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School Committee Minutes, 11/08/2005

**ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2005**

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

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director Barbara Cataldo
Student rep EJ Harris

Call to order: 7:30 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Charlotte Pierce, coordinator of the world language network, (a town wide group in Arlington supporting language learning), thanked the School Committee for their support for the ongoing revitalization of the educational TV channel 9 at Arlington High School. The world language network has materials and courses for elementary grades, middle and high school in math, social studies, geography, and some GED courses that could be aired on the station. Charlotte would like to share the programs with channel 9 for free, but is unclear as to the process in how to get started. Mr. Levenson stated that he would look into the process.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DISTRICT GOALS

Supt. Levenson addressed the Committee relative to the Arlington Public Schools District Goals. Mr. Levenson reviewed the concept of only having 5 goals explaining that by selecting just 5 goals the district can concentrate limited time, effort and resources on these goals. The goals are based on over 100 meetings with staff, administrators, parents, students, town officials, and advocacy groups. The Superintendent emphasized that although much time will be spent on those goals it is important to continue strong support for other programs such as: a supportive and caring school climate, exposure and skill in all of the arts, a commitment to diversity, and modeling and supporting healthy decisions.

The five goals are:

1. Implement Special Ed and English Language Learners reforms per Coordinated Program Review.
2. Implement essential standards and common assessments in math, reading, writing, science and social studies K-12 to build upon the foundation of our standards based education and common curriculum.
3. Provide highly effective and focused professional development.
4. Determine what content knowledge, skills, and "habits of mind" will best prepare our students for the 21st century.
5. Create a transparent, simple-to-understand budget, which provides both line item and programmatic detail.

Mr. Levenson, School Committee members and the administrative staff had a discussion on the five goals.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Moved to accept the five district goals presented by Supt. Levenson. Mr. Thrope moved to amend the motion to add "**subject to feedback from the proposed task force**" and further amended by Ms. Owayda "**with the understanding that we continue to move forward on the goals**" seconded by Ms. Lovelace

Unanimous vote 7-0.

SCHOOL DAY DATA

Mr. Thielman explained that the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment subcommittee was charged with collecting information on time spent on non-core subjects at the elementary schools, the Ottoson Middle School and at the high school.

Supt. Levenson explained that as we think about curriculum and instruction and where we want to go, examining how the school day is spent seems to be a logical starting place. Once we know what we are currently doing and how our time is spent, to ask

the question, "is it supporting the professional development that we want, the instruction, and the standards". The point of this is to understand the current situation and then at a later date evaluate how that supports our newly adopted goals. This is a very broad look at the school day, and this report is just information at this point.

Suzanne Owayda presented the findings on the non-core subjects at the elementary level and at the middle school. Ms. Owayda explained that non-core subjects are defined as anything that is not ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies/History, and World Foreign Language.

At the elementary school the spreadsheets showed the number of minutes spent on art, music, library, physical education, lunch, recess, penmanship/cursive, open circle, great body shop, CAPP, computer, swimming, ACE Testing, ACE, instrumental music, environmental camp, enrichment and field trips.

At the Ottoson Middle School spreadsheets showed the number of minutes spent on Family and Consumer Sciences, Technology, Art, Music, Physical Education, ACE, SOAR, Keyboard, Computer, Drama, Health, Band, Field Trips, activity day. The subcommittee will meet with Charlie Skidmore to discuss time spent at the high school on non-core subjects.

Mr. Thielman stated that he would like to see a matrix of:

What percent of our time is spent on activities that are aligned with the standards?

What percent of our time is spent on good activities but are not aligned with the standards?

What percent of our time is spent on power standards?

The Chair noted that this key piece of data is what we need in order to make an evaluation of what is important and what is not, especially when it comes to budget time and we have to make some choices.

BREAK

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Thielman reported that the:

- Joint meeting with Board of Selectmen on November 28th at 6:00 p.m.

- Task force to align Superintendent's compensation with goals, Mr. Thielman explained that the goal of the task force is to determine how the measures and milestones of the district goals relate to awarding any merit adjustment to the Supt at the conclusion of the 2005-506 school year.

Mr. Thrope made the following motion seconded by Ms. Lovelace

Moved that a subcommittee be established to determine how the Measures and Milestones in the District Goals approved by the School Committee on November 8, 2005 will be used to award any merit adjustment to the Superintendent at the conclusion of 2005-2006 school years. Section III of Superintendent Levenson's contract states that a "merit adjustment in base salary may be awarded based on the performance of agreed upon performance goals and objectives. This merit adjustment may be an increase up to approximately ten percent (10%) of base pay if all the performance goals and objectives are met or a decrease in salary by approximately five percent (5%) if the performance goals and objectives are not met." The subcommittee shall make recommendations to the full School Committee no later than January 1, 2006.

Mr. Schlichtman voiced concern that it appeared that some of the committee members had knowledge of the motion before the start of the meeting and questioned the chair if there was discussion with some members on this issue. Mr. Thielman did state that he spoke with Mr. Thrope and Ms. Lovelace relative to their interest in serving on the committee. Mr. Schlichtman stated that he was concerned that this is not the first time that an issue is presented at a school committee meeting with a lot of thought and discourse behind it without the benefit of the public, and further that the open meeting law is very clear that all deliberation must be taken in public.

Motion passes 6-0-1 (abstention by Mr. Schlichtman).

Mr. Thielman requested that Ms. Lovelace and Mr. Thrope serve on the committee along with himself.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was

Voted to appoint Jeff Thielman, Susan Lovelace and Martin Thrope to serve on the Task Force to align the Superintendent's compensation with the district goals. 6-1 Mr. Schlichtman voted no

- Naming of Sean Garballey to Title IX Committee

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to appoint Sean Garballey as the school committee representative to the Title IX Committee. 7-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The meeting with Board of Selectmen is scheduled for November 28th. The Superintendent noted that under the Lyons' plan spending caps, (4% & 7%) the O'Neill Formula has effectively become inactive and seems to be put aside; although there has been no formal decision made yet it appears to be where the Town is heading.

Nate stated that there are three items that need school committee approval

Supt. Levenson presented to the Committee for approval

.. **The AHS Performing Arts field trip to Gettysburg/Washington DC**

Performing Arts Department and students will travel to Washington DC on May 11th through May 14th 2006, the students would miss two days of school. Supt Levenson has reviewed the itinerary and approves of the trip.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve the AHS Performing Arts field trip to Gettysburg/Washington, DC May 11-14 2006.

Unanimous vote 7-0.

International Education Travel Facilitator

Mr. Levenson explained that the success of the excellent trips organized at the high school for foreign travel for AHS students has led other staff to want to do the same. The amount of time, effort, and the repeating of the learning curve for every new trip is extreme; a typical planning cycle is about 2 years to put a trip together. Nate is proposing to streamline the process and expand opportunities for staff and students interested by creating a position of International Educational Travel Facilitator for AHS. This would alleviate staff from financial controls, legal requirements, forms, etc. This position is budget neutral and would come under the direction of Community Education.

Mr. Thrope stated that he is in agreement with the position in principle but that the job description does not provide for compensation and it is unclear as to why it would come under the direction of Community Education for AHS student's grade 9-12. Mr. Thrope questioned if it is a stipend position, if it has any relation with the union, and added that job descriptions follow a specific template, which should be applied, to this position.

Supt. Levenson noted that the pay is listed in his report at \$20.00 an hour for 12 hours/week. The format is different but the information and content is the same. Marty noted that if the job description does not provide for a rate of pay he couldn't vote in favor of it. Mr. Thielman suggested that pay information be inserted into the current document.

The Superintendent does not want to push back the process due to the format presentation and if approved Nate will reformat the job description to the standard template.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve the position of International Educational Travel Facilitator at \$20 hours per hour, 12 hours per week for a maximum total cost of \$8,640.00. 6-1 Mr. Thrope voted no for reasons cited not the merits of the position.

International Exchange Program Developer –

The job goal of the position would be to help the school district determine the feasibility, benefits, and potential drawbacks of bringing foreign students to Arlington High School. The Superintendent thinks that it has the potential to be a very significant revenue generator. At this time we would look to bring students from Germany and Japan.

Terms of employment: it is a part time position, \$20/hour, up to a maximum of \$2000.00.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to approve the job description of International Exchange Program Developer as presented by Supt. Levenson. Unanimous vote 7-0.

School Committee room improvement

Mr. Levenson reported that the work on the room has been pushed back due to the heating crisis; hopefully there will be more to report at the next meeting.

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 requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of Warrant #06048 in the amount of \$413,426.79

*Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of September 27, 2005

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to approve the items presented on the Consent Agenda 7-0.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REPORT

Mr. Thrope presented the following policies for a 1st reading:

- 1st reading of ADDA, ADDA-R, ADDA-E-1, ADDA-E-2 – New CORI requirements
- 1st reading of amendment to IC - School Year and Length of Day (proposal makes hours consistent with state law).
- 1st reading of amendment to IHAE - Physical Education (corrects reference to state law)
- 1st reading of IHAM- Health Education (updates policy to be consistent with current practice).
- 1st reading of IK – Academic Achievement (modify policy to be consistent with standards-based education).
- 1st reading of IKF and IKF-E – graduation requirements. (proposal makes policy consistent with current practice).

FOR DISCUSSION ONLY – Religious Holiday working draft. Mr. Thrope presented the draft policy to the full committee for feedback and guidance. The draft policy provides for guidelines in absences on designated days for students and staff and reconfirms the existing policy of no tests; quizzes or other examinations scheduled, and no projects or other assignments due.

Currently Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are identified as major religious observances although other similar days of religious observance may be added to the list as they are identified.

The Superintendent and the Committee agreed that the key issue is whether or not school can be run on those days. The subcommittee will continue to work on the policy.

Mr. Thrope offered to the committee that they might want to consider reviewing the policy manual on a two-year cycle rather than the three-year cycle originally agreed upon since the subcommittee will have completed the review in two years.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 1st at 5:30 pm.

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Report of 10.28.05 meeting

Ms. Sheffler noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 9th at 8:30 not November 18th as indicated in the minutes.

REPORTS OF OTHER SUBCOMMITTEES (Upcoming meetings, etc.)

· Community Relations- the next meeting is scheduled for November 29th at 4:30 pm.

MASC CONVENTION – DELEGATE ASSEMBLY REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman reported that all of the Delegate Resolutions passed with the exception of resolution #7, Value Added Assessment.

PTBC UPDATE

Mr. Thrope reported that the contractor for the Dallin School has missed an important deadline in the completion of the school. November 7th was to be the deadline for substantial completion but now is extended to November 21st. Mr. Thrope stated that the school will open as expected the beginning of January and noted that the project is well under budget and is of very high quality.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence

*Approval of Warrant #06058 in the amount of \$1,480,764.02

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was:

Voted to approve warrant #06058 in the amount of \$1,480,764.02. 6-0-1 (abstention by Mr. Schlichtman).

NEW BUSINESS

“ Suzanne Owayda reported that she, along with Jeff Thielman attended the Human Rights Commission presentation on hate crimes and graffiti in Arlington; Since the Superintendent and Committee members were unaware of times that graffiti incidents occur around the schools, Suzanne will contact Chief Ryan and request that he copy reports to the Superintendent and School Committee when graffiti happens around the schools.

“ Sean Garballey noted that the Ottoson Middle School opened a new salad bar for the first time.

Mr. Garballey along with Susan Lovelace, Kate Cremens and Food Director Rob Rice are members of the Wellness Subcommittee, which focuses on student health, and wellness.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiation discussion with no further business to be conducted upon the return to open session except to adjourn.

Roll Call: Unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION from 11:00 to 11:15pm.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to adjourn @ 11:15 pm. Unanimous 7-0.

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary