

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board Meeting
November 5, 2020

Item C-1-a

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 7:01 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
Brian Stockton, Chief of Staff
Bobby Kaplow, Director, Extended Day
Ben Harris, Assistant Director, Extended Day
Jeff Chambers, Director, Design and Construction

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING:

1. Call to Order

Ms. O’Grady called the meeting to order.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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.

3. Citizen Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items:

The following speakers addressed the Board concerning the proposed elementary boundary process, sharing suggestions for possible adjustments to the proposed boundary options:

Mike Flood, parent
Noah Israel, parent
June Locker, parent
Don Sottile, parent
Stephanie Cohen, parent
Kate Geder, parent
Carla Toro with Alicia Rich, Key parents
Fran Zelenak, parent

The following speakers addressed the Board supporting the reopening of the schools. Some speakers noted concerns about learning loss and mental health issues with virtual learning; some asked for more transparency in sharing plans, and some had suggestions to improve virtual learning:

Katie Jefcoat, parent
Reg Goeke, parent
Natalie Bernstein, student
Chris Schons, parent
Sara Kirkwood, parent and her children
Christina French, parent
Paul Brickley, parent
Anjy Cramer, parent
Alison Silver on behalf of Laura Williams, parent

The following speakers also addressed the Board:

Ian Blumenfeld, parent: stating concerns about inequity between in-person and virtual students, and encouraging more work to provide strong virtual learning.

Dasha Hermosilla, parent: asking to keep neighborhood communities together through the boundary changes, using creative approaches to bring students back, and allowing students to participate in VHSL winter/spring sports.

Jennifer and Gwynn Michener, parent and student: speaking on the proposed boundaries for the new school at Reed; also supporting continuing virtual learning until safety of teachers and students can be guaranteed.

Christina Headrick, parent: supporting the boundary proposal, asking for an online option for families when in-person learning returns, and asking for efforts to ensure good ventilation and clean air in the classrooms.

Gina Quirk, parent: suggesting that APS initiate an ongoing materials distribution system to ensure all students have materials needed to support their learning.

Megan Newfield, parent: expressing disappointment that APS is not allowing high school sports.

Heather Wishart-Smith, parent: appreciating the decision to pause Level 2 return to school, and sharing suggestions for how best to return to in-person learning.

Michelle Tercero, teacher: asking for a return to school plan that keeps current classes together and sharing concerns about the current plan for teachers to teach in person and virtually.

4. Recognition

School Psychologist Jessica Kingsley presented the recognition for School Psychology Awareness Month, sharing information about the work that psychologists do every day to support students throughout APS.

5. Announcements

- *November 6, 2020, Closed Meeting, 4 PM*
- *November 10, 2020, Closed Meeting 5:15 PM*
- *November 10, 2020 Work Session on Budget Status/CIP Framework 6:30 PM*
- *November 12, 2020 Work Session on Boundaries, 6 PM*
- *November 12, 2020 Virtual closed Meeting, 8 PM*
- *November 16, 2020 -Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 2 PM*

Mr. Goldstein share events and activities at several of his liaison schools. Ms. O’Grady shared a brief summary of plans for upcoming Board meetings, and also provided an update on communications the Board has received.

5. Superintendent’s Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán thanked the Arlington community for approving the School Bond and acknowledged Bond co-chairs Lois Koontz and Miles Mason. He looked forward to welcoming the two newly elected School Board members in January. Updates on the annual online verification process, SAT testing, and Middle and High School Information nights were shared. Dr. Durán also provided an update on meal services and on the secondary options and transfers process. In closing, he presented an update on work on the School Board’s 2021 Action Plan.

C. CONSENT AGENDA: (8:25 PM)

Dr. Kanninen moved to adopt the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Van Doren. 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. June 2, 2020 Work Session on the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Plan
- b. August 13, 2020 Work Session on Return to School Planning
- c. August 20, 2020 School Board Meeting
- d. October 1, 2020 Closed Meeting
- e. October 15, 2020 Closed Meeting
- f. October 19, 2020 School Board Policy Subcommittee Meeting

2. Personnel Actions:

P/E-SCALE PERSONNEL

1 Retirement

T-SCALE PERSONNEL

5 Appointments

2 Resignations

A-SCALE PERSONNEL

1 Appointment

SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL

1 Appointment

2 Resignations

1 Retirement (revised date)

3. Library Services Brief

4. Health/Physical Education Brief

5. Revision to School Board Policy K-14.30 Volunteers and Deletion of Policy K-14.31 Volunteer Programs

6. Proposed Revisions to School Board Policy I-7.2.3.30 Communications

7. Proposed Revisions to School Board Policy J-8.3.1 School Health

Ms. O’Grady confirmed that under consent, the Board approved three policy revisions, and she highlighted the Library Services Brief and the Health/Physical Education Brief that were received by the Board.

D. MONITORING ITEMS: (8:27 PM)

1. School Year 2020-2021 Update

Recognizing the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, Dr. Durán confirmed APS is taking all efforts to ensure safe plans to reopen. He shared adjustments to the COVID Dashboard that have been made based on updated guidance from the Virginia Department of Health and confirmed the data presented will continue to inform decisions. He also reviewed CDC risk measures and summarized health and operational metrics, including the mask policy and contact guidelines and how they will be implemented. The APS health and safety response plan was also reviewed.

Dr. Durán then presented an update on the return-to-school plan, including results of the family selection process. He provided a plan overview and explained how decisions are being made. He confirmed that Level 2 is paused for the remainder of 2020, and he described implementation of the Level 1 return. After sharing additional supports being provided to students to strengthen distance learning, Dr. Durán then spoke to plans for athletics. In closing, he shared updated budget projections in terms of revenues and costs.

Board members appreciated the update and the changes made to improve the dashboard. Ms. Talento asked for further consideration of allowing sports. Responding to questions, staff provided information about the transportation being provided to Level 1 students and efforts to reduce the length of bus rides. Also discussed were efforts underway to ensure that adequate ventilation is operational in all facilities. Additional topics discussed were ensuring that families know how to seek help, how students are being identified for additional supports in the schools, and providing instructional updates to families and the community.

E. ACTION ITEMS: (9:25 PM)

1. School Board FY 2022 Budget Direction:

Ms. O’Grady briefly summarized the School Board’s proposed budget direction for the FY 2022 budget development.

Ms. O’Grady moved that the Board adopt the School Board FY 2022 Budget Direction, seconded by Ms. Van Doren.

Mr. Goldstein expressed concern that the direction does not focus on compensation to support current staff and recruit new staff. He suggested that the Board direction should include specific guidance to the Superintendent to provide a compensation increase in the budget. Ms. Van Doren shared concerns about financial challenges facing APS and stated her belief that the proposed language provides the superintendent with flexibility to address compensation. Noting the importance of flexibility to address future unknowns, Ms. Talento confirmed she will support the motion as presented. After acknowledging financial challenges ahead, Dr. Kanninen stated her belief that the policy regarding including compensation in the budget should not be waived and confirmed that she will not support the motion. Ms. O’Grady stated that the proposed budget direction provides the Superintendent with flexibility to address all needs.

Ms. O’Grady called for a vote and the motion was adopted in a vote of 3-2. The voting record is as follows: Mr. Goldstein – Nay; Dr. Kanninen – Nay; Ms. O’Grady – Aye; Ms. Talento – Aye; and Ms. Van Doren – Aye.

Ms. Van Doren suggested that the Board review the salary policy and revise it so that it includes direction for the superintendent to include compensation for all staff in the proposed budget, and not limit the compensation to on the step payscale.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS: (9:50 PM)

1. Superintendent’s Elementary Boundary Proposal:

Dr. Durán introduced the Superintendent’s recommendation for the Fall 2020 elementary school boundary process. He acknowledged that in light of the pandemic and strain it has caused of families, this boundary process was narrowed to focus primarily on establishing boundaries for the new elementary school at the Reed site. He confirmed that staff is aware of the community concerns about changes that have happened at the site over the last several years.

Ms. Stengle presented an overview of the boundary process and described tools used by staff to manage enrollment. She presented enrollment growth over the last several years, and she reviewed elementary capital improvement projects that have been completed recently. She reiterated that the process will keep planning unit moves to a minimum, and will develop attendance zones for the new schools at Reed, at the repurposed Key site, and for Arlington Science Focus School. She also confirmed plans are in place for a county wide boundary process in 2022 to address additional capacity issues. She then outlined short-term and longer-term tools that will be used to manage 2021-2022 capacity.

Gladis Bourdouane, Integrated Project Planner, reviewed the policy considerations in all boundary processes and the impact of the pandemic on the current process. Kathy Mimbberg, Coordinator of Community Engagement, summarized engagement conducted in the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 boundary processes. Next, Ms. Bourdouane presented feedback received from the community engagement process, and summarized the superintendent’s recommendation, which affects six schools. She reiterated this process only includes changes that are needed at this time and allows flexibility for future boundary changes. Jonathan Turrisi, Director, Strategic Planning, then explained the specific boundary changes that are included in the Superintendent’s recommendation.

Ms. Stengle spoke to the proposed elementary changes that will align with the middle schools and high schools. She shared a preview of the next boundary process which will be a countywide process, confirming that APS will seek to avoid reassigning planning units moved in the 2020 process. She also shared information related to grandfathering for the Board to consider with this plan. In closing, she reviewed the timeline and next steps for this boundary process and highlighted additional information that will be considered as the process moves forward.

Noting that there has been some concern expressed in the community, Ms. O’Grady confirmed that this boundary process does not include consideration of an upper and lower school at the Arlington Science Focus and Key sites. Staff responded to questions on specific planning unit moves recommended in the proposal, and Board members commented on aspects of the recommendations. Some concerns expressed by the Board related the accuracy of projections and the effect of budget strains resulting from the pandemic. The Board looked forward to further discussion of the boundary proposal at upcoming work sessions.

2. Proposed Revisions to School Board Policy F-1 Financial Management – Capital Improvement Plan: (11:33 PM)
3. Proposed Revisions to School Board Policy F-5.7 Construction and Maintenance

Confirming that these policy revisions are closely related and inter-dependent, Mr. Chadwick reviewed recent Capital Improvement processes and projects and explained how those processes have informed the proposed policy revisions. He appreciated staff and advisory groups that provided input to this review process. Ms. Stengle noted Board direction from the last CIP to review and adjust these policies, and then reviewed the objectives for the changes and the process staff undertook to address these objectives. Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Chambers then outlined the systematic approach taken and the proposed changes identified as revisions to Policy F-1 and Policy F-5.7, as well as to the associated policy implementation procedures (PIPs).

The group acknowledged that these policies will be discussed at an upcoming work session so Board members agreed to save their questions for that time.

H. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

I. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 AM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Arlington School Board