

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, at 5:15 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

*Present and participating remotely were:*

Jeanne Downs, Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair  
Kim Reichelt  
Chris Ryan  
Kathie Steinberg

*Also participating remotely:*

Arthur Unobskey  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead  
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan  
Director of Finance & Operations

*Also:*

Ben Keefe, Director of Public Buildings

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:15 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

1. **COVID-19 Response (out of order):**

(a) Surveillance Testing Program Update and Possible Vote to Approve Fee:

Ellen gave an update on the testing program. The testing fee has changed; however, the tests are free for the first six weeks as provided by the state. Staff, who may be outsourced, is needed to swab Kindergartners and first graders and observers are needed for overseeing the self-swabbing by students in grades two through twelve. Nursing staff will perform the reflex testing. The fee will be \$32.00 to cover the operational costs for testing. For families who cannot afford the fee, funds will be used from the town's donation account to cover the cost for those families as well as staff members. All those who are interested in this program must complete and submit the consent forms.

After the first six-weeks of testing, Wayland will contract with a vendor at which time the fee will adjust upward to include the test and operational costs.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve a COVID pooled testing fee for the Wayland Public Schools of \$32 for the initial six-week period. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

Kathie Steinberg X

Jeanne commented that Ellen and Chris filed their conflict of interest forms.

Arthur added to this discussion later in the meeting. The vendor has asked the district to participate in a quick start which is about a third of those who signed up and test in the buildings as a trial run through the procedures. Arthur will send a letter to the community regarding a consent form that was also reviewed by school counsel and recommended by DESE. Consent forms must be received to participate.

**2. Superintendent Search:**

- (a) Discussion of Next Steps:  
Passed over.

**3. Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Minutes: January 13, 2021:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

**4. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:**

Danielle Hardie inquired if additional resources or support are available for families who home school their children due to the lack of a pediatric COVID vaccine. She commented that she did not receive a Kindergarten packet for her child and asked if the schools are addressing SEL for those children who need additional support.

Arthur responded to Ms. Hardy. He noted that families who home school are not part of the public school system any longer and described the process. Arthur will make sure a Kindergarten packet is sent to her. Arthur also addressed Ms. Hardie's concern about how the district is addressing SEL for students.

Jeanne read a public comment from Brie and Mike Lemire regarding their support to bring Kindergarteners into school four days a week, as positive cases are decreasing and research indicates that schools are not a source of high transmission and viral spread.

**5. Financial Matters:**

- (a) Discussion of FY22 Recommended Budget and Possible Vote to Approve:  
After meeting with Steve Correia, Louise Miller, Cherry Karlson, Susan Bottan, Jeanne reported that the recommendation was to submit the FY22 operating budget but to split it into three categories: level services, new initiatives, and a breakout of COVID expenses. Jeanne explained the basis for this recommendation.

The COVID funds will be managed by the town and if the schools need access to those funds, a request would be made through the Town Administrator's office. A discussion ensued about this process and the school department's ability to access funds.

Susan reviewed the spreadsheets she prepared for personnel and non-personnel level funded budget of \$1.1M and the facilities budget. To level fund the facilities budget is an increase of \$231,000 bringing the grand total of the level services budget to \$1.370M increase over the FY21 budget. Susan noted there may be some additional special education staffing needs to meet the individualized educational plans of some students and may require adjustments to the mandated services personnel budget for one year only. Richard explained this possible \$70,000 adjustment to the level funded budget, and Susan confirmed that the total amount would be \$1.44M or a 3.2% increase over the FY21 budget.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
 Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

There were two tiers of sustaining innovations totaling \$435,000, including a maintenance and project management budget (maintenance contract and a .5 FTE for project management service) of \$247,000 for a total of \$682,000 or a 1.57% increase over the FY21 budget. The School Committee noted its concerns about facilities being included in the sustaining innovations/new initiatives category, as well as the uncertainty of the funds belonging in the school or town budgets given that currently the town controls the facilities department. A discussion followed in this regard. Ben Keefe reported that the town's FY22 facilities budget request is \$991,000. Annual HVAC maintenance totals \$207,000 and includes cleaning in the five schools and The Children's Way three times a year during the summer, winter, and spring breaks. During the April spring break, there will be comprehensive cleaning, an operational inspection, minor repairs and adjustments, and necessary filter changes. Ben presented a breakdown of expenses and explained further. Ben addressed the differences between the MERV 13 vs. the MERV 8 filters, such as the cost, the possibility of reverting back to the MERV 8 filters, and the reimbursement of funds for the MERV 13 through the COVID funding. Ben spoke about the possibility of hiring a permanent HVAC technician and the salary range depending on overtime and a premium shift. He added that there may be a need for outside assistance to help in meeting timelines. Ben does not see savings in the first year.

Susan asked the School Committee to consider the possibility of shifting to a distance only transportation service which could reduce the budget by almost \$550,000. Thus, the School Committee would vote on a budget, less the COVID funding, with an increase \$1.5M or 3.47% not including the \$70,000 for special education. Susan also provided some projections for FY22 COVID related expenses for personnel, non-personnel for a full year or a half year. COVID testing was not reflected in this projection. She also projected costs for the transition to all-in for all students after April vacation. The fall program is unpredictable at this time. The School Committee discussed the budget information presented and how to move forward with tonight's budget vote. Richard spoke about the SEL issues that are not measurable or predictable, but added that the district must be prepared going forward because there will be a significant impact in this regard. Richard agrees that the recommended budget will address the unanticipated needs.

Jeanne proposed moving the maintenance contract into the level services budget, include the sustaining innovations, maintain the current transportation model for one more year, consider moving all maintenance costs into the town budget, and that the school district controls all COVID school costs. Concerns were raised about the transportation model, the burden on working parents, and the possibility of not reinstating the full transportation service in a year or so. A discussion ensued about transportation and Susan shared the feedback from the principals regarding the current transportation schedule in terms of time taken for arrivals and dismissals in the hybrid model and the increase in time if all students came back to school, as well as the staffing issues. The Committee continued to discuss the facilities budget.

Jeanne again proposed that the School Committee moves the maintenance items into the level services budget, that the rest of the sustaining new initiatives are kept where they are including the project manager, keep the COVID expenses where they are with the caveat that we explain that the maintenance items should become part of the town budget, and the caveat that we explain that the COVID expenses are not necessarily for the hybrid model and they could be used for a different model, and that the School Committee wants to understand that they are under the control of the School Department.

Susan confirmed that total level services increase is \$2,122,971 plus \$1,439,820 for a total budget of \$46,921,936 or an 8.22% increase that includes COVID costs for one year. Without the COVID costs, there is a 4.9% increase over the FY21 budget. A discussion followed.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve a FY22 operating budget without COVID expenses of \$45,482,116 and with COVID expenses of \$46,921,936. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

6. COVID-19 Response (continued):

- (a) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Synchronous Augmentation, Kindergarten All-In Planning and Start Date:  
This discussion ensued in preparation for the Kindergarten students to return all-in on February 25 that was voted by the School Committee and is supported by the Board of Health, including an update of the ventilation issues in the elementary schools.

Ben Keefe confirmed that DESE adopted a ventilation report from Harvard University and reported on the findings of the report. There should be a minimum of three clean filtered air exchanges per hour in each classroom; he explained. Ben presented the slide deck that DESE presented to school superintendents for the School Committee to peruse. Ben recited the fully adequate air exchange rates of 3.3 or more for the elementary schools that meet all of the requirements. He added that the only restriction in the rooms is the social distancing protocol. Ben addressed the one working rooftop unit servicing the cafeteria at Claypit Hill in terms of air exchange.

Arthur reported on the preparations by the administrators and teachers that includes revising the master schedule. For the most part, there will be 5 feet of social distancing in the classrooms and there could be some classrooms at Claypit Hill that achieve 6 feet given that another kindergarten section was added. All mask breaks and lunches will be socially distanced at 6 feet. Parry spoke about the time involved for mask breaks, recess, hand washing, transitions, arrivals and dismissals, and the academic progress in hybrid vs. all-in. Having the kindergartners all-in will have more of an impact in social emotional learning.

The School Committee members expressed their support or non-support of this decision. Jeanne and Chris support the decision but understand the concerns. Kim is highly ambivalent toward this decision and elaborated on her non-support based on the research surrounding social distancing and believes it may be premature. She does, however, understand why there is a push toward bringing the kindergartners all-in. Chris offered more reasons and research to support this decision based on his personal experience. Although Kathie struggles with this decision, she is relying on the professionals as to why this should happen. Ellen is comfortable moving forward with bringing kindergartners in, but remains hesitant because of the new variants and very soon Wayland will have a testing program, but she does understand the parents' perspective. For the most part, the School Committee recommends moving ahead with bringing kindergartners all-in on February 25.

7. Financial Matters (continued):

- (a) Review of Special Revenue Fund Budgets and Possible Vote to Approve Fees:  
The School Committee reviewed the spreadsheet regarding special revenue fund budgets prepared by Susan. Next year, full day kindergarten may not generate enough revenue to pay for benefits. Full day kindergarten, The Children's Way, BASE, and Food Service pay for health care and OPEB out of these funds. BASE and TCW, however, have budgeted for those items for next year but will not have the balance in the accounts in May when benefits and OPEB are voted at Town Meeting. Susan has been consulting with the town's Finance Director in terms of timing to charge back for FY22. Susan reported how food service is holding its own this year since lunch fees are not being collected this year. A discussion ensued about the full day kindergarten budget, including past years.

Susan described the fee history spreadsheet, including the last four years, for athletics, instructional music, transportation, and full day kindergarten. The fees do pay about a third of the cost of the operational costs of the programs. FinCom has recommended an increase to the fees and Susan presented options to cover 35% of operating costs. Kathie noted that the fee structure is high as the parents contribute about \$5M in revenue from fees, and Wayland exceeds other districts in this regard. In addition, the town collects about \$5.1M in miscellaneous fees. She does not recommend an increase to the fees. Jeanne considered an increase to the transportation fee.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) that the School Committee maintains the fees as presented. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

Jeanne agreed that the fees should remain as is, but acknowledges that the town is faced with getting a very large budget passed during this difficult time.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the special revenue fund budgets as presented. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

- (b) Discussion of Capital Stabilization Fund and Possible Vote to Support:  
Kathie noted her support of the warrant article being proposed for a capitalization fund and recommended School Committee's support in case of an emergency replacement within the capital budget. The School Committee will take a vote next week.
- (c) Review of Current Financial Status:  
Susan reviewed the current financial status and was updated to reflect the new ESSER Two Grant (\$192,425) and the new COVID Relief Grant (\$79,245). Combined with other reported savings and costs expected driven by COVID as noted by Susan, there is currently a net balance of about \$150,000. In addition, Susan noted the projected costs to bring all students back to school at the end of April. Susan recommends paying some of the SPED prepay if the year ends with a net balance.
- (d) Review of Budget Calendar:  
The School Committee will schedule a budget hearing moving forward.

**8. Superintendent Update:**

- (a) Hybrid Mode Update:  
In preparation for Parry's RHLCP report, Arthur acknowledged that teachers and administrators have been extremely effective in making the hybrid model successful, particularly the elementary staff, Curriculum Directors, and math coaches.

**9. COVID-19 Response (continued):**

- (a) Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:  
Parry presented the RHLPC K-5 Progress Committee Report through early to mid-December 2020. The report included data collected, parent feedback from 714 respondents, staff feedback from 43 respondents, student achievement information and progress monitoring, a summary of patterns and next steps. The purpose of this exercise was to find out how students are doing, especially those who are struggling. The committee's goal was to find accurate patterns and stories in the data, but still remain cautious about drawing early conclusions.

