

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board Meeting
July 30, 2020

Item C-1-b

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 7:08 PM. This meeting was held by electronic communications means due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, using Microsoft Teams.¹

Present were:

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
Tannia Talento, Member
Nancy Van Doren, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Catherine Ashby, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Bridget Loft, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management
Dan Redding, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Lisa Stengle, Executive Director, Planning and Evaluation
Arron Gregory, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING:

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. **Citizen Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items:**

Ms. O’Grady reviewed the speaker process for virtual meetings.

The following speakers addressed the Board in support of the hybrid option, sharing concerns about virtual learning and asking for more choices for families. Some speakers asked about the metrics being used to inform decisions and suggested returning to in person instruction as quickly as possible:

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.

Caroline Knox Burns, parent
Erin Neal, teacher and parent

The following speakers addressed the Board in support of the virtual model, speaking about health concerns with in-person learning and the need to keep both students and staff safe. Some speakers also encouraged providing staff with more technology and training to support virtual learning:

Jessica Idol, teacher and parent
Ken Boothe, father of a teacher
Kaila Leonberger, special education teacher

The following speakers also addressed the Board:

Courtney Fox, parent: asking for plans to address the needs for all families, expressing concern that some students will be left behind, and asking for a commitment to equity, inclusion and accessibility.

Symone Walker, parent: asking APS to provide all families and students with what they need to participate in virtual learning, expressing concern about widening of the learning gap, and encouraging collaboration with the County.

Paul Brickley, parent: asking for more focus on developing a substantial plan for returning to school, suggesting creating taskforces to fully explore options.

4. Recognitions: NONE

5. Announcements

- *August 11, 2020 School Board Policy Subcommittee Virtual Meeting - Noon*
- *August 13, 2020 Closed Meeting, 5:15 PM*
- *August 13, 2020 Work Session on Return to School Planning, 6:30 PM*
- *August 18, 2020 Work Session on The Heights Building/CIP Planning Virtual Meeting, 6 PM*

Board members shared experiences participating in PTA Town Halls at their liaison schools and appreciated the parents and staff for organizing the meetings. Ms. O'Grady summarized recent communications received by the Board. She also confirmed that the Board will not act on a proposal to reduce Montessori fees for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Durán encouraged families who may have financial challenges to contact APS for assistance.

5. Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán provided a brief update on the Grab-and-Go Meals program and how APS will transition to food distribution through the National School Lunch

Program in early September. He also shared an update on summer distance learning and the Let's Talk Summer Series for students to identify problems and create solutions in advocating for change. Responding to Board questions, Dr. Durán provided more information about efforts to ensure students continue receiving food support if needed.

C. CONSENT AGENDA: (7:44 PM)

Ms. O'Grady announced that item C-6, the Long Branch APS/DPR Playground Easement Lease Agreement was removed from consent and will be taken up at a later meeting.

Ms. Van Doren moved to adopt the consent agenda as amended, seconded by Dr. Kanninen. The motion was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0. The voting record is as follows: Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. O'Grady – Aye; Ms. Talento – Aye; and Ms. Van Doren – Aye. The following items or actions were approved as a part of consent:

1. Minutes:

- a. April 16, 2020 School Board Meeting
- b. April 21, 2020 Budget Work Session
- c. April 23, 2020 School Board Meeting
- d. June 12, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting
- e. June 16, 2020 Policy Subcommittee Meeting
- f. July 9, 2020 Closed Meeting
- g. July 14, 2020 Policy Subcommittee Meeting

2. Personnel Actions:

P/E-SCALE PERSONNEL

2 Appointments
1 Change in Position/Salary

T-SCALE PERSONNEL

6 Appointments
7 Changes In Position/Salary
4 Resignations

SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL

2 Resignations

3. Swanson Right of Way Dedication
4. School Board Civic Association Liaison Assignments
5. Authorization of Signatures in the Absence of the Superintendent
6. ~~Long Branch APS/DPR Playground Easement Lease Agreement~~ REMOVED FROM AGENDA

7. Long Branch APS/DPR Relocatable License Agreement
8. Career Center/Columbia Pike Lease Agreement
9. Career Center/Columbia Pike Memorandum of Understanding

Ms. O'Grady announced that as part of consent, the Board approved four facilities items and the 2020-21 School Board Civic Association Liaison Assignments. She also confirmed that the Board appointed Cynthia Shall as Assistant Principal, Arlington Community High School.

D. MONITORING ITEMS: (7:47 PM)

1. Return to School Status Update

Dr. Durán presented the update on plans to return to school, outlining criteria being considered for reopening and sharing information about COVID-19 in the area. Noting the APS commitment to health and safety, he highlighted areas of focus including physical distancing, requirements for masks, and training for staff. He provided data on family and staff surveys on returning to in-person learning. The majority of families favored the hybrid model, with approximately 21% of families not responding. For staff, 55% preferred the full distance learning option.

Next, Dr. Durán described work to develop class schedules and plans for student monitoring and support. He also outlined planned professional learning for staff to prepare for distance learning and he highlighted efforts to provide families and staff with needed technology. Plans for childcare for staff and options for families were also shared. Dr. Durán then outlined information from the Virginia High School League on high school athletics. Efforts to identify options for employees who are unable to telework were also described. He shared a brief update on cost projections, confirming that the projections will be updated as new information becomes available. In closing, he reviewed the planning timeline going forward.

Board members appreciated the update and encouraged continued planning and communications going forward. The group discussed issues with accessing virtual learning and efforts to solve those issues. Also discussed were budget concerns and potential Cares Act funds and funds from other sources that may be made available to address needs. Ms. Van Doren urged the Board to send a letter requesting funding from the county to address financial needs, especially needs related to retaining staff. Also discussed were staffing adjustments that might result from lower enrollment as well as the increase in class size included in the 2021 budget.

Additional topics discussed included plans for providing child care for staff, potential additional funding, and adjusting staffing as a result of the pandemic. Also discussed was supporting staff during this stressful time and how employees unable to telework can be assigned to other roles to provide support when school opens. Additional discussion focused on ensuring that food is available to students during

distance learning, possible savings from building closures during the pandemic, and translation services related to the return to school plans. In closing, Dr. Durán thanked all of the volunteer groups and individuals throughout the region who are supporting the efforts to prepare for the return to school.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS: (9:37 PM)

1. Adoption of New School Board Policy A-30 Equity:

Arron Gregory, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, presented the proposed equity policy, reviewing the timeline for developing the policy and the groups and individuals who participated in the process. He then provided an overview of the proposed policy, which includes an overall belief statement and governance in four key areas. In addition, the policy outlines six areas of support for ensuring equity, and Mr. Gregory also shared details of these standards and areas of support. In closing the presentation, he reviewed next steps for finalizing the policy, developing an equity action plan, and creating Equity Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs).

Board members appreciated the draft policy and recognized that work will continue on the policy and PIPs. Ms. Talento suggested that the policy be revised to include an annual review, and shared concerns about the inability to ensure equitable access to technology for all APS students, the use of the word “discipline” in the policy regarding teacher practices, and the need to define Universal Design. Ms. Van Doren appreciated that the policy is interconnected to most APS policies and highlighted that inclusion is incorporated in the policy. It was also confirmed that a definition of equity will be added to the policy. Ms. O’Grady recognized the addition of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer in APS and appreciated Mr. Gregory’s work to finalize the policy. She also highlighted the importance of this policy and of accepting and supporting all individuals.

G. NEW BUSINESS: (10:15 PM)

Ms. Van Doren moved that the School Board Chair and Superintendent send a letter to the County Board to request \$12.64 M to fund Arlington Public Schools deficit needs for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year to fund critical costs related to the Coronavirus Pandemic, seconded by Ms. Talento.

Ms. Van Doren explained her reasoning for this motion, much of which is needed for supplies related to the pandemic, but is also needed to keep the staff who will be needed once schools are back in session.

Mr. Goldstein asked for clarification on the budget discussion at the recent joint leadership meeting and how this letter differs from the discussion. Dr. Durán and Ms. O’Grady provided their sense of the discussion at the joint meeting and felt that this motion is more specific than the request shared at the meeting. Ms. Talento agreed that it could be worthwhile to submit a clear and direct request to the County, but was unsure there was

enough information to support a request at this time. Some Board members shared concerns about unknowns related to the budget related to data that is not yet available and whether the County would be able to consider this request. Ms. Peterson spoke to the unknown aspects of APS finances, suggested when she thought additional information would be available, and commented on how APS could operate if needed funds are not confirmed. Ms. Van Doren reiterated her suggestion to provide a formal request to the County for needed funding. While the group understood the sense of urgency and concern with the current financial projections and agreed that asking for funding is a wise move, several Board members expressed concern that not enough information was available to inform a request at this time.

Ms. O’Grady called for a vote. The motion failed by a vote of 1 – 3 with 1 abstention. The voting record is as follows: Mr. Goldstein – no; Dr. Kanninen – no; Ms. O’Grady – no; and Ms. Van Doren – Aye, and Ms. Talento abstained.

H. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Arlington School Board