

Hi Liz,

Thank you for setting up your formative assessment materials in such a way that it is easy to provide feedback and to more thoughtfully assess, but more importantly understand, the important work that is happening in Arlington. Below is my feedback, by goal, on the evidence that you shared with us. Please let me know if you have any questions.

For Goal #1, I am particularly impressed by the Leader Logs that are put together each month. I know that one of the things that you heard in your entry process (and something I hear all the time from families) is that at the elementary level there are inconsistencies across schools. While individual school culture is very important and is driven by the administration, teaching staff and families, it is also critically important that students across Arlington have experiences that are comparable so that when they come together at the Gibbs they have a common language and are used to common expectations. It is a tricky balance to empower leadership teams while also holding them accountable to common expectations (at some point we may need to have a reckoning over all of these different “approaches”). We have work to do on that in Arlington. I appreciate your Leader Logs because they set a tone for what administrators and leaders are expected to know about the district as a whole. I recognize that this work is in its nascent stages but reading between the lines (literally) it sounds like there is a high level of engagement from our staff. I think it will be helpful to include for them some information on how decisions are made in town; sometimes I am surprised by what people don’t know and it is important to understand, to some extent, how the town works especially where it impacts kids and schools. It seems as though what happens at one school eventually happens at another (playgrounds, debt exclusions, MSBA projects, enrollment growth, etc). The Leader Feedback report is helpful and data-driven. Modeling the bravery we hope to see from our staff (by reporting out on interim in progress outcomes) is powerful.

I appreciate the inclusion of the climate surveys in this area and think they are helpful and useful. I so wish we had pre-COVID data and the lack there of makes it hard for me to engage with the results fully. I know that will change as we continue to survey in an environment that isn’t so driven by COVID. Having teachers complete the survey as part of a staff meeting was a great idea to get more feedback. I am still mulling over my overall feedback on the budgeting process. However, my feedback to you is that you told us what you were going to do, you did it, and then you told us what you did. I can’t ask for any more than that. The one thing I need to better understand is why we dropped some items out of the budget (why did things end up on the cutting room floor so to speak) - that is usually something we go over in subcommittee and we didn’t do it this year. It will be good to iterate on this process. I think there is growth for the subcommittee here as well to help articulate what our involvement looks like.

For Goal #2, this is one of the main reasons we hired you and I am so pleased with the progress on this goal. The interesting conundrum ahead, in my mind, is how to shift some of this engagement to being in person while maintaining the level of engagement we have received remotely during the pandemic. It’s going to be tough. The social media work is super. I do worry about how much of this you are doing yourself. I also think that the Superintendency plays a

kind of complicated role in advance of any override and navigating that conversation with the community from your position will be challenging.

For Goal #3, it has just all been so impressive. Thank you for the absenteeism data. I would like to talk more about that at some point, maybe in subcommittee. There are real challenges around balancing between parents feeling as though they are partners with their schools and have agency over their lives and choices and a critical need for kids to be in school. I think this is a conversation the district will need to have with families and it will be an important part of our work around equity and access. It doesn't matter if we're staffed to enrollment if the kids who we desperately need to be in school are missing 18+ days.

For Goal #4, I am glad that the NSIP has been helpful. I've also been impressed with your collaboration with the Middlesex League Superintendents and I am confident that your work with them will continue to be helpful even after the NSIP process ends.

Jane Morgan