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minutes 11-28-2006

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2006**

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
Kathy Fennelly
Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Supt.: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
CFO: Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep.: Sean Conroy

Call to order: 7:30 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

.. Joanne Contardo, AHS parent and host of International Students attending AHS spoke in support of the program.
.. Amy Cohen, AHS parent and town wide PTO co president spoke to the new administrative structure and the challenges facing the new administrators; she urged the committee to look at replacing administrative positions as well as a professional guidance director at the Arlington High School.

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 # 07063 in the amount of \$1,022,830.89

*Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 26 & October 10, 2006

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted approval of the consent agenda as presented

MCAS HIGHLIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Kevin Hutchinson, Assist. Supt. Of Curriculum, Elise Frangos, ELA Director K-12, Judith Sumner K-12 Science Director and LeiLanie D'Agostino Curriculum Developer and Data Analyst addressed the committee on MCAS results.

.. Math and ELA at AHS indicate positive trends
.. Some elementary scoring ranges defy state performance regarding socio-economic factors
.. Gaps in performance as students progress 3-10
.. Science indicates positive comparative performance despite performance gaps
.. Validity of LEP needs to be further analyzed based on current student data
.. Positive performance of 8th grade math indicates closer look needed on the quality and appropriateness of interventions
.. Continued discussion and intervention needed to address the achievement gap.

The committee discussed with the administrators the drop in scores from elementary to middle school and questioned if there is an explanation or year to year comparison for some of the dipping between grades; could it be related to staff turnover or is it the consequence of high stakes testing?

Nate stated that turnover is important and it is a consideration, but that we should accept that as a challenge not an excuse.

EFFECTIVENESS & CHALLENGES OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Supt. Levenson reported on the administrative structure and changes and why they were necessary. Mr. Levenson explained that the changes saved money and that the alternatives were worse, Nate agreed that we do not have enough administrators but also pointed out that we do not have enough staff to support all of our needs.

The Superintendent reviewed the new administrative structure document with the following plan:

In November A) Superintendent's Assessment **February** A) Superintendent's Assessment

- B) Thoughts & comments from **February** key administrator in new positions B) Confidential survey of administrators
C) Confidential survey of staff impacted by the changes.

This will help to assess what is working and what is not working. The following administrators presented their view on the positive and negative effects of the structure change: Todd Sundstrom Lead Teacher for 6-12 Social Studies, Dave Johnson AHS Athletic Director, Cindy Bouvier K-12 Health Wellness & Counseling Director, Judith Sumner K12 Science and ACE Program Director and Mike McCabe, Thompson school principal.

The committee discussed at length the concerns and challenges of the administrators, staff and parents and requested that the Superintendent document what is being lost (i.e. what is fallen through the cracks) and how it affects direct student services in order to make good decisions in the future.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PILOT PROPOSAL

Supt. Levenson highlighted the proposal for International Exchange Pilot Program. The proposal is to accept three to five high school students from Nagaokakyo, Japan to complete grade 11 at Arlington High School beginning in September 2007. Nate summarized the benefits for AHS students, benefits for the Japanese students, the structure and logistics and the challenges of initiating the program. The effect on the budget is that it is revenue positive on the 1st student. The Superintendent requested approval of the program from the school committee.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Lovelace it was
Voted that the School Committee supports the International Japanese Exchange Pilot Program for one year with up to five students participating. 7-0.

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was
Voted that the policy & procedures and the budget subcommittees review the current issue of tuition of non-resident students and to recommend an appropriate fee. 7-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

.. **Traffic Supervisor Update** – the recognition clause is currently posted. The 20-day posting period ends on November 30th; the school committee negotiating team members are Jeff Thielman and Kathy Fennelly.

.. **Religious Observances** the data on the Jewish holidays shows that about 4% of students and nearly 7% of teachers are out on the Jewish High holidays. Supt. Levenson stated that the 2 conclusions from the data are 1) students and staff do feel comfortable taking these days off and that 2) over 90% of the students have a typical day, but with no tests or quizzes. The policy of no tests and quizzes seems to be working fine.

CHAIR'S REPORT

.. **School Committee Retreat Update** Ms. Sheffler reminded members that the superintendent/school committee retreat will take place on Friday, December 1st from 9:30 – 1:30 at the Whittemore-Robbins House. The next two retreats are tentatively scheduled for April 6, 2007 and June 15, 2007.

.. **Vision 2020 forum planning** Ms. Sheffler reported that the summit meeting scheduled for December will be take place on January 11th instead.

.. **Appointment of Superintendent contract review subcommittee**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Voted to approve the superintendent contract review subcommittee consisting of members Susan Lovelace, Sue Sheffler and Paul Schlichtman. 6-1 Mr. Thrope with a no vote.

.. **School committee personnel vote** Ms. Sheffler informed the committee that the hiring subcommittee consisting of herself, Susan Lovelace and Paul Schlichtman interviewed for the position of administrative assistant to the school committee. The subcommittee is recommending that the full committee vote to support the hire of Karen Fitzgerald.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve the hiring of Karen Fitzgerald as the administrative assistant to the school committee on Class 3 Step 5. 7-0.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

.. **Accountability Subcommittee**

Mr. Thielman reported that the subcommittee met on November 27th. At the meeting a motion was taken to rename the merit pay subcommittee to The Superintendent Accountability Subcommittee. On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded it was so voted. 7-0. The subcommittee continued to work on the accountability grid, the next meeting is scheduled for December 6th at 4:30 pm.

.. **Budget Subcommittee**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 6th at 5:00 pm.

.. **Policy & Procedures**

Mr. Garballey presented policy KAA school- community-home- communication for a 1st reading. The subcommittee also discussed school safety and the concession stand. The next meeting is scheduled for December 6th at 2: 30 pm.

.. **Curriculum & Instruction**

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 30th at 6:00 pm. The only agenda item will be a discussion on QPA on college transcripts.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman noted that Leader Bank/Bowes Real Estate would make a presentation at the next meeting. Correspondence reviewed by Mr. Schlichtman.

NEW BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Negotiations

On a motion by Ms. Fennelly seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations (with the possibility of returning to open session for a vote) Roll Call: 7-0

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve the contract ratified by the Arlington Education Association and the Arlington School Committee. 7-0.

On a motion by Ms. Fennelly seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to Adjourn @ 11:00 PM

Submitted by

Karen Tassone