

***Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, January 14, 2016***

***6:30 PM***

***Draft***

*Arlington High School  
School Committee Room  
869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, MA*

*Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair, Jennifer Susse, Vice Chair, Jeff Thielman, Secretary, Cindy Starks, Mr. Pierce, and Bill Hayner*

*Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent of the Schools, Laura Chesson, Assistant Superintendent's Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Rob Spiegel, Human Resource Director, Alison Elmer, Special Education Director, Liz Higgins - 2nd VP of AEA - AEA Rep.*

*Absent: Kirsi Allison-Ampe, MD and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant*

*Open Meeting*

*Mr. Schlichtman opened the meeting at 6:35 PM and held a moment of silence for Christopher Landford and presented the description of Art in the room.*

*Public Participation*

*Jane Morgan - Stratton parent, Discussion of budget, Kindergarten parent perspective, Full time K aides are her biggest priority.*

*Juliet Moore - Arlington parent enrollment survey - enrollment issues in Middle School. Preliminary results shared, 768 respondents, just a snapshot of results. Preliminary, Stating case for East Arlington neighborhood middle school, Walkable middle school. Better accessibility. Discussion of benefits of neighborhood middle school.*

*Mara Vatz – agrees with Kindergarten aides should be a priority. Moved to Arlington primarily for public schools, nervous about Kindergarten - big classes, and noted it is very important to have more adults in room in Kindergarten.*

*Review and Approval of AHS Program of Studies for 2016-2017 school year.*

*(Matthew Janger and Bill McCarthy)*

- *Distributed 2 page update to Program of Studies and program of studies*
- *Policy update - changing to 3 week change period from Honors to Curriculum A or Curriculum A to Honors*
- *A number of classes are 2.5 credit classes (half year). Try to give more flexibility and choices to students.*
- *Courses removed - did not have high levels of interest or have been consolidated.*

*After Mr. Hayner asked how the changes will be published, it was noted that it would be by the following:*

- *In Program*
- *Guidance newsletter*
- *Change to handbook*
- *E-mails*

*Mr. Thielman said the CIAA subcommittee endorsed the Program of Studies and therefore the following motion was made:*

***Mr. Thielman, motioned to approve the Program of Studies for AHS, 2016-2017, seconded by Mr. Pierce.***

***Voted: 6-0 in favor. (unanimous vote)***

*Dr. Bodie - ask Dr. Janger to discuss changes in HS this year*

- *Change from 7 day rotation to 5 day schedule. Created X-block. Tuesday & Thursday. Thursday Advisory - develops relationships, minimize disruptions, create positive culture and climate. Working with consultant. Professional Development opportunities. Providing tools for teachers.*
- *More internship's this year. Relatively structured curriculum opportunity. Placements range to wide range of opportunities. May consider expanding.*
- *Technology increases. Last year - new Macbooks for teachers. This year - laptop carts, chromebook carts, small supplies of chromebooks throughout the school. Classrooms are working on paperless and interactive work.*
- *Getting to point of having enough devices and will be able to allow kids to bring own devices. Most kids have smart phones. Can be great instructional devices.*

*Web site design will be postponed.*

*Review Draft calendar for 2016-2017 School Year*

- *Dr. Bodie - 1st read tonight, Vote next meeting.*
- *First day of school - Tuesday after Labor Day. Day 185 will be June 27. Day 180 will be June 20.*
- *Interest in creating calendars for future years this spring.*

*The members asked when will we get ahead of this and plan calendars for future years.*

*Dr. Bodie said structural change and would like to give people more than a year's notice*

*Mr. Hayner noted we should eliminate 3 days during the year (Jewish Holidays and Good Friday) We can't close school on every religious holiday, but treat everyone the same and respect everyone's practice and belief. Dr. Susse wants to survey parents to inform about future decisions and noted it would be wrong to make changes for next year. Need to give people opportunity to weigh in with preferences. Mr. Thielman said SC meeting dates should be in there.*

***Dr. Susse made a motion to change the dates of SC meetings, seconded by Mr. Hayner.***

***Mr. Thielman - amend motion to direct Policies and Procedures subcommittee to discuss this issue and report back by the first meeting in February.***

***Voted: 6-0 in favor***

*The committee members said common for AHS and OMS events to happen on Thursday and it would be easier for SC to change calendar rather than having AHS or OMS to change calendar. Mr. Schlichtman - subcommittee should look at meeting date and meeting time. Mr. Thielman - there was a lot of debate about this a few years ago. Ms. Starks - will vote against it, meetings run too late and too long. Mr. Hayner - later time - later meeting. Mr. Schlichtman - only time committee members can speak to each other is in open meeting, and allows members to speak. If we stay on Thursday, ask Principals not to schedule major events on Thursday. Dr. Bodie - Elementary early release dates will still be on Tuesday next year.*

***Discuss Foundation Review Budget with State Legislators: Sen. Donnelly, Rep. Rogers, Rep Garballey***

*Sen. Donnelly - want to hear from SC their questions on Foundation Budget and other budget issues. Between now and June - Governor will present his budget. Sen. Donnelly believes we have a revenue problem, not a spending problem. Line items have been cut. Looking forward to budget with revenues in it. Want to fund education system in the state. Companies make location decisions based on school districts. Want top quality schools. Support funding for Chap. 70 and foundation budget. Looking at \$431 million over 4 year cycle. Needs to be generated in the House.*

*Rep. Garballey - Huge issue for Arlington. Want a report that shows the gap - underinvestment in education. Foundation budget review commission report shows underinvestment in education. Raise revenue to implement recommendations. Implementation of goals will take 3-4 years. Recommendation that initial focus within commission's recommendations around Special Ed. for out of district and in-district. Lots of other issues we need to look at. Chapter 70 was implemented over 7 year period in the 1990's. Hope is that we can get serious about revenue projections and economic growth. Will consider other recommendations from School Committee.*

*Rep. Rogers - echo what his colleagues said. Sound methodology in report. Done professionally. Health care costs are a big driver. 140% higher. 40% of state budget goes to health care. How do we solve explosion in cost. Spec. Ed. Costs. English Language Learners also driving costs. Implementation will happen over time. \$430 million - a lot of money - same amount as state spends on adult mental health. More than twice as much as environment & recreation. Implementation will not happen quickly. Speaker and governor said no new taxes. Rep. Rogers thinks we need to raise income tax revenues.*

*Rep Garballey - Tax votes should be sufficient to cover what they are voting for and progressive (not regressive). Battle priorities. Special Ed. & Early Ed. try to balance competing priorities.*

*Sen. Donnelly - will not support any more unfunded mandates. Money must come with it. Will not support increasing charter schools and taking money out of public schools. Taking more money out is not productive. Debate Legislature will be having.*

*Mr. Schlichtman - Town Manager budget. 10% differential of per pupil - give schools any extra Ch. 70 money that comes in over projections. If this becomes budget, Ch. 70 money becomes more relevant.*

*Mr. Hayner - strongly consider legislation controlling DESE. They are out of control. Unfunded mandates come out of DESE. Ask permission after the fact.*

- *Rep. Garballey - bill to stop unfunded mandates. No more until complete report is done. Discussion of fingerprint mandate.*
- *Sen. Donnelly - admin agencies are under the governor. Regulations are implemented by the agencies.*

*Mr. Pierce - we are lucky to have a delegation that stands behind us. Pre-K. Parents here have to fund an extra year of Pre-K. No Pre-K offered here.*

*Ms. Starks - 2016 ballot - marijuana legalization. Money on taxes in Colorado. Want to understand what we can do with the money. If it passes, that money will come in sooner. Where might money be earmarked.*

- *Sen Donnelly - on Senate committee to discuss. Will look at all aspects, including where money will go. Look at Colorado revenue.*

*Mr. Thielman - enrollment increases in Arlington. In a dialogue with Town Leaders. Legislators role in responding to enrollment increases is to get Chapter 70 money increased and get to us sooner rather than later.*

- *Sen. Donnelly - sees enrollment growth in all towns he represents.*
- *Rep. Garballey - all on the same page. Will continue to advocate.*
- *Rep. Rogers - each member meets 1:1 with chair of Ways & Means. Each member can select three priorities. Always Chapter 70 education funding. Fighting for more money for schools. Education is future. Always priority.*

*Dr. Susse - 1993 Ed. Reform. Fairly conservative numbers then. Now we know old numbers are wrong. What should SC members and community members push for? Push for percentages of amount. Wonder if there is any way to set aside revenue increases in Chapter 70.*

- *Sen. Donnelly - year end closing. What you can do is letter Governor know and Speaker - raise revenues needed to fund Chapter 70. We need to let people know that we need to revenues.*

*Dr. Susse - what is timeline for ballot question to change constitution.*

- *Sen. Donnelly - have to do it in two successive questions. Would be on ballot in 2018 if it passes.*
- *Rep. Garballey - House budget debated and voted in April, Senate in May. Rep. Garballey will be advocating for the whole thing. What do we think the legislature's priorities should be? Will have to come back when revenue picture is clearer.*

*Dr. Susse - where would we put kids in Pre-K.*

*Mr. Schlichtman - Thank you for advocating for AHS to MSBA.*

- 2000-2001- Ch. 70 started to erode. Underestimated cost of providing education. Many years of erosion of Ch. 70 funding.
- Meeting in Arlington last Thursday. We want everything on the table. If Legislature is not making hard decisions, it gets pushed down to local level. Local authorities cannot raise revenues. Municipalities are more constrained in Massachusetts than any other state. We will stand behind legislators.
- PARCC and MCAS 2.0 - criticism on PARCC - Mass. lagged behind every other state on technology in schools. If state is making initiatives in electronic testing, state needs to fund it.
- Thank you for discussion on charter schools. Funding problems.
- Open invitation to come back.

#### Discussion of FY 17 School Committee Budget Priorities.

- Will still have 7% increases in Spec. Ed.
- 3.5% increase for remainder of plan years. Change for positive.
- The last three years, we've had enrollment growth factor of 25%. Will increase to 35%. Will be applied to pupils we have gained over last three years.
- Recognition that this is not what we wanted, but should Ch. 70 go up, we will get difference.
- Net increase \$973,524.
- We have been looking closely about what District needs and provided a rationale for every increase. That total was \$3,872,980.
- Ms. Johnson - we will be able to take \$1,529,278 - includes all revenue projections. Embedded in this includes
- Mr. Schlichtman - this is a first discussion. We will not vote.
- Mr. Hayner - with increased money
  - Ms. Johnson - we can afford \$1,529,278 of the \$3,872,980
- Mr. Pierce - question
  - Ms. Johnson - \$900,000 is total uptick.
- Ms. Starks - somewhere around being able to fund about 39% of requests. Concern - is there other money in revolving accounts to bolster this. Can we shrink requests?

Dr. Bodie - suggest we look closely at this over the next two weeks. Also want to hear SC priorities. Some things are essential - curriculum materials. Also have issue of enrollment growth. Don't know where all new teacher needs will be, except Thompson.

- Two modular classrooms at Thompson.
- Other increases - Ottoson - more kids in the building.
- Some positions at the high school.
- Close the achievement gap. In order to provide the kind of support needed requires interventions. This will be the lens we look at in making recommendations.

Dr. Chesson - once we take out money we know we have to spend on reserve positions, it is significantly less.

Mr. Thielman we will not be maintaining services. We need to staff to enrollment it's a legal mandate to close achievement gap, curriculum materials update. Not a question of priorities.

- Ms. Johnson - in order to do those three things, we will need significantly more money.
- Mr. Thielman - are there other options politically besides accepting this offer?
- Dr. Susse - shout out to Dr. Allison-Ampe. Got ball rolling. Hope there are ways to push for more.
- Dr. Bodie - conversation with reps was important. Chap. 70. Anything above projections comes to schools. Additional Ch. 70 money will support interventions.
- Mr. Hayner - Request committee members to develop list of concerns in setting priorities.

#### Monthly Financial reports

*Put off until later meeting*

#### Superintendent Report

*Dr. Bodie updated the committee on the School Enrollment task force is focused on immediate decisions for Thompson for next year. The discussion of Thompson options, included: Modularity, Busing to another school with space, Redistricting process that takes at least a year, which is off the table for next year, and Thompson/Hardy District the economies of scale will not work with an average of 23 per class upper and 22 lower would need an additional classroom. The committee has looked at every option. Recommendation of modularity will go to Town Meeting. Cost could be around \$400,000, this is an immediate issue. The Task Force Committee will also take up issue of Ottoson which is a big issue facing long range planning.*

*Mr. Thielman - 2 classes at Thomson. Left open the need for a permanent addition at Thompson, since want to come back on cost for architect to do a preliminary assessment of the Ottoson. Member of public said we still have not made a decision on Gibbs. Need to come back with a decision. Dr. Bodie said they would like a decision much earlier than June. (Lesley Ellis). Other tenants would also like to know. Dr. Susse inquired on who is funding furniture for new classrooms? Can we roll in all the costs with rental or purchase of modular? Dr. Chesson. Also a 1:1 building. Had not planned on that enrollment growth.*

*Dr. Susse would like to make a motion to form a committee on expanding buffer zones, the following motion was made:*

***Dr. Susse motioned to refer the expanding of buffer zones and question of boundary lines to the Community Relations Subcommittee, seconded by Ms. Starks.***

***Voted: 6-0 unanimous***

*Discussion - Mr. Thielman - members of enrollment task force want this to happen. Mr. Pierce- should be taken seriously. Disrupting a lot by doing this. Another tool but will not fix enrollment problems.*

*Caution committee. Mr. Hayner wanted to clarify that we are not setting up the committee to redistrict yet. Ms. Starks - lines between Thompson and Hardy - open to discussing those lines. Over 300 families that will be affected by these massive shifts. Dr. Susse - task force is interested in this. Public meeting - parents are more accepting of this than she thought. Parents understood that this is one way to address the changes to the Town. Mr. Thielman - conversations with parents who said they are open to it. Mr. Hayner - thanked members of school enrollment task force and said he is nervous to add money to Thompson. Ms. Johnson - Capital Committee authorized \$600,000 for Thompson modularity. There is an enormous demand for modular classrooms in area right now. Based on Stratton modular bids.*

*Dr. Bodie - number for modulars came from Belmont's experience noted it is a very hot market. All surrounding towns are looking for modular classrooms too. Ms. Starks - member of enrollment task force - appreciate advocacy of parents, asks them to continue their advocacy and help people in community to understand the issues.*

***Mr. Thielman motioned to endorse recommendation of School Enrollment Task Force to place two modular classrooms at Thompson, seconded by Ms. Starks.***

***Voted: 6-0 in favor unanimous***

*Dr. Bodie spoke about PARCC -. Two schools will do online test - Bishop and Ottoson.*

*Feb 24 Arlington Public Schools will hold a District-wide meeting for parents on common core and PARCC. The students will take test and see how our curriculum holds up. We've done a lot of work to align curriculum to standards. Dr. Bodie said to get the children familiar with the tools.*

*Mr. Hayner asked if there a way to compare PARCC with last year's MCAS. Dr. Chesson said there is a crosswalk DESE has. She will calculate growth scores and will see how subgroups do on targets.*

*Dr. Bodie announced the MLK Celebration – Monday, which we will celebrate 50 years of METCO in Arlington with our current METCO director Margaret Thomas and previous METCO director, Jean McGuire.*

#### *Consent agenda.*

***Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Consent Agenda: Warrant #16093 dated for 12/17/2015 and 12/17/2015 minutes and 12/10/2015 Regular School Committee minutes. Mr. Hayner requested to pull the 12/10/2015 minutes and seconded the motion to approve the Warrant and minutes dated 12/17/2015.***

***Vote: 6-0 in favor***

#### *Subcommittee Reports*

*Policies and Procedures, Mr. Pierce met on Jan. 11 and discussed the following: Professional Staff Contracts, Restraint and Background check.*

*Budget Report- Dr. Ampe absent*

*Facilities – Ms. Starks will hold a meeting on January 21 at 5:30 and will discuss Ottoson and updates on survey.*

*District Accountability, Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Mr. Thielman said the committee met today at 5:30 and agreed on evidence for Superintendent's evaluation. Mr. Thielman will create report for committee.*

*Community Relations- Ms. Susse spoke about the Community Meeting last week, thanks to Joe Curro, Stacy Smith, Dr. Bodie, Community Relations Committee, Ms. Starks, Linda Hanson, for all their work on the meeting. Dr. Susse is creating preliminary report. Will have to work on. Over 200 people discussing important issues. Variety of views within the room. Good that we were talking. Value hearing from community.*

*Executive Session Review Committee*

*Warrant Committee*

*School Enrollment Task force*

*Announcements*

*Mr. Pierce - Little Mermaid Junior - Belmont Town Hall*

*Mr. Hayner - EDCO SC roundtable. Open to anyone who can make it.*

*Mr. Schlichtman - discussion of person who fought hard to buy a condo in Arlington.*

*Adjournment*

***Mr. Thielman moved to adjourn at 9:00 PM, seconded by Ms. Stark.***

***Voted: 6-0***

*Recorded by Mr. Spiegel*

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Karen Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee/jt*