

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – March 27, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Friday, March 27, 2020, at 1:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

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

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 1:35 p.m. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the health emergency and was recorded by WayCAM. The Chair also announced that the public can call 508-358-6812 to make a public comment or email School Committee members.

1. Discuss COVID-19 Response:

- School Closure and Continued Remote Learning:

Arthur updated the School Committee. The Governor has extended the school closure from April 3 to May 4. The first phase of the remote learning plan will end April 3 and a new plan will go into effect possibly on April 6. The district will move forward in a moderate pace, particularly with high school and middle school students, while continuing the remote learning in the same manner of offering enrichment. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is allowing flexibility to the school districts.

Parry commented on the different learning variables, such as the independence of the learner, keeping in mind that younger and mostly elementary students will need parent support in terms of forward moderate progress. Elementary teachers will have more of a focus on new content for which students can apply previously taught skills. High school students are more independent and individual subjects are being taught. Thus, high school teachers can communicate with their students regarding content and skills. The primary focus, however, continues to be supporting kids socially and emotionally, as well supporting their personal relationships and community connections.

Arthur noted the timeline of the implementation of the next phase of remote learning and described the discussions around grading, schedules, and synchronous and asynchronous teaching. A discussion ensued regarding a pass/fail model for middle and high school students; however, this has not been finalized. Arthur described the enrichment process for all grade levels, adding that he has received mostly positive feedback from parents, as they appreciate the ongoing effort by teachers and staff to make connections and provide creative lessons for students. Some decisions will depend on the length of the school closure. Arthur addressed the accountability and remote participation/learning by all teachers with their students. It was suggested that each teacher contacts his/her students as a way of preparing them in terms of expectations moving forward. In addition, some teachers, given their personal situations regarding illness or family illness, will not be able to do their job. Therefore, learning plans will be a joint effort in which others could help out those teachers who may have to discontinue teaching for a while. As a way of receiving the School Committee's feedback regarding the next phase of learning, Arthur will share the phase 2 remote learning document with each member individually. A timeline for preparation was discussed. Parry addressed the issues that some teachers may find overwhelming or uncomfortable, such as the use of technology and providing curriculum in a way that is beneficial. This does vary by grade level.

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Ellen updated the School Committee regarding her discussions with State Representative Carmen Gentile before the May 4th extension around curriculum progression in Wayland for which he offers his support and help in this regard. Ellen also updated the Committee on the virtual Wayland SEPAC meeting she recently attended. She commented on the satisfaction of elementary parents during this enrichment learning period, adding that it is a bit more complicated at the secondary level. Ellen also shared an email from a co-chair of SEPAC describing a virtual meeting with Russell Johnson, Associate Commissioner for Special Education for DESE. Ellen added that all parents who attended this virtual meeting support curriculum progression for their children despite the challenges.

Richard noted that he was also present in that meeting and commented that special education is a legal requirement and different from general education in various ways. After a conversation with the SEPAC co-chairs, Richard and the co-chairs are basically sharing the same thoughts in this regard. Richard will provide information taken from the meeting and after consulting with the attorney within Arthur's letter that will go out to families, adding that IEP's will have to be modified given the change in the school day schedule. Other ongoing work involves speech therapy or tele-therapy via video conferencing, which is challenging given student privacy protocols and other variables. Richard described the planning for how special education teachers can insert themselves into the learning model, particularly at the secondary level, as it can be more challenging with pre-school and elementary students.

Richard addressed testing and IEP issues related to those students. He commented that IDEA timelines are stricter in Massachusetts, and states can rightfully change the timelines. The district is considering conducting virtual IEP meetings despite some challenges, adding that DESE may provide flexibility to conduct IEP meetings on an as-needed basis. Annual review meetings, however, may take place under the right circumstances. Richard described the process for re-evaluations and testing that was underway before the closure. All IEP's will remain in place for now even if they expire during the school closure. Lastly, when schools open up, there will be a real focus on SEL and counseling related to needs that have resulted from personal family issues during this emergency and will impact student services for at least the next year.

The Education Cooperative Collaborative Agreement:

TEC will be sending out 4th quarter bills to collaborative school districts. The School Committee agreed that this bill will be paid as services are still being provided to those Wayland students who attend TEC. There was an advisory from DESE that school districts are responsible and should continue to pay out-of-district tuitions.

Bus Contract:

Susan informed the School Committee that our school legal counsel reviewed the bus contract and the invitation to bid, and he found provisions within M.G.L. 30A, c.41, s.56 that requires all school districts to only pay for services that are being delivered. It is expected that DESE and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue will provide clarity in this regard; thus payments are on hold until then. The district also received a copy of the Federal Stimulus package that outlines some provisions for paying contractors but, in this case, bus contractors. Municipal/school district reimbursements are unclear at this time. Reimbursement to families are being discussed related to transportation, fee-based programs, and student parking. Susan has also asked the transportation companies for information related to the cost of paying drivers, their net expenses, and what they expect from their contracted communities during this time of not running services.

Arthur left the meeting at 2:52 p.m.

2. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Ellen noted the difficulty some are having to access the phone line and find the announcements for these meetings. Kim suggested that the Committee honor the time of the public comment on the agenda. There were no comments or written statements from the public.

3. Consent Agenda:

(a) Approval of Minutes:

- February 24, 2020
- March 11, 2020

Kathie Steinberg motioned to approve the consent agenda. A discussion followed. Kim made a change to the February 24, 2020 minutes in section 4(a).

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Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes. 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	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted (3-0-2) to approve the February 24, 2020 minutes as amended. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

4. **Possible Vote to Authorize the Chair to Sign the Superintendent’s Contract:**

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted (3-0-2) to authorize Jeanne Downs to sign the Superintendent’s contract as discussed at the last meeting. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

5. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**
 None.

The next meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

6. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 2:58 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	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
 Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda

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2. Regular Session Minutes of February 24, 2020
3. Regular Session Minutes of March 11, 2020