



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 10/14/2010**

*Approved by the Arlington School Committee November 23, 2010*

*The Arlington School Committee  
Regular School Committee Meeting  
Thursday, October 14, 2010  
7:00 p.m.*

*School Committee Room – Sixth Floor  
Arlington High School  
869 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476*

**Present:**

*Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Thielman, Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe and Mr. Judson Pierce.*

*Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education, and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.*

*Mr. Joseph Curran arrived at 7:25 p.m.*

**Absent:**

*Dr. Wallis Raemer, Assistant Superintendent  
Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer  
Steve Pereira, AAA Representative, and Student Representatives*

*Mr. Thielman exited the meeting at 9:07 p.m. and returned at 9:10 p.m.*

*Ms. Starks exited the meeting at 9:12 p.m. and returned at 9:22 p.m.*

*Mr. Ryder exited the meeting at 10:40 p.m.*

*Mr. Curro opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.*

**Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition**

*Mr. Curro reflected on the leadership lessons of the recently rescued Chilean miners and their families. Tonight's remembrance was for Bobby Noviellos's sister who passed away recently, she was the mother of an Arlington High School student. A moment of silence was in her memory.*

*Mr. Curro informed the committee members and community of the agenda items and that Ms. Diane Johnson, CFO was out ill and Dr. Bodie would handle budget questions for the night.*

**Public Participation**

*Mr. Shane Curcuru, parent of Brackett kindergartner, encouraged the committee and community to oppose Question 3.*

**AHS Report on Schedule**

**Mr. Thielman moved to table The AHS Report on Scheduling, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 6-0**

*Mr. Curro read the following letter to the committee and asked for the committee members to endorse this letter and authorize the chair to sign it and send to the Arlington Advocate.*

To the Editor:

The Arlington Public Schools – like other school districts around the state and country – have struggled greatly during our nation's recent time of financial distress. We have sought to provide the best education possible for the students of our town, doing so in the face of rising structural costs and diminished support from the state and federal governments in a number of key areas.

We have been forced to turn to the community for private fundraising help; to an onerous reliance on fee revenue from families, who use vital educational and extracurricular services; and to an increased dependence on grants and other sources of funds, which may not be available from year to year. Nothing underscores our difficulties better than the well-publicized discussions around last year's budget shortfall and potential strains on the current year's finances.

It is against this backdrop that we wish to express our concern about the possible passage of Question 3, which would sharply reduce the state sales tax. The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation has analyzed potential impacts on local aid if voters approve this question. By their estimates, Arlington would stand to lose as much as \$3,855,794 in local aid if Question 3 is passed.

These are difficult times. Slashing sales tax revenue will only make them worse.

We urge all who care about our town and the vitality of our schools and other needed public services to vote No on Question 3.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of the Arlington School Committee

***Dr. Ampe moved to endorse this letter and authorize the chair to sign it and send to the Arlington Advocate, seconded by Ms. Heigham.***

***Voted: 6-0***

*Mr. Curro plans to ask Mr. Curran if he would consider signing the letter too.*

#### *Budget and Finance Discussion*

*Dr. Bodie informed the committee members that Ms. Johnson was out ill all week. The documents the committee received tonight are the Monthly Report and a list of FY 10 items. The School Committee will have all other budget documents at the next School Committee Meeting, October 26, 2010. Dr. Bodie suggested to the committee members to email Ms. Johnson with any budget questions*

*Dr. Bodie expressed her gratitude on the efforts of Bridge the Gap Fund committee members and to the community for raising close to \$600,000. Dr. Bodie stated she would like to use the additional Bridge the Gap Funds received in August, of \$16,197.25 to offset Traffic Supervisors salaries.*

*Mr. Curro would like two motions.*

***Mr. Thielman moved to accept the Bridge the Gap Funds for \$16,197.25, seconded by Ms. Starks.***

***Voted: 6-0***

***Mr. Thielman moved to use the funds to offset the Traffic Supervisors, seconded by Ms. Heigham.***

***Voted: 6-0***

*After Committee members learned that the Traffic Supervisors were part of the original Bridge the Gap recommendations on budget items to bring back, and that the Transportation Advisory Committee supports placing Traffic Supervisors at each school, the vote was taken. Other members would like to see additional Teacher Assistants hired to support with AYP students at the Thompson and Ottoson Middle School. Dr. Bodie did inform Mr. Pierce that the additional funds donated by Bridge the Gap will free up money that would of come from the General Budget Fund and Dr. Bodie would consider hiring one or two part time Teacher Assistants to support AYP students.*

***Mr. Thielman moved that, by no later than October 26, 2010, the Superintendent and/or her designee prepare a***

report on the FY 10 budget (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010) that includes:

- **The district's actual income and expenditures in FY 10 compared to the FY 10 budget approved by the School Committee (the July 2, 2009 budget document on the School Department website);**
- **Variations between the income budgeted for FY '10 (per the July 2, 2009 budget document on the School Department website) and the actual income received in FY '10, specifically indicating each source of approved revenue with the corresponding variance;**
- **Variations between the expenditures budgeted FY '10 (per the July 2, 2009 budget document on the School Department website) and the actual expenditures in FY '10;**
- **A summary of where the school district saved \$1.1 million during FY '10. Seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Ms. Starks inquired if this request was different from the documents the committee received tonight and Mr. Thielman said he has not yet reviewed the documents given tonight. Dr. Bodie supports the motion.

#### Budget Subcommittee Update

Ms. Heigham said the Budget Subcommittee met on October 5, 2010 and looked at the status on the documents the Chief Finance Officer was preparing. Ms. Heigham and Mr. Curro had a conversation with Mr. Crafton regarding the Process Audit and Mr. Crafton said he would have the report on October 29, 2010 or possibly before our next meeting.

Ms. Heigham announced the dates and agenda items for the next four Budget Subcommittee meetings.

On October 18<sup>th</sup> agenda items include: the Status Report on the Process Audit, Review the September Monthly Report, Revise the FY11 Budget, Establish Timeline for the FY12 Budget. On October 28<sup>th</sup> agenda items include: Review the Process Audit Draft, Identification of Elements for Inclusion in the Budget Subcommittee FY10 Report. On November 1, 2010 agenda items include:

Review the Process Audit Final Report, Review the Draft of the Budget Subcommittee FY10 Report. On November 4<sup>th</sup> agenda items include: Final Edits to the Budget Subcommittee FY10 Report, Preparation for School Committee Presentation of the Budget Subcommittee FY10 Report.

The Budget Subcommittee asked for clarity on the direction the full committee sought in the report from them regarding the outcome on the Process Audit. It was the consensus that the Budget Subcommittee would review the Process Audit and Powers and Sullivan report and get a sense what the School Committee might need regarding recommendations of implementation. It was also requested by Mr. Curran and Mr. Thielman that Professional Firms, Mr. John Crafton, MASBO and Powers and Sullivan present their reports to the Full School Committee at the Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 9, 2010.

#### AHS Report on Schedule

**Ms. Heigham moved to remove from the table the AHS Report on Schedules, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Mr. Skidmore handed out a schedule and reviewed this with the School Committee members. The schedule showed a typical AP student schedule for the current year. Mr. Skidmore explained the variation from previous years to this year, which now includes 80-minute block, no science labs and no homeroom time. Mr. Skidmore did note that labs can now be included during the 80-minute block and teachers of other content subjects agree that this extra time impacts student learning in a positive way.

#### Special Education Coordinated Program Review Plan

Mr. Ryder said that every Local Educational Agency must maintain documentation to demonstrate compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at the local level. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reviews special education documentation during scheduled Coordinated Program Reviews and Arlington must complete and submit their Special Education Program Plan Statement by October 29, 2010.

The Special Education Program Plan Statement Mr. Ryder presented tonight had been updated in August 2010. Mr.

Ryder is requesting the full school committee to authorize the Chair to sign the Review Plan.

**Ms. Heigham moved that the Arlington School Committee authorize the School Committee Chair to initial sections and sign the Arlington Special Education Program Plan, in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education coordinated program review process. Seconded by Mr. Thielman. Voted: 7-0**

Minority Hiring Report. K. Bodie

Dr. Bodie presented the Minority Hiring Report for 2010 and said our trend of hiring is per our policy.

Legal Services Review Subcommittee

Mr. Curro read the following Key Recommendations from the Legal Services Review Subcommittee.

- The School Committee – at this moment in time – finds that its interests are best served by seeking diversification and specialization of legal counsel, relying on a number of firms and attorneys for particular areas of strength.
- The School Committee shall work with the Director of Special Education and the Superintendent to periodically review special education legal counsel and to determine whether there is a need to revisit current arrangements in this regard.
- The School Committee shall engage Elizabeth Valerio of Deutsch, Williams, Brooks, DeRensis & Holland as labor counsel on an hourly basis to provide services in the areas of contract negotiations, grievances, arbitrations and other related matters, contingent upon successful completion of negotiations to formalize this relationship.
- The School Committee shall engage Rebecca Bryant of Stoneman, Chandler & Miller for matters of general school law, contingent upon successful completion of negotiations to formalize this relationship.
- The School Committee does hereby direct the Legal Services Review Subcommittee to negotiate terms whereby the above-referenced firms may be retained as general and labor counsel, provided that said terms shall be presented to and approved by the full Committee.
- Contingent upon the completion of negotiations with the above firms and the approval of resulting agreements, the School Committee does hereby direct newly appointed counsel to consult with current general and labor counsel regarding a plan of transition and to present said plan – along with estimated costs -- to the School Committee for consideration and approval.
- The School Committee does hereby direct the Superintendent to develop a job description for a Human Resources Director, said description to be presented to the School Committee for consideration and approval.
- Contingent upon the approval of the above job description, the School Committee does hereby direct the Superintendent to include the above-referenced position in all fiscal year 2012 budget planning.
- The School Committee does hereby direct the Superintendent or her designee to meet personally on a regular basis – ideally monthly – with the Town Counsel to review the District's outstanding legal caseload and associated billings, said meetings to be subject to the mutual consent of Town Counsel.
- The School Committee does hereby direct the Superintendent and the School Committee's representative to the Town Government Reorganization Committee to inform the Reorganization Committee of all measures taken pursuant to these recommendations.
- Contingent upon the completion of the above tasks, the School Committee does hereby relieve the members of the Legal Services Review Subcommittee of their duties and does dissolve said subcommittee.

**Ms. Starks moved to accept the Legal Services Review Subcommittee Key Recommendations, seconded by Mr. Pierce.**

**Ms. Starks moved to amend the recommendations to delete bullet 8 and change bullet 7 to read "The School Committee does hereby direct the Superintendent to develop a plan for how to handle Human Resources in the APS jointly with the Town Reorganization Committee and the Town Human Resource Director".**

**Voted: 7 - 0**

**It was moved to accept the Legal Services Review Subcommittee Key Recommendations as amended.**

**Vote 7-0**

The committee members discussed the pros and cons of having a Human Resource Director and the importance of the position could out weigh the legal costs if matters were not handled effectively. The committee agreed to have Dr. Bodie develop a plan how to handle Human Resources in the Arlington Public School jointly with the Town Reorganization Committee and the Town Human Resource Director.

Recess

The Committee recessed at 8:45 p.m.

District Goals 2010 – 2011

Dr. Bodie presented the Arlington Public Schools District Goals for 2010-2011 that included input from the Administrative Team members. The first goal focus was on Instruction, the second goal focus was on Communications and the third goal was on Infrastructure. The action of each goal was explained and any input from the committee should be sent to Dr. Bodie. The Full Committee expects to review the goals and changes at the next School Committee Meeting and vote to approve the District Goals for 2010 – 2011.

### Policy and Procedures Subcommittee

Mr. Pierce presented the First Reading of File JICFB – Bullying in Schools. At the next School Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 26, 2010 the policy should be voted and approved.

**Mr. Pierce moved to temporary suspends policy GBEA Staff ethics /Conflict of interest for the purpose of hiring a Teaching Assistant, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

Dr. Bodie explained that due to policy a teacher assistant couldn't work in the Arlington Public Schools if a relative is an administrator. The committee members did not want to violate any privacy issues and discuss personnel issues in open session.

**Mr. Pierce withdrew the motion.**

Consent Agenda - All items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

\* Approval of Warrant #11042 Total Warrant Amount \$433,878.09 dated September 28, 2010

\* Approval of Regular School Committee minutes September 14, 2010

**Ms. Heigham moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Starks.  
Voted: 7-0**

### Secretary's Report

Ms. Starks noted the following documents the School Committee received:

- copy of the letter that went home with students about seasonal flu vaccines being available - when and where,
- draft letter to the Arlington Advocate editor for consideration urging people to vote no on question 3
- copy of the letter sent to parents of AHS students explaining how to get to student's grades online
- copy of the memo of agreement between the town of Arlington and the Arlington Public Employee Committee
- draft copies of the minutes from school committee meetings held on 9/14/2010 & 9/28/2010
- copy of warrant dated 9/28/2010
- copy of an email from a parent with questions about the NCLB implementation at Thompson
- copy of an email from a parent concerning the new athletic fees
- email regarding student behavior at Hardy
- copy of a letter about the 5-2-1 program at the Ottoson
- copy of a letter to Alan Brown from Janice Bakey regarding Stratton's Blue Ribbon award
- announcement of the division 1&2 joint meeting for MASC to be held on Weds. 10/20 at 7pm with the topic of bullying
- copy of the Brackett school newsletter dated 10/4/2010
- MASC notice of annual meeting to be held on 11/3/2010
- copy of the REMS grant performance report dated 8/1/2010
- copy of Chapter 2 titled Powers and Responsibilities of the School Committee written by one of those recommended to be hired as legal counsel
- copy of the legal expenses detailed so far for FY 11
- copy of a letter from Brian Sullivan to all departments about the start of the FY12 budget planning process
- copy of the second of the FY11 monthly budget tracking reports including revolving accounts
- copies of information to be given on the early childhood program to be included in the Thompson Building Project
- copy of cost containment data o the effect of in-district pre-K special education programming
- copy of a letter from Dr. Bodie to the BOS providing them rationale for warrant article 4, contingent transfer of real estate
- updated copy of the special education program plan statement that went into effect 1/1/2001 but was updated on 8/2010
- copy of the ethnic report for 2010 of the APS
- the final report of the legal services review subcommittee dated 10/6/2010
- public notice of the ACMI 2010 annual meeting

- approved minutes from the 9/23/2010 district accountability & curriculum instruction & assessment
- 10/1/2010 enrollment numbers of the APS
- invitation to a reception with Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Leheane, LLP Attorneys at Law
- copy of a notice from Juliana Rice (town counsel) on the North Union Street Playground - Conversion from Open Space
- copy of Making News - Today's Students - Tomorrow's Teachers.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie requested a motion to authorize the Arlington School Committee Chair to sign the Insurance Warranty Binder.

**Mr. Thielman moved to authorize the Chair of the Arlington School Committee to sign the Insurance Warranty and Representation Letter, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Dr. Bodie explained Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers Program to the committee and said it is a career development-mentoring program that recruits and trains high school students for college and a teacher's career. The program was designed to address the shortage of teachers of color.

Dr. Bodie is requesting a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, which is non-binding and indicates Arlington Public School's interest in participating in the program.

**Ms. Starks moved the School Committee to authorize the Chair to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, which indicates Arlington Public School's interest in participating in Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers Program in September, 2011 with the understanding that the MOU is non-binding should the district not have the financial resources in September, 2011 to implement the program, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Dr. Bodie informed the committee the Blue Ribbon Award Ceremony would be held November 19, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. at Stratton Elementary School, and invited everyone to the Arlington Art Teachers Art Exhibit, on the second floor of the Arlington Town Hall from October 21<sup>st</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Bodie said the Superintendent's newsletter subscription option is available through the Arlington Public Schools website.

Roundtable

**Mr. Thielman moved to table Roundtable, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Executive Session 10:04 – 10:40 p.m.

**Mr. Curran moved to enter into Executive Session at 10:04 p.m., to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation when an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the committee and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce - Yes, Dr. Ampe - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Mr. Thielman - Yes, Ms. Starks - Yes, Ms. Heigham - Yes and Mr. Curro - Yes.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Ms. Heigham moved to exit out of Executive Session at 10:40 p.m. and return to open session, seconded by Mr. Curran.**

**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce - Yes, Dr. Ampe - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Mr. Thielman - Yes, Ms. Starks - Yes, Ms. Heigham - Yes and Mr. Curro - Yes.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Ms. Heigham moved to approve the employment agreement with the Arlington School Committee and with Dr. Wallis Raemer, Interim Assistant Superintendent, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Adjournment.**

**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce - Yes, Dr. Ampe - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Mr. Thielman - Yes, Ms. Starks - Yes, Ms. Heigham - Yes and Mr. Curro - Yes.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Ms. Heigham moved to remove from the table Roundtable, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Mr. Pierce moved to suspend policy GBEA for the purpose of hiring a Teacher Assistant at Stratton School, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Mr. Curran moved the motion.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**It was moved to suspend policy GBEA for the purpose of hiring a Teacher Assistant at Stratton School.**

**Voted: 7-0**

*Mr. Pierce informed the committee members that the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee would like to review the Arlington School Committee Policy on the start time and day of meetings.*

*Mr. Curran inquired about a payment plan for athletic fees. Mr. Pierce informed Mr. Curran that the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee discussed payment plan options for athletics but was told that the Business Office staff was staffed to thin to handle multiply payment options from families. Dr. Bodie did say she would continue to research the issue.*

*Mr. Curran moved the 11 o'clock rule to 11:05, seconded by Ms. Heigham.*

*Voted: unanimously*

*Mr. Curro said he would check with Legal Council regarding public records request and if we can post the Superintendent's Evaluation.*

*Mr. Thielman attended the Thompson School Building Committee meeting.*

*Ms. Starks attended Vision 2020 meeting and encourages everyone to fill out their survey. Ms. Starks attended the AYPCC Town Day booth and will attend the November meeting.*

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Curran moved to adjourn at 11:04 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.*

*Voted: 7-0*

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Karen M. Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee/cs*