

Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, May 14, 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, Marion Nolan AEA and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

**Open Meeting**

Mr. Kardon chair, confirmed the School Committee meeting was being held remotely on Thursday, May 14, 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**

Members of the public are asked to send written comment to kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us or can register to speak via the webinar by emailing kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 14.

The committee received two comments, one Michael Brown who is attending the zoom meeting tonight and read his email. The other email received from Alexandra Martinez and Burmi read by Mr. Kardon.

**To the School Committee:** I thought there might be opportunities to enhance students' learning during Covid19 remote learning, and possibly after, by using the skills of Arlington residents who, like me, have the skills and experience to help students with their work. I don't know if the School committee or the teachers or administrators would be open to this, and it would of course require some vetting of those who might want to volunteer, just as I had to be vetted when I went on School trips when my child was in the APS. Michael Jacoby Brown, TMM, Pct. 17, former PTO President, Ottoson Middle School

Next 30 days is a critical period to develop, test, and solidify education delivery methodologies that will work for children first, and then their parents and teachers.

We must be prepared to return to home-based schooling during the next academic year, as risk of localized outbreaks is very material.

There are really two teaching approaches and variations of thereof that will likely apply: **a)** some form of in-person, at-school teaching with social distancing elements (can't be tested now) and **b)** partial or full return to home (can and should be figured out now).

So far, we do not see the approaches being done working for at least a large contingent of parents and what is being implemented does not address their needs and reality.

**2)** Parents and other key stakeholders need a dashboard that shows what key priorities APS is working on in light of the circumstances, who is responsible for each stream, goals and deliverables, timelines / deadlines to accomplish, and measurements of success that those individuals will be measured by and held accountable for.

If there are no responsible individuals and other drivers such as goals and measurements, deadlines, etc., there won't be accountability for getting things done, done with proper quality and within deadlines.

As parents, we are virtually in the dark, not knowing what is going on, why, and what goals and measurements APS is working toward.

This is what's in part driving the frustration and severe concerns that we will not be prepared in the fall. "We are working and waiting for guidance from the state" that's proven slow to act will result in parents reaching their limit in the fall, if we face another stay-at-home period. We need more accountability and explicit / quantifiable measurements and reporting of progress. This is the only way we as a school district will be successful.

**3)** Inequity is brought up as one of key reasons for why we don't see more live teaching and other more active and effective remote teaching.

This was repeated on yesterday's call for elementary school children's parents. We are past the two month mark of the lock-down, and these issues are still not addressed.

There are examples of other school systems with a much greater percentage of disadvantaged, often minority families that have been able to tackle this problem within a much shorter period of time.

It would be great to get reports / stats on key areas of inequity APS is working to reduce (definitions of those areas), weekly progress that's been made to reduce them / trend line of reduction, reduction in deficiencies / shortages, timeline / goals for resolving them.

I reached out to Roderick MacNeal but am not sure if he is the right person to obtain this information from.

Who will it be and how can we review this data?

**4)** Lastly, there are examples of other school systems that have tested the approach of live teaching via video where a teacher kicks off the day with a video call, outlines assignments, and asks / answers questions. All this takes very little time. Then teachers are available during the morning and/or within certain hourly time frame to answer questions.

Kids feel connected with the teacher. Research shows that even short, regular, live session's bare semblance of traditional classroom time and they have a positive impacts on the kids' emotional well-being.

Parents are struggling to understand why this is not being tried, as many parents feel that this is a proper way to support our children and to teach in the current environment.

Each time we ask why this can't be done, the answer tends to be that it is very difficult to teach for hours via video and it is too much screen time for children.

The answer always jumps into extremes, as if the intent is just to kill the idea because APS does not want to do it.

Why can't there be a balance, especially if other school systems are rolling out versions of it and quite successfully?

It would be great to understand why APS is dead-set against the approach.

Instead, teachers are spending hours pre-recording sessions , which takes many more times longer and is very inefficient and much less effective way to teach (i.e. developing a script and assignments, practicing, recording and rerecording takes a lot longer than taking an outline of assignment and walking through).

Email:

**Yes** I have been quite surprised by the lack of “in person” (iZoom or Cisco WebEx) interaction with our students. Arlington’s school system, which has been touted to be excellent - has not lived up to our expectations-why? And where do we go from here?

--

Alexandra Martinez

#### COVID-19 Update and Remote Learning Plan matters

Dr. Bodie provided a quick overview as Arlington has entered into phase 3 of school closure. Dr. Bodie said the survey showed parents and staff were asking for flexibility and that DESE more asncrised way of learning. One advantage is class video materials begin given to students can go back to it as many times a student needs. The plan for the district closure was in line with the parent Forum Presentation given to parents.

Dr. Bodie spoke about the food deliveries to over 220 families continues and Dr. Bodie addressed setting up a plan for next year. Mr. MacNeal will present this material tonight and all the work being done over the next 7 weeks of school will be compiled and delivered to parents for next year.

The School Committee inquired how teachers are re distributing time over the next phase of the remote learning plan. Dr. MacNeal presented his presentation to the committee. The plan included activity lesson plan developed in

Google classroom with student feedback 12 -18 hours per week. Office hours including google hangouts google changes, phone calls emails 2-5. Meetings, faculty dept., ACE, learning community same course 3 -5 hours. Professional development 1-3 hours and emails 2-3 hours. Many teachers and staff are spending more time than this.

Dr. MacNeal said asynchronous teaches new materials. This gives idea of activities teachers are engaged in. One of things we are finding is challenging is to schedule all these chats and connections with parents working at home and children needing help with school work. The school grids were created to help with this. We have strong values and we take this very seriously to make sure all students in each grade have the same curriculum and common assessments.

The School Committee appreciated the presentation and does not want to diminish what is going on, but had concerns for families who don't speak English, or don't have internet connections and some are having technically difficulties. Not all families are having the same experiences, some have children in upper classes and some in lower classes, some teacher's use grids some are supplementing own videos, but not working for all students. The high school teachers and all administrators have been reaching out to students who have not participated or engaged in remote learning, some do a daily check in but will continue to do more checking in with students and families. The administration said it would be harder for families to do synchronous teaching, this way families can spread the work out over the week. It was suggested to send out another survey with the School Committee members reviewing this survey before it goes out. Hopefully we can receive feedback and understanding on what is working for families.

Dr. Bodie working on virtual summer programs, not sure what will happen in September, but continues to meet and discuss with Governor, DESE, local groups, and Arlington Emergency groups on safety protocols for next year.

Mr. Thielman asked if Dr. Bodie was going to prepare a set of expectations for all teachers for remote learning with a separate Memorandum of Agreement with the AEA to clarify for everyone a uniform expectation for teachers.

After Dr. Bodie assured the committee members that everyone is going above and beyond, Mr. Schlichtman concurs with Mr. Thielman to have a MOA going forward. The committee members will support this motion, since hearing from parents on Facebook and personal chatter, most want live synchronous teaching from teachers.

**On a motion** by Ms. Morgan, seconded by Mr. Hayner, it was voted That, in order to test and learn about best practices for future remote learning and to meet the request from many parents in the district, the Superintendent is directed to develop a plan with additional synchronous weekly video meetings during which time teachers have the option to pilot live instruction (while concurrently providing asynchronous materials).

Voted: 7-0

#### English Language Learners (ELL) Remote Learning Update

ELL Director Carla Bruzzese said she has had a lot of collaboration between core content teachers and Ell teacher who are co planning, providing language objectives and accommodations and communications. Her teachers three who are here tonight Ms. Heather Smith, Ms. Hanah Dingman, and Ms. Jessica Nguy are always including more to practice English. They are taking general education teachers videos and creating learning online which is different from learning in a face to face environment. Her team is providing synchronous learning. Many families had challenges with getting on line and making sure they had devices and printed materials. They want to more flexible with pacing, be consistent in the schooled , and communicate with EL to support families and try working with window of time as opposed to assigned due dates.

The FAQ we had to translate into 5 languages, and used talking point app, and have interpreters to communicate. Ms. Bruzzese said it is a constant outreach on weekdays and weekends. Families want to help but have language barrier, with new technology, limited modified assignments and unique family situations. Her team has also helped them file for unemployment and her ELL teachers have become social workers because families are overwhelmed and stressed.

The school committee members appreciated their passion and thoughtfulness and all that the team has been doing.

#### Update on Social-emotional well-being for students and staff

Dr. MacNeal introduced Ms. Sara Burd, Ms. Danielle Rakowsky and Ms. Kathy Hirsch. Ms. Burd presented data from the survey sent out to families and staff. As it shows, families Are feeling concerned on their students social and emotional needs. Also families are experiencing unemployment, health issues and families living and working from home which they need to manage their routines, and make sure plans for the family are in place. They are aware of students who do not show up for meetings and have identified those students and follow up with them, with phone calls, food support or what the case may be. AYCC and Interface is a group of mental health counselors have been partnering with her department have been supporting social and emotional learning for kids, families and staff.

#### AHS Post-secondary planning

Ms. Rakowsky and Ms. Hirsch said they have been covering AHS post-secondary planning and said students have been attending virtual college fairs, talks with juniors and seniors on phone meetings, Google hangouts and by email through the school closure. Sending out newsletters and updates what their department is doing. They have attended meetings about scholarships and how to pay for college. They plan to complete the graduation scholarships soon. They continue to work with the freshman working with course selection for next year. Going over transcripts. Tracking academic progress. They are looking to do SAT and ACT in the fall with training since and testing was cancelled and do it with social distances. Their department continues speaking with colleges on admissions and trying to stay on top of everything that is changing every day. They also are attending IEP meetings with students. Very busy with post-secondary needs and making sure all students and family's needs are met. Kathy beginning with school closure and working with ell and have meet and make sure all is having all their needs meet.

The School Committee members appreciated the mindfulness and Social and Emotional enrichment being provided to the students and families. They agree to keep families calm and stress free, and to remember to care for the care givers. The committee would like to see the data on how many students are receiving support to help provide additional resources in the school budget if need rises going forward.

