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**Listening Session on AHS Semester 2 Options Monday, December 7, 6-8 pm via Zoom correction**

2 messages

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Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>  
To: Everyone APS EMail Group <everyone-aps@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 3:23 PM

**Listening Session on AHS Semester 2 Options  
Monday, December 7, 6-8 pm via Zoom**

*Register in advance for this webinar:*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_oL87ybwoSBynAWTImaDfqw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oL87ybwoSBynAWTImaDfqw)

The Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability subcommittee of the Arlington School Committee will hold a listening session to hear from members of the Arlington High School (AHS) community regarding Semester 2 of the 2020-21 school year. Dr. Janger has previously circulated information and a survey regarding options for improving services at AHS and increasing the amount of in-person instructional time. The listening session will be an opportunity for School Committee members and AHS community members to hear directly from other AHS community members about their thoughts and concerns regarding the options being considered for Semester 2. Although members of the Arlington administrative team may be present, this is not a Q&A session but rather an opportunity for direct input to the School Committee as it considers possible changes to the AHS learning structure for Semester 2.

Those wishing to participate should join the webinar and use the "raise hand" option to indicate you would like to speak. Written comments can also be submitted to [kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us), which will be shared with the Committee but will not be read out loud. We ask that people listen to all viewpoints presented and be mindful of the amount of speaking time used so that everyone can participate.

As background, the School Committee voted in August that AHS would implement a hybrid model (meaning some in-person instruction), but that the semester would begin remotely due to HVAC issues with the AHS facility. Then in September, the School Committee voted to "postpone a full hybrid instruction program, with live, in-person teaching available to all students who desire it, until the 2nd Semester of the 2020-21 school year" and required by November 13, 2020 the submission of "a plan to implement hybrid instruction at AHS in the second semester of the 2020-21 school year that allows all students to experience live, in-person instruction if their parents or guardians make this choice for them." Dr. Janger submitted the three options discussed in the survey as the possible options for "live, in-person instruction." A recommendation from the APS administration is expected at the December 10 School Committee meeting, and at that meeting the School Committee will likely vote on a model so that implementation planning can begin.

--

Karen Fitzgerald  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee  
Superintendent of Schools  
869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor  
Arlington, MA 02476  
781-316-3540  
[kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us)

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**Karen Fitzgerald** <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 3:36 PM

To: Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, William Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Thielman, Jeff" <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Fitzgerald, Karen" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

[Quoted text hidden]



Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## COVID dashboard - please forward

2 messages

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**Liz Exton** <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>  
To: Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 2:51 PM

Hi Karen,  
Can you please forward this to the full committee.  
Thanks,  
Liz

Hi everyone,  
Just as an FYI, the Brookline schools launched this dashboard last week.

<https://sites.google.com/psbma.org/psb-reopening-hub/dashboard?authuser=0>

Liz

--  
Liz Exton  
Arlington School Committee  
lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us

---

**Karen Fitzgerald** <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us> Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 3:02 PM  
To: Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, William Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Thielman, Jeff" <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsii Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Roderick MacNeal <rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Robert Spiegel <Rspiegel@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Alison Elmer <aelmer@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Fitzgerald, Karen" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Tassone <ktassone@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Please see the email from Liz Exton on COVID dashboard  
[Quoted text hidden]

--  
**Karen Fitzgerald**  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee  
Superintendent of Schools  
869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor  
Arlington, MA 02476  
781-316-3540  
kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us

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Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## Fwd: Update COVID-19 Cases

1 message

Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 2:43 PM

To: Bill Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Jeff Thielman <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Tassone <ktassone@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Dear APS Families,

Earlier this week we received the results from Monday's COVID-19 staff testing program. There were two positive cases, but no close contacts. One person is a district support person and the other a staff member at Peirce.

Additionally, a student at Gibbs tested positive for COVID-19, which resulted in one learning community needing to be remote following the quarantine guidelines of the MA Department of Public Health and the Arlington Department of Health and Human Services for a close contact. Also, a student at OMS tested positive. The test result for this student was reported to the school during the first period, so the impact is that only one classroom will need to be remote .per guidelines for a close contact.

I am also writing to remind you not to send your child to school if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms or just not feeling well. If your family is being tested for COVID-19 because of exposure to someone with the virus, please wait to send your child to school until the results are received.

We share the goal of keeping children and staff in our schools safe and able to continue to be in school. We want to avoid having to remove from school an entire classroom, grade or learning community.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

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Arlington School District would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Arlington School District directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#)

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.

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Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us  
781-316-3501

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Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## [Everyone-APS] Update COVID-19 Cases Over Thanksgiving Week

1 message

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Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Tue, Dec 1, 2020 at 7:54 PM

To: Everyone APS EMail Group <everyone-aps@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Dear All,

Welcome back. I hope you are doing well and enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday and weekend.

Over the Thanksgiving week, six staff members and two students tested positive for COVID-19. In total, there were three close staff contacts, who remain remote following quarantine guidelines for close contacts. No close contacts were students.

Of the six staff members who tested positive, three are district staff members. The other three staff members work at Peirce and Brackett. One student attends Hardy and the other student attends Peirce.

To date, there have been no COVID-19 virus transmissions in any of our schools.

Thank you for your continued efforts to make sure that our schools remain safe.

Best regards,

Kathy

--

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us  
781-316-3501

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Everyone APS EMail Group" group. To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to everyone-aps+unsubscribe@arlington.k12.ma.us.

To view this discussion on the web visit [https://groups.google.com/a/arlington.k12.ma.us/d/msgid/everyone-aps/CAAEUD-MXG7LuFt\\_6Hhknw2xHhXSOaoiPbMnVGfhiWBRWM%3Dxw3w%40mail.gmail.com](https://groups.google.com/a/arlington.k12.ma.us/d/msgid/everyone-aps/CAAEUD-MXG7LuFt_6Hhknw2xHhXSOaoiPbMnVGfhiWBRWM%3Dxw3w%40mail.gmail.com).



Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## FW: FW: Hybrid High School

2 messages

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whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 10:30 AM

To: Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Cc: Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Karen,

Matt J. asked me to forward the string below to the rest of the committee

Bill

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**From:** Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>

**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 7:36 AM

**To:** Pete Gast <petegast@gmail.com>

**Cc:** wayner@arlington.k12.ma.us

**Subject:** Re: FW: Hybrid High School

Bill,

Can you forward this exchange to the school committee packet with other correspondence, assuming Mr. Gast agrees?

I agree, in hindsight, that straight comparison would have been appreciated by folks. It's not something easily changed once folks are responding.

Thanks,

Matthew

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Pete Gast <petegast@gmail.com>

**Date:** Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 12:17 AM

**Subject:** Re: FW: Hybrid High School

**To:** Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>

**CC:** <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Bill, I appreciate the quick response from both of you. I directed my question to you because of my understanding that the mandate to explore in person instruction came from the school committee. I think it is premature to focus Matthew's staff on creating detailed plans for in-person instruction while Arlington in the (previous definition) red. I think it would have been more responsible to focus on improving the social and emotional support within the structure we have now.

Matthew, I understand and appreciate the quick note. Please let me stress first of all that I am very impressed with how well you and your staff have created detailed plans under tight time pressure now and back in August. I feel like each plan is the best version of its core idea. I only wish that we collectively were able to agree on the plan earlier so that teachers would have months instead of weeks to rebuild their classes.

My quibble with the survey is that it asked us to compare plans 1, 2, 3 and I heard feedback from other parents that they



would like to have been explicit about continuing with the current plan as part of that comparison. I can see how you could combine information from different parts in order to infer those preferences, but the data would have been cleaner (and parents like me calmer) if the comparison had been explicit.

Department shift is similar to our current system except students will have 2-4 school visits per week, and need to commute to and from the school building nearly every day. No one else in my household has that many community interactions each week because Arlington (like the rest of the world) is fighting a global pandemic and we don't have it under control. Just thinking about that many bus trips was enough to shut my teenager down.

I hope that the burden of switching gears for the teachers is also being factored into the decision. Incremental improvement works best if they don't have to go back to the drawing board every semester.

I look forward to the presentations. Thank you for listening to me and thank you for the balancing act that you do.

-Pete Gast (he/him)

On Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 9:06 PM Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us> wrote:

Dear Mr. Gast,

Thanks for your note. Mr. Hayner shared your questions. I apologize for a quick rough note. The school committee presentations will be more detailed.

First, the mandate of the school committee was to share proposals for increasing in person instruction. Second, the departmental shift is essentially the current model with reverse field trips replaced with a more systematic shift. approach. Last, as you will see in my presentation of results, the survey does have a comparison of the current and sample models. At this point, it appears that the current model is preferred slightly over the department shift because of safety. Of course as we begin the new semester any in person schooling will be planned around COVID conditions. I hope that helps.

All the best,

Matthew

--

Matthew Janger, Ph.D. (he, him, his)

Principal, Arlington High School

(781) 316-3594

For AHS Calendars and News

For AHS Newscast

"together we can build a more welcoming and friendlier environment here at Arlington High School, a place where students can show their true colors without judgement"

- Catherine Malatesta

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ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلاتك

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**Karen Fitzgerald** <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 10:41 AM

To: Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, William Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Thielman, Jeff" <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Fitzgerald, Karen" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Roderick MacNeal <rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Robert Spiegel <Rspiegel@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Alison Elmer <aelmer@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Michael Mason <mmason@arlington.k12.ma.us>

fyi

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Karen Fitzgerald**

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee*

*Superintendent of Schools*

*869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor*

*Arlington, MA 02476*

*781-316-3540*

*kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us*

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Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## Fwd: Semester two

2 messages

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**Matthew Janger** <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>  
To: Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 7:34 PM

For the school committee.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melinda Mesmer** <mesmermm7@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 5:05 PM

Subject: Semester two

To: Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>, jkempf0@gmail.com <jkempf0@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Janger,

We recently completed both the survey for semester one and also the semester two survey. We have two AHS students, one is a Freshman and the other a Junior. We want to email you first and foremost to thank you and your staff for making semester one so successful for our daughters. Both of our kids have been engaged and are interested and excited to learn and have very much enjoyed interacting with their teachers over zoom four days a week, especially after the long summer. We can see that they are learning. The teachers have made great efforts to engage the students and we as parents can see that, and are appreciative.

In addition to the above feedback, we would like to also ask you to please consider keeping the same model for semester two. The new proposed models for semester two all require several days of "independent learning" without any synchronous instruction. This would be a huge loss. We strongly feel that the success of the school year has been in large part due to synchronous learning and teacher student interaction. Our elder child is taking three AP classes. Doing independent study unaccompanied by formal instruction does not seem like the best approach.

Lastly, we have serious concerns about planning for in person learning at the high school given the recent surge in COVID cases. While the elementary and middle schools have been successful in avoiding outbreaks, we're sure you know that high school age students resemble adults when it comes to increased risk for transmission, whereas younger children pose lower risk. Trading synchronous learning for in person time with the rising COVID infection rates does not seem prudent at this moment in time. We care deeply about the social and emotional ramifications of continued remote learning, but as a physician and parent, this does not look like a risk worth taking now.

We hope that you are proud of the achievement of your students and staff so far in this difficult year. Thank you for taking the time to read our email.

Best Regards,

Melinda Mesmer and Jim Kempf

--

Matthew Janger, Ph.D. (he, him, his)  
Principal, Arlington High School  
(781) 316-3594  
For AHS Calendars and News  
For AHS Newscast

"together we can build a more welcoming and friendlier environment here at Arlington High School, a place where students can show their true colors without judgement"  
- Catherine Malatesta

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**Karen Fitzgerald** <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 10:44 AM

To: Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, William Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Thielman, Jeff" <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Roderick MacNeal <rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Michael Mason <mmason@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Alison Elmer <aelmer@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Robert Spiegel <Rspiegel@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Fitzgerald, Karen" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Please see the email below.

[Quoted text hidden]

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*Karen Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee*

*Superintendent of Schools*

*869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor*

*Arlington, MA 02476*

*781-316-3540*

*kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us*

[Quoted text hidden]



Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

## COVID-19 Case At Gibbs

1 message

Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 9:33 PM

To: Bill Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Jeff Thielman <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Tassone <ktassone@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Good Evening,

We learned a few hours ago that a student at Gibbs has tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, Learning Community 2 will need to be remote until December 17. While the LC 2 cohort B was not exposed, all of the LC 2 staff have been identified as close contacts. There is insufficient staff available to have cohort B be in-person to receive remote instruction from their teachers.

The results of our testing program on Monday identified two positive cases out of 240 tests. - a district staff support person and a staff member at Peirce. There were no close contacts.

I will send out a message to the APS community tomorrow. I want to make sure that all close contacts and families at Gibbs have been notified before doing so.

We are likely to see more post-Thanksgiving cases in the week ahead.

Sincerely,  
Kathy

--

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us  
781-316-3501

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Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

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## Fwd: Anti Racism News Letter - December

2 messages

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**Matthew Janger** <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>  
To: Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 2:08 PM

For the School Committee.  
m

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Paul McKnight** <pmcknight@arlington.k12.ma.us>  
Date: Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 11:47 AM  
Subject: Anti Racism News Letter - December  
To: <class2024@spyponders.com>, <class2023@spyponders.com>, <class2022@spyponders.com>, <class2021@spyponders.com>

The Anti-Racism Working Group is happy to release this month's newsletter! Tune in every month to see a new release and visit our website for updates, resources, calls to action, and past newsletters at <https://sites.google.com/arlington.k12.ma.us/ahs-anti-racist-newsletter>  
enjoy ! :)

Link to video: <https://acmi.tv/videos/anti-racism-working-group-newsletter-december-2020/>

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**Paul McKnight**  
Dean of Students, Collomb House  
Student Council Advisor  
Arlington High School  
781-316-3388

he/him/his

*"Do or do not. There is no try." - Yoda*

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Matthew Janger, Ph.D. (he, him, his)  
Principal, Arlington High School  
(781) 316-3594  
For AHS Calendars and News  
For AHS Newscast



"together we can build a more welcoming and friendlier environment here at Arlington High School, a place where students can show their true colors without judgement"

- Catherine Malatesta

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**Karen Fitzgerald** <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 7:34 PM

To: Jane Morgan <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Paul Schlichtman <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, William Hayner <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Thielman, Jeff" <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Len Kardon <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kirsi Allison-Ampe <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Liz Exton <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathleen Bodie <kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Karen Tassone <ktassone@arlington.k12.ma.us>, "Fitzgerald, Karen" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

[Quoted text hidden]

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*Karen Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee*

*Superintendent of Schools*

*869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor*

*Arlington, MA 02476*

*781-316-3540*

*kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us*

[Quoted text hidden]

In Zoom meetings, I am able to divide the class into smaller discussion groups, and then visit the groups and have conversations with students in a way I would not be able to do in the classroom, with everyone masked and social-distanced. I can see the students' facial expressions as they listen or share, which facilitates communication, and I have no trouble hearing them, as they are not speaking through a barrier. The students seem to enjoy the occasional slapstick cameos by my cats, as I enjoy seeing the students' animals, and those brief moments, among others, have enabled bonding within the classes, thus bolstering the students' Social Emotional Learning. Although it has been a lot of work to design the teaching experience all over again, it has been worth it, as it is difficult to imagine the same level of personal interaction and deep discussion happening if we were speaking through masks, standing at least six feet away from each other.

— Tim Marten, English Teacher

I have found that students are willing to share on camera, especially in break out rooms. I have two in one classes, like my Early Childhood II and III class meet concurrently. I meet with the whole group for announcements, mid class check in, and the end of the period. Through the rest of class, I'm able to divide them and focus on individual assignments with each group in a breakout room. It allows the students and me to really focus on a specific task, such as project discussion or review of textbook packets. It just wouldn't be possible in person. And we had our first guest speaker today, something I do not think would be possible at all this year in the building.

I am also going to use my own children's books and toys as learning tools when we get to our units on infant, toddler, and preschool development. I don't usually lug things in from home, and I have classroom books and toys, but they would likely be unsafe this year without intense sterilization. In Interior and Fashion I've begun doing breakout rooms as well, and it allows interpersonal interactions in a large class (26!) We are designing home interiors right now and students can share their screens with their group for input and then when I enter I can provide feedback as well. If we were doing this assignment in person, we would all have to work individually and far apart to be safe. It stinks that students can't learn to use the sewing machine, but I don't think that would be feasible even in an in person model this year. I was trying to brainstorm how to do it for our reverse field trip, and the amount of sanitizing it will entail will be a challenge. I think the group will have to be broken into four for safety reasons, which would mean incredibly slow progress if we were trying to learn this skill using a hybrid model.

- Jennie Craigie, FCS

I have truly been enjoying remote teaching. I have embraced the new challenge and I truly enjoy engaging with my students via Zoom. My AP Language classes have been a delight to teach. Every student is engaged and working together every class. I routinely use Breakout rooms for discussion during every class- and the students have expressed how much they enjoy the opportunity to collaborate with their peers in that setting. They are able to delve deep into the discussions in a way that is comfortable and natural for teenagers. If we had been in person with distancing and masks, I am certain that this would not have happened as quickly. The students would simply not be able to have the same level of interaction and excitement around learning with those unnatural barriers. Since the start of this experiment I have had to rework almost everything I do- but all those challenges have been worth the outcomes I have seen so far. I am still able to meet my students 1 on 1 for writing conferences and look at a document together via Zoom. I am still able to check in with every student every day at the start of class. I am still able to informally and formally assess their understanding of



the lesson objectives. Simply, we are still able to learn and in some ways are learning even better than before.

-Elizabeth Harple, English

I was so worried about teaching remotely this year. I have a background in music and performance and feel that my strongest skills are those related to working with the students, but I was so wrong. This year has, so far, been amazing. Being remote has afforded me the opportunity to expand my classes since I teach a CS elective. It has been challenging at times to learn to communicate, but overall I feel that both my students and I have grown and I have gotten to see a side of them that I think might almost be more real than what we see in the physical classroom. These kids have a way of interacting online that is so different, but amazing to see. I feel like I have great resources at my disposal with the functions that Zoom has to offer, peardeck, jamboard, and code.org (our curriculum). I did not think things could go this well, but here we are.

-Clayton Jones, CS/Math Teacher

I entered this school year very nervous about teaching remotely: Would I be able to bond with my students in the same way I normally do? Would I be able to check in with them individually, and know if they were struggling? I have been so pleasantly surprised with how well it is going, and how much we are able to make our little classes feel like a bubble of normality. I have gotten to know my students' personalities and quirks, and they enjoy talking with each other in class discussions and breakout groups. Although it has taken a tremendous amount of work to transform my curriculum for this new setting, I feel that I am seeing immediate results. I cannot imagine how I would have built that sense of community if we were in a classroom, with only half the class, wearing masks and unable to move closer than six feet. I know for certain that I would not be seeing the success and engagement that I'm seeing right now. I asked my students for some feedback about how it is going so far, and I've included a few of their responses below:

"I feel like this year has been going very well so far. Thank you for all the hard work you are putting in to make this class feel as normal as possible!"

"The balance between group work, class discussions, and break times have been really helpful and positive. I also really like how we have the agenda at the beginning of class and the slides as we go along because it makes the class time structured and nothing is surprising."

"The structure of the class is very enjoyable and helpful, I like the way we have half a class synchronously, and for the other half, we have independent work. It is a good balance for me and gives me just the right amount of time to complete and stay focused on everything. The breakout rooms and class discussions are wonderful too, they give you a chance to talk with one or two people independently and then with the whole class if you want to do that, which I like. The way assignments are posted on Google Classroom is also very helpful, because they are neatly organized and you can find whatever you need in a short amount of time."

- Megan Miller, English Teacher

Following the lead of my ELA teachers before me, I'll start by saying the preparation and grading elements have taken on a new life in terms of consuming time. But like all new things, I can see myself actually implementing some of these new practices in a post-COVID world to cut down on many things that used to take just as much - if not, more - time. Students are really thriving having been given all their texts at once, and they're making incredible use of Zoom's breakout room feature - both in small groups, and, perhaps especially, when I put them into individual breakout rooms. They



can ask for help just as they would if the class was working independently, but they don't feel the pressures of what others' might think - many students are asking more clarifying questions, and our 1:1 writing workshops are a bit slicker and faster, since we aren't looking over shoulders at a screen - something that simply is never going to happen when workshoping writing in person in any kind of COVID-era in-person classroom. The quality of the writing is simply better as well, in my opinion as well, across all three of my senior classes, thanks to the digital workshop opportunities. While posting a slideshow of everything we're doing is not my usual M.O., I'm creating a record both the students and I can look back on, and I can see exactly what we're covering, and when we're doing it. This is all, of course, things that have been working for me as an instructor. What matters most is the student experience, and here are some quotes from students from their weekly writing reflections/check-ins:

- "This year is shaping up to be better than I thought it would be. Online school could definitely be worse; I actually like only being in a couple classes at a time"
- "I think the best part of class so far has been getting to meet with you individually about essays. We didn't do that last year and it has been very helpful for me."
- "The new schedule has been working well for me, I feel I have enough time to complete my homework and actually get reasonable amounts of sleep. I really enjoy how you make sure we get into breakout rooms every class, it makes the class feel less long and more engaging for me."
- "As we all move forward and adapt, this silver lining ends up revealing the gold beneath. More independence in online school ends up working to my benefit as for me, days feel longer when you don't leave your house in the morning and come back in the afternoon."
- "Everything is working pretty well for me at the moment, though the virtual classroom took some getting used to."
- # "School is definitely easier than it was pre-semesterization. "
- "I also like that we have easy access to the Google Slides presentation with the week's lesson plan."
- "This morning I had my second reverse field trip! It was very strange to see my classmates in person surprisingly. Something I did not realize was that I had such a large Spanish class. Overall, it was a very pleasant experience being with my teacher and my peers."
- "I just returned from a reverse field trip for my Spanish Cinema class. Right now I have so much adrenaline coursing through me and I feel rejuvenated after our in person meeting! Although it was definitely a strange experience, being able to see these people as not just floating torsos on my screen and not having to deal with all of the unmuting and muting to hear everybody was really powerful and felt a tiny bit closer to normal."

-Justin Bourassa, ELA

I am surprised by how much I am enjoying remote teaching. I certainly miss the direct interactions in the classroom and will happily go back when we can be unmasked and within 6 feet of each other. However, the students are quite engaging in their own space and can be focused and animated. Using the technology apps we have available, (though I am finding the grading to be quite exhausting), the ability I have to get instant feedback from the students via Pear Deck and pop into their break out rooms has been very helpful in allowing me to check their understanding and adapt my instruction. There is something oddly disarming about being in each other's spaces that is surprisingly more human than I expected. My own son is in the hybrid model at his high school and he spends a

fraction of the time with his teachers that I spend with my students. He is also very limited in his ability to interact with other students in class and the hallways etc. Our students are able to work together on class work and discuss things without masks.--- Melanie Konstandakis, History

Despite a long history of actors wearing masks, performing in PPE masks is a considerable challenge to convey most modern acting skills. In spite of the challenge of performing over Zoom, that experience is closer to the practical training and skills needed in a drama class. Remote acting is closer to the traditional experience than being in person with masks and social distancing. Students have creatively embraced the opportunities for storytelling presented in Zoom. The opportunity to practice acting skills is closer to acting for film as opposed to for stage.

We've also been able to have a wide variety of guests in our classroom who are not local and we'd never meet in another situation. Several Broadway professionals have met virtually with students including Broadway Stage Manager Katherine Shea, Broadway Designer Shawn Boyle (AHS class of '99), Broadway director Stephen Nachamie, Broadway performers Michael Brian Dunn, Erica Spyers, Sheldon Henry, Tony nominees J. Smith Cameron and Arian Moayed. Kurt Crowley, the music director of *Hamilton* has met with us over Zoom, as has Isaac Aptaker (AHS class of '05), the show runner/writer for *This is Us* and screenwriter of *Love, Simon*; *Love, Victor*. Peri Gilpin, Roz from *Frasier* has also been a guest. None of this could have happened without it being virtual.

We've invited guest directors to work with students on productions presented by the Drama Guild. Lauren Zeftel (AHS class of '09) will be directing a show with students. Aaron Aptaker (AHS class of '09) will be devising a performance piece with students. Neither are local, both are young theatre professionals. We're able to give students the opportunity to work with a diversity of directors and increase the number of productions offered because they are online.

- Michael Byrne, Drama teacher

I miss teaching in person terribly, and need to take naps every day after teaching remotely. But I like how it has kicked my goal of a paperless classroom into high gear. If I can just get a handle on grading everything remotely, I'll be feeling much better.

John Macuk

I have been grateful for the opportunities to teach about new topics related to Wellness that we probably would not have made time for had we not been forced out of our traditional teaching groove / rut. The lack of interaction during class time compared with what we were accustomed to leaves a lot to be desired, but I have really enjoyed scheduling smaller group and individual meetings to catch up on material and get to know students. From a CPS perspective, all of my interactions with students have been positive. I have not seen any dysregulation in my interactions with students this year.

Will Darling, Wellness

I was apprehensive about how teaching art remotely would work this fall, but I have found my students craving the time to express themselves through materials and dig into hands on work where they don't need to be in front of a computer screen all the time. I have found it easier to structure group investigations as well as independent studio time. I have been able to provide differentiated instruction through breakout sessions that has been really effective in assessing students skills and helping them to build a plan for growth. Breakouts have also allowed me to get to know my students



personalities in a way that I thought would be more challenging this year. It has also been easy for me to catch students who have missing work or support them outside of class to be up to date with work. I am thankful for our students' dedication, tenacity, and creativity.

Thank you,

Dear School Committee,

My attendance has never looked so good! No one is late and for the most part they are participating. This is the first time I can remember that I do not have a single failure due to absences. I was not a big fan of the idea of teaching remote but I am impressed. The content I am delivering is better than ever, the students seem to love only having a few classes to worry about. Our weekly assessments are working well, students like being able to show what they learned throughout the week. The 80 minutes of direct teaching is the only reason we are able to not cut a single topic from our Algebra 2 material. If we were to switch models and lose direct learning time we may have to cut things from our curriculum which means students will not be ready for the PSAT. In my co-taught class the students are engaged, ask questions, and are so proud of what they have accomplished. Their grades are excellent and based on content knowledge. Same content was delivered in both co-taught and non co-taught Algebra 2: Assessments (one a week total 8, same questions I would ask in a typical year only differences is that due to it being semesterised we let them use notes) class average 82% and 75%(co-taught), making up the other portion of the assessment grade are IXL skills which is a program that gives each student different questions on specific topics (gave a total of 25 skills) 88% and 86% (co-taught), class work and homework which are graded for effort and correctness (roughly 32 assignments given) 80% in both classes. Due to the hard work my teachers and I have put in these students are receiving 100% of the content they would in a normal year. Do I like remote? No of course I don't, I would give anything to be back in the classroom with my students. Can I keep the level of instruction and cover the amount of content next semester with 4 cohort classes ABSOLUTELY not. It is only because there is 320 minutes a week of direct instruction and all my students are working on the same assignment at the same time that this is possible. Every second we lose direct instruction will lead to cutting curriculum or not covering to the extent it has been this semester. Yes we need more in person time with students which we can create without blowing up the thousands of hours we put into making the curriculum engaging and accessible to all students. - Joanna Begin, Mathematics since 2003

On Tue, Nov 24, 2020 at 12:10 AM Mora Rothenberg <moraroth@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Dr. Janger,

I'm doing my best to understand these choices, but as you stated, it's very hard to figure out the options. Is there any way to just choose "keep things as they are, it's working for us"? I think the kids just need a few more social activities (especially the seniors); it might be really hard on everyone to try to shift the academic part, and I worry about safety especially with Covid cases raging through the winter months. I would definitely want the option to keep my kids home if I thought it best.

Thanks for all the hard work, as always.

Mora

On Fri, Nov 20, 2020 at 12:41 PM wrote:

Matthew,

Just a quick note to let you know that the reverse field trips have been extremely well-received by Charlotte. She has had them in honors Chem with Ms. L-D, AP English with Mr. Cincotta & honors French with Mme. Lahey.

And in comparing notes with folks in CA, GA, and even locally around here, they are envious of this offering. Kudos to you and the team for making that happen - it has been a positive contribution to the remote experience.

Happy holidays to you and your family,

On Thu, Nov 19, 2020 at 9:52 AM wrote:

Good morning, Dr. Janger,

We listened in to the school committee meeting last night and want to thank you for what you said—and for saying it with far more grace and patience than we might have :-)

Each time we hear you speak, it's so clear that you have worked incredibly hard to figure out how to make in-person learning happen. And it's also clear that you have prioritized safety and science while doing so.

We understand that lots of people want kids to go back to school, but that unfortunately can't matter very much right now. It astounds me that when hospitalizations and positive diagnoses are skyrocketing that school committee members ask you to think about in-person school more and be

more creative. It seems like you have done that already. Plus, spring semester just isn't that far away as you know—they seemed surprised that class schedules are already set.

So we cheered (literally) when you said that you have no more bandwidth for this, that you and your colleagues are putting in long days (and have been for months and months) and that if someone wants to come up with a plan that works, you will gladly look it over. You are right that this has been hard on everyone and that it's pretty much impossible to not be sad right now—but the fact is that putting off decisions that will disappoint some families right now isn't going to change the fact that there's a pandemic.

We just want to throw our support your way—your leadership has been impressive to us.

Take care and be well,

Patty Miranda Harlow and Spencer Harlow (Miranda, 9th grade)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Danuta Forbes** <danutaf17@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 3:30 PM  
Subject: Comment for tonight's CIAA meeting  
To: Karen Fitzgerald <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Dear SC members, Principal Janger, Superintendent Bodie, and Assistant Superintendent MacNeal,

I understand that we are in the midst of a nationwide surge in this pandemic, and entertaining the idea of in-person school may seem inappropriate at this time, but please take one moment to hear about my experience.

Today I had conferences with my son's teachers. They have been absolutely fantastic during this virtual pivot and online learning semester. They are engaging our kids as best they can, but both teachers independently confirmed what I suspected, that my son would learn much better in person than online, he's falling behind a bit, and distracted by other online temptations. He performs better when he's able to engage with other students in person and have his teachers physically present. I am not asking for in-person classes for everyone, not even my kid right now, but when counts go back down next semester, hopefully in February, March or beyond, I absolutely think parents should have the option of sending their kids into the school. Ottoson is



doing a fantastic job of hybrid learning, and AHS should find ways to at least have the Senior class and students with academic needs (not just on IEPs) prioritized for in-person learning. Not everyone will feel comfortable sending their child into the school, but for many, these past few months have been incredibly difficult.

Come up with a plan now, either for the Spring, or the Fall, but don't just sit there and do nothing. Make a plan now to get our kids back into the school. You can change the plan, but doing nothing and not looking ahead has made us question whether or not to send our 8th grader to AHS next. year. I imagine many others feel the same way.

Thanks,

Danuta Forbes

11/12/2020

To the Members of the School Committee,

I am parent of two Arlington High School students and a professor in a school of public health. I would like to thank you all for all of the hard work and decisions that have been made during an incredibly difficult time period, and convey some positive feedback about the year. Some of these thoughts have already been communicated to Dr. Janger.

Considering constraints related to the condition of the high school and public health recommendations, I think that the School Committee and school administrators have come up with an excellent plan. The combination of the semester system, synchronous remote learning and reverse field trips all work well together while best ensuring the safety of our children and the high school faculty. I know that there is a petition circulating among AHS parents asking for creativity in increasing in-person contact if possible, and this is certainly a worthy goal, if it can be done safely. In the following, I'd like to focus on less immediate goals.

Switching to a semester system was a brilliant idea. I hadn't realized that this system was in place in other high schools. The semester system decreases student stress, limits the number of remote zoom sessions per day and gives teachers the time to do a deeper dive into course material. While I don't know the status of remote learning in general in our state or others, I have heard of situations where large numbers of students are failing because they can't handle the usual course load of 6 – 7 courses per day remotely or in person. I would like to ask that the semester system be considered beyond this school year for several reasons. First, there is currently uncertainty as to how the remainder of the pandemic will play out. While I do think it's likely that there will be an effective vaccine, there is uncertainty as to the timing and what public health precautions will still need to be in place, even after a

vaccine is available. Second, as a college professor, I've always thought that high school was unnecessarily stressful for students. College students take at most four classes at any one time, while high school students may be juggling six or more courses, none of which are coordinated. Since the work has been done to come up with an optimal schedule, including reserving Wednesdays for activities that are not traditional academic courses, why not benefit from this schedule in the future?

In terms of planning for the spring semester, I do think it's a worthy goal to try to come up with in-person contact if it can be done safely, and particularly if a vaccine isn't available until after the end of the school year. However, we are unfortunately heading into a very dark period of the pandemic illustrated by increased rates in Massachusetts and nationally. So, again, I am referring to in-person contact if it can be done safely. Some question that need to be addressed will certainly be informed by state and national recommendations, but perhaps these discussions can also begin at the local level. These questions include the following:

- Once there is a vaccine, is there a plan to get students back in the building as soon as possible?
- Will vaccination be required for students to be back in the building? If so, will remote instruction continue for students who can't be vaccinated or refuse to be vaccinated?
- How will the emotional and mental health issues of students arising from the pandemic, including the possible discomfort of being back in larger groups of people, be address?
- What efforts can be made in the future to mitigate the spread of disease in classrooms?

In the spirit of full disclosure, I was not feeling positive about sending my kids to in-person classes prior to learning that the high school would be remote, because of the lack of COVID testing. This is not a criticism as almost no public schools have the resources to do testing. I didn't feel confident about safety and felt it was unfair to force the high school faculty back into classrooms, particularly when it was known that teens spread the virus as easily as adults. However, I feel very comfortable with the reverse field trips outdoors, or in large well-ventilated spaces in the high school. Without testing, we would have no idea who was infected and who was spreading the virus within and outside the AHS community. Recently, Wellesley High School came up with the resources to do weekly testing and found 6 cases of COVID. They immediately switched to remote learning. We all want what is best for our children, but until a robust testing system or vaccine is available, we should continue to exercise caution.

Thank you for your time,  
Janice Weinberg

On Thu, Nov 12, 2020 at 9:48 PM Lori & Colleen <scholphfamily@yahoo.com> wrote:  
Dear Dr. Janger,

In light of the upcoming report to the school committee on students' experience with remote learning this year, we wanted to write and share the experience of our 9th grader. We do appreciate the difficulty of shifting to remote this year, however, our son's experience has been underwhelming, to put it mildly. He started school eager and excited to learn and now is bored and unchallenged.

The semester schedule does not lend itself easily to Zoom. 80 minute classes on Zoom are long and often boring if a teacher simply lectures. There has been little opportunity to have breakout sessions with other students and when they do happen it is often unmoderated so little interaction takes place. Also, there was only one reverse field trip per class and with upcoming holidays I doubt more will happen.

If next semester is fully remote there needs to be more in person learning opportunities for the students to connect with their teachers and peers. He has not met one new student due to the constraints of online learning. Building social emotional connections should be a priority for students during their first year of high school and we have not seen any activities that focus on that.

The final issue is the combined A/Honors program. Our son only has one core class this semester and so far the "honors" program has meant choosing to do extra work such as making an outline and flashcards or taking on extra homework. He was very proud that his middle school teachers recommended him for honors for all core courses but so far it has not been challenging or stimulating as expected.

We understand there are challenges to creating a full hybrid program next semester but we would hope the administration and teachers would consider some creative, safe ways the students can experience more in person learning opportunities to supplement remote, as the current experience is creating a disengaged group of learners from what we can see with our son and many of his friends.

Sincerely,  
Lori Schwartz and Colleen Olphert, parents of a 9th grader

On Mon, Nov 2, 2020 at 5:38 PM Helen Kissler <helenkissler@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Janger,

I thought I would share my message below with you too. My daughter Tilly (9th grade) really raved about her teachers this weekend. Thank you for supporting the teachers and all our students. Tilly's teachers are doing an amazing job.

All the best,  
Helen



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Helen Kissler** <helenkissler@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 2, 2020 at 4:12 PM

Subject: Thank you

To: Elizabeth Basso <ebasso@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Joseph Shay <joshay@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Kathryn Mostow <kmostow@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Hello,

I wanted to tell you that Tilly and I took a walk at the weekend and she told me - in great detail! - about how she *really* likes her teachers this year. She said that even though she greatly dislikes not being able to attend in-person school, she is so happy that she has the best teachers. She said that you are all very different, but are all energetic, kind and engaged even when the students are staring expressionless and not giving any response. She said that she wishes the students would respond to you more! It is very different to her little brother's Kindergarten class that she has witnessed in the students' response to online teaching :)

I wanted to say thank you as I can only imagine how much work this all is. We appreciate it very much, especially when we hear from Tilly about fantastic she thinks you all are.

With best wishes,  
Helen

PS I'm sure you wouldn't but, please don't tell her I told you this!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Allison Perkins** <perkins28@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 10, 2020 at 10:22 AM

Subject: AHS Feedback

To: Matthew Janger <MJanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Cc: <jmorgan@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <whayner@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <pschlichtman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <kallisonampe@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <lexton@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <lkardon@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <jthielman@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>, <aps\_superintendent@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Michael Perkins <perkins6288@gmail.com>

Hi Dr. Janger,

As parents of an AHS freshman and considering the upcoming school committee discussions about in person learning options, we are writing to share our perspective on current status and goals for moving forward. Our daughter is taking Physical Science, Modern World History, Spanish II and 9<sup>th</sup> grade wellness this semester. As twenty year residents of Arlington, we have been and continue to be committed to supporting our schools, including the administrators, teachers and students. Dr. Bodie and school committee members are copied on this email in the spirit of transparency and to expedite sharing our feedback.

There have been several positive factors in the current model which include -

- The commitment from teachers to adapt to a remote learning model, in the face of enormous challenges, is highly commendable. Overall, we're impressed by teachers that are learning and using new technology as well as understanding how to connect with and keep students engaged.
- In most cases, we've seen teachers recognize the complexity of a new model for everyone, including the students. We observe them asking for and listening to feedback and making accommodations when needed.
- The "reverse field trips" at AHS have allowed students to interact in person with their teachers and their peers. While our daughter is finding ways to see friends safely, it is important to her mental health and growth to make connections with other students as well. After each reverse field trip, she returns home happier and more confident in her learning experience.

There are also some key factors that we feel should change going forward, which include –

- Increased opportunities for in person classes are necessary for learning and mental health wellness, including social emotional development. We understand that AHS building issues limit in person learning options, but believe there is room to increase the opportunities above the present state. As we learn more about safe and successful models at other school districts such as alternating weeks and offering certain courses in person (i.e. science or math), we believe that these and other options are worthy of substantial consideration for AHS.
- The impact of remote learning, connecting primarily through Zoom and limiting interaction with peers, has an increasingly adverse impact on student's wellness as this becomes their "new normal." Meaningful check ins with students and their caregivers regarding student's social emotional well-being and learning are critical to evaluating our school's programs. Using attendance and grades as primary data sources is not sufficient and does not reflect how our children are really doing or how effective school programs are. We are concerned about reports that student and family input is being studied, without seeing these check ins or any data from them.

- The semesterized schedule does not offer enough academic opportunities for many students. Additionally, an individual teacher's effectiveness has more substantial consequences in the new model of the semesterized schedule. An ineffective teacher for one of just two core courses is substantially more negative than having one ineffective teacher amongst four core courses in a traditional schedule. This semester our daughter has a highly ineffective Science teacher (we believe you are familiar with the issues but can discuss if helpful). Our student that loves to learn and was excited by the prospect of taking all Honors courses is underchallenged and frustrated this semester by not having enough courses and because one of her two core courses is not meeting expectations. We understand that this model must remain in effect through the school year and would like an evaluation and reconsideration of this model at AHS going forward.

In summary, we see many teachers adapting and rising to the challenges of remote learning while we know that improvements must continue in the semester and year ahead to better educate our children, including meeting their social emotional needs. We recognize that there are many challenges to in person learning beyond building safety issues, from teacher negotiations to course offerings and more. We are willing to provide support and make tradeoffs where possible to see improvements. We look forward to hearing about additional options for next semester and how AHS can plan to make the 2021-22 school year better as well.

Best Regards,

Allison & Michael Perkins  
28 Dodge St.  
Arlington, MA

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Spencer Harlow/Patty Miranda Harlow** <theharlows@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Nov 1, 2020 at 1:16 PM

Subject: The Spring semester

To: <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Cc: Matthew Janger <mjanger@arlington.k12.ma.us>, Dr. Roderick MacNeal, Jr <rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Hello Ms. Fitzgerald, Dr. Janger and Dr. MacNeal,

Our daughter is a 9th grader at AHS and I want to write (hopefully briefly because I imagine you all have full inboxes) to say that we fully support all-remote learning in the spring. We know this doesn't work well for everyone, but we feel strongly that it's time for big sacrifices, selflessness



and concern for faculty and staff in the high school. We trust those leading the school to make sure that kids don't slip through the cracks and that learning takes place. Our daughter's experience so far has been wonderful.

She was at Stratton from K-3 and then at Belmont Day School from 4-8. We had thought that the switch back to APS might be challenging because BDS had the resources and time to present an impressive remote program in the spring, but we were wrong. She feels so connected to her teachers and increasingly to her peers (she only knows a couple of kids in three of her classes and no one in one class) and we feel strongly that the balance between academic rigor (she's in honors classes) and emotional well-being is being handled wonderfully. She is enjoying this year so much more than last year.

My in-laws were little kids during the depression and we think often of all the sacrifices those families made to get through that time, as well as those they made during WWII. We know this is no fun and boring, but we also feel as though what's important is getting through the pandemic with as few additional deaths as possible.

I am in college admissions and remind everyone I know that this is something impacting the entire world, not just a city or country. The playing field is no more uneven than it has been in the past in lots of ways. Much good can come of this time in terms of connections, enriching family life, and learning new life skills (my parents are benefiting from many meals and baked goods made by our daughter throughout the week though we need to teach her the life skill of doing dishes :-).

We assume that many families are pushing hard for in-person school and we just want to add a push to keep school remote. Ms. Fitzgerald, we assume that our email can be shared with the other school committee members.

Thank you all so much for all your time, thought and diligence in navigating the proverbial uncharted waters. It can't be easy.

Best,

Patty Miranda Harlow  
Spencer Harlow

10/21

Dear Principal Janger...

I am sure that your inbox is inundated with emails from parents and other stakeholders as this unprecedented experience unfolds. While not wanting to add to the tide of questions, opinions, thoughts, and probably demands, I wanted to take a moment to offer my humble thanks for two innovative elements that have been introduced during this remote learning adventure.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the semester-approach learning model. For those of us (and our numbers are quite high here in Arlington) that have completed many

years of post-secondary education, we have possibly forgotten that as teenagers we were asked to juggle seven to eight blocks a day with different instructors, different assignment schedules, and often seemingly unrelated content. Our colleges and universities take a different approach--one that I am grateful has been a part of this year at AHS. For my daughter, this has been a positive change, and one I hope might be considered as precedent when we eventually return to in-person learning.

The second innovation, although perhaps born of logistical necessity, has been the four-day learning week. With Wednesdays built in as an opportunity to seek support, participate in advisory, and pursue learning opportunities like Relaxation, the stress load seems more balanced. As pressures to perform increase for our teenagers, this intentional, embedded recognition of the need to balance demands and well-being is a welcome change. This is another element of the remote adventure that I am hopeful may be retained when we return to in-person learning.

Thank you for taking a precious moment of your time to read these reflections. While these are just the thoughts of one parent among many at AHS, I appreciate your ongoing work and thoughtful consideration.

10/22

Hi Dr. Janger -- Just a quick "shout out" to XXX 4 teachers XXX. They ran fantastic open house events - informative, welcoming, warm, timely and really, really impressive. All four are also hitting it out of the park as teachers in this weird time. I am amazed at how hard they are working, how much content and feedback they are giving to students and how engaging the classes are. My freshman is so happy and my partner & I are relieved.

AND, a shout out to you and your administrative team for making the bold move to blocks/semester courses. I will admit to being skeptical about how this would work, but am delighted to see how deep/engaging the classes are and how focused the work can be when there are fewer content areas to try to master at once. And, again, I commend how these four teachers are using the longer time. It's really great.

So, this is just an email from one happy parent to say thank you, thank you, thank you for all you guys are doing to make this year safe and productive as we move through this pandemic situation.

Warm Regards,

10/23

A quick email to say...



1. Terrific open house! The teachers were very prepared and relaxed. I loved having my feet up



with a glass of wine. Consider keeping this.

2. x - junior - is loving the 80 minute classes. So less stressful. Less frenetic day. Consider keeping.

Keep up the great work! We're proud of the AHS staff.

On Wed, Aug 19, 2020 at 12:43 PM Stephanie Larason <slarason@gmail.com> wrote:  
Dear Dr. Janger, Mr. McCarthy, Dr. Bodie, Dr. MacNeal, and School Committee,

Thank you all for your tireless work at this exceptionally challenging time. As the parent of a rising senior, I look forward to the upcoming details of the AHS plans and the Thursday evening meeting.

Until then I am sharing my deep concerns about the equity and safety of the current hybrid/remote return plan given the unique challenges of the AHS facility and needs of our high school learners. The uncertainty about if and when the AHS facility can be made safe for hybrid, in combination with the fact that the ability to choose from a full range of courses is a large facet of equity for high schoolers, points strongly to a different re-opening path: **commit to a fully remote first semester at AHS.**

This serves the goal of safety by acknowledging the seriousness of the challenges and unknowns about the AHS facility as per Mr. Feeney's remarks at the 8/10 School Committee meeting, and committing to a **realistic** timeframe to assess and address them. It serves the goal of equity by making the full range of course selections available to all students, rather than punishing those who choose remote. Due to the wise, semesterized plan adopted by the high school leadership, a remote first semester with the potential to launch a hybrid second semester (which families could opt into or out of at that time) would appear to be achievable without the scheduling issues it would cause in K-8.

Unless the 8/28 facilities report shows a fast, unambiguous, and demonstrably achievable path to facility safety, we need to deal with the fact that all AHS students (excepting high needs cohorts) will likely spend a big chunk, if not all, of the first semester remote. Under the current plan, **that would result in two separate-but-unequal remote cohorts**, with the remote "hybrid" cohort enjoying a full range of offerings, and the remote-by-choice cohort stuck with what Dr. Janger's email of 8/18 described as "more limited offerings."

While the district recommended and the school committee approved a whole-district hybrid model, I believe that failing to address the specific circumstances of AHS does not serve our learners. The cost of less in-person learning is, on average, smaller for high school cohorts than for younger cohorts, and the cost of limited course offerings is much larger, especially for



juniors and seniors. In the 8/14 subcommittee meeting, Mr. McCarthy shared that AHS is already planning to make in-person accommodations for students who show signs of struggle with remote learning, beyond identified high needs cohorts, so it would seem there is a plan in place to guard that aspect of equity in an all-remote model. Add to this Dr. MacNeal's remarks at the same meeting indicating that research indicates that hybrid is inferior to remote for learning success, and I am truly struggling to understand why we are pushing forward with hybrid for AHS, at least for the first semester.

I am requesting your specific explanation of why you believe, if indeed the facilities challenges are significant, that the current plan better serves the goals of safety and equity for AHS students than a remote first semester - in which all students would be safe, and all would have access to the full range of courses.

With deep gratitude for your service,  
Stephanie Larason

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## PARENT INPUT

10/21

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I am sure that your inbox is inundated with emails from parents and other stakeholders as this unprecedented experience unfolds. While not wanting to add to the tide of questions, opinions, thoughts, and probably demands, I wanted to take a moment to offer my humble thanks for two innovative elements that have been introduced during this remote learning adventure.

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