

Arlington High School
Budget Discussion Overview
Arlington School Committee Meeting
December 10, 2020

Arlington High School (AHS) currently enrolls 1410 high school students in a 400,000 square foot facility. The school has remained consistently high in rankings and closed achievement gaps over the past 6 years. We are consistently recognized as a U.S. News & World Report Gold Medal school. We are a U.S. News & World Report STEM school, a Newsweek Top School, a top 500 Newsweek STEM School, and among the nation's most challenging schools according to the Washington Post.

This year, our budget priorities reflect ongoing efforts, the impact of the building project, and the impact of the COVID 19 epidemic. Our budget priorities for this year echo ongoing efforts and challenges. After years of gradual enrollment growth and long term understaffing, we entered this year anticipating rapid growth. However, with the advent of the pandemic, enrollment has remained flat. Our new growth estimates anticipate a slight slowdown in growth based on the impact of the building project. For this reason, we are anticipating growth of only 36 students in the coming year.

The core of our budget request is formed around rising enrollment and the challenges of the upcoming building project. Our priorities in allocating staffing are driven by the need to maintain support in the core required classes, to provide a full schedule of course offerings, to support inclusion and high expectations for all students, and to support educational equity and opportunity. We anticipate increased needs for social emotional and academic support as the students and staff emerge from the pandemic. We will also be completing Phase 1 of the building project and moving almost half the classrooms in the winter of 2022. This will require support to maintain existing spaces, supporting move planning, and to supervising an even more complex space.

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

- Unpredictable enrollment. Enrollment growth this year is extremely 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 continues to make it difficult for students to meet requirements and build their schedules.
- Collaborative Problem Solving rollout - 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. These are likely to be exacerbated by the pandemic.
- State accountability guidelines call for ever rising levels of student achievement and

graduation rates.

Curriculum and Staffing

The high school anticipates modest and unpredictable enrollment growth in the next year. Overall enrollment has increased by 199 students in the previous 5 years. The table below is based on conservative estimates of the district high school enrollment. Our staffing increases over the past 6 years have not kept pace with this enrollment growth. Below, we have adjusted forward the 5-year timeline of staffing increase that was created last year, with adjustments for current enrollment projections, staffing, and student needs.

Below is a 5-year timeline of staffing increases that will allow us to anticipate those increases in a timely fashion. I will explain each line below. The grey area marks the year of completion of the building project, when we anticipate that enrollment patterns will likely change significantly.

School Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Enrollment Projection	1513	1531	1572	1580	1605
INCREASE	36	18	41	8	25
Multiplier @1.7 per 25	2.45	1.22	2.79	0.54	1.7
1. Classroom Teachers	2.00	0.80	2.40	?	?
2. Special Ed			0.40	1.00	
3. Dean				1.00	
4. House Secretary				0.50	
5. School Counseling		0.50		0.50	
6. Historical Understaffing					
7. Inclusion	0.40				
8. Related Service (SLPA)	1.00				
9. Sub-Separate/ Retain OOD			?	?	
10. Team Chair					
TOTAL FTE (Enrollment/Needs)	3.4	1.3	2.80	2.7	?
11. Building Project Phase	1 - 2	2	3	4	
Secretary Support	0.50				
Building Security	1.00	1.00			
Makerspace Aid (BSP)		1.00			
Smarlab Assistant (BSP)			1.00		
TOTAL FTE (Building Project)	1.5	2.0	1.0		

Legend: The grey corresponds to the completion of the building, when enrollment projections

are likely to change significantly.

1. **Classroom Teachers.** The MSBA sets the average class size at 20, understanding that this results in classes ranging from 17-23 under appropriate staffing levels. This allows for normal variation based on scheduling and distribution as well as for planned support classes that are smaller by design. Each teacher is then responsible for roughly 100 students. With 7 class periods and an average class size of 20, we require 1.4 FTE of classroom teachers for each 20 additional students. However, given the constraints of our current budgets and rising enrollment throughout the district, we have set the rate of increase at an average of 25 students per section.

In addition, each new student gradually increases the need for support roles such as Special Education, Deans, and Guidance. While our desired caseloads would place the multiplier at 1.83 FTE for each additional 25 students, we have used a multiplier of 1.7, again based on the constraints of growth across the district. We anticipate modest growth next year, and a need for 2.0 FTE of classroom teachers to cover growth.

2. **Special Education Caseloads.** Roughly 13.3% of our students have IEPs and special education teachers carry a caseload of 20 students. Given the small growth over the coming year, we are not asking specifically for Special Education staffing to cover this demand in the current year. However, we do anticipate a need for Special Education coverage to support our inclusion co-taught classes, see below.

3-4. **House System - Dean.** Over the last three years ago, we were able to move to a third full time Dean and to return to a three house system, reopening Collomb House. Our plan is to maintain houses of under 500 students in keeping with the vision in our Educational Program developed for the new building. We were able to assign one Dean and two School Counselors to each house. We have also reorganized our House Secretaries to create a centralized attendance office, which better allows us to support all three House Deans. In anticipation of the new building and a 4 house system, when we begin to approach 1755, we will plan for an additional house, including a Dean, School Counselors, and Secretarial support.

5. **School Counseling.** Our contract calls for the School Counselors (formerly Guidance Counselors) to carry caseloads under 300. In addition, NEASC and professional standards for high school counseling call for caseloads under 250, recognizing the importance and burden of graduation, career, and college planning. We currently have 6 School Counselors and anticipate going over our desired caseload in SY 2023. This will require us to hire either an additional half or full-time Counselor depending on student need and staffing availability. In addition, our School Counseling Department includes 1.5 FTE of Social Workers. Given rising enrollment and increased issues with mental illness among high school age students, we will monitor needs going forward.

6. **Understaffing.** To address existing understaffing issues, last year, we requested an additional 2 FTE of teachers. Given our increases in staffing and lower than anticipated enrollment growth, we were able to improve class sizes in English, Math, History, and Science, getting closer to appropriate levels. The arts and electives remain full and many students are not able to get the classes they request. If staffing levels keep consistent with enrollment growth, as requested, we expect that this will not be less of an issue in the coming years.

7. **Co-Taught Inclusion Classes.** This year, we expanded our commitment to support all students achieving at a college-college career ready standard. Beginning five years ago, we piloted co-taught models to support students in our small group Curriculum B level courses. With appropriate support, students accelerated their learning to access college preparatory curriculum (Curriculum A).

The model requires multiple co-taught sections in required classes to reach an inclusion model with fewer than 30% special education students. Over the last year, we were able to support multiple Curriculum A sections of required classes with Special Education co-teachers. These Co-Taught Inclusion Classes have been successful, and we continue to work on the challenges of scheduling, staffing, and coordination involved in supporting effective inclusion. We anticipate adding 2 sections in order to complete the development and staffing of this model in required classes.

8. **Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant (SLPA).** Due to the rising need for speech and language services, the Special Education department seeks to add a professionally licensed SLPA, under the direction of our existing Speech and Language teacher. This is outlined further in the Special Education services request.

9. **Compass and Specific Student Needs.** Over the past 6 years, AHS has been working to expand our offerings to support students with high level needs for specialized instruction. This might mean the creation of stronger substantially-separate programming, or training and support for students with unique needs in the general education classroom. We have significantly improved the capacity of our Reach Program, serving autistic students or students with related needs, and our Summit Program, serving students with social-emotional needs. We have recently expanded programming in our Compass Program, for students with cognitive disabilities. Increased staffing in these areas will depend on the emerging needs of students rising through the lower grades, or choosing to attend Arlington High School. This area is dependent on specific needs and we do not anticipate a need in the coming year. We will monitor needs going forward.

10. **Team Chair.** We are currently servicing our IEP programming and service only students using 2 Team Chairs. While we don't anticipate a need to expand this role immediately, the special education needs at the high school continue to expand as our numbers increase and as we retain students with higher levels of support. We will monitor needs going forward.

11. Building Project. The AHS building project is now underway, and we anticipate completing Phase 1 in January of 2022 and moving to occupy those spaces. There are a number of staffing requirements built into the Educational Program. In addition, the monitoring and staffing requirements of Phase 1 and 2 will have an impact next year. For this reason, we are requesting 1.5 FTE of positions. First, we are requesting 0.5 FTE of secretarial support for the Assistant Principal. The demands of scheduling and coordinating construction impacts and the anticipated move in January will add significant clerical duties. The design of the building calls for Reception/Attendance Staff at two main entrances. With the opening of the new STEAM wing, we will need to staff the new entrance for the second half of the year, adding 0.5 FTE. Lastly, during Phase 2, the building will be significantly divided with classes in the new wing, Fusco, and Downs House, stretching around the construction. For this reason, we are requesting an additional paraprofessional for the second half of the year to supervise the “Links”, adding another 0.5 FTE. The total is 1.5 FTE to assist with building project security and oversight.

With the anticipated return to school in September 2021 and the anticipated move in January 2022, roughly 100 staff will need to pack and move classrooms. The Arlington Public School Contract calls for a per diem payment for classroom moves. With this number of moves, we anticipate roughly \$40,000 will be needed to plan and pay for the move.

Digital Technology

In seven years, digital technology at AHS has transformed our approach to teaching and learning, providing new opportunities 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 [Bring Your Own Device](#) program in SY 2015-16 year, AHS moved to an environment where all students expect and are expected to have access to digital technology for teaching and learning. In the past year, this experience with digital technology proved our salvation as the school was forced to go primarily remote. The school has distributed chromebooks and repurposed monitors and equipment from computer labs. Teachers were thrilled to be issued new Macbooks. As we anticipate a return to the building in September, we expect that there will be some predictable need for replacement of devices due to breakage and loss.

We will need to anticipate ongoing needs for teacher devices, student devices, classroom projection, wireless access, internet access, specialty labs, and database subscriptions all need constant upkeep, renewal, and improvement. Specifically we need:

- Ongoing replacement and supplies for new staff.
- Funding for replacement and repairs to accessories and connectivity such as projectors, cords, DVD players, software, and bulbs.
- Student devices need replacement and increased numbers for classroom, study hall, and library use.
- Continue to invest in Wireless and Network capacity and reliability

AHS Bring Your Own Device Agreement found at this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-o58x_g8diWvLLdRh1c2G2RMIQddEhx5f9uRUq5q-k/edit?usp=sharing