

***Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, December 10, 2015  
6:30 PM***

***Draft***

*Robbins Memorial Town Hall  
Selectmen's Chambers  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA*

*Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair, Jennifer Susse, Vice Chair, Jeff Thielman, Secretary, Cindy Starks, Mr. Pierce, Kirsi Allison-Ampe, MD., 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, Ms. Linda Hanson, AEA President, and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant*

*Mr. Hayner exited the meeting at 7:04 PM.*

*Ms. Starks exited the meeting for a few minutes and returned at 8:35PM.*

*Mr. Thielman exited the meeting for a few minutes and returned 8:37 PM.*

*Open Meeting*

*Dr. Bodie announced that the elevator should be ready before the next meeting.*

*Public Participation*

*Ms. Linda Hanson provided the committee members with the results on the teacher survey, PARCC vs MCAS. She also provided results from a survey from surrounding town and said she appreciates the School Committee members taking the time to hear about different views and how the teachers feel they are part of the conversation.*

*Ms. Rebecca Stein, parent of 9<sup>th</sup> grader and educator, does not support PARCC and read aloud the following statement:*

*Rebecca Steinitz*

*December 10, 2015*

*Arlington School Committee*

*I don't like to repeat myself, and you know my position: I think PARCC is a problematic test, for many reasons; I believe DESE is pushing districts to switch to PARCC in a blatant attempt to make the PARCCification of MCAS 2.0 inevitable; and, while I am as certain as many of you that the Department's intention is to create a PARCC in MCAS clothing, I'm not convinced they will succeed. Thus I am opposed to shifting to PARCC in 2016.*

*That said, I want to talk about what I'm hearing from you all, which is two main rationales for switching to PARCC: the hold harmless provision, and technology. And my question is: what do these rationales have to do with students and learning?*

*Accountability matters. I work at a school that has gone from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile over the last four years, and I cried when we went from Level 3 to Level 1. But Arlington is a different story. Our district goals for 2015-16 say nothing about PPI or SGP. Yes, we are a Level 2 district, but so are Newton, Brookline, and Lexington – as achievement in the Commonwealth rises, these designations have less and less to do with educational quality, and more to do with impossible metrics. Arlington's accountability problems are administrative and subgroup issues – which matter and continue to be admirably addressed, but do not threaten the district in any meaningful way.*

*Looking ahead, if Arlington students take PARCC, they will perform, relatively speaking, exactly as they perform on MCAS. That is, scores will decline with PARCC, but the PARCC standings will look just like the MCAS standings: teach-to-the-test charters at the top, then wealthy communities, on down to the poorest districts, and Arlington will stay more or less where it is, because, as we know, income is the number one correlation with standardized test results. As for individual student performance, released PARCC items can be used to gather data, and let's not forget that 2017 will also be held harmless – for whatever form of test MCAS 2.0 actually takes. In short, I'm not seeing the need to be held harmless in 2016, and I'm not seeing how being held harmless matters for authentic student learning.*

*As for technology, I'm not worried about how students will handle computerized tests. They are the new generation; they are nonplussed by computers; we're the ones who worry. Concerns about bandwidth and devices are more compelling, but still, these are issues for adults. Are we really going to give children a test they don't need to take to see if our technology works? As an educator, my mind boggles.*

*In short, I've heard little in official discussions or private conversations to convince me that taking PARCC will benefit Arlington's students, and I hope you will take this factor into consideration as you make your decision.*

### MCAS Accountability

*Dr. Chesson presented the MCAS Analysis 2015 report, Overall Accountability ratings and Cumulative PPI. She was happy to report that last year Ottoson Middle School was a Level 2 school and this year they are now a Level 1 school. The administration and School Committee members congratulated Mr. Ruggere and the staff. The elementary Level Two schools areas of needs were presented and Bishop, Hardy, Peirce, Thompson, and Stratton are focusing on assistance to high need students in 2015-2016, per Dr. Chesson. The Thompson has no ELA needs only math, and other assistance plans we are doing are the following: a district wide elementary curriculum council to share best practices and areas of concern, deepen coach model, and increase consistency.*

*The committee members discussed accountability numbers and stated that they don't like how every district in the state is compared even with those doing PARCC and MCAS, and members are not happy that the two metrics are not the same. The committee agreed to discuss which test they will administer at the next meeting and have the member's vote which they prefer for the spring of 2016.*

Vote to notify the Superintendent that we intend to enter negotiations on her contract

**Mr. Thielman moved to enter into negotiations, Per Article 2 of Kathleen Bodie's Contract, that the Arlington School Committee notifies the Superintendent, no later than December 31, 2015, the Committee shall notify the Superintendent in writing as to whether or not it desires to continue the Superintendent's employment beyond June 30, 2016. Should the Committee and the Superintendent mutually desire to continue the Superintendent's employment, they will make a good faith effort to complete negotiations for a successor employment agreement on or before May 30, 2016. If they are unable to agree upon a new employment agreement or an extension of this AGREEMENT, then this AGREEMENT will expire and the Superintendent's employment will end on June 30, 2016., seconded by Ms. Cindy Starks.**

**Voted: 6-1 Mr. Hayner voted No**

Mr. Hayner read the following statement: "I came onto this committee almost five years ago with the intent to help bring back the public confidence to the School System. I have been fortunate in working with a group of people including the superintendent who have always been collegial and hard working. Many things have changed for the positive but my confidence in the superintendent is lacking.

Mr. Hayner passed the document to the secretary of the committee and exited the meeting at 7:04 PM due to not feeling well from falling at home prior to the meeting.

#### **FY 17 Budgetary Needs of Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School**

Mr. Tim Ruggere, Principal of Ottoson Middle School thanked the School Committee members for prior budget requests over the years and presented the following Budget Requests for FY 2017: We are requesting a total of 5.5 additional FTE, to address needs created by enrollment growth at the middle school level.

- 2.0 FTE Additional Cluster Teachers
- The current grades 6 and 7 have each added a half cluster in the last two years in order to maintain a smaller class size. In order to maintain smaller more personalized class sizes at grade 8, we are requesting that a half cluster, 2.0 FTE additional teachers, be added for grade 8 for the 2016-17 school year.
- Current 7th grade - 383
- Current 6th grade - 411
- Expected incoming 6th grade - 410-420
  
- 0.6 FTE Physical Education Teacher
- In an attempt to keep PE classes in the 30's, we are requesting an additional 0.6 PE Teacher. Class sizes have become challenging to manage and locker room coverage has become a safety issue with the current staffing. As of right now, we have PE Teachers that are covering the locker room during their planning periods.
  
- 0.2 FTE Family and Consumer Science Teacher
- In order to keep FACS classes at reasonable sizes, we are requesting an additional .2 teacher. We currently have 2.4 FACS teachers and this would provide two extra sections in FACS for next year. This would bring the FACS department closer to the same number

*of FTE's with other exploratory departments which will allow for more balanced course sections.*

- *1.0 FTE School Nurse*
- *To ensure an appropriate student coverage ratio, the district needs to add an additional school nurse at the middle school. Without this position, the district will fall below recommended state and federal student/school nurse level.*
  
- *0.8 FTE World Language*
- *The middle school's increased enrollment has created a need for additional class sections in the world language area, so we look to add an additional 0.8 Spanish/French teacher.*
  
- *0.4 FTE Digital Media/Computer Science*
- *Increased enrollment has created a need for additional class sections in the digital media/computer science area; therefore we are requesting additional 0.4 FTE for this need.*
  
- *0.5 FTE Social Worker*
- *In the wake of increased anxiety felt by students and in response to the rise of school refusal and hospitalizations, we are requesting an additional 0.5 social worker. The guidance counselor/social worker caseload is currently 300 and if we do not add this 0.5 position, next year's numbers will be over 300 which above the contractual limit.*
  
- *Rationale for supplies and materials increase*
- *Increased enrollment has also created a need for additional supplies and materials.*
  
- *Lockers*
- *The lockers in both the girls' and boys' locker rooms are in complete disrepair and prove to be a safety/health risk. The lockers are close to 50 years old and many of them are unusable, broken and unsafe.*
- *In the student hallways we may require an additional 40 lockers for students to use for personal property.*
  
- *Desks*
- *With the increase in enrollment, we need 50 desks for the incoming students.*
  
- *Chairs*
- *With the increase in enrollment, we need 50 chairs for the incoming students.*
  
- *Cafeteria tables*
- *We need 3 additional cafeteria tables for the increase in enrollment.*
  
- *Folding Chairs*
- *We need 50 more folding chairs for parents and students for ceremonies and assemblies.*
  
- *Social Studies Textbooks/Digital Subscription*
- *Textbooks used by 7th grade students were published in 1998. Since then, the study of geography has changed and there have been shifts in landforms and climates, and four*

*new sovereign states. This grade also has to use multiple sets of books to cover all world regions. This proposal calls for four class sets of books but the focus is on the six-year digital subscriptions that students can use at home and in class and can be updated as new editions of the book are released.*

- *Pilot of Science Textbooks/Digital Subscription*
- *Current resources are outdated (developed in about 1986). Updating was waiting for new standards and digital access, which are both approaching. We request to pilot new science textbooks and digital subscriptions for grade 6 and trial units in grades 7 and 8. A pilot allows a test of new curriculum without committing to the full cost. The new curricula also provide a higher level of differentiation.*
- *Latin Textbooks/Digital Subscription*
- *The current middle school Latin books are falling apart. We propose purchasing a class set with online textbook access.*
- *Visual Art*
- *While enrollment has grown, funding for expendable art supplies has remained static and the department has added a digital component to the curriculum. We are requesting an increase for expendable art materials.*

*The committee members congratulated Mr. Ruggere on being level one school. They were also concerned with space issues if we had to add additional staff, and where to place them and the students. The other concern was which grade to separate 6<sup>th</sup> graders or 8<sup>th</sup> graders if they needed to move students to the Gibbs, or to modules. Mr. Ruggere did state, when asked by the committee if APS should go with PARCC or MCAS said that PARCC is the next natural way to go and stated it was easier for his staff to administer PARCC than the MCAS test.*

*Dr. Matthew Janger, Principal of Arlington High School said he requests everything Tim asked for except the clusters, and noted all work the high school students do, is because all the work the Ottoson Middle School Administration does.*

*Dr. Janger noted that Arlington High School currently enrolls 1265 students in a 400,000 square foot facility. The school is highly ranked, and we have risen relative to other schools. The school is ranked among the top 20 high schools in Massachusetts according to MCAS scores, up from last year. We are recognized again as a U.S. News & World Report gold medal school, a U.S. News & World Report STEM school, a Newsweek Top School, and among the nation's most challenging schools according to the Washington Post. This year, we again received a level 1 designation from the state for overall achievement and progress on the MCAS and graduation rates.*

*This year, we have addressed district goals through focusing particular attention on our new schedule and advisory program, building our capacity to engage students through instructional technology, and serving the needs of all students.*

*Infrastructure continues to be a challenge. The school continues to be on warning by NEASC for the condition of its building and infrastructure. With a broken elevator and our aging facility, administration is challenged to keep the physical environment from interfering with the learning*

*environment. I continue to commend the staff and students for their resilience in providing such a high quality education under such trying conditions.*

*To continue to keep and attract these teachers over the next years will require us to provide them with appropriate class sizes, adequate facilities, and effective instructional technology.*

#### *Curriculum and Staffing*

*The high school experienced an enrollment increase of 48 students over last year. This was 24 more than was anticipated. We project an additional 15 (1280 total) for 2016-17. Our staffing levels continue to be tight and hiring for last year did not keep up with enrollment increases.*

*The average student load for teachers in the core content areas remains high, ranging from 20.5-20.8 students per class. The distribution of students results in high class sizes for academic classes.*

- *Science 29% are 25 or over*
- *History 25% are 25 or over*
- *Math 27% are 25 or over*
- *English 15% are 25 or over*
- *WL 20% are 25 or over*

*Elective classes are at their caps, based on safety and equipment. We foresee the following trends continuing to put pressure on staff.*

- *Rising enrollment. Enrollment growth continues to be high and unpredictable. We would like staffing levels that attract and keep quality faculty, maintain room for growth, and allow us to respond to student needs.*
- *Chapter 222 requires schools to educate students who were previously excluded due to felony charges or expelled.*
- *Student trends point toward higher levels of social-emotional challenges among students.*
- *State accountability guidelines call for ever rising levels of student achievement and graduation rates.*
- *Evaluation requirement for building administrators to observe every faculty member and for buildings to evaluate all faculty every year.*

*Dr. Janger is requesting the following staffing increases:*

*Necessary for enrollment, staff excellence, student achievement, curriculum requirements, and safety issues (3.2 FTE)*

- *Math Pre-Algebra / Computer Science - 0.4*
- *Dual taught Math/ High Needs - 0.4*
- *English - 0.6*
- *Social Studies History - 0.8*
- *Science Biology/ Physics - 0.6*
- *World Language French - 0.2*
- *World Language Spanish - 0.2*

*Dependent on enrollment trends (1.4 FTE)*

- *Family and Consumer Science - 0.2*

- *Visual Art Digital - 0.6*
- *Technical Education (Makerspace) - 0.6*

*Still requested by the admin and staff - to reduce stress on the teachers and support student achievement - 3d Dean to cover rising expectations, evaluation, and enrollment*

- *Dean - 1.0*

*Increase support for social emotional needs of students*

*One major initiative to increase support for the social emotional needs of students is the new 5-day schedule, Xblock, and advisory. Based on feedback from students, teachers, and parents, we moved from our 7-day schedule rotation to a 5-day schedule. This helps support student organization, teacher planning, and coordination with outside organizations and activities.*

*The new schedule allows for a 24 minute “Xblock” on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We have created this time to provide meeting time for students and teachers as well as creating a regular advisory program. The Tuesday “Campus Period” is a break time for students and teachers. Students are required to stay on campus in supervised areas. Time can be used for meeting with teachers, club meetings, having a snack in the cafeteria, or quiet study. During the Thursday “Activity Period,” students meet with their advisory group for activities designed to*

- *Create and foster connections between teachers and students*
- *Provide a consistent conduit for communication with students*
- *Create and foster positive school climate and culture*

*A teacher-led Xblock committee has worked with consultant, Rachel Poliner, to train staff in leading these activities that help build a positive social-emotional environment at AHS. Through practice and training in building strong relationships the AHS community as a whole will grow even stronger.*

### *Digital Technology*

*With support from the capital committee, grants, and teacher innovations, we have achieved some remarkable improvements in instructional technology over the past two-years. These improvements will need to be supported and sustained over the coming years. Digital technology is changing the potential for engaging and supporting all learners, preparing students for a computer rich economy, and allowing students to engage directly with creating knowledge and influencing their world. Our goal over the next two years is to develop an educational environment that combines special use labs with an environment where classrooms can expect access to instructional technology provided by the school or supplemented by devices provided by students. This is one form of a “Bring Your Own Device” or BYOD model.*

*All instructional staff at AHS now has an Apple laptop and every classroom is equipped with a projector. Wireless and the network have been expanded, but are still experiencing growing pains. The suite of Google Docs and Google Classroom are being used widely across the school.*

*This year, with support from AEF and the capital committee we have introduced*

- *A laptop cart with instruments for science (AEF)*
- *A digital media studio combining CADD and Digital Photography (AEF)*

- *Classroom pilots of iPad and Chromebook class-sets in 9 sites reaching 15 classrooms and touching even more.*
- *Increased access to chrome books through the media center and departments*
- *The three computer labs have been reconfigured to create one large Citrix lab and one equipped with Chromebooks and Citrix stations.*
- *STEAM Collaboration/Maker Space - A group of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics teachers have created a STEAM collaboration using the Makerspace to create hands-on learning in and out of class*

*To provide a 21st Century Education (not necessarily supported through the capital committee request):*

