

**Arlington School Committee
School Committee Special Meeting
Tuesday, November 24, 2020
6:30 PM**

Conducted by Remote Participation

By Remote Participation per Governor Baker's Emergency Order of March 12, 2020

Ms. Morgan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Morgan confirmed member attendance: Liz Exton Present, Paul Schlichtman, Secretary Present, Len Kardon Present, Bill Hayner, Vice Chair Present, Kirsi Allison-Ampe Present, Jeff Thielman Present, and Jane Morgan, Chair Present

Ms. Morgan confirmed staff members in attendance: Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Roderick MacNeal, Assistant Superintendent, Robert Spiegel, Human Resources Director, Michael Mason, CFO, Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education, Julianna Keyes, AEA President, Matthew Janger, AHS Principal, Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant

Open Meeting

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>

This is a special meeting scheduled two weeks ago for Superintendent Search Process after our regular school committee meeting interviews. We will also discuss the AHS report at this meeting. Thank you to those you sent comments by email, there is no public comment scheduled for the special meeting.

Winter Sports for AHS

Mr. John Bowler, Director of Athletics attended the meeting tonight to seek the School Committee's approval of certain winter sports approved by the MIAA for AHS and to hold games and practices with the conditions that the safety protocols are followed. All AHS tryouts will start on December 14, 2020 and the all league games will start after the first of the year. The winter sports teams include the boys and girls hockey teams, girls and boys basketball teams, gymnastics and the ski team. No transportation will be provided by the school, no locker rooms will be available, basketball players will be required to wear masks at all times, and the same for the gymnastics team players. If a team member tests positive, then the entire team will be considered close contacts and will need to quarantine. The Superintendents of the Middlesex league are meeting on Wednesday, November 25 to vote approval of winter sports, if for any reason they don't approve this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Hayner, it was moved to approve, The Arlington High School winter sports program, for boys' and girls' basketball, boys' and girls' ice hockey, gymnastics and skiing schedule as determined by the Middlesex League superintendents.
Roll Call: Liz Exton Yes, Len Kardon Yes, Kirsi Allison-Ampe Yes, Jeff Thielman Yes, Paul Schlichtman Yes, Bill Hayner Yes, Jane Morgan (7-0)

The committee members were supportive of having students participate and being with other students, but also concerned since the health department recommends 6 feet distancing but it was explained that the students will be wearing masks and feels it is important for the students to be able to have the opportunity to be with other students.

AHS Reopening Plan

Dr. Janger presented his sample model at the previous School Committee meetings and tonight he would like to focus on the outline of the master schedule structure for the semester 2, provide a timeline for the decision, review of 2-cohort options and provide an overview of reasonable hybrid options.

Dr. Janger wants to assure everyone he reads everyone's emails and acknowledges that he and his staff are trying to consider all options and doing the best to bounce off everyone's opinions. Whatever model we choose we will build options into it. He will look at feedback and the goals to make this happen and consider the safety for students, staff and community, academics progress, mental health, social interaction, equity of access, students with disabilities and COVID readiness.

The current model is:

- 4x4 Semesterised year
- Most classes and students are remote for Semester 1
- Moderate and high needs students offered in school programming
- Reverse field trips and other in person programming offered
- Athletics and extracurricular continue

The AHS Semester 2 presentation can be found [here](#). This primarily explains sample hybrid schedules:

Hybrid instruction involves a mix of live, in-person instruction, remote instruction, and independent learning activities.

- Cohort model - in a hybrid cohort model, classes are divided into smaller sub-groups of students so that they can receive live, in-person instruction in smaller groups for social distancing purposes.
- Shift model - in a hybrid shift model, classes are not divided, instead subsets of classes (e.g., by department, grade) meet in whole group or partial groups to allow for social distancing.

- Combined Cohort/Shift - one can combine cohorts and shifts to make more spaces available (e.g., only English classes come in and are divided in cohorts)
- Simulcast - In person class with students participating remotely

It would depend on what program we decide to do and the subcommittee will discuss this at our next Curriculum, Instruction, Accountable and Assessment (CIAA) meeting on Thursday, December 3, at 6:30 p.m. Mr. McCarthy did speak about the classroom needs to run the programs at the high school since we all want students in the building but don't think 50/50 hybrid can work.

