

Arlington School Committee
School Committee Special Meeting
Thursday, October 8, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Conducted by remote participation per Governor Baker's Emergency Order of March 12, 2020

Open Meeting

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Morgan read the Governor's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, pertaining to remote participation of public meetings during the state of emergency due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download>

Ms. Morgan confirmed member attendance and said Ms. Liz Exton arrived after her school open house at 8:00 p.m. Paul Schlichtman, Secretary Present, Len Kardon Present, Bill Hayner, Vice Chair Present, Kirsi Allison-Ampe Present, Jeff Thielman Present, Jane Morgan, Chair Present.

Ms. Morgan confirmed staff members in attendance:

- Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools
- Roderick MacNeal, Assistant Superintendent
- Robert Spiegel, Human Resources Director
- Michael Mason, CFO
- Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education
- Sam Karusus, Co-Chair Remote Academy
- Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant
- Roni Tivan, Arlington High School Dean
- Kate Peretz, Hardy Principal
- Brian Meringer, Ottoson Principal
- Eva Liner Co-Chair Remote Academy
- Mme. Fabienne Pierre-Maxwell, Gibbs Principal
- Jenna Fernandes, AEA

Fall Opening Update

Ms. Fabienne Pierre-Maxwell principal of Gibbs school provided details of the Gibbs school opening and said overall it went well and the children are adjusting to wearing masks and said some challenges with orchestra and chorus, as well as with special education, but working to make everything better. Ms. Morgan stated her children are at the same school but different times for her children to attend band and said the Ottoson Middle school plan has orchestra on the remote days which seems to be a better scenario. Dr. Allison-Ampe stated that orchestra use to be at the end of the day, and worked out great for her.

Dr. Bodie invited Dr. Michael Hanna and Ms. Kate Peretz to talk about how the elementary classes and how they are going. Dr. Hanna gave recognition to all faculty, staff, and students at all of the elementary schools and on the professionalism and commitment each staff members had to open and welcome children back to school. He said there have been challenges. Ms. Peretz, echoed everything Dr. Hanna said and she wished she could have more students on site, and was worried about student's mask wearing but said everyone has been very supportive. She acknowledged some bumps along the way and challenges such as the technology, working with Zoom, and other platforms and tools but everyone is working hard to making things work correctly. She is continuing to hiring new Teacher Assistances. The first PTO Zoom meeting was held and many are feeling very optimistic that this will be a good year. Dr. Bodie would like to extend her appreciation to all administration and staff for their hard work.

Mr. Kardon appreciated the update but he is still curious how short we are for those students in the building due to staffing issues and he would like to know how close we are at adding back the 45 minutes to the day. Dr. Hanna said elementary principals will meet to make a sketch of tipping points and said it will be a lot of shifting as we are adding more staff and what we need for onsite and offsite programming. Mr. Kardon said others schools are working hybrid and asked why we are structuring remote days differently. Ms. Peretz said other colleagues in other districts don't have art, music, and physical education and not live check-in. Dr. Allison-Ampe asked where families should go if they need chrome books. Ms. Peretz suggested to direct them to their school principal. Mr. Thielman thanked everyone on getting the remote and hybrid off the ground and said parents are pleased to have students back to school. He said at the Community Relations meeting last week a quote was made: it always seems impossible until it's done. He did acknowledge that there are concerns that more activities should be set up on Wednesday especially when hybrid students are not in class. Mr. Thielman then asked if Dr. Bodie and the administration had thought of recommending to bring in all kindergarteners, first and second graders in person for this school year. Ms. Peretz responded that they are thinking of it all the time and that would be the goal. As soon as we are able but safety comes first. Mr. Schlichtman was concerned for bringing in more students and wanted to know how things were working for them. Mr. Hanna explained that five year olds want to be together. They are happy to be reading and learning. Ms. Peretz said for the young students in remote academy, when they are home on hybrid days, they are taking turns, follow directions, sharing and practicing speaking and seem to be doing a great job.

The committee members would like more communication to parents on what is expected when students go to art, music or physical education. They would like to know what time the day ends for both remote and hybrid students. The administration said students should be working till 11:30 with the teachers but continue learning time till 1:00 p.m. . Ms. Morgan wanted to confirm the time when hybrid students get out on Wednesday and asked if it was 11:00 or 11:30. It was determined that the day would end at 11:30 and hybrid at home are done at 11:00 but

the administrations said students end at 11:30 and that teachers may have students engaged in doing work and then will come back before 11:30.

The Remote Academy overall for the first three weeks have been running smoothly and opened with 875 students in 40 different classes, led by Ms. Samantha Karustis and Ms. Eva Liner. They have had some ups and downs with technology but are working hard to help the students. They have received feedback from families and feel students are engaged and happy to be in class and teachers are reporting that families are being supportive too. After Ms. Morgan asked Dr. MacNeal what system we will use for elementary notifications for students, he said he is discussing this with Dr. Bodie and David Good. Mr. Schlichtman said he heard from parents as did Mr. Thielman that parents are thrilled with the remote learning and with the social and emotional focus and wellbeing for students too. Ms. Karustis added that teachers learned a lot from last year and are sharing best practices. Dr. Allison-Ampe asked how things are going for special education students going for remote academy. Samantha said special education services are fully staffed and students are receiving services and it is going smoothly. Eva said remote setting and delivery of services are different. They are making adjustments for the students who wanted to move some to hybrid. We do have a policy but we are flexible and if space is available.

It was suggested to move to the METCO Program overview at this time.

METCO Program Overview

Margaret Credle Thomas provided the following APS METCO program overview for the school year 2019-2020. She said there were 74 students that participated in the program and the students are in Grades K-12 and attend at the Hardy, Peirce, Bishop, Gibbs, Ottoson, and at Arlington High School

The five APS METCO team members are Director- Margaret Credle Thomas, Social Worker- Tonika Claiborne, Social Worker Intern- Richelle Smith, and Bus monitors, Donna Coakley and Kitana Cruz provided services after the spring closure and reached out to families through telephone calls and emails to determine the most important resources families needed. Families had the opportunity to receive Chromebook from Arlington Public Schools on distribution dates. The METCO team also met families in Boston to provide a Chromebook for those unable to drive to Arlington. Social workers provided students virtual social community lunch groups, and METCO contracted with Ann's Christian Learning Center to provide supplemental tutorial support for 40 students who had been receiving intervention services. Also METCO engaged Mindy Wright Consultants to provide college access workshops for juniors and seniors. Family outreach continued to check-in on virtual learning and to provide referrals to other supports as needed.

2020-2021 Transportation: Program follows Department of Elementary Secondary guidelines and is providing transportation to 30 students from families who have chosen the hybrid model. The elementary bus has 17 riders, and the secondary bus has 17 riders, including bus monitor and driver. Four Boston-resident students attend 4-days a week. We also provide reverse field trip transportation for AHS students.

Fall Update Continue

Ottoson Middle School

Brian Meringer said the Ottoson opening went very well and pleased and said the kids seem to enjoy getting back to school and good reports with remote academy. Remote Academy has teachers who want to be there and received emails on great job teachers are doing. Brian said his staff has been outstanding and his students have kept masks on and that he will remind students to social distance.

Mr. Kardon commented that he was concerned at the beginning of the year but said things have fallen into place with remote days, with the hybrid program, and on Wednesdays where teachers plan to give asynchronous learning. Mr. Thielman wanted to make sure enough math content will be covered for students so they will be ready for high school math. Brian said he spoke with Mr. Coleman and Matt said it's hard to say what percentage will be covered but teachers know what units to stress and what units to omit and sat with teachers regularly on what concepts and theories they need to know. Dr. MacNeal concurred that teachers know what to cover. Ms. Morgan is impressed with the OMS schedule and that it's a nice balance, robust classes, and she is amazed what teachers are doing and that they are meeting one on one with students.

Arlington High School

Ms. Veronica Tivan, Dean at Arlington High School is filling in tonight for Dr. Janger who had a conflict. She is happy to report things have gone smoothly and echo's what the curriculum leaders have said. The high school classes and his semester based schedule is working with students taking on an average of three classes per semester and that the attendance remains high and students are staying engaged. They are doing a reverse field trips, and seeing students face to face. The staff have been handing out supplies and text books to students while social distancing. Ms. Tivan said the band has meet on the field and the high school teams have been meeting too. Some concerns she shared are on technology issues, Zoom bombings and joining in different classrooms. The building issue with the ventilation system and with classrooms and small populations of special needs students in the building is working. Some students are taking GED classes and working to engage all student but noted overall remote is going well.

Mr. Kardon would like more reverse field trips while the weather is good so students can meet in person. Dr. Allison-Ampe said the students are saying it's a big difference for students to have sports practice and making them feel good and be able to see friends. Currently 100 girls are

taking cross country running. The school leadership is encouraging teachers to try and get as many students to connect with adults especially if a student is late or absent from a class. Ms. Morgan is having a hard time understanding what students are doing on Wednesday. Ms. Tivan said student could have a club meeting, which they strongly encourage. Physical education class, advisory meetings, and extra help is offered. The teachers are meeting with students for the extra help, students are working on college essays, and seniors are meeting and planning and collaborating.

Update on SAT plans for students

Ms. Tivan said the high school is planning to offer SAT testing on Saturday, October 27 in the red and blue gym. The administration is working with the Department of Health and with DESE on all discussions taking place to offer the SAT to seniors who have yet to take the SAT's which is about 160 to 170 students. Dr. Bodie said we can accommodate students in those two spaces.

Update of Covid testing

Dr. Bodie said the Covid testing starts for in person staff tomorrow at the Dallin, Thompson, and OMS. She appreciates the work of Sue Franchi and Cindy Sheridan Curran to run and continue the program which they may shift the testing day from Friday to Monday. Ms. Jenna Fernandes, AEA rep, thanked Dr. Bodie and said the staff is grateful Arlington is providing testing for the APS staff and Ms. Morgan is glad as well.

Second Read on Revision to 2020-2021 School Calendar

Dr. Roderick MacNeal presented the revision to the 2020-2021 school calendar and said based on timeline he pushed the conference dates back due to holidays, progress reports and to alleviate the stress on parents.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, seconded by Mr. Hayner, it was voted to adopt the Revision to 2020-2021 School Calendar.

Roll Call: Ms. Exton Yes, Mr. Kardon yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Schlichtman Yes, Mr. Hayner Yes, and Ms. Morgan Yes. (7-0)

Hiring Update

Mr. Spiegel updated the hiring report from two weeks ago and will continue to report on the number of new hires from September 24, 2020. The following have been hired: Ottoson Spanish Teacher, Brackett Special Education Teacher, Menotomy Preschool Nurse, and Menotomy Preschool Nurse (1:1). Three TAs and 1 BSP for Elementary Remote Academy, BSP & TA – Stratton, BSP - Menotomy Preschool, TA - Menotomy Preschool, Kindergarten TA – Hardy, Building Sub – Gibbs, Building Sub – Ottoson, TA – Dallin, 1 BSP and 3 TAs.

Diversity Hiring

As of October 1, 2020 Mr. Spiegel presented the Diversity hiring report employees which does not include substitutes, coaches and community education employees. The new hires since last October 1, 2019 shows we have hired 7 Asian, 11 Black, 10 Hispanic, and 16 Non-Identified and 101 White staff. The data shows for our current employees we have 37 Asian, 35 Black, 32 Hispanic, 2 Indian or Native America, 95 Non-Identified and 848 white to total 1049 staff. Our current student data for 2020 shows we have 197 Black, 4 American Indian or Alaskan Native, 757 Asian, 370 Hispanic/Latino, 5 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 434 Two or more Races and 4144 white students.

The committee members were concerned on ways Arlington could retain teachers of color to stay in our district. Mr. Spiegel pointed out that we try to retain every teacher. He said teachers of color leave for different reasons. We have a strong mentoring program for all new hires and we have strong curriculum leaders but it is a challenge and some leave the district for more money and others leave the profession. Dr. MacNeal said it is difficult to hire people of color primary in a majority of white districts because he said many of color want to go back where they can give back to their own communities where they attended school.

Mr. Kardon suggested offering a hiring bonus to bring in more staff to fill unfilled positions. The student enrollment numbers was discussed since they show a decline but Dr. MacNeal said many parents are opting for homeschooling and the reason is due to the pandemic. Some families created a pod and they have hired a teacher and share the cost. Dr. Bodie said that the Department of Education is aware of the drop in student enrollments and discussions are ongoing with DESE and they may do a multiyear average on enrollment due to concerns on Chapter 70 funding for school districts.

Community Relations Chat Dates

Mr. Hayner would like to suggest holding School Committee Chat Dates for Elementary – November 7th, METCO – November 14th and Secondary – December 5th.

Mr. Hayner provided the guidelines, the meetings will be virtual and no more than two members can attend and no deliberation. Mr. Hayner will assess how the meetings are going and discuss it again in December if to move forward with additional meetings.

On a **motion** by Mr. Kardon, amended by Mr. Schlichtman, it was moved that the School Committee authorize the Community Relations subcommittee to schedule and implement these forum dates and times of their choosing as recommended by Mr. Hayner.

Roll Call: Ms. Exton Yes, Mr. Kardon yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Schlichtman Yes, Mr. Hayner Yes, and Ms. Morgan Yes. (7-0)

Superintendent Report

Dr. Bodie provided the AHS Building report and said everything is moving forward and on time but since many have asked she point out that we cannot accelerate the building project even though students are not in school. Kathy mentioned a ground breaking ceremony may happen in December with MSBA, OPM and School Committee when the first steel beam is put in.

Consent agenda

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, seconded by Mr. Thielman, it was voted to approve the consent agenda as presented, with Warrant 21065 date 9/29/2020 and the approval of Social Emotional Learning Coach job description.

Roll Call: Ms. Exton Yes, Mr. Kardon yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Schlichtman Yes, Mr. Hayner Yes, and Ms. Morgan Yes. (7-0)

Subcommittee/Liaison Reports and Announcements

- Budget - Dr. Allison-Ampe said they will meet in a couple of weeks to discuss FY 22 budget.
- Community Relations Mr. Hayner said the will meet on October 16, 2020 at 4:30 pm.
- Curriculum, Instruction Accountability and Assessment, CIAA held two meetings, one with Department of Health and Board of Health, to discuss COVID testing program and the DESE Covid standards and health metrics issue. The second CIAA meeting was to discuss issues with the Remote Academy and special education issues on covering inclusion services where students were scattered over many classrooms. The committee would like to work on the superintendent's evaluation and human rights request.
- Facilities Mr. Thielman to schedule meeting before October 16
- Policies Mr. Schlichtman no report.
- Superintendent Search Process Mr. Schlichtman said tomorrow at 3:00 is the deadline to apply for Superintendent of Schools and the Screening meeting will be held next Thursday, October 15 and the interviews will be held in the month of October and questions for first round of interviews.
- High school building committee report already provided.
 - Parmenter is open and trying to get tour from the AHS Building committee and maybe a School Committee trip too.
- Liaison
 - Mr. Kardon attended the Long Range Planning meeting and said that we got more state aid than planned for. The LRP will meet again in December but going forward things may change.
- Announcements

Mr. Hayner reported that The Rotary Club of Arlington, will place flags on the lawn at the Water Tower on Park Avenue, October 22, at 11:30 a.m.

Future items

Mr. Schlichtman said he received the MASC delegate summary and would like it on the agenda for the next meeting and requested a report on the AHS mascot.

Correspondence Received

Warrant 21065 9/29/2020 total amount \$599,641.65
Regular School Committee minutes 9/24/2020
Letter from TASA D. Savage
2020-2021 Revision of APS School Calendar
Social and Emotional Learning Coach job description
2020 Diversity Report
2020 Hiring Report updated
Community Relations Community Chat schedule 2020-2021
Guidelines of Virtual SC Community Relations Chats
METCO Program overview 10 8 2020
Staffing Update 10 8 2020
New Revision to 2020-2021 School Calendar 10 8 2020
Email regarding Zoom booming

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was voted to adjourn at 9:51 p.m.
Roll Call: Ms. Exton Yes, Mr. Kardon yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes,
Mr. Schlichtman Yes, Mr. Hayner Yes, and Ms. Morgan Yes. (7-0)

Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee