

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – October 29, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, October 29, 2018, 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

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Also:

Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal
Christie Harvey, Claypit Hill Principal
James Lee, Happy Hollow Principal
Brian Jones, Loker Principal
Katy Merrell, Director of The Children's Way

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the regular session at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

1. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Chris Desmond presented the School Committee with a petition containing 225 signatures and comments in opposition to the change of school start times. Mr. Desmond has a Kindergartner at Happy Hollow and believes that a vote to change the start times will harm one group of students as opposed to another. In his opinion, there are many issues that need to be worked out first, such as BASE or Longfellow availability and family time. Mr. Desmond is in support of kids getting more sleep, but the decision must be one that works for all kids. He suggested that other options be explored that won't affect Kindergartners and first graders.

John Grabill commented that 1200 kids will be affected by this decision and that there is no longitudinal data for those kids 5 to 10 years old and whether getting an hour less sleep per night is not good for them. He commented that most of the parents of these kids are not aware of what is involved in the School Committee vote because it has not been presented well, even though the discussions have been going on for three years. Mr. Grabill believes that because there are so many parameters that have not been thought out, there should not be an urgency to reach a decision.

Alissa Kissell thanked the School Committee for the years of research undertaken and the effort to receive everyone's point of view. Although the time change doesn't necessarily benefit the elementary children, the decision to move forward with a change is for the general good of the community. She commented that many parents who are concerned at this point are new to the discussions and there will always be a new wave of people. Because the research shows that there are many pressures on older students, Ms. Kissell urged the School Committee to vote to change the school start times.

Michele Coppola agreed with the previous comment and thanked the School Committee for all their work on this topic. She supports the decision to change the school start times because the research is substantial and the health risks are significant to teens and pre-teens. She has been a health and wellness educator in Newton for the past 25 years and has a child in middle school and one in high school. The children must come first even though change is painful and it is difficult to juggle schedules when there doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day.

Paula Berg agreed with the last two speakers and noted that this decision is driven by what scientists are telling us. She went on to say that, according to science, elementary children lose steam at 2:45 p.m. She does not agree with the concept of the

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petition presented this evening. A change will not require a shift in sleep, as the children will get plenty of sleep and will get a full day of learning. In her opinion, the younger kids are not being sacrificed for the older kids.

Kristin Heres submitted a letter to the School Committee. She has a first grader and this time change will have an adverse effect on her family given that she and her husband work full time, they are a BASE family, and they will lose an hour in the evening. She added that she wouldn't want to see the METCO program compromised, as it will affect those families as well.

Barrett Bvontas addressed those families with very young children and whose evening time will be shortened. She commented that they do not have a sense of the problems for the older children and sacrifices are made all the time. Ms. Bvontas urged those parents to understand that everything will be okay and adjustments in schedules will work out.

Argie Shapiro believes that it would be more prudent to wait and work out all the details before a final decision is made, as this will also affect her family, particularly in the areas of BASE and bussing. She has 3 children in the elementary, middle and high schools. Ms. Shapiro mentioned a study in terms of how this issue impacted Weston and Winchester after those districts changed the school start time.

Susan Garfield thanked the School Committee for taking on this issue rigorously and empathetically over the past few years and encouraged the School Committee to stay the course. She commented that this is a scientifically proven issue that is best for children. Ms. Garfield stated that families come to these issues from their own position, but should look at it in the continuum of the cycle of children. Change is hard, but our children deserve action now.

Paul Morenberg thanked the School Committee for its excellent work and the thoughtful process that has been put forward. He has children in the elementary schools and middle school. He is sympathetic to those families who do not support this, but the science is compelling. Mr. Morenberg mentioned the University of Michigan studies. This issue is about the emotional and social wellbeing of our children. He believes that everyone can come together to adopt this plan and make mid-course adjustments later and urged all parents to support the proposal.

Amanda Miles has two children at Happy Hollow School and she is an educator in a secondary school. Although she understands the research and benefits, she hasn't heard how it benefits elementary children. Ms. Miles commented that Happy Hollow families use the BASE program most and everyone's day will be lengthened by one hour.

Joanna Hartunian is a former teacher and also has two children at Happy Hollow. She is appreciative of the School Committee's work and supports the proposal because most students are up and ready to go, so many teachers move some subjects to the morning. In her experience, most children are done for the day after lunch. She urged families to think of the kids, as they face stress and a level of anxiety that often leads to a number of problems. Ms. Hartunian added that her generation was released from school at 2:15 and it worked.

Joseph Vukson also has two children at Happy Hollow. Although he supports the idea of high school and middle school kids getting more sleep, he does not support the change because his children will be sacrificed and will suffer for it. Currently, his children are at BASE until 6:00 p.m. resulting in an eleven-hour day.

Cathy Caulfield noted her support for the school start time change, as it's a matter of biology and how kids are wired. She has two children in middle school and one in elementary.

Richard Feist commented that everyone has their own individual concerns. However, if elementary school aged children can't get up now, it will be twice as difficult as they get older.

Jenny Silberman thanked the School Committee and expressed her support for a school start time change. She commented that many other school districts across the country operate successfully with similar hours that are being proposed for Wayland. Three years ago, Biddeford, Maine made a similar start time change, and the superintendent has told her that there have been no issues. She cited some research for elementary students, noted that the schedule change is more in line with children's circadian rhythms, and that Wayland's proposals are consistent with other communities, such as Sharon, Massachusetts. Ms. Silberman is confident that the community, parents and the School Committee can work together to make this happen, as additional delays could be detrimental to the health and safety of the students.

As a supporter of a change in school start times and a past member of the Task Force, Sejal Srinivasan commented that this issue has become one of high school/middle school vs. elementary schools. The work over the past three years has been focused on achieving a balanced solution for all K-12 Wayland children. Ms. Srinivasan reiterated on some of the work done by the Task Force and the overwhelming research that was reviewed in terms of Circadian rhythms of children and how it relates to family time for most in the evenings. She referred to the proposal put on the table a year ago in which elementary schools started at 8:00 a.m. and high school and middle school students started at 9:00 a.m. However, there was significant

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opposition to this proposal from parents and teachers. Although there is limited research on elementary start times but all in favor of early elementary start times, there is one exception – the Kentucky Study. For some, money would solve some of the issues; however, Ms. Srinivasan noted that money is not easily found in the budget.

John Gracia thanked the School Committee for all its hard work. He is a design engineer by trade, and he empathizes with everyone's challenges, but he believes there is a clear benefit for the older kids. The opportunity to make this change will be lost if there is a delay.

Jodi Chase thanked the School Committee and she supports the time changes. She commented that this issue began many years ago and the process has not been rushed.

Mei-Lyn Kingsley thanked the School Committee and she also supports the time change plan. She believes that a change in school start times, according to the American Pediatric Association is what is best for 2,700 kids and the community. It's scary in terms of what could happen to the kids, if they don't get enough sleep.

Alexia Obar believes that this plan has many flaws and there are too many details that have not been worked out. She addressed the challenges with the BASE program and the issues that will be present for those who participate in sports and/or school clubs, particularly arriving home much later. Ms. Obar also noted that two-thirds of Wayland teachers are against the change. She asked that the School Committee postpone the decision.

Irene Rideout is concerned that two-thirds of the teachers are against this, as she believes that their support, among other things, is vital in the implementation of this change. She believes that more effort is needed to get teachers on board. Ms. Rideout commented that she hasn't seen a proposal asking for money to implement this plan and commented on the work of the Task Force and Working Group, as they remained budget neutral. She would like to see some reports confirming that the School Committee has looked at solutions to various problems and how much money it would take to solve the problems.

Sejal Srinivasan responded to Ms. Rideout's statement regarding budget issues regarding school start times. She stated that over the past 18 months, the School Committee and Dr. Unobskey have looked at estimating costs for bussing and adding day(s) at the end of the year, if deciding to reduce the length of the school day. Small changes cost a lot, and, as a result of this research, the School Committee and Dr. Unobskey deemed it not viable.

School Committee member Ellen Grieco commented that she has been torn and has lived on both sides of the issue. She has listened to and has read the research for a very long time, has listened to everyone's remarks, has seen biological changes in her own children, and has spoken to parents in Acton and Concord who have already made this change. Ms. Grieco is sympathetic to and understands everyone's concerns, but added that due to anecdotal research and being the mother of kids in high school and middle school, all children, including elementary kids, will be much happier and better off once a change is made.

2. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

District Improvement Plan & School Improvement Plan Presentations with Possible Vote to Accept School Improvement Plans:

Arthur commented that the principals, together with their teachers, have developed their School Improvement Plans for this year. The district's theme is "Noticing Every Child, Every Day." Students can learn from each other, can have empathy to understand other people's point of view, can make mistakes and learn from them, as they must be impactful citizens and find their voice. Arthur elaborated on this year's theme and the work going forward.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL):

Richard Whitehead, Director of Student Services, noted that SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for the five core competencies that were identified by the CASTEL group and adopted by the DESE. The following are practical applications of the core competencies:

- Understand and manage emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Feel and show empathy for others
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions

The SEL Committee kick-off meeting will be on November 7, 2018. There are about 50 people interested to serve, and the committee will be comprised of parents, educators, and community partners. The goals for the committee will focus on the consolidation of work already done within the district in the following areas to develop a plan going

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forward. Richard explained.

- Develop vision and mission statements for SEL in Wayland
- Assess district capacity and resources
- Review current research and evidence based practices
- Connect schools, families and the community
- Develop a strategic plan for SEL implementation

Finally, they hope to develop a cohesive and clear SEL framework for preschool to 12th grade students, provide professional development in this regard to support educators, tap into the community partnerships and resources, and to make sure that this goal is practical, applicable and effective.

Elevating Achievement:

Assistant Superintendent Parry Graham commented that in “noticing every student, every day,” it’s important to have a sophisticated understanding of our students’ jagged learning profiles in order to more effectively build on their strengths and meet their needs to learn and achieve maximum growth and results.

Parry explained the two big organizational challenges in elevating achievement, such as connecting a “broad” concept from district-wide to each school and into the classroom, and the likelihood of adding one more thing to a teacher’s responsibilities.

Parry noted that the principals and the Director of The Children’s Way face these challenges by understanding their buildings and staff, by taking a broad framework and using it to address real areas of growth in their schools and settings, and by advocating for authenticity and connectivity.

The Children’s Way:

Director of TCW Katy Merrell noted that TCW’s 2018-2019 goals are (1) understanding the benefits of mindfulness and expanding the practice of mindfulness at TCW, including looking at how it impacts staff, children and families and (2) improving accessibility and removing physical, language, materials, and cultural barriers.

Katy focused on the mindfulness goal in terms of TCW’s action steps. Staff is reading “Growing up Mindful” by Dr. Christopher Willard who will be TCW’s retreat presenter in January. Through a Case Study approach, the staff will also assess their mindfulness practices that are currently in place, identify needs classroom to classroom, and share the new mindful practices. Mindful practices that are put in place over time decreases anxiety and aggressive behaviors, and receiving information and maintaining a positive outlook is key to elevating growth and learning.

Elementary:

The elementary principals described the FOSS approach – Full Option Science System, which are FOSS like formats to elevate achievement across academic areas. When lessons occur in the classroom, the students are fully engaged, they partake in an effective effort and collaboration, and they execute, examine and redesign and produce excellent products and productivity.

Although three individual schools, one united goal was developed to ‘examine and exemplify how key pedagogical practices provide opportunities for all students to access learning postures that bring them to analytical and critical levels of thinking...’

The elementary principals will observe and identify what students do and say when responding to the structures and roll out of FOSS class lessons by using learning walks. Jim explained the learning process at different learning levels whereby students can reach an analytical level. As noted by Brian, when learning walks are complete, a Google document is shared amongst the three principals and teachers to assist in identifying the instructional pedagogical approaches during FOSS identified that promotes a growth mindset. Brian illustrated an example and provided an outline of which science is taught and focused on at each grade level.

Christie presented the “FOSS Fever” next steps and commented that it is important to help teachers to find the time and innovative ways to work with the curriculum. Project based learning is closely connected to the FOSS approach, as the students are collaborating, thinking critically, collecting and analyzing data, and making decisions about their learning which leads to overwhelming achievement levels.

Middle School:

In keeping with “Noticing every student, every day,” the school based goal is for all staff to begin a multi-year process of transitioning the middle school to standards-based reporting in order to offer more specific, actionable feedback regarding

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students' academic growth and performance. The Math Department started this process about four years ago, and Betsy explained why the school is moving towards standards-based reporting. It's about knowing students better to target their instruction and elevate their achievement which is different depending on the student. It's also about focusing on learning, mastering content and skills, rather than focusing on grades or points.

This is not a simple process and will take time to fully implement. Thus, Betsy and her staff must solidify the why through professional development, must plan the how by dedicating inservice time, and must embark on a manageable leg of the journey each year within each department. Betsy described her work with her staff currently and going forward. Based on the Math Department's work in this area, the staff has found that the teachers know their students better as learners, there is a more personalized, effective targeted instruction in areas of challenge, there is a shift in the conversation between teachers and students from grades and points to learning, and students are taking control of their own learning.

High School:

Allyson commented on what it means that every child is noticed every day. There are structures in place, including the teachers and the supportive community, but more work will be accomplished within the primary organizational structure of the departments during department meetings and inservice time each Wednesday afternoon. Allyson noted some of the areas in which they have discussed at these meetings.

The theme for the high school's work for the next three years is taking a "deep dive" into knowing the students. As the school-based goal, the WHS department teams will develop strategic action plans that will strengthen their knowledge and support of identified groups of students. Allyson explained how this process will work, as the team will begin with a self-assessment of current strategies and structures in terms of how they understand students' individual strengths and weaknesses and will then identify a group of students whom the team will want to understand more deeply. They will gather data and research about these students and will design an action plan in order to strengthen teachers' knowledge and to elevate the students' academic achievement.

Allyson shared and explained some thoughts that came from an open brainstorming session.

Questions were asked and a discussion ensued about the administrators' charge to move forward with this effort and how it is evolving at each level. Arthur commented that this effort is in keeping with the Mission Statement and is very much a collaborative undertaking.

(b) Continued Review of School Start Time Proposals:

- Review of Public Forums
- Review of Timeline to Date
- Discussion of Concerns
- Next Steps

Jeanne announced that the School Committee has received much feedback in recent weeks, as well as during the last three years. She updated the public on the timeline of the school start time discussions that began in July 2015 and the decisions that have been made since June. Some of the issues and concerns that have been discussed recently are professional development, elementary earlier start time, extra-curriculars and before and after school activities across all grade levels, the impact on athletics, the capacity of childcare to accommodate working families, transportation, and the cost to implement the change.

Arthur informed the School Committee about his efforts in exploring these concerns further. After consulting with teachers and administrators, he recommends the continuation of PD in the afternoon. He continues to look at adding four days in which students are dismissed an hour and fifteen minutes earlier and possibly changing the early release day to Tuesday. The Committee and Arthur discussed at length the elementary start times, the available research, the public's input about the earlier schedule, and the possibility of moving the elementary start time to 8:00 a.m. and the impact it might cause for other issues.

Ellen left the meeting at 9:36 p.m.; returned at 9:38 p.m.

Nathan asked if it was possible to extend the school year beyond 180 days. Arthur noted the financial costs for additional days, which is about \$183,000 per day. Another idea was to take five minutes from the added instructional time at the end of the day, as negotiated a year ago. Kim described the inadequateness of the Kentucky Study for elementary aged children.

Arthur explained the obstacles he encountered regarding extra-curriculars, such as personal reasons for some teachers who can't stay later in day. There are some programs that are held in the morning across all levels, such as music and

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instrumental groups, Student Council, the Honor Society, and wellness groups. Susan addressed transportation and the research she has done in terms of the current 1400 riders and where they live in order to address the possibility of eliminating a bus next year. A discussion ensued about the logistics and potential additional cost of bussing. To add a tier with 5 additional buses, the cost would be about \$180,000. Arthur reported on those items in the budget that could be eliminated if \$300,000 was spent for bussing. The Committee discussed the process in possibly asking for the additional money.

3. **Administrative/Procedural Matters (taken out of order):**

(a) Appointment of School Committee Representative to the SEL Committee:

Ellen volunteered to be the School Committee representative. Richard commented on the makeup and cross section of the committee that will four or five times during the year.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Ellen to the SEL Committee.

