

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2022

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 7:02 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair (Absent)
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Mary Kadera, Member
David Priddy, Member (Participated via Microsoft Teams due to personal reasons from Fort Lauderdale, Florida)
Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Catherine Ashby, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relation
Kimberley Graves, Chief of School Support
Bridget Loft, Chief Academic Officer
Dr. John Mayo, Chief Operating Officer
Jason Ottley, Interim Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer
Christine Smith, Legal Counsel
Brian Stockton, Chief of Staff

A. CLOSED MEETING: NONE

B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING

1. Call to Order
2. Presentation of Colors: Arlington Career Center AF JROTC Cadets Corps
3. Recognitions

In recognition, of Black History Month the Gunston Middle School Chorus performed the Black National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing". Ms. Dawn Smith, Communications Coordinator, presented the 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Literary and Visual Arts Contest Winners. Lastly, in honor of the Virginia School Boards Association School Board Clerk Appreciation Week, the Board recognized Claudia Mercado and the School Board staff for their outstanding work and commitment to public education.

C. CONSENT ITEMS (7:25 PM):

Ms. Diaz-Torres moved for adoption of the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Kadera. The motion was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Dr. Kanninen, Ms. Kadera, and Mr. Priddy voting affirmatively. The following items or actions were approved as a part of consent:

1. Minutes
 - C-1-a Minutes for the October 14, 2021 Closed Meeting and School Board Meeting
2. Personnel Actions
P/E-SCALE

¹The recording of School Board meetings is posted on the APS Web site following the meetings. Regular meetings are also broadcasted on Comcast Cable Channel 70 and Verizon FIOS Channel 41.

- 2 Appointments
- 1 Change In Position/Salary
- 1 Resignation
- 1 Retirement
- 1 Reclassification Request
- Assistant Director of Safety, Security, Risk and Emergency Management

T-SCALE PERSONNEL

- 6 Appointments
- 1 Change In Position/Salary
- 6 Resignations

A-SCALE PERSONNEL

- 4 Appointments
- 2 Changes In Position/Salary
- 4 Resignations

SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL

- 4 Appointments
- 10 Changes In Position/Salary
- 1 Resignation
- 1 Retirement
- 1 Reclassification Request
- Dispatcher

3. ~~Revisions to School Board Policy B-3.6.30 School Board Advisory Committees and Retirement of School Board Policies B-3.6.34 School Health Advisory Board and B-3.6.35 Student Advisory Board~~ REMOVED FROM AGENDA
4. Revision to School Board Policy I-7.2.9.31 Advanced Classes
5. Appointments to the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC)

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS (7:27 PM):

1. Board Announcements:
 - February 23, 2022 – Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 8:30 AM
 - February 24, 2022 – Superintendent’s Proposed FY 2023 Budget Presentation and Budget Work Session #1, 7 PM, Board Room
 - March 3, 2022 – Closed Meeting, 5:30 PM, Board Conference Room
 - March 3, 2022 – Committee of the Whole Meeting, 6:30 PM, Board Room
 - March 8, 2022- Budget Work Session #2, 5 PM, Board Room
 - March 9, 2022 – Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 8:30 AM

Dr. Kanninen announced that under consent, the Board adopted revisions to School Board Policy I-7.2.9.31 Advanced Classes and that the Superintendent approved the Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs) associated with this policy. In addition, the Board removed the adoption of Policy B-3.6.30 School Board Advisory Committees and retirement of School Board Policies B-3.6.34 School Health Advisory Board and B-3.6.35 Student Advisory Board from the agenda to consider additional revisions. These items will come back for Board approval in the next month. Lastly, the Board appointed Andy Greenwood, Benjamin Malakoff, and Alistair Watson to the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC).

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Ms. Kadera congratulated Innovation Elementary School for receiving a competitive STEM + Families Math Night grant and Wakefield High School students on earning 247 individual Regional Scholastic Art Awards. She also acknowledged that Montessori Education Week was from February 20 through February 26.

2. Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán shared that February was Love the Bus month and that February 22 was bus driver appreciation day. He encouraged the community to take the time to show their appreciation to APS school bus drivers who safely transport students. Dr. Durán provided an update on mask use in schools and noted that APS would continue the layered prevention strategies as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Education for K-12 schools. He highlighted mathematics at the elementary level sharing about students engaging in rigorous, and interactive mathematics lessons. He also provided an update on the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Funds explaining that funds would be allocated to address "unfinished learning" (due to COVID) and before and after school programs. Furthermore, Dr. Durán spoke about the bell study project being conducted to review school start and end times and the instructional minutes. He encouraged families to participate in a survey that will be made available in March to all APS families. As APS entered the budget season, he provided the FY 2023 budget process timeline. Lastly, Dr. Durán applauded the Campbell Elementary Upstanders Club who participated in APS Kindness Week.

The Board discussed the math highlights and the new instructional dashboard. Ms. Diaz-Torres requested to see highlights about mathematics at the secondary level. She also spoke about mask use and asked that everyone consider students and staff who have underlying health conditions and continue to work together to keep schools open and safe. Ms. Kadera inquired about the APS timeline related to Senate Bill 739 and the supports in place for staff who may be considered high-risk. In addition, she inquired about staffing and tutoring related to ARP and ESSER funds.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS (8:04 PM):

The following speakers addressed the Board asking the Board not to pause the Virtual Learning Program (VLP):

Jennie Apter, NAACP Education Committee, and Barrett Elementary parent

Nilda Rosado, parent

Andrea Alvarez, parent

Jed Bobier

Kimberly Pearson, middle school teacher

Laura Keneally

Patricia Schnell for a Spanish-speaking family

Arlyn Elizee

Janna Dressel

Joshua Folb

Tia Alfred

The following speakers addressed the Board opposing mask mandates and encouraging parent choice:

Blair Tak, parent

Julie Abizaid

Naisha Chinnery, parent

Chris Romasco, parent

The following speakers addressed the Board:

Camille Galdes, Arlington Parents for Education, requesting changes in isolation guidelines

Amy Cannava, Wakefield High School, school psychologist, requesting better compensation

Christina Childress, Transportation, inconsistent work procedures

Cecilia Kline, supporting a virtual learning option

Reginald Goeke, Arlington Parents for Education, supporting compensation for employees and smaller class sizes.

Brandon Clark, teacher, Gunston Middle School, better compensation for teachers

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F. MONITORING ITEMS: NONE**G. ACTION ITEMS (8:54 PM):**

1. Strategic Plan Tuning & Revisions to School Board Policy A-6.30 Development and Assessment of Strategic Plan

Ms. Diaz-Torres moved that the Board adopt the refined Strategic Plan Performance Objectives and Strategies as proposed. These revisions will go into effect on July 1, 2022 and will extend the APS Strategic Plan to 2028. In addition, I move that the Board adopt revisions to School Board Policy A-6.30 Strategic Planning System as proposed, seconded by Ms. Kadera.

Dr. Kanninen called for a vote and the motion was adopted in a vote of 4-0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; Mr. Priddy – Aye. Mr. Goldstein was not present at the time of the vote.

2. Changes to the Virtual Learning Program (VLP)

Ms. Graves began by acknowledging the parent feedback received related to the Superintendent’s proposed recommendation. She reviewed the rationale for the recommended pause and spoke about the need to engage in planning and developing a comprehensive framework for a future Virtual Learning Option Program. Ms. Graves shared about the instructional options for students in the 2022-23 school year and Ms. Loft provided information about K-12 Virtual VA and supports for English learners and students with disabilities. Moreover, Ms. Loft briefly shared data related to the performance of VLP students. Lastly, Ms. Graves shared about the academic support for students transitioning back to home schools for the upcoming school year, as well as the timeline for families to apply for medical exemptions to return to in-person learning and receive Virtual Instructional Learning Services.

The Board discussed the upcoming timeline to apply for medical exemptions, requested a task force work plan, and spoke about opportunities for community engagement. As the liaison to the VLP, Ms. Kadera shared her concern about the data comparison being used to justify the program pause and the academic performance.

In accordance with Policy K-3: Program Changes, Ms. Diaz-Torres moved that the School Board approve the Superintendent’s proposed changes to the Virtual Learning Program (VLP) for the 2022-2023 school year.

In addition, I move to direct the superintendent to convene a task force charged with creating a long-term plan for a virtual learning option for Arlington Public Schools. The task force will report their recommendations to the School Board in December 2022.

I further move to direct the superintendent to present a monitoring item to the School Board in August 2022 regarding the status of the students enrolled in, and the staffing for, Virtual Virginia and homebound instruction for the 2022-2023 school year.

Speaking to the motion, the Board reflected on the challenges faced by the VLP and empathized with the frustration of families. They also thanked the resilient families and staff who graciously worked through all the hardships they faced. However, they recognized the need to pause the program to create a comprehensive and sustainable program that will meet the needs of students in the future. Ms. Kadera noted the significant number of students being impacted and shared her concerns that APS could not articulate a cohesive rationale for the pause.

Dr. Kanninen called for a vote and the motion was adopted in a vote of 4-0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye. Mr. Goldstein was not present at the time of the vote.

- ~~3. Approval of Potential Revisions (if needed) to the 2021-22 School Year Calendar-REMOVED FROM AGENDA~~

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H. INFORMATION ITEMS (9:44 PM):

1. FY 2022 Mid-Year Fiscal Monitoring Report and Recommendation for a One-Time Employee Bonus Payment

Ms. Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Management Services, presented the financial progress of the FY 2022 budget and the Superintendent's recommendation for the School Board to approve the issuance of a one-time bonus on April 5, 2022, in the amount of \$1,000 (pre-tax) for eligible full-time staff and pro-rated amounts for part-time and hourly employees. She also provided an update on the FY 2022 Mid-Year Capital Construction Status and the FY 2022 Major Construction Reserve.

The Board discussed the proposed one-time employee bonus and the timeline to process the payment. The purpose of the bonus was to compensate employees for going above and beyond their duties to ensure schools remained opened and adequately staffed.

2. Fall 2022 Elementary Boundary Process Update

Ms. Lisa Stengle, Executive Director of Planning and Evaluation, explained that elementary enrollment levels were manageable, and that staff did not recommend a countywide boundary process in Fall 2022. As a result, she requested that the School Board reverse its December 3, 2020 motion. She also presented some strategies to manage enrollment in the 2023-24 school year using September 30, 2022, enrollment figures.

3. Revisions to School Board Policies J- 5.4 Leaving School Grounds, J- 6.3.6 Prohibited Substance Use, J- 6.3.8 No Tobacco Policy, J- 6.7 Search and Seizure, J- 7.4 Discipline, K- 7.3 No Smoking Policy, and M-1 Reporting Serious Incidents

Dr. Jeannette Allen, Director of Administrative Services, presented the policy revision process which included an overview of the feedback received from the community, staff and students. She provided detailed information on the specific changes to each of the policies and policy implementation procedures.

The Board appreciated the lengthy community engagement related to these policies and applauded Dr. Allen's for spearheading the revisions of some critical policies that directly affect students.

4. ~~First Amendment to License Agreement Quincy Site~~ REMOVED FROM AGENDA**I. NEW BUSINESS:****J. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Arlington School Board

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