

**Arlington School Committee**  
**School Committee Regular Meeting –**  
**Thursday, October 28, 2021**  
**6:30 p.m.**

The regular Arlington School Committee meeting was held on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via remote participation over Zoom. Mr. Hayner, the Chairman and Dr. Allison-Ampe, Secretary were in attendance in addition to School Committee Members: Ms. Exton-Vice Chair, Mr. Kardon, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Schlichtman, Mr. Thielman as well as Dr. E. Homan-Superintendent, Dr. R. MacNeal-Assistant Superintendent, Mr. R. Spiegel-Director of Human Resources, Ms. A. Elmer-Director of Special Education, Mr. M. Mason-Chief Financial Officer, J. Keys, AEA Representative, and two AHS Student Representatives, M. Carmody and A. Chelariu, E. Diggins, Administrative Assistant. Minutes from the September 28 and October 14 School Committee Meetings were approved.

Mr. Hayner opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. on October 28, 2021

**Public Comment**

James Swan, 35 Windsor Street, Arlington, attendee, discussed his opinion on the information discussed at the recent CIAA Subcommittee Meeting which he attended, held on October 25, 2021

Lynette Culverhouse, 24 Draper Avenue, read a statement regarding a situation at one of the Arlington Public Schools

**Jazz Proposal**

Dr. Janger and Mr. D’Agostino discussed the possibility of attending a conference out of state with students, which ultimately requires the School Committee approval – The honors orchestra has accepted the invitation if approved by the School Committee. Committee Members were asked to refer to the proposal sent to them via email from Mr. D’Agostino. Rostered musicians will have to be vaccinated to participate. Ms. Ampe voiced her concern over the vaccination/non-vaccination requirement of the site in Dallas. Mr. D’Agostino explained that the conference requires testing or vaccines. Ms. Ampe believes a vaccination is necessary and does not think testing is enough. Mr. Thielman moved to approve, it was seconded by Mr. Kardon. Roll call vote: J. Thielman, yes, P. Schlichtman, yes, Dr. Ampe, no, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Hayner yes. (Yes, 6-1)

**Envision Arlington – Scott Lever**

Mr. Lever presented the annual Town Survey for Envision Arlington and explained what it covered. The overall findings were discussed and Mr. Lever said that the detailed report will be available by December of this year. The survey ran from Jan to March, 2021 on line, via Survey Monkey. Mental health numbers were down where the physical and financial numbers were higher. 45% of respondents said that their access to routine medical care was more difficult due to COVID. Questions in the Survey included Education; Childcare, Remote Education, Mental Health Services.

**Gibbs School, School Improvement Plan (F Pierre-Maxwell, Principal and S. Greiner, Assistant Principal)**

Principal Pierre-Maxwell stated that Gibbs School prides itself with students, parents and staff who are guided by three words - Understanding, Unified, Unstoppable. She applauded the support from her staff, students, superintendents, school committee, fearless parents, Afterschool staff, Nurses and many others. The “wins” from this school year included the participation of 441 students in the virtual activities over the summer to help guide the students prior to entering the 2021-2022 school year. Principal Pierre-Maxwell shared pictures of celebrations and conversations from the activities. As for challenges, she believes they exist for all Arlington Public Schools and explained that her focus will be on data from 2017-2021 at Gibbs in her reporting. Looking at that pattern, Black students, in particular, have truly declined. The data is identical consistently across all districts. Gibbs is looking at this challenge and the School Council is in the process of analyzing objectives and how best to support the objectives. The 21-22 Key Initiatives, Action Steps and School Priorities were also presented by Principal Pierre-Maxwell. Resources to Support Success at Gibbs were reviewed. Assistant Principal Greiner handled questions. The discussion included the significant disparities and how the large jump in achievement has continued into 2021 for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders, increased clusters and the success/focus on Special Education focus/success, lack of resources outside of home, extracurricular activities, needs that need to be addressed, etc.

**Ottoson Middle School – School Improvement Plan (Brian Meringer, Julia MacEwan)**

Goals for Ottoson Middle School include the implementation of a Bridge Program (assists students who have missed a significant amount of school time (because of anxiety, depression, hospitalizations, school refusal, etc.). Studies reflect that more girls suffer but more often ask for help, less often boys suffer but are less often asking for help.

The second goal is to create an Advisory Program and adopt an SEL program called RULER. Kids and adults connecting, relationships between students and staff (of paramount importance). Three administrators enrolled in the RULER training this past summer – now being taught to the faculty.

The third goal is working with the Mathematics Department to investigate equitable pathways through mathematics coursework beginning in Grade 7. Should they track Math – 7 and 7A are very similar and 2/3 of kids are taking the higher level math class. Other school systems do not track at grade 7 level. Are kids internalizing the fact that they are not in that upper math class? The action steps involved in changing the grade 7 level math tracking were reviewed.

School Committee members asked various questions on possible outcomes of these goals, partnership on the resources and next steps and barriers of the math tracking, There was a discussion of the math classes at OMS and the various pathways to high school and how a lot of the options available are not being considered by the students. Students, parents need to be involved in the changes that need to take place –education is not static, it is constantly changing. Because this was the first time the School Committee Members have seen this information (a lot of ideas presented), so there were many questions on the goals including some apprehensions. It was acknowledged that this is a plan and that it is hoped it will be successful – what do we need to do and can we do it? Advisory Program

implementation being considered after a previous program was dissolved. The current Program is called ASPIRE and is 10 minutes long.

### **Superintendent's Report**

COVID 19 update 10/28/21 – low numbers continue and the dashboard is updated regularly. Arlington average daily rate is stable compared to last week. Revised deadline for mask requirement is January 15. If numbers fall into low or moderate categories, we could look at a waiver.

The Superintendent discussed her **Entry Plan** – listening sessions begin next week and **Hiring Challenges** and **Vacancies**. 41 open positions at all levels of experience.

Grab and go lunches will be provided on all half-day school days – all free. COVID vaccination clinics will take place in November, with information being sent to families as soon as the vaccines are approved for ages 5-11.

### **Financial Report**

Period 3 Financial Reports are reports month ending September 30. Including, reports for grants, revolving and SC appropriation (General Fund). Also included COVID 19 related grant and rare funding electric bus grant.

**General Fund** – School Committee-appropriated dollars shows current excess of \$1,000,000 due to a combination of factors, including fewer OOD students and outstanding open positions due to hiring difficulties. **Cost Savings** - we had less out of district students than what we have and we are still trying to hire so cost savings are reflected because the positions are not encumbered. **Grants Report** – some just got set up. Still setting up others (i.e. ESSER III) and what's different this month. Asterisks (\*) are next to grant that need SC approval/acceptance. If that motion could be made to accept those grants with the asterisks that would be helpful. **Revolving Funds** – spending as planned, nothing major to report.

Overall good financial position.

\*CDBG Tutoring, \$40K

\*Consolidated Health Services Affiliated, \$5K

\*Integrating SE Learning Academic Learning, \$10K

\*ARP-IDEA, \$332,430K

\*ARP-IDEA, Early Childhood, \$29,578K

\*EPA-DERA, \$326,579

A motion was made by Dr. Allison-Ampe and seconded to accept the grants as received. Roll Call Vote: Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, Yes, Miss Exton, Yes, Mr. Kardon, Yes, Mr. Hayner, yes. (Yes, 7-0)

### **MASC Delegate Assembly**

Mr. Schlichtman reports the assembly is next week and has asked the resolutions be posted in Novus for your perusal and is happy to receive comments now or going forward.

## **Consent Agenda**

Warrant # 22093, \$809,607.27, dated 10/26/2021

School Committee Minutes – September 23 and October 14, 2021

In a motion by Jane Morgan and seconded, the Warrant and Minutes were approved. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Kardon, Yes, Mr. Hayner, yes. (Yes, 7-0)

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

- Budget – Budget Subcommittee met and had a discussion about additional positions which will be presented by the Superintendent at another meeting.
  - Community Relations – Community Relations Subcommittee met and discussed enrollment, need of more space, challenging of more staffing, Policy KFD. They want to have a full committee discussion. A Chat was taking place on October 16.
  - Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments & Accountability – Met and had brief updates to the community (i.e. science week ideas, future of science camp)
  - Facilities – no report
  - Policy & Procedures – A meeting is being scheduled.
  - AHS Building Committee – They will meet the week of November 1 and will receive an update
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- Liaisons Reports - none
  - Announcements - none
  - Future Agenda Items - none

## **Adjournment**

A Motion and vote was made by Mr. Hayner and seconded, to meet in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, specifically, (i) litigation associated with the dissolution of EDCO, and (ii) litigation associated with the dismissal of an employee, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation positions of the Committee.

Roll call vote, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Thielman yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Mr. Hayner, yes.

Adjournment from Regular School Committee Meeting at 9:02 p.m.