4. **Educational Matters:**

The School Committee resumed their discussion of school start times. Ellen commented on the importance of accommodating working families within BASE or some other childcare programs. The Wayland Recreation Department may be interested in helping in this regard.

Ellen left the meeting at 10:13 p.m.

Other issues addressed were additional costs to implement a breakfast program for elementary Boston students, expanding the search for childcare, possible bus costs, and the possibility of having monitors at night games as chaperones. Arthur commented that different groups will form after November to work out some of the issues by February, such as a childcare group, an arts programming group, and a professional development group. In addition, Jeanne would like to address staff morale, particularly at the elementary level. The scenarios were reviewed.

4. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the Addition of a 1.0 FTE EL Teaching Assistant:

The School Committee discussed Parry's request to add an EL teacher assistant for this year and funding this position with 2018-2019 existing funds from the EL budget. There has been an unanticipated and substantial change in the number of children in the EL program at Claypit Hill and Loker. Thus, the number of ELs currently exceeds the service hours that the teachers can provide at both schools.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the addition of a 1.0 FTE for the EL teaching assistant.

(b) Discussion, Review and Possible Re-Vote of Capital Improvement Plans:

Kathie reported on the presentation to the Finance Committee on October 22 at which some of their questions were answered by Susan and Ben Keefe. Requests were made for \$21M of excluded debt, \$10M of which was for the schools. The Finance Committee would like the maximum town-wide capital at \$5M. Kathie explained the finances and, at the request of FinCom, the possibility of deferring some projects. It was agreed upon not to make changes at this point in the process.

(c) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Prior Year Invoices:

Susan commented that three invoices from Budget Blinds, Pearson, and Robin Traquina were received after the close of the FY2018 fiscal year and an open Purchase Order had not been generated.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the payment of the FY2018 late bills in the amount of \$2,630.25 as outlined in Susan's memo of October 14, 2018.

(d) Review of Budget Calendar:

The School Committee reviewed the FY20 budget calendar, including the budget presentations at the Council on Aging and the schools.

(e) Update and Discussion of School Owned Land:

This agenda item was passed over.

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(f) High School Master Athletic Plan:

- Project Update

There was no new information to share; thus, this agenda item was passed over.

4. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Review of Meeting Agenda for Boston Meeting on November 5, 2018:

The School Committee and Arthur reviewed the agenda for the Boston meeting on November 5, 2018, which includes refreshments, an activity, a presentation by Mabel Reid-Wallace, and a presentation by the School Committee regarding School Start Times.

(b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Request:
None.

(c) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Open Meeting Law Matters:
None.

(d) Discussion of School Committee Communications and Information for The Buzz:
Kim will submit another article regarding school start times.

5. **Finance Subcommittee Update:**

(a) Review of Meeting with Finance Committee:

Kathie reported that the Finance Committee has been given the school budget dates. The support organizations will be invited to a future meeting as their end-of-year reports are received. A discussion of special revenue funds, as well as the Enrollment Report will occur at a future meeting.

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

None.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated October 29, 2018, in the amount of \$449,266.14
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated October 29, 2018, in the amount of \$3,693.89
- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated October 24, 2018, in the amount of \$1,454,203.65

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- October 10, 2018
- October 15, 2018 (public forum)
- October 15, 2018
- October 17, 2018
- October 22, 2018

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted (4-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

8. **Executive Session:**

Due to the lateness of the meeting, the Executive Session was postponed.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 10:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

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Observers:

Chris Desmond, 81 Riverview Circle
Barrett Bvounros, 27 Bow Road
David Shmelzer, 36 Hampshire Road
Jenny Silberman, 79 Oxbow Road
Joseph Vukson, 17 Stonebridge Road
Christine McKenna, 11 Holbrook Road
Paul Morenberg, 25 Hazelbrook Road
John Grabill, 62 Riverview Circle
Alissa Kissel, 87A Old Connecticut Path

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda and Backup Information
2. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
3. Special Session Minutes of October 10, 2018
4. Special Session Minutes of October 15, 2018
5. Regular Session Minutes of October 15, 2018
6. Special Session Minutes of October 17, 2018
7. Special Session Minutes of October 22, 2018
8. Executive Session Motion