

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board Meeting and Closed Meeting
October 3, 2019

Item C-1-a

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, October 3, 2019, at 6:10 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Tannia Talento, Chair
Monique O’Grady, Vice Chair (arr. 6:15 PM)
Reid Goldstein, Member
Nancy Van Doren, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present was:

Cintia Johnson, Interim Superintendent

A. CLOSED MEETING:

Ms. Talento announced that Dr. Kanninen was unable to attend the meeting as she was out of town. *Ms. Talento moved that the Board immediately convene in a closed meeting to discuss and consider admissions and other matters concerning a student as authorized by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A) (2),* seconded by Ms. Van Doren. The motion was adopted in a vote of 3 – 0, with Mr. Goldstein, Ms. Talento, and Ms. Van Doren voting affirmatively. Ms. O’Grady was not present at the vote.

The closed meeting adjourned at 6:49 PM, and the Board reconvened in an open meeting.

Ms. Talento moved to certify that to the best of her knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting just held, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening this closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. The motion was seconded by Ms. Van Doren and was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0. The voting record is as follows: Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Ms. O’Grady – Aye; Ms. Talento – Aye; and Ms. Van Doren - Aye.

Ms. Talento called for a brief recess. The Board reconvened in an open session at 7:02 PM.

B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING:

Also present were:

¹ Video clips of regular School Board meetings can be viewed on the APS Web site at the following link: <https://www.apsva.us/school-board-meetings/view-school-board-meetings/>
DVDs of all regular School Board meetings are also available for viewing in the School Board office.

Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Dr. Jeannette Allen, Acting Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Catherine Ashby, Interim Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management
Dan Redding, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
James Meikle, Director of Maintenance
Sarah Putnam, Director, Curriculum and Instruction

1. Call to Order and Presentation of the Colors

Ms. Talento announced that Dr. Kanninen was unable to attend the meeting as she was out of town.

2. Recognitions

In honor of National Custodial Worker's Day, the Board recognized APS custodial staff members. Art Bell, Director, Plant Operations, Cathy Lin, Energy/Stormwater Program Manager, and Levi Novey, Chair, Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Sustainability, recognized the custodians for their work to prepare for the first day of school and efforts that support recycling and sustainability. Board members also shared their gratitude for custodial workers.

3. Announcements

- *October 16, 2019 School Board Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 2 PM, School Board Conference Room*

Mr. Goldstein shared information about activities and events at his liaison schools, including Barcroft, Kenmore, Oakridge, and Long Branch. Ms. Van Doren spoke to her personal experience with a concussion, and encouraged families to become educated about proper concussion care.

Ms. Talento reviewed the letter sent to families assuring them that APS is aware of immigration concerns, and confirming that all students and families are welcome and safe in the schools. She also shared an update on the superintendent search.

4. Interim Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Ms. Johnson acknowledged the important contributions that custodians make every day, especially to students. She announced that October is National Principals Month, and thanked principals for their hard work and commitment. She announced events and activities, including the College Fair, Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, Harvesting Dreams for Our Children, and celebrations of new schools. She also presented an update on the online verification process, Arlington Alert, and standards-based grading.

Ms. Johnson then gave a brief update on the 2019-2020 School Board Action Plan. Under operational planning, she announced the upcoming work session on the Arlington Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan (AFSAP), and shared information on plans for the new elementary school at Reed and the Career Center expansion. She also noted recent policy revisions approved by the Board. Staff responded to questions about the availability of flu shots and how the community can learn more about standards-based grading.

C. CONSENT AGENDA: (7:51 PM)

Ms. Van Doren moved to adopt the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. O’Grady. The motion was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0, with Mr. Goldstein, Ms. O’Grady, Ms. Talento, and Ms. Van Doren voting affirmatively. The following items or actions were approved as a part of consent:

1. Minutes:
 - a. August 21, 2019 School Board Policy Subcommittee Meeting
 - b. August 22, 2019 School Board Meeting
 - c. August 27, 2019 Closed Meeting and Work Session on 2019-20 Planning Projects
 - d. September 17, 2019 School Board Policy Subcommittee Meeting

2. Personnel Actions:
P/E-SCALE PERSONNEL
1 Retirement
1 Resignation

T-SCALE PERSONNEL
4 Appointments
4 Resignation

A-SCALE PERSONNEL
14 Appointments
2 Changes In Position/Salary
3 Resignations

SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL
3 Appointments
1 Change In Position/Salary
3 Resignations
1 Retirement
2 Terminations

3. Revisions to School Board Policy B-2.1.33 School Liaisons

4. Career Center Expansion Pre-Construction Phase Construction Management at-Risk Contract

5. Appointment to the Arlington Committee on Transportation Choices
6. Funds Transfer for Payment of Unpaid Meal Bad Debt
7. Appointment to Budget Advisory Council

Ms. Talento announced that as part of consent, the Board approved the Career Center Expansion pre-construction phase construction management at-risk contract, and appointed Chenda Lee to the Arlington Committee on Transportation Choices and Dedra Curteman to the Budget Advisory Council. The Board also approved revision of School Board Policy B-2.1.33 and a funds transfer for payment of unpaid meal bad debt.

D. CITIZEN COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: (7:55 PM)

The following speakers addressed the Board:

Symone Walker, Arlington NAACP Education Committee: stating concerns about equity in addressing dyslexia in APS, noting the impact of dyslexia on learning, and encouraging early intervention at all elementary schools.

Jeremy Dutra, Fleet Elementary parent: appreciating the new school building and the staff at Fleet, but sharing concerns about issues with vehicle pick-up there.

Greg Myers, accompanied by Bill Briggs, Mary Dolby-McDonald, Jenny Lambdin and Karen Reich, Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructors: noting the importance of mental health first aid, and asking for help in encouraging all staff to participate in trainings that are provided.

Josh Folb, parent: speaking about bullying prevention month, and appreciating the staff at Thomas Jefferson Middle School for their efforts to prevent bullying of his child.

E. MONITORING ITEM: (8:05 PM)

1. Library Services Update

Mr. Jeff Lutrell, Supervisor, Library Services, provided an update on the program. He shared information on library staff throughout APS and shared good news about the libraries. He explained that library services support digital literacy skills and the collections reflect the diversity of the community. He then shared progress on performance objectives under the goals of Student Success, Student Well-Being, and Partnerships, and presented data demonstrating how libraries support instruction and help students develop strong reading habits. He also described staff work to address recommendations from the Library Services Program Evaluation in the areas of age of the collection, access to resources, digital and information literacies, maker and design thinking, and equity and inclusion. After presenting next steps related to resources and circulation, collaboration with all content areas,

and deepening inquiry and maker/design activities, he then shared bright spots and special activities in the school libraries.

Responding to questions, Mr. Lutrell explained how data was gathered and provided more detail on student use of materials. Also discussed was the connection between the data and Strategic Plan performance objectives. Ms. Van Doren encouraged staff to ask students for feedback on library services and noted the importance of helping students learn about healthy screen time. Also discussed were efforts to update collections to be inclusive and comprehensive, and developing creative learning opportunities. Mr. Lutrell responded to questions on survey data on partnerships, and provided detail about strategies to address the recommendations. Ms. Talento appreciated the work done by Library Services and acknowledged Ms. Jackson of the Office of Equity and Excellence for supporting efforts to foster diversity in the reading materials and in the school libraries.

F. ACTION ITEM: (9:02 PM)

1. School Board's FY 2021 Budget Direction

Ms. Talento presented the proposed budget direction, noting the changes that were made to the document since it was presented for information. These changes specifically related to guidance on compensation and funding to continue implementation of initiatives and recommendations from program evaluations.

The following speakers addressed the Board:

Josh Folb, Arlington Education Association: opposing the proposed change to compensation in the budget direction, noting that more funding is needed for compensation, and asking to postpone the vote until the full Board is present.

Lisa Blackwell, parent: stating disappointment in the change to the language of the budget direction taking away the emphasis on addressing student need.

Ms. Van Doren moved that the Board adopt the School Board's proposed FY 2021 Budget Direction, seconded by Ms. O'Grady.

Mr. Goldstein stated concerns with the proposal to waive policy in the budget direction and stated his belief that this action should not be taken, particularly without having all Board members participate in the vote. He noted that the budget information available is very preliminary, and he believed that the proposed direction would not provide maximum flexibility to the Board or Superintendent. He also spoke to the importance of clarity, consistency, fairness, predictability, and transparency in Board actions, and stressed the need to gather additional information before deciding how to provide compensation.

Mr. Goldstein moved to amend the budget direction by deleting the bullet that begins with 'In order to provide maximize flexibility...' and replace with the following bullets:

- *Include a step increase for eligible employees that is consistent with School Board policy and the Strategic Plan goal to have an engaged workforce.*
- *Develop additional measures to provide a compensation increase to all employees; and*
- *Prioritize the work plan of the compensation study so that recommendations on compensation to take effect in FY21 are delivered in time to be implemented in the FY21 budget.*

The motion to amend was seconded by Ms. Talento.

Ms. Van Doren stated that she would not support the amendment. She spoke to issues faced in the last budget process when many employees did not receive an increase, and confirmed that the proposed budget direction provides flexibility to provide some type of compensation increase to all staff. Ms. O’Grady agreed with Ms. Van Doren’s comments and noted that APS is becoming less competitive in terms of salaries. She recognized that work is needed to address compensation, and looked forward to the compensation study and other information that will provide guidance on correcting the pay scale. For the coming year, she asked for a proposed budget that incorporates preliminary information gathered in the compensation study, and confirmed her support for the proposed budget direction.

Ms. Talento reviewed discussions held to date in preparing for the budget direction and 2021 budget. She noted that the possibility of waiving policy was considered during the last budget process, and explained the factors considered in deciding to bring this item forward for a vote. She confirmed waiving policy on occasion is an accepted practice of the Board, and stated her opposition to the amendment. Mr. Goldstein agreed with many of the comments made, but again stated his belief that waiving policy would be premature.

Ms. Talento called for a vote on the motion to amend, and it was defeated in a vote of 1-3 with Mr. Goldstein voting affirmatively, and Ms. O’Grady, Ms. Talento, and Ms. Van Doren opposing.

Ms. Van Doren spoke to the main motion and reiterated that compensation needs to be addressed in the budget. She noted that the minimum wage paid by APS is below the County’s minimum wage, as well as below the MIT-calculated living wage for the D.C. area. She stressed the importance of providing all employees with an increase, and looked forward to the compensation study for guidance on improving the pay scales. Ms. Talento supported the proposed budget direction, commenting on numerous cuts in recent years that have impacted staff. She also felt the proposed budget direction allows flexibility for staff to explore ways to provide compensation. The group discussed whether waiving the policy would prevent including a STEP in the upcoming budget, and the consensus was that the Superintendent could include a STEP even if the policy is waived.

Ms. Talento then called for a vote on the main motion and the motion was adopted in a vote of 3 – 1, with Ms. O’Grady, Ms. Talento, and Ms. Van Doren voting affirmatively and Mr. Goldstein opposing.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS: (9:50 PM)

1. Internal Audit Plan

Mr. John Mickevics, Director, Internal Audit, presented the proposed Internal Audit Plan for the 2019-2020 school year. He reviewed the purpose of an internal Audit and outlined the audit development process to identify areas for review. He then shared the four areas recommended for audit this year, which include new construction cost efficiencies, identifying potential efficiencies, cost savings and revenue opportunities, evaluating employee expense reimbursement and assessing compliance with the English Learner settlement agreement requirements. He then described each area in more detail. In closing, he summarized next steps to conduct the proposed audit.

Mr. Mickevics responded to questions, explaining the aspects of overtime that will be reviewed, and confirming that he will do his best to provide any information on potential budget savings that he identifies through his work.

F. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Tannia Talento, Chair
Arlington School Board