Parents and guardians generally see their children making some academic progress, but many are concerned that there is less academic progress as there would be in a normal year. Parry shared the data for students in the hybrid model as well as those students in WRAP and students on IEP's and 504 plans. Questions regarding social emotional needs of students were also asked of parents and guardians. Kindergarten parents, in particular, feel that their children's social emotional needs are not being met.

Staff data was gathered from 19 classroom teachers, 10 specialist teachers, and 14 special education teachers. Teachers were somewhat more positive than what was expected, but are also concerned about those students, as are their parents, who had technology challenges, had interruptions, and had missed many remote days and/or in-person days. WRAP teachers feel that this experience for students is very positive. Finally, teachers acknowledge that it is challenging to provide the necessary social emotional support.

Parry provided a slide from grade-level classroom teachers regarding curricular coverage in reading, writing, math and science, as well as the academic expectations for this year and in a "normal" year. He described the data and responses, including the data and responses from the specialist teachers and student services staff.

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

Finally, student achievement data was provided in literacy progress from the beginning of October through the beginning to middle of December for students in grades 1 to 5 who were below grade level in literacy skills. The data asked about typical or ambitious growth in literacy. The literacy data was interpreted as very positive. In addition, student achievement data was collected for math in terms of meeting, approaching or exceeding expectations and was compared to the 2019-20 fall and winter.

In summary, there was a high correlation between teacher feedback and student achievement, as well as between parent and teacher perceptions of struggling groups of students. The literacy data appears promising and the math data shows a positive track but could reflect reductions in curriculum, there were some promising trends in terms of parent perceptions of students with disabilities' reading progress of below grade-level students, and the social emotional support may be the area of greatest overall need. The group's next steps are to embark on a similar analysis for middle and high school students, begin to plan for summer programming, focus on synchronous support math positions, start preparing for providing social emotional supports, and dig deeper on sub-group trends for grades 1 to 5. Parry thanked the members of the RHLCP committee.

Parry addressed the use of the data collected in terms of how the synchronous augmentation additional staff will approach it. All students should benefit from this data, and there could be some intervention work. Questions were also asked about the percentage of the elementary teaching staff who responded to the survey, the literacy and math assessment data in terms of students who receive interventions, parents' perceptions vs. teachers' perceptions, and staffing for synchronous augmentation.

### Post February Vacation:

The administrators have been pondering whether there should be a few days of remote learning after February vacation based on trends and research of COVID. Transmission and viral spread has been minimal in the school buildings in Wayland, thus, Arthur advocated that all students return to school the Monday after February break. The School Committee supported Arthur's decision.

Commented [DM1]: Pos

(b) **Special Education Update:**

Richard reported that the special education staff continues to be a part of the planning process for bringing Kindergarten students into school four days a week. He was very pleased with Parry's report and praised his staff for all their hard work.

(c) **COVID Learning and Safety Committee (continued):**

At its recent meeting, the Committee discussed ventilation, custodial issues (none this week), and testing and vaccines.

(d) **Transportation Update:**

No update.

(e) **Ventilation Update:**

Ventilation was discussed earlier in the meeting.

(f) **Next Steps:**

Discussed earlier.

**10. Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) **Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Schedule:**

The School Committee agreed to move to a 5:30 p.m. start time for meetings beginning February 10.

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

None.

**12. Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:08 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WESA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel, the Superintendent, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – February 3, 2021

effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (c) the approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: January 13, 2021 and January 29, 2021.

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

13. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:46 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u>         | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair      | X          |           |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Chris Ryan               | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | X          |           |

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. Public Comment
3. Draft Memo to FinCom
4. FY22 Incremental Increases over FY21 Budget
5. Draft FY21 Budget Summary and Status
6. Fee History Spreadsheet
7. FY22 Recommended Budgets for Special Revenue Funds
8. The Children's Way Tuition Schedule for 2020-21
9. Cost Implications for Increased In-School Instruction
10. Minutes of January 13, 2021
11. Executive Session Motion