

EDUCATION

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

The tradition of excellence in the classroom, performing and visual arts, and athletics continued in the 2014-2015 school year. Motivated students, great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible. This year continued the focus of building on past successes and moving forward on the vision of the Arlington Public Schools as detailed in the four over-arching district goals.

- The Arlington Public Schools will ensure that every graduate is prepared to enter and complete a post-secondary degree program, pursue a career, and be an active citizen in an ever-changing world by offering a rigorous, comprehensive, standards-based and data-driven K-12 system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that integrates social, emotional and wellness support.
- The Arlington Public Schools will recruit, hire, retain, and build the capacity of a diverse staff to be excellent teachers and administrators by providing high quality professional development aligned to needs, instructional support, coaching, and an evaluation framework that fosters continuous improvement.
- The Arlington Public Schools will offer a cost effective education that maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars and utilizes best practices, academic research, and rigorous self-evaluation to provide students and staff the resources, materials, and infrastructure required for optimum teaching and learning in a safe and healthy environment.
- The Arlington Public Schools will be run smoothly, efficiently, and professionally. The district will operate transparently and engage in effective collaboration and responsive communication with all stakeholders. It will provide timely, accurate data to support financial decision-making, envisioning of the district's future, and long-range planning in partnership with other Town officials. Through these actions it will create broad support for a high quality education system that is the community's most valuable asset.

The results of our efforts include:

- Clear expectations for what every child should know and be able to do (standards-based education) continued to be refined and integrated into daily life in the classroom.



District-wide common assessments in mathematics, English, and writing helped teachers pace their instruction and informed them about students who had mastered the skills and content and those who needed further instruction. The District's intensive reading program, which focuses on early intervention and intensive support for struggling readers, demonstrated continued success in its ninth year of implementation. All K-5 students were assessed during the school year. Data from these assessments determined the level of support provided for students not meeting benchmark standards. This initiative has helped many more students read at grade level. At all levels, teachers and administrators focused on incorporating 21st century skills into every classroom. While the content of what is taught remained in place, greater emphasis on team work, working in a multicultural global society, perseverance, communication skills, creative problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information was emphasized.

- The Stratton Building Committee (Superintendent, School Department CFO, Stratton School Principal, School Committee member, parents and faculty representatives, the Deputy Town Manager, and a representative from the Finance, Capital Planning, and Permanent Town Building committees) submitted its plan to bring Stratton to parity with the other elementary schools to the Capital Planning Committee in September. The option to complete construction in 14 months rather than over multiple years was endorsed by the Capital Planning Committee.

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- Following the unanimous approval of the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee last spring, the District submitted a Statement of Intent (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), requesting support for facilities improvements to Arlington High School. The high school facility was noted as a key concern in its re-accreditation process. Prior to the submission of this SOI, the District received engineering reports from On-Site Insight and an Analysis of Programmatic Needs from HMFH Architects.
- Given the trend of increasing enrollment in the Arlington Public Schools, particularly at the elementary level, the School Department contracted with HMFH Architects to complete a space and enrollment study of the schools to be completed by the fall 2015.
- MCAS results indicate that Arlington continues to be a high achieving district with moderate to high student growth. Students scoring at Proficient and Advanced levels in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science continue to surpass state averages at every grade level. On average, Proficient and Advanced scores were nearly 19% above the state level in ELA; in math, 18%; in science, 21%. The 2015 results show increases in the percentage of students scoring at the Advanced level in ELA and Mathematics. With only two exceptions, students in all tested grades in the aggregate attained at least a Student Growth Percentile of 51 or greater in both ELA and mathematics. All individual schools continue to perform well. Of particular note, Ottoson Middle School achieved Level One (highest state accountability rating) for its 2015 MCAS results. One hundred percent of Arlington High School's graduating class passed English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering, receiving a competency determination based on their MCAS performance.
- During the 2014 - 2015 school year, the staff, teachers, and administrators of Arlington Public Schools have participated in professional development focused on topics which enable the district to effectively work towards meeting the goals set by the School Committee. Teachers at all levels have participated in professional development centered around instructional techniques that are necessary for implementing the new national standards for education (Common Core State Standards), analyzing data from common assessments to measure student growth, collecting and analyzing the evidence of educator effectiveness which is part of implementing the new Massachusetts Educator Evaluation System, meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELL), and integrating technology into the curriculum K -12. In order to deliver wide-spread professional development in a fiscally responsive manner, the district has frequently utilized the expertise of its teachers and staff to share knowledge through a professional learning community model.
- Teachers participated in extensive professional development both during the summer and school year, including the elementary Mathematics and Reading Mentor Induction Program, the Mentoring Program for all new teachers, out-of-district conferences and programs, and in-district programs to deepen content knowledge and instructional pedagogy. Teachers at all levels benefited from programs and course offerings through our *Primary Source* membership. The District continued its participation in the *Teachers As Scholars Program*, which provides teachers with content-rich professional development programs. Sixty elementary teachers participated in the graduate level course RETELL required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for teachers who teach English Language Learner students.
- Arlington's mentoring program for new teachers was featured for its exemplary practices in *From Learning to Leadership: A Cost Study for Early Career Supports for Teachers* by The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy.
- AHS continues to excel on assessments of academic quality reflecting both high achievement and improvements in academic equity. AHS earned a level one designation on the Massachusetts School Report Card. This reflects not only high *performance overall, but success in raising the performance of high needs* students. AHS has received Gold Medal distinction in the U.S. News & World Report Best High School Rankings. In 2015, AHS ranked 21st among Massachusetts schools and in the top 2% of schools nation-

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ally. Arlington was also recognized as a top school in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, ranking 200 nationally. AHS has also been named to the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll for three years for continuing to expand access to AP courses while maintaining or improving performance. AHS was also included in the list of "America's Most Challenging High Schools" by The Washington Post. Students at AHS also improved their performance in the National Merit Scholarship Competition over the past three years. The 2015 graduating class had two Merit Scholarship winners; six finalists; 3 semi-finalists; and, 30 commended students.

- The Technology Plan was further implemented this year by increasing technology hardware, including LCD projectors, in all schools and increasing wireless access in all schools. Internet capacity was increased, as well as data storage capacity. A pilot one-to-one iPad program was implemented in one cluster in the sixth grade at the Ottoson Middle School. The students in this cluster were able to receive 10 additional days of mathematics due to the team's math teacher implementing the "flipped classroom" model, which had students viewing instruction online at home. Students also consistently produced more writing than sixth grade students in previous years, even those students for whom writing is a challenge. Eight teachers at the high school were also selected to have a class set of devices in their classroom to help them quickly increase their use of technology. Teachers in mathematics, science, English Language Arts, and social studies participated in this pilot. Courses in technology have been expanded to increase the number of students studying digital modeling and computer science utilizing additional technology purchased through the support of the Arlington Educational Foundation.
- Grants received by the District supported the expansion of technology, curriculum initiatives, professional development, and academic and social-emotional support for students. A description of these grants follows.
- Arlington Education Foundation continued its strong support of Arlington's students and teachers with these grants that were

implemented this school year: The Technology Initiative entered Phase II and focused on expanding STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs at the Ottoson Middle School. AEF funded a 3D printer and cart of iPads, which expanded the Ottoson Technology and Engineering program. In addition, AEF funds were used to update the curriculum and equipment for the school's Digital Media and Literacy class. The multi-year School Improvement Grant for Ottoson Middle School funded the planning phases and initial implementation of the new Advisory Program for all OMS students, as well as the new House System. These structures help a large middle school become a more personal experience for students. The grant cycle also included OMS faculty and staff in a process of developing a shared vision of instruction, and student and school culture, while working toward a vision of shared leadership and responsibility among faculty and students. An AHS Technology User's group received support for professional development and equipment to do preparation for moving to a Bring-Your-Own-Device environment in the future. AEF provided district-wide elementary classroom-based "concentration stations". Each "Cool Tool Kit" is equipped with simple therapeutic tools to support students who experience anxiety or whose ability to self-regulate needs fostering. Development and Expansion Grants were awarded in spring 2015 for the following school year: Expanding the reach of the care coordinator to elementary schools through ongoing professional development of elementary school nurses by the care coordinator. Expanding the Lab-site professional development model to additional teachers and to a non-fiction literacy unit in either science or social studies. Innovations Grants awarded in fall 2014 supported projects ranging from Studies in Shadow Puppetry: Connecting Science, Social Studies, and the Arts at Stratton School, to support for a Science Fair Club at Ottoson, a Kindergarten Garden at Brackett School and Student Leadership Training for the high school. Grants awarded in spring 2015 included support for the Bishop garden, a new AHS Archeology class, and a STEM surge at Dallin.

- The George and Elizabeth Sanborn Foundation continues to fund the APS to support a myriad of activities addressing tobacco pre-

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vention education, intervention for those who are users, and cancer support and education for the students in kindergarten through grade 12, the staff and the community.

- The Arlington Public Schools (APS) applied for and received a \$1.1 million, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education in 2012. In its third year, this grant is funding Project S.U.C.C.E.S.S (Schools Uniting and Coordinating Counseling in Elementary School Settings), an initiative to increase counseling services in the elementary schools. The design of intervention focuses on the vital role played by school counselors and mental health professionals in ensuring that students are ready to learn. The grant enables APS to offer the types of supports that result in positive approaches to the challenging situations students sometime face. Quality, comprehensive counseling services at the elementary level are known to increase achievement and narrow achievement gaps. With 12% low-income, 12% English Language Learners, and 16% Special Education students, Arlington has a number of children who have consistently scored below the general population on the Reading and Mathematics assessments of the MCAS. This grant will help to narrow the achievement gap. The Project S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Grant funds collaboration with both the Arlington Youth Consultation Center and The Children's Room, and provides expanded professional development for classroom teachers, counseling staff and administration. As this is a three year grant, the district is focusing on creating sustainability for years to come. The monthly Advisory Committee meetings have been an ongoing forum for professional conversations, sharing best practices, and planning and evaluating grant activities.
- A grant from [C.A.S.I.T.](#) (Centro Attivita' Scolastiche Italiane) was awarded to Arlington to reinstate Italian courses at the high school, and an additional \$2,000 was awarded to provide additional curriculum support.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health awarded Arlington an Innovative School Care Coordination grant, which funds a "care coordinator" who assists students at risk for a decline in academic achievement because of chronic and/or acute medical conditions and mental health conditions. The focus is to decrease absenteeism and coordinate the overall care of students through communication with the wide variety of care givers involved. These parties can include medical and mental health providers, teachers, parents, guidance, special education, and others, depending on the circumstances.
- Arlington benefits from entitlement grants that are based on federal funding: Small group instruction for Mathematics and English Language Arts before or after school, or in the summer, is an example of an activity funded through the Title I grant. Title I schools also receive additional math coaching and intervention. Arlington's Title IIA Improving Educator Quality grant supports Arlington's new teacher induction program. Achievement Program for Limited English Proficient Students will support a Summer English Language Learner's program for eligible students from all elementary schools for the third year. Arlington's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal Special Education Entitlement Grant provides support for special education, including for team chairs and specialists such as occupational and physical therapists, social workers, psychologists and speech and language pathologists.
- The schools continued to work in partnership with the police, town, and community to ensure consistent and coordinated responses to inappropriate student behaviors. The Diversion Program started in 2006, which focuses on restitution and rehabilitation for first time, non-violent behavior, has proven to be an effective model. The APS partnered again this year with community and non-profit organizations to provide more options for counseling services. Meeting the social and emotional needs of children is as high a priority as meeting the academic needs of our students. The Parent Forum series continued again this year, free to all parents and community members. These forums included a variety of topics, such as, Bullying Prevention, Cyber Safety, Guiding Good Choices, Raising Boys, Sleep and Nutrition, The Gifted Child, Non Traditional Families, Substance Use, Transitions, Behavior Management, Anxiety, and The College Process.

- In coordination with the Arlington Police Department, the District began adopting the “ALICE” Safety Protocol, beginning with the high school, middle school and Bishop. Parents had the opportunity to experience the training before students were trained. ALICE is considered “best practice” for K-12 schools, and is being adopted throughout the United States. The decision was reached after reviewing the Massachusetts Task Force on School Safety and Security report. The remaining schools were scheduled for training in the 2015-16 school year.

For more information about activities and achievements in the Arlington Public Schools during 2014-2015, please see: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/budget/fy16/fy16budgettownmeeting.pdf>. In addition, monthly Superintendent’s Newsletters provide additional insight: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/newsletters/>.

The Arlington Public Schools have a team of talented professionals working together towards our shared vision: All students will achieve at their full social, emotional, creative, and academic potential, and will be prepared for higher level academics, workforce success, active citizenship, and life-long learning.



MINUTEMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Overview

The year 2015 was a busy one at Minuteman High School.

The school saw major changes in its leadership team, took several steps to advance its long-planned and long-awaited building project, secured state grants to support its programs, established a highly popular Girls in STEM Camp, refocused marketing efforts on recruiting in-district students, received awards for student academic and trade successes, saw improvement in its MCAS scores, assisted non-profit community groups and towns with a host of projects, and secured approval of its budget from each of the 16 towns in the district.

Leadership Changes

Minuteman saw major leadership changes with the appointment of a new Principal, Assistant Principal,

Director of Outreach and Development, and Director of Special Education.

John “Jack” Dillon III, who served as the school’s Assistant Principal for nine years, was selected as Principal. George M. Clement was selected to succeed Mr. Dillon as the new Assistant Principal / Director of Admissions. Steven C. Sharek was appointed as the school’s Director of Outreach and Development. Dr. Amy Perreault was appointed interim Director of Special Education.

Building Project Advances

A long-planned building project took major steps forward during 2015.

On February 6, Minuteman’s School Building Committee announced preliminary cost estimates for four alternatives: renovating the school with state financial help, renovating and expanding with state help, building a new school with state help, and building a new school and demolishing the old one with state help.

On March 11, the School Building Committee launched a series of public presentations and information-gathering meetings.

On May 19, the Minuteman School Committee endorsed construction of a new school as its “preferred option” for addressing current facilities issues; creating an educational environment that best meets the needs of students, teachers, and employers; and ensuring continued accreditation.

On August 6, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) unanimously endorsed the building of a new 628-student Minuteman High School on district land adjacent to the existing school. The board authorized the school to prepare detailed schematic drawings for the new building.

On December 1, the school’s Design Team submitted a completed schematic design to the MSBA.

On December 22, the Minuteman School Committee took two votes designed to help pave the way for a new school. The committee voted to approve consensus amendments to the Minuteman Regional Agreement and voted to negotiate an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Lincoln. Lincoln will serve as host community for the new school.

Poll Shows District Voters Support New School

Voters in the Minuteman High School district support the school, its programs, and a proposal to replace the school with a new building – and they do so in big numbers, according to professional research poll. The poll of 400 registered voters was conducted by nationally-recognized pollster David Paleologos of DAPA Research Inc. in late August. It has a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points.

The poll, which was commissioned by Minuteman, was designed to gauge voters’ sentiment about the

school and the quality of its programs, their awareness and level of support for a proposed building project, and the factors that most influence voters' opinions.

"This poll shows that there's a strong positive feeling in the district about Minuteman High School and its programs," said pollster David Paleologos, head of DAPA Research Inc.

"There's a clear willingness to build a new school," Paleologos said. "And this support crosses all demographics: gender, income, age, area, and even political party. These are overwhelming numbers, and the type of results we don't see very often."

New State Regulations Help District Taxpayers

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new state regulations covering vocational technical education. Two changes are big "wins" for taxpayers in the Minuteman school district.

One change established a capital fee for out-of-district students. Another established a special education fee for out-of-district students receiving special education services. These regulatory changes are the direct result of efforts by Minuteman to allay concerns from the district's member communities about the costs of providing educational services to out-of-district students.

Minuteman Secures State Grants

Minuteman was awarded an \$88,970 state grant to expand its Biotechnology program and give students a competitive edge in one of the state's fastest-growing industries. The grant was one of six awarded by the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to schools in the MetroWest region.

In July, the school was awarded a competitive state grant of \$59,940 to purchase three training simulation systems for students learning welding.

State Treasurer Visits Girls in STEM

Minuteman's Girls in STEM Career Exploratory Camp got a visit from a top state official: State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg.

During her visit to the school August 5, Treasurer Goldberg observed what these seventh- and eighth-grade girls were doing and learning, frequently interacting with them and asking many pertinent questions. She said the girls are being empowered "so they can realize their own dreams and make a difference" in the state's economy, especially in burgeoning, 21st Century fields such as health care, finance, high-tech and biotechnology that are largely dominated by men.

New Recruiting, Retention and Marketing Efforts

Minuteman retained the services of Mark C. Perna, a nationally recognized expert in recruiting and retaining students in vocational-technical schools. Mr. Perna

is the founder of Tools for Schools of Columbus, Ohio.

Throughout the year, he worked with a team of administrators, faculty and staff members led by Assistant Principal George Clement. They developed a comprehensive recruiting and marketing campaign to increase applications and enrollment from our member towns. With his help and concerted efforts by the entire staff, Minuteman is going to attract and retain more of the right students in the right programs for the right reasons. As a result of doing this, the school will enroll more students, retain them in greater numbers, and attain higher graduation rates. The right student is one who is motivated, dedicated, sees the light at the tunnel, and wants to get there.

Student Awards

Twelve students from Minuteman High School received medals -- four gold and eight bronze -- in a Massachusetts SkillsUSA competition. The students earned the medals at the SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference held in Marlborough.

Minuteman High School accepted a grand prize for its Girls in STEM program and Minuteman student Collin Kelly earned a silver medal in the Action Skills competition during the 51st annual SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

In May, Minuteman junior Julia Ruderman won first place in the Pioneer Institute's Frederick Douglass Prize Essay Contest for Massachusetts. Ms. Ruderman earned a \$5,000 prize from Pioneer for her essay on the Old Schwamb Mill in Arlington.

Maria Cid-Pacheco, majoring in biotechnology, was Minuteman's 2015 nominee for the prestigious Walter J. Markham Award.

Emma Clemente, an environmental science and technology major, was named the school's Outstanding Vocational-Technical Student of 2015.

MCAS Success

Minuteman High School improved its performance on MCAS tests, with that improvement extending to all disciplines and all student subgroups. Results of the test were reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

"In many cases, the improvement was significant," said William J. Blake, Jr., Minuteman's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. "Improvement was particularly significant for our students with disabilities."

District Enrollment

As of October 1, 2014, Minuteman had 673 students enrolled in its high school day program. Of these, 384 (57.1%) lived in one of the 16 district towns and 289 (42.9%) lived outside the district.

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As of October 1, 2014, Minuteman had 63 students enrolled in its post-graduate programs. Of these, 26 (41.3%) lived in one of the 16 district towns and 37 (58.7%) lived outside the district.

Approval of the District Budget

In a process that took a full eight months from start to finish, Minuteman's budget was approved by every Town Meeting in its 16 member communities. The new budget covers the period from July 1 to June 30, 2016. The \$19.8 million budget was 0.9% larger than last year's.

Minuteman School Committee

A 16-member School Committee, comprised of volunteers appointed by Town Moderators in each of the member communities, approves the district budget, hires the superintendent, and sets policy for the district.

Four new members joined the Minuteman School Committee during the year: Pam Nourse of Acton, Vincent Amoroso of Boxborough, Jennifer Leone of Lancaster, and Sharon Antia of Lincoln. Ms. Nourse succeeded Nancy Banks, who relocated outside the district. Mr. Amoroso succeeded Cheryl Mahoney. Ms. Leone replaced David Mazzola, who resigned. Ms. Antia succeed Kemon Taschloglou, a long serving School Committee member.

The other members of the School Committee are Jeffrey Stulin of Needham (Chair), Carrie Flood of Concord (Vice Chair), and David Horton of Lexington (Secretary), Susan Sheffler of Arlington, Jack Weis of Belmont, David O'Connor of Bolton, Judith Taylor of Carlisle, Ford Spalding of Dover, Alice DeLuca of Stow, David Manjarrez of Sudbury, Mary Ellen Castagno of Wayland, and Douglas P. Gillespie of Weston.

Minuteman in the National Spotlight

Minuteman High School was the focus of national attention at least three times during the year.

First, the school's Girls in STEM program was recognized by SkillsUSA, a national organization that runs trade and leadership competitions for students in career and technical schools. SkillsUSA recognized the value of Minuteman's mentoring efforts for Girls in STEM by awarding this initiative the 2015 Grand Prize in the Student2Student mentoring program. Minuteman was recognized at the national SkillsUSA conference in Kentucky.

Second, I authored an article that appeared in the April 2015 issue of *School Administrator* magazine. The article, "Career Skills v. Academics: Not an Either/Or Proposition," can be found at: <http://aasa.org/content.aspx?id=36953>. *School Administrator* magazine is published by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA).

Third, author Nicholas Wyman included a chap-

ter on Minuteman's success in his book: *Job U: How to Find Wealth and Success by Developing the Skills Companies Actually Need*. The book was published in paperback in January 2015.

Looking Ahead

The coming year should be another exciting one at Minuteman High School and I look forward to it with great hope and anticipation. The school's long-planned building project will again be front and center and I truly hope that our 16 member towns will rally around the project, protect the millions of dollars that the state is willing to invest it, and do what's best for our students – and our region's economy. Further, I am eager to start thinking more closely about how best to reuse the old facility in order to maximize the economic and financial benefits to the Minuteman district.

In closing, I wish to offer my personal thanks to the members of the District School Committee, both past and present; members of the School Building Committee; the Skanska/KBA Project Team; our faculty, staff, and students; our alumni; our Program Advisory Committee members; our town and state leaders; the townspeople who attended our community meetings, and the entire staff and board of the MSBA for bringing us to this point in the process. This is meaningful work and I am grateful for the efforts and commitment of my team.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward A. Bouquillon, Ph.D.
Superintendent-Director