

Arlington High School
Budget Discussion Overview
Arlington School Committee Meeting
DECEMBER 14, 2017

Arlington High School currently enrolls 1328 students in a 400,000 square foot facility. The school is highly ranked. We have consistently risen in rankings and closed achievement gaps over the past 4 years.

For the fourth year in a row, AHS is ranked among the top high schools in Massachusetts according to MCAS scores. We are recognized again as a U.S. News & World Report gold medal school, a U.S. News & World Report STEM school, a Newsweek Top School, and among the nation's most challenging schools according to the Washington Post. This year, we again received a level 1 designation from the state for overall achievement and progress on the MCAS and graduation rates.

Our budget priorities for this year echo our ongoing efforts and challenges. Rising enrollment and staffing needs form the core of our budget requests. In addition, AHS continues to focus on supporting high expectations for all students, reflected this year in our expansion of co-taught classes. Our mission of "learning, connecting, and caring in a safe, supportive, and inclusive community" is reflected in the efforts of the Community Building Coordinating Committee, Wellness Day, and Inclusion Day. We see increased use of instructional technology to engage students, differentiate, and expand opportunities. Lastly, our aged building continues to limit and burden our instruction. Maintaining, repairing, and creating instructional space will continue to be a need for the next 3-6 years.

Our staff and students continue to demonstrate their skill and resilience in providing such a high quality education under such trying conditions. Many could easily move to greener pastures, but continue to be committed to the Arlington community. To continue to keep and attract these teachers over the next years will require us to make current investments in staffing, facilities, and effective instructional technology.

Curriculum and Staffing

The high school is experiencing rapid enrollment growth. Overall enrollment has increased by 111 students since SY 2013. We expect an additional **increase of 76 students** in the next year and to reach 1576 students by SY 2021. Our staffing increases over the past 4 years have not kept pace with this enrollment growth. The additional staffing just to cover just these 76 additional students at our current ratios would be **5.3 FTE**. The requests below total to 7.2 FTE to meet our various needs.

AHS Enrollment Projections

	SY 2017	SY 2018	SY 2019	SY 2020	SY 2021
8	402	417	417	421	426
9	350	373	387	387	391
10	323	358	381	395	396
11	339	322	357	380	394
12	316	353	335	371	396
Total	1328	1406	1460	1534	1576

We foresee the following trends continuing to put pressure on staff.

- Rising enrollment. Enrollment growth continues to be high and unpredictable. We would like staffing levels that attract and keep quality faculty, maintain room for growth, and allow us to respond to student needs.
- A shortage of art, PE, and elective classes is making it difficult for students to meet requirements and build their schedules.
- Chapter 222 requires schools to educate students who were previously excluded due to felony charges or expelled.
- Moving away from punitive discipline toward positive behavioral support demands more time and relationship building of staff and administration.
- National and local student trends point toward higher levels of social-emotional challenges among students.
- State accountability guidelines call for ever rising levels of student achievement and graduation rates.
- Evaluation requirement for building administrators to observe every faculty member and for buildings to evaluate all faculty every year.

Given the increasing stresses on the staff and building, the staff and administration agree that the first priority is to increase the 3d Dean position to full-time to help support teachers and our at-risk students. Last year, the district recognized the increasing demands on our administration created by legal mandates, increasing social-emotional needs of students, facilities issues, high class sizes, and increasing enrollment. We created a new 0.6 FTE Dean position as part of a 2-year plan to return to a 3 house system.

Requested by the administration and teachers - to reduce stress on the teachers, support student achievement, and implement positive behavior support - Expand 3d Dean to cover rising expectations, evaluation, and enrollment

- **Dean - 0.4**

Over the last four years, we have targeted staff increases to the core academic departments to keep them within enrollment limits. We have not increased our staffing for Art, PE, or electives. For this reason, the core academic departments require staffing increased only to accommodate enrollment increases and program offerings.

Necessary for enrollment, staff excellence, student achievement, curriculum requirements, and safety issues (2.4 FTE)

- English - 0.6
- History - 0.6
- Science Biology/ Physics - 0.6
- World Language - 0.6
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The focus on core classes has led to an increasing shortage of Art, Physical Education (PE), and elective classes. This year, we have seen students unable to meet Art requirements, fill their schedule, and schedule classes, because of the shortages of options. All Art, PE, and elective classes are at their caps.

To provide required Art and PE and to expand elective offerings (dependent on enrollment trends) (2.2 FTE)

- Art - 0.6
- Performing Arts - 0.2
- PE - 0.6
- History - 0.2
- English - 0.2
- Family and Consumer Science - 0.4

In the last two years, we have piloted co-taught models to support students in our Curriculum B level courses. With appropriate support, we have found that students can be accelerated in their learning to access college preparatory curriculum (Curriculum A). We propose to move these classes to the Curriculum A level with appropriate support.

To support co-taught instruction so that all students graduate college and career ready (1.0 FTE)

- Science co-taught Biology and Chemistry - 0.4
- History co-taught US History 2 - 0.2
- Math co-taught - 0.2
- ELL Inclusion support - 0.2

Our World Language department has been growing offerings in Italian and Mandarin. As we staff upper level offerings in each language, we need to add sections.

To support all levels of language classes (0.6 FTE)

Our Guidance Department currently has caseloads of 266 students projected to rise to 281 next year. The recommended maximum load, and the highest caseload of our surrounding districts, is 250.

To set Guidance caseloads at the recommended average of 250 students per Counselor

(0.6 FTE)

Focus on Community Building

This year, we have addressed district goals through focusing particular attention on community building, the intersection of wellness, inclusion, and relationships. The newly formed Community Building Coordinating Committee is a representative group of staff, students, and community members working to improve communication, planning, and assessment of these efforts. This year major efforts include Wellness Day and Inclusion Day, 4-hour conferences combining locally supported workshops and outside experts to provide a range of activities to students and staff.

The high school administration is piloting positive approaches to school discipline. The administrative team, Guidance, and the staff as a whole have had various levels of training in collaborative problem solving, an evidence-based approach for helping children with behavioral challenges supported by Think:Kids at Massachusetts General Hospital. We plan to train school-based trainers to expand implementation of this model.

Continuing efforts include our advisory program, the Harbor and Short Stop programs to support student health challenges, and the AHS Voices United initiative to fight bullying.

Digital Technology

In only four years, digital technology at AHS is changing the potential for engaging and supporting all learners, preparing students for a computer rich economy, and allowing students to engage directly with creating knowledge and influencing their world. With the introduction of a

use.

- Specialty labs (CADD, Digital Media, Computer Science, and Digital Music) are all in need of upgrades or replacement devices.
- Continue to invest in Wireless and Network capacity and reliability

AHS Bring Your Own Device Agreement found at this link:

Athletics

Athletics experienced continued growth and progress over the past year. Teams excelled on the field with league titles, state finalists, state championships and a national champion. Off the field, our registration numbers continue to rise, we received a Leadership award from the state association.

We launched this year with presentations from the Positive Coaching Alliance, aiming to bring the benefits of educational athletics to all of our programs. Our captains' council, coaches advisory and parent vision team are all committed to building the pride and unity while maintaining the strong history and tradition amongst our programming.

This year, we are seeking an increase of \$29,800 to finally bring us in line with real expenses and adjust for rising costs. Specifically we are:

- Planning for the increase in ice costs (per rink contract), about \$5,000 more
- Increase in the cost of transportation (per history of contract), about \$5,000 more
- Increase cost of equipment, about \$3,000 more
- Addition of 3 new coaches; cross-country, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field, about \$12,000
- Implementation of an equipment rotation, \$3,000.00
- Replacement of football chute, \$1,800.00
- Renegotiation of the transportation contract

Research supports the benefits of participation in high school educational athletics including improved grades, lowered disciplinary issues, strengthening the skills of commitment, communication and teamwork while building confidence and supporting the social-emotional needs of adolescents.