#### School Committee approval of AEA and AAA Evaluation MOA AEA Teachers, Unit A Evaluation MOA AEA Clerical, Unit C Evaluation MOA AAA Administrators Evaluation MOA

Mr. Robert Spiegel addressed evaluations with unions and we have agreed to suspend evaluation for the rest of the year due to the difficulty to evaluate remotely. The administration can go into google classrooms and it's a different observation but all have agreed to suspend evaluation for this year. We will figure out how to do evaluations for next year if this continues.

After hearing about the current agreement Mr. Thielman proposed that we will need updated MOA's doing remote learning next year if this continues.

Marion said everyone is working hard

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Mr. Thielman, it was **voted** to approve the AEA unit A, Teacher, AEA C clerical and ANDAAA Administrators MOA.

Mr. Spiegel addressed the AEA Athletic spring stipends and said the schools and union have agreed to pay half of stipends to coaches.

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)

#### School Committee approval of AEA Athletic Stipend MOA AEA Athletic Spring Stipends MOA

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Dr. Allison-Ampe, it was **voted** to approve the MOA for the AEA spring Athletic Stipend.

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)

#### Superintendent's Search Process Update

Mr. Paul Schlichtman, Chair of the subcommittee said after they held a meeting and reviewed the proposals and evaluations for two consultants they have made a decision.

Dr. Allison-Ampe said Mr. Schlichtman took a back seat since he was past MASC President and Mr. Koochers good friend. Dr. Allison-Ampe and Ms. Susse confirms with the decision to negotiate an agreement with MASC and they act as the Superintendent Search Consultant for Arlington Public Schools.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner it was **voted** to approve the Superintendent' Search Process Subcommittees to negotiate an agreement with MASC and act as a consultant and move forward

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)

#### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie announced that Andrew Ahmadi has agreed to join Arlington Public Schools as the next Principal of Peirce Elementary School. He will replace Karen Hartley, who is retiring at the end of the school year. His current position as the Assistant Principal of the Whittemore Elementary School in Waltham. Mr. Ahmadi has been in his current position for three years.

Dr. Bodie reported on the AHS Building Committee update and said the fencing is out and about. The OPM and architects may have extra money. Parmenter is on task. Dr. Bodie informed the committee and community that pre construction work is not affected by students not on site. When and if students return in September parking all going well.

Graduation is being handled by the committee, of student, teachers, parents, to be held on June 6 and thank ACMI will do virtual streaming at 5:00 p.m. and at 1:00 will do a parade. Banners will be placed on Mass Avenue and signs on lawns.

Reminder for people to fill out census.

Dr. Bodie played the AHS Technical video for the musical Tommy

#### Consent Agenda

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Dr. Allison Ampe, it was **voted** to approve the Consent agenda: Approval of Warrant Number 20264, Dated 5/5/2020 in the Amount \$693.266.98

Approval of Minutes: March 12, 2020, April 9, 2020 and April 30, 2020 School Committee Regular and Zoom Meeting Minutes

Approval of the Ida Robbins Scholarship for 2020. Presented to the top two AHS students with the highest GPA.

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/Liaison Reports/Announcements

Budget: Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Chair meet on Wednesday and discuss fee and refunds and discussed FY 21 budget.

Community Relations: Jennifer Susse, Chair to set up meeting to interview candidates for poet laureate screening committee

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability: Jane Morgan, Chair meet Tuesday and Dr. Bodie, Dr. MacNeal who also invited Matt Coleman to provide a department chair perspective on remote learning.

Facilities: Bill Hayner, Chair no report

Policies & Procedures: Paul Schlichtman, Chair no report

Arlington High School Building Committee: Jeff Thielman, (Chair), Kirsi Allison-Ampe

Calendar Committee: Jennifer Susse no report

Election Modernization Committee: Jennifer Susse to be held June 6

Traffic Negotiations: Jane Morgan, Bill Hayner

AEA Negotiations: Len Kardon, Paul Schlichtman Liaisons Reports Announcements

Future Agenda Items-Ask Dr. Bodie to outline a plan for September since we are in flux.

#### Executive Session

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, seconded by Dr. Allison-Ampe it was voted to approve enter executive session at 9:41 p.m. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with

the union and/or nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with the union and /or nonunion in which if held in an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect. Conducting strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, which if held in an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted. To discuss Principal Contracts, specifically Peirce and Gibbs. To discuss Traffic Supervisors Contract and not returning to open session.

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)

Correspondence Received:

Warrant dated, May 5, 2020 School Committee minutes, March 12, 2020, April 9, 2020 and April 30, 2020 IDA Robbins Award description IDA Robbins Awards letters to two AHS seniors May 2020 AEA Teacher Unit A, Clerical Unit C and AAA Administrators Evaluation MOA AEA Athletic Stipends MOA Superintendent's Search Process minutes, RFP and Evaluation Remote Learning Email B. Hayner N. Saunders Email regarding Remote Learning ELL presentation and FAQ, Plans Social-emotional Learning and Counseling presentation Town of Arlington Legal Dept Supplement-Remote Meeting Checklist and Guidance <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march12-2020/download> Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities.

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Ms. Morgan, seconded Mr. Thielman to adjourn at 10:17 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  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee