

Arlington School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

June 15, 2023

6:30 p.m.

Arlington High School

869 Massachusetts Avenue

6th Floor, School Committee Room

Arlington, MA 02476

6:34 p.m. Open Meeting (P. Schlichtman)

The Vice Chair of the School Committee, P. Schlichtman, opened the meeting, in absence of the Chair, Dr. K. Allison-Ampe. In attendance were the following School Committee Members: J. Thielman, L. Kardon, P. Schlichtman, L. Gitelson, L. Exton and J. Morgan. K. Allison-Ampe and M. Mason were absent. A. Elmer attended remotely. Also in attendance, R. Spiegel, R. MacNeal, AEA Representative S. Ferranti (remotely), Superintendent E. Homan.

6:35 p.m. Public Comment (P. Schlichtman)

The Vice Chair read aloud the protocol for the public speakers. Public speakers who registered to speak included: S. Barton, D. Valdes, C. Johnson, H. Clay, C. Bunnell, S. McKinnon, C. Vincent, N. Roop, K. Marzilli Ericson, S. Westerhoff, J. Friedman, E. Dray, J. Weinstein, J. Mansfield, M. Varoglu, C. Martin, R. Soneja.

S. Barton spoke in support of gender inclusivity. D. Valdes spoke in support of gender inclusivity and embracing students and supporting the resolution rather than the revised version. C. Johnson spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. H. Clay spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution, rather than the two updated resolutions. C. Bunnell spoke to support the Exton/Gitelson resolution and not the Kardon updated resolution. S. McKinnon spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution for equal existence within the schools. C. Vincent

spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. N. Roop spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. K. Marzilli Ericson spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution and rejected the Kardon amended resolution. S. Westerhoff spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson “proclamation” (S. Westerhoff is a previous AHS student and now a 2nd year college student). J. Friedman spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson proclamation. E. Dray spoke in support of the original Exton/Gitelson resolution rather than the Kardon updated resolution. J. Weinstein spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution and their revised resolution as well. J. Mansfield spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. M. Varoglu spoke in support of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. C. Martin spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. R. Soneja spoke in favor of the Exton/Gitelson resolution. Public speaking ended.

7:06 p.m. AHS Student Representatives to the School Committee

No AHS Student Representatives were available to present this evening.

7:07 p.m. Appointment of Griffin Jones - Arlington Human Rights Commission

G. Jones spoke briefly about his background and his reason for wanting to be appointed to the Human Rights Commission.

A motion was made by J. Thielman and seconded by L. Gitelson to appoint G. Jones to the Arlington Human Rights Commission.

VOTE: A unanimous vote in the affirmative.

7:08 p.m. Appreciation: Dr. Roderick MacNeal (E. Homan)

The Superintendent spoke in honor of Dr. MacNeal and called him a “fearless advocate for kids” and that he leaves a legacy behind in “walking the walk” for the District. She spoke about their rewarding, supportive partnership and the ability to engage in hard conversations. She wished him the best and offered him advice “to follow his compass” as it is always in the right direction. Each School Committee Member shared kind words to Dr. MacNeal and wished him well in his new position. Dr. MacNeal thanked his great team of educators and the schools for giving him the opportunity to grow. Dr. MacNeal commented that he couldn’t be more thankful and grateful for everything.

There was a 10 minute recess for refreshments in honor of Dr. MacNeal.

7:29 p.m. AEF Presentation (J. Geyer, E. Goodsell)

J. Geyer, who is the outgoing president of the Arlington Education Foundation (AEF), presented a summary of what the AEF has done this past year. AEF is a 501(c) organization made up of 14 community members, an APS teacher rep, METCO parent rep, the School Committee rep and District Rep that work to support and advance public education in Arlington. J. Geyer

thanked the School Committee for their support as well as Dr. Homan and J. Dunn who both worked in close coordination as well as the Foundation liaisons, L. Exton and L. Kardon. The staff of AEF and the funding priorities of the AEF were presented next as well as the announcement of a new district investment grant for \$42,000 which has been awarded for the 2023-2024 academic year for Strategic Initiative Working Groups. An overview of the FY23 Grants (five grants) and the effect of these funds on multiple schools this year were presented as well as a review of the various FY22 innovations grants which took place in the elementary schools, secondary and high school levels.

J. Geyer announced that the new AEF President will be E. Goodsell (an airport delay prevented E. Goodsell from attending this meeting). Next, J. Geyer acknowledged the contributions to AEF by J. Dunn, the Founder, Board Member, President and District Liaison for the AEF Foundation; AEF will be starting the 2023-2024 academic year with a new grants administration in the Business Office. J. Geyer also thanked Dr. MacNeal and Dr. Homan for their work/ collaboration.

L. Kardon thanked J. Geyer for all the work she has done.

A motion was made by L. Kardon and seconded by J. Thielman to accept the grant for \$42,000.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

7:40 p.m. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report (M. Credle-Thomas)

M. Credle-Thomas presented the Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Department Strategic Initiatives and Priorities and thanked the School Committee and leadership of Dr. Homan, Dr. MacNeal and the Cabinet members for their collaboration.

M. Credle-Thomas presented the APS vision and the DEIJB version of this vision and reviewed the DEIJB timeline with accomplishments from 2021 to present which included the hiring of a Director of DEI, adoption of listening sessions and the completion of an equity audit. Professional Development Goals met included the establishment/facilitation of affinity groups and the designation of facilitator goals. The Department also organized and coordinated an IDEAS PD and organized and facilitated a teacher panel PD Day to the full APS faculty on staff belonging. The student engagement strategic initiative included the Ottoson Day of Belonging, Narrative 4 Project with Arlington Police for the high school in May. The Curriculum & Instruction Strategic Initiative included collaboration with teachers and coaches. The work continues with Community and State Engagement using the DEI Channel and ACMI to communicate and disseminate information, continuation of monthly meetings with DEI Town Director and Chief APD and AHR commission and other commissions in Town and other communities. Additional partnerships include the Mass Partnership for Diversity in Education (w/ R. Spiegel), Association of Massachusetts School Equity Leaders and just passed her comprehensive Exam and will begin her third year in the Boston College PSAP Program.

R. Spiegel and M. Credle-Thomas continue to partner in the Massachusetts Teacher diversification PLC through DESE. They developed a partnership with Cambridge College and designed an anti-bias process monitor for hiring.

Future strategic priorities include: hiring a new specialist (who has been hired), continue to partner/collaborate in the strategic priorities, increase inclusion and diversity by honoring important holidays and observances monthly and partnering with the curriculum leaders and principals to continue to design and develop a curriculum for the diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and create some residencies at the schools to hear what's going on.

There were questions from the SC Members and M. Credle-Thomas answered accordingly. Dr. Homan thanked M. Credle-Thomas for all the exciting and excellent work.

7:55 Resolution Affirming LGBTQIA+ Community (L. Exton, L. Gitelson)

L. Exton spoke that the School Committee Members, as elected officials, must do the best for the children in the Community. The revised resolution (posted in Novus) accomplishes the goals to take action to support the LGBTQIA+ Community.

L. Exton made a motion to approve the revised resolution presented by L. Exton and L. Gitelson submitted to the Committee. L. Kardon spoke in support of the resolution but not in the way in which the resolution made its way to the agenda without a full subcommittee review. L. Gitelson spoke in favor of the resolution and the importance of passing this resolution. J Thielman spoke in favor of the resolution and asked that the Committee work together moving forward; did not like the tone of the process and wants to get back to working collaboratively and feels L. Kardon is right about the rules and that there were other actions that could have taken place properly. P. Schlichtman spoke about deliberating outside of this room and how things work with topics, subcommittees, conversations, etc. and mentioned that it is not uncommon to bring resolutions to the meeting without subcommittee meetings. P. Schlichtman stated that he supports the LGBTQIA+ community and making safe space for children and clarified that resolutions are temporary and get attached to minutes as an opinion and the only way they can take action as a Committee is to insert language into the policy manual. Dr. Homan commented that equity work is challenging/controversial and that we are committed to doing so and creating/implementing policies to support the LGBTQIA+ community.

P. Schlichtman called for a vote to accept the resolution as presented.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

8:09 p.m. HGI Report (M. Janger, N. Edson and L. Basso)

This was a presentation on the Heterogeneous English Pilot for Grade 9, which is the last one for this year in the series of presentations. This presentation focuses on the Climate and Culture survey.

Dr. Janger gave an overview of the information which would be covered in the presentation and introduced two teacher presenters: L. Basso, 9th grade ELA teacher and Edson nd .

L. Basso reports that they are pleased overall with the positive feedback from the grade 9 teachers. They were able to dive deeper into specific skills and content and maintain high levels of rigor across levels. Students worked collaboratively across levels which allowed for rich discussions and more sophisticated levels of discourse on a consistent basis as well as feeling more motivated and capable in succeeding in English class.

N. Edson reviewed the teacher next steps over the summer included reviewing Panorama Survey Results and the actionable steps in lessons and tools and ultimately implementing training. Hoping to implement daily and weekly assessments. They are hoping for more opportunities to meet as a full team rather than in Groups for the future.

Dr. Janger then discussed what they are looking for by level and demographic group in the Outcomes and Evaluation including the honors level participation, student grades, rigorous expectations, future enrollment in honors and achievement and MCAS scores.

Results so far show that honors levels participation has gone up substantially and student grades have stayed even (improvement). The Panorama Survey was presented with some topics staying the same and others improving. Dr. Janger explained the way the Panorama survey is organized. There was no difference in most of the scaled topics, aside from classroom engagement which was down significantly and was a disappointment. The "engagement-related" questions were reviewed and had improved greatly. Of the current group of students only 31% of the students are excited about going to this class. Most movement went from high to middle level. The behavior of other students helping or having no effect were both 31%. The conclusion of the Panorama Survey seems to reflect that students are not that excited about the class (e.g, school). The caregiver feedback was reviewed; answers were lower percentages than the student responses. Dr. Janger hopes for equal or better outcomes by level and demographic groups. He reviewed the next steps and timeline which includes an 23 October review, 23 December proposal and 24 June review.

The School Committee Members (L. Kardon, J. Thielman, J. Morgan, P. Schlichtman) asked questions and Dr. Janger and the teachers answered accordingly.

8:47 p.m. Approval of Arlington High School International Trips (M. Janger)

Dr. Janger presented two international trip proposals (Taiwan and Quebec City). J. Morgan was delighted to see an international trip at the \$1,000 level which makes it much more available and accessible to all students.

J. Morgan made a motion and it was seconded by L. Gitelson to approve the Quebec City international trip.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

J. Thielman made a motion to approve and it was seconded by L. Exton to approve the Taiwan international trip.

**Roll Call Vote: L. Gitelson, no, L. Kardon, yes., J. Morgan, no, J. Thielman, yes, L. Exton, yes, P. Schlichtman, yes. Opposed: J. Morgan, L. Gitelson.
(4-2 in the affirmative)**

L. Gitelson asked how the expense of the Taiwan international trip was addressed and Dr. Janger explained that there is a tradeoff because these trips are less expensive than they would be if not through the school. There is also a mixture of travel opportunities at different price levels. They are hoping more fundraising can be done for international scholarship funds.

8:56 p.m. District Goals, Second Read (E. Homan)

A motion was made by J. Thielman and seconded by L. Exton to approve the second read of the District Goals.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

8:57 p.m. Override Update (L. Kardon)

L. Kardon gave an update on the possible override. On November 7 there will be a special meeting to vote on a \$7 million dollar override. L. Kardon asked the School Committee to support the action taken by the Select Board to support the \$7Million dollar override.

A motion was made by J. Thielman and seconded by J. Morgan to vote to support the \$7 million dollar override on November 7.

Roll Call Vote: L.Gitelson, yes, L. Kardon, yes, J. Morgan, yes, J. Thielman, yes, L. Exton, yes, P. Schlichtman, yes.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:01 p.m. Superintendent's Update (E. Homan)

The Superintendent began her presentation by congratulating the Class of 2023 after a wonderful graduation ceremony, the award presented at the State House to the Crossing Guard Champion, L. Carella and the selection of Stratton student A. Bode, by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 2023 Children's Congress in Washington, DC. The superintendent reported that an APS project has advanced to the finals in the The National History Day National Competition, there was one outstanding affiliate entry winner for Massachusetts and one project which won first place in the junior group website category.

Hiring searches recently completed include the new Stratton Principal, Brackett Assistant Principal, Bishop Assistant Principal, Director of Research, Data and Accountability. On-going search includes openings for a Hardy Principal, interim Math Director and the Middle School SPED Coordinator. Dr. Homan also thanked the workplace students and teachers for their work, honoring our fallen heroes with the Memorial Day display of flags up on Park Circle.

Enrollments are in the packet.

9:04 p.m. Approval of Job Description (E. Homan)

Prior to a vote, Dr. Homan discussed the Leadership Development and Onboarding Program Designer job description for the School Committee Members.

A motion was made by L. Exton and seconded by J. Thielman to approve the Leadership Development and Onboarding Program Designer job description as presented.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:06 p.m. Year-end Financial Update (E. Homan)

Dr. Homan presented in the absence of M. Mason who could not attend because of an emergency. The presentation included an overview of the ESSER Funds (amount received) and the initiative options available, with "B" being the option chosen by the community. The core initiatives chosen were reviewed. The Expenditures to Date and the FY24 overall Spending Plan presented included: Communications Specialist, Assistant Director of High School Counseling, DEI/JSpecialist, Director of Research, Data and Accountability, Family Liaison at Gibbs, Leadership Development and On-boarding Coordinator, Elementary Literacy Professional Development.

Dr. Homan asked Members for any questions on the ESSER Presentation and/or Financial Report.

A motion was made by J. Thielman and it was seconded by L. Exton, to move adoption of the financial report presented by M. Mason which includes two motions but will be voted on as a

combined, one motion. These budget adjustments included increasing and decreasing various budget categories.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:11 p.m. Policy and Procedures (P. Schlichtman)

A number of policy changes were presented by P. Schlichtman which included the deletion of Policy IJ-R and the second reading of files IGD, KE, KE-R and IMA (which will be included in the Policy and Procedure Manual)

A motion was made by J. Thielman and seconded by L. Gitelson to approve the second read of Policies IGD, KE, KE-R, IMA. and delete policy IJ-R.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:12 p.m. Safety Issues - Regis Road at Thompson School (P. Schlichtman)

A motion was made by L. Kardon and seconded by J. Morgan to approve sending the letter (posted in Novus) presented by P. Schlichtman to the Select Board regarding the Safety Issues on Regis Road.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:14 p.m. Consent Agenda (P. Schlichtman)

P. Schlichtman presented the consent agenda items below:

Warrant #23288, \$747,026.60, 5/31/2023
Warrant #23293, \$1,334,840.16, 6/13/2023
School Committee Meeting Minutes, 5/25/2023

A motion was made by L. Exton and it was seconded by L. Gitelson to approve the consent agenda items.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:15 p.m. Subcommittees/Liaison Reports/Announcements (P. Schlichtman)

- Budget - L. Kardon will be scheduling a meeting to wrap up this year and discuss the upcoming November 7 override.
- Community Relations - L. Exton, no report.

- CIAA - J. Morgan reported that they met yesterday and discussed the job description, school improvement plan template, project U at Gibbs; it was a great meeting.
 - Facilities - J. Thielman, no report.
 - Policies/Procedures - P. Schlichtman reports that they have been asked to look at a number of policies and they will be busy this summer.
 - AHS Building Committee - J. Thielman reports that they had a great tour of the new space.
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- Liaison Reports - L. Gitelson reports that she attended the final SEPAC meeting of the year. P. Schlichtman attended the state house celebration for the honored Hardy traffic guard.
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- Announcements - none.

9:20 p.m. Future Meetings (P. Schlichtman)

Given that the School Committee has cleared the agenda, P. Schlichtman asked for a vote to cancel the regularly scheduled School Committee meeting for June 22, 2023.

A motion was made by L. Exton and it was seconded by L. Gitelson to cancel the June 22, 2023 meeting.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

A motion was made by Mr. Kardon and it was seconded by J. Thielman to move into Executive Session.

Roll call vote: L. Gitelson, yes, L. Kardon, yes, J. Morgan, yes, J. Thielman, yes, L. Exton, yes, P. Schlichtman, yes.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:20 p.m. Executive Session (P. Schlichtman)

9:26 p.m. Adjourn from Executive Session (P. Schlichtman)

A motion was made by Mr. Thielman and it was seconded by Ms. Gitelson to exit Executive Session.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:28 p.m. Return to Regular Session and Possible Vote: Memorandum between School Committee and AEA Unit A Mentor Stipend

P. Schlichtman offered the memorandum of agreement between the Arlington School Committee and the Arlington Education Association pertaining to stipends which was discussed and voted on in Executive Session and is now being voted on again in public session.

A motion was made by J. Thielman and it was seconded by L. Gitelson to approve the AEA Unit A Mentor Stipends.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

9:28 p.m. Adjournment

A motion was made by J. Thielman and seconded by L. Gitelson to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth M. Diggins
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee