

**Arlington School Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
October 27, 2022  
DRAFT**

**6:30 p.m.**

The Chair called the meeting to order and confirmed the attendance of the following:  
Dr. Homan, yes (v), Mr. Mason, yes (v), Mr. Hayner, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, no, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Ms. Exton, yes. Also present: Mr. Spiegel, Dr. Janger, Ms. Piggot, Ms. Miller (v), Ms. Eidson (v), Ms. Fernandes (AEA representative).

**6:32 Open Meeting**

The Chair read the open meeting statement and announced that some of the Administrative Team is out of the office attending a conference and are attending this meeting remotely. She also paid tribute to Marie Krepelka, Select Board Administrative Assistant, who passed away. Ms. Krepelka had worked in the Town for over 60 years. The Chair offered her deepest sympathy to all of Ms. Krepelka's friends and family.

**6:34 p.m. Public Comment**

There were no public speakers.

**6:35 AHS SIP**

Dr. Janger presented the School Improvement Plan for Arlington High School with the main focus being: Belonging, Engagement and Equitable Access to High-Level Learning. A sense of connection with each other and with students is missing (e.g., caused by the pandemic, the building project). The student belonging scale from last spring indicated that belonging was the lowest level on the scale. An additional graph indicated that in 9th Grade English belonging was second lowest on the scale, with engagement being lowest, in spring, 2022. Staff Belonging indicated that 66% of staff feel quite connected or extremely connected (based on the Panorama Study from 2021). Staff scored lower on feeling a sense of connection to each other.

Dr. Janger presented a graph displaying enrollment data for students in honors by race and by their history in ESL and/or with IEP. He reported that the absence of belonging and unity is acknowledged here as well. Dr. Janger presented his Goals to improve certain areas which included an anonymous study by the Equity Response Team, holding Voices United Workshops, monthly meetings with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and continued work in the Phase 2 AHS Building Project. A Q&A with the SC Members followed.

### **6:50 p.m. AHS Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative Update**

Dr. Janger presented an update on the Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative including Resources, Teacher Preparation, English Panorama Scales from Spring 2022 (lowest in belonging and engagement) again focusing on the percentage of students in these categories in these last five years. Heterogeneous groupings show a high rate of participation vs. years without the Initiative. Participation by race still shows a gap but closing them significantly according to the data. Historical trends were displayed by race as well.

Ms. Edison and Ms. Miller, two high school teachers, were invited by Dr. Janger to explain Student and Teacher Feedback and how they began the school year. They reported that preparing for the change required a lot of work over the summer. They had to dig into it by aligning skills across all levels. Teachers reported that more technical support in Powerschool is needed. Ms. Miller explained that there is designated common planning time for the teachers and what was included in that planning time.

The presentation ended and a Q&A was held with the SC Members. Questions included a query on class sizes, how to prepare Ottoson to help facilitate for next year, transitioning from middle school to high school, how honors vs heterogeneous is being described (same curriculum but there is a standard and honors prompt - a more complex/sophisticated answer would be required by the honors prompt. Consideration is being given to eliminating course recommendations. It was suggested that the participation rates be shared with parents.

The Chair asked the teachers what resources they need to continue with this initiative. Ms. Miller suggested that the teaching side of it feels really good and then when it gets down to the technical side of things they need some support (e.g., Powerschool, logistics). Ms. Edison agreed. It was clarified that the plan is still only for a pilot in 9th grade and tracking whether or not the 9th graders sustain in 10th grade. Dr. Homan commented that she will be working with Dr. Janger and Mr. Meringer to work on this process (the problems with Powerschool and the possibly eliminating the teacher recommendation piece).

### **7:45 p.m. Diversity and Hiring Report**

Mr. Spiegel began his presentation by thanking Ms. Piggot and additional Human Resources staff for their work on this presentation. The agenda included topics as follows: Administrators, new AEA Unit A Educators, AEA Unit A Hires by School, New Hire Facts, AEA Unit D and AEA Unit C Hires and other new employees since October '21. Mr. Spiegel noted that we are in need of new hires and anyone interested should contact him. Mr. Spiegel reported that there are two new mentor coordinators in the Mentoring, Induction and Onboarding Program (one for PreK-5 and one for grades 6-12). Onboarding is mostly on line and we are switching soon to a new System.

Mr. Spiegel highlighted some of the most common reasons for resignation and the current vacancies (with special education, school nurse and paraprofessional shortages being a nationwide issue). Mr. Spiegel commented that we are still functioning well nonetheless.

Mr. Spiegel presented student data as of October 2022. Working on staff diversity as students are more diverse than staff and we want the students to feel represented. New hires are more diverse than last year's hires. Mr. Spiegel presented the various graphics that reflected diversity in the different units (including AAA, AEA Unit A, AEA Unit C, AEA Unit D). There is a required form but not a requirement to self-identify. Paraprofessionals are more diverse. Principals, Central Office, IT, afterschool/day care, maintenance, transportation, food service, and a breakdown of Arlington students and staff ethnicity breakdown/comparison was presented.

Mr. Spiegel presented his next steps including strategic planning group 2 (valuing all staff). He reported that the DEI Director and HR Director will increase opportunities for recruitment of educators, including BIPOC educators as well as retention of current staff. The DEI and HR Director will be meeting with new educators this fall to check in on their experiences so far. The School Committee asked questions and Mr. Spiegel answered accordingly. Dr. Homan thanked Mr. Spiegel for holding things together while she was at the DLD Conference and for his thorough work on this report.

#### **8:00 p.m. Superintendent's Evaluation**

Dr. Homan presented her materials and the School Committee had a brief discussion on the documents that will be used to complete the evaluation as well as the date due. She reported that there is typical growth in ELA and higher growth in mathematics as reflected in the gap analysis. Also included was an achievement gap analysis, a chronic absenteeism report and goals and evidence (taken from the formative assessment and updated - used color-coded text to show the differences). Goals are the same. Dr. Homan opened the floor to Questions. There were no questions but there were access issues in Novus which needed to be resolved.

Mr. Kardon is working on a document and he will share the draft. The Chair set a deadline for November 10 to submit the evaluation forms. It will be presented to Dr. Homan at the November 17 School Committee Meeting.

#### **8:10 p.m. Monthly Financial Report**

Mr. Mason presented his Third Period FY23 Report which reflects expenditures as of Sept. 30, 2022 including general fund, grants, Covid 19 related grants, select revolving funds and special revenue funds. The first report is the general fund report which is not much different from the last report due to the timing of the payroll warrants and accounts payable warrants. The next report will be much different (October 31, 2022) and will show a better view of where we are.

### **8:16 p.m. EOY Financial Report**

Mr. Mason thanked Mr. Farias for doing most of the drafting on this report and commented that this report takes a lot of work. Comparative information was provided to Members in their meeting materials. Mr. Mason reported that this report has been clean for the last few years but when drafting this report they found some areas that need to be adjusted (total spending is indicating lower than the previous year) so some research and reconciliation was done given Instructions from DESE on how to report end of the year provided at a recent DESE training, the prior reports were over reporting expenditures based on incurring on books rather than paying down the debt so the fiscal '20 and '21 periods reflect additional spending. DESE wanted to be sure all districts are aligned for auditors so this will be a more consistent way of reporting expenditures. Mr. Mason continued his presentation and explained the information on the tables he distributed prior to the meeting.

Presentation ended and opened to questions. Mr. Kardon asked that Dr. Allison-Ampe look at this further in the Budget Subcommittee Meeting. Mr. Schlichtman asked if there will be a problem with the net school spending issue with DESE? Mr. Mason said he has not yet consulted with DESE but does not believe it will be. Dr. Allison-Ampe also commented that this will be discussed further at a future Budget Subcommittee Meeting.

### **8:26 p.m. Superintendent's Update**

Dr. Homan provided her Strategic Planning Updates including Community Forums which take place in the evening, with the last one being virtual. She shared some initiative Sneak Peeks which will change as they are refined: Ensuring Equity and Excellence, Valuing All Staff, Improving Infrastructure, Operations and Sustainability and Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships.

Dr. Homan gave a quick update on the Playgrounds at Stratton, Peirce and Bishop Schools. Additional updates included information on the fall play, feedback month (November), the Annual Town Survey (will ask for SC input if they are interested in providing), OMS Cross Country Team, Helping Hands in Arlington and Enrollments.

Branding is done: Education that Empowers (with trees and students walking/pond). Posted on the website soon and letterhead ordered. Other locations for the logo include the new Central Office wall, etc.

School Committee Members did not have any questions.

### **8:37 p.m. Gas Leaks Task Force Resolution for Discussion and Possible Vote**

Ms. Exton presented a resolution to the School Committee Members for discussion and possible vote to support a request being introduced to the Select Board calling on National Grid to fix methane leaks in Arlington, 14 of which are in close proximity to Arlington schools.

The School Committee members voted unanimously to support the resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Hayner, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Ms. Exton, yes.

### **8:38 p.m. Consent Agenda**

Ms. Exton introduced the consent agenda items and asked for a motion to approve:

Warrant #23079, October 18, 2022, \$418,908.62  
School Committee Meeting Minutes, October 13, 2022  
School Committee Meeting Minutes, October 20, 2022  
Job Description for Assistant Food Service Director

A motion was made by Mr. Hayner and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman to approve the consent agenda items.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Hayner, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Ms. Exton, yes.

### **8:39 p.m. Subcommittee/Liaison Reports/Announcements**

- Budget - Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Chair - Meeting next week and will add the mentioned items to the agenda.
- Community Relations - Bill Hayner, Chair - Subcommittee Members will try to have all meetings during school hours. If not, a door monitor will need to be hired and the Chair of the respective Committee will work with Ms. Diggins to secure a door monitor for the meeting with appropriate notice.
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability - Jane Morgan, Chair - Met this week and discussed the overnight experience, elementary literacy, strategic planning.
- Facilities - Jeff Thielman, Chair - No report.
- Policy & Procedures - Paul Schlichtman, Chair - Will work with Ms. Diggins to schedule a meeting.
- Arlington High School Building Committee - Jeff Thielman, Chair - Meeting November 1 at 6 p.m.
- Superintendent Evaluation - Len Kardon, Chair - no comment.

- Liaison Reports - Ms. Morgan is on the Wellness Committee liaison. They are planning to meet six times this year and she is excited. Of note, they are looking at the Wellness Policy in detail and will be making some recommendations.
- Announcements - Ms. Exton read aloud an email received in accolades to Superintendent Homan and a building Principal for working with the Department of Children and Families to find emergency placement for a child. SC Chat was held in October on METCO.
- Future Agenda Items - Ms. Exton let the Committee know that she received a METCO update and her interest in having the Committee take a trip to the new METCO headquarters.

### **8:50 p.m. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Hayner, and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman to adjourn from the meeting.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Hayner, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe, yes, Ms. Exton, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth M. Diggins  
Administrative Assistant, Arlington School Committee