

## ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Arlington Public Schools continue to offer an excellent and equitable education to all of Arlington's brilliant young minds. In 2023 Arlington Public Schools proudly began implementation of its innovative and ambitious 5-year Strategic Plan and welcomed Arlington High School Students into Phase 2 of the New Arlington High School.

### APS Vision and Overarching Goals

Arlington Public Schools has high expectations for all students and offers diverse programming that allows students to pursue their passions and interests. The following vision, mission, and strategic priorities inform decision-making and initiatives across APS.

#### Vision

The vision of Arlington Public Schools is to be an equitable educational community where all learners feel a sense of belonging, experience growth and joy, and are empowered to shape their own futures and contribute to a better world.

#### Mission

Arlington Public Schools focuses on the whole child to create inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for all students, values diverse identities and ways of learning, prepares all staff to maintain high expectations while providing necessary supports, and sustains collaborative partnerships with families and the community.

#### *Strategic Priority #1: Ensuring Equity and Excellence*

Arlington Public Schools will ensure equity, excellence, and access to rigorous learning experiences for all students. All graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution.

#### *Strategic Priority #2: Valuing All Staff*

Arlington Public Schools will recruit and retain an excellent and diverse workforce by creating a collaborative and supportive culture for all staff; providing high-quality and relevant professional development; expanding opportunities for leadership and shared decision-making; and prioritizing representation, diverse perspectives, and expertise.

#### *Strategic Priority #3: Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability*

Arlington Public Schools will maintain a system of schools that is safe, well-maintained, sustainable, and fiscally responsible, with the appropriate tools and resources to support best educational practices and an optimum teaching and learning environment.

#### *Strategic Priority #4: Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships*

Arlington Public Schools will partner collaboratively with families in meeting the educational needs of all students; facilitate consistent two-way communication; and provide timely, transparent, relevant, and accessible information to all stakeholders.

### APS 2023 Accomplishments

2023 has been an exciting and productive year in Arlington's schools. What follows are a few of the major accomplishments of APS from 2023.

#### *Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students*

APS is proud to serve an increasingly diverse student and family population who are dedicated to continuous improvement of our schools, particularly when it comes to ensuring academic opportunity for all students.

Arlington Public Schools has a track record of high achievement over time that demonstrates the impact of Arlington's commitment to academic excellence. APS celebrated many academic successes over the past year:

- The District celebrated outstanding achievement in 2023's accountability report, meeting and exceeding targets set by the state across measures including performance in literacy, math, and science; school attendance; advance coursework participation; and other measures.
- The District expanded academic supports at all schools, including additional librarians at the elementary level, additional specialists and classroom teachers at the middle level, and additional programming at the high school level to support the move into new facilities.
- With support from the Arlington Education Foundation, the district has expanded leadership and participation opportunities with families, staff, and students, through implementation of Strategic Plan Working Groups and Instructional Leadership Teams at all schools.

The District's focus over the past several years has been on ensuring adequate services to meet the learning needs of all students following the COVID-19 pandemic, including needs related to student mental health. In FY24 the District added service providers and classroom teachers to address these needs, as well as additional classroom and support staff. In FY25 the District will focus on anticipating growing enrollments at the Gibbs, Ottoson, and AHS, as well as staff to support the new programming spaces in the new high

# EDUCATION

school. Though enrollments are expected to level off in the years to come, APS anticipates continued growth over the next few years and will continue to allocate resources to accommodate growing enrollments and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

## *Implementation of the Strategic Plan, in Partnership with the Community*

In 2022 the District engaged in comprehensive planning and audit processes with members of the community, in an effort to co-create plans for the future of Arlington Public Schools in partnership with community members. In 2023 Strategic Plan Working Groups were designed and launched; these 8 groups focus on one or two initiatives, and will be responsible for the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan. Working Groups include APS staff, families, administrators, and students in the development of action plans to continuously learn from and develop initiatives across the district. APS is grateful to the Arlington Education Foundation for funding strategic planning efforts as part of a District Improvement Grant in 2023.

## *Opening of APS Family Welcome Center*

Also in 2023, APS opened its first Family Welcome Center, which has been a planned addition to the district as part of the new Arlington High School building project. The District has awaited the opportunity to develop a hub for families to register, access information, and engage with other members of the community for many years. The new Welcome Center is located at 14 Mill Brook Drive and is staffed with a Director of Communications and Family Engagement, two Engagement and Enrollment Specialists, a communications specialist, and an Administrative Assistant. In 2024, APS looks forward to expanding access for families to learning opportunities, access to language services, and access and information about how to access other Town and community resources. In addition to the opening of this new center, all APS Central Office functions have moved into their new office space, and the School Committee has moved into a new School Committee Room.



*The APS Family Welcome Center opened with Phase 2 of the AHS Building Project in November 2023.*

## *Expanding Access to Performing Arts Programming*

In 2022, APS expanded access to performing arts programming district-wide by absorbing elementary instrumental fees into the district-wide budget; the elimination of these fees allowed more students to participate in music programming at an early age, and the result has been a rapid expansion of participation in the performing arts - including instrumental, choral, and theatrical - over the past few years.



*The APS Family Welcome Center opened with Phase 2 of the AHS Building Project in November 2023.*

## *Rollout of New Elementary Literacy Curriculum*

In 2023 the District selected and began the implementation of a new comprehensive K-5 literacy curriculum. In planning for FY25 the district will allocate significant time and financial resources to professional development and materials for the new resource, *EL Education*, which provides rigorous and developmentally-appropriate materials for students' development of fundamental literacy skills and comprehension of complex texts. The curriculum is aligned with the goals of the 5-Year Strategic Plan because it embeds deeper learning and project-based opportunities into its units, each of which ends with a "performance task" that requires students to demonstrate their knowledge to peers and the community through creative projects and showcases. This curriculum work will be accompanied by adjustments to the elementary schedule to provide

# EDUCATION

for more integrated and interdisciplinary learning in our elementary classrooms.



2nd grade students at Dallin practice sharing their research findings with classmates in one of the new curriculum pilot classrooms.

## Arlington Recognized for Climate Efforts to Reduce Emissions

In 2023, APS celebrated the introduction of 2 electric buses. Each electric school bus will have a 135-mile range and the ability to charge in approximately 3-4 hours using two new, direct current fast chargers at the Ottoson Middle School. The new electric school buses will displace approximately 4,300 gallons of diesel fuel annually, preventing emissions of 48.24 tons of carbon dioxide. The electrification of Arlington's school bus fleet is part of the Town's efforts to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Town also received an EPA grant from the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) of 2010, which in 2021 provided approximately \$10 million across the country for replacement of old diesel buses with new buses certified to EPA's cleanest emissions standards.



One of two new electric buses, demonstrating its electric engine and ready for the green ribbon to be cut before the bus is launched for students to ride every day.

## AHS Athletics

Arlington High School Athletics continue to field competitive teams in the Middlesex League and in the MIAA Statewide Tournaments. Some highlights include:

**Winter Season 2022-23:** In the Winter 2022-2023 season AHS had three teams win Middlesex League Liberty Division Championships: Boys Basketball, Boys Ice Hockey, and Wrestling. Those three teams and Girls Ice Hockey qualified for the MIAA State tournaments. Students from Indoor Track, Alpine Ski, Boys Swimming, Wrestling and Gymnastics advanced to MIAA State Tournament events.

**Spring 2023:** During the Spring 2023 season over 450 students registered in nine different programs. Softball, Volleyball, and both Tennis Teams qualified for the MIAA State Tournament. Many student athletes from the Track Teams qualified for the MIAA State Meet.

**Fall Season 2023:** During the Fall 2023 season 556 students registered to participate in ten different programs. Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Football, Golf, Girls Volleyball, Girls Swimming, and both Cross Country Teams qualified for the state tournament. The Girls Cross Country team had an impressive year winning the Middlesex Liberty Division, Middlesex League Meet and MIAA 1B Divisional Championship. The Girls Cross Country Team also finished runner up in the MIAA Division 1 All State Championship.

## Opening Phase 2 of the Arlington High School Building Project

With the completion of Phase 2 in November 2023, three-quarters of the new high school is now complete. Phase 2 was the largest and most complex of the multi-phase project and construction of the new school remains on budget and is anticipated to be finished in February 2025. Full project with site work is Sept. 2025.

Features of the new AHS wing include:

- Student Center, a combination of collaborative, learning and social spaces which includes the Forum Stairs, Library, Learning Center, Cafeteria, Student Cafe/Store, Outdoor Learning Courtyard, Discourse Lab, Immersion Lab and the Mass. Ave., and Cafeteria entrance lobbies.
- Humanities wing with 44 general classrooms and 2 FACS (Family and Consumer Sciences) classrooms.
- Student Counseling Center.

Completion of Phase 2 also encompasses the opening of the new school district offices (including the new Welcome Center and the School Committee Room). Arlington's inclusion-based Menotomy Pre-

# EDUCATION

school, which has resided at their temporary home on Irving Street for the past 3 years, moved back to the AHS facility and opened to students in early January. The new preschool includes a separate and secure entry, age-appropriate interior classrooms and a dedicated exterior playspace.

The scope and complexity of this four-phased project is significant. During Phase 2 (March 2022 - January 2024), the AHS Building Committee and project partners faced supply chain and weather delays as well as logistical challenges, which resulted in a three month delay in the anticipated completion of the facility.

Phase 3 construction has already begun and encompasses the athletics wing, black box theater, and outdoor amphitheater. With the completion of Phase 3, anticipated to open February 2025, the new facility will be complete. The final and 4th phase of the project, expected to finish in September 2025, will involve the construction of two additional multi-use, synthetic turf athletic fields, plus landscaping and a connection to the Minuteman Bikeway.

The AHS Building Committee hosted public tours of the Phase 2 spaces on January 20, 2024 with an estimated 2,000 residents attending. For more information on the AHS Building Project, including a virtual tour of the Phase 2 wings, design renderings, construction progress videos and photos, weekly construction updates, and more, visit [www.ahsbuilding.org](http://www.ahsbuilding.org).



*Menotomy Preschool: The Town's integrated program for 3-5 year olds is now in a new building adjacent to the new High School.*



*AHS Forum Stairs: The forum stairs provide a gathering and collaboration space for students and staff at all times of day.*



*School Committee Room: The new school district offices include the School Committee Room and new Welcome Center.*



*AHS Library: The heart of the school, the library provides a flexible and inclusive space for academics.*



## MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Minuteman Achieves All In-District Enrollment 2 years in a Row

For the second time in the district's history, all ninth-grade students in the fall of 2023 resided in Minuteman's member towns. Historically, Minuteman would admit varying percentages of students who lived within the member towns and those who lived outside of those towns, whose communities would finance tuition on a per-pupil basis. As of September 2023, about 93% of all grades 9-12 students reside in the nine member-town communities of Acton, Arlington, Bolton, Concord, Dover, Lancaster, Lexington, Needham, and Stow. Total enrollment for Minuteman is 649 students with 33% of those students residing in Arlington.

### Minuteman Students Bring Home the Gold in SkillsUSA

In June 2023 nine Minuteman students and four faculty members, traveled to Atlanta Georgia to compete in SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference. SkillsUSA is a national group that strives to teach workplace, personal, and technical skills to students of all levels across the country to prepare them to be outstanding citizens, contributing to the community and the workplace. Minuteman has had a very active SkillsUSA chapter for decades with 54 students participating 2022-23 school year. For the second year in a row, Minuteman won the national gold medal in the Career Pathways Showcase: Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Food. Arlington residents Dean, Gavin, and John O'Brien were the gold medal winners. Minuteman came in 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation for their Entrepreneurial presentation.



Arlington residents Dean, Gavin, and John O'Brien class of 2023 winning the gold medal at Skills USA National competition in Atlanta, GA.

### Juniors and Seniors Out on Co-op

Juniors and Seniors at Minuteman are eligible for Co-Op. Co-op students can work at job sites within the scope of their career majors. The co-op is open to seniors all year and juniors for the year's second half. 100 students were out on Co-Op during the school year of 2022-23. Twenty-eight of those students reside in Arlington. Students were working for the following Arlington businesses: Villandry Contracting, Piggott Electric, Shattuck Heights Hardware, A9 Green, and Mouradian Plumbing. Students also had opportunities at MGH Harvard labs, MBTA, Saturday Robotics, and the Goddard School. The Co-Op opportunities continue to grow year over year for future students.

### Grants to Support High School and Adult Students

Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District \$354,000 Metal Fabrication & Joining Technologies: The school will train students for high-demand metal fabrication and joining technologies occupations. The school will expand and deepen its curriculum, add industry-recognized credentials, increase secondary enrollment in existing programs, and offer post-secondary opportunities for adults enrolled in the Minuteman Technical Institute (MTI).

Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School \$500,000 Funding will provide the high school with technology and equipment to support expanding the Animal Science/Veterinary Science vocational program. The equipment will open opportunities for students to additional industry-recognized credentials and hands-on learning with state-of-the-art training tools.

### MTI Continues to See Success

Minuteman Technical Institute (MTI) offers 10-month and 15-week courses in various career trades for adults looking to gain technical skills in a new, high-demand profession. The 2022-23 year brought great growth through the Governor's Career Tech Institute Expansion, and since then MTI has been awarded just over \$3M.

Through new and continued partnerships with Mass Hire, North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund, AET Labs, Rolls Royce Naval, and the International Facilities Management Association, MTI collaborates and develops programming to meet workforce demands.

MTI students gain recognized industry credentials in OSHA and Hot Works and hours toward state licenses. A partnership with IFMA (International Facility Management Association) has led to the development of a Facilities Management program and directly addresses the need in the greater Boston area for certified Facilities Managers.

# EDUCATION

---

Currently, MTI is running eight of its nine programs and is at 74% capacity, the highest since COVID, and enrollment remains open through September 29, 2023. 22% of our students are female, while 88% are male.

100% of Cosmetology program completers who sit for the State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering exam, pass on the first attempt. 98% of Welding students who take the American Welding Society certification tests pass on their first attempt. 97% of the Carpentry Pre-Apprentice program completers are employed upon completion of the program and are retained beyond their first 30 days.

## **Minuteman Seniors are Off to College and Work**

The class of 2023 had a graduation rate of 100%. With 64% of students heading to either a two-year or four-year college and 36% heading into planned apprenticeships, trade school, or joining the workforce. The graduating class of 2023 graduates attend schools such as Clark University, MIT, WPI, The New School, Emerson, Johnson and Wales University Maine College of Art, and several more. Minuteman looks forward to watching students have continued success in the future as alumni.



*Arlington's Aviva Pearlmutter, class of 2025, working hard in her major of DVC, Design and Visual Communications.*