- *Invest in Wireless and Network capacity and reliability*
- *Staffing for the Makerspace to allow interdisciplinary use and expansion of elective offerings.*
- *Funding for replacement and repairs to essential instructional technology such as laptops and projectors.*
- *Time and funding for ongoing professional development for teachers*

#### *Building*

*Over the past two years, we have worked closely with the town maintenance and custodial departments to improve the management and staffing of the facilities. Our Assistant Principal has attended closely to maintenance, custodial, and security issues. As a result, we have seen improved cleanliness and repairs. With the introduction of the new town Facilities Director role, Ruth Bennett has been conducting a review of our processes and needs. In spite of discussions about future high school renovation, it is imperative that we support efforts to keep the current learning environment clean and in good repair for the current students and our staff. Building maintenance issues have major impacts on morale, education, safety, and security.*

*We have made some stop gap measures to badly aging facilities, but need to invest in some major repairs to maintain a safe educational environment over the next 4-6 years.*

- *Support allocations to routine maintenance and repairs in particular security and restrooms.*
- *Allocate funding to convert more spaces into instructional, science labs, office, storage, and computer lab, spaces.*
- *Fully staff custodial crews (at least 10 FTE)*

#### *Athletics*

*Melissa Dlugolecki, Athletic Director, spoke on changes to her budget to reflect the historical costs of athletics, rising registrations, and rising costs of the programs. The demands and needs of the athletic department due to the rise in participation as well as increase in costs to maintain the current resources, include transportation, cost of facility rentals, additional equipment needs to support the expansion of participation, the increase cost of officials, and the increased costs dedicated to the athletic trainer and EMT coverage to safely cover our events. Ms. Dlugolecki stated that she was not seeking an increase of spending; she was requesting an increase in her budget to meet the needs and continue to service the student-athletes of Arlington High School.*



*The committee wanted to know what the priority list would be and Dr. Janger replied to fix the building and to increase the staff. The members were also impressed with the five day schedule and inquired about a late start for students but that is not being considered at this time.*

*Dr. Bodie congratulated both the Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School level one and introduced the additional administration members, Mr. Larry Weathers, Ms. Catherine Ritz, Denny Conklin Trish Vislosky, Ms. Maureen Murphy, Mr. Jack Flood and Ms. Wendy Salvatore.*

#### *PARCC or MCAS in spring of 2016 for Arlington Public Schools Discussion*

*The committee members discussed PARCC vs MCAS in the spring of 2016, and Mr. Schlichtman noted that the committee members would like to vote on a decision at the next meeting in December. The members were not in agreement at the moment to support PARCC but said they will take the week to review and would like the committee to listen to the leadership in Arlington and the principals of the high school and middle school since they recommend PARCC.*

*The committee members agree to add more discussion at the next full School Committee meeting on this subject before they take a vote of support for PARCC or MCAS. Ms. Hanson noted it is a difficult decision since both tests are problematic and both useful, some bigger questions then vote for no test at all. She we have to make a choice between two imperfect decisions. Ms. Hanson suggested that the members read through teacher's survey comments.*

#### *Monthly Financial Reports*

*Ms. Johnson noted that the cost of the elevator had increased but the elevator will be ready next week per Ms. Bennett. The committee asked for a budget impact list from the administration on the costs of the budget needs from Special Education Department, high school and middle school budget impact for FY 17. Dr. Bodie would first like to discuss this with the full committee after the administration meeting.*

#### *Superintendent's Report*

*Dr. Bodie commented on the Boston Globe article on asbestos and said it is not the case in AHS or any of our schools. Dr. Bodie reminded parents about snow days, and said if parents feel they cannot get their child to school due to snow it would be an excused absence. Dr. Bodie informed the community to go into APS calendar on our website: and said Christmas Carol will be at AHS next week at 7:30 PM on 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> and 11 am performance for sensitive for children with autism on Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup>.*

#### *Consent Agenda*

***Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, All items listed with an asterisk are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence: Approval of Warrant: Warrant # 16077, Dated November 19, 2015, Total Warrant Amount \$760,431.79, Approval of Draft Minutes: November 12 and 19, 2015, Mr. Pierce seconded the motion but requested to pull the minutes, therefore the vote to approve the Warrant.***

***Voted: 6-0***

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the draft minutes, from November 12, 19, 2015, seconded by Ms. Susse.**

**5-0-1 Mr. Pierce abstained**

*Subcommittee & Liaison Reports & Announcements*

*Policies & Procedures* Jud Pierce (Chair) said the First Reading BEDB Agenda Format Preparation and Dissemination, and will do a trail to post meeting and materials on Friday and open it up to the public, and try the change before changing the policy. The Kindergarten Age policy was discussed and the consensus of subcommittee is to leave the policy as is, note on our website a statement how and why it is important to have this policy as noted. The subcommittee will meet on January 11 at 8:15 am, and discuss a Policy on MCAS and PARCC, Electronic Signatures for Vendor Warrants, and said our comptroller is looking into this too.

*Budget* Kirsi Allison-Ampe (Chair) provided the recommendation on Peirce Field Fees.

**Dr. Allison-Ampe moved for the School Committee to approve the revised Peirce Field Fees as presented for the next 6 months, seconded Ms. Susse.**

**Voted: 6-0**

It was announced that ACMI is currently running a show where Kirsi and Paul are on discussing APS Budget.

*Facilities* Cindy Starks (Chair) presented the Arlington Public Schools Facilities Needs for 2015-2021 PowerPoint which included timeline requirements for the needs of all our schools, and the four big questions are on Elementary Neighborhood schools, Middle school size, Class size/ teacher load, and the Town impact. We need to go to Special Town Meeting, January 25, 2016. Ms. Starks noted the Facilities Meeting, Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. regarding McKibben's Update Report at Arlington High School.

*School Enrollment Task Force*, will jointly run the meeting on Jan 7, 2015, Public Meeting on Enrollment Challenges, the enrollment challenges were again discussed and building locations for 5,6,7, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were also mentioned again. The Task Force would like to know the recommendation of the School Committee but many questions still need to be answered before they can provide the Task Force with their recommendation. The members and administration continued the discussion on sizes of new buildings; add on at the elementary buildings, middle school or even on the practice field at the high school, as well as the needs for more classrooms. It was also noted that taking back the Gibss may not be the best decision. We are still waiting on the MSBA to reply on the Arlington High School rebuild, and we still need to do more study and research before a recommendation can happen per Mr. Thielman and Dr. Bodie.

**Ms. Susse moved to extend the 10 o'clock rule till 10:30 PM, second by Mr. Pierce.**

**Voted 6-0**

*District Accountability, Curriculum/Instruction & Assessment* Jeff Thielman (Chair) said he will hold a meeting in January to review the Superintendent Evaluation Process and discuss it again at a full committee meeting in February.

*Community Relations Jennifer Susse (Chair) Next meeting 12/14/2015 and said at the next subcommittee meeting the members will draft an agenda and talk details on the presentation to be held January 7, 2016 at 7:00 PM*

*Executive Session Minute Review Subcommittee Voted 5/28/2015*

*Warrant Committee - Voted 4/9/2015 Bill Hayner (Chair)*

*School Enrollment Task Force*

*MOA Unit A Health Insurance Premium Deductions Vote of Approval*

***Mr. Thielman moved to vote the approval of the Memorandum of Agreement between Arlington School Committee and the Arlington Education Association Unit A Health Insurance Premium Deductions for Employees Who receive 21 Paychecks per year, seconded by Mr. Pierce.***

***Voted: 6-0***

*Executive Session*

***Mr. Thielman moved to enter Executive Session at 10:10 PM to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and/or nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with union and/or nonunion in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect and to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect, Collective bargaining may also be conducted and Discuss contract and salary of the Superintendent, CFO, and Principals, and to exit only to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pierce.***

***Roll Call: Unanimous***

***Voted: 6-0***

*Adjournment*

***Ms. Starks moved to exit and adjourn at 10:36 PM, seconded by Mr. Thielman.***

***Roll Call: unanimous***

***Voted: 6-0***

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Karen Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee/jt*