File: EBC Supplemental. General (Interim) Policy on COVID-Related Issues

The Arlington School Committee takes note of the COVID-19 emergency; resulting disruption of the traditional school day and year; growing concerns of students, families and the community; and the growing number of issues that will affect public education.

Therefore, the school committee establishes an emergency, interim policy to:

- promote public safety and safety of students and faculty,
- maintain to the extent possible the high and efficient level of educational services,
- ensure support for students in general and in particular for those at highest risk educationally as well as those at social and economic risk, and
- comply with the emergency orders of the governor **and/or the Town of Arlington** and adhere to the extent possible, to the guidance of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other agencies of state and federal government, and expedite the safest strategy for returning students to school.

The school committee will approve the final plan submitted to DESE which will outline its strategy for returning students to school and will, in collaboration with the superintendent, make such modifications to the "back to school plan," and district policy, and will authorize the superintendent to suspend, revise or create protocols to facilitate the safe return to school.

The superintendent will designate the appropriate staff members to oversee the safe administration of COVID-related policies during the period of the pandemic emergency and shall make such recommendations to the school committee as needed.

The school committee will authorize the superintendent to act expeditiously in executing the "back to school" plan in accordance with current law and regulation and will, where noted, authorize the superintendent to suspend, revise, or recommend policies, rules and protocols as needed to serve the best interests and safety of students, their families, and the community. **The superintendent shall notify the school committee of such actions.**

The "back to school" plan shall constitute the policy of the school district during the pandemic emergency, and the superintendent shall exercise the authority provided in law to carry out the plan as needed.

- General district goals affected by the pandemic.

  The superintendent, with the advice and consent of the school committee, may suspend or modify individual district policies to address the COVID-19 emergency as declared by the governor **and/or the Town of Arlington**. Such suspension of policy shall expire upon the end of the emergency as declared by the governor.

The goal of emergency pandemic policies shall be to:

- ensure the safety and health of students, faculty, staff, and all persons who may come in contact with them;
- provide the most effective educational services as possible to students under the circumstances;
- authorize changes to operating protocols as needed to open and operate schools effectively from various venues or platforms;
- conduct the district business and operational functions of the district as efficiently as possible;
- allow the superintendent and staff to act quickly to carry out a "back to school" plan and,
- facilitate the re-establishment of a safe and productive school day and year.

- Student assignment to schools (File JCA)

  Subject to the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the superintendent may suspend or revise the assignment of students to schools, including the assignment of new students for such a period as the emergency declaration is in force.

- School calendar (File IC/ICA)

  Subject to the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements, the superintendent may suspend or revise the school calendar with the approval of the school committee.

- Class size (File IIB)

  In order to maintain healthy, safe, and effective classrooms, the superintendent may suspend district policy on class size, subject to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreements where applicable.

- Attendance (File JH)

  Subject to operative law and regulations, suspend, modify or adapt policies related to student attendance including the link between ~~and~~ absences (when appropriate, including the link between attendance and grades) and, chronic absence policies, and accommodations for students requiring special placements.

- Time on learning (File IC/ICA and ID)

  Subject to the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements, the

superintendent may suspend or amend requirements for time on learning for the duration of the COVID pandemic.

- Grading and retention (File IKE)

  In accordance with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the school committee, modifications to the policy of the district for grading and retention of students.

- Local graduation requirements (File IKF)

  In accordance with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and modifications to current regulation or law, the superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the school committee, modifications to the policy of the district regarding graduation requirements. ~~DUPLICATE STATEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCTION~~

- Special education (File IHB, IHBA, IHBAA, IHBF)

  The superintendent and school committee should be mindful that attainment of a high school diploma may render certain students ineligible for further services.

- Discipline and Suspension/Expulsion with home schooling rights (File JIC, JK)

  The "back to school" plan recommended by the superintendent and subject to the approval of the school committee shall contain protocols for serving students who are disciplined or suspended during the pandemic emergency.

  Further, the superintendent shall provide in these "back to school" plans provisions for students **who** were disciplined or suspended ~~**or** who may elect to remain at home under the provisions of the policies related to home schooling~~, or who may elect remote learning in the interests of safety or health concerns.

- Exemptions for particular groups of students (i.e., use of masks for youngest children, high risk students) (File JL)

  The superintendent shall provide protocols to principals and teachers regarding students who may require special exemptions from health and safety standards during the pandemic emergency. Such protocols may address exemption for utilizing support animals.

- Job descriptions (File GCA)

  The superintendent may revise job descriptions for district staff, considering the provisions of current collective bargaining agreements, in order to secure the safety and health of students and staff, establish effective communications between school and community, maintain facilities, transport students as needed,

provide food services, and acquire necessary materials to operate schools safely and securely during the pandemic. The superintendent will inform the school committee of any such changes. Any changes to job descriptions shall expire at the end of the declared emergency situation.

- STUDENTS AT RISK (JIE, JL, JLC, JLCC)

  During the COVID pandemic, the superintendent or principal of a school may revise or suspend provisions of policy to facilitate the education of students at risk or with special physical needs or their family caregivers, including, but not limited to caring for or educating students with disabilities, illness, pregnancy, childrearing responsibilities, or special education needs consistent with law and regulation.

- Privacy of Students. (File JRA)

  During the pandemic, the rights to privacy held by students and their families shall not be abridged by the public schools. Such rights extend to the confidentiality of student academic records, health data, economic status, and other such information as may be considered confidential by law.

  Massachusetts law prohibits the recording of individuals without their permission. Similarly, students may not be recorded in classrooms by audio, visual, or remote means without the permission of parents or, if of age, by individual students. During periods of remote learning, the privacy of students participating in on-line classes shall not be violated by recording them without appropriate permissions.

- Pivoting back to remote learning, or back to in-school instruction

  The superintendent shall incorporate into the "back to school" plan protocols for modifying these plans including addressing the needs of students who may require reversion from in-school to remote learning modalities because of the pandemic emergency.

- Home schooling File IHBG (temporary), home-bound instruction File IHBF (e.g., students with physical disabilities) and remote instruction for students in quarantine

  The "back to school" plan shall provide for students who are temporarily homebound due to illness, quarantine, or disability.

- Public Safety Officers, including the school resource officer ~~(MOA with the local police.)~~

  Subject to current law or regulation, the superintendent shall report to the school committee of any change in status of the school resource officer. ~~(If the district eliminates visitors to school during the school day, the SRO may be impacted.)~~

- Eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities, including sports (File JJ)

  Subject to law, regulation and standards established by the appropriate and legitimate regulatory body, the superintendent may propose changes to district protocols for participation in extracurricular activities including sports subject to the rules established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

- Attendance vs. participation in events (File JH and Student/Athletic Handbooks)

  Subject to law, regulation or emergency declaration, the superintendent may propose protocols or modifications or suspensions of district policies regarding attendance by students or the public in school events including, but not limited to assemblies, sports events, large gatherings, or other programs.

- Visitors in schools and buildings (File KI)

  Subject to current emergency declarations, the superintendent may propose suspension or modification to district policies regarding visitors to school buildings during the school day and after school hours.

- Illness and contract tracing (File JLCC)

  Subject to the provisions of the "back to school" plan, the superintendent may establish protocols for tracking student contacts as a means of locating others from whom students may contract or expose other persons to the COVID-19. Such protocols will be consistent with law and regulation and be consistent with standards to protect the privacy of students, their families, and other persons. (conflict with student privacy rights)

- Transportation and busing (File EEA, EEAA, EEAEC, EEAG)

  Subject to current law and regulation, the superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to the transportation of students by the school district. Legal requirements relating to IEPs that contain transportation for students shall not be altered without the appropriate family consent. These modifications shall be consistent with the district "back to school" plan.

- Operations and plant maintenance (File EC, ECA)

  Subject to the provisions of law, regulation and collective bargaining agreements, the superintendent may suspend or amend current policy to ensure the efficient operation of business functions and maintenance of school buildings and other such offices as the district maintains.

- **Notification:** The superintendent will inform the school committee if and when any of the above mentioned policies are suspended, amended, or changed by law or regulation.