

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – May 21, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, May 21, 2018, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair
Nate Buffum
Kim Reichelt (arrived at 8:36 p.m.)
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
School Business Administrator

Also:

Brian Jones, Principal Loker School
James Lee, Principal Happy Hollow School
Kristin Fay, Happy Hollow Teacher & SPED Team Leader
Gretchen Lutz, Early Childhood Coordinator

Chair Ellen Grieco convened the regular session at 7:03 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

1. Special Matters:

- (a) Conduct School Choice Hearing and Vote to Adopt a Resolution to Participate or Withdraw from School Choice for the 2018-2019 School Year:

The School Committee conducted a public hearing on School Choice. There was no public input.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adopt a resolution to withdraw from School Choice for the 2018-2019 school year.

- (b) Presentation regarding Instructional Studies by Principals Brian Jones and Jim Lee:

Prior to the presentations, Arthur informed the School Committee that he asked the principals to work with another administrator in central office on a specific instructional effort in each principal's school building. Throughout the year, the principals worked with the teachers, gathered data in terms of this effort's impact on students, and drew conclusions.

Brian Jones/Loker School: *Student Learning Priority – 3rd Grade Writing (with Susan Bottan, Mike O'Connor and Rose Marie Furey:*

The foundation of this endeavor was to ask how can staff engage students to improve their writing with more detailed and creative pieces, while keeping the process enjoyable, and how will that inform instruction to grow the writing ability of students?

Some of the data analyzed included pre- and post-writing samples, such as Opinion Writing for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years and PARCC and MCAS open response results. Included in the research was an observation of writing instruction in third grade classrooms. As a result, some concerns were identified, such as the lack of typing fluency, the lack of knowledge or understanding about the word "essay", the lack of enthusiasm about writing, and the struggle to gather information from the text to support their arguments.

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Some of the actions taken to address these concerns included changing the class schedule to focus on typing skills, using Chromebooks in the classrooms for major writing assignments as opposed to handwriting, defining the word “essay” which includes a posted definition in the classrooms, creating the “Passion Project” – a form of debating among students, analyzing third grade MCAS results, and expanding the membership for the Loker Weekly from 5 to 27 students whereby they can write about their personal interests. A short video of Mr. O’Connor’s classroom was shown in terms of how he approaches writing with his students in an effort to encourage them to write.

Results of these efforts have increased student engagement and enthusiasm and have given the students a sense of pride and ownership of their writing. In addition, teachers want to continue to look at the data to focus on improving growth. Moving forward, more informative writing will be encouraged using writing prompts that will be more interesting for students, update and enhance the Grade 4 scope and sequence activities, and continue the focus on showing evidence. The summer work project will continue to look at writing prompts for third grade curriculum to address the need for more writing.

Jim Lee/Happy Hollow School: *Moving to the Next Level (with Marlene Dodyk, Kristin Fay, and other HH staff):* This initiative took an indepth look at interventions for moving “at risk” students to achievement levels consistent with meeting expectations to proficient levels on the 4th Grade ELA MCAS allowing the school to move toward a rating of a Level I school.

The staff started with two study questions: 1) What are current practices around elevating achievement for entering 4th grade students who fall in the “at risk” categories on several district assessments, one being DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, used to predict ELA MCAS success prior to having the results of 3rd Grade ELA MCAS scores; and 2) Are there indications that students are showing consistent growth throughout the course of a school year that place them on target for “meeting expectations” on the Spring ELA MCAS battery? From these two questions, they formed a premise/hypothesis of what is being done now in terms of RTI and PLC meetings in an effort to work towards their goal.

The study was narrowed down to form a better understanding of student achievement by identifying seven “at risk” students who were entering 4th grade in the Fall of 2017 and who were well below desirable Fall benchmarks that predicted student success on the Spring ELA MCAS battery. Thus, the focus was on student achievement and intervention in English Language Arts. Intervention groups were formed and tracked, as described by Jim. Jim described the six to eight week process and the work staff pursued with these seven students in order to determine which interventions will be used. The results of Fall data/testing was shown for these seven students that included word level reading – the development, progression, and the meeting/exceeding grade. Jim explained the chart.

Research-Based Interventions were used, such as Read Naturally, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), Blast intervention curriculum, and Lexia. Then the staff reviewed the Fall to winter growth data where a positive difference in their progress was noted, as well as in the MCAS results. Jim added that paper based tests are available for those who fall within the criteria, but most use the computer; Brad explained this determination further. For those Tier III students who require intensive instruction, Kristin Fay uses the Blast Program that encompasses Word Sort (syllable breakdown and vowel and letter sounds), reading fluency, and dictation. This program can replace phonics for some students. Kristin demonstrated this approach via a video program.

Conclusions were drawn from this undertaking, such as data meetings must continue as they provide an opportunity for staff to work collaboratively, progress monitoring keeps everyone asking questions based on the data leading to a more targeted intervention, and interventions are motivating and engaging for the students. Tier III ensures that extra time is spent in small group learning for students who require those services the most. In addition, the whole child must be considered. A discussion ensued regarding the types of assessments and what is considered to be the most effective.

- (c) Discussion regarding the Current Policy for Consideration of Early Entrance to Kindergarten/First Grade: Early Childhood Coordinator Gretchen Lutz asked the School Committee to review the early entrance policy which takes into consideration the possibility of some children’s early entrance into Kindergarten and first grade with birthdates after the August 31 cutoff date. Gretchen summarized the policy in terms of the August 31 cutoff date and the process she undertakes once an exception request is made by parents. She invites the parents to discuss their request and why they are making this request. Over the last 10 years, 24 families have made this request and 2 children were approved out of the 9 that she agreed to evaluate and observe.

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Gretchen does not favor the philosophy of this policy for several reasons, including that most towns do not have such a policy. Gretchen added that a child's age and entrance into school is more about the social and emotional growth rather than how well they are doing academically at the age of 4. Marlene Dodyk explained the process when the cutoff date was changed from December 31 to August 31, adding that she supports Gretchen's request to eliminate it.

Kim arrived at 8:36 p.m.

The School Committee reviewed the policy and guidelines. The Policy Subcommittee will come back to the School Committee with a recommended policy. A discussion ensued regarding cutoff dates for those coming to Wayland from other districts, other states, and other countries.

2. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public (taken out order):**

There were no comments or written statements from the public.

3. **Special Matters (continued):**

(a) Discussion regarding Superintendent's Annual Performance Evaluation, with a Focus on Goal 5 (Professional Culture) and Elements 1 through 6, including Feedback on all Aspects of the Superintendent's Performance and a Review of the Process:

Goal 5: Brad responded to a question about the change from Open Court to Foundations, a Wilson-based phonics system. He explained the related coding system, how it impacts the students, and how the teachers have responded to the change thus far. Arthur noted that a survey will be provided to the staff at the end of May asking how the change has impacted them and what they like about it.

Arthur described what a "walk through" involves in the schools, particularly in Kindergarten and first grade classrooms that are using Foundations. These walk throughs occurred all year, but in March, April, and May the observation focused on the progress made since the implementation of Foundations. He and other observers use a checklist of what they are looking for in the classroom. Follow-up meetings are held by the observers in order to address any concerns going forward and the impact of the program by analyzing assessment data. Using an array of decoding data, such as DIBELS, measurements are used to determine where students should be in their growth, adding that it can be a challenge for the teacher to determine if the student gets it.

Ellen left the meeting at 9:04 p.m.; returned at 9:06 p.m.

Arthur commented briefly on the state's evaluation system which leaves the primary responsibility of evaluating teachers to the school principals.

Element 6: Shared Vision Development - As discussed in Administrative Council meetings, Arthur noted that the administrators will focus on two or three of the six UNITED goals, while still keeping the framework of these goals in place. This conversation is ongoing with Admin Council.

Element 1: Instructional Practices – In response to how instructional practices are determined and measured, Arthur commented that data and student work determine what is working, or not, in the district, as data must communicate results clearly and in order to make progress. He added that there is a lot of to be done in this area, and there should be a common data point for teachers to discuss, not necessarily for all curricula.

Arthur addressed the findings resulting from presentations by the principals regarding instructional leadership, such as the ability of students to engage and apply their skills to solving real-world problems and giving students choices regarding their assignments.

Element 2: Diverse Learners Needs – Arthur explained what motivated him to become a student in a 9th grade English college level class in which he read To Kill a Mockingbird. For one, he wanted to personally know what is being done to engage students who are in the middle without the students knowing they are in the middle.

Arthur spoke about post observation conferences and whether there should be written or oral feedback and what has been done to address this and what remains to be done. Arthur described the complex and intense process, as structured by the State's rubric, that the principals work through in terms of giving feedback to the teachers, such as face-to-face conferences and in group settings, resulting in teacher evaluations at the end of the school year.

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The School Committee discussed past processes of evaluating the Superintendent. A questionnaire will be provided to the Administrative Council in terms of their input regarding Arthur's performance. Ellen informed the Committee that Kevin Bresnahan's legal opinion is that all responses are not public and can be discussed in Executive Session.

4. Financial Matters:

(a) High School Master Athletic Plan:

- Neighbor Meeting
- Fall Warrant Articles
- Project Status
- Next Steps

Jeanne informed the School Committee that the Conservation Administrator walked the flags at the High School; the position and delineation of the flags was fine. The "neighbor meeting" will be held at the High School with Weston & Sampson on June 20 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be posted for the School Committee. In addition, the Board of Selectmen has discussed warrant articles a Special Fall Town Meeting. The project will be going out to bid in September.

(b) Finance Subcommittee Update:

- Review Draft Charge of Subcommittee
- FY2020 Budget Planning
- Q3 Financial Report
- Warrant Approval Process

The draft charge will be reviewed on June 4th. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee met last week about FY2020 budget planning. The selectmen may possibly discuss this matter with the School Committee.

