

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – June 17, 2019

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, June 17, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Nate Buffum
Kim Reichelt
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal
James Lee, Happy Hollow Principal
Christie Harvey, Claypit Hill Principal
Brian Jones, Loker Principal
Melissa Bryant, WHS Foreign Language Department Chair & Teacher
Nicole Hagdoust, World Language Teacher
Heath Rollins, Athletic Director

WHS China Exchange Students:

Andrew Boyer, Devin DiCarlo, Keita Williams, Lucas Thompson, Luciano Sebastianelli
Chang Liu, WHS Mandarin Teacher and China Exchange Coordinator
Brian Reddington, WMS Science Teacher

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the regular session at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting was recorded by WayCAM. On behalf of the School Committee, Jeanne thanked Diane Marobella for her work as the recording secretary for the School Committee.

1. **Special Matters:**

(a) Presentation by the Wayland High School JSYY Exchange Students:

The following presentations were highlighted and described by the WHS JSYY Exchange Students, as they were assignments during their trip to China. They also shared some of their personal experiences and travels while in China.

- *Education Inequality* by Andrew Boyer
- *The Second Sino Japanese War* by Devin DiCarlo
- *The Red Guard* by Keita Williams
- *The GaoKao* by Lucas Thompson
- *The Life of Cao Cao* by Luciano Sebastianelli

Middle School science teacher Brian Reddington accompanied the students to China and noted that all the students kept their own journals in areas such as family life, excursions, English Corner, food, and school life, which was a part of their educational experience.

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In response to a question from the School Committee, the students said that they were surprised that when shopping, everything could be bargained for, and the Chinese government blocked Wikipedia.

Arthur was asked to speak about his experiences with the new principal of the JSYY School and commented that the new principal is committed to sending her students to the United States next year.

(b) WHS World Language Proposal:

Melissa Bryant and Nicole Hagdoust presented a proposal for World Language in which this subject would be a two-year graduation requirement for high school students beginning in 2020. Some of the rationale and expectation for studying world language for two years is that students can communicate information, make presentations, and express their thoughts on familiar topics. These expectations do align with National Standards and DESE Standards, as well as with the WHS Mission Statement and the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Other districts that require a two-year world language graduation requirement include many, such as Acton-Boxborough (2020-2021), Arlington, Weston, Natick, Bedford, Lincoln/Sudbury, and Boston Latin.

All four-year state universities in Massachusetts do require a minimum of two consecutive years of high school foreign language study. Some may require three or four years. In addition, in 2017 Governor Baker signed legislation into law for the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy, which is monitored and awarded through DESE. Twenty-five WHS seniors received this award in June 2019.

Melissa and Nicole reviewed the planning and procedures in terms of students being able to access two years of the Language curriculum, adding that a small number of students with learning and social emotional disabilities may be waived from this requirement depending on the recommendations from a Guidance team and would ultimately be at the principal's discretion.

The School Committee asked questions regarding this world language proposal. A formal presentation will be brought before the School Committee in the fall.

(c) Presentation and Discussion with Youth Advisory Committee Members:

Youth Advisory Committee member Malcolm Astley spoke in regard to the Youth Advisory Board and its role to oversee the many groups in Wayland who work to support the youth of Wayland in terms of the challenges they face. These groups include Youth and Family Services, Wayland Cares, the Board of Health, the Police Department, the Sudbury/Wayland/Lincoln Domestic Violence Roundtable, the School Counseling Service, the health and wellness staff, the social emotional planning groups, the Initiative and the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program, and the Students Against Destructive Decisions. The goal is to get these groups to function collaboratively to identify the priorities and work on these issues.

Malcolm presented a list of running and pending agenda items in areas of concern, such as healthy decision making by children, prevention, clinical intervention, promoting parent support and education, anxiety, depression, and suicide, substance use, as well as social emotional skills. Malcolm elaborated on these areas of concern and others not mentioned here.

(d) Review and Discuss Youth Advisory Committee Appointee Applications:

This agenda item was discussed later in the meeting.

2. **Educational Matters:**

(a) School Improvement Plans Presented by Principals:

The Children's Way – Deepening Wellness & Elevating Growth:

Katie noted that the things that are of immeasurable value are the hardest to measure, adding that the progress and growth of the TCW students are assessed on a daily basis. The Children's Way teachers are constantly learning about social emotional issues, practicing mindfulness, and building upon their own skills that include rest and resiliency, so they can be ready to respond vs. react in any given situation. Katie elaborated on the ways in which teachers can be less stressed and be present for the children as offered at a professional retreat facilitated by Dr. Christopher Willard. The Children's Way also hosted a mindfulness workshop for some parents in May.

Key social emotional skills and key mindfulness practices have been implemented in the classrooms followed up by updates and ideas shared at staff meetings. Katie reviewed how these practices are used in the classrooms, including the benefits gained; such as practicing regulated breathing and participating in movement and games.

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Katie presented The Children’s Way plan to include wellness and growth for the 2019-2020 school year with a focus on transmitting core philosophy, core approaches, and common language. Due to recent staff turnover, piloting a “mentoring model” will be introduced. In addition, teachers will be involved in district-wide “Learning Walks,” TCW teachers and Kindergarten teachers will collaborate and there will be an identification of a Pre-K-12 SEL common focus, approaches, and language.

Elementary – Elevating Achievement:

Principals Christie Harvey, Jim Lee, and Brian Jones presented the Elementary School Improvement Plan. The objective is to help teachers “identify key pedagogical practices that provide opportunities for students to access enrichment level work when using FOSS science lessons so that they can be identified and used to elevate engagement and achievement in like ways across curricular area.”

Thus far, the work completed in this regard has been Learning Walks at all three elementary schools and the creation of a Google document of observed pedagogical practices from Learning Walks that is shared with all elementary administrators and teachers. Different administrators participated in each Learning Walk at Loker School, Claypit Hill School, and Happy Hollow School and observed different teachers’ classrooms as described by the principals, adding that many observations were common practices across all classrooms and grade levels. Many patterns emerged from the Learning Walks, including that children were always engaged and worked collaboratively and comfortably together. Other ideas and thoughts were noted as the process moves forward in terms of areas that need more focus.

Next steps might include asking teachers to participate in the Learning Walks, as they could have valuable input in terms of elevating achievement, and principals and curriculum coordinators will work directly with teachers to identify how specific pedagogical practices can be applied across the disciplines.

Elementary – Deepening Wellness:

The goal is to identify areas of growth within social-emotional instruction. Each school has completed a SEL assessment, and teachers, specialists, and teaching assistants are being trained in the full Responsive Classroom course. In addition, classroom teachers led morning meetings based on this training, which included the morning message, the greeting, shared and group activities. Principals observed these meetings and Open Circle lessons for the purpose of providing feedback on its impact and the importance of educating the whole child. Jim gave examples of mindfulness techniques being practiced in the classrooms.

Moving forward, the district SEL team will ensure that the SEL practices are aligned with the vision and mission of the district, as well as continuing to evaluate and develop the social language used and modeled at the upper elementary grades. The principals cited examples of measuring progress in terms of the success of FOSS.

Brian Jones acknowledged Jim Lee for his long-standing work in Wayland and his wonderful contributions to the district.

3. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Carla Stafford opposes the decision made regarding math assessments and spoke briefly about her son’s junior year experiences with math. She attended the recent meeting in this regard at Wayland High School and it was well attended with most parents opposing this decision. Ms. Stafford commented that her child needs extra support out of school and noted that other towns are not making this decision in terms of math assessments.

Kara Britton spoke about her child’s experiences in math and there are increasing obstacles when placing limitations on the students; thus she opposes this decision. She added that she supports the World Language Proposal because she and her daughter are currently looking at colleges.

Kathleen Radar agrees with the previous two comments. The tests are used as tools to study for future tests. She believes that it is harmful to students to keep the tests from them.

Alexia Obar also agrees with the previous comments and is not supportive of the tests not being returned to the students and without early morning transportation, it will be difficult for students to get extra help. She believes that there hasn’t been enough communication in this regard since December and communication is key when making important decisions.

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Vanessa Kremp commented that being mindful about students' social emotional welfare is confusing when the tests are being kept from the students.

Stephanie Leong spoke about what happens in the Middle School in terms of using the tests to learn why mistakes were made, adding that resources are available to prepare for the re-assessment. She believes that 9th and 10th graders need the math assessments, but maybe the 11th and 12th graders do not.

Jeff Sklar noted that he appeared before the School Committee on December 3 because, in his opinion, the students' records law was not followed in this regard. He briefly reiterated the comments he made on December 3, including what he feels has been retribution towards him. Mr. Sklar claimed that many students are dropping out of honors math classes because the assessments are not returned to them.

Dana Davies does not agree with this decision commenting that the focus should be on helping students become better students. Her concern is that this decision is being put in place at the same time that start times are changing adding to the stress to the students. She believes that children should have access to their tests in order to learn from their mistakes.

Kim Reichelt, speaking for herself, wants the public to know that she and other members ran for School Committee because they care very much about the schools. They do their best and listen to everyone before decisions are made. Although the sender apologized after the fact, Kim announced that she received a very disturbing email today.

Jeanne read a statement from Jeff Barron regarding "assessment vs. summative." He is against keeping math assessments from the students, as it decreases the potential to learn from mistakes made and believes it will become a major issue in the fall when students can't access teachers' help so easily. It does not allow the students to be best prepared for the future. He is hopeful that the School Committee will advise against this math decision.

Jeanne also read a statement from Tom Sciacca advocating against the potential monopole at the high school.

Arthur commented that it's important for the public and School Committee to realize that much discussion by the administrators and teachers has gone into the decision regarding math assessments and he trusts these professionals thereby supporting this decision knowing that it was made with only the best interests of the students in mind.

4. **Educational Matters (cont'd):**

(a) School Improvement Plans Presented by Principals:

Wayland Middle School – Elevating Achievement - Standards-Based Grading:

Betsy Gavron presented the School Improvement Plan to the Committee with the focus on noticing every student every day. The Middle School's goal is that "the entire staff will begin a multi-year process of transitioning to standards-based reporting in an effort to offer more specific, actionable feedback about students' academic growth and performance."

She worked with the Middle School leadership/curriculum leaders which led to leadership working with each department in terms of standards-based grading. Betsy described this work that included developing a common language across the grades in this regard, developing common agreements or how much information is reported, participating in Learning Walks. In the interest of time, Betsy shared the work of the Social Studies Department and the takeaways noted by this department; one being that in order to teach for mastery, two-thirds to three-quarters of the curriculum needs to be taught to the students. Some vertical alignment work and concept mapping was developed resulting in five concepts that they could be sure would be consistent with the standards based work – citizenship, global citizenship, geography, justice, and power. Betsy continued to elaborate on the Social Studies Department's work related to the characteristics of effective state standards. However, different departments took different approaches.

Wayland Middle School – Deepening Wellness:

The school based goal in this regard is to "identify and support school-based personnel, who will participate in a district-level committee to assess current PreK-12 student social-emotional needs, existing school-based structures/supports, and current capacities."

The district adopted five CASEL standards, but the Middle School will focus on two – social awareness and relationship skills with some attention to responsible decision making. Middle School staff's professional

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development included diversity, equity and inclusion work. Betsy described the staff's ongoing effort.

Betsy identified the Middle School's next steps for elevating achievement through standards-based grading, which includes continuing to work on offering effective formative feedback, continuing to draft and refine 8-12 standards to report out, testing the school's common assessments' ability to measure mastery of standards, and trying out standards with grade book options and reporting tools. Next steps for deepening wellness will involve reviewing the SEL Report and MWBHS data, rolling out the SEL vision and mission with staff, building on McLean anxiety work, and focus on the CASEL standards as they relate to the school's BERT philosophy.

Wayland High School – Elevating Achievement – Department Team Projects:

Allyson Mizoguchi presented the WHS School Improvement Plan that describes department team projects toward elevating achievement. Realizing that this journey is about a three-year project, seven department teams studied a group of students whom they want to better understand. As part of their effort, the teams brainstormed and self-assessed current practices and structures, identified a cohort of students, and created a plan for collecting data to improve academic and personal knowledge of students with the goal of elevating academic performance.

For example, the English Department chose "resistant readers" as those students whom they wanted to better understand. Allyson described how the team focused on ways in which to develop these students into independent readers. A "survey of reading habits" was conducted and almost 600 students responded. Allyson explained some of the survey's highlights and results in terms of how much students read and what they read.

As a result, the English Department has developed an action plan for next year that includes a focus on independent reading. The team will research and acquire more high interest books for classroom libraries, it will make use of SORA/ Overdrive for students accessing e-books, a questionnaire will be developed and implemented and given to students at the beginning of the school year and halfway through the year for the purpose of identifying the "resistant readers." Once these students are identified, they will be assisted in finding titles and "reading conferences" will be held with those students periodically to reinforce their attempts at reading. A discussion ensued about whether students' reading habits begin in middle school and carry through high school.

The CASEL Core Competencies:

Richard reviewed the five CASEL core competencies that were all previously discussed during the principal's reports. He appreciates the principals' and staff's confidence and commitment to move forward in this regard to inherently link them to academics, social development, curriculum development, including the district's long term planning. Parry also commented on the work that is being done in the schools, including tying into elementary reading assessments and focusing on many areas for multiple years to come.

(b) Discussion regarding the Athletic Handbook:

Athletic Director Heath Rollins presented the draft Athletic Handbook to the School Committee. He noted that the development of the handbook by the Athletic Advisory Committee has been a two-year project to include all athletic information in one document. Athletic policies make up about 90% of the handbook. The policy regarding student absenteeism is the biggest change, adding that students must be in school the day of a game, unless there is an approved absence at least the day before, such as bereavement, college visits, religious holidays, drivers' license test, or scheduled doctors' visits. The team fundraising policy was also rewritten to ensure consistency among teams.

The School Committee discussed Heath's athletic timeline for the purpose of the Committee's approval of the handbook. The goal is to approve at the Committee's meeting on July 15.

(c) Follow-up Discussion on High School Assessments:

Each School Committee member expressed his/her concerns regarding the WHS leadership's potential decision to hold onto math assessments and not return them to the students. Some of the concerns are the number of students who are dropping math courses, the procedural vs. the substantive issue, the legal aspect of student records requests, and the School Committee's role is in this decision-making process.

WHS Math Department Chair Barbara Coughlin joined in the School Committee's discussion and offered her and the math teachers' rationale in moving forward with this decision. She addressed the students' decisions this school year in making changes to their math courses, including the data she has collected in this regard. Barbara described how teachers reflect on how students can improve on their mistakes without the assessment. Students are encouraged to

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meet with their teachers to focus on the bigger picture of what they understand and what they don't understand in order to move forward. Teachers use "learning logs" for each student similar to a portfolio system, as the teachers spend a lot of time with students when needed. One observation was made: tests are not returned in other subjects.

Jeanne suggested that in terms of next steps, there could be another discussion in this regard, trust the professionals to make this decision, or put this effort in trial mode until January 2020. The Committee members noted their preference in moving forward. Barbara added that the teachers appreciate that the School Committee allows the staff to do their job well, but if the School Committee takes over the decision making in this process, there will be a serious morale issue amongst the staff. She pleaded with the Committee to trust the staff to do its job. The majority of the School Committee members agreed to trust the professionals with the hope that this decision will work and continue to benefit the students.

(d) Superintendent's Report:

- *School Visits:*

Arthur thanked Jim Lee, wished him well on his retirement, and noted that it has been a pleasure to work with him. He attended the State House ceremony at which 50 schools state-wide were recognized for high performance, high growth, and exceeding targets in MCAS scores, and Loker School was recognized as one of those schools.

- *School Start Times Update:*

Information was sent to families on June 12. Kim attended a public forum in Sudbury at which school start times were discussed prior to a School Committee vote to change the start times in 2020. She noted there was very little opposition to this change in Sudbury and some support from the elementary teachers and parents. Kim was tasked with developing recommendations in terms for healthy sleep habits, as well as communication.

5. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Request for School Committee Approval to Add Special Education Teacher Assistants:

The administrators are recommending hiring additional teaching assistants for SPED, a total of 6.2 FTE's: .2 at Loker, 1.0 at Happy Hollow, 4.0 at the Middle School, and 1.0 at the High School. The estimated total cost is \$155,000 and the funding will be found through savings generated in transportation and tuition. Susan noted the reallocations in the budget. Richard explained the rationale in making this request.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the funding to add the special education teacher assistants as described by Richard.

(b) High School Athletic Complex Project:

- Project Status: the project is progressing very well.

- Abutter Letter: the letter went out last week.

- Discussion of Balloon Test for Monopole and Next Steps:

The look of the pole can be specified by the School Committee, if they move forward. If a pole is not put at the high school, Verizon will move ahead with its process to use the Rod & Gun Club property. There would be benefits to having the monopole at the high school; however, the School Committee would like to explore the health issues to the public, possibly at the July 1 meeting. It was noted that the Board of Health does not support a cell tower at the high school, and a petition is circulating in opposition to the monopole at the high school. The School Committee's consensus is not to proceed at the high school with the monopole.

(c) Update on Discussions with Recreation Commission Concerning Fields:

Kathie met with the Recreation Commission and its interest in pursuing regular communication with the School Committee in terms of the Loker field and shared responsibilities on the playgrounds. Kathie will continue the conversation with the Recreation Commission.

6. **Policy Matters:**

(a) Review and Discuss Policy DIF:

This agenda was tabled until July 1.

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7. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- (a) Discussion regarding Superintendent's Annual Performance Evaluation, including Review of Elements, Feedback on All Aspects of the Superintendent's Performance and Schedule:

The School Committee discussed with Arthur the three elements: Communication with Families, Administrative Leadership Meetings, and the Superintendent's vision. Arthur explained his work in these areas to date.

The School Committee asked questions in terms of what has been learned this year when communicating to families, have the surveys been useful tools, Administrative Council meetings, and the takeaways from the Spanish Immersion decision.

The evaluation process will wrap up on June 24 and the final written evaluation will be presented to Arthur on July 1.

- (b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Request:

- Minutes Request of June 11, 2019

Jeanne noted that George Harris has requested all un-redacted Executive Session minutes for FY11 that have not been released. Those minutes that have been released, he has requested that they be un-redacted. This topic will be discussed again on July 1.

- (c) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Open Meeting Law Matters:

There are no outstanding Open Meeting Law matters at this time.

- (d) Discussion of School Committee Communications and Information for The Buzz:

Kim will provide a summary of this meeting. Kim and Arthur will appear on The Buzz in late August to discuss school start times.

In terms of the Youth Advisory Committee applications, Jeanne noted that four applications were received. Interviews will be on July 1, but Malcolm Astley's appearance before the School Committee this evening will be considered his interview.

8. **Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated June 17, 2019, in the amount of \$342,181.93
- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated June 19, 2019, in the amount of \$707,350.97

- (b) Approval and Declaration of Surplus Furniture

- (c) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of May 20, 2019

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

9. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

10. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 11:52 p.m. for the purposes of discussing strategy in the pending lawsuit titled Stephen Cass v. Town of Wayland, et al, USDC D. Mass., CA No. 1:17-CV-11441, as permitted to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3); and voting to approve the following Executive Session minutes: May 20, 2019, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will reconvene in open session for adjournment purposes only.

11. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 12:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Michele Fiske, WTA
Kori Rogers, WTA
Carla Stafford
Kathleen Radar
Stephanie Leong, Rolling Lane
Alexia Obar

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Written Statements read during Public Comment
3. Youth Advisory Committee Applications
4. WHS Athletic Handbook
5. Memo on Math Assessment Return Policy
6. List of Surplus Furniture
7. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants
8. Regular Session Minutes of May 20, 2019
9. Executive Session Motion