

Arlington High School
Budget Discussion Overview
Arlington School Committee Meeting
December 12, 2019

Arlington currently enrolls 1415 high school students in a 400,000 square foot facility. The school has remained consistently high in rankings and closed achievement gaps over the past 6 years. We are consistently recognized as a U.S. News & World Report Gold Medal school. We are a U.S. News & World Report STEM school, a Newsweek Top School, a top 500 Newsweek STEM School, and among the nation's most challenging schools according to the Washington Post.

Our budget priorities for this year echo ongoing efforts and challenges. After years of gradual enrollment growth, we are entering an accelerated period of growth stretching for the next 9 years. In the coming year, we anticipate as many as 105 additional students, based on historic trends. The core of our budget request is formed around rising enrollment and the challenges of the upcoming building project. Our priorities in allocating staffing are driven by the need to maintain support in the core required classes, to provide a full schedule of course offerings, to support inclusion and high expectations for all students, and to support educational equity and opportunity. AHS is already an aging and cramped facility, with construction slated to start this spring, we anticipate strains on our teaching staff. This will require support to maintain existing spaces, create new teaching spaces over the next 2 years, and to supervise an even more complex space.

We foresee the following trends continuing to put pressure on staff and facilities.

- Rising enrollment. Enrollment growth continues to be high and unpredictable. We would like staffing levels that attract and keep quality faculty, maintain room for growth, and allow us to respond to student needs.
- A shortage of art, PE, and elective classes continues to make it difficult for students to meet requirements and build their schedules.
- Collaborative Problem Solving rollout - Moving away from punitive discipline toward positive behavioral support demands more time and relationship building of staff and administration.
- National and local student trends point toward higher levels of social-emotional challenges among students.
- State accountability guidelines call for ever rising levels of student achievement and graduation rates.

Curriculum and Staffing

The high school continues to experience rapid enrollment growth. Overall enrollment has increased by 199 students in the last 5 years and is expected to grow by 380 students in the

next 5 years. We anticipate an **increase of 105 students in the coming year**. Our staffing increases over the past 5 years have not kept pace with this enrollment growth. Below, we have adjusted forward the 5-year timeline of staffing increase that was created last year, with adjustments for current enrollment projections, staffing, and student needs.

a 5-year timeline of staffing increases that will allow us to anticipate those increases in a timely fashion. I explain each line below.

School Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Enrollment Projection	1522	1609	1700	1782	1797
INCREASE	105	87	91	81	15
Multiplier @1.7 per 25	7.14	5.92	6.19	5.58	1.02
1. Classroom Teachers	6.00	5.00	4.40	4.60	1.00
2. Special Ed	0.60	0.50	0.80	0.60	
3. Dean			0.50	0.50	
4. House Secretary	0.01				
5. School Counseling		0.50	0.50		
6. Historical Understaffing					
7. Inclusion					
8. Related Service (PT, Speech)	0.4				
9. Sub-Separate/ Retain OOD			?	?	
10. Team Chair					
TOTAL FTE	7.10	6.00	6.20	5.60	1.00
Construction Security	1.00				

1. **Classroom Teachers.** The MSBA sets the average class size at 20, understanding that this results in classes ranging from 17-23 under appropriate staffing levels. This allows for normal variation based on scheduling and distribution as well as for planned support classes that are smaller by design. Each teacher is then responsible for roughly 100 students. With 7 class periods and an average class size of 20, we require 1.4 FTE of classroom teachers for each 20 additional students. At that ratio, we would require an additional 7.25 FTE just for classroom teachers. However, given the constraints of our current budgets and rising enrollment throughout the district, we have set the rate of increase at an average of 25 students per section, understanding that this will result in significantly more large sections. This leads to a request of **6.0 FTE for classroom teachers**. We anticipate distributing approximately 5 FTE to our English, Math, History, and Science departments and using the additional 1.0 to create additional sections in the arts and electives.

In addition, each new student gradually increases the need for support roles such as Special

Education, Deans, and Guidance. While our desired caseloads would place the multiplier at 1.83 FTE for each additional 25 students, we have used a multiplier of 1.7, again based on the constraints of growth across the district.

2. Special Education Caseloads. We are requesting an addition of **0.6 FTE** to Special Education this year to cover the anticipated increase in caseload. Roughly 13.3% of our students have IEPs and special education teachers carry a caseload of 20 students. Based on enrollment trends we anticipate a growth in special education of roughly 20 IEPs, requiring the addition of 1.0 FTE. This year, we anticipate distributing those FTE to cover needs in caseload, co-teaching, and speech and language services. These are discussed more below.

3-4. House System - Dean. Two years ago, we were able to move to a third full time Dean and to return to a three house system, reopening Collomb House. Our plan is to maintain houses of under 500 students in keeping with the vision in our Educational Program developed for the new building. We were able to assign one Dean and two School Counselors to each house. This year, we also reorganized our House Secretaries to create a centralized attendance office, which better allows us to support all three House Deans. In anticipation of the new building and a 4 house system, when we begin to approach 1755, we will plan for an additional house, including a Dean, School Counselors, and Secretarial support.

5. School Counseling. Our contract calls for the School Counselors (formerly Guidance Counselors) to carry caseloads under 300. In addition, NEASC and professional standards for high school counseling call for caseloads under 250, recognizing the importance and burden of graduation, career, and college planning. We currently have 6 School Counselors and anticipate going substantially over our desired caseload in SY 2021. This will require us to hire either an additional half or full-time Counselor depending on student need and staffing availability. In addition, our School Counseling Department includes 1.5 FTE of Social Workers. Given rising enrollment and increased issues with mental illness among high school age students, we will monitor needs going forward.

6. Understaffing. To address existing understaffing issues, last year, we requested an additional 2 FTE of teachers which we did not receive. Our staffing kept pace with enrollment growth and we were able to improve class sizes in English, Math, History, and Science. However, the arts and electives remain full and many students are not able to get the classes they request. This year, for example, we had enough requests for 4 additional sections of Culinary Arts and 4 additional sections of Foundations of Art. We see a steady increase of students who are not able to change classes or organize their schedule because of the lack of open sections in electives.

7. Co-Taught Inclusion Classes. Last year, we expanded our commitment to support all students achieving at a college-college career ready standard. Beginning four years ago, we piloted co-taught models to support students in our small group Curriculum B level courses. With appropriate support, students accelerated their learning to access college preparatory

curriculum (Curriculum A).

While the model has been successful, we found that high needs students became concentrated in those classes rather than creating true inclusion settings. Last year, we were able to support multiple Curriculum A sections of required classes with Special Education co-teachers. These Co-Taught Inclusion Classes were successful, and we continue to work on the challenges of scheduling, staffing, and coordination involved in supporting effective inclusion. We anticipate adding 3 sections in order to meet the caseload and expand the program more fully in the sciences. These sections will be staffed within the 1.0 FTE expansion of the Special Education staff.

9. Compass and Specific Student Needs. Over the past 6 years, AHS has been working to expand our offerings to support students with high level needs for specialized instruction. This might mean the creation of stronger substantially-separate programming, or training and support for students with unique needs in the general education classroom. We have significantly improved the capacity of our Reach Program, serving autistic students or students with related needs, and our Summit Program, serving students with social-emotional needs. We have recently expanded programming in our Compass Program, for students with cognitive disabilities. Increased staffing in these areas will depend on the emerging needs of students rising through the lower grades, or choosing to attend Arlington High School

10. Team Chair. We are currently servicing our IEP programming and service only students using 2 Team Chairs. While we don't anticipate a need to expand this role immediately, the special education needs at the high school continue to expand as our numbers increase and as we retain students with higher levels of support. We will monitor needs going forward.

Digital Technology

In six years, digital technology at AHS has transformed our approach to teaching and learning, providing new opportunities for engaging and supporting all learners, preparing students for a computer rich economy, and allowing students to engage directly with creating knowledge and influencing their world. With the introduction of a [Bring Your Own Device](#) program in SY 2015-16 year, AHS has moved to an environment where all students expect and are expected to have access to digital technology for teaching and learning.

In the past year, AHS was able to support most of our high priority needs for teacher devices, and student devices through the refurbishing of equipment that was replaced at the elementary level. While the devices are welcome, many are older models and have short usable lives. It will be imperative to continue to upgrade, update, replace, and expand digital devices, connectivity, wireless access, projection, and sound systems across the high school. This is necessary to support classroom practice, teacher morale, and new online testing requirements for the state MCAS system.

Teacher devices, student devices, classroom projection, wireless access, internet access, specialty labs, and database subscriptions all need constant upkeep, renewal, and improvement. Specifically we need:

- Ongoing replacement and supplies for new staff and classrooms for of teacher devices is underway with a mix of Macbook Air computers and chromebooks.
- Funding for replacement and repairs to accessories and connectivity such as projectors, cords, DVD players, software, and bulbs.
- Student devices need replacement and increased numbers for classroom, study hall, and library use.
- Continue to invest in Wireless and Network capacity and reliability

AHS Bring Your Own Device Agreement found at this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-o58x_g8diWvLLdRh1c2G2RMIQddEhx5f9uRUq5q-k/editt?usp=sharing

Building

The Arlington community is abuzz with planning and visions for the new Arlington High School. This is an exciting project and I hope that everyone in the school and community will contribute. The vision for this project is already driving innovation and exploration among AHS teachers.

In the excitement of this planning, it's important to remember that our students will be using the current building for the next 5 years. We have worked with the town maintenance and custodial departments to improve the management and staffing of the facilities. Our Assistant Principal has attended closely to maintenance, custodial, and security issues. It is imperative that we support efforts to keep the current learning environment clean and in good repair for the current students and our staff. Building maintenance issues have a major impact on morale, education, safety, and security.

Currently our classroom use is between 90-98%. With use rates over 85%, the unavailability of appropriate classrooms significantly hampers the scheduling process. As we move into the first phase of construction, we will be able to create 6-7 much needed classroom spaces in the space created by the Preschool move to the Parminter Building. Each classroom space requires at least \$10,000 in furnishings and repairs. In addition, this suite of classrooms will require an additional chromebook cart for classroom devices, at roughly \$8000. We also anticipate creating a Physics Lab in one of these classrooms which will require equipment totaling roughly \$2000. The total for this classroom space is \$80,000

With construction on the front lawn and the building made both more hazardous and porous by the presence of construction activities, we have requested a **1.0 FTE Security Guard** position to supervise the high school site after hours.