



March 15, 2023

Dear County Board Chair Christian Dorsey, Vice Chair Libby Garvey, and Members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Takis Karantonis,

Ahead of the County Board Work Session FY24 Budget Meeting on DPR and Libraries this Thursday, [Arlington Parents for Education](#) urges increased attention and resources to better serve Arlington's youth who are experiencing many challenges, including drug use, mental health, and academic challenges [at both the secondary and elementary](#) levels. Experts at recent community forums have spoken of the need for activities to help both drug use and mental health issues. Specifically, during a forum convened by CCPTA and the PTAs from W-L, WHS, and YHS on [Monday](#), many speakers noted the benefits of programming for teenagers and students after school hours and on the days off of school. Given that secondary school lets out as early as 2:30pm, students have numerous unfilled hours of the day, in addition to the many days off from school and summer break. We believe the County is well-positioned to meet this need and provide programming to this critical segment of Arlington's population.

We encourage you to ask DPR:

- How is DPR planning to increase recreational programming for teenagers during out-of-school time? How will you make it financially accessible?
- What plans does DPR have for programming in South Arlington, particularly at the new John Robinson Jr. Town Square?
- How is DPR working within the County to utilize Community Centers for youth programming during the out-of-school time?
- How is DPR advertising its programming to low-income and non-native English speakers? What are the rates of participation across demographics? Are the discounted fees sufficiently affordable? Are there non-monetary barriers to participation that DPR can address?
- How is DPR engaging with teens to recruit them as camp and recreational staff?

We encourage you to ask the Libraries:

- How is the Library system increasing programming for students (teens and children) for out-of-school hours and coordinating programming with APS's days off of school?
- How is the Library advertising its offerings to youth, including in Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, and Mongolian?
- Has the Library considered a "reading buddy" program to help address students struggling with literacy in Arlington?

Thank you for your time and attention to these critical issues impacting our community.



Sincerely,

APE Board
Alison Babb
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