



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Accountability Minutes 08/30/2010

Approved Minutes

Arlington School Committee

District Accountability & Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 30, 2010 @ 3:00 p.m.

Attendance

Subcommittee Members: Jeff Thielman, Kirsi Allison-Ampe, M.D. (Joseph Curran - excused)

District Leadership: Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D., Wallis Raemer, Ed.D., Mark Ryder

SEPAC Representatives: Michael Levi

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

- The minutes of the July 20, 2010 subcommittee meeting were approved. Motion by Dr. Allison-Ampe, second by Mr. Thielman. Approve 2-0.
- Michael Levi presented SEPAC's draft inclusion vision statement, which includes a call for a working group that would finalize the statement and establish a timeline and milestones for implementing the vision.
 - Mark Ryder, Director of Special Education, said the district is improving in terms of inclusion but is not where it needs to be. He welcomed the draft vision statement as a starting point and liked the idea of a working group.
 - Dr. Bodie said that developing the vision statement and working group would fit into the "school climate" goal in the draft goals she intended to present later in the meeting. Dr. Bodie said that teachers and administrators in Arlington had made progress on inclusion but still "had work to do" on this issue.
 - After some discussion, the group came to consensus on the following composition of the working group:
 - 2 representatives of SEPAC
 - 2 non-special education parents (Mr. Ryder will put out an invitation for people to join the working group through the town's PTOs)
 - 9 faculty and staff representative of all levels (elementary, middle, and high school)
- The working group will have the following charge:
 - Agree on a common vision for inclusion
 - Assess the current state of inclusion in Arlington Public Schools
 - Identify and assess strategies to create a more inclusive school district
 - Define steps and a timetable for achieving the vision statement
- Mr. Ryder agreed to convene the working group by no later than October 15, 2010. He will report back on his progress on identifying working group members at the next subcommittee meeting (to be scheduled later in September).
- Discussion of Draft FY '11 District Goals

- Dr. Bodie said the goals are very much in draft form. The purpose of presenting them to the subcommittee at this time was to get feedback on the format plus any suggestions on the goals/measures.
- The goal format includes three overall goals, specific objectives underneath each goal, action steps, evidence of success or measures of success, and a column identifying which APS staff members are responsible for overseeing the district's work on each objective.
- Dr. Bodie outlined three overall goals:
 - Ensure all Arlington students are well-prepared for academic, social, emotional and vocational success in the 21st century.

Create systems for increased communication and collaboration across the district.

Provide the tools, infrastructure and systems to support district initiatives and learning environments.

- The subcommittee reviewed each draft goal and the supporting objectives. Dr. Allison-Ampe asked for as many specifics as possible in the "measure of success" column. Mr. Thielman noted that under draft objective 1 a "increase achievement in reading K-8", the statements made seemed like evidences of success or measures.
- Mr. Thielman suggested that the Capstone Project and on-line courses be included in the action steps under 1 f (improve transitions to higher education and the world of work."
- Dr. Bodie reported that there was no interest in researching an International Baccalaureate program for Arlington High School during 2010-11. It may be something worth exploring during the following school year.
- To implement Arlington School Committee Policy IGA, which calls for reviews of each curriculum area every five years, Dr. Raemer presented a process used in Brookline to review curriculum and programs. The review process includes four phases: a) Phase 1 – Study, b) Phase 2 – Plan, c) Phase 3 – Implementation, and d) Phase 4 – Review. Dr. Raemer said that the process, particularly implementation, will cost money, but we won't know how much until we begin. Dr. Bodie, who has worked as an administrator in Arlington for 11 years, said her only experience with a curriculum review in Arlington was last year's review of Performing and Fine Arts.
 - Dr. Raemer said she would like to start with a review of Technology.
 - The subcommittee concurred that this would be a good program to review first.

Mr. Thielman and Dr. Allison-Ampe liked the review process used in Brookline and supported its implementation in Arlington.

- Per Arlington School Committee Policy IGA, the subcommittee discussed which curriculum updates should be presented to the full School Committee this year. The subcommittee identified the following:
 - Anti-bullying policy and implementation
 - Capstone Program at Arlington High School
 - Technology
 - Overview of changes made by the new principal at the Ottoson Middle School
 - Implementation of the new History Grant
 - Pilot Response to Intervention (RTI) at the elementary school level.
 - SEPAC survey being developed by outgoing SEPAC board member, Barbara Tilson
 - Inclusion Vision Statement Working Group

Mr. Thielman suggested that during the subcommittee's report on September 14th, the subcommittee will ask School Committee members for additional feedback on presentations they would like to hear this year. Dr. Allison-Ampe and Mr.

Thielman agreed that the Curriculum & Accountability Subcommittee would attempt to discuss curriculum updates prior to presentation to the full School Committee to help identify the focus of each presentation. There is a need to narrow the area of focus given the time allowed for discussion at a School Committee meeting. School Committee members would also be invited to contact the Superintendent to identify areas of discussion during each presentation. Mr. Thielman noted that generally there is time for one curriculum presentation per meeting, and that sometimes during the year it is difficult to have a curriculum discussion at every meeting. The School Committee meets at most 20 times per year, so 10-12 academic topics would be the very most that could be covered.

- The subcommittee agreed to meet prior to September 28th, the date of the full School Committee meeting at which the draft goals are expected to be presented. Mr. Thielman will send out dates when he is available that week. Dr. Allison-Ampe said a meeting at 8:15 or 8:30 a.m. would work for her.
- New Business – None

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.