

**Arlington Public Schools**

**Arlington School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 10, 2022**

**6:30 p.m.**

**DRAFT**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Open Meeting**

The regular School Committee Meeting was called to order by Mr. Hayner and he confirmed the attendance of the following School Committee Members: Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Dr. Ampe, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Dr. Homan, yes, Mr. Spiegel, yes, Dr. MacNeal, yes, Mr. Mason, yes, Ms. Elmer, yes, AEA Representative, Ms. Keyes, yes. AHS Student Representative not yet present. Mr. Thielman signed in at 6:34 p.m. 6:34 p.m. Mr. Thielman signed into the Zoom Meeting. The Arlington School Committee January 27, 2022 regular meeting minutes were approved.

**6:31 p.m.**

**Public Comment**

Danuta Forbes spoke to the School Committee about the process of the heterogeneous groupings and would like to be more involved and hear more about it. She commented that there were lots of questions were asked that went unanswered in the previous meeting and would like a more open and transparent process.

Julie Hall spoke to the School Committee commenting on how grateful she is to teachers and nurses for what they do every day and how far we have come since the last time she spoke. She spoke tonight on both a mask optional policy and the vaccination rates in Arlington.

Barrie Tysko thanked everyone for their work during this pandemic. She spoke to her concern of dropping mask mandates and the ramifications of doing so. She suggested that the Committee learn more about Safer Air/Safer Schools and asked that in their decision about masks they follow the CDC and approach documents received with skepticism.

**Overview: Mental Health Data, Impacts, and Needs** (S. Burd, Director of School Counseling and Social Emotional Learning)

Dr. Homan opened the presentation with a brief overview of why this presentation was brought to the meeting and introduced Ms. Burd. Ms. Burd discussed the Universal Mental Health Screener Process as well as the Social/Emotional Learning Indicator Score – one identifying student learning and the other identifying student needs. The Mental Health Screener Process catches students' needs and delivers supports in real time. The different screeners used last year and the screeners being used presently were discussed and the percentage of students with elevated scores were presented. Ms. Burd discussed how the data is used and what is done in response (for small group intervention, allocated funding, new hire, etc.). Last year virtual group meetings were held and this year meeting groups are in person. The research shows the intervention has been successful as students reported feeling better after six sessions. The impact of COVID 19 shows cases 2-3 (maybe higher) times greater than pre-

pandemic levels. Ms. Burd discussed the Action Steps; the District is expanding/implementing in response to the research. Staff and families are using a Trails to Wellness Program, a course of 10 sessions where students learn about their mental health/well-being.

Ms. Burd moved from the Universal Mental Health Screener Process and discussed the Social Emotional Learning Indicator Score (SELIS) – a learning assessment data point to inform instruction as a school, grade, cohort, individual, etc. Teachers can use to guide their curriculum instruction. The Mental Health Screener Process catches students' needs and delivers supports in real time. Arlington as a whole community, the area of improvement for SEL Learning is to move the students' perceptions and confidences up out of the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile to a place where they feel much more confident to really engage in their learning. Ms. Burd explained the upcoming trainings, new temporary hires, projects at AHS and Ottoson. Ms. Burd explained how the DESE funds received would be spent which included upcoming trainings, new temporary hires, projects at AHS and Ottoson. Two permanent positions have been added to the Department this year and will be carried over to next year.

A question and answer period followed before the end of the presentation.

#### **7:27 a.m. AHS Student Representative**

Amy Chelariu enthusiastically shared that she had a tour of the new building and she and the other students are super excited to move in. Many of the seniors are earning their volunteer hours by helping with the move.

