



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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minutes 10-24-2006

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2006**

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

Superintendent: **Nate Levenson**
Asst. Supt.: **Kevin Hutchinson**
Sp. Ed. Director: **Barbara Cataldo**
Student Rep.: **Sean Conroy**

Absent: **Sue Mazzarella**

Call to order: 7:35

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

.. Lisa Sullivan Ottoson Middle School parent spoke relative to her son's accident and the need for increased traffic supervisors at and around the Ottoson Middle School.

.. School Safety- suggested changing the professional development day from Wednesday November 1st to November 7th (voting day)

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 # 07047 in the amount of \$444,920.11

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

MINORITY HIRING REPORT

Supt. Levenson reported that the minority hiring report will showcase 3 items

1. To look at the report from last year (recap against the plan)
2. What made a difference & what did not work (lessons learned)
3. Share statistics of what was done.

The Superintendent summarized the results of the report explaining we have hired more minorities than in the past, it is a step in the right direction but it is hard to say that it is a huge success.

Additional lessons learned from the 2006 plan

1. We cannot start hiring too early. By May no new minority resumes received, and by June all minority candidates were hired.
2. We are in fierce competition for minority candidates with other districts. What will help us attract non-minority candidates will also help us attract minority candidates.
3. Perhaps the most powerful minority-hiring plan we can have is to make Arlington the most supportive and welcoming of districts for all new teachers. This includes expanded school based childcare, housing and banking support, extensive mentoring, and great professional development.

Supt. Levenson plans on sharing the data with the Superintendent's Diversity Task Force before putting forth this year's plan.

SPECIAL EDUCATION VISION

Mr. Levenson reviewed the creating a vision of achievement for special education and the question, Why do we need a vision?.

Nate pointed out that as the compliance and structure issues get resolved our focus can be on academic and social success.

Over the next few months we will shape and form Arlington's vision for special education. This will allow the district to create a road map to academic and social success for all special education students.

Nate summarized discussions with principals, curriculum leaders, BJ, Hutch and some staff concerning their thoughts and experiences. The Superintendent hopes to gather input and ideas as follows:

- .. Discussion at a future school committee meeting
- .. Three small group discussions with special education staff
- .. Brainstorming and extended discussion with team chairs and testers on the November 1st, full day professional development.
- .. Conversation with the Special Education PAC on November 8th.
- .. Multiple meetings with the administrative team (principals and curriculum leaders).
- .. Input from the reading team
- .. Input from general education teachers.

By mid January the Superintendent hopes to have a vision that consists of wide input and broad (but not complete) agreement.

DISCUSSION OF DISTRICT GOALS WITH STAFF

Supt. Levenson gave a quick update on the input on the goals process. Every staff member has received a copy of the goals; they are posted on the APS website, a forum was held for staff and he has responded to email comments.

Nate noted the difference in the staff feedback between last year and this year. This year the atmosphere was calm, basic dialogue, collegial, last year was stressful, emotional and frantic.

The goals are:

1. Special Education and ELL: All special education students will achieve their full academic and social potential.
2. Student Achievement: All students will attain high levels of academic success through the implementation of a data driven, standards based education.
3. An appropriate education for a complex world: ensure that all Arlington graduates are well prepared for social, emotional, and vocational success.
4. School Culture: Provide a safe, healthy and positive environment for students and staff.
5. Work environment to support teaching and learning: Provide tools and systems that enable staff to focus on student success.

Three goals are a continuation of last year's goals and Nate commented that goal #5 was very popular with staff and administrators. Mr. Thrope suggested that Town Meeting Article 65 be included as part of goal 5; the Superintendent agreed to the addition.

Other important areas, but not district goals:

1. Retention and recruitment, including minority staff, which may include an expanded student-teacher program.
2. High quality professional development for the 2006-2007 professional development plan.
3. Working with the town boards and committees to develop new plans to maintain and upgrade the Thompson and Stratton Schools.
4. Regular budget reporting to the School Committee
5. Monitor and assess the new administrative structure.
6. Social studies and science to share their plans and goals with the school committee.
7. Striving to increase the number of students gaining a very high level of mastery in all subjects (including, but not limited to, Advanced on MCAS).

CHAIR'S REPORT

October 19th Planning Mtg. Ms. Sheffler reported on what would be discussed at the full summit meeting on December 7th. 1) what is the taxing capacity for Arlington 2) demographics and projections for school enrollments over the next 10 years. 3) answer new MSBA rules.

The next summit meeting is scheduled for November 16th with a full summit meeting set tentatively for December 7th.

- .. **School Committee Calendar Update** – calendar was updated as discussed at the last meeting.
- .. **Wind Power Feasibility Study Update** – will report out on at the next meeting.
- .. **MASC Delegate**

Mr. Schlichtman reviewed the resolutions to be presented at the MASC Annual Conference November 8th through November 11th.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to appoint Sean Garballey as the school committee representative at the MASC Annual Conference with Paul Schlichtman as the alternate delegate.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

.. **Contract Update** The AEA negotiating team unanimously endorsed the proposed contract and it will go before the full membership on October 30th. Mr. Thrope requested a copy of the memorandum of understanding and a summary of changes in the contract.

.. **High School Athletic League** AHS principal Charles Skidmore is requesting permission to go forward with changing

Arlington High School from the GLB to the Dual County League. Mr. Skidmore stated that it is a tiered league and matched by school size; he believes that it is a much better fit for Arlington High School.
On a motion by Ms. Lovelace, seconded by Mr. Garballey it was
Voted to direct the community relation subcommittee to seek input from the sports user groups on the proposed league change. 7-0.

Mr. Thielman pointed out that the change must be made by school committee vote and requested an analysis of criteria as to why it is a better fit.

.. **Traffic Supervisors** Supt. Levenson reported that allocation of traffic supervisors is a difficult decision and explained that we may be looking at a couple of spots for reallocation.

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Fennelly it was
Voted that the Superintendent ask the Chief of Police with the traffic supervisors and the Student Safety Task Force to gather all available data pertinent to the accident to determine the optimum allocation of traffic supervisors with the intent of safety for our students. 7-0.

Mr. Schlichtman urged the Superintendent and Chief of Police to investigate what remedial action should be taken during the interim.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Subcommittee

Ms. Lovelace reported that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday October 25th at 5:00 pm. The agenda includes review of revenue enhancement strategies and expense reduction discussed, implemented or rejected last year.

Merit Pay Subcommittee

The next meeting is scheduled for October 26th; Glenn Koocher from MASC and Lyle Kirtman of Future Management Systems will be present to discuss merit pay increases and what works in other districts.

Policy & Procedures Subcommittee

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve provision 7A in the AHS handbook: Inappropriate Use of Technology:

If a student-photographs or records teachers, students, administrators, or other school staff without their written permission, posts images of staff or classroom activities on the internet or any other form of electronic communication, including social networking postings such as Myspace.com, without written permission or uses any form or electronic communication to harass, intimidate or threaten AHS students or staff.

Any student who engages in such inappropriate communication causing a member of the school community to feel harassed, intimidated or substantially disrupts the education mission of the Arlington Public Schools shall be subject to the following disciplinary consequences depending upon the severity of the misconduct:

- Community Service
- Detention
- Suspension
- Long-term suspension (beyond 10 days)
- Expulsion

Unanimous vote.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to approve ID badges for students and faculty immediately at Arlington High School. Unanimous vote

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to refer to the Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Subcommittee the issue of QPA and to have the high school principal report to the full committee by January 15th on a revised QPA system. Unanimous vote

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence reviewed by Mr. Schlichtman from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance Committee and a letter from the Board of Youth Services and their opposition to the elimination of the program.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to refer the correspondence and concerns of Board of Youth Services to the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Subcommittee; to also invite members Cindy Sheridan and Jeannette Amato Mills to the meeting. 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

The Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction subcommittee will meet on Monday, October 30th at 5:00 pm.

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

Voted to adjourn @ 10:50 PM.

Submitted by

Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary