

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Closed Meeting and School Board Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2022

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 5:34 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Mary Kadera, Member
David Priddy, Member

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Christine Smith, Division Counsel

A. CALL TO ORDER AND CLOSED MEETING

Dr. Kanninen called the meeting to order and *moved that the Board immediately convene in a closed meeting for consultation with legal counsel and a briefing by staff regarding the mask mandate pertaining to probable litigation as authorized by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(7); and for consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as authorized by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(8)*, seconded by Mr. Priddy. The motion was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Dr. Kanninen, Ms. Kadera, and Mr. Priddy voting affirmatively.

Dr. Kanninen move to certify pursuant to §2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia that to the best knowledge of each School Board member, 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 Mr. Priddy and was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye.

Dr. Kanninen moved that the School Board support the Superintendent’s recommendation to continue the current mask mandate within Arlington Public Schools and authorize the actions recommended by Division Counsel in closed session including, if necessary, legal action to ensure the provision of in-person instruction during the COVID pandemic in compliance with Virginia law, including, but not limited to, employing mitigation measures as provided by SB 1303 (2021) and move to place this for vote on the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Priddy. The motion was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Dr. Kanninen, Ms. Kadera, and Mr. Priddy voting affirmatively.

Dr. Kanninen called for a brief recess at 6:08 PM, and the Board reconvened in an open session at 7:01 PM.

Also present were:

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

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B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Board Announcement on Mask Use
4. Recognitions: Posse Scholars and QuestBridge Scholar

Mr. Tyrone Byrd, Director of Secondary Education, presented the six high school students who earned four-year, full-ride scholarships from The Posse Foundation to attend partnering higher education institutions. The Posse Foundation recruits and trains outstanding young people from urban high schools with the goal to send them to top colleges and universities. He also presented the four seniors who earned four-year, full-ride QuestBridge scholarships. QuestBridge Scholars is a college and scholarship application process that helps outstanding low-income high school seniors gain admission and full four-year scholarships to the nation's most selective colleges.

C. CONSENT ITEMS (7:09 PM):

Ms. Diaz-Torres moved for adoption of the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Priddy. The motion was adopted in a vote of 5 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Dr. Kanninen, Ms. O'Grady, and Mr. Priddy voting affirmatively. The following items or actions were approved as a part of consent:

1. Minutes: None
2. Personnel Actions
 - P/E-SCALE
 - 1 Reclassification Request
 - Supervisor of School Safety
 - T-SCALE PERSONNEL
 - 5 Appointments
 - 4 Changes In Position/Salary
 - 3 Resignations
 - 1 Retirement
 - A-SCALE PERSONNEL
 - 4 Appointments
 - 3 Resignations
 - SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL
 - 8 Appointment
 - 1 Change in Salary/Position
 - 2 Resignations
 - 1 Retirement
3. I-1.34 Early Childhood Preschool Programs
4. I-11.5.2.31 Student Acceleration
5. I-7.2.9.30 Program Differentiation
6. Consideration of Legal Matters

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Dr. Kanninen announced the policies that were adopted under consent and shared that the Superintendent approved the Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs) associated with those policies. In addition, she announced that the School Board voted to support the Superintendent's recommendation to maintain the mask mandate within Arlington Public Schools and authorized the actions recommended by Division Counsel in closed session including, if necessary, legal action to ensure the provision of in-person instruction during the COVID pandemic in compliance with Virginia law, including, but not limited to, employing mitigation measures as provided by SB 1303 (2021).

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS (7:11 PM):

1. Board Announcements:

January 26, 2022 – Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 8:30 AM

January 27, 2022 – Closed Meeting, 5:30 PM, School Board Conference Room

January 27, 2022 – Committee of the Whole Meeting, 6:30 PM, School Board Conference Room

Mr. Goldstein shared about upcoming events at Arlington Science Focus School.

2. Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán announced that the Support Employee of the Year nomination deadline was February 18 and encouraged the community to nominate an employee who goes above and beyond and deserves recognition.

He presented important upcoming dates, including information about Virtual Kindergarten Information Night. Dr. Durán spoke about the importance of the required mask use mandate for students, staff, and visitors indoors at school and on school buses to keep schools open and safe. He also provided information on the Test to Stay Program and the distribution of COVID-19 test kits. Dr. Durán presented information on the inclement weather plan to transition to synchronous, virtual learning on snow days as conditions allow. Furthermore, Dr. Durán announced that closeout funds would be used to purchase literacy and math resources needed to address the downward trends in the number of students meeting grade-level benchmarks. To conclude, Dr. Durán highlighted the Discovery Elementary School's HydroGarden, where students experience hands-on learning as part of their sustainability focus.

Mr. Priddy addressed the inclement weather closure on January 20 and requested that decisions on the status of operations be delayed considering the changes in the forecast and Mr. Goldstein inquired about the decision timeline. Dr. Durán explained the process of making inclement weather closure decisions noting that student and staff safety is a priority and decisions are made with the best information available. The Board discussed the Test to Stay Program and monitoring literacy progress.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS (7:47 PM):

The following speakers addressed the Board supporting universal mask mandate and sharing their concerns on Governor Glenn Youngkin's executive order lifting mask mandates in Virginia schools:

Jeff Martin, Arlington resident

Christine Bolon, teacher, Yorktown High School

Wendi Pizer, parent advocate, Arlington Special Education PTA (SEPTA)

Claire Noakes, Arlington County Council of PTAs (CCPTA), Black Parents of Arlington, Arlington Special Education PTA (SEPTA), and Arlington Hispanic Parents Association

Whytni Kernodle, President, Black Parents of Arlington

Mern Horan

Jamie Cohen-Cole, parent

Lara Daly-Sims, parent

Deborah McClary, parent

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The following speakers also addressed the Board:

Josh Folb, teacher, sharing concerns about teacher work overload

Jennifer Bartlett, President, Friends of Arlington's David M. Brown Planetarium, supporting opening the Planetarium in the fall

Kathi Overton, member, Friends of Arlington's David M. Brown Planetarium, supporting opening the Planetarium in the fall

Naisha Chinnery, parent, Gunston Middle School, supporting Governor Glenn Youngkin's executive order lifting mask mandates in Virginia schools

Miranda Turner, member, Arlington Parents for Education, supporting the Test to Stay Program and encouraging addressing learning loss

Ivis Castillo, bus driver, supporting early decisions related to inclement weather and encouraging a better work environment at Transportation Services

Jacob Berube, Libertarian Party of Northern Virginia, supporting Governor Glenn Youngkin's executive order lifting mask mandates in Virginia schools

Charles Smith, bus attendant, supporting mask mandate and encouraging a better work environment at Transportation Services

The Board recessed at 8:25 PM and reconvened at 8:32 PM.

F. MONITORING ITEMS (8:32 PM):

1. Virtual Learning Program (VLP) Update

Ms. Graves presented an overview of the enrollment by level and demographic categories. She provided an overview of the instructional classes available to students and an update on the staffing of the program. Acknowledging the impact of the pandemic on students, Ms. Graves spoke about the social and emotional learning (SEL) and mental health supports for students and the collaboration with the home schools. Ms. Loft presented information on the professional learning opportunities for the VLP staff, specifically for staff supporting special education and English language learner students. She also shared information on compensatory services for students with disabilities and the plan to address VLP Students' learning needs. To conclude, Ms. Graves expressed that it would be remiss not to acknowledge that the VLP continued to have areas to improve and staff needed to continue to address parent engagement.

As the liaison to the VLP, Ms. Kadera appreciated the school system acknowledging that the VLP did not have a successful start and that staff was humbled to admit that mistakes were made and worked swiftly to try to address all issues. She commended the staff for demonstrating their genuine commitment to students and improving collaboration with the VLP families. Furthermore, the Board discussed summer school options, monitoring active participation of students, ways students can access mental health supports, and the breakdown of demographic data for the VLP. They also discussed grading and the plans to help students academically. Lastly, Dr. Kanninen requested a budget update for the program.

G. ACTION ITEMS (9:21 PM):

1. Final Fiscal Close-Out/Status and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Quarterly Report

Ms. Diaz-Torres moved that the Board adopt the following resolutions:

1. To carry forward funds remaining from FY 2021 to FY 2022, it is recommended that the School Board adopt the following resolution (Resolution #1):

The School Board requests the appropriation and increase in County Transfer of \$59,238,212 to the School Operating Fund which represents the combination of budget savings from FY 2021 in the amount of \$58,688,160

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and an increase in local tax revenue from FY 2021 in the amount of \$550,022 which is above the amount anticipated and budgeted for in the FY 2021 Adopted School Board Budget.

2. To provide for the purchase orders/incomplete projects encumbered as of June 30, 2021, that will be paid in FY 2022, it is recommended that the School Board adopt the following resolution (Resolution #2):

The School Board requests the re-appropriation of encumbrances and budget increases to the FY 2022 Schools Budget as indicated below:

- School Operating Fund \$10,546,010
- Capital Projects Fund \$ 9,386,997
- Community Activities Fund \$ 69,775
- Food & Nutrition Services Fund \$ 473,682

3. In order to continue the special projects and construction projects for which the budget period does not coincide with the school year, it is recommended that the School Board adopt the following resolution (Resolution #3):

The School Board requests the re-appropriation to FY 2022 of the balances in both the Grants and Restricted Programs Fund and the Bond Construction Fund as follows:

- Grants and Restricted Programs Fund \$ 1,447,520
- Bond Construction Fund \$89,744,725

4. In order to retain the current fund balance reserves (balances as of 6/30/21), it is recommended that the School Board adopt the following resolution (Resolution #4):

The School Board requests the carry forward of the following fund balance reserves:

In the School Operating Fund:

- \$25,159,933 – FY 2022 Adopted Budget use of reserves
- \$ 1,047,239 – VRS Reserve
- \$ 2,000,000 – Separation Pay Reserve
- \$ 1,000,000 – Health Insurance Reserve – self insurance

In the Food & Nutrition Services Fund:

- \$6,004,769 – Fund Balance

In the Capital Projects Fund

- \$38,283,587 – Capital Reserve
- \$ 170,070 – Capital Planning

These reserves will be carried on the books of Arlington Public Schools until the School Board authorizes the use of these reserve funds.

5. In order to authorize the use of the \$59,238,212 appropriated from Arlington County to Arlington Public Schools in Resolution #1 plus the \$2,817,940 appropriated to APS by the County Board at adoption of the FY 2022 budget, it is recommended that the School Board adopt the following resolution (Resolution #5):

The School Board authorizes the Superintendent to use the amount appropriated at adoption of the FY 2022 budget and from the County in Resolution #1 and carried over to FY 2022 as follows:

- Addition to Compensation Reserve \$16,850,000
- Addition to Debt Service Reserve \$ 2,000,000
- Addition to Future Budget Years Reserve \$28,180,752

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- *FY 2022 Expenditure Recommendations \$15,025,400*
- Total authorized uses of carryover funds \$62,056,152*

The motion was seconded by Mr. Priddy. Mr. Goldstein inquired about the different funds and Ms. Peterson explained the different funding sources and the timeline for closing the fiscal year financial records.

Dr. Kanninen called for a vote and the motion was adopted in a vote of 5-0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye

2. I-7.2.6 English Learner Services

Since presented to the Board as an information item, Ms. Loft noted that the policy was updated to reflect services provided to English Learners and to align with Federal law and APS policies and implementation procedures.

Mr. Goldstein moved that the Board adopt the proposed revisions to School Board Policy I-7.2.6 English Learner Services, seconded by Ms. Kadera.

Ms. Diaz-Torres thanked staff for the work that took place to put this policy revision forward highlighting that the policy revision is a building block to continue to improve services for English Learners.

Dr. Kanninen called for a vote and the motion was adopted in a vote of 5-0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Dr. Kanninen – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye

H. INFORMATION ITEMS (9:35 PM):

1. Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Visioning Process Task Force Recommendations

As the Board liaison to the DLI Visioning Process, Ms. Diaz-Torres recognized the long-time work behind the visioning process that included staff and community engagement and thanked everyone involved for getting to the point where short and long-term recommendations were brought forward.

Elisabeth Harrington, Supervisor of World Languages, presented the Superintendent's and the DLI Task Force recommendation to move the APS Dual Language Immersion Program from a 50/50 partial immersion program into an 80/20 early full immersion program starting in the fall of 2023 in accordance with School Board Policy K-3 Program Change. She provided information on the rationale and benefits of the recommendation. Ms. Harrington also presented other recommendations from the DLI Task Force that included budget and staff implications to support, develop and coordinate the program. Mr. Jonathan Turrisi, Director of Strategic Planning, presented the community engagement goals and communication process strategies.

The Board discussed the research to support moving the program to full immersion to help close the achievement gap. They also discussed the different recommendations and their impact on literacy, staffing, and future conversations about immersion and the commitment to implement the program with fidelity. Mr. Goldstein inquired about the alignment of the 80/20 early full immersion program change recommendation to the PreK-12 Instructional Programs Pathway (IPP) framework and implications related to Board approval on future budget and instructional decisions. Mr. Kadera asked for detailed cost information to implement the recommendations and the impact on grade level staffing. Dr. Kanninen and Dr. Durán briefly clarified that the Superintendent's recommendation was budget neutral and Dr. Kanninen requested to pay careful attention to provide equitable resources across the schools.

2. Approval of Potential Revisions (if needed) to the 2021-22 School Year Calendar

To comply with Virginia Administrative Code, 8VAC20-131-150 Standard School Year and School Day, and in the event that schools would have to close due to inclement weather, Dr. Mayo presented the Superintendent's

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recommended potential revisions to increase required instructional hours. He also shared the feedback received from different stakeholder groups regarding the potential revisions. Dr. Durán noted that he was communicating with families to prepare for virtual learning during inclement weather, as another option to manage school closures. Dr. Kanninen clarified that until Board approval, the calendar would not be modified and that not all the dates noted on the recommendation would be affected.

The Board discussed the rationale for the potential calendar revisions and the plan to notify families.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

J. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Arlington School Board

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