



September 16, 2020

Arlington School Board
2110 Washington Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear Chair O'Grady,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce appreciates Arlington Public Schools' hard work to serve our community, as shifting from in-person to distance learning has challenged both schools and families. Among the hardships is that many families rely on the time that children are in school as a form of child care. APS is offering child care services for its employees to address this challenge within its workforce. The Chamber supports this decision and encourages APS to develop a plan to expand the child care offering that it is currently providing to its employees to others in the community, as conditions permit.

We know that establishing classes is not as simple as assigning as many students as can fit to a classroom. Reconfiguring school spaces for social distance and accounting for continuity with the term already in progress are just some of the challenges for returning students to in-person classes. However, being able to accommodate more students safely in its buildings before being able to resume in-personal classes may provide APS with a unique way to support the community through expanded child care.

An expanded child care plan can phase expansions based on families' child care needs, for example, prioritizing children of healthcare workers and children of parents whose jobs do not allow them to telework. This phasing would be similar in concept to APS' plans for phasing the return to in-person instruction. But, whereas those plans are, rightly, based on academic need, phasing plans for child care should be based on child care need. The targeted groups for each plan may overlap some, but will likely not be identical. It is also possible that some aspects of each plan could run concurrently.

We appreciate that APS may not be able to expand its child care offering at the current time, but we nonetheless encourage APS to set plans now so that it is ready to do so without delay when it is able. We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington School Board Vice Chair Dr. Barbara Kanninen and members Reid Goldstein, Tannia Talento, and Nancy Van Doren; APS Superintendent Dr. Francisco Durán; Arlington County Board; Arlington County Manager