

# **Arlington School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**

**October 12, 2023**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Arlington High School**

**869 Massachusetts Avenue**

**6th Floor, School Committee Room**

**Arlington, MA 02476**

## **6:36 p.m. Open Meeting (K. Allison-Ampe)**

The Chair of the School Committee, K. Allison-Ampe, opened the meeting and acknowledged a late start due to technical issues. In attendance were the following School Committee Members: J. Thielman, L. Kardon, P. Schlichtman, L. Gitelson, L. Exton and J. Morgan, K. Allison-Ampe. Also in attendance: E. Homan, remotely, M. Ford Walker, R. Spiegel, A. Elmer, J. Medeiros, AEA Representative and A. Chelariu, M. Hagenbuch, AHS Student Reps.

## **6:40 p.m. Public Comment (K. Allison-Ampe)**

There were no public speakers.

## **6:40 p.m. AHS Student Representative(s) to the School Committee (K. Allison-Ampe)**

The Chair welcomed A. Chelariu and M. Hagenbuch to the meeting. M Hagenbuch shared the results of the Cross Country team finals, the Pep Rally and Club Day – over 40 clubs this year.

The Chair announced that the Superintendent is being represented by the Deputy Superintendent this evening.

## **6:45 p.m. Diversity and Hiring Report (R. Spiegel)**

R. Spiegel presented the annual staffing report which included new hires and demographic data

in the District. He thanked the Assistant Director, K. Piggot, and M. Coleman for all of their work on the data and acknowledged the importance of all of the various offices and departments that contribute to this process and thanked them all.

R. Spiegel stated that the vision and mission of the APS is that all learners includes all educators and all staff in the District. He reviewed the agenda for the presentation with a discussion on the relevance to Strategic Priority #2. The Demographics of the District were reviewed next and the explanation of mandatory form with an option to not self-identify. He presented all new hires and where we are with the percentages/breakdowns. Unit A Educator demographics were presented next; the new Unit A percentages vs. the last four years. We are a more white district in terms of educators vs. students. The breakdown percentages by different unions/employees (with Unit A being the biggest, most employees) were presented by R. Spiegel. Staffing retention rates were presented thru June 30, 2023. APS is just about where the State is with teacher retention; we want to be a little better than that. Unit A hires were presented as well as the reason for the new hires. Administrators, AEA Unit D, C and other hires were presented next. Common reasons for resignations were presented as well as current vacancies. Recent and current initiatives included: April networking, August hiring fair, a Leadership Development and Onboarding Program, an Orientation and Mentoring Program and Strategic Working Group #2.

A Q&A followed with the School Committee Members and R. Spiegel answered accordingly.

#### **7:05 p.m. Land Acknowledgement** (K. Allison-Ampe)

As dictated per Policy BEDL for the meeting closest to Indigenous Peoples Day, Dr. Allison-Ampe read aloud the Land Acknowledgement, acknowledging that the Town of Arlington is located on the ancestral lands of the Massachusetts Tribe, the tribe of Indigenous peoples from whom the Colony, Province, and Commonwealth have taken their names.

#### **7:10 p.m. Fall 2023 Outcomes Report** (M. Ford Walker and M. Coleman)

M. Coleman reviewed the APS Vision Statement and the aspect of Strategic Plan #1 as well as the three big core takeaways shown from the data collected. The focal groups on which this data is based were presented as well as the data sources that motivated this presentation. M. Coleman gave a quick refresher of the documentation from the previous report – accountability data, MCAS results, access data, chronic absenteeism, advanced coursework, graduation/dropout rates and extended engagement. An Accountability Data recap and what the accountability data includes were reviewed. A Scale of Point Assignment was explained as the information used by the State for categorizing whether or not we met or exceeded the expectations - Arlington has an 89% success rate. A graph showing how Arlington compares to other schools was displayed. M. Coleman presented a matrix displaying SGP (Student Growth Percentile) which will come up in the report as well and is reported as typical and high growth. MCAS results were presented in graph form for ELA and Math for Grades 3-8 as well as High School. Science results were reviewed with upper trends as well. 2022 and 2023 Science

MCAS were changed so the older information cannot be compared to the newer information, but the last two years show they are doing well for MCAS and Accountability areas. Although APS is meeting or exceeding all expectations required by the State, it doesn't paint the whole picture. M. Coleman reports that 84% of students are completing at least one course that the State considers advanced. But there are huge gaps in certain student focal groups. AP Trend data was presented next with an increase of Freshman and Sophomore enrolling in AP exams. Only 11 percent of black students enrolled, a much lower rate.

Panorama Results show the experience for students in Grades 3-5 is fairly rigorous. Students in 6-12 started at a higher benchmark and reported fairly rigorous results as well.

There is a consistent downward trend in Grades 3-5 and 6-12 of a sense of belonging. Results show that some of the focal groups (especially in 11th grade) report that mental health issues are most likely the reason for the downward trend. Absenteeism benchmarks by the State were met but there are still red flags in chronic absenteeism in some of the students in the focal groups. Mostly positive data but we still have area for growth.

M. Coleman then presented the Elementary ELA. The new pilot shows that high-need status is going down for grades 3-5 students. The trend is also going down for black or latino students. The EL status is the same thing - going down. Grades 6 - 8 were included, due to the COVID pandemic, which shows a wide gap but it is leveling out a little bit. The last slide included the data from K-3 (COVID effects). Dibels assessment (3 x year) shows great progress in each grade throughout the year, but there is still work to do.

M. Coleman presented "next steps" which included an EL Pilot in Grades K-5, Family Welcome and Resource Hub, Increased Parental Communication and Engagement, Coordinated School Improvement Plans and a focus on Deeper Learning and academic rigor.

Dr. Ford Walker reports that they are working hard to align that the SIPs are really reflective of ways in which schools are going to respond to the data presented. Action steps aligned and resources received by the school's requests.

A Q&A followed with the School Committee Members and M. Coleman and M. Ford Walker answered accordingly.

### **8:25 p.m. Superintendent's Update** (M. Ford Walker and M. Coleman)

Dr. Ford Walker presented the Superintendent's Update since Dr. Homan was attending remotely. It was presented that the EL Education Pilot is underway, a \$10,000 Safe and Supportive Schools Grant was awarded by DESE to APS and the Professional Learning Menu for 2023-2024 is currently open for educators.

Dr. Ford Walker reported that APS has been selected as a 2023 Mass Save Climate Leader and that the District has received two new electric buses on Town Day. The Superintendent

Evaluation Materials were sent via email this week (DRAFT) and enrollments are included in Novus.

Additional comments included that a timeline for the evaluations will be available from the School Committee Chair. Brackett being closed today was brought up and the expectations on how make up time will happen was requested. J. Morgan said that having the school shut down today was hard but she appreciated the emails from Dr. Ford Walker. J. Morgan appreciated the professional development work by Dr. Ford Walker and reported that Back-to-School night at Stratton was phenomenal.

**8:30 p.m. Elect MASC Delegate** (K. Allison-Ampe)

A nomination by L. Exton, seconded by L. Gitelson to nominate P. Schlichtman to act as the MASC Delegate for 2023. L. Exton thanked P. Schlichtman for his attendance at this meeting on behalf of the Committee.

**VOTE:** It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

A nomination by P. Schlichtman, seconded by L. Exton, for K. Allison-Ampe to act as the alternate MASC Delegate alternate for 2023.

**VOTE:** It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

**8:33 p.m. Possible Vote to Approve APS and the AEA MOA** (K. Allison-Ampe)

A motion was made by L. Kardon and seconded by J. Thielman to approve the APS and the AEA MOA for an increase in wages for cafeteria workers and authorize the Chair to sign.

**VOTE:** It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

**8:35 p.m. Consent Agenda** (K. Allison-Ampe)

The Chair presented the Consent Agenda items and asked for a motion to approve.

Warrant #24072, 10/3/2023, \$860,315.89

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

**VOTE:** It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

**8:34 p.m. Subcommittee/Liaison Report/Announcements** (K. Allison-Ampe)

- Budget - Len Kardon, Chair - Special Town Meeting recommended vote by the Finance Committee but wording needs to be adjusted. Revised the budget calendar which will be distributed. Funding mechanism for funding Speakers for SEPAC and Budget Office Staffing
  - Community Relations - Liz Exton, Chair, CHAT scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 17 on HGI @ 9 a.m. with J. Thielman and L. Gitelson in addition to the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.
  - Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability - Jane Morgan, Chair, Meeting on October 23 at 2PM RE: 6th Grade overnight experience and SpecEd Programs with A. Elmer and a SEPAC Report.
  - Facilities - Jeff Thielman, Chair - Meeting on November 2 @ 5:15 p.m We need to clarify if something at Brackett was an emergency and needs to be made up.
  - Policy & Procedures - Paul Schlichtman, Chair - RE: Brackett - we vote the calendar for 180 days; can't run a school without water.
  - Arlington High School Building Committee - Jeff Thielman, Chair - Meeting on Nov. 14 and December meeting will be in the school. Arranging a tour for the end of October for the School Committee; dates will be sent out for options.
- Liaison Reports
  - Announcements
  - Future Agenda Items

#### **8:40 p.m. Adjournment**

A motion was made by L. Exton and seconded by J. Morgan to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** It was a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

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