



January 21, 2022

Dear Dr. Durán and School Board members,

On behalf of Arlington Parents for Education, please find the text of my remarks last night and a follow up request for clarification on Test to Stay. Thank you for your consideration.

My youngest daughter is a full time APS preschool student. She has missed three weeks of school due to quarantine this school year and a Test to Stay (TTS) protocol, which APE has been advocating for this since the beginning of the school year, could keep her in school for more days. Thank you to APS for preparing to implement this protocol. However, please clarify that the protocol will be available to **all** close contacts (but **not** to students who test positive), regardless of vaccination status (as vaccinated students don't have to quarantine at all). Also, APS Ready indicated on Twitter that APS is not actually ready to implement TTS because, despite having the tests, because we do not have a nurse to administer it. I hope all of our County leadership can assist however necessary to treat this with the urgency it deserves because this protocol means more days in school for kids. The sooner we start, the better.

Another thing APE has been asking for is for a systematic approach to addressing learning loss. APS implemented Beginning of Year assessments but while parents have received their children's individual results, I haven't seen district-wide assessment data presented or discussed. This data is needed in order to define the magnitude of learning loss our students are facing and to inform the resources needed to address it. I also recall Ms. Diaz-Torres asking for a plan to address the missed instructional days for VLP students due to the rollout at the beginning of the year. And, I understand that students with disabilities are owed potentially thousands of recovery and compensatory hours due to the past 22 months.

The budget presentation on the \$62M in carryover funds shows more than \$20M allocated in various ways to compensation, and almost \$8M allocated to resource purchases. These things are needed. However, in order to make informed decisions about use of the rest of those funds, we have to have data on the magnitude of our students' needs.

In November, APS applied for \$15M in state funding to address learning loss. This implicitly acknowledges that we know we need more resources in this area. It is unlikely, though, that APS will be awarded the full amount, given the total pot available and the 132 other school divisions in Virginia. On behalf of APE, we urge APS to reallocate closeout funds to address urgent learning recovery needs as well. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Miranda Turner