

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County | January 5, 2022

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

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Board Meetings are held in the Board Room of the Carol Sheffey Parham Building at 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Joanna Tobin
President

Robert Silkworth
Vice President

Gloria D. Dent

Corine Frank

Melissa Ellis

Dana Schallheim

Michelle L. Corkadel

Bunmi Omisore

Upcoming Meetings

General Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
6:00 pm
Board Room

Policy Committee
Tuesday, February 1, 2022
3:00 pm
Virtual

Equity Committee
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
11:30 am
Virtual

Budget Committee
Monday, February 14, 2022
12:00 pm
Virtual

Board Hearing
Thursday, January 6, 2022
6:00 pm
Board Room

Board Workshop
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
6:00 pm
Board Room

10:00 am 1. Motion to Enter Executive Closed Session

12:00 pm 2. Opening/Recognition

2.01 Invocation

2.02 Pledge of Allegiance

2.03 Approval of the Minutes

2.04 Establish Agenda Order

2.05 Recognitions

2.06 Educator of the Month

2.07 Employee of the Month

2.08 Volunteer of the Month

12:30 pm 3. Reports

3.01 President's Report

3.02 Policy Committee Report

3.03 PTA Report

3.04 Superintendent's Report -
School Operations

1:00 pm 4. Presentations

4.01 Anne Arundel County Fiscal Year 2023 Revenue Outlook

1:30 pm 5. Public Comments

The Board will hear in-person and virtual public comment on agenda items during regularly scheduled meetings from up to a total of 10 speakers per agenda item of each meeting, prior to Board discussion of those items. Those wishing to provide live in-person or virtual public comment may register, space permitting, at 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. 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.

2:00 pm 6. Consent Items - Award of Contracts (A)

6.01 Diesel Fuel

6.02 Kindergarten Addition - Meade Heights ES

6.03 Lightning Detection Alert System

6.04 Storm Drain and Environmental Construction

2:15 pm 7. Action Items (A)

7.01 Administrative Personnel Appointments

7.02 Personnel

7.03 Sabbaticals

Policy Revisions - Second Reading

7.04 Students with a Known Food Allergy - Code JECAA

Other Action Items

7.05 2021 - 2022 School Year Calendar

7.06 2022 - 2023 School Year Calendar

4:00 pm 8. Review Items (R)

8.01 Minority and Small Business Enterprise Utilization Report for Fiscal Year 2021

8.02 Award of Contracts

9. Motion to Enter Executive Closed Session (as needed)

The following testimony was submitted for the January 5, 2022, 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

ITEM 3.04 – Superintendent’s Report – School Operations

1. Although I am very pleased that the students of AACPS will be returning to school in-person after the holiday break, I am tired of being concerned that this could change at any moment. Parents should never have to be worried that their children's school will stop in-person instruction. Our children need to be in school, in-person with their friends and teachers. They desperately need their lives to be normal again. I commend you for doing the right thing for all of the children in AACPS and continuing normal school operations. I hope this decision does not change. Please do not be distracted by the very vocal complainers on the other side who allow fear to control their lives. As members of the ACCPS BOE you must continue to make fact-based, not fear-based decisions in the best interest of all of the children of AACPS - and in this case, that decision is to keep schools open.

Jennifer Fold
Linthicum

2. Although the CDC reduced the quarantine days to 5 for those in the general population who test positive for COVID-19, the CDC still recommends 10 days of isolation for K-12 students and staff as people can spread the virus for a full 10 days from when they develop symptoms, even if they are feeling better, or if they never have symptoms at all.

AACPS is requiring Covid positive students to quarantine for only 5 days and then to remain masked at all times upon returning to school. This is not feasible because students must unmask to eat lunch in the cafeteria. Will students returning from a 5-day quarantine be allowed to eat in the cafeteria with all other students? Our school buildings are not like other public places - students cannot seek out personal space to eat their meals. High school students also unmask during PE classes, so who will ensure that students returning from quarantine are remaining masked?

You can stop contact tracing and identifying close contacts, but that is not going to stop the contacts. The least the board can do is maintain a 10-day quarantine for those who are COVID positive so that they are not returning to school contagious.

I implore you to rethink the quarantine policy change. The board's goal is to keep schools open for our children, so we need policies that will help keep schools open. 10 days of quarantine is better than a return to full-time virtual learning.

Tamara Beger
Odenton

3. I'm writing to you today to plead with each of you to work together for all stakeholders here in Anne Arundel County.

I know many of you don't focus on students getting COVID because they don't tend to get as sick as the elderly and vulnerable populations, but what about our Teachers and Staff in our schools? How many of them tested positive over the break and are now out due to COVID? How many can be out at a time before schools have to shut down? These are questions that are being asked in our community and nobody is responding.

Dr. Arlotto put out the new COVID guidance stating that the CDC had reduced quarantining of positive cases to 5 days with 5 additional days of masking full-time. This did not apply to schools.

The CDC on 12/29 states:

- A person diagnosed with COVID-19 can be around others when at least 10 days have passed since their symptoms began, or since the date of their initial positive test (use the date the test was collected) if they did not develop symptoms and
- if they had a fever, at least 24 hours have passed since the resolution of their fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- other symptoms have improved.

Please revert your latest guidance. I want nothing more than for schools to remain open, but I fear all you've done is pull the rug out from under our administrator's feet right as the storm is hitting this community.

Jennifer Greeff
Millersville

4. It is a waste of energy to debate whether schools should be shut down due to the omicron surge. At this point it should be clear that as long as we do not permit teachers and staff infected with covid to enter the buildings, we will soon have so many out that it will not be safe to have children, healthy or otherwise, in school. (Businesses are closing, flights are being cancelled, public transit lines are being reduced, all due to staff being out sick. How could one possibly think school would be any different?)
If AACPS has a contingency plan in place to pivot to remote teaching, they should be doing a better job of communicating this to the public as well as their own teachers. We are 24h out from the first day back from break and we lack any kind of specific information on the metrics that will determine the need to close buildings, and what would happen thereafter. This is a leadership failure that is causing additional stress for families and teachers. Those that asked for additional remote learning options during reopening were ignored. If AACPS had retained more of this capability by focusing more on their remote program, AACPS would have been much better prepared for this.
The AACPS BOE and administration need to communicate to families and staff that someone has a plan for what will happen after the inevitable shut down of buildings.

Michelle Koul
Severna Park

5. My name is Dana Schulze, I am a combat war veteran, wife of 26 years and mother of 3 children. A single solution is not the answer especially if people have natural immunity from previously fighting Covid-19. Every American is capable of medical and economic decisions. The high-risk individuals (those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic lung disease) are wise enough to protect themselves and limit their exposures. Social factors such as unstable housing, limited nutritious food, inadequate transportation and low socioeconomic status increase COVID risks. Shutdowns and mandates increase socioeconomic risks. School closures have contributed to increasing suicide and drug overdoses, especially with youth and young adults at a decreased risk of COVID. Suicide is prevented through economic, mental health, community, social and emotional support. Mandates and closures decrease all of these supports. Masks are harmful, do not prevent the spread of viruses, spread germs, and increase viral load to the wearer. The Brown University study concluded that "wearing masks is blamed for a disturbing 23 percent fall in young children's development and cognitive test results." Masks are harmful to children's ability to learn. Properly fitted N95 masks are safe for only up to 3 hours. Give parent's their right to decide. People younger than 70yo have a 99.95% recovery rate against Covid. Follow the science and stop the fear-based excuse to increase the power of our government. Early treatment therapies for COVID improves outcomes. Distribute prevention and early treatment information to help fight the disease not grovel in fear....

Dana Schulze
Millersville

6. The decision to reduce the quarantine period - in direct opposition of the CDC guidance for COVID-19 Isolation in K-12 schools - is reckless and unconscionable. With the case rates climbing exponentially in the largest wave to date, this is a time to INCREASE precautions, not reduce them. Please follow the lead of other local systems and maintain the CDC-recommended 10-day isolation rules, provide high quality masks, ramp up testing, and provide clear metrics for what circumstances will trigger a shift to virtual instruction. The metrics are important - it is not clear that there is currently enough healthy/non-quarantined staff to maintain basic safety, let alone provide adequate instruction.

No one wants virtual instruction but continuing to operate in-person at any cost does not ensure learning continuity and puts students and staff at risk. Please enact a plan – any plan – that makes an attempt to limit in school spread in order to keep schools open safely.

Elizabeth Matson
Crofton

7. There is no transparency before the meeting on the school operations report. What I find frustrating is the schools and BOE are so focused on taking away parental liberties/rights, indoctrinating our kids with critical race theory, dehumanizing our children with masks, disenfranchising our Children with vax/testing for sports, oversexualization through school library books and sex-ed, and demoralizing our kids with the removal of dances. It's the school and BOE's job to approve of and teach curriculum. Not to interject political and medical agendas into the process. There is too much fear and burden being placed on our kids by outside influences. You are directly contributing to their negative mental health. For the past two years our kids have been through a constant roller coaster of mandates, quarantines, and virtual learning or the threat of virtual learning. We need to step back and look at all the damage that has been done from all of this. This virus is never going to go away. This is not and should not be our new normal. Fear should not be what is driving decisions for our children. It is not the BOE's responsibility to make medical device or decisions for our kids.

Kristie Basista
Brooklyn

8. My family and I would like to thank the Board and Dr. Arlotto for standing up and leading. Thank you for making educating children essential. The Board has come a long way and has been making a lot of sense lately. Thank you, every member who voted to keep our children in school as much as humanly possible. 2020 and into 2021 was painful watching this Board keep our children away from in person education, but you have turned over a new leaf and are doing an outstanding job. Thank you all.

Tyrus Scott
Severna Park

9. Thank you for staying committed to keeping our kids in school buildings despite the backlash you have received. You are doing the right thing. You are preventing depression, anxiety, suicides, drug overdoses, abuse, and neglect in our student population. We stand with you. Please continue to support the new, more sensible Covid protocols for our kids.

Tina Belford
Linthicum

ITEM 7.06 – 2022-2023 School Year Calendar

1. Regarding School Calendar 2022-23. I'm in favor of Option A. I'm opposed to changing any options that start school on September 1st.

Maureen Severin
Crofton

2. What a rollercoaster of a school year already, and it's not even half over.

I know what's on the table for calendars but starting the 2022-23 school year before Labor Day is taking a way a week from our teachers - much needed time to decompress from this school year and rejuvenate for the next. Teachers and staff still have long days ahead this year. Let our kids get a break, before you even know what the months to come will bring (they will bring COVID!) I hope you will see that there's more good to be had for everyone's mental health in delaying the school year than pushing it up.

Valerie Shinnamon
Severna Park

3. It's an hour before noon on Tuesday and there is still no agenda posted for this meeting and Ms. Frank's proposed calendars have still not been made available! I find it absurd and disappointing that this Board cannot even get it together to pass a school calendar. You already voted on when the first day of school should occur based on when Labor Day falls. Why are Ms. Frank's calendars even being considered?

The real issue is that constituents and stakeholders don't have an opportunity to weigh in at the time of these Board votes because you all propose these motions without any advance warning to the community! Do you really think the community supports moving the last day of school in 2023 for teachers from a Friday until Tuesday (since schools need to close for Juneteenth)? Of course, this doesn't make sense and is not looking out for teacher wellness as you pretend to care about. This Board has come too far in acknowledging every religious holiday that exists, there are too many days off which then pushes the calendar too late in the year. Please consider the observed federal holidays and then require that no tests be administered on religious days. The school calendar has gotten too complicated as it is with the required teacher professional days. This Board needs to consider the 84,000+ students and their families and not just the few loud voices that seem to have your ears. Leave the current school year calendar unchanged and pass a 2022-2023 calendar that serves the best interest of the vast majority of your stakeholders.

Cheryl Wolf
Severna Park