Susan reviewed the third quarter financial report. There is an end-of-year projected balance of \$62,000. Some surpluses occurred in medical therapeutic services and realized savings in out-of-district tuition which allow the district to put forward a SPED prepayment in FY19 for \$200,000. Overages were noticed in facilities in the areas of electrical work, plumbing work and HVAC work, as well as in the wastewater account. A posting has been put out for a wastewater treatment manager. In terms of the METCO Grant, there is a negative of \$151,000. This is a timing issue, as money needs to be spent before receiving a reimbursement.

As discussed in the Finance Subcommittee meeting, the School Committee was asked if Susan can bring only the coversheet for the warrant to the School Committee meetings rather than the coversheet plus the pages and pages of supporting documentation. Ellen commented on the process implemented many years ago, as cover sheets were not acceptable at that time. The School reviews the supporting documentation as part of the electronic documents in the meeting folder.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve an electronic submission of the warrants only and to sign a paper copy of the coversheet in the meeting without receiving paper copies of the backup.

5. Educational Matters:

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits
- Update regarding the Assistant Superintendent Search

Arthur attended performances by the WINDOW dance group and the strings band. The students were passionate about their performances.

Arthur reviewed the schedule for the assistant superintendent finalists site visit days, adding that each group interviewing the finalists will fill out a form on which to provide feedback regarding the finalists. Once references are checked, he will announce his choice on June 4th.

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6. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- (a) Vote to Appoint Richard Whitehead as Director of Student Services beginning July 1, 2018:
Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Richard Whitehead as Director of Student Services beginning July 1, 2018.
- (b) Discussion regarding Role of Subcommittees in Relation to School Committee, including Role of Finance Subcommittee:
This agenda item was passed over.
- (c) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Requests:
Jeanne informed the School Committee that she sent George Harris a draft of the April 2, 2018 minutes that he requested.
- (d) Discussion of Open Meeting Law Complaints Filed by George Harris on May 8, 2018 (Alleging Failure to Produce Minutes in a Timely Manner and Alleging Insufficient Detail in Minutes) and May 14, 2018 (Alleging Failure to Produce Minutes in a Timely Manner):

The School Committee reviewed the two OML complaints and determined that Kim and Ellen would do a further review and reply to the complaints accordingly.

7. **Policy Review:**

- Life-Threatening Allergies
- Protocol and Guidelines for Life-Threatening Allergies

The School Committee reviewed the allergy policy and guidelines presented by the Policy Subcommittee. Both school counsel and the school nurse have had input to the policy and guidelines. The Policy Subcommittee will continue to review the policy and guidelines and bring an updated version back to a future School Committee meeting.

8. **Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated May 21, 2018, in the amount of \$211,120.19
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated May 14, 2018, in the amount of \$65,444.76
 - Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated May 23, 2018, in the amount of \$1,595,992.25
- (c) Approval of Minutes:
- March 14, 2018
 - April 2, 2018
 - May 7, 2018

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, 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 Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 10:31 p.m. to receive an update and discuss strategy related to negotiations with WTA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3); to discuss a residency matter, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(7), in order to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and the Massachusetts Right to Privacy Law, M.G.L. c.214, §1B; to review the following executive session minutes for possible declassification, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: January 2, 2018, January 10, 2018, January 11, 2018, January 22, 2018, January 29, 2018, February 5, 2018, February 13, 2018, March 19, 2018 and March 26, 2018; and to approve Executive Session minutes of May 7, 2018, 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>
Ellen Grieco, Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair	X	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

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

The School Committee will reconvene in open session to possibly vote to declassify Executive Session minutes as listed on the meeting agenda.

11. Regular Matters (continued):

(a) Possible Vote to Declassify Executive Session Minutes as Listed on the Meeting Agenda:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to declassify and release Executive Session minutes as redacted and as discussed in Executive Session, with the exception of January 11, 2018, as there was no executive session.

12. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Mary Ann Borkowski, 27 Pemberton Road

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda and Backup Information
2. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
3. Policy JEB – Entrance Age
4. Guidelines for Consideration for Early Kindergarten Entrance
5. Q3 Financial Report
6. OML Complaints of May 8, 2018 and May 14, 2018
7. Life-Threatening Allergy Policy
8. Protocol and Guidelines for Life-Threatening Allergies
9. Burlington Public Schools Life-Threatening Allergy Procedures and Guidelines
10. Special Session Minutes of March 14, 2018
11. Special Session Minutes of April 2, 2018
12. Regular Session Minutes of May 7, 2018
13. Executive Session Motion
14. Executive Session Minutes
 - January 2, 2018
 - January 10, 2018
 - January 22, 2018
 - January 29, 2018
 - February 5, 2018
 - February 13, 2018
 - March 19, 2018
 - March 26, 2018