#### **7:28 p.m. Superintendent's Proposed Budget** (E. Homan)

Dr. Homan thanked the students for their beautiful artwork on the cover of the FY23 budget book as well as the members of her team for all of their contributions to the decisions that have come together into the proposed budget. She thanked Ms. Burd for her presentation as it shows the need for the resources requested/reflected in the budget. Dr. Homan's presentation spoke about the priorities and highlights of the budget which included but was not limited to being more competitive with salaries in a bargaining year and supporting the social/emotional health of the students. The proposed budget also reflects the elimination of certain fees in athletics and music and the addition of teachers/librarian. After a presentation of the in-district enrollments (FY18-FY27), Dr. Homan handed over the presentation to Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason thanked Dr. Homan for this process and mentioned that it was a different process than in years past and he feels they took the time to really go through this process overall. He then presented and discussed the funding sources from FY19 to FY23 as well as a snapshot of FY23 Funding Sources only and the Proposed Budget Expense by Category for FY23 only. Additionally, FY23 "anticipated" funding Sources were presented, compared to the FY22 funding resources showing a total increase in the funding of 2.53%. Mr. Mason explained that most of the services/budget is focused on the general fund. The FY23 budget is \$4.3 million higher than last year which is the number we have to work with for the proposed increases, cost of living increases, etc. Mr. Mason then discussed some changes/reductions of positions and other miscellaneous budget efficiencies which would reduce the general fund spending by \$2.1 million. The budget efficiencies/reductions were then discussed in more detail. Dr. Homan then took over the presentation to discuss proposed additions to the general fund.

Dr. Homan gave a quick look at what's ahead and a Q&A took place with SC members and some explanations of what was presented in the budget. No vote on the budget required at this time; public hearing will take place first.

**8:11 p.m. Superintendent's Formative Evaluation** (E. Homan)

Dr. Homan shared her Goals and Evidence and asked how the SC would like to provide the feedback (e.g., narrative form). She shared a link to her goals and evidence using standard indicators from the Superintendents Rubric. Feedback in whatever form or forum should be provided to Dr. Homan before the next School Committee Meeting. The Committee members discussed how the feedback would be presented to the Superintendent. L. Exton will be providing a form that members are welcome to use.

**8:22 p.m. Superintendent's Report** (E. Homan)

The COVID case rates were reported by Superintendent Homan and she also presented the APS Vaccination Rates (well over the 80% with the exception of Menotomy Preschool where the students are not yet eligible). Dr. Homan presented a number of updates to COVID protocols which were received within the last 48 hours and adjustments made as of February 1 were presented. Dr. Homan discussed the masking requirement changes moving forward and the option of students/staff members who can wear masks if any mask mandate is changed. Dr. Homan welcomed the Committee's input on the matter at the end of her presentation.

Dr. Homan presented data on a number of specific APS updates including a manuscript partnership with MGH and the APS Test-to-Return Program. A discussion was held about the mask mandate and various opinions on dropping or keeping the procedure in place as well as the option of meeting in person as a Committee moving forward.

**8:50 p.m. 2022-2023 Calendar – First Read** (E. Homan)

Dr. Homan presented a first read on the 2022-2023 Academic Year calendar with the biggest change being the Elementary School Early Release Days moved to every Wednesday. An adjusted calendar with changes discussed will be presented at the next meeting.

**9:04 p.m. Monthly Financial Report** (M. Mason)

Mr. Mason presented a report for period 7 which included the general fund and the revolving fund. The revolving fund report is more specific to go along with the budget review submitted. He explained the reason for the general fund surplus and what can be done with a surplus if it is still available at the end of the budget year. Committee members did not have any questions.

**9:07 p.m. Consent Agenda** (B. Hayner)

\*Warrant #: 22171, \$680,201.65, 2/8/2022

\*Meeting Minutes from Regular School Committee Meeting, January 27, 2022

Dr. Ampe made a motion to approve and it was seconded by Mr. Kardon. Roll call vote: Dr. Ampe, yes Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Mr. Hayner, yes.

**9:08 p.m. Subcommittee/Liaison Reports/Announcements** (B. Hayner)

- Budget – K. Allison-Ampe, Chair – no report.

- Community Relations – L. Exton, Chair – met on February 8 and discussed heterogeneous initiative as well as potential changes to the SC Chats because of low attendance. An upcoming chat is scheduled for February 12.
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability, L. Kardon, Chair – No report
- Facilities – J. Thielman, Chair – no report.
- Policy & Procedures – P. Schlichtman, Chair – no meetings. Change Public Participation to Public Comment, Policy BEDH.
- Arlington High School Building Committee, J. Thielman, Chair – Certificate of Occupancy is in hand.
- Liaison Reports
- Announcements
- Future Agenda Items

A motion was made by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Morgan to move into Executive Session. The Committee will not be returning to the Regular School Committee Meeting. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Dr. Ampe, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Hayner, yes.

**9:13 p.m. Adjournment**

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth M. Diggins  
Arlington School Committee  
Administrative Assistant