The committee continued to discuss the model options and the impact this will have on teachers shifting their teaching plans again, students moving to another plan, while many parents are saying they are happy with the current plan. It is not desirable to disrupt special education schedules either. We want to bring as many students back but we need to do it as safely as possible. The survey will be open until November 30, and the committee will hear more from Dr. Janger at the next CIAA meeting. The committee is asking that more collaboration is needed to solve the problems and fill the DESE requirements on in person learning but the safety of students is our first priority.

Superintendent hiring conversation

Ms. Morgan stated that Dr. Bodie notified the committee of her plans to retire at the end of June 30, 2021. The Superintendent Search Screening committee made up of 15 members brought forward two finalist candidates to be the new Superintendent of Schools. Ms. Morgan is seeking to hire Dr. Greer or hire Dr. Homan. She would like to hear where the committee members are at in their decision process, since this is the first time meeting in open session due to open meeting laws. Ms. Morgan asked if the committee needs more information? Does the committee seek to search for additional candidates? Does the committee seek to schedule additional meetings. Can the committee say where they are at in their decision process or do they need more information.

Ms. Exton, Mr. Kardon, Dr. Allison-Ampe, Mr. Thielman and Ms. Morgan all stated in detail that they have done their due diligence, contacted references, spoken to their respectful school committee members, colleagues in their school district and town managers and all agree to support their favorite candidate of Dr. Elizabeth Homan to be the next Superintendent of Schools for Arlington Public Schools.

Mr. Schlichtman and Mr. Hayner both stated they support Dr. Victoria Greer as their favorite candidate for Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Schlichtman was very concerned and said the committee was responding to quickly and suggested setting up a virtual site visit for each candidate.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, seconded by Mr. Hayner for discussion, to take up the decision of hiring a Superintendent at our next meeting, request the search process committee to set up a virtual site visits for each candidate.

Roll Call: Liz Exton No, Len Kardon No, Kirsi Allison-Ampe No, Jeff Thielman No, Paul Schlichtman Yes, Bill Hayner No, Jane Morgan No, (1-6) motion fails

After hearing from the committee, Mr. Hayner through the chair, asked Paul if he would reconsider his vote, if the rest of committee agreed to first do site visits and that the committee unanimously came to an agreement on Arlington's next Superintendent. Mr. Schlichtman stated he would not reconsider his candidate choice, even after virtual sites and he strongly feels this is the wrong decision To hire Dr. Homan, and is not the mission of the search process. Therefore, the Mr. Hayner and the rest of the committee members voted not to support the motion to set up virtual site visit.

The committee members all feel they followed the best process and heard from the majority of community members, central office, faculty, staff, parents and students and are in agreement and are very comfortable that Dr. Elizabeth Homan is the preferred candidate to be our next Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools.

The committee members appreciate hearing different views and acknowledges that everyone did their research and that it can be awkward to have difficult discussions in public. They agreed they don't need to do another search and appreciates the work of the Superintendent Search Screening Committee and the candidates they brought forward as the two finalists. The committee would like to have the chair begin negotiations with Dr. Elizabeth Homan and connect with MASC if need be and bring back a contract to our next meeting.

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Ms. Exton, it was voted to direct the chair to move into negotiations with Dr. Elizabeth Homan for the next Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools.
Roll Call Roll Call: Liz Exton Yes, Len Kardon Yes, Kirsi Allision-Ampe Yes, Jeff Thielman Yes Paul Schlichtman No, Bill Hayner Yes, Jane Morgan Yes, (6-1) motion passes

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, seconded by Mr. Thielman it was voted to adjourn at 9:40 p.m.
Roll Call: Liz Exton Yes, Len Kardon Yes, Kirsi Allision-Ampe Yes, Jeff Thielman Yes Paul Schlichtman No, Bill Hayner Yes, Jane Morgan Yes, (7-0) motion passes

Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee