

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Arlington School Committee**

**Special School Committee Meeting**

**September 9, 2021**

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

Approved:

**Open Meeting**

Mr. Hayner opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and confirmed attendance of the following School Committee Members: Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Liz Exton, Len Kardon, Paul Schlichtman, Jane Morgan, Jeff Thielman, Bill Hayner as well as Superintendent Liz Homan, Assistant Superintendent Rod McNeil, Chief Financial Officer Michael Mason, AEA President Julianna Keys, Special Education Director Alison Elmer and Communications Director/Grants and Title 1 Julie Dunn.

**Public Comment**

No public Comment.

Mr. Hayner made a motion to approve the AEA MOA. Mr. Schlichtman moved to approve and authorize Mr. Hayner to sign the document. Mr. Kardon seconded. No discussion.

Mr. Hayner confirmed a unanimous vote by School Committee Members: Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Liz Exton, Len Kardon, Paul Schlichtman, Jane Morgan, Jeff Thielman and Bill Hayner.

Following the vote on the MOA, Mr. Schlichtman was given an opportunity to voice his concern about the COVID-19 vaccination and thanked the various AEA for partnering with the Superintendent and School Committee to mandate a vaccine. Believes wide-spread vaccination is the only way out of this pandemic. Mr. Schlichtman believes that every eligible student should be mandated to have the vaccine. Mr. Schlichtman covered athletic risks and thinks MIAA should also mandate the vaccine and wonders if we can require our athletes or visiting

athletes to have vaccines. Vaccines work and vaccines save lives. He believes we should push legal and moral actions to stop the spread of this terrible virus.

### **Summer Professional Development/Opening Day Report**

Dr. MacNeal was introduced by the Superintendent to make this presentation. Dr. MacNeal acknowledged curriculum leaders, teachers and coaches for their leadership during this work after a very challenging year. He is very proud of everyone who participated in the workshops.

Dr. MacNeal spoke to the Learning Highlights: Digital Learning, ELA, ELL, Math, SEL, Science, Social Studies, Wellness and World Languages.

Dr. Homan then discussed the August Leadership Workshops. She was extremely impressed with the deep thinking in the two days of work. She hopes that everyone on the leadership teams were excited and motivated to do what we need to do for kids this year!

New Teacher orientation overlapped with the August Leadership Workshop. The week of mentor leadership happened prior to this day. Marie Janiak helped the new teachers get acclimated.

Opening day was very successful on Peirce Field; it was a beautiful day. After comments and a lovely breakfast, Department Meetings were held that morning. Some students were welcomed back ahead of opening day and Dr. Homan shared a photo of a Peirce visit on September 2. Some virtual visits were arranged as well.

The first day of school was a joy – leadership got out to the various schools and a lot of smiling eyes (masks covered the smiles), but the opening days were enjoyed greatly. Superintendent Homan asked for questions. Ms. Exton thanked Dr. MacNeal for the presentation and found it exciting and looks forward to how it works out this year. Mr. Hayner commented it was a fantastic day to see everyone outside, on a beautiful day, smiling. Dr. Ampe thanked Dr. MacNeal and Superintendent Homan for all their work over the summer and to get the school year launched at Opening Day. She voiced her concern about some that didn't receive the reach out. Dr. Homan responded that this was an experiment and wants to learn/receive feedback on how this went and what we do if we want to continue with this process. Dr. Ampe wants equity across the board on the reach out. Ms. Morgan suggested that some of it was a

communication/notification sometimes comes late, or buried with other information. Ms. Morgan believes that the principals should be responsible for the communications. The biggest issue is if things are different at each of the schools rather than the same.

**ESSER III Plan** – Dr. Homan and Ms. Dunn discussed the Plan. Plan approved this spring for the Safe Reopening of School – Funds are for students supported in academic, social/emotional and mental health needs in the world of the Covid-19 virus among us. The education portion is known as ESSER. The APS allocation is \$1.1 million--double the ESSER II. ESSER I is spent, ESSER II is being spent and now we are applying for ESSER III. Grant covers through Summer 2024. A final plan will be presented and stakeholders will be consulted. Equity requirement is a new requirement and we need to maintain this assurance to use the funds.

Dr. Homan presented an approach on how the funds will be spent now that we know the requirements, including community outreach. Dr. Homan discussed data-informed initiative options and some examples of such: Initiative A, B and C and will plan for the ESSER funds to enhance the area the community decides are most important. Dr. Homan explained in more detail what each Initiative would/could include. The Team believes all are important but thinks we need to prioritize. Dr. Homan discussed the timeline and ended the presentation. Questions from members followed: Ms. Morgan found it helpful to have had the discussion in a Budget Committee Meeting and appreciates the clear report and is interested in the feedback from teachers and community. Mr. Kardon appreciates the presentation and the refinements since the Budget Meeting and although it's not a lot of money, it's extra money and he looks forward to the community reaction and moving forward with one of the items.

Dr. Ampe appreciates the then and now presentation. She had a question on Option A and feels that one of the requirements of Option A is already something we do and are required to do so we shouldn't say we are going to be doing it. Dr. Homan discussed the translation options we use and better options that are available to us and these options are costly, but helpful. Discussion on translation services continued, with the clarification the funds would be for enhancing services. Mr. Thielman thanked Ms. Dunn and Dr. Homan for the presentation

and asked how the funds needed to be spent and Mr. Mason answered that the funds simply need to be spent by September 2024. Recovery plan funds can be used for Pandemic Recovery costs. Mr. Thielman wondered if we would retain employees hired. Ms. Morgan answered to Mr. Thielman's concern that we need to be careful when spending comes to the employment of people which makes some of the proposals tricky. Ms. Exton thanked Dr. Homan and Ms. Dunn for the Report and voiced that she would appreciate more "meat" on what options seem to make more sense and hopes the survey will show us. A discussion continued on the various Options (A, B, C). Dr. MacNeal discussed the data he has beyond surveys. Ms. Keys says her gut instinct is to go with B and discussed ways to make the various programs that have been put in place for the Pandemic to continue. Ms. Morgan added "it's just over a million dollars."

### **Superintendent's Report**

- Enrollment Reports – includes class size average. Current count (still Preliminary) shows 209 more students than in October, 2020. Quite a few new students in the last few weeks.
- Projection Analysis against Mr. Mason's made last year.
- Invitation from Deeper Learning Dozen – designed to target central office and district administrators to visit other districts across US and Canada and learn about equity work being done and learn from those strategies and bring them back to their own district. All expenses are paid through this grant. It's an honor to be invited and would like to gauge support for attendance.
- School Reopening Update – DESE says it's required to contact them before closing a classroom or school. DESE requires any cases to be reported and a dashboard will be updated weekly. FAQ also under construction.
- Admin Hiring – Louisa Popkin is new Elementary Special Education Coordinator this year.

Dr. Homan asked about questions for her update.

Mr. Schlichtman was very impressed by the report of departing students and commended the staff for putting it together and sharing it. Credit goes to Mr. Mason for that! Dr. Ampe is really

impressed by the DVD invitation and sounds like an amazing opportunity and wanted to know if we had to take action. Dr. Homan says she does not think so. We are waiting for an MOA and once that arrives Dr. Homan will share with the Committee or Subcommittee. It's a time commitment from leadership attention so she wanted to share and let SC know about it. Mr. Kardon thinks the SC should review the MOA if it's anything other than a simple commitment. Ms. Morgan thinks it's worthwhile and hopes that it can be funded from some other source than the PD budget – Dr. Homan says it won't come out of the PD budget.

Consent Agenda – Mr. Schlichtman moved to table the vote because the proper documentation was not uploaded in NOVUS. No discussion. The motion to table was seconded by L. Kardon. Mr. Hayner was concerned about the warrant needing to be paid but Mr. Mason said the warrant was already paid. A unanimous vote was made to table the consent agenda.

### **Subcommittee/Liaison Reports/Announcements**

Budget – Kirsy Allison-Ampe – They met on the 1st of September on Zoom on a number of topics. Budget calendar in Novus. Dr. Homan commented that the calendar is aligned with the counter previously discussed. Mr. Mason had nothing else to add. Dr. Ampe doesn't think we need to approve the budget calendar and it can come from Dr. Homan without approval. Dr. Ampe is requesting how to seek feedback from the public on the budget process. She will send an email asking for SC opinion on what information would be most helpful for you to know how to do this and Liz Diggins will compile the data and report it back to Dr. Ampe.

Grants will be discussed at the next School Committee Meeting. In Novus there is a motion to recommend that you approve the attached list of activities. Background of the motion is that we are required to do this annually and we have not been. This is a housekeeping measure and we need to do further evaluation of the entire list. On a motion made by Dr. Ampe, seconded by Ms. Exton, it was unanimously voted to use the student activity account.

Mr. Schlichtman noted that because we don't approve the calendar, he moved receipt, the vote was seconded and it was then voted unanimously to do so.

Community Relations, Liz Exton - Concerns about spaces in after school have been a concern over the last two weeks. She would like the Committee to reconvene with all the Directors this fall. No meeting dates are known yet.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability, Len Kardon – On hold for now until the school year gets started. Would like a copy of the recent safety audit report. J. Morgan pulled up policy on what we have. Some are Town property. J. Morgan would like to attend these meetings. Hardy Playground has opened and it is beautiful.

Facilities, Jeff Thielman – On hold for now until the school year gets started.

Policy & Procedures, Paul Schlichtman – They do have a bunch of things to talk about and he will be looking to schedule meetings. Asks members to send him an email with what they think should be at the top of the list.

Arlington High School Building Committee, Jeff Thielman, Kirsii Allison-Ampe – Project going well, didn't meet because of the Holiday. The Select Board and Leaders saw the building. Dr. Ampe thinks we should make sure the community is aware that because of problems that have come up, the auditorium is not going to be available until April.

Liaisons Reports - none

Announcements - none

Future Agenda Items - none

A motion was made to adjourn, so moved, and seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Elizabeth M. Diggins

Administrative Assistant

Arlington School Committee