

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – July 20, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Monday, July 20, 2020, at 1:00 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

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 1:04 p.m. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM and 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>Present</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X
Kim Reichelt	X
Chris Ryan	X
Kathie Steinberg	X

1. 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 1:05 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; (b) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Custodial Union, 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 (c) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: June 24, 2020. 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	

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, Louise Miller, Town Administrator, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will reconvene in open session to discuss matters noted on the agenda.

The School Committee reconvened in open session at 2:22 p.m.

Arthur commented on the community's interest in surveying other school districts in terms of which models were being considered to reopen school in the fall. He has met with superintendents with similar demographics on a weekly basis and conducted an informal survey. Although not decided yet, about 50% of the districts were leaning towards a hybrid model, 25% were considering an all-in model, 8% may implement a remote model, and 17% are considering different models at different levels. Sixty-nine percent of the districts, within a hybrid model, would combine two in-person days and two remote days per week and a remote day for all students as the fifth day of the week; he described. Arthur explained the options for the all remote (X) day. Arthur addressed synchronous vs. asynchronous learning in a hybrid

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model, the exploration of outdoor classrooms, and the option for families to opt out of the hybrid model.

Arthur left the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

2. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne Brown, 9 Charena Road, relayed that a junior student athlete who is in the process of being recruited based on his/her GPA, but since there was a decision in the spring to only include first semester grades in the GPA, the athlete is not being recruited. This decision has adversely affected this student as well as many other students. Ms. Brown asked if there was any chance that last year's GPA could be recalculated and to give credit for the work done by students during third quarter.

Jeanne read a public comment from Kristin Murphy: Ms. Murphy does not support the purchase of the K-12 online program "Edgenuity" for students who will opt out and not return to school due to the current COVID pandemic and noted the reasons for her non-support. This program consists mostly of asynchronous videos and assignments, it does not align with Common Core Standards for math in Grades 6-8, it is poorly rated by users of the program and, according to a Slate Magazine review, students cannot "test out" of material that they already know which relegates them to listen to video content that they have mastered, and students who do not attend school in person will receive no instruction, no feedback, and no interaction with teachers. However, teachers will be expected to oversee the program for some students to some extent. Ms. Murphy believes that this is a step back in Wayland's mission to close the opportunity gap and notes that Wayland teachers alone should educate all of Wayland's students.

Sejal Srinivisan, 35 Covered Bridge Road, encouraged the School Committee to make an imminent decision in terms of which model the district will follow in reopening the schools. She shared a study that underscores the transmission risks from children and noted that an all-in model cannot justify the health risks for students and teachers. Ms. Srinivisan encouraged the School Committee to focus on one specific model. She also asked that the potential learning loss in the spring be presented.

Jeanne read a public comment from David Howe: Mr. Howe offered a path of logistics in opening schools for the 2020-2021 school year. It is assumed that the health risks are lowest in a remote model, moderate in a hybrid model, and highest in an all-in model. The mental health risks and the risk for academic progress is highest in the remote model, moderate in the hybrid model, and lowest in the all-in model. After listing several principles that will lead to a conclusion for reopening school, Mr. Howe believes the health of students and the community is the first priority. Thus, the district should complete three plans in the following order – remote, hybrid, and all-in – so the district can transition between models, if necessary. If the district cannot formulate all three models by August 31, he suggested opening schools on the standard date with the remote model.

Jeanne read a public comment from Stacey Reed: As a Middle School 7th grade life science teacher, Ms. Reed encouraged the School Committee to celebrate and honor the learning that happened in the spring by both teachers and students and not just focus on the notion of curriculum loss. Given the unprecedented and unanticipated situation in the spring, Ms. Reed believes that virtual learning in the fall will look very different as the teachers reflect on their lessons and all that they learned in the spring. She provided examples of what her students were proudly able to create, share, investigate, build, and learn in their courses and assignments. Students were provided with a menu of nine choices each week which allowed them to focus and pursue their interests. Ms. Reed also commented on the mindfulness options that were offered, as well as her synchronous and asynchronous communications with her students. Given the health risks for students and teachers, it is her belief that students' needs will be better met in the fall remotely rather than in a socially distanced classroom based on scientific evidence.

3. Consent Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes: June 24, 2020 and July 6, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of June 24, 2020 and July 6, 2020. A roll call vote 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	

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Kathie Steinberg

X

4. COVID-19 Response:

- Continued Discussion of Three Models for Return to School in Fall 2020 (Remote, Hybrid, All-In), including State Guidance, Community and Staff Feedback, Outstanding Questions, and Teaching and Learning and Operational Aspects:

The following topics will be addressed during this discussion: a parent survey, the spring learning loss, Board of Health conversation update, ventilation, a timeline, and the possible elimination of a model.

Jeanne will attend the Board of Health meeting this evening at which the Board will review the state guidance regarding school cohorts, as well as a list of concerns developed by Jeanne and Arthur in reopening schools. The list will be shared with other Committee members for their input/additional concerns. In terms of ventilation, Louise Miller and Ben Keefe will attend the next School Committee meeting to provide a ventilation update.

Parry provided an update about the learning loss (what was accomplished and what was not accomplished) in the spring and the three proposed fall reopening models. Parry will provide a document at the next meeting regarding these topics based on conversations with high school department chairs, middle school curriculum leaders, and elementary curriculum directors.

When the schