

*Arlington School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 17, 2015
6:30 PM*

*Draft Agenda
Arlington High School
School Committee Room, 6th Floor
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA*

Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair, Jennifer Susse, Vice Chair, Jeff Thielman, Secretary, Mr. Pierce, Kirsi Allison-Ampe, MD and Mr. Hayner

Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent of the Schools, Laura Chesson, Assistant Superintendent's, Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Rob Spiegel, Human Resource Director, Alison Elmer, Special Education Director, Siobhan Foley Karen Fitzgerald

Absent: Ms. Starks

Ms. Johnson arrived: 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Pierce exited the meeting 9:25 p.m.

Open Meeting

Mr. Schlichtman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone back to the School Committee Room. The Artwork presented was from the Menotomy Preschool students.

Public Participation

Ms. Siobhan Foley, 3rd grade teacher Thompson, and VP AEA introduced Ms. Liz Higgins, Ms. Christine Brayfield, Ms. Julia Keys, Ms. Valarie Sorenson, and Ms. Linda Hanson who were all speaking tonight for district budget requests.

Ms. Higgins, read the following requests for Elementary:

- More TA Support when classes go over 25*
- Full time TA's in K – first priority*
- Grade level TA's not tied to Special Education needs Concern: TA's often pulled to cover for subs*
- Better pay for qualified classroom TA's and SPED TA's*
- More Technology Support*
- Instructional technology teachers to work with students*
- More iPads and other technology hardware (dongles, apple TV's, speakers, wireless keyboards)*
- More IT support*
- Academic and Social/Emotional Support*
- Additional special education professional teacher support*
- Math support for upper grades*
- Math support for Kindergarten*
- Comprehension support for upper grades*
- More literacy coaches to match math coach model*
- More social work support*
- Classroom teachers to maintain class sizes below 25*
- Curriculum Materials and Support*
- FOSS science kits for each teacher*

- *Additional books to complement new reading units, additional guided reading books, and nonfiction books*
- *More professional development – especially bringing outside consultants into the district*
- *Other/Miscellaneous*
- *Key cards for entering the building at all elementary schools*
- *Sinks in the cafeteria for student use (recess then lunch)*
- *Another modular classroom for Stratton during the rebuild for music*
- *Money for creative seating options to support collaboration*

Ms. Brayfield read the following statement:

I am here this evening to address the issue of “double gym classes”. While there has been the need for a few double gym classes in the past in one or two schools, the combination of the weekly early release time on Tuesday, and the enrollment growth, have led to a substantial increase in the need to double up and have two gym classes, each with their own teacher, running simultaneously in the gym. There are currently 33 doubled up gym sessions at the elementary level, with Peirce having the least at one, and Brackett and Dallin having the most at 7 apiece.

While there are good weather days when one class can be outside and the other inside, there are many days of the year when both classes need to share the gym space. The PE teachers have been doing their best to be creative, but having 45 – 59 bodies in one space presents many challenges.

Double classes are not ideal for teaching and learning. It has been difficult for us to follow our curriculum because we don’t currently have twice the amount of equipment needed to effectively teach each unit in the curriculum. We are being forced to either deviate from our curriculum or have children wait a long time for a turn.

Student safety is another concern. With so many children in the gymnasium at once, there is a higher risk of injury. While we do teach body awareness and appropriate movement within their own personal space, some children have had trouble following these guidelines in the smaller space they have at their disposal with the double classes.

Whether it is a Kindergarten or 5th grade double class, each has its own challenges. Smaller children pose a noise/management issue along with the difficulty of establishing routines and calm transitions, while 5th graders pose a space and equipment challenge. Many children also have sensitivity to noise, and no matter how well behaved, 50 students simply make more noise than 25. One PE teacher has even spoken to their principal regarding sound reducing panels for the gymnasium to help with this issue.

I want to close with a request to add additional PE teachers next year – both to meet the increased enrollment, and to deal with the early release Tuesday schedule. Technically, there are 43 available teaching blocks during the week if the gym is utilized at all times, but due to the fact that teachers are shared between buildings, and there is little wiggle room in the schedules, principals have been forced to go to the double sessions. 43 periods, with the gym occupied at all times, would mean that only the largest school right now, Brackett, would have the need for a double session. With more PE FTE’s, principals would have more flexibility in how they create their specialist schedules, thus decreasing the need for double sessions. We would really appreciate your support in this area.

Ms. Keys, suggested the following budget requests for the Ottoson Middle School

- *More staff to address rising enrollment (60+ more students = 3 new staff, equitably)*
- *More special ed staff especially in small group programs. Support for these students in mainstream classes.*

- *Full time science director*
- *More world language staff so kids can get first choice language*
- *Wi-Fi improvements*
- *Security upgrades to enable door locking in “lockdown” situations: dead bolts for doors and pull down shades for windows that go into the hallway*

Ms. Valarie Sorenson suggested the following budget request for the high school and noted more requests could come after the AHS faculty meeting on Friday, December 18th:

- *Staff, staff, staff, and full time secretary, in the dean’s office*
- *Working Wi-Fi*
- *Usable bathrooms and facilities upgrades*

Ms. Linda Hanson, President of the AEA, gave her final remarks on PARCC and said with the recent updates on the conversations on MCAS and PARCC with the AEA Board of Directors she has decided to support PARCC in the spring of 2016. She would like the communication on switching to PARCC to be clear and consistent to every teacher and parent/guardian and appreciates the conversations with the administration and the School Committee members.

FY 17 Budgetary Needs of Elementary Principals and Special Education Department

The following Elementary Principals attended the meeting tonight: Thad Dingman, Dallin Elementary School, Karen Donato, Thompson Elementary School, Mark McAneny, Bishop Elementary School, Karen Hartley, Peirce Elementary School, Michael Hannah, Stratton Elementary School, Stephanie Zerchykov, Brackett Elementary School, and Kristin DeFrancisco, Hardy Elementary School spoke and began the meeting by thanking and giving an update on how they have used the resources that were prioritized in our budget requests last year.

Ms. DeFrancisco spoke on behalf of the principals and said maintaining the full time social worker position at each elementary school has been something that has allowed each school principal to ensure that our students’ social emotional wellness is supported. Social workers have been able to not only see students individually and in small groups, but also have been able to lead social thinking lessons in general education classrooms that help students learn ways to self-regulate and access curriculum more effectively. In addition, social workers have been able to co-treat students with OT providers and even special educators. This holistic approach allows students to practice skills in authentic settings.

Last year, we highlighted the need for more relevant, STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) focused learning experiences for our students in the elementary grades. By supporting the purchase and implementation of new curriculum, you have helped us to bring FOSS (Full Option Science System) to elementary students in first, second, and third grade. New units of study are well underway and teachers have received professional development to aid in their instruction. As a result, students are engaged in hands-on, inquiry based science opportunities aligned to Next Generation Science Standards. Children are building parachute system to study air resistance, designing solutions to real life design problems, and developing a concrete understanding of engineering. We look forward to the next phase of implementation for our 4th and 5th graders next school year.

By granting our request to increase Teacher Assistant salaries this year, we feel that we are able to maintain the teacher assistants that we have worked hard to integrate into our learning communities. Our teaching assistants are being asked to learn about all that is required to support the school cultures that we have. They work with the greatest amount of students in the building. They help to support students in all areas of the building and during all subject areas. Often times, our building teacher

assistants are needed to be the most flexible staff members in the building. This is truly why we feel we need to show our TA's how much we value their important work and appreciate your help to do just that.

Last, we were able to keep class sizes down for most classrooms and in most schools. As stated during our asks last year, small class sizes are allowing teachers to meet the district goal of providing inquiry based, differentiated experiences for all of our students. With projected enrollment growth in Arlington, we all will need to be sure to continue watching this closely and working to maintain the manageable class sizes that you helped us to finance last year.

Ms. DeFrancisco noted as we move into thinking about next year, we have still kept our district goals in mind and are requesting support based on fulfilling these goals, as well as continuing to build on the momentum we are seeing based on investments that our town has made in the elementary school programming.

Our staff and community are committed to a system in which all students meet high standards. This requires continued support for our teachers in implementing rigorous standards based curriculum and instruction as well as our students receiving the extra supports needed when necessary to meet these standards. The Arlington Community has come to expect this for their children as well they should.

We have been very mindful at looking at data around our students with the highest need. Due to enrollment growth, this high needs group has grown. For example, for the first time the Bishop Elementary School has been recognized with a high needs subgroup. This means the high needs group of students is large enough to document.

As we look across our accountability data, we see our most noticeable achievement gap developing with students in high needs populations and their ability to meet yearly growth targets. What we are also seeing is a direct connection between rising enrollments, which is creating a resource gap directly tied to this high needs group.

For clarification, a high needs student belongs to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and former ELL students, or economically disadvantaged students. For a school to be considered to be making progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps, the cumulative PPI for both the all students group and high needs students must be 75 or higher. In short, in order to stay committed to the high standards to which the community and our students have become accustomed, and to support the growing high needs students due to increased enrollment growth, we are asking for financial support in the following areas.

We ask that we are able to sustain the resources given to support last year's requests that were discussed at the opening of our presentation. Those are full time social worker in each school building, STEM curriculum, and increased salary for teaching assistants. This will continue to help meet our goals for this year.

As you all know, our Tools of the Mind program is a rigorous full day academic curriculum replacing a curriculum that emphasized morning academic programming. In order to implement this curriculum with integrity, a great deal of both academic and social emotional supports is needed. This program currently operates with a part time TA and this is not enough support. It is important that our students' first year with us serve as a foundation in developmentally appropriate rigor which we expect to grow vertically. Teachers are certainly not able to implement with the same rigor in the afternoon without an assistant. To this end, we are again asking for full time teaching assistants in Kindergarten to support the delivery of the Tools of the Mind program with integrity and high quality for all students as it is meant to serve as foundation for future grade levels.

Due to increased enrollment, we find ourselves servicing a larger number of students, and we need adequate resources to support these children. Currently, we do not have the staff to address the sheer number of students being identified for support, both through special education and intervention.

We know that best practice and research support a system where students experience the majority of their learning in their general education classrooms. In order to see this model rise to its fruition, we need to consider the rising caseloads of our learning specialists. They are keeping up with service commitments for students on IEP's, writing and maintaining all individualized plans for their students, attending all required team meetings, and attending meetings to be part of the RTI process for all children. Learning specialists are doing all this while keeping abreast of the curriculum and curriculum changes at up to three grade levels. This is quite a mammoth task.

We would like to see our learning specialists be a more intimate team with eight or less teachers and no more than two grade levels. This would allow more common planning time, more co-teaching, more thoughtful differentiation at the beginning of each curricular unit to assist our high needs subgroup students. To this end, we are asking for four additional specialists, with each having a TA to support, in order to address the need to build teacher capacity to adequately service students with diverse high needs.

As part of our support plan for teachers and students, we are exploring and beginning implementation of a coaching program in Arlington. Currently, both literacy and math coaches work with teachers to build their capacity as they educate a wide range of learners. The idea behind coaching is to help all staff members deliver a high quality curriculum that will meet the needs of all students. Coaches help to support the differentiation and delivery of instruction. They help to develop rigor, and build the capacity of teachers and special educators.

In addition, a group of educators consisting of math coaches, literacy coaches, principals, mentor teachers and Dr. Chesson are working to strengthen this program with the help of a distributed leadership workshop orchestrated by the Department of Education and consultants Education Delivery Institute. This work will help us to implement this program with success and allow the program to grow. Due to enrollment growth, our ability to afford all schools this coaching model is becoming more difficult. An increase in coaching staff will make our resources commensurate across the district. To that end we support the district vision for increasing coaching staff at the elementary level as outlined by Dr. Chesson.

In order to avoid stalled implementation and leverage our investment so far, we are looking to continue our professional development around and acquisition of FOSS Science Curriculum. This curriculum has started what has been a need in our elementary schools and asked for by our communities, for quite some time. Next year, we need to complete the implementation in first through fifth grade. To that end, we are requesting funding to continue the implementation of the updated FOSS science curriculum at all elementary schools.

We also hope to start a three year plan to overhaul the elementary mathematics curriculum. The new curriculum is aligned to the new common core state standards, in both process and content. Our request includes funding for mathematics curriculum updates for Kindergarten through grade two. This curriculum is common core aligned and supports differing types of learners.

You will see on your budget sheet that we are asking for a variety of much needed curriculum materials. These include Lucy Calkins kits for new classrooms, LLI kits for schools that don't have them, math manipulatives and non-fiction reading materials aligned with the common core state standards.

In closing, the elementary school principals are looking to continue building small grade level teams of educators that include, classroom teachers, special educators and their TA's, math and literacy coaches, social work support, and additional support staff. With this in place, it will be our goal to build the capacity of all who work with our students so that they may provide rigorous opportunities for students in which all are able to engage and access successfully.

They hope that in speaking with the committee tonight they understand how important it is to be mindful of our enrollment growth and that we feel it our responsibility to be proactive around this growth so that we can continue to give the Arlington Community the high quality education they have come to expect from us as a school district. We feel that momentum around these initiatives is key, and when we are unable to support and keep up the momentum, it derails students, teachers and administrators. We know that with your support around these initiatives we will be able to sustain momentum and provide a rigorous, equitable education for all types of learners. School committee members, we thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening. We are all happy to answer any questions you may have about these requests as well as how we our using our resources around last year's requests.

School committee members, open up and passionate about what the principals do, and what Arlington does, and we want to maintain initiatives, to be able to give kids their best. And they are mindful on how things were presented. The committee members thanked all the principals for the comments and for the work they do for their own children, and appreciate the support the principals provide to their classroom teachers, special education teachers, math coaches, and for the rigorous curriculum they provide for Arlington students. Dr. Bodie, Mr. Coleman, and Mr. Weathers spoke on the needs of their departments, the FTE's needed and to increase the curriculum line items for additional science kits, and invited the committee members to visit classrooms or to have students provide demonstration on science lessons. After the budget requests were discussed Paul asked if the principals have comments on PARCC or MCAS? Kristen, Thad and Matt all echoed that after speaking with staff and the leadership team they agree to move to PARCC in the spring of 2016 then see what happens in 2017/2018. Everyone agrees to first test the technology piece of PARCC before committing the test is all computer based testing. A few of the committee members noted the capacity issue at Thompson Elementary school are on board with the motion after Ms. Susse noted that the town uses a formula which is not based on our districts need. The committee strongly believes to advocate for the education of Arlington students and for the promise they made to the voters to maintain services and to meet the increased enrollment. That's what this motion is about.

Dr. Allison-Ampe moves that the full School Committee direct the Superintendent to put forward to the Town Manager and the Long Range Plan committee a number that communicates the full scope of APS needs. This is envisioned as full "asks" minus anticipated revenue. She may also submit a lower number ("asks," pared down) and/or new proposals for enrollment growth factor if she so desires. All communications should include the message that the School Committee has not yet discussed nor voted on the budget proposal, seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Voted 6-0

A few of the committee members noted that they just received the information today but are on board with the motion after Ms. Susse noted that the town uses a formula which is not based on our districts need. The committee strongly believes to advocate for the education of Arlington students and for the promise they made to the voters to maintain services and to meet the increased enrollment.

Special Education Director: Alison Elmer introduced her team and provided the priorities for the Special Education department in 2016/2017. Early Childhood Coordinator: Joyce Schlenger, Elementary

Coordinators: Chris Carlson & Jill Parkin, Middle School Coordinator: Martha Wall, and High School Coordinator: Lynne Bennet.

Good evening Mr. Chair and School Committee members. We'd like to thank you for this opportunity tonight and hope to use this time to briefly highlight our priorities for the upcoming 2016-17 school year and answer any questions you may have about these identified areas of need.

We'd like to begin by thanking you for support of our requests in the FY16 budget, which included maintenance of the full-time social workers at each elementary school and the three district-wide Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and the accompanying behavioral support personal (BSPs,) as well as the addition of the 0.5 FTE school psychologist at Ottoson Middle School. I would also like to highlight the creative and fiscally responsible ways in which we have been able to strengthen the depth and quality of special education programming over the last year. Through the reallocation of resources, we were able to add a full-time Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility (TVI/O&M,) a service for which we previously contracted and we were also able to add a full-time Speech Language Pathology Assistant (SLP-A), in place of a 0.5 FTE Speech Language Pathologist (S/LP) allowing us to meet compliance requirements for speech and language services while keeping spending neutral.

As you have heard repeatedly from both the school department and Dr. McKibben's report our enrollment is increasing and with this we have seen an increase in our high needs students. While this group consists of students receiving special education services, English Language Learners, and those that are economically disadvantaged, we know from our department figures that the special education population, specifically, is increasing (fig. 1).

Fig. 1

June SIMS Reports

June 2015: Total = 934 (age 3-5 = 96 / age 6-21 = 838)

June 2014: Total = 878 (age 3-5 = 83 / age 6-21 = 795)

June 2013: Total = 856 (age 3-5 = 90 / age 6-21 = 766)

October SIMS Reports

October 2015: Total = 834 (age 3-5 = 83 / age 6-21 = 746)

October 2014: Total = 838 (age 3-5 = 95 / age 6-21 = 743)

October 2013: Total = 812 (age 3-5 = 95 / age 6-21 = 717)

In order to keep up with the increasing needs of this sub-group and what we are required to provide under state and federal law, we are requesting a 4.0 FTE increase to the elementary learning specialist positions to be distributed across four of the seven elementary schools, so that all schools have three of these specialists.

We know that looking at learning specialists' caseloads and service delivery grids does not give a complete picture of the entirety of their roles. From a purely compliance standard you can see that we will be unable to meet the service requirements outlined in the student IEPs without this increase (Fig 2). This does not account for meeting time, report writing, or assessment. Nor do these figures account for the time spent providing support to general education students through Response to Intervention (RTI). If we are to meet the needs of the entire high needs population and provide the level of service this community has come to expect, we must work as part of a cohesive team that consists of general educators, learning specialists, coaches, and interventionists. This need was also highlighted by the elementary principals in their requests to increase both coaching and learning specialist staff.

Fig 2

| | Caseload (# of students) | % of School Pop | Pull-out (C grid) hrs | Push-in (B grid) hrs | Total hrs by School | Total hrs by provider | Contractual hrs available |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| School A | 39 | 9 | 24.5 | 71.5 | 96 | | 44 |
| LS 1 | 18 | | 9.5 | 38.5 | | 48 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 21 | | 15 | 33 | | 48 | 22 |
| School B | 45 | 12 | 11.5 | 120 | 131.5 | | 66 |
| LS 1 | 14 | | 2 | 34 | | 36 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 16 | | 4.5 | 42 | | 46.5 | 22 |
| LS 3 | 15 | | 5 | 44 | | 49 | 22 |
| School C | 58 | 14 | 16.5 | 92.8 | 109.3 | | 44 |
| LS 1 | 27 | | 7 | 48 | | 55 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 31 | | 9.5 | 44.8 | | 54.3 | 22 |
| School D | 45 | 11 | 12.5 | 63 | 75.5 | | 44 |
| LS 1 | 20 | | 7 | 27.1 | | 34.1 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 25 | | 5.5 | 36 | | 41.5 | 22 |
| School E | 30 | 13 | 1.5 | 89 | 90.5 | | 44 |
| LS 1 | 17 | | 0 | 47 | | 47 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 13 | | 1.5 | 41.3 | | 42.8 | 22 |
| School F | 42 | 14 | 33.5 | 75.1 | 108.6 | | 44 |
| LS 1 | 20 | | 14.5 | 28.5 | | 43 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 22 | | 19 | 46.5 | | 65.5 | 22 |
| School G | 37 | 8 | 45.1 | 91.7 | 136.8 | | 66 |
| LS 1 | 15 | | 21 | 53.3 | | 74.3 | 22 |
| LS 2 | 12 | | 7 | 17 | | 24 | 22 |
| LS 3 | 10 | | 17.1 | 21.4 | | 38.5 | 22 |
| | | | | | 748.2 | 747.5 | 352 |

We are making a request for an additional 1.0 FTE school social worker at the Brackett Elementary School. Several years ago, when our in-district programs were developed, we created K-12 Specialized Learning Centers (SLC) for students identified with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and emotional impairments. At the time, tough decisions needed to be made about staffing as limited resources were available to service these high needs populations. We were able to provide full-time Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LICSW) to the programs servicing students with autism and emotional impairments. It is now time to provide similar resources to our elementary program for students with intellectual disabilities. Currently, there is a 1.0 FTE LICSW servicing all of the students at the Brackett

Elementary in general education, as well as special education students in the Learning Center and students in the SLC (Fig 3).

Fig. 3

| School - SW | FTE | CASES - SPED | CASES - GEN ED |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Brackett</i> | 1.0 | 36 | 27 |
| <i>Dallin</i> | 2.0 | 30 | 11 |
| <i>Stratton</i> | 2.0 | 17 | 20 |

Another area in which we are seeing an increase in enrollment is in our preschool population (Fig. 4). The Menotomy Preschool services special education students entitled to services under the IDEA, as well as tuition-paying general education students.

Fig. 4

| <i>Special education students</i> | <i>September</i> | <i>June</i> |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| <i>2011-2012</i> | 29 | 35 |
| <i>2012-2013</i> | 23 | 36 |
| <i>2013-2014</i> | 24 | 37 |
| <i>2014-2015</i> | 30 | 40 |
| <i>2015-2016*</i> | 25 | 43 |
| <i>2016-2017**</i> | 25 | |
| <i>*as projected</i> | | |
| <i>**projected with one move-in and possible EI placements</i> | | |

You will notice that while the numbers for special education students are lower in September, special education eligibility begins at the third birthday, so students are added across the school year. This year, based on existing enrollment and projected Early Intervention (EI) referrals we are expected to add 17 special education students to the preschool this year, substantially exceeding past year's figures. These projections do not include community students who may turn three this year and of whom we are unaware. To address this demand on both space and staffing, we have made a capital request to renovate existing office space into classroom space and we are requesting in the operating budget a 0.5FTE teacher increase and 2.0 FTE in teaching assistants (TAs).

At the high school level, we are requesting increases to our Speech and Language Pathologist allocation from the current 0.5FTE to a 1.0 FTE to meet our state and federal compliance requirements. We are also making a similar request to increase our Occupational Therapist allocation by a 0.5FTE for district-wide services. Dr. Janger spoke briefly the other night about the request for a 0.6FTE increase to our high school special education staffing so that we can provide content area specialists (Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science) to our some of our most vulnerable and at-risk general education and special education students in the Millbrook Program.

Finally, you have heard over the years the repeated requests to fund higher teacher assistant salaries. We are specifically requesting Supported Learning Centers (SLCs) TAs be increased to the BSP level of pay. These individuals work with our highest need populations and are increasingly difficult to recruit, hire, and retain. With each turnover of staff, we not only invest financial resources, but teacher and specialist time into training staff for these specialized positions. You will also see this request made by

the middle school to promote all of their TAs to BSP level salaries, commensurate with the current high school practice.

We again thank you for your time and consideration. The committee asked for additional clarification if changing Teaching Assistant to BSB salary or job title, and noted that due to enrollment growth the conversation needs to be on space issues too. It was confirmed it would be a salary increase not a job description change.

PARCC or MCAS in spring of 2016 for Arlington Public School Vote

Mr. Thielman moved to direct the superintendent to notify DESE that we are going to use PARCC in the spring of 2016, seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Roll Call: Mr. Hayner Yes, Mr. Pierce Yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Dr. Susse, Yes, Mr. Schlichtman Yes.

Voted 6-0, Ms. Starks absent

The committee members made the following statements on how they will vote.

Mr. Hayner suggested no testing for two years and noted he does not trust the commissioner of education and hopes the final test that comes out on MCAS 2.0 is nothing but PARCC.

Mr. Pierce said after hearing from administration tonight would like the school committee members to sign a letter to the legislation on opting out of testing, which would send a valuable message.

Dr. Allison-Ampe read the following message: I will be voting for Arlington to go with PARCC. Before we vote, I want to clearly explain my views. Last year I voted for MCAS. I had four major concerns: that our technology was inadequate for electronic testing, that we (at local and state levels) had inadequate say in the test that the test is timed, and that it was unclear what test the future would hold. I also hoped the additional months could be used so any testing change would not be a hurried and harried event. I think the vote to stay with MCAS last year had political power. There have been numerous changes to PARCC since the PARCC vs MCAS discussion began: Massachusetts has opted to go create their own test, most likely a version of PARCC, actual test questions are released for review, the amount of prescribed testing has dropped. However, I do not see that voting to stay with MCAS this year has the same political power. Another reason to stay with MCAS for 2015-16 was continuity of useful data that helps our schools. Going forward, given the changes in test composition and in testing population composition, I don't think the comparison data we will be getting from MCAS will be as solid or as useful. PARCC will also have issues but there will be a larger pool for comparison. A majority of our teachers have explained that they would prefer PARCC. This was not the case last year. A majority of our schools also favor PARCC this year. I think we need to give PARCC with the message that we are testing the test that the results of the test do not matter from an accountability standpoint. I have been asked: "but why give a test that you aren't going to count?" I think this question doesn't capture my intent. I want us to give a new test in the least stressful manner possible. By saying "it doesn't count," I don't mean we'll take the results and just throw them under a desk and ignore them. My hope and expectation will be that results will be looked at and we will work toward needed improvements, whether in testing equipment, testing prep, changes in curriculum, or pushing the state to improve the test. But it will be in an environment where our staff knows that their jobs are not on the line depending on the test results. (Not that they necessarily have been in the past).

I still have concerns about the PARCC test. Specifically, it's timed nature, developmental appropriateness, the amount of testing, etc. I also understand that PARCC's proponents see many advantages to it, including better alignment with Common Core, more rigorous questions, etc. When I look at the options we are being told we face in the near future, I see PARCC in both of them. I think in

the long run it would be more stressful for our students if we stick with MCAS now, and then have to change over to electronic PARCC-like testing with less or no time in a hold-harmless position from the state. What has not happened is discussion with parents and students. One of the additional reasons I voted no last year was to buy the administration some additional time to allow better discussions with parents. I am frustrated and disappointed that this has not happened, but I am not going to vote NO just because of this. The PARCC communication plan calls for a variety of notifications being sent to parents. I assume we will receive an updated list of when these notifications will be sent since dates have already passed and I don't see any notices yet. But the most important point is not yet included in the communication plan: that is, what type of message is being conveyed? I think it is vitally important that the administration have a clear message that we are doing a test of the test this year, and that the results of test do not matter. Finally, as I vote yes, I want to emphasize the two things I feel are most important: 1. We need a robust test of our ability to conduct a test electronically. By this, I mean we need to simultaneously test electronically the minimum number of schools that we would have to do if everyone was taking the test electronically. Given the constraints coming from the state, if a testing schedule can be created that only one school would have to be tested at a time, then one elementary school is enough. If a mock schedule showed there would have to be two schools testing simultaneously, then we need to do two schools at the same time. This will allow us to better evaluate our readiness and have information with which to inform our budget process next year. 2. We need to quickly and clearly communicate to parents and students and staff how the test is being viewed by the School Committee and the administration: that we are doing a test of the test this year, that results of test do not matter, to talk it down as best possible. We should also include the new expectation from state that 7th graders and beyond will have to pass electronic test to graduate from high school.

Mr. Thielman noted he favors PARCC and echo's Dr. Allison-Ampe on informing parents and having them to attend a meeting to ask questions. Dr. Bodie would like each school to have a say in if schools go paper or electronically with the test. The administration agrees that certainly the district would need to test the Wi-Fi and test the work before the actual testing starts. Jeff is also concerned that some students will be disadvantage if they take the test on paper, but Dr. Bodie assured him that students are very adaptable and training will be done with students and teachers. Ms. Susse spoke that she voted for MCAS last year but noted she like the direction we are going and likes MCAS 2.0 and said based on three things last year, teacher needed a break, parents would like to know what was happening and last year we were uncertain what was going to happen, will vote for PARCC this year. Jennifer feels this is a better test and that we should question the technology and see what happens. Mr. Schlichtman point out that we are making decision at the end of December and since we were told at the end of November we have pushed back the schedule and had three excellent discussion on the topic for the community members. The test will not count for accountability but will count for us on teachers and learning. He feels good about voting in the affirmative and said this is the right thing to do. Mr. Hayner asked Dr. Chesson to update the communication plan and communicate it to the parents and students.

Dr. Allison-Ampe move that the full school committee members authorize the chair to speak on PARCC on behalf of the full School Committee and that the messages that are going out about the PARCC Test goes to parents and the community, seconded by Mr. Hayner
Voted: 6-0

Discussion on Thompson School Capacity Issues

Dr. Bodie informed the committee members to review the McKibben Narrative Report for modifications on the enrollment report and provided the enrollment forecasts report too.

Dr. Bodie said the enrollment at the Thompson is at capacity for both Thompson and Hardy for the next few years. In the report the other elementary schools will remain flat and that Brackett Elementary hit is high point now and will go down over the years. It's still a large school but in terms to add classrooms,

we won't need to add additional classrooms per the report. A few options for Thompson are to add onto the space either with a permanent addition or permanent stackable modules, or move students from Thompson to another building. Moving students out of town is not an option, or even moving one classroom to the Gibbs, since educating students gets very complicated, with specialists too.

After hearing some options, and reasons why MSBA did not allow Arlington to add additional classrooms on the Thompson Elementary School when it was being rebuilt, Dr. Bodie recommends that we now add the permanent classrooms onto the Thompson Elementary School. Most members and Ms. Foley agree with the recommendation but Dr. Allison-Ampe explained that she would like to hear the updated forecast report from Dr. McKibben's tomorrow before supporting the recommendation. Mr. Thielman and Mr. Schlichtman agree strongly with the recommendation of Dr. Bodie and said it's a good first step. Mr. Hayner would like to direct members on the School Enrollment Committee what direction the School Committee members would like to go; therefore the following motion was made:

**Mr. Hayner motioned to move to endorse Superintendent Bodie's recommendation to add permanent construction at the Thompson Elementary School, seconded by Mr. Thielman
Voted: 5-0-1 Dr. Allison-Ampe Abstained.**

Vote to Hold Special School Committee Meeting on Thursday, January 7, 2016

After Ms. Susse explained how the Public Meeting on Enrollment Challenges will be structured then following motion was made:

**Ms. Susse, moved to Hold Special School Committee Meeting on Thursday, January 7, 2016 at Town Hall, seconded by Jud Pierce.
Voted: 6-0**

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie congratulated the OMS and AHS students who performed in the concerts. Dr. Bodie informed the committee that the Middlesex Leagues Superintendents have had discussions on high school start times, and currently no recommendation at the present time but going forward this topic may be discussed and a recommending will be brought to the full School Committee.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Hayner voted to approve Consent Agenda, All items listed with an asterisk are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence:

**Approval of Warrant: Approval of Accounts Payable Warrant Number 16087, dated 12/10/2015, Total Warrant Amount \$675,555.54, Approval of Minutes: None, seconded by Dr. Allison-Ampe.
Voted: 6-0**

Subcommittee & Liaison Reports & Announcements

Policies & Procedures Jud Pierce (Chair) said he will discuss the three policies which refer to principal salaries.

Budget Kirsi Allison-Ampe (Chair) nothing

Facilities Cindy Starks (Chair), In absences of Ms. Stark, Mr. Thielman said the subcommittee supports the Thompson School addition and announced future dates for the school enrollment task force on 12/22/2015 and 1/12/2015 before the next School Committee meeting on 1/14/2015.

District Accountability, Curriculum/Instruction & Assessment Jeff Thielman (Chair) a meeting will be planned before the next school committee meeting.

Community Relations Jennifer Susse (Chair) discussed the details on the public visionary meeting and lots of idea, and discussed the survey to parents and teachers on the school calendar.

Executive Session Minute Review Subcommittee Voted 5/28/2015

*Warrant Committee - Voted 4/9/2015 Bill Hayner (Chair)
School Enrollment Task Force*

The Consent Agenda was voted at this time, and Mr. Hayner announced his Polar Plunge on January 23, 2016 and that the students from Stratton 3rd graders held a Town Meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Susse moved to adjourn at 9:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 6-0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee*