

# Board of Education of Anne Arundel County | April 21, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency, Board meetings are currently being broadcast for the public and in compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Times for agenda items are intended as guidance only.

The Board may choose to change the order of agenda items to meet the needs of the Board. Unless changed by the Board, items occur in the order listed.

## Board Members

Melissa Ellis  
*President*

Dana Schallheim  
*Vice President*

Candace C.W. Antwine

Robert Silkworth

Corine Frank

Joanna Tobin

Michelle L. Corkadel

Drake Smith

## Upcoming Meetings

### General Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

12:00 pm

Board Room

### Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

3:30 pm

Virtual

### Equity Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

6:00 pm

Virtual

### Budget Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

3:30 pm

Virtual

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## 4:00 pm 1. Motion to Enter Closed Session

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## 6:00 pm 2. Opening/Recognition

2.01 Invocation

2.07 CRASC Report

2.02 Pledge of Allegiance

2.08 PTA Report

2.03 Approval of the Minutes

2.09 CAC Report

2.04 Establish Agenda Order

2.10 Policy Committee Update

2.05 Recognitions

2.11 Equity Committee Update

2.06 Teacher's Association of Anne Arundel Co.

2.12 Budget Committee Update

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## 7:00 pm 3. Public Comment

The Board will hear public comment on agenda items from up to 10 speakers per agenda item during this section of the meeting. Those wishing to provide live testimony may register, space permitting, at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony). All speakers will be allotted 2 minutes. Written comments on agenda items can also be submitted through a form available at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony). The process for submitting such comments and comments on non-agenda items, which are only accepted in writing, can be found at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony).

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## 8:00 pm 4. Review Item (R)

4.01 2020-2021 Reopening Update

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## 8:30 pm 5. Consent Items – Award of Contracts (A)

5.01 Energy Intelligence Software

5.02 Painting – Glen Burnie HS, Central MS, Broadneck ES, and Carol S. Parham Building

5.03 Painting – Brock Bridge ES and West Meade Early Education Center

5.04 Security Vestibules – Brooklyn Park MS, Crofton MS, and Lindale MS

5.05 Casework Replacement – Chesapeake Bay MS

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## 8:45 pm 6. Action Items (A)

6.01 Administrative Personnel Appointments

**Policy Revisions - Third Reading**

6.02 Student Nutrition Services – Whole School – Code EB

**Policy Adoption – Third Reading**

6.03 Data Governance – Code DL

**Policy Adoption – First Reading**

6.04 Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students

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## 9:45 pm 7. Other Review Items (R)

7.01 Monthly Financial Status Report

7.02 Construction Status Report

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## 8. Motion to Enter Closed Session (if needed)

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**Key: (I) Information (A) Action (R) Review**

Information on agenda items can be obtained from the Board of Education Office (410-222-5311) or at [www.aacps.org](http://www.aacps.org)

The following testimony was submitted for the April 21, 2021, meeting of the Board of Education. The “...” designation indicates the cutoff of testimony due to it exceeding the word the limit. The full version of such testimony has been provided to the Board.

#### **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 4.01 – 2020-2021 Reopening Update**

1. The school board should immediately make accommodations for children with disabilities to return to the classroom, particularly considering teachers and many children 16 years and over have been vaccinated. This year has been particularly challenging for those students, and the schools have a legal obligation to meet their needs.

I disagreed with the school board's decision to ask parents to make decisions about return to school months ago, before we could make informed choices that would depend upon the vaccine rollout and COVID rates. However, now vaccines have become more widely available, and COVID rates have dropped significantly since the beginning of the year. This marks a significant changed circumstance, and I urge the school board to act immediately.

Sarah Crawford  
Severna Park

2. Good evening, Superintendent Arlotto, Madame Chair and Vice Chair, and distinguished Board members.

I am an educational advocate working with a family in AACPS District 3 whose elementary student is on an IEP in a boundary/general education school. The student has not only been unsuccessful accessing his education online for the past year, it has actually culminated in 2 crisis situations that required hospitalization. There were no documented instances of crisis/aggressive behavior in the classroom prior to the school shut down.

This student was returned to a 2-day/week hybrid schedule on Monday and Tuesday where he was able to finally access his IEP services in person, in the only way that truly works for him.

The Principal and Special Educator both indicated that there is room available in his classroom and that this particular student is "at the very top of their list" as a student who needs to be returned to 4-day/week in person learning as soon as the Principal receives authorization to do so.

After watching the 3/30 special session and 4/7 public board meeting videos, there is concern that the new motions which passed may unintentionally overlook students like this, who are on an IEP but receiving services in general education programs. There was a listing of "priority students," for the 4-day invitation to return, but this student was in what Dr. Arlotto referred to as the "next tier" he planned to work with. By passing the motions as they are worded, a student who is mandated to receive IEP services in the general education setting that are not able to be accessed virtually may no longer be prioritized in the invitation for 4 day returns.....

Beth Ann Hancock  
Upper Marlboro

3. It's been two weeks since this Board voted unanimously to expand in person learning to four days a week for as many students as possible. The problem with this motion is there was no time frame given! The lack of urgency and transparency regarding who will even be eligible to return is beyond frustrating. I feel like my kids' education and AACPS is like being on the Titanic. We've survived the iceberg and the sinking of the ship but now we are in the cold, dark waters clinging to whatever we can hoping that a boat is coming to rescue us. We don't even know what we are waiting for or if help is on the way. Is there help on the way? Time is running out and this gradual phasing in approach is just not appropriate. Should I be happy that my kids aren't targeted students and just wait for the fall and hope for a full re-opening? AACPS should not be closing the academic gap by suppressing the top! The gifted and talented kids have been totally ignored throughout this process. The large majority of "regular" students have also been greatly disadvantaged by this process and now many of those students are now struggling and disengaged. Please be clear and transparent and tell us who and when students will be allowed to attend their schools for 4 days a week. Even better, let all students who want to return do so! Time is quickly running out.

Cheryl Wolf  
Severna Park

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### **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 6.04 – Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students**

#### **1. Statement from The Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission**

On April 15th, the Anne Arundel Human Relations Commission heard from members of LGBTQ Advocacy Coalition for Safe Schools. The Commission voted to support the Coalition for Safe Schools policy recommendations because they expand the educational opportunities and protections provided by the BOE's gender identity and gender expression guidelines.

The Coalition policy recommendations call for formal recognition of LGBTQ + students beyond simple recognition of gender identity and gender expression, ensure that the privacy rights of LGBTQ + students will be respected and protected, identify staff training and LGBTQ + curriculum development as high priorities, identify support for Gay Student Alliances that currently exist as critical and call for resources to develop Gay Student Alliances in our schools, especially at the Middle School level.

Each policy recommendation, if implemented would make Anne Arundel Public Schools a more welcoming place for the LGBTQ + student community. State law mandates that all our children be provided with a free, taxpayer supported public education.

Simply, LGBTQ + students cannot be denied this right, either through omission or commission.

Anne Arundel County under the leadership of County Executive Pittman has vowed to ensure Anne Arundel County is “the best place - for all”. The Commission believes that if the Board of Education adopts the Coalition policy recommendations Anne Arundel County Public Schools will take a giant step towards making the school system the best place for all.

Eugene Peterson  
Laurel

2. AACPS needs policy to protect LGBTQ+ students. GLSEN data shows the hardships that LGBTQ+ students experience. The harsh reality is that Maryland schools are not safe for LGBTQ+ children. Most LGBTQ+ students report being victims of harassment and discrimination at school, ranging from verbal bullying to physical assault. School staff vary in how they respond to the struggles of LGBTQ+ students. Policy would empower students to report problems and empower educators to help. What does it mean if we do nothing and allow children to suffer on our watch? Students cannot succeed if they have to hide who they really are, due to fears of persecution. Some people will oppose this policy, saying it is “special treatment.” This is false; policies that protect students who are maltreated don't harm other students. Some will argue that the BOE should focus on reopening schools and that this policy is a distraction. However, the policy is about safety for ALL students, during and after COVID. And there's the “bathroom issue.”

Some people believe children shouldn't be subjected to the discomfort of sharing facilities with transgender children. Some fear that kids will abuse the policy so they can spy on other kids in bathrooms. These fears aren't supported by data. Every school has private facilities that any child can use. AACPS has had guidelines supporting transgender students since 2015 and children have not manipulated them to spy on other kids.

Growing up is hard enough for LGBTQ+ kids. Let's make their educational experience safer.

Abbie Ellicott  
Severna Park

3. I am writing to affirm a school policy of safe conversations and protection of LGBTQ+ students/adults. Likewise, I would encourage a school policy for diversity of views on topics of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. In other words, public education should be a safe place for the free exchange of all ideas, even those which differ from public opinion. A healthy pluralistic society understands disagreement does not always equal discrimination. The First Amendment applies to all students, which can provide learning from personal values and potential religious views. In sum, public policy can defend the rights of the LGBTQ+ community without threatening the rights of religious communities. Please consider fairness for all sides with inclusion from each viewpoint. Show our students we can have a both/and mentality, not just an either/or exclusive bias. Respectfully submitted from a parent of five children, a faith community leader, and a believer in love for all neighbors.

David Brown  
Severna Park

4. I am a parent of two graduates from AACPS. I have lived in Anne Arundel County since 1996. I believe that AACPS needs a formal, uniform, strong and comprehensive policy and regulations put in place, to protect all LGBTQ+ students. These students are at much higher risk in society at large of being harassed and bullied. They are also at higher risk for self-injury and suicide and I believe that AACPS should implement policies and regulations that exemplify how all of us should be treated. We should all feel safe being completely ourselves and students should feel safe and protected at school.

Sarah Blaser  
Deale

5. As a teen growing up in Texas, I was encouraged by my parents and my church-school to shame homosexuals – this despite what the very book I was encouraged to read said about judging others. Youngsters tormented by a sexual preference that they did not choose were sent away to camps and subjected to experiences they refused to talk about when they returned. When we learned that a teen - conflicted by his sexuality - committed suicide, we were instructed that he would have died from AIDS anyway had he continued his "evil ways".

When I joined the military, I saw members of the LGBTQ community serve their country just as bravely, shed the same red blood, and die just as readily for their nation as any of my friends who were lowered into the ground. They did so despite the necessity to hide who they were until September 20, 2011 when Don't Ask Don't Tell finally de-criminalized their existence in our nation's military.

As educational board members, you have the awesome and respectable duty of protecting our children even as parents heavily pressure you from all points of view. As you make your decision on how to move forward with policies that affects LGBTQ students, I ask only that you see them not as children – but as young men and women who will eventually stand watch to safeguard us, cure our future diseases, and solve the problems which undoubtedly hide in the shadow that is our future. They are not conflicted monsters. They are human beings whose protection now means our protection in the future.

Larry Moore  
Crofton

6. I am the proud parent of an AACPS LGBTQ MS Student, he came out to me in 4th grade when he learned the vocabulary to express who he was.

My son came out to his peers in 6th grade and I've had the same worry ever since, "Can AACPS protect & support him when he is at school?" Unfortunately, the answer is not really.

My son has received an incredible education, his teachers are phenomenal, and he has formed strong bonds with many of them and they truly support him in every possible way they can. But the hard truth is that for some reason, biased based bullying against LGBTQ is not handled adequately at an administrative level. I believe that all adults involved are well intentioned, but many have biases and proper training is required so they can understand & overcome that to better support our LGBTQ students. LGBTQ students commit suicide at a rate higher than any other youth demographic. LGBTQ Students have a harder time finding support as many come from unsupportive homes that can be so destructive, they have to hide who they are. School is where teenagers spend most of their waking hours, it has to be their safe place. I am not asking anything drastic - I am asking the BoE to Be Brave, to take seriously the awesome responsibility you have and protect the LGBTQ youth entrusted to you in AACPS. Protecting them, takes nothing away from non-LGBTQ youth - it's not cake. Be Brave.

Katherine Moore  
Crofton

7. I fully support Action Item 6.04 Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students. Every child has the right to be safe in school!

Brandi Endres  
Severna Park

8. I am writing as the mother of a former SPHS student (grad 2019) and a parent who tried (and failed) to advocate for change at SPHS while my daughter was a student there. For the 4 years my daughter was a student at SPHS, she witnessed an endless barrage of homophobic, racist, sexist, and generally hateful comments by a multitude of students and a few teachers. She personally experienced anti-Semitism. What makes all of it so much worse is that the Administration never (I have specifically chosen the word "never") took it seriously, gave appropriate consequences nor was there ever an effort to educate students in a meaningful way about any of these issues. The LGBTQ+ policy is absolutely essential. LGBTQ+ students suffer disproportionately very serious issues and AACPS MUST institute meaningful mandatory training for ALL staff, must ensure that there are resources including LGBTQ+ people as part of the curriculum and be certain that there is always a teacher assigned as LGBTQ+

student org advisor so that there is continuity and opportunity to form and meet. Additionally, students must have a right to privacy in their records and consent must be given when there is communication with family who may not provide a safe and supportive environment. Furthermore, asking please remove the line in the policy about “the gender with which the student consistently identifies.” Who is going to definite “consistently?” That will just add to the problems and to what end? It is not necessary. Thank you!

Jennifer Haber  
Westminster

9. AACPS needs a robust, well-defined, and implemented policy to protect LGBTQ+ students in the AACPS system. These children need to be protected and allowed to flourish in the county's schools.

Rob Blaser  
Deale

10. President Ellis, Vice President Schallheim and members of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education. Thank you for providing this opportunity to submit for your review my support of item 6.04 Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ students. The health, safety, resources and support of LGBTQ+ students deserve your definitive and forward-thinking attention. I ask you to support the 3 page draft submission of the BOE Policy Committee chaired by Dr. Joanna Tobin as a much overdue enhancement, protection and addition to LGBTQ+ policy. I especially request you to endorse establishing with full administrative and teaching support of student LGBTQ+ related groups in Middle and High Schools. Additionally, it is imperative to increase training and education for teachers and administrators on a regular and ongoing basis the unique substance and sensitivity to dealing with LGBTQ+ students as well as respecting and honoring the privacy, preferences and identities of LGBTQ+ students. Our schools need to be safe havens from bullying and discrimination. I am reflecting on my own journey as a gay man and the deep scars inflicted on me personally as a result of the lack of recognition and support in my schools dating back over 60 years. Anne Arundel County Public Schools carry enormous responsibilities for the welfare of all students. Our community should be a beacon of leadership in LGBTQ+ policy. Respectfully, Joseph M. Clapsaddle: Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commissioner, St. Anne's Annapolis Parish Rainbow Group LGBTQ+ Coordinator and member of CLASS - Coalition for Anne Arundel County LGBTQ+ Safe Schools.

Joseph M. Clapsaddle  
Arnold

11. Schools are responsible for providing a safe learning environment for all students, however, many LGBTQ students frequently hear homophobic remarks - or other types of biased language - and experience bullying/harassment at school because of their sexual orientation and/or gender expression. These experiences can contribute to a hostile climate for LGBTQ students, causing some to miss school rather than routinely subject themselves to such negative experiences (GLSEN). Additionally, many of our LGBTQ teens have been separated from their support systems during the pandemic, without access to their school's GSA or the staff members with which they feel safe, and have felt particularly disconnected from their learning environment because of this; many LGBTQ students cannot truly express themselves in their own homes, and it impacts their ability to engage in virtual/hybrid learning, where their social-emotional learning needs are being met. Policy centered on

safe and inclusive environments for LGBTQ is how this school system can ensure protections/supports for ALL learners without taking anything away from any specific student group.

As a graduate of AACPS and teacher with experience in 4 of the high schools in the AACPS system, I've been fortunate to hear thousands of stories from the students and families that reside in our wonderfully diverse county. I would hope that we can move forward together toward achieving the goal of "All Means All" as we establish policy for our LGBTQ students that ensures they have the same access to success as the rest of our student body.

Xiomara Patel  
Baltimore

12. I, as a student of Bates Middle School, am aware of multiple LGBTQ+ students in the school. I am one of them. I support the decision to give the students' rights and fair treatment. I believe that everyone should have equal rights in our school.

I remember being in a PVA extended day class with a substitute teacher in 6th grade, and a friend of mine wanted to be called a name different from their biological name, as well as different pronouns. The teacher refused to call them by the name they requested and was very adamant about dead-naming and misgendering them. This type of behavior, especially by educators, can be really harmful to young students just trying to be themselves. This is one of the many reasons why we need this LGBTQ+ protection policy to be passed.

The above two testimonies are from students in the GSA group I co-lead with another teacher at Bates. We have an active GSA, in part, because we have several transgendered or non-binary students here. All we ask is that policy be put forth to help ALL students at AACPS feel respected and included.

Brittany Fonte  
Annapolis

13. I am the Gender Acceptance Alliance Coordinator at Crofton Middle School and I am urging you all to take serious action towards making our schools a safe and inclusive environment for our LGBTQIA+ students. My students often express concern about not feeling like there is a space for them in our schools. In one of our PDs on diversity I learned that diversity is the first step, inclusion the second. I also learned that one very important aspect of inclusion is EXPECTING the group or community of people to be there. Currently we do not expect LGBTQIA+ students in our schools. We deal with them as they come along. The biggest example of this is the lack of gender-neutral bathrooms. Imagine not being comfortable using the restroom in a building that you spend almost 8 hours a day in. How can they learn if their basic needs are not met? This matter has been talked about and looked over for far too long. The time for change and action is now.

Sarah Greaney  
Gambrills

14. I am a mother of a child who at birth was identified as male - and who tried desperately to fit that designation for years. As a result, my child suffered from serious depression, anxiety and body dysmorphia disorder throughout middle school, high school and into college. I am just now truly

understanding how painful those formative years were to her.

After years of therapy my child has transitioned, changed her name and found a supportive community. At 27 years she is making great strides, however, the anxiety and depression has not magically disappeared and having the confidence to work in "the world" - a world that continues to threaten and belittle her - remains a huge challenge. This is a travesty. She is a brilliant, creative and deeply empathetic person with an enormous amount to offer the world. I have no doubt that she will break through barriers and shine, but her young adulthood should not have been such a perilous journey. Many LGBTQ+ children TODAY suffer needless guilt, shame and self-hatred at a time in their lives when they should be developing to their fullest potential. Your role is to meet their specific challenge and to utilize every resource at your disposal. The children in your care today look to you for support in a cruel world that continues to berate, dismiss and revile them at every turn. You have the power to make a difference.

Monica O'Connor  
Severna Park

15. I am writing to advocate for the passage of comprehensive policy to address the harassment, bullying, and discrimination that LGBTQ students currently face in Maryland schools. Existing data from the GLSEN shows the staggering amount of trauma and hardship that LGBTQ+ students face every single day in our schools: the vast majority of LGBTQ students in Maryland regularly heard anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and experienced some sort of anti-LGBTQ victimization while attending school. 50% of students queried reported being the victim of discriminatory policies or practices at their school, and fewer than half reported feeling supported by their school's faculty and administration. Sadly, only 34% of LGBTQ students who reported homophobic or transphobic victimization said that it led to effective staff intervention.

GLSEN recommends school-based supports such as inclusive school policies, faculty and staff who are sensitive to and supportive of LGBTQ+ issues, and a comprehensive curriculum that celebrates the history and achievements of LGBTQ individuals. It is critical that Maryland's educators, policymakers, and community members take the necessary steps to ensure that all children in the state have the opportunity to learn, succeed, and feel safe being their authentic selves in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

For these reasons, I urge the AACPS Board of Education to support the implementation of a comprehensive and detailed LGBTQ+ policy to respect, protect, and support LGBTQ students.

Morgan Drayton on behalf of March On Maryland dba March On Foundation  
Odenton

16. I am writing today in support of the AACPS LGBTQ plus policy that would have supported myself and my friends throughout our high school career. As a queer woman living in a predominantly conservative area, discovering and coming to love myself was not easy. This was especially due to my attendance at Severna Park High School, a school that preaches heteronormativity, and creates an uncomfortable environment for LGBTQ plus students. In regards to the policy, appropriate training for teachers and staff is critical to include all LGBTQ plus students in the conversation. This training would have drastically made my high school experience more enjoyable. I would like to see this training applied to our current health curriculum in the county, as the current heteronormative lessons ostracize and pose a threat to LGBTQ plus students' mental health. Speaking from experience, learning under the current curriculum not only prohibited me from learning about myself, but it also perpetuated negative connotations

surrounding myself contributing to my internalized homophobia. My story does not stand alone. I recognize that my privileged story differs from students who have experienced victimization and discrimination in the forms of physical, verbal and sexual violence. I recognize that BIPOC queer students are suffering at a disproportionate rate and need to be heard. I recognize that many transgender students are suffering in silence. I recognize that this policy would support these struggling students. Do you? Coming to accept yourself in a world that views you as “abnormal” is difficult enough so why should our schools contribute to these feelings of distress and self-doubt, and trauma?

Zoe Smith  
Severna Park