

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – November 30, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. at Wayland High School Lecture Hall, South Building 2nd Floor.

Present:

Chris Ryan, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Jeanne Downs
Erin Gibbons
Jessica Polizzotti

Also present:

Dr. Omar Easy
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Tom Lafleur
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Madeline O’Leary – WHS Student Representative
Tom Holder – DPW Director
La Toya Rivers – METCO Director
Abigail Dressler – TCW Director
Brian Jones – Loker Elementary School Principal
Emily Charton – Claypit Hill Elementary School Principal
Tricia O’Reilly – Happy Hollow Elementary School Principal
Allyson Mizoguchi – WHS Principal
Betsy Gavron – WMS Principal
Michelle Crowell – Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment & EL

1. Welcome & Call to Order:

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 6:02 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. School Committee members shared their thoughts and school news since the last meeting, such as the senior residents were invited by Dr. Easy to the WHS production of Godspell for which transportation was provided and The Education Cooperative is looking for a new Director. Chris Ryan is pleased that Madeline O’Leary is representing the WHS student body this year.

2. Public Comment:

Michelle [REDACTED], 20 Aqueduct Road, commented that on November 8 her son was hit by a car in the crosswalk while walking home from Loker School. She expressed concerns about speeding cars and the fact that there isn’t a crossing guard in that location. The Police Department has posted crossing guard positions, but have not been successful in filling the positions. She asked the School Committee’s help in this regard, including extending the school zone by Loker and Thompson Streets. A suggestion was to bring these concerns to Town Meeting.

Delia Caulfield, a senior and Student Council Present, together with Lucy Grasso, Tess Alongi, and Allison Chase, came before the School Committee to put forth concerns about the traditional and annual Powder Puff game, which has always been held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. The Weston class president and Delia Caulfield collaborated to create a plan for the game to take place. However, the high school did not sanction it for various reasons and made the decision to end this event going forward. The game was played as a private event on the turf field on November 23 without any issues. On behalf of the 2023 Powder Puff team, the hope is to continue this tradition safely and collaboratively in future years.

Jeff and Robin Sklar, 18 Brooks Road, expressed their concerns about the November 10 School Committee meeting, including comments made by the Chair and Vice Chair. Mr. Sklar noted that there is bullying going on in the schools and it wasn’t resolved at the school level; thus, it was brought to the Superintendent. It is Mr. Sklar’s opinion that because the bullying continued, there is a cultural problem. Mr. Sklar read the School Committee’s complaint policy, adding that

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there is a grievance procedure, and neither were followed in his view.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Kerry Kaufman, 131 Woodridge Road, in which she expressed her concerns about making Wayland's crosswalks and school routes safer for walkers and bikers to and from school. Police Chief Berman is trying to hire two additional crossing guards, but to no avail. Although a Yield/Safety median was placed at the crosswalk in question, it was destroyed in no time and was lying on the road. Speed is also an issue in that area, and a traffic study was recommended near all school crosswalks. Ms. Kaufman asked the School Committee for its support and leadership in this regard, as safety is a top priority for all children. Suggestions from the School Committee were to increase directed patrols at the crosswalks and advertise for crossing guards in the All Schools News.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Michael Henrich, 192 West Plain Street, a parent and a board member of the Wayland Hockey Association. He wrote to support Dr. Easy as he is an advocate for the students of the Wayland Public Schools, their well-rounded experience and the overall betterment of the school community. The hockey program was in crisis and the parents attended the June 22, 2022 meeting to ask for help when there was no school funding and a lack of support and effort on behalf of athletics. Dr. Easy got involved and saved the hockey program. Mr. Henrich added that Dr. Easy is deeply respected for his level of effort and commitment to the Wayland students.

3. Superintendent Update:

3.1 Discussion with WHS Student Representative Madeline O'Leary:

Madeline provided the School Committee with an update about the A Cappella concert, the WHSTE production of Godspell, Spirit Week, and the successful season for boys' varsity soccer and cross country. She also proposed that Wayland become an SAT/ACT site again, as students travel to nearby towns to take the test. Madeline also advocated for more available SAT prep for all students. In addition, Madeline suggested trips for sophomores and juniors whereby the whole grade is engaged in activities outside of the "Wayland bubble", adding that these types of activities could be related to the Wellness unit; she explained. Finally, Madeline noted that many WHS students have voiced a need for more events and opportunities that would unify the high school, such as a Homecoming or Winter Ball.

3.2 Discussion with Tom Holder (DPW Director) regarding the PFAS in the Town Water:

With the hope of opening the water fountains in the schools, Tom Holder updated the School Committee about the status of the PFAS levels in the Wayland water. Up until 2020, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency issued a PFAS health advisory set at 70 parts per trillion, as did the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. In 2021, the Mass DEP lowered the contamination levels from 70 parts down to 20 parts per trillion. At that time, the Happy Hollow well field exceeded the contamination levels and the Town explored its options in terms of locating a different well source. An ion exchange treatment system was installed at the Happy Hollow well and activated in June 2022, which showed that PFAS levels were at a non-detect level. During this calendar year, the Town did not exceed actual contamination levels. The system will operate for at least two years and a recommendation will be made to the Town within the next few months.

A discussion ensued about the four water sources in Wayland that includes the Happy Hollow well field as being the only source exceeding the contamination levels. The Town is required to sample monthly and then combine them in a calendar quarter. Mr. Holder elaborated on this process, adding that the water levels have yet to be tested at each school. Before water fountains are in use, Dr. Easy would like a more recent test. Tom Holder said that they could test next week with the results in three weeks. Additionally, the Town is in the design process of hooking up to the MWRA and activating in August 2023 as approved by the Select Board.

3.3 Discussion and Approval to Expand the METCO Program to the Preschool:

This year, The Children's Way became a DESE certified school and expanded the Wayland district to six schools, PreK to 12. METCO Director La Toya Rivers proposed that the METCO program be expanded to PreK as well enrolling no less than five METCO four-year olds beginning in the fall of 2023 at The Children's Way. There would be no additional cost to the district, as DESE grant funds are available for next year and there is space available. Wayland would be the first school district to implement PreK placement, as the other 32 METCO school districts do not have a DESE certified preschool.

This opportunity will provide an equitable foundation for Boston resident preschool students and would build a cohort of students who would be a part of the community. There are three current families who are interested in this opportunity, and siblings of students enrolled in the Wayland Public Schools would be a priority. Ms. Rivers described the METCO HQ application process and the changes being implemented going forward, including

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some events prior to the application process, such as the upcoming METCO Showcase.

The Family/Friends Program may be reinstated in Wayland as requested by several families. Next steps include submitting the expansion plan to DESE, holding information sessions for prospective families, promoting this opportunity at METCO events, and, finally, accepting applications for PreK placement.

A discussion ensued about this proposal and questions were asked by the Committee members. Ms. Rivers explained why the Kindergarten enrollments are declining across all METCO districts in the State, the plan to hire a teaching assistant for TCW who would also ride on the bus from Boston to Wayland and back, future funding, and availability for all Wayland and Boston families going forward. Dr. Easy and TCW Director Abigail Dressler addressed concerns about the inclusion program in place and the possibility of limited availability for next year.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the expansion of the METCO program to The Children's Way Pre-K program.

3.4 Principals' Presentations of School Improvement Plans:

The five school principals presented one aspect of their School Improvement Plans. The elementary principals, Brian Jones, Tricia O'Reilly, and Emily Charton focused on math achievement related to District Target #3. This year and during the year 2023-2024, the alignment of the PreK-12 mathematics structure will be prioritized in order to ensure a "robust, equitable, and systematic program and to increase the growth and achievement level of every subgroup as determined by district measures and MCAS."

About ten years ago, RTI (Response to Intervention) was utilized in this regard, but was not utilized to its full potential for various reasons; thus, the opportunity gap did not close for students of color. One area was to create an inclusive learning environment for all students in the classroom, eliminating the RTI process of students of color leaving the classroom for some instruction. WIN (What I Need) blocks were established and take place twice a week for 20 minutes (K-2) and 25 minutes for (3-5) during which the classroom teacher, the SPED teacher, and teacher assistant work collaboratively, including the math coach, with all students. Mr. Jones described this approach. The Bridges Intervention Program was launched recently and is an effective resource as well. Positive signs are being recognized already.

Ms. Charton focused on the effectiveness of the math coach model, and she noted that Claypit Hill is the first elementary school to have a math interventionist. Math coaches assist the teachers to best utilize and structure the WIN block, as well as provide the necessary resources. The math interventionist supports the students who need targeted extra help with some standards and/or skills in an effort to close the gaps for the highest needs students. Ms. Charton related a positive experience during an observation in one fifth grade classroom.

Ms. O'Reilly described how she, the assistant principal, math coach, special educators, and classroom teachers all work together and refocus on Tier I instruction for all students which is different from intervention. Tier I instruction is data-driven and meets students where they are within the skill that is being taught and moves them forward. iReady and STMath provide data to teachers which helps inform differentiated daily instruction. It's also important to understand how to use the data effectively and proficiently.

Erin Gibbons left the meeting at 8:09 p.m.; returned at 8:11 p.m.

Ms. Gavron presented the Middle School's focus around the multi-year goal #4, as they "will prioritize social-emotional well-being for students and staff in order to foster a compassionate and nurturing learning environment."

With its focus on SEL, an internal audit will be conducted of the student services programs ensuring that the programs are robust and can adapt to the changing academic and SEL needs of the school population. The partnership with the McLean Hospital will continue in areas of providing a "break place" within the school, supporting school counselors to be able to teach DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) for some students and to continue their consultation around school refusal cases. Ms. Gavron explained this ongoing work for students who suffer from anxiety-based challenges.

Another important SEL area is the priority of equity within the Middle School in order to meet every student's needs in an ongoing approach and reviewed through an equity lens. With the assistance of Caroline Han, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging, a faculty meeting was held that focused on belonging uncertainty for students

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of color and finding ways to mitigate students' feelings in belonging and feeling safe. Once a week, Ms. Han holds "Ask Anything" sessions in an effort to find the areas that need adjustment and to adapt specific practices in that regard.

Dr. Mizoguchi presented the High School's work around District Target Goal #1, which, through the START Program, is to "identify students' academic progress in the context of the pandemic, then utilize effective instructional practices to maximize individual students' academic growth during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years." The START Program identifies struggling students, provides support, and monitors and intervenes with students so they can maximize their academic progress. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is also a part of the START Program. About 30 students have been identified in this regard.

Additional support can be provided within the Academic Support Center, time with the RTI teachers, or via DCAP whereby classroom teachers utilize Tier 1 instructional practices. Data is gathered every six weeks from the teachers in an effort to determine what is working and what is not working. Efficiencies and routines have emerged as a part of this process.

3.5 Presentation of WHS Model UN Trip:

Allyson Mizoguchi presented the WHS Model UN Trip which is being hosted by Boston University from February 10-12, 2023. Students will meet as a club and will convene with other students from other districts who are in the same club. It's possible there will be fifteen students and two chaperones.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Model UN Trip as presented.

3.6 Elementary Fall Diagnostic Math Presentation:

Dr. Easy introduced this agenda item noting that due to COVID DESE recognized it was necessary to accelerate math learning with high-quality instructional materials. In 2021-2022, Michelle Crowell, on behalf of the district, applied for the Math Acceleration Grant from DESE to support K-5 students, and \$45,553 was awarded with no cost to the district. This year, 2022-2023, the district received partial funding of \$30,964 with a cost to the district of \$19,776.

Ms. Crowell explained that the district chose iReady because it is recognized as a top computer based and core math program that will enrich and deepen students' understanding of math with the use of age appropriate activities and lessons.

The iReady Diagnostic adapts the assessment to find the students' level of instruction and adjusts questions' difficulty for students based on correct answers. If students answer incorrectly, the questions become easier, allowing the program to identify the strengths and weaknesses and provide opportunities for the growth of each student. The teachers can differentiate this data within the elementary WIN blocks.

The diagnostic is given to students in K-5 three times a year, fall (not K students), winter, and spring. It is possible moving forward, however, that Kindergarten students may be assessed in the fall based on discussions by the teachers. Ms. Crowell reviewed the data from the fall of 2022 and compared it to the data presented in the fall of 2021, adding that the students have improved in math skills. School data is almost consistent across the three elementary schools. In addition, Spanish Immersion students can take the diagnostic in Spanish. Ms. Crowell explained the data from the subgroups, such as Special Education and EL students, including students from different races. Most students are where they should be this time of year despite the impact of the pandemic.

A discussion followed the presentation.

4. **Administrative Matters:**

4.1 Discussion and Vote to Appoint Ben Downs as WHS Assistant Swim & Dive Coach as Filed by the Superintendent:

Dr. Easy filed the necessary paperwork with the Town Clerk.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted (4-0-1) (Jeanne abstained) to appoint Ben Downs as WHS assistant swim and dive coach.

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4.2 Review of FY23 Superintendent Goals and Standards:

Dr. Easy presented and explained each of his five goals and the key actions and benchmarks relative to each goal to the School Committee. Goal 1, the Student Learning Goal is a continuation of a three-year goal. For Goal 2, Professional Practice Goal 1, Dr. Easy will continue to develop a language-based program for all students in schools. Goal 3 is the second Professional Practice Goal by which Dr. Easy will continue to develop a high-functioning team by building trust to increase accountability and collaboration. Goal 4 is a two-year goal by which Dr. Easy will prioritize the PreK-12 alignment of the math structure. Finally, Goal 5 is his District Improvement Goal 2, as he will continue the development and the strategic planning of maintaining, managing and servicing all other school buildings from 2021-2024, including working with the MSBA in an effort to begin the process for a new elementary school.

A discussion ensued around Goal 3 in terms of administrative collaboration and benchmark three, visiting at least one classroom per grade level across the district. Dr. Easy noted that each administrator can add to the agenda for each SLT and Admin Council meeting.

4.3 Discussion and Review of Response to November 16, 2022 Open Meeting Law Complaint Filed by Kimberly Sklar Reichelt:

The School Committee discussed its response in an effort to respond to this OML complaint within fourteen business days, and the Committee all agreed to move forward and ask for an extension from the Attorney General.

5. Consent Agenda:

5.1 Approval of WHS Robotics Club Gifts:

- Middlesex Savings Bank (\$1,000)
- The Village Bank (\$3,500)

- Anonymous Donor for WMS Tripships (D.C.) (\$1,000)

5.2 Accounts Payables Warrant:

Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated 11/30/2022, in the amount of \$459,868.06.

5.3 Approval of Minutes: October 25, 2022, October 26, 2022, and November 9, 2022

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco and seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

6. Policy Matters:

6.1 Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Policy GBEB (Staff Conduct):

Jess noted that changes will not be made to Policy GBEB.

6.2 Discussion of Policy KDBA (Accessibility and Return of Tests):

Policy KDBA discussions began last year but was tabled. In the meantime, the math assessment task force completed its work regarding test returns. The Policy Subcommittee will ask school counsel to assist in developing another policy in this regard.

7. Financial Matters:

7.1 Approval of Two Grants:

- State Earmark Grant (\$25,000):
- Doug Flutie Foundation for Autism (Playground Communication Board for The Children's Way):

The State Earmark Grant will serve to update the lighting in the Fieldhouse, as generated by Wayland's State Senator. Second, a teacher at TCW applied for a grant to provide a playground communications board for The Children's Way playground (\$1,000).

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the two grants as presented.

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- 7.2 Discussion and Approval to Include Nursing Staff in the School Budget:
Dr. Easy explained that the town and school nursing staff would like to keep their current status.
- 7.3 Discussion and Approval of Removing Utilities from the School Budget and Moving to the Town Budget:
Dr. Easy noted that the school department would like the Town to fund the utilities for all school buildings. A Memorandum of Understanding outlining this proposal will be forthcoming from the Town. A discussion followed.
- 7.4 Review of FY2022 End-of-Year Report:
Tom Lafleur updated the School Committee regarding the FY2022 End-of-Year Report. He explained the encumbrance process when invoices are received after the fiscal year ends on June 30. An \$857 balance remained after funds were moved forward to the SPED prepay for FY23. He also explained the deficit carried forward in the Enrichment line due to the lack of funds during the pandemic.
- 7.5 Review and Possible Vote to Accept FY2022 School Support Organizations Year End Reports:
All support organizations were reported and a lot of money was raised to support and fund items/programs in the district that the operating budget could not support.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to accept the FY22 support organizations' year-end report as presented.

- 7.6 Discussion of SPED Stabilization Fund:
In order to establish a SPED Stabilization Fund, a warrant must be developed for Town Meeting for its funding. Dr. Easy noted its importance given the increases to special education transportation and out-of-district costs moving forward. The warrant article process opens on December 15 and closes at 4:30 on January 17, 2023.

Upon a motion duly made by Jess Polizzotti, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted (4-0-1) (Ellen Grieco abstained) to move forward and delegate authority to Jeanne Downs to work with Dr. Easy and Tom Lafleur to create the information needed for the Special Education Stabilization Fund.

- 7.7 Discussion of Budget Presentation Date:
As noted by Chris Ryan, the Select Board and John Bugbee will receive the FY2024 proposed school budget on December 15, the day after Dr. Easy's presentation.

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

Jeanne reported that the Loker roof project is completed and came \$800,000 under appropriation. However, the main distribution for the electrical is outstanding. Also, the High School field drain was cleaned and a new screening device was installed.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:32 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), 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; and (b) to approve Executive Session minutes: October 26, 2022 and November 9, 2022, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §22. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Chris Ryan, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Jeanne Downs | X | |
| Erin Gibbons | X | |
| Jess Polizzotti | X | |

The School Committee will be joined by Dr. Omar Easy, 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.

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10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 10:06 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Chris Ryan, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Jeanne Downs | X | |
| Erin Gibbons | X | |
| Jess Polizzotti | X | |

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Jeff Sklar, 18 Brooks Road
Robin Sklar, 18 Brooks Road
Carol Hickes, 30 Brook Trail Road

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. WHS Student Update
3. Model UN Overnight Field Trip
4. Appointment Notification for Volunteer Swim & Dive Coach
5. Draft of the Superintendent's Goals
6. OML Complaint of 11/16/2022
7. FY22 EOY Report
8. FY22 EOY Support Organizations Report
9. Special Education Stabilization Fund Information
10. Accounts Payables Warrants
11. Minutes of October 25, 2022
12. Minutes of October 26, 2022
13. Minutes of November 9, 2022
14. Executive Session Motion