

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Closed Meeting and School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**February 16, 2023**

The Arlington School Board convened on Thursday, February 15, 2023 at 5:32 PM at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

**Present were:**

Reid Goldstein, Chair  
 Cristina Diaz-Torres, Vice Chair  
 Mary Kadera, Member  
 David Priddy, Member (absent)  
 Bethany Zecher Sutton, Member

**Also present were:**

Christine Smith, Division Legal Counsel  
 Kenneth Golski, Assistant Division Council  
 Employee  
 Witness

**A. CLOSED MEETING ON THE DETERMINATION OF A GRIEVANCE**

Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order and *moved that the Board immediately convene in a closed meeting as authorized by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1) to conduct a hearing on the grievance of employee dismissal Number G-SY23-SS-IG-02*. The motion was seconded by Ms. Diaz-Torres, and it was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Ms. Kadera, and Ms. Zecher Sutton voting affirmatively. Mr. Priddy was absent at the time of the vote.

The closed meeting adjourned at 7 PM. The Board took a brief recess and reconvened in an open meeting at 7:14 PM.

*Mr. Goldstein moved to certify that pursuant to 2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia, 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 Ms. Diaz-Torres and was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0. The voting record is as follows: Ms. Diaz-Torres – Aye; Mr. Goldstein – Aye; Ms. Kadera – Aye; and Ms. Zecher Sutton – Aye. Mr. Priddy was absent at the time of the vote.

**Also present were:**

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent  
 Dr. Gerald Mann, Chief Academic Officer  
 Dr. John Mayo, Chief Operating Officer  
 Dr. Darrell Sampson, Executive Director of Student Services  
 Frank Bellavia, Director of Communications  
 Claudia Mercado, Clerk  
 Carmen Mejia, Deputy Clerk

**B. REGULAR MEETING OPENING (7:14 PM):**

1. Call to Order

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2. Presentation of Colors: Arlington Career Center Space Force JROTC Cadets Corps
3. Recognitions: National Board Certified Teachers and Clerk's Appreciation Week

The School Board welcomed Ms. Nancy Routson, Student Support Coordinator, to share about the National Board Certification process, the most respected professional certification available in education, and help them congratulate 19 exemplary teachers who successfully earned their National Board Certification. The Board also recognized School Board Clerk, Ms. Mercado, and Deputy Clerk, Ms. Mejia, on School Board Clerk Appreciation Week, celebrated annually by APS and the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) during the third week of February to create awareness of the role of clerks.

**C. CONSENT ITEMS (7: 27 PM):**

*Ms. Diaz-Torres moved for the adoption of the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Kadera. The motion was adopted in a vote of 4 – 0, with Ms. Diaz-Torres, Mr. Goldstein, Ms. Kadera, and Ms. Zecher Sutton voting affirmatively. Mr. Priddy was absent at the time of the vote. The following items or actions were approved as a part of consent:*

1. Minutes

[C-1-a Minutes for the January 26, 2023 Closed Meeting and Work Session Gifted Services](#)

[C-1-b Minutes for the February 2, 2023 School Board Meeting](#)

2. Personnel Actions

**P/E-SCALE PERSONNEL**

- 1 Appointment
- 1 Change In Position/Salary

**T-SCALE PERSONNEL**

- 10 Appointments
- 4 Resignations
- 2 Resignations With Prejudice
- 1 Retirement

**A-SCALE PERSONNEL**

- 7 Appointments
- 1 Resignation
- 1 Resignation With Prejudice

**SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL**

- 6 Changes In Position/Salary

3. Revisions to School Board Policies G-1.4 Acceptable Use of Social Media, K-14.1.10.30 Cooperation with Juvenile Court, and ~~K-14.1.10.31 School and Police Relations (removed from the agenda on 2/15)~~
4. Amendments to School Board Policy J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers

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## 5. Appointments to School Board Advisory Committees

Mr. Goldstein announced that under consent, the School Board adopted revisions to School Board Policies G-1.4 Acceptable Use of Social Media, and K-14.1.10.30 Cooperation with Juvenile Court, which included updates to comply with Virginia law, and revised language to clarify meaning and current practice. In addition, the Board adopted an amendment to Policy J-5.3.31 Options and Transfers to align its review with the regular 5-year policy revision cycle. Consequently, the Superintendent approved the Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs) related to these policies accordingly.

## D. ANNOUNCEMENTS (7:28 PM):

### 1. Board Announcements:

Mr. Goldstein announced that the School Board was accepting nominations for the Honored Citizens Award through March 13 to recognize individuals who make an enormous difference in our school communities. He also shared about events at some of his liaison schools.

February 23 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 8 AM, Board Conference Room  
 February 23 – Closed Meeting, 5:30 PM, Board Conference Room  
 February 23 – Superintendent's Proposed FY 24 Budget Presentation, 7 PM, Board Room  
 February 23 – Budget Work Session #1, immediately following Budget Presentation, Board Room  
 March 2 – Closed Meeting, 5:30 PM, Board Conference Room  
 March 2 – School Board Meeting, 7 PM, Board Room

Ms. Kadera congratulated the Yorktown High School girls swim team on winning the regional competition and the wrestling team for moving on to the state competition. She also shared about her visit to Randolph Elementary School and participating in their monthly all-school morning meeting focusing on what it means to be a thinker. Mr. Goldstein then shared about Claremont Elementary School hosting the Prince William Public Schools dual language immersion coordinator, teachers, and administrators to learn more about the dual language immersion program at APS. Lastly, he was delighted to announce that Abingdon Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) recognized Gabriela Perez, a front office employee, for her positive leadership and contributions to the school community in support of student success.

### 2. Superintendent's Announcements and Updates

Dr. Durán began by addressing an unacceptable activity that took place at Gunston Middle School, involving an 8th-grade student. He wanted to publicly thank the student for speaking up but was disheartened that the student felt uncomfortable coming forward, which speaks about the work that needs to continue to happen so that everyone is sensitive to students and their feelings. Dr. Durán acknowledged that the event in question does not align with the diversity and inclusion core values of APS. He explained that Gunston Middle School administrators were investigating the incident to determine the necessary actions being taken to address and prevent similar activities from happening again. The Superintendent affirmed that he and the School Board have an expectation that instruction is inclusive and culturally sensitive; therefore, Dr. Durán instructed the Academics and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices to conduct a deep dive to review instructional activities to ensure they are culturally sensitive.

Dr. Durán provided an update on safety and security, announcing that APS school administrators participated in a review of APS emergency and safety procedures in early February. He also shared about the work to update procedures to improve emergency plans, and expectations, as well as improving clarity and consistency in communications around incidents affecting safety. In response to substance use and opioid education and prevention, Dr. Durán announced that all middle and high school staff were trained on opioids, fentanyl, and

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the use of naloxone on February 7. He shared that APS was focused on working to finalize additional educational opportunities for students and families. In alignment with the Every Student Counts school year priority, the Superintendent highlighted project-based learning at the Langston Program where students developed and produced a sustainable product and created a real-world business plan for marketing, distribution, inventory, sales, and profits. Moreover, Dr. Durán provided information about the Home Address Confirmation Process (HACP) requiring families of current 5th and 8th graders to submit documents confirming their home address by March 15. He then presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Calendar, highlighting opportunities for public comment. In recognition of School Bus Driver Appreciation Day (February 22) and Kindness Week (February 13-17) Dr. Durán encouraged the community to show their appreciation for the school bus drivers who go the extra mile to safely transport students to and from school every day and demonstrate how simple day-to-day acts of kindness enable inclusive places to live, work, learn and play. To conclude, the Superintendent was excited to congratulate Swanson Middle School seventh-grader, LJ Sieff, for presenting Making Mathematics Accessible for Disabled Students Who Use Augmentative Assistive Communication (AAC) at the National Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference. The presentation highlighted the importance of universal design for learning, self-advocacy, and engagement of the AAC community to meet the needs of students in academically rigorous settings. In addition, Dr. Durán highlighted Innovation Elementary School and its partnership with Bayou Bakery aimed at teaching students about the culture of Mardi Gras. David Guas of Bayou Bakery challenged students to a Shoe Box Float building competition where the winners got a chance to talk to NBC Washington about their design process and the project and got to share in the traditional King Cake as a reward.

Addressing the Superintendent’s mention of the incident at Gunston Middle School, Ms. Zecher Sutton inquired about the review of instructional activities and Dr. Durán noted that the Academics Office was going to work with individual schools to provide feedback on the instructional content, as well as review system-wide activities. Ms. Diaz-Torres emphasized that more work needs to be done in the area of diversity and equity and encouraged the community to voice their concerns about instructional materials that do not belong in the schools. Ms. Kadera wanted clarification on the Community Conversations on Substance Use targeted audience. Hence, Dr. Sampson explained that the events were open to anyone interested, and APS was working to make the meetings available in different languages and on the APS website. Applauding the naloxone training for secondary staff, Ms. Diaz-Torres urged elementary staff to also receive training to ensure quick response by all with Dr. Sampson speaking about the work to expand the training and awareness. In reference to the safety and security update, Ms. Kadera pointed out that messages to the school communities have improved and expressed her gratitude to the staff for doubling down on communications. Furthermore, to inform the community, Ms. Kadera called for the Superintendent to clarify the reporting of incidents on school grounds, the reporting of police-related activity, and communication with school communities. Dr. Durán provided a detailed clarification of the distinction between activities on school grounds reported to the police, incidents reported to the police specifically related to schools, and the communication with APS on all activities. Lastly, Ms. Diaz-Torres emphasized that APS would work with families on the HACP and Dr. Sampson shared some examples of complex living situations where staff would help families navigate the process. She also encouraged the community to support the soap-making small business at the Langston Program.

**E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS (8:12 PM):**

The following speakers addressed the Board:

Name:	School or Affiliation:	Topic:
Eric Lotcke	Parent alumni	Explaining the work of the School Resource Officers (SROs) committee and supporting additional resources for schools

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Melissa J. Dyer	Swanson Middle School	Expressing support and appreciation to Dr. Willmore and Wakefield High School staff
June Prakash	President, Arlington Education Association	Sharing staff concerns about school safety, drug use, and mental health
Joshua Folb		Requesting better compensation for instructional staff and more support
Major Webb	Webb for VA	Expressing concerns about the fentanyl crisis at Arlington Public Schools
Deborah Waldron	Teacher, Yorktown High School	Expressing concerns about teachers' work schedules and suggesting better compensation
Tia Alfred	Chair, NAACP Education Committee	Expressing concerns about an incident at Gunston Middle School and civil rights violations
Shana Robertson	Wakefield High School	Sharing concerns about negative student behavior
Whytni Kernodle	Black Parents of Arlington	Addressing systemic racism

**F. MONITORING ITEMS (8:35 PM):**

1. FY 2023 Mid-Year Fiscal Monitoring Report

Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Management Services presented a status update on the FY 2023 Budget to measure the financial progress and to determine if adjustments to the current year's budget may be necessary. Ms. Peterson summarized revenue, expenditures, and projected funds available. Projecting \$17.7 million in funds available at the closeout of FY23, Ms. Peterson recommended that these funds be made available to replenish the reserves. Moreover, Ms. Peterson presented an update on the FY 2023 Capital Construction and Maintenance, FY 2023 Capital Construction, and Minor Construction/Major Maintenance (MC/MM).

The Board discussed MC/MM reserves and the funding of capital projects.

**G. ACTION ITEMS: NONE**

**H. INFORMATION ITEMS (8:55 PM):**

1. Campbell Elementary School Kitchen and Entrance Renovations Construction Contract Award

The School Board-adopted FY 2023-32 Capital Improvement Plan included the Kitchen and Entrance/Security Vestibule Renovation Program for enhancements at over twenty schools. Mr. Jeffrey Chambers, Director of Design & Construction, explained that to complete the renovations at Campbell Elementary School staff solicited bids using a public procurement process, issuing an Invitation to Bid (ITB). As permitted by the terms of the ITB, staff pursued negotiations with the lowest, most responsive, and most qualified bidder, The Matthews Group, Inc.

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In response to Board inquiries about the project being over the initial estimate, Mr. Chambers clarified that funding for the project would be within the available funding and does not jeopardize or postpone any of the other Kitchen and Entrance/Security Vestibule Renovation Program projects.

- 2. Revisions to School Board Policies D-1.33 Community Activities Fund, D-1.31 Financial Management-Budget Savings, D-2.30 Financial Management-General, D-2.31 Financial Management-Revenue Sharing, D-2.33 Financial Management-Additional County Revenue, D-2.34 Financial Management-Reserve Funds, D-2.35 Financial Management-Budget Direction, D-2.36 Financial Management-Budget Development, D-9 Internal Audit, and J-14 Student Fees, Fines and Charges

Steven Marku, Director, Policy and Legislative Affairs, began by presenting about the merger of 7 Policies (D-1.31 Financial Management-Budget Savings, D-2.30 Financial Management-General, D-2.31 Financial Management-Revenue Sharing, D-2.33 Financial Management-Additional County Revenue, D-2.34 Financial Management-Reserve Funds, D-2.35 Financial Management-Budget Direction, and D-2.36 Financial Management-Budget Development) into one policy, D-2 Financial Management-Budget. Some of the revisions to the policy merge included alignment to the Strategic Plan, Board Priorities, and replacing the specifics on revenue sharing with a reference to the Revenue Sharing Principles agreed to by the School Board and the County Board which governs that issue. Mr. Marku then presented revisions to Policy D-9 Internal Audit which resulted in the renumbering of the policy to B-30 in addition to other significant updates. Additionally, Mr. Marku presented revisions to Policy J-14 Student Fees, Fines and Charges to clarify practices, among other items. Lastly, Mr. Marku also summarized the retirement of some Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs) related to the policy merger, revisions to PIPs accordingly, and the public comments received.

Ms. Diaz-Torres clarified that the Internal Auditor was not limited to financial audits but worked on a wide range of audits related to the work of APS and the work scope was reflected in the revised policy and job description.

**I. NEW BUSINESS: NONE**

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 PM.

**ATTEST:**

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Claudia Mercado, Clerk  
Arlington School Board

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Reid Goldstein, Chair  
Arlington School Board

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