

Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, April 9, 2020 6:30 PM  
Conducted by Remote Participation

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

Present: Mr. Len Kardon, Chair, Ms. Jane Morgan, Vice chair, Mr. Paul Schlichtman, Secretary, Ms. Jennifer Susse, Dr. Allison-Ampe, Mr. Bill Hayner, Mr. Jeff Thielman

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D. Superintendent, Roderick MacNeal, Jr. Assistant Superintendent, Michael Mason, CFO, Rob Spiegel, Human Resource Director, Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education, Julianne Keyes, AEA and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Open Meeting

Mr. Kardon chair, confirmed the School Committee meeting was being held remotely on Thursday, April 9, 2020 read the Mass.Gov rules and started the meeting at 6:34 p.m. Mr. Kardon conducted a roll call to confirm the presence of members.

Public Comment

There will be no live comment during the meeting. Instead, members of the public are asked to send written comment to kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us which will be summarized and/

Mr. Kardon apologized for hold meeting on second night of Passover. Also, we are doing webinar style tonight our last open meeting was a zoom meeting but people started Zoom bombing, therefore we turned to the webinar style. The committee members received three emails regarding April vacation.

COVID-19 update

Dr. Bodie thanked Mr. Kardon and gave brief overview for 4<sup>th</sup> week of the school closure. Kathy said the first two weeks focus was on safety and staff, and student connection with teachers. Hearing now that Governor Baker said all schools closed till May 4<sup>th</sup>, the administrations started the focus on more structure. She has updated the FAQ on our website. This makes it clear for staff and students on what they are doing. During the closure of April 6-May 4 schools will provide more mindfulness and provide rich enrichment assignments for students. It must be clear we cannot replicate a school day, but to provide rich enrichment assignments and opportunity for students.

Dr. Bodie said that over all 1000 chromes books for those in grades 1-12 were distributed. Students can go to the website and to the FAQ and go into google hangouts for additional information. Dr. Bodie did acknowledge that it can be difficult for families since many are home working and meeting from home. The technology equity for students at home can become difficult if two children need the computers at the same time.

Governor Baker spoke to the Department of Education on what to do about students with special needs. Ms. Elmer provided the following guidelines. Around March 25th we received the plan

from the MA DESE based on the updated guidance from the Federal Department of Education on the requirement to provide a FAPE (a free and appropriate public education) which in this case specifically ties to the IE and the need to deliver special education services. The DESE describes services in two ways "resources & support" which we have been delivering since the second week of closure. As Dr. Bodie mentioned we are making the enrichment materials accessible that Dr. MacNeal and his team got together and got on the website almost immediately. This included reaching out to families twice weekly, providing individual lessons, helping to troubleshoot technology or academic issues, providing suggested schedules, delivering a different assignment/activity if the student isn't working on grade level content.

The second phase which we are rolling out is "instruction & services" which is delivery of special education services that are outlined in the individual IEPs. I was just on a call with Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston who is the Director of Special Education for the state in which they shared templates for these plans. These plans are not IEPs, they are not amendments or changes to the IEP, they do not require consent to implement these plans, but we do need to provide notice. Now we already started these documents last week because we need to develop 900 of these individual remote service plans. This is a massive undertaking to create 900 of these plans. Of course we create at least 900 IEPs over the course of a year, but we are attempting to get these plans created by teams within a week. They should be coming out on Monday. Ms. Elmer had hoped to get them out by the end of the week, unfortunately due to the holiday that likely won't happen.

The plans will outline the individual services students receive like occupational therapy, speech, etc. We know, and the feds and the state recognize, that not all services can be delivered remotely, but to the extent that we can deliver the services they will be a combination of the methodologies that Commissioner Riley described, some recorded sessions, some live sessions, google classroom assignments, projects, and other activities.

We will also be rolling out remote IEP meetings. We've had to address some security issues before we can do this, but we've met with our IEP management provider (PCG/EasyIEP) twice this week so that we can make sure we have the systems in place to send IEP documents electronically with password protected encrypted documents. So we won't be holding meetings next week, but we will start to schedule those meetings over the next week or two. Because of our limitations we will only be holding meetings with required timelines. Now there are times families request a meeting whether it's to go over rejected items or to discuss progress, etc., we will not be able to hold those meetings. We have to focus on the meetings with required timelines that should have already happened or are scheduled to happen over the course of this closure.

The committee members heard that it is challenging for all students and are concerned for students who need one on one services. Since we cannot advanced student curriculum we can do a lot to broaden the enrichment from April 6 to May 4.

If we get announcement in the next week for the rest of the year. We are talking and planning for that. We all in the district will have to do mediation next year in every grade and every course. That will be part of any plan to maintain equity for all students per Dr. Bodie.

The committee members inquired about out of district placements, students on IEPs. They asked about the private schools that have remained opened and are providing services? Dr. Bodie said we are paying for out of placement schools, even though some students are home. Families with children on IEP are concerned about placements for next year and about assessments. Dr. Elmer informed the members that due to the school closure evaluations that were to be done in April and May those timelines are on pause until we return after the closures. All teachers should of reached out to students, an provide around 3 hours of remote learning, not online learning for our students. Special education will not look like it did. Dr. Elmer said meetings have been going on since November, and prior to the school closure internal meetings continue, but a required meeting will happen and a message will go out individually. An email went out to families last week and all special education information can be found on our website.

Dr. MacNeal said he and curriculum leaders, Literacy coaches, teachers since the onset of school closure have been working to provide consistency in each content area. On Tuesday, principals and teachers will send out the information for the following week and parents can have a choice on activities students can highlight and remain active. Students can access help and other recourses on the enrichments pages. Dr. MacNeal applauds teachers and coaches with a strong robust structure for students with weekly calendar.

Mr. Bill McCarthy, agrees with Dr. MacNeal and applauded the guidance and social workers who also continue to check in with students to make sure they have what they need with school work, food, safety and to make sure they have technology.

The committee members seem to agree that many families have concerns and find it difficult to work at home and find enough time to help students during the day.

Dr. Bodie and Mr. McCarthy said it's tough for our senior class, with all their cancellations of events they have been working and looking forward to.

Dr. Bodie spoke about April Break and the number of days we need to be in session, is no more than 185, which brings us to June 25<sup>th</sup>. Many districts are cancelling April vacation. Dr. Bodie heard from the AEA, and administration surveys and the majority would like to cancel April vacation. Parents also received the survey and the majority concur to cancel April vacation and to extend beyond June 25. This cannot happen due to teacher's contracts and the cost could run about \$240,000 per day.

After a brief discussion, the committee members were in agreement to cancel April Vacation and continue enrichment activities, and suggested, if families want a break they should take one.

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Mr. Schlichtman, it was **voted** to hold remote learning days on the four days, not including Patriots Day holiday, of April 2020 break.

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

Budget update

Dr. Bodie said the Budget report ending March 31 and can be found in Novus. Mr. Mason provided an update to the full committee.

Due to the school closure Mr. Kardon would like the administration to consider looking into refunding fees to parents and to look at revolving funds. Dr. Bodie acknowledged that state asked the districts to continue to pay as if students were in school during the closure and said we have a lot of totally fee based programs in Arlington and we need to look at. Dr. Bodie and Dr. Allison Ampe agreed with Mr. Kardon to meet and discuss the fees, and Dr. Allison-Ampe will set up a Budget Subcommittee meeting. The members inquired about having an additional summer program to support students, but the superintendent said it is hard to staff and costly. The budget of FY 20 and FY 21 were mentioned and Dr. Bodie said we are in a good place and continue to pay our employees until the end of the year, June 30.

Ms. Elmer addressed Mr. Hayner around tuition for out of district, and she is not sure how the Circuit Breaker will work, and if we are reimbursed at the regular rate but said we need our legislators to advocate for this. Mr. Schlichtman acknowledged and appreciated what everyone in Arlington was doing.

#### AHS Waiver of Program of Studies

Dr. Bodie provided the Arlington High School Program of Studies and a list of requirements that, due to the school closure, need to be waived for the 2019-2020 school year.

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Ms. Morgan it was **voted** to waive the requirements listed in the Arlington High School Program of Studies, as recommended by the administration. Roll Call: Mr. Kardon, Yes. Ms. Morgan, Yes. Mr. Schlichtman, Yes. Ms. Susse, Yes. Dr. Allison-Ampe, Yes. Mr. Hayner, Yes. Mr. Thielman, Yes. (7-0)

Mr. Schlichtman asked to place MCAS on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Kardon would like to see the Student Opportunity Plan, but Dr. Bodie said she is continuing to work on it. The date has been extended to May 15 or later.

#### Superintendent's Report

##### AHS Building Committee

Due to Covid-19, all work has been stopped at the Parmenter School. The schedule is very tight, and puts Arlington into jeopardy for occupancy for September. The committee is developing plans and working on transition plans for the preschool. They are doing pre-prep work before the construction begins at the high school, clearing trees and putting up fencing. How high school timeline will be affected, over the next year is still uncertain. AHSBC is aware of all these issues. Changes in parking lot for high school during contract.

The Communication subcommittee is working on blog to explain geothermal. Three meetings planned.

Mr. McCarthy is working on the monuments and memorials committee and plans to take them and put in storage.

#### Consent Agenda

Mr. Hayner made a **motion** to approve the Consent Agenda.

- Approval of Warrant 20243 in the amount of \$261,977.04.

**Seconded** by Mr. Schlichtman.

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

#### Subcommittee reports

Superintendent Search Process Committee

After Mr. Schlichtman said we cannot do the Superintendent Search with the current RFP deadlines, the subcommittee asked for a do over due to Covid-19 school closure because the meeting to select a Search Company had to be cancelled, it was agreed to put this on a future school committee agenda for the full committee to discuss.

#### Announcements

Mr. Hayner would like to thank all of Arlington on support on funeral of Veteran Mary Foley. Ms. Susse wished everyone happy holidays.

After the committee members discussed the next best date to hold the next school committee meeting, the members agree to keep the April 30<sup>th</sup> date.

#### Correspondence Received:

Warrant dated 3/31/2020

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march12-2020/download>

#### Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner **seconded** by Dr. Allison-Ampe it was **voted** to adjourn at 9:02 p.m.

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

**Respectfully submitted by**

**Karen M. Fitzgerald**

**School Committee Admin Assistant**