learning fad.

But this one is probably going to cost, if not as much as the palaces built for our HS and latest Middle School (where students at neither have yet to set the educational world afire), then enough cost to take your breath away.

Some of the energy in the document is so captivating that I was left wondering why send students to a school in the first place. If they have a stay-at-home parent, then let students stay home to take their lessons from a computer, or a big screen TV connected to one. Or craft a family smartphone app to teach them. Or use social media. Or all three.

Surely the merits to these ways of educating youngsters will far surpass their demerits, and be vastly less costly the beleaguered taxpayers too.

Via email

Julie Rocchio, 6/20/14

I am concerned that the health section as drafted reflects modifications from the PreK-8 EdSpecs which are not in the best interest of ACPS. I am also confused why such changes were made given that I was assured the ES/MS EdSpecs would expand off, not redo, the recently completed PreK-8 EdSpecs.

I hope the current EdSpecs Subcommittee will review the following. My feedback is based on my experience on the PreK-8 Educational Specifications Work Group and the School Health Advisory Board.

- 1) I understood that the PreK-8 EdSpecs and subsequent Jefferson-Houston project called for approximately 700 square feet for a Nurse's Clinic to provide basic school nursing services by ACPS through current practices. The draft ES EdSpecs call for approximately 475 square feet.
- 2) The PreK-8 EdSpecs allow the option of a site-specific School Based Health Center. The draft ES EdSpecs describe the option of "partnership operated wellness centers... operated through community partnerships".

As discussed in the PreK-8 EdSpecs process, School Based Health Centers are a defined legal entity eligible for specific federal grant funding. While SBHCs partner with community providers, I understood going through the SBHC model allows ACPS to limit its patient population to students and families and allows ACPS to maintain control over decisions relating to health center operations.

The type of community partnership described in the new ES EdSpecs can indicate a subcontractor relationship under ACPS authority which can be a reasonable model for ACPS, though not the model chosen by the PreK-8 EdSpecs team. Further, ACPS should be very clear about its intent since community partnerships can mean a separate legal entity located within a school building. Community clinics are likely partners and are typically funded through a different federal grant stream which requires independent community boards making health center operation decisions. If community partners are federally funded and operate within a school building as a separate entity, there is a legal requirement that all persons be served, even those with no connection to ACPS.

I believe the PreK-8 EdSpecs Committee, in close coordination with SHAB and Student Services and with extensive community representation, specifically and thoughtfully chose the SBHC model so that ACPS would maintain authority over an entity within its building and could limit the patient population to those within the ACPS community. I believe SBHCs were also chosen because of improved chances of accessing federal grant funding.