

EDUCATION

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The tradition of excellence in the classroom, performing and visual arts, and athletics continued in the 2017-2018 school year. Motivated students, great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible. This year continued the focus of building on past successes and moving forward on the vision of the Arlington Public Schools (APS) as detailed in the four over-arching district goals.

- The Arlington Public Schools will ensure that every graduate is prepared to enter and complete a post-secondary degree program, pursue a career, and be an active citizen in an ever-changing world by offering a rigorous, comprehensive, standards-based and data-driven K-12 system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that integrates social, emotional and wellness support.
- The Arlington Public Schools will recruit, hire, retain, and build the capacity of a diverse staff to be excellent teachers and administrators by providing high quality professional development aligned to needs, instructional support, coaching, and an evaluation framework that fosters continuous improvement.
- The Arlington Public Schools will offer a cost effective education that maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars and utilizes best practices, academic research, and rigorous self-evaluation to provide students and staff the resources, materials and infrastructure required for optimum teaching and learning in a safe and healthy environment.
- The Arlington Public Schools will be run smoothly, efficiently, and professionally. The district will operate transparently and engage in effective collaboration and responsive communication with all stakeholders. It will provide timely, accurate data to support financial decision-making, envisioning of the district's future, and long-range planning in partnership with other Town officials. Through these actions it will create broad support for a high quality education system that is the community's most valuable asset.

Throughout 2017-2018, APS teachers and administrators in collaboration with members of the community developed a vision of what skills, knowledge, and dispositions Arlington students should attain and develop during their years in Arlington Public Schools.



Vision of Student as Learner

The APS vision for students as learners and global citizens outlines what the district wants all students to know and be able to do by the time that they graduate from Arlington High School (AHS). This requires that all students experience a coherent curriculum that is aligned with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and that supports the development of critical thinking, social-emotional and relationship skills. Students are supported in their development by highly qualified teachers, who engage in continuous professional learning. This vision informs the strategic initiatives, instructional decisions, and budget requests in the multi-year plan.

These characteristics will be demonstrated by student's ability to:

- Work independently and collaboratively.
- Observe, analyze and synthesize information from a variety of sources to enhance existing understandings and construct new knowledge.
- Demonstrate perseverance by using repeated reasoning and inquiry.
- Participate in rigorous, focused discourse.
- Develop and defend arguments based on evidence and respectfully consider different perspectives.
- Create and critique original work.

Vision of Student as a Global Citizen

Students will strive to be empathic, responsible, and active members of a local and global community who are aware of the role that bias and prejudice play in society, as demonstrated by their ability to:

- speak with, and listen, to others in a manner that is respectful of multiple perspectives.
- cultivate and maintain healthy and reward-

ing relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

- Develop self-awareness and self-understanding.
- Think critically and reflect upon choices and their impact on others.
- Participate as a consumer of and contributor to the cultural and civic life of local and global communities.

The results of our efforts include:

- Clear expectations for what every child should know and be able to do (standards-based education) continued to be refined and integrated into daily life in the classroom with curriculum aligned to the Massachusetts State Standards. District-wide common assessments continued to be refined and updated in all disciplines at all levels, including mathematics, English, and writing to help teachers pace their instruction and inform them about students who had mastered the skills and content and those who needed further instruction. At all levels, teachers and administrators focused on incorporating 21st century skills into every classroom with greater emphasis on team work, working in a multicultural global society, perseverance, communication skills, creative problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information was emphasized.
- Stratton Elementary students and staff moved into the newly renovated school in September 2017 after being housed in modular classrooms on site during renovation the previous school year. Six additional classrooms to address enrollment growth were completed in October 2017 at the Thompson Elementary School. Construction to renovate the Gibbs School commenced in the spring 2017 and continued throughout 2017-2018. The Gibbs School will house sixth grade classes in order to alleviate over-crowding at the Ottoson Middle School. The Gibbs school opened in September 2018 in time for the school year. The building expansion projects are in response to growing enrollment in the Arlington Public Schools. Student enrollment has increased by over 700 students since 2013. The District welcomed 170 additional students this year, representing a 3% growth from last year.
- In May 2017, the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) Board of Directors voted for Arlington to commence the process involved in completing the Eligibility

Module, which is the first phase of the process to rebuild or renovate the high school. The AHS Building Committee worked with HMFH architects and the owner's project team from Skanska throughout 2017-2018 on a Feasibility Study to document the high school's educational program, generate an initial space summary, document existing conditions, establish design parameters, develop and evaluate alternative options, and recommend the most cost effective and educationally appropriate preferred solution to the MSBA Board of Directors for consideration. Throughout the process the AHS Building Committee solicited community input to determine the preferred design option. In July 2018, the Preliminary Design Program and a Preferred Schematic Report was submitted for approval by the MSBA Board of Directors in order to move forward into the Schematic Design phase of the project. The MSBA Board of Directors approved Arlington moving into Schematic Design at their meeting in August 2018.

- In 2017, grades 3-8 took the new Next Generation MCAS test, while grade 10 took the Legacy MCAS. District baseline results for the Next Generation MCAS are positive, with all schools showing strong results. Next Generation MCAS 2017 results are baseline; they cannot be compared to prior results. In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations on the Next Generation MCAS are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS. On the Next Generation MCAS, the majority of students in subgroup populations, including Special Education, English Language Learner (ELL), Former ELL, and economically disadvantaged students, are scoring above state averages. Arlington High School received an accountability rating of 1, the highest rating. There is no accountability rating based on 2017 results for schools that include grades 3-8. On the 2017 MCAS, AHS passing rate for Grade 10 ELA is 100%; Math, 98%; Science and Technology/Engineering, 100%.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, the staff, teachers, and administrators of Arlington Public Schools participated in professional development focused on topics, which enable the district to effectively work towards increasing the capacity of all staff to deliver an effective learning experience for all students. Teachers at all levels participated in

- professional development centered around instructional techniques that are necessary to close the achievement gap between struggling and succeeding students, to assist teachers in creating supports necessary to provide each student with the social-emotional growth that will prepare them to become purposeful adults, and to provide teachers with the skills necessary to integrate the development of twenty-first century skills into the curriculum K-12. In order to deliver wide-spread professional development in a fiscally responsive manner, the district has frequently utilized the expertise of its teachers and staff to share knowledge through a professional learning community model. Math and literacy coaches, assisted by teacher leaders, provided an expanded level of support for improving instruction not previously offered within the district. The expansion of the skills of teacher leaders has been generously supported by the Arlington Educational Foundation. The use of mini-blended learning courses (courses which include both a face-to-face and an online component) taught by district curriculum coordinators and teacher leaders provided teachers with additional expertise in meeting the needs of English Language Learners and Special Education students. Libraries of exemplar videos have been expanded to assist teachers with continued refining of their classroom practices.
- Arlington High School continues to excel on assessments of academic quality reflecting both high achievement and improvements in academic equity. AHS earned a level 1 designation on the Massachusetts School Report Card for the third year in a row. This reflects not only high performance overall, but ongoing success in raising the performance of high needs students. AHS again received Gold Medal distinction in the U.S. News & World Report Best High School Rankings, rising in its ranking both in the state and nationally. This year AHS ranked 12th among Massachusetts schools, up from 16 the year before, and in the top 2% of schools nationally. Arlington was also recognized as a top school in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or (STEM), ranking 220 nationally. Newsweek also ranked Arlington in the top 2% of schools. Students at AHS also continued high levels of performance in the National Merit Scholarship Competition over the past four years.
 - The Technology Plan was further implemented this year by increasing technology hardware, including LCD projectors, in all schools and increasing WAN bandwidth to 10GB to all elementary schools. The size of both of the School Internet Circuits increased from 500MG to 1Gig each. Data storage capacity and security were updated and expanded. The Town and School Spam, Malware, and Virus Protection System were replaced. School buildings not added in 2016 were added to the Energy Management System Network as part of Phase 1 of School/Town Energy Management Project. Courses in technology expanded to increase the number of students studying digital modeling and computer science utilizing additional technology purchased through the support of the Arlington Educational Foundation (AEF). Through the support of the Capital Planning Committee, student and teacher access to iPads and Chromebooks increased, generally with no more than two classes sharing a cart of computers throughout the district.
 - Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) announced that Arlington Public Schools was named a 2018 Massachusetts Green Ribbon School District. The District received this honor in recognition of its leadership in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education that incorporates science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), civic skills, and green career pathways. The state designation qualified the District for nomination for a similar award at the national level. Arlington Public Schools was one of six districts across the country to receive the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Award. This honor recognizes three areas of excellence: reduction of greenhouse gases, efforts to address the nutrition, fitness, mindfulness, and overall health of students and staff, and the incorporation of curricula that addresses environmental topics at all school levels.
 - Grants received by the District supported the expansion of technology, curriculum initiatives, professional development and academic and social-emotional support for students. Arlington Education Foundation, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Symmes Medical Use

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Non-profit all supported initiatives to help ensure that Arlington's students feel safe and supported at school, learn mindfulness techniques along with their teachers, and learn skills that help youth make good decisions about substance use as they grow into healthy adults. Arlington continues to pay close attention to Bullying Prevention initiatives. Examples of these initiatives include expansion of professional development to include all staff, programs such as The World of Difference at the Ottoson, expansion of Open Circle and Responsive Classroom at the elementary level, and advisories at the Ottoson and AHS. AEF committed to a three-year initiative with the Arlington Public Schools, investing a total of \$200,000 in behavioral health so that every student, pre-school to high school, has the best environment in which to learn. The grant supported Youth Mental Health First Aid training for 300 teachers, staff, administrators, and support staff. All schools implemented actions plans for Safe and Supportive Schools with the support of AEF and a Safe and Supportive Schools grant from the DESE. AEF also provided key support for innovative educational projects in the humanities, arts, and STEM areas.

- The schools continued to work in partnership with the police, Town, and community to ensure consistent and coordinated responses to inappropriate student behaviors. The Diversion Program started in 2006, which

focuses on restitution and rehabilitation for first time, non-violent behavior, has proven to be an effective model. The APS partnered again this year with community and non-profit organizations to provide more options for counseling services. Meeting the social and emotional needs of children is as high a priority as meeting the academic needs of our students. The Parent Forum series continued again this year, free to all parents and community members. These forums included a variety of topics ranging from: Addiction, Local Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Teen Brain Development, Guiding Good Choices, Problem Solving, Anxiety Disorders, Smoking Cessation, Cultural Diversity, Working with Talented Students, Mindfulness, Raising Responsible Children, and Supporting LGBTQ Youth.

For more information about activities, school and department highlights and achievements in the Arlington Public Schools during 2017-2018, please see:

<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/budget/fy19/fy19budgettownmeeting04-23-18.pdf>

For additional information, please see the Superintendent's newsletters: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/newsletters/>

The Arlington Public Schools have a team of talented professionals working together towards our shared vision: All students will achieve at their full social, emotional, creative, and academic potential, and will be prepared for higher level academics, workforce success, active citizenship, and life-long learning.



Entrance to Gibbs School. Photo: Raj Das



Annual Report to the Towns Minuteman High School

Dr. Edward A. Bouquillon, Superintendent-Director
January 1, 2018 – October 15, 2018

Minuteman High School Named 2018 National Blue Ribbon School by U.S. Department of Education

Minuteman High School has been named a 2018 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. The announcement of all 349 public and private school honorees was made on October 1, 2018 by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Minuteman is the sole vocational high school in the State to be accorded this award. Abington High School and Swampscott High School are the other Massachusetts schools that earned this recognition.

According to a U.S. Department of Education press release, National Blue Ribbon Schools earn that designation by excelling in one of two performance categories - either as Exemplary High Performing Schools or Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools, "which are among their state's highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's student groups and all students over the past five years."

All three National Blue Ribbon Schools from Massachusetts, including Minuteman, were cited for being Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools.

An awards ceremony for all of this year's National Blue Ribbon Schools will be held at the Omni Shoreham in Washington, D.C., on November 7 and 8, 2018.

Minuteman has previously been acknowledged for academic excellence and for significantly closing achievement gaps. Just a few months ago, on April 5, 2018, Minuteman was named a Massachusetts Commendation School by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for being outstanding in those two categories. Governor Charles D. Baker presented Dr. Bouquillon with a plaque honoring the school at a State House ceremony.

Minuteman High School Sees Improvements in 2018 MCAS Scores

2018 MCAS results released by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education showed Minuteman students made marked improvement in their performance on the English Language Arts (ELA) exam. Compared to the year prior (2017), the percentage of Minuteman students who scored "Advanced" increased by 7% and the number of students who scored "Proficient" increased 11%. The number of students who

were in the "Needs Improvement" category fell 17% while the number of students in the "Failing" category dropped 1%. This shows a clear positive shift in performance levels across all categories.

On the Mathematics exam, Minuteman students showed a positive shift from the number of students who scored "Advanced" in 2018 (48%) in comparison to the 2017 scores (45%). This population of students showed a positive movement from the "Proficient" category to "Advanced" while the population of students in the "Needs Improvement" and "Failing" category remained the same.

MCAS Biology saw a small decline in the number of "Advanced" students and an equal shift into the "Proficient" category. The population in the "Needs Improvement" category stayed the same and there was a small increase in the number of students who were in the "Failing" category (2%).

On the MCAS Chemistry exam, 74% of Minuteman students scored in the "Advanced" category over 37% compared to 2017. That is an increase of 37%. This was a strong positive trend towards the "Advanced" category with 21% scoring proficient making the "Advanced + Proficient" rating 95%.

Minuteman Building Project Moves Towards 2019 Fall Completion

The Minuteman High School building project has reached another major milestone.

In ceremonies attended by hundreds of students, dignitaries and Minuteman supporters, Gilbane Building Company used a 185-foot crane to lift the final steel beam into place over what will become the new high schools' s main entrance. Erection of the 24-foot beam – painted white and signed by students, teachers, elected officials, and well-wishers – marked completion of the steel structure of the building. The Topping Off Ceremony is a traditional builders' rite marking the point when the final steel beam is lifted into place at a construction site. A small tree or leafy branch along with an American flag was tied to the beam to represent good luck and to demonstrate patriotism.

Despite some challenging weather over the fall and winter, the Minuteman project remains on schedule and on budget. Students are scheduled to start classes in the new building in the fall of 2019, more than one (1) full year ahead of estimates initially given to the member towns.

Grant Expands Metal Fabrication and Welding Programs

Minuteman High School secured a \$495,000 state grant to update and expand its Metal Fabrication & Joining Technologies (Welding) program. The grant award was announced by governor Charles Baker on June 21 and is one of three successful grant applications that

have been submitted by Minuteman which have brought nearly \$1.5 million to Minuteman over the last 2 years.

This grant will be used to modernize and expand the metal Fab and Welding program and allow high school students and adults to train on modern, industry-standard equipment. The funds will be used to purchase Virtual Welding Trainers, Multi-Process Inverters, a Guillotine Shear, Press Brakes, Bending Brakes, a Drill Press, a Punch, and a five-foot Power Roll.

High school and middle school students will use the equipment during the regular school day. “Gap year” students, incumbent workers, and unemployed adult will use the equipment during the evening in programs run by Minuteman and by Wentworth Institute of Technology. Graduate will enhance their technical skills and more easily secure jobs as welders, metal fabricators, and machinists in the region’s defense, manufacturing, STEM/medical device, and power-generation industries.

MTI New Evening Post-Secondary Programs

Minuteman Technical Institute (MTI) is launched new evening, post-secondary programs for adults in October including Advanced Manufacturing, Culinary, Electrical and Metal Fabrication and Joining (Welding).

Each program is ten-months long, features 700 to 900 hours of instruction, and is aimed at preparing high school graduates taking a gap year as well as adults who are changing careers for these four high-wage, in-demand professions. This program will run from October 1, 2018 to August 15, 2019.