

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Closed Meeting and School Board Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2021

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 5:38 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.¹

Present were:

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Reid Goldstein, Vice Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Monique O’Grady, Member
David Priddy, Member

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent

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 to discuss the performance of a public school employee, as authorized by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1)*, seconded by Ms. O’Grady. The motion was adopted in a vote 5 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Dr. Kanninen, Ms. O’Grady, and Mr. Priddy voting affirmatively.

Dr. Kanninen 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, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. The motion was seconded by Ms. O’Grady 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. O’Grady – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye.

Dr. Kanninen called for brief a recess at 6:43 PM, and the Board reconvened in an open session at 7:01 PM.

Also present were:

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
Claudia Mercado, Clerk

B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING

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

To conclude the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the School Board proudly recognized some Latinx students for their leadership and outstanding success in school and life. Ms. Dulce Carrillo, Supervisor of Public Engagement, presented the seven high school students and spoke about their exemplary characteristics. In addition, the Board

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.

recognized Superintendent, Dr. Durán, for his contributions and leadership at Arlington Public Schools, the State Board of the Virginia Department of Education, and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS).

C. CONSENT ITEMS (7:23 PM):

Ms. O'Grady 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

2. Personnel Actions

P/E-SCALE

- 1 Classification Specification Request Project Manager
- 1 Appointment
- 10 Changes In Position/Salary
- 1 Resignation

T-SCALE PERSONNEL

- 11 Appointments
- 6 Changes In Position/Salary
- 4 Resignations

A-SCALE PERSONNEL

- 8 Appointments
- 2 Changes In Position/Salary
- 1 Resignation
- 1 Resignation (With Prejudice)

SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL

- 5 Appointments
- 3 Changes In Position/Salary
- 2 Resignations

3. Second Amendment to Lease Agreement with Highland Holdings, Inc. for Parking

4. Appointment to the Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

Dr. Kanninen announced that under Consent, the Board appointed Alistair Watson to the Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC). The Board also appointed Richard Straggas as Director of Finance and Danielle Harrell as the Principal of the Virtual Learning Program.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS (7:27 PM):

1. Board Announcements:

- October 15, 2021 – Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 1 PM
- October 18, 2021 – Virtual Open Office Hours with Reid Goldstein, 7:30 PM
- October 19, 2021 – Closed Meeting, 5:30 PM, School Board Conference Room
- October 19, 2021 – Work Session on Homework and Communication of Student Progress, 6:30 PM, School Board Room
- October 22, 2021, Virtual Special Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 3 PM
- October 26, 2021 – Committee of the Whole, Strategic Plan Goals, 6:30 PM, School Board Conference Room

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.

October 27, 2021, Virtual Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 8:30 AM

Ms. Diaz-Torres expressed her excitement on recognizing the amazing accomplishments of the students in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month and Mr. Goldstein shared about activities taking place at his liaison schools.

2. Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán also acknowledged the students that were recognized for Hispanic Heritage Month and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to learn about the students. He provided an update on the official student enrollment for September 30 and important school year events. Dr. Durán shared that October was National Principal Appreciation Month, Bullying Prevention Month, and Learning Disabilities Awareness Month and he spoke about School Lunch Week. He then provided an update on the Fall 2021 Boundary Process and Adjustment of Elementary Immersion Feeder Schools highlighting that this boundary process was limited in scope, focusing on refinements to provide capacity relief where needed in 2022-23, and describing the engagement process. To end, Dr. Durán announced that U.S. News & World Report ranked APS elementary and middle schools top in the state and congratulated the winner of the state PTA Reflections Art Contest.

Mr. Goldstein inquired about the outreach to inform families of the community meetings related to the Fall 2021 Boundary Process and Ms. O'Grady encouraged families to write to APS Engage with questions about the process.

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

The following speakers addressed the Board on the Proposed FY 2023-32 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):

Sam Watchman, student, Arlington Tech Program
Sean Bender-Prouty, student, Washington-Liberty High School
Haywon Kim, Arlington Tech Advisory Committee

The following speakers addressed the Board with concerns about the Virtual Learning Program:

Janna Dressel, parent
Arlyn Elizee, parent

The following speakers addressed the Board on the Fall 2021 Boundary Process:

Milne Young, Boulevard Manor
Miranda Turner, Charles Drew Model Elementary
Jennifer Dean, Charles Drew Model Elementary
Brittany Knutson, Charles Drew Model Elementary

The following speakers addressed the Board regarding COVID-19 safety measures, employee concerns, and compensation related to Transportation Services:

Christina Childress
Crystal Harris
Kimberly Goodwin
Ivis Castillo

The following speakers addressed the Board on

Symone Walker, NAACP Education Committee, raising awareness of Dyslexia Awareness Month
Kathleen Clark, Co-President, SEPTA, concerning the rise in bullying incidents at schools
Judith Davis, parent, Wakefield High School, staffing of the German language program
Berdy Davis IV, student, Wakefield High School, requesting additional bus stop
Aari Davis, student, Wakefield High School, requesting additional bus stop
Julie Hannink, Arlington Parents for Education, funding of The American Rescue Plan Act
Alison Babb, Arlington Parents for Education, concerning the use of technology devices at the elementary level

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.

F. MONITORING ITEMS (8:33 PM):

1. APS Responses to Student Behaviors

Dr. Jeannette Allen, Director of Administrative Services, presented the APS philosophy regarding student behavior and noted that responses to student behavior shall be consistent with the mission, vision, and strategic principles of Arlington Public Schools and its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Responses shall also consider the student's social-emotional development, age, cultural background, and other relevant factors. She spoke about the alignment with the Strategic Plan objective 10, presented data related to the risk-ratio and disproportionality in suspension rates by race and ethnicity, and shared revisions to School Board policies addressing student behavior. In addition, she provided information on the new Student Code of Conduct Handbook and explained the supports in place to reduce disproportionality of student suspension and implement restorative justice practices.

The Board discussed the pivotal changes to address the challenges related to student behavior as part of a multi-year comprehensive plan, clarification on professional development, and the need to educate families and students about the restorative justice practices, student handbook, and the policies governing student behavior. They also conversed about the impact of strategies. In addition, the Board expressed their interest in reviewing future data to analyze meeting the objectives of the Strategic Plan and disproportionality risk ratio.

2. Virtual Learning Program Update

Ms. Graves presented enrollment and demographic data, the online learning participation dashboard for each level, and she shared an update on staffing. In addition, Ms. Graves spoke about supporting the social and emotional needs of students and families and improving communication channels. Ms. Loft presented about the opportunities for professional development for staff. She also spoke about the services available to students as part of their school of record and the supports in place for students with disabilities.

The Board discussed filling vacancies, addressing the different student needs to ensure a consistent service across the system, and the future of the Virtual Learning Program. Highlighting the monumental effort put forth by staff to implement the virtual program, Ms. Diaz-Torres noted the need to address equity and the challenges with synchronous instruction. The Board requested receiving formal updates on the Virtual Learning Program and the progress to address learning loss.

G. ACTION ITEMS (10:04 PM):

1. Internal Audit Annual Plan

Mr. John Mickevics, Internal Auditor, presented updates to the Proposed 2021-2022 Internal Audit Projects as a result of the Audit Committee meeting held on October 7, 2021.

Mr. Goldstein moved that the Board adopt the 2021-2022 School Year Internal Audit Annual Plan, seconded by Mr. Priddy.

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. O’Grady – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye

2. School Board FY 2023 Budget Direction

Diaz-Torres moved that the Board adopt the School Board FY 2023 Budget Direction, seconded by Ms. O’Grady.

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. O’Grady – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye

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.

3. The Heights Building Phase 2 Architecture/Engineering Services

Mr. Chambers, Director, Design and Construction, confirmed the architecture and engineering fee of \$952,359 for VMDO Architects.

Ms. O’Grady moved that the Board approve the architecture and engineering team fee of \$952,359 for VMDO Architects for The Heights Building Phase 2, seconded by Ms. Diaz-Torres.

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. O’Grady – Aye; and Mr. Priddy – Aye

H. INFORMATION ITEMS (10:10 PM):

1. Amazon “Think Big Space” at Wakefield High School

Mr. Stockton presented about the new Amazon Think Big Space at Wakefield High School, a unique collaboration between Amazon, Arlington Public Schools, and private community sponsors, to provide a dedicated space to support the division-wide STEM curriculum. He shared about the external funding from Ralph Johnson in the amount of \$109,000 and Amazon in the amount of \$150,000 to build the Think Big Space aimed to prioritize personalized learning to engage students of all ages, interests, and abilities. Mr. Brian Stout, Amazon Senior Manager of Public Policy, shared that Amazon Think Big Space was named after one of Amazon’s 14 Leadership Principles which states “Thinking small is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Leaders create and communicate a bold direction that inspires results. They think differently and look around corners for ways to serve customers.” Mr. Chris Willmore, Principal at Wakefield High School, thanked Amazon for partnering with Wakefield High School to build the first Think Big Space in a high school in the Americas, and Mr. Kris Martini, Director of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, spoke about the connection of the Think Big Space and the U.S. Department of Education’s STEM 2026 Vision.

The Board briefly discussed the innovative opportunities that will be available for students to broaden their skills and engage in project-based learning.

2. School Board Direction on the Superintendent’s Proposed FY2023-32 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Dr. Mayo provided an overview of the FY 2022-24 CIP Projects and the long-term projects that will continue in the FY 2023-32 CIP. He provided a summary of the financial considerations related to bond capacity. Mr. Chambers summarized the results of the Arlington Career Center Study and presented the four site plan options to accommodate the educational specifications of the site, noting that option four was the Superintendent’s recommendation. Ms. Cathy Lin, Director of Facilities and Operations, shared the recommendations for a long-range plan to renovate existing school facilities. Lastly, Ms. Lisa Stengle, Executive Director of Planning and Evaluation, reviewed the recommended CIP direction that included funding for continued projects, prioritizing the renovations of facilities, and beginning the concept design for the Career Center.

The Board discussed the proposed options for the Career Center and the preliminary information on revenue.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Goldstein announced that in lieu of presenting a motion related to the Fall 2021 Boundary Process and Adjustment of Elementary Immersion Feeder Schools to gather additional information to inform his vote, he was going to submit questions to the Superintendent for follow-up.

J. ADJOURNMENT

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.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 PM.

ATTEST:

Claudia Mercado, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Barbara Kanninen, Chair
Arlington School Board

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.