

Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Special Meeting  
Thursday, September 10, 2020  
6:30 p.m.

Conducted by remote participation per Governor Baker’s Emergency Order of March 12, 2020

**Open Meeting**

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

Ms. Morgan confirmed member attendance:

Liz Exton	Present	Paul Schlichtman, Secretary	Present
Len Kardon	Present	Bill Hayner, Vice Chair	Present
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Present	Jane Morgan, Chair	Present
Jeff Thielman	Present		

Ms. Morgan confirmed staff members in attendance:

- Roderick MacNeal, Assistant Superintendent
- Robert Spiegel, Human Resources Director
- Michael Mason, CFO
- Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education
- John Bowler, Athletic Director
- Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant
- Matthew Janger, Arlington High Principal
- William McCarthy Arlington High Assistant Principal
- Kate Peretz, Hardy Principal
- Brian Meringer, Ottoson Principal
- Mme. Fabienne Pierre-Maxwell, Gibbs Principal
- *Superintendent Kathleen Bodie was not in attendance.*

Participating in the meeting, but not confirmed in attendance at the start:

- Julianna Keyes, AEA President
- Thad Dingman, Dallin Principal
- Paul McKnight, Collumb House Dean

Public Comment

None.

Fall Sports for Arlington High School

Ms. Morgan advanced the 7:45 agenda item on fall sports so Mr. Bowler could participate and leave the meeting.

Mr. Bowler provided the Arlington High School Fall 2020 Athletic Department Update  
Arlington High School Fall 2020 Athletic Department Update

The MIAA Board of Directors voted to have a four season athletic schedule for the 2020-21 school year. The Fall Season will start on September 18, 2020.

Fall Sports (Sept. 18th-November 20th) Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Girls Swimming, and Golf. There will be no Fall MIAA State Tournaments. Winter Sports (Nov.30th-Feb. 21st) Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys and Girls Hockey, Boys and Girls Indoor Track, Wrestling, Winter Cheerleading, Boys Swimming, and Ski. Winter MIAA State Tournament TBA

Fall 2 “Floating Season” (Feb. 22nd-April 25) Football, Fall Cheerleading, and any other fall sport not played due to COVID-19. Fall 2 MIAA State Tournament TBA

Spring (April 26-July 3rd) Baseball, Softball, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Boys and Girls Tennis, Boys Volleyball, and Boys and Girls Outdoor Track. Spring MIAA State tournaments TBA.

Based on the recent guidelines established by the EEA, DESE, MIAA, and the Middlesex League Athletic Directors and Superintendents the following has been established for the Fall:

Boys & Girls Soccer, Field Hockey, Golf, and Boys & Girls Cross Country will take place this Fall Season. Tryouts/practices will begin the week of Monday, September 21st. More detailed tryout and practice schedules will be posted ASAP.

Football, Cheering, Girls Volleyball, and Girls Swimming have been moved to the MIAA Fall 2 Season dates of 2/22/21-4/25/21.

The MIAA Sports Medicine Committee has approved Sport Specific Modifications

Examples Soccer No headers, No Corner Kicks, and No Throw ins. Field Hockey has gone from 11 on 11 to 7 on 7 with no penalty corners. Cross Country teams will be 14 feet away from each other to start the race and have staggered start times.

Masks are required as specified by MIAA sport specific rule modifications for all participants and coaches at practices and games. In accordance with Arlington Public School health and safety policies, gaiters are not permitted for athletic participation.

The Middlesex League Varsity Teams will participate in a 10-game interscholastic schedule this fall, with the exception of Cross-Country (5 Meets). All Sub-Varsity teams with the expectation of Cross-Country will participate in an 8-game interscholastic schedule this fall.

All sub-varsity games and most varsity games will be played on Saturdays in October and November (10/3 to 11/21). Additional varsity games will be played on Columbus Day (10/12) and Veteran’s Day (11/11). Middlesex League Golf matches will be played during the week based on golf course availability.

Arlington will compete against one school in all sports on the same weekend to limit contact and exposure and to also help with contact tracing should it be needed at any point during the season.

There will be no school provided transportation for games, meets or matches in Arlington or in other communities. Families must provide transportation to practice during the week and on Saturdays and holidays for respective games.

Varsity teams will practice 3 times per week and Sub-Varsity Teams will practice 2 times per week throughout the fall season. Practice times are still being determined.

Attendance at all practices and games will be strictly monitored. Every participating student-athlete will be required to answer 4 questions relative to COVID screening with their coach before the start of every practice and game during the 2020 Fall Season.

In an effort to remain in compliance with all Massachusetts State Laws relative to large person gatherings, the Middlesex league will only permit one fan per student-athlete at each HOME and AWAY athletic contest. Attendance protocols will be strictly enforced in all locations. Masks and social distancing will be expected for all spectators in attendance.

The standard Arlington High School User Fees for each sport will be collected at the start of the Fall season for each student-athlete that is successfully rostered on each team following the tryout process.

The Fall 2020 online athletic registration process will be open until Wednesday, September 16th. All student-athletes interested in trying out for a fall sport must be registered by 9/16.

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was voted to approve boys' and girls' soccer, boys' and girls' cross country, field hockey, and golf, to be played this fall while following all EEA, DESE, MIAA, and the Middlesex League rules.

**Discussion:**

Ms. Morgan said the approval is required as the high school will be operating in remote mode. Mr. Kardon noted that in other states, where masks are not in use, there are COVID clusters in their sports programs, both at the college and high school levels. He said he hopes mask requirements will be enforced.

Dr. Allison-Ampe asked if there is a place on our website where the information presented by Mr. Bowler said the information will be emailed to parents in the morning, and it will be placed on our website.

Mr. Thielman asked if there would be an overlap between seasons. Mr. Bowler said no, a student can play in all four seasons.

Mr. Hayner said this motion is only for the fall season. He asked Mr. Bowler if he would be coming back to the school committee for future seasons. Mr. Bowler said the MIAA will meet in the fall to discuss winter sports, and he will come back to the committee after the MIAA decides what sports will be offered in the winter. Mr. Hayner asked if the school would be doing any COVID testing. Mr. Bowler said it would be up to the athletes.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

**Fall Reopening Plans: Elementary (K-5)**

Dr. MacNeal said that he and Dr. Bodie have appointed Sam Karustis and Eva Liner (both in attendance at the Zoom meeting) as point people and Co-Administrators for the Remote by Choice Academy.

Ms. Exton said she appreciates the designation of point people for the Remote by Choice Academy, and that they will be supporting the teachers in the academy.

Dr. Allison-Ampe asked for an org chart at the next meeting, both in terms of supervision and parent contact.

Dr. MacNeal said parents will be reaching out to Ms. Karustis and Ms. Liner. It would be the same as if they were principal of a physical building. We are treating the Remote by Choice Academy as a virtual school. Specialist programming will be connected to students' original home schools. In response to a question from Mr. Hayner, Dr. MacNeal said the co-administrators would be responsible for supervision and evaluation of Remote by Choice Academy staff.

Dr. MacNeal, updated the committee on staffing needs. Since some staff have resigned and others were promoted from paraprofessionals to teachers, the school department is in need of additional staffing to run the hybrid model in our schools. Dr. MacNeal recommends the school committee recommends an early dismissal of 1:45 for the in-school portion on the K-5 hybrid plan. This is necessary at the opening of school to provide proper staffing and provide duty free lunch and prep time. The students will also continue instructional activity once they come home which will be counted toward time and learning requirements.

Ms. Morgan clarified that the 1:45 dismissal would allow the school to schedule the contractually required prep time at the end of the day (1:45-2:30) for all K-5 teachers while teaching in the hybrid mode. Ms. Morgan asked how this compares to the original plan for the hybrid model. Dr. MacNeal explained that to avoid contact with multiple cohorts of students, specials were scheduled to be remote and synchronous on days hybrid students are engaging remotely. Prep periods were scheduled as they would be pre-pandemic, with paraprofessionals providing supervision during that time. The lack of paraprofessionals and building substitutes means we don't have the staff to supervise children during prep time, which is the reason for the shift to an early dismissal.

Dr. MacNeal recommended that high needs students, who require additional support, stay until 2:30. He said it was a benefit, as these students won't be pulled out of their core content classes to receive support.

Ms. Exton asked if this is something we will be doing for the entire year, or if this is something we can revisit.

Dr. MacNeal said this is not indefinite, and said the administration will come back around November 1 with an update as to how we are progressing with hiring and determine if we need to stay with the early dismissal up to winter break, or if we have the proper staffing to expand the day out to 2:30.

Ms. Exton said this is disappointing, but she firmly supports teachers' need for their prep time and she understands the reason for the change.

Mr. Kardon asked how many building subs we have hired.

Mr. Spiegel said since August 20, we've received resignations from 13 paraprofessionals, so that's just in the last couple of weeks. The reason as those people have become licensed teachers, and the demand in other districts is very strong for licensed teachers, so they were able to get teaching positions. We have also moved paraprofessionals with licenses into teaching positions in Arlington.

Mr. Dingman said we have lost six paraprofessionals, and four have been recruited for teaching assignments in the last two weeks. That's ten staff across our building (Dallin) that we lost.

Mr. Kardon asked for further clarification on staff vacancies.

Mr. Spiegel said we have finalized the hiring of four or five building subs, but the pool is not as deep as we would like.

Dr. MacNeal displayed a staffing spreadsheet, and Mr. Dingman said we are 16 paras short of the 43 paras required for minimum staffing across the seven elementary schools. He said we need redundancy

for illness, and planned for three building subs per building (a total of 21 building subs, we have only 7 in place).

Mr. Kardon asked if this plan meets time on learning requirements, and Dr. MacNeal said students will be given a structured learning activity to take home.

Mr. Kardon asked if families would be less inconvenienced by an 8:45 start instead of a 1:45 dismissal, achieved by moving the teacher prep to the beginning of the day, and if that was considered by the administration.

Dr. MacNeal said they considered the delayed opening, but it is easier to provide support for high needs students if they remain in school. He said after-school programming would be better able to handle the early dismissal.

Dr. Allison-Ampe said she appreciates why we are talking about doing this, but she is concerned this will be difficult for families. It's good to know the afterschool programs could help, but school is going to start in less than two weeks and now we are telling families their child is going to be home 45 minutes earlier, and have to go get them 45 minutes earlier on the two days they are in school. She hopes we will be able to find the staffing required to extend the school day back to a 2:30 dismissal.

Mr. Thielman said it would be helpful for the administration to keep us posted on the hiring, as the 1:30 dismissal is an extra burden on families who were hoping to have two days of full-length school. He said he was curious if there are trends in the market, and how Arlington is doing compared to other districts regarding hiring.

Ms. Elmer said this is a common thread among special education directors across the state, they are all seeking help in hiring paraprofessionals.

Mr. Dingman said the administration is striving to bring children into school, and the early dismissal is necessary to open our doors. He would rather open with the early dismissal, rather than not being able to open on September 21.

Mr. Schlichtman asked if there is a budgetary impact with the lack of paras and the set of changes recommended by the administration.

Dr. MacNeal said he hopes we will be able to fully staff the positions, so he isn't looking at part the money for these positions to be used elsewhere.

Mr. Hayner asked if we could attract more paras by raising the salary.

Mr. Spiegel said the district is bound by the contract with the union.

Mr. Hayner said his question was hypothetical.

Mr. Spiegel said he has thought about how to bring paras in at a higher level, but that would create a ripple effect with current employees and that would be very expensive.

Mr. Hayner asked if we could move forward with less staffing than presented, and Mr. Dingman stressed this is a minimum staffing level with no redundancy. Mr. Hayner asked if METCO families were being considered.

Dr. MacNeal said he had a conversation with the Ms. Thomas, our METCO director. We will be able to provide supervision and these students will be taken care of in this scenario.

Mr. Hayner asked if we need to notify DESE of this change. Dr. MacNeal didn't think so, but he would check with DESE for advice.

Ms. Morgan said she appreciates the flexibility of the teaching staff. She appreciates the difficulty for families. She said the superintendent has worked successfully coordinating with the afterschool programs that are not affiliated with the district,

Ms. Keyes observed if students are going to be sent home with an activity, we are now asking teachers to prep for their prep. As we continue to work out how this is going to go, we ask people to keep this in mind.

Dr. MacNeal said we have online tools and other activities we can provide without making this a burden for the teachers. We will make sure teachers won't need to plan for their prep.

Ms. Peretz said a benefit is that teachers will have common planning time with their colleagues, it's a good silver lining.

On a **motion** by Mr. Kardon, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** that the School Committee approves the recommendation of the Superintendent to change the elementary (K-5) hybrid program so students leave school at 1:45 p.m. on their in-person days, and that the administration is directed to continually report to School Committee on its hiring efforts and any changes to its evaluation of this dismissal time.

**Discussion**

Dr. Allison-Ampe asked if all schools need to go back at the same time. Dr. MacNeal said he would make that recommendation.

Ms. Peretz said they view it as important for all elementary schools to have the same experience.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Fall Reopening Plans – Arlington High School

Dr. MacNeal presented a memorandum from Dr. Janger, requesting the school committee approve all-remote instruction for the first semester at Arlington High School.

Dr. Janger spoke to the memorandum (below) and his recommendation for all-remote instruction. Dr. Janger said the high school program has always been faced with a cascading number of issues. We have a construction project going on. We have a building that is already too small for our programs and a building in a challenging condition.

Dr. Janger said that, over the summer, as they tried to build a hybrid model, we have created more space. We added an eighth period. We moved a lot of programs (Physical Education, Wellness, Music, Computer Science and World Languages) to remote. We had to cancel courses, we combined our heterogeneous courses, and the Facilities Department has been making a heroic effort to review all of the spaces. In the past, we have divided classrooms and repurposed storage areas and other space, but these rooms don't work when students must be spread apart. We've lost anywhere between 20-30 operating classrooms, and many have been reduced to where they can hold fewer than ten students. That means class size under a 50:50 hybrid program is reduced to 18 students, sometimes fewer than that. The reality, there just isn't enough seats to run the hybrid schedule.

Dr. Janger said that having run the master schedule under the current constraints, we had classrooms at near 100% capacity, more than 1700 students not getting their course requests, and over 500 students not able to get their core course requests. Going to all remote allows us to set normal class sizes, as they are not constrained, was necessary.

Dr. Janger said, on September 21, we are still planning to bring high-needs students in. Special Ed students with high or moderate needs are all being contacted right now, with programming being put in place. We can give them larger amounts of space because the building is not crowded. We are also bringing in some of our general ed programs that are Tier 3 for High Needs, and these students are being contacted. We will follow by bringing in students for whom they don't have an adequate home environment in which to work.

Dr. Janger described the higher expectations for remote learning compared to last spring. Last spring we required one point of contact per week; now we have a group of teachers working on expectations for classrooms, but the basic expectation is that every day, four days per class, you will be coming in for a Zoom meeting, then breaking out for a combination of teacher work, independent work, group work, like you would find in a regular classroom. ON Wednesday you would have your opportunity for remote PE classes, advisory, club, sport, and guidance work during the X block.

Dr. Janger said we want kids in the building. We are talking about reverse field trips, where teachers bring a group of students into a classroom in smaller numbers, or into an outdoor space, where they can spread out. We will also clarify work habits necessary for success in a remote environment, and follow-up quickly to make sure students are connecting, engaged, and getting their work in on time.

The text of the memo from Dr. Janger:

The Arlington High School Administration has been working throughout the summer to develop a plan for our students to return successfully to instruction this fall. Given the challenges created by our crowded and antiquated building, the new construction, and the evolving guidance on COVID 19, we recognized that it would be a challenge to bring large numbers of people into the building. Recently it was decided that we would start all general education courses remotely in a phased process and consider moving to a “full hybrid” model after the first quarter.

Phase 1: September 21- October 9 (14 days)

Begin remote instruction for general education

Offer in-person instruction for category 1 students (identified high needs)

Phase in in-person instruction for categories 2-4 in priority order

Possible outdoor in-person meetings for grade 9 orientation

Phase 2: October 12 – October 30 (14 days)

Continue remote instruction for general education

Continue to phase-in in-person instruction as able for categories 2-4.

Possible outdoor in-person meetings for general education classes

Phase 3: Starting on October 31

Based on epidemiology, policy, and facility information (Term 1 ends November 23):

Continue with Phase 2, or consider capacity to adopt hybrid in-person instruction

We are eager to have students in our building again and we have worked to problem solve around many obstacles. As we have moved forward with gathering more detailed information on our ventilation, program spaces, and enrollment it has become increasingly clear that planning for “full hybrid” in the first semester is not the best course of action. It is a complicated set of interacting parts, but the bottom line is that we just cannot fit a rich and diverse program into our facilities. Given all of the trade-offs, we have concluded that we can offer a better program if we plan to teach most classes remotely in the first semester, use our facilities to support identified student populations, and plan to remain in Phase 2 for the first semester. This memo summarizes the issues that lead to this conclusion. We have provided supporting documentation to the Superintendent. We will draft detailed guidance about these plans as we move forward.

AHS took extensive steps to develop a schedule to support hybrid instruction based on classroom size limits (6 ft.), usable classrooms (ventilation), and staffing the Remote Academy.

- Added 8th Period (14% more scheduling periods/classrooms available)
- Moved Physical Education, Wellness, Music, Computer Science and World Languages to remote instruction for all students (increased number of scheduling periods/classrooms available)
- Cancelled 14 courses
- Changed 14 courses to heterogeneous (combined Curriculum A and Honors)
- Moved classes to share rooms and use all space
- Reviewed, repaired, and upgraded ventilation across building (ongoing) and increased airflow rates where possible
- Ordered courtyard tents

#### Obstacles

- Only 52 classrooms are large enough to accommodate over 10 students
- 21 classrooms are not usable (no window/not able to restore ventilation to full functionality)
- Total seats reduced to 1612 seats with room size limits from 4055 seats
- 11 offices are not usable (no window/not able to restore ventilation to full functionality)
- Some classrooms still need repair and some remain out of service
- Gyms, Cafe, Auditorium, Old Hall still being reviewed for repair
- Construction limits outdoor spaces
- Limited space to adjust to building maintenance and construction issues
- Time is a factor in developing the scheduling options to support planning

#### Results

- Not enough seats for students to get their full schedules
- 1715 unfilled primary requests
- 566 unfilled core subject requests
- Need extra seats to be able to adjust students schedules (e.g. last year had open capacity of 2329 class slots; This year, no extra capacity)
- Students will not be able to change schedules if there are no spare seats available
- 168 students requested Remote Academy (result - limited course options; did not significantly open up classroom space)
- Art and FACS offerings cut by half to support hybrid program
- Most teachers moving between classes and sharing classrooms
- Limited spaces for teachers to work while not teaching
- Students in hybrid program would still be taking a high number of remote classes (Physical Education, Wellness, Music, Computer Science and World Languages)
- Remote Academy students are guaranteed only core classes with AHS teachers
- Unassigned time:  $\frac{1}{3}$  students (400+ per period). With these high numbers, common spaces in the building and Open Campus are not sufficient to provide socially distanced study spaces.
- Majority-Remote is now the best option to serve all students.

#### Remote Academy Challenges

- Science will not be able to offer any electives
- Math can only staff the following courses: 1 section of Alg I, 3 sections of Geometry (heterogeneously grouped, A and H combined), 2 sections of Algebra II and 1 section of Stats A. There is potential for a Pre-Calculus class, but only if we combine Honors with A, to offer 1 Pre Calculus combined class. These courses would only satisfy a subset of the total students



requesting Remote Academy. We would need to find other options for 37 additional requests in which there are not enough in each section to create a remote section. For example, we have 2 students requesting remote only for BC Calculus.

#### Proposal

- Set all class sizes to the usual (e.g.,25-30) rather than based on hybrid-ready size limits
- Do not enable or plan to move to full-hybrid in Semester 1
- Therefore, do not need Remote Academy to support students who cannot attend hybrid classes in Semester 1
- Plan to work toward Phase 2 of phasing proposal in Semester 1
- Continue to offer in-person options for high and moderate needs students (i.e., Special Education Programs, English Language Learners, Harbor, Workplace, Mill Brook)
- Develop in-person community building and extra-curricular opportunities, including orientation, student support, and athletics.
- Develop opportunities for in-person interaction with distance learning classes (e.g., reverse field trips, labs, outdoor meetings, fishbowl classes, mixed in-person and remote participation)
- Develop in person opportunities for student support (“Learning Center”)
- Review options for Semester 2 in November

If we are Majority-Remote what will be better?

- Removing the seat limits and Remote Academy will open classes for students
- Removing Remote Academy will allow those students who are unable to attend the hybrid to have a fully supported schedule and remain part of the whole school (inclusion)
- Option for 4 days of contact per week vs. 2 days of contact
- AABB cohorts are not necessary. Can revise to ABAB which maintains more continuous contact and supervision.
- Allows for planning to extend for entire semester vs. term
- Allows use of the building and in-person contact time to serve those students most in need
- Use of reverse field trips (e.g., labs, small group meetings, team building)
- Departments and Teacher planning groups have been training and planning for remote instruction all summer. Now the district has better digital platforms, computers, and peripherals.
- Majority-Remote reserves limited space and time for connecting with and supporting those students who are challenged by remote or hybrid (high and moderate needs).
- Full semester of a consistent structure and expectation will support greater planning, experimentation, and capacity building.

#### Questions

- Why are we only hearing about this now?
  - Concerns over the building space, building condition, and construction project would make it difficult to fit the program into the available space. We have been working against the constraints of the building capacity, condition, and construction.
  - Running of the final schedule was dependent on receiving information on HVAC and room availability, which was not available until August 28 and is still not complete.
  - Have run repeated schedules to adjust and accommodate the spaces as we have received new information.

- Plan has been for flexibility and phasing to allow us to plan in spite of uncertainty. Current proposal is to stop at Phase 2 for Semester 1
- Can we do a different version of hybrid?
  - Yes, While we are not planning for a two-shift hybrid plan, our plan is to develop in-person opportunities for students
  - Develop in-person community building and extra-curricular opportunities, including orientation, student support, and athletics.
  - Develop opportunities for in-person interaction with distance learning classes (e.g., reverse field trips)
  - Develop in person opportunities for student support (Learning Center)
- What about the mental health impact of missing in-person school on students?
  - As noted above, student connections and support will be addressed through in-person activities.
  - Our teachers can create connections and engagement through remote instruction. The current model will have daily teacher contact, advisory, and extracurricular activities.

Mr. Thielman summarized the previous day's Facilities Subcommittee, and directed members to the draft minutes of the subcommittee.

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** that the Arlington School Committee accepts the Superintendent's and High School Leadership's revised plan to postpone a full hybrid instruction program, with live, in-person teaching available to all students who desire it, until the Second Semester of the 2020-21 school year (which commences in late January 2021), with the following conditions:

By no later than Friday, October 16, 2020, the district and high school leadership shall present a written report to the School Committee that includes:

- An update on HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) issues in Arlington High School, including the cost of installing new equipment and other upgrades necessary to make all spaces used as offices, classrooms and gathering spaces in previous school years accessible to students and staff during the current school year,
- A specific plan for remote instruction in the first semester of the 2020-21 school year that contains:
  - Opportunities for all students to have contact with teachers and staff on the campus of the high school through a variety of means, including some in-person instruction, orientation, and extracurricular programs,
  - A robust system of follow-up with all students, particularly those who do not submit assignments to their teachers on time or otherwise struggle with remote learning, and
  - Other pertinent details of the remote instruction plan.

By no later than Friday, November 13, 2020, the district and high school leadership shall prepare a written report to the School Committee that includes:

- A summary of student experiences to date with remote instruction, including participation rates and the number, percentage, and frequency of in-person, on-campus contacts AHS students have with faculty and staff,
- A summary of the school leadership’s evaluation of all reasonable hybrid models they have researched that allow students to experience live, in-person instruction (e.g., grades of students going to school at different times, an in-school schedule for selected core courses, etc.),
- A plan to implement hybrid instruction at AHS in the second semester of the 2020-21 school year that allows all students to experience live, in-person instruction if their parents or guardians make this choice for them, and
- A summary of any new costs associated with a transition to hybrid instruction in the second semester (e.g., audio visual equipment, additional staff, etc.).

As information becomes available, the School Committee shall evaluate proposals for facilities improvements and other expenses associated with the implementation of hybrid instruction at Arlington High School, prioritize needs, and work with the district leadership and town officials to identify funding sources to support a full hybrid program. Subcommittees of the School Committee shall meet as appropriate to review information and reports prepared by the Superintendent and her staff.

-----

**Discussion**

Ms. Exton said she has been thinking about ninth graders and their transition to the high school, and how there can be more outdoor, in-person things for them at the beginning. She asked what the administration has already thought about supporting the freshmen in transitioning to the high school.

Mr. McKnight said we have a team of staff working on a freshman transition program. This includes working with student leaders and student councils. This work will run through our advisory program. We have solicited upperclassmen to be co-advisors and peer mentors to be assigned to ninth grade advisories. We are creating a ninth grade welcome website. We are planning a series of in-person orientations. We are in discussions with the Board of Health as to how those can happen.

Ms. Exton said she hopes students can have regular in-person contact with staff on the campus.

Dr. Janger said he hopes each class will have one in-person project or activity per semester.

Ms. Keyes reminded the committee there are some teachers who are very high risk for COVID, and they requested assignment to the Remote by Choice Academy because it is not safe for them to be in groups of people. The goal is to get kids in to meet their teachers; there may be some teachers who are unable to do that.

Mr. Kardon said we have a tight room to begin with. Some of the rooms are not standard sizes, some of the rooms are triangles. When you try to fit six foot spacing into those rooms you get very small numbers. I think it is unfortunate we are where we are, but we knew some of these rooms would be unavailable. We should have come to this conclusion in July and come up with another solution. There are other solutions that are out there that we could have explored, and need to explore, for the second semester. There are undercurrents, is this really worth it? In an ideal hybrid model, you get two days of in-person learning and three days of asynchronous guided by a teacher learning. The state, and many parents, think there needs to be in-person learning. Their opinion needs to be taken into account. I strongly support the aspects of the motion that require a hybrid plan be put forward to us in November. He reflected on people commenting that we are looking on the bright side and not stating this is a huge disappointment to the community and the students. I feel like we are letting them down, and it hurts.

Dr. Allison-Ampe concurred with many of Mr. Kardon’s comments. She said she was at the Facilities Subcommittee meeting so she doesn’t have questions. She mentioned the subcommittee report didn’t report that the administration looked for non-school space, and nothing is available. The idea that

churches and other facilities could be used won't work here. Dr. Allison-Ampe asked, how would inclusion look for the High Needs students who are brought into the building?

Dr. Janger said it depends on the IEP, but students who are participating in a general education class in a Zoom call will continue to do so. They may participate in the Zoom call in the high school building, and breakouts may be in the building and in-person.

Mr. Thielman discussed the meaning of a robust remote program. He said we have 14-18 year olds in a variety of home situations, and follow up texts, phone calls, and emails are critical when students miss a class or don't submit assignments on time. The motion gives the committee detail on what the follow-up process will be.

Dr. Janger said the teachers have been asking for a consistent method for assessing, monitoring, and following-up with students across classes. We have been developing a work-habits rubric, and a support structure surrounding it.

Mr. Thielman said a regular schedule is what we wanted with the hybrid model, but at yesterday's meeting it was obvious the best we can do is to direct the district to come up with different hybrid options where students aren't in for two days a week, to look at other districts, to see if those models could be applied to Arlington High for the second semester. Mr. Thielman said kids want predictability and regularity in their lives.

Dr. MacNeal said we need to be careful comparing ourselves to other districts, as the staffing and condition of their buildings are different.

Mr. Thielman said 87% of the parent population indicated they wanted a hybrid model for their students. There is widespread concern, not just in Arlington but across the country, that we may lose many kids. He said he is sure a vast majority of Arlington High students will connect with teachers and have a good experience, and will respond to follow-up texts and calls. There are going to be kids that we may lose in this system, in this lack of in-person education. Once you let a kid down, it's hard to get their trust back. I'm just encouraging, and I encouraged Dr. Janger on this point at yesterday's meeting and I'll say it again publicly. We need to be concerned about every single student at Arlington High. If we don't do our job now, if we don't try to reach out to them, if we don't try to take care of them, if we don't care about them, we could have some serious regrets. We could lose some kids, and that would be a tragedy and the responsibility of the entire adult community that's been involved in the decision making this summer about the high school and about the district in general.

Dr. MacNeal said our care for our students, and the way that we take care of them, is not going to change because we're going to the remote learning environment. We are a district of qualified, highly capable professionals. We have spent hundreds of hours in meetings talking about planning, looking at the spring, re-evaluating our efforts in the spring. People have availed themselves, and sacrificed time with their families, in order to prepare themselves for the fall. So, everything that you are saying, we already do, and we have certain values that we adhere to. We have a vision of a student as a global citizen and learner. We have district goals. We are a district of qualified professionals who are dedicated to giving the best learning experience to our students. This situation that we're in is no different than any other school district within the country. Everybody is struggling to meet the complex needs of all of our students in this global pandemic. We are moving with the best plan possible with the goal of servicing the needs of all our students. We do that on a regular basis when there is no pandemic, so that goal and what you just stated is not going to change. We understand it's even at a heightened sense we need to do this in this particular environment because we know there are going to be students who need to reach out to and give that extra attention to. I just want to make sure that the public knows and understands the amount of hours and financial resources that have gone into planning. Dr. Janger and

everybody on the administrative team have been working 12, 14 hour days in order to make sure we are prepared to go into the fall. We understand the things we have planned to do have been altered based on our resources. It's a perfect storm. We're in the midst of building a new high school, and then the pandemic hit. We already knew that the high school needed to be torn down, and built a new structure in order to move forward without a pandemic. With all these things coming into the mix we are recommending this based upon the fact that we are going to spend another countless hours making sure we do what you just explained. I don't want the public to think that we're not already thinking that, and we need to be directed to do so. We are going to do that regardless of whatever situation we are in. I don't want anybody to think we are not prepared to move forward, and we have not put lots of thought, time and effort, and sacrifice to our own families to make sure that this happens.

Dr Janger agreed with Mr. Thielman's sense of urgency about meeting the needs of high school students. He said he wanted to go back to the question we should be asking, and should have been asking from the very beginning, was what model would provide the best instructional outcomes for all of our students equitably, not how do we get to hybrid as if hybrid was a thing. Hybrid is not a thing. Hybrid means you do some in-person instruction and some remote instruction. We're planning on doing some in-person instruction and some remote instruction. We have met, in terms of deep dives, all summer long every week with all the Middlesex League principals. A number of them, Belmont, Watertown, are going remote because their facilities and their programming doesn't work. A number of them are achieving blended instruction because they worked out with their union, in the past, how they can do a different format in terms of having some students in the classroom and some students at home. That has not been worked out (in Arlington). What we have been doing, every step of the way, was looking at the facilities we have and trying to maximize how we can get kids in the most productive interaction with their teachers, in person and out of school. At the point where we are now, we have stripped it down to kids are only taking four of their core academic classes in person and one elective. That's fewer than they are planning on doing in Winchester, and even under those conditions we were not able to fit students in this school in a 50:50 hybrid. Given where we have been pushed to, and trying to make this decision, this is the best option. Why are we using the building the way we are using it? Because on September 21, we can reach out to, and are reaching out to, our highest needs students. Our deans are in contact with, our Harbor Program is in contact with, those students we are concerned about falling through the cracks. Getting them to come into our workplace program, our Harbor Program, our Mill Brook Program, getting those people connected to those folks. Focusing those resources on making sure we can follow through. You said if we don't follow through with kids we lose them. Kids don't care about a hybrid. Kids care about the expectations being clear to them. We're already behind the 8 ball because they're waiting to know, but they care about when we say this is going to happen instructionally in school, it happens instructionally in school. What happened last spring was that every two weeks we changed the set of expectations. By the time we started doing instruction that was supposed to matter, those kids we were going to lose were long gone. Let's be clear. The day we left school (in March) the instruction was to the deans, the student study team, the guidance department, and the social workers to contact in person every single student on their caseload they were concerned about. Every student who was failing a class was put on Plato for credit recovery within a week after we left school because we know by the time everyone else got organized, those students were going to be gone. You have to understand we've been running along the whole time contacting and following up with these kids, while trying to put these models in place. I share your goals 100%, but we cannot characterize where we are now as a failure on the part of the teachers or the administration. We have been set a task of figuring out the best thing to do, and we have worked as hard as we could to hit the targets that were set. We have come to the point where we are saying to you, the best option now is to do this. We are committed to,

by November, having learned what works and what doesn't work, and how things are with ventilation and facilities, then we can give you a couple of options about how we can instructionally set things up in a timely fashion, so we as a group can make a timely decision about what is in the best interest of kids.

Mr. Thielman said he didn't use the word "failure." The motion specifically requires the principal to evaluate other models. That requires sharing information from other schools in the Middlesex League, or wherever the case may be. We're expecting a report that has some paragraph summarizing other situations so the public is aware. At some point, by November 13, that's the clear expectation of the motion. The school committee's job is to pass motions, and we use language such as "we direct the superintendent to do x, y, and z." That's why the language is "we direct." That's the language of all the motions we have given to Dr. Bodie over the years, and she executes them. Mr. Thielman said he would take Dr. MacNeal and Dr. Janger at their word, they will follow up intensively with all students. The robust remote program requires intense, quick, prompt follow up with students who don't hand in assignments, so thank you for reinforcing that and stating that publicly. It's important you agree with me on that point, very important. Mr. Thielman said he appreciates and understands people are working hard, and that he never said otherwise, and never said that people are not doing all they can to help our students. He said he thinks we need to have a further conversation about a philosophical difference that may exist between the school committee and some people who are in the district. Some of us on the school committee voted for the original hybrid motion because of a belief that getting kids in school with teachers, and friends, and peers, in a structured format, is good for their social and emotional well-being. That philosophy was based, in large part, on the frustrations parents and families with the experience of remote instruction in the spring. Mr. Thielman said he thinks there needs to be further conversation; picking the best instructional model seems to be a part of it. There's another part of it that was expressed by the school committee, and that is a concern about the social-emotional well-being and health of our students. He said he appreciates the dialog, and Dr. Janger and Dr. MacNeal reconfirming the importance of a prompt response to students' needs in the remote instruction.

Ms. Keyes said it is great to hear the different perspectives, and she appreciates having a voice at the meeting. She said we have a lot of students in the district who, the hardest thing they do every day, is get dressed and walk into the building. With the peer pressures, and the bullying, the anxiety of being in a crowd of people and the pressures on our teens today, we've had rising numbers of school refusal for the past several years. We've been making programs to help kids with that and deal with that. We have upped our social-emotional learning because of that. We've always had a group for which school doesn't work. That's not new with remote. It's shifted, it may be a different group of students, and some of those who didn't do well in person are doing well with remote, but this is not increasing a problem or creating a problem that didn't exist before. We have always had kids who don't do well with the model of school that works with most kids, and we know how to address that. We've been perfecting it, we've been improving it. Sara Burd is wonderful with all of our social-emotional learning. We have Harbor Programs, we have bridge programs, we have ways of reaching these kids. I just don't want the public to think we've suddenly got all these kids we're leaving behind. There's always been a group that hasn't done well with the model that exists, and we've reached them. We're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Schlichtman said he appreciates the little bursts of candor that seem to pop out of these discussions every once in a while. We seem to be circling back to where we should have been at the beginning, before we made the decision to go hybrid. Dr. Janger certainly asked the question that I would have liked to have discussed in far more depth, when he said the goal was not how do we get to hybrid, but how do we do what's best for the education and safety of our children moving forward. He said he would vote

for the motion. This motion is exactly where we need to be right now. I think this is the approach we needed to take overall. As we look to move back our dismissal times at the elementary level, we pushed too much into the hybrid that we couldn't deliver. He said he thinks the best starting point was to start with the remote. Mr. Schlichtman thanked Dr. Janger and Dr. MacNeal for their comments, and he knows they are looking out for what's best for the students.

Mr. Hayner asked if we are aware if all students we are servicing at the high school have all the technology they need. Dr. MacNeal said yes, we are going to be a 1:1 district Pre-K to 12. Every student is going to get a digital learning device.

Mr. Hayner asked if, by going all remote, we will be expanding the curriculum back to where it was or something close to it. Mr. McCarthy said we won't be able to expand the curriculum and put back courses we removed. We are going to be able to create more seats. For example, our Foundations of Art class typically has 24 students. Currently it's cut down to 10 in order to accommodate the hybrid. We're going to be able to bring that back up to 24. That's 14 additional seats. With nine sections, we can open up over 100 seats in Foundations of Art alone. That's our hope, we can expand the number of seats and students can get what they requested.

Mr. Hayner asked if seats were reduced because we don't have the space for them. Dr. Janger said we can only offer four core classes and an elective; those were the only courses in hybrid. PE already moved all remote. Music already moved to all remote, though music will have access to more spaces in the building for activities. The students who would have been in the all remote would have been limited in what they could do for AP, now get the same AP courses because they are joining in with everybody else. Everybody can take BC Calculus, everybody can take World Language, anybody can take any course we are offering.

Ms. Morgan said she will support the motion, but she feels really sad about it for a lot of our kids. She thinks that coming to high school in ninth grade and leaving at the end, beginning the senior year remotely is just a sad experience for some of our kids. She understands that for some of them it might work better, but for a lot of them it's not going to be the experience that they were hoping for and their families were hoping for. There's just a lot of room between implementing an AA Wednesday BB hybrid model with core classes and an elective in person, and all remote. There's a lot of space there. The reality is that we ran out of time, and we're running up against the need to create the schedules. Teachers and students need to know their schedules. She is sad, there's students that we haven't seen since March, and she would like to throw any resources we need behind making sure we can reach each and every one of those students. If we have 1450 students and we get to 1449 of them, that's not good enough. We need every single one.

Ms. Morgan said the only thing she would consider adding to this motion, if there are things this administration needs to make sure we can follow, support, engage any student, we need to make sure we are able to do that. She said the administration needs to ask the committee for what they need, so we can move heaven and earth to provide it. She said she is really worried about some of the students. She's not worried about all of them, but she's never been more worried about kids going into a school year as she is about some of our high school kids. She appreciates this has been a herculean task to get us to this point. This is what we need to do now, but she still feels sad.

Mr. Thielman pointed to the fourth bullet of the motion, "A summary of any new costs associated with a transition to hybrid instruction in the second semester." The reports can include requests for additional resources.

Ms. Morgan called for a vote on Mr. Thielman's motion.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Superintendent's Report

Dr. MacNeal thanked the committee for the affirmative vote. Dr. MacNeal said we should update the Arlington Public Schools Calendar for the 2020-2021 school year, As the early release day has moved from Tuesday to Wednesday, parent-teacher conferences should be moved to early release Wednesdays. Ms. Morgan suggested that Dr. MacNeal should ask Ms. Fitzgerald to present a proposed update to the calendar, in writing, at the next meeting.

Dr. MacNeal and Mr. Mason reported that, due to staffing, the Bishop bus had been temporarily cancelled.

Dr. Allison-Ampe said she is disappointed this is happening with short notice. This is not due to funding, we don't have the staffing. She asked how parents are going to be notified.

Dr. MacNeal confirmed this is not a budgetary concern on the bus driver for Bishop but we have been unable to hire a qualified driver

Mr. Kardon said the Bishop bus is not a route that can be readily replaced by walking, and it's a critical service.

Ms. Peretz and Mr. Dingman said elementary parents will be receiving class notification and welcomes tomorrow (September 11).

Mme. Pierre-Maxwell said Gibbs schedules are ready, but there was a PowerSchool failure this afternoon. Schedules should be available tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Meringer also cited the PowerSchool failure as an issue, but said Ottoson schedules should be available tomorrow.

Mr. McCarthy said we will change the class caps in PowerSchool tomorrow, and schedules should go out next week.

Mr. Kardon has asked about parent notifications about distributing devices. Dr. MacNeal said he is working with Mr. Good, Director of IT, on sending out a message to all parents that all students will be receiving chrome devices and information for students to pick up these devices.

Mr. Thielman asked how tents would be used at the elementary schools.

Ms. Peretz said the tents will be used for eating outside, and for outdoor classroom space.

Dr. Janger said the tents in the courtyard will be used as breakout space.

Superintendent's Search Process Subcommittee - Update

Mr. Schlichtman referred to the draft minutes from September 3 Superintendent Search Process meeting, which contain the proposed structural membership of the Superintendent Search Screening Committee.

Mr. Schlichtman emphasized that the school committee will strive to ensure screening committee members include underrepresented constituencies, as members are chosen to fill some of the 15 seats:

3 School Committee members

3 Parents (representing elementary/secondary, including one SPED parent)

1 Central Office Administrator

2 Principals or Assistant Principals (representing different levels)

2 Teachers (representing elementary/secondary)

1 Municipal government representative



3 Other Stakeholders, preferably including a student. This is an open category, and may include additional teachers, parents, or members of the community who would add value to the committee. People who apply for the screening committee must commit to attending an initial orientation meeting on Tuesday, September 29 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be conducted on Zoom. We will start screening resumes on the week of October 12.

Screening committee members must be available for all future meetings. Screening committee members will participate in a confidential screening of candidate applications, develop interview questions, participate in the first round interviews of candidates, and make recommendations of finalists to be submitted to the School Committee.

All submissions must be received electronically by September 17, 2020 at 3:00 pm.

Search committee meeting dates will be determined at its September 29, 2020 meeting. Depending on COVID protocols, future meetings may be conducted in person.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** to approve the timeline and structural membership of the Superintendent Search screening committee.

**Discusson**

Ms. Exton asked why a student was preferred, but did not have a dedicated seat.

Mr. Schlichtman stated this was a recommendation from MASC.

Dr. Janger said he has a group of students interested in working with the Black Student Union.

Mr. Schlichtman said applicants should self-identify affiliations, and we would look favorably at a BSU representative.

Dr. Allison-Ampe said we didn't feel comfortable dedicating seats, due to the limit of the number of seats, other groups could follow by asking for a dedicated seat.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Mr. Schlichtman said the recruiting brochure has been mailed out by MASC, and is on the MASC website [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org) and on [www.arlingtonsuper.com](http://www.arlingtonsuper.com). He said Mr. Koocher is reporting interest in the position from several excellent candidates.

Policies and Procedures:

The Policies and Procedures subcommittee presented the following policies for a first reading:

- KDAB: Temporary Signs and Banners,
- BEDH and BEDH-E: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings,
- ACAB: Harassment

Mr. Schlichtman said ACAB was recommended by MASC in order to conform to new federal regulations. Attorney General Maura Healey, and other state attorneys general, are suing to block these regulations. Until they are successful, we are required have this policy in place. Due to the August deadline, the subcommittee is recommending suspending the rules in order to move the policy to a second reading.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** to suspend rules to consider on a second read on ACAB. **Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** to adopt File ACAB Harassment. **Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Mr. Schlichtman described the changes to policy BEDH, BEDH-E Public Comment, and KDAB Temporary Signs and Banners. He said BEDH is being adjusted to be more inclusive, removing the word citizens and replacing it with residents. He said we are also bringing the policy into compliance with the legal requirements of the Natick decision. Mr. Schlichtman said that KDAB was brought to us by Town Counsel, as we need to have clarity so we don't inadvertently create a public forum on our properties.

Subcommittee/Liaison Reports/Announcements

Budget, Kirsi Allison-Ampe nothing to report  
 Community Relations: Bill Hayner, Chair nothing to report  
 Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability, Len Kardon nothing to report  
 Facilities, Jeff Thielman report was provided  
 Policy & Procedures, Paul Schlichtman report was provided  
 Superintendent Search Process, Paul Schlichtman report was provided  
 Arlington High School Building Committee: Jeff Thielman, (Chair), Kirsi Allison-Ampe, no report.  
 Liaisons Reports

Announcements

Mr. Hayner would like to wish a local resident a happy birthday since he turned 100 today.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Executive Session

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** to enter into Executive Session at 9:18 p.m., and not return to open session, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and/or nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with union and/or nonunion in which if held in an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect and to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, in which if held in an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect and collective bargaining may also be conducted.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Mr. Thielman, it was **voted** to exit and adjourn from Executive Session at 9:54 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Liz Exton	Yes	Paul Schlichtman	Yes
Len Kardon	Yes	Bill Hayner	Yes
Kirsi Allison-Ampe	Yes	Jane Morgan	Yes
Jeff Thielman	Yes		(7-0)

Correspondence Received:

Proposal from Dr. Janger for AHS

School Committee Motion on AHS Reopening Plans

Policies and Procedures Minutes September 3, 2020

First read on the following: Policy KDAB Temporary Signs and Banners; Policy BEDH & BEDH-E Public

Comment at School Committee Meetings; Policy ACAB Harassment

Superintendent Search Process Minutes September 3

Invitation to apply for a seat on the superintendent search screening committee

Facilities Subcommittee minutes September 9

Respectfully submitted by

Karen M. Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

Arlington School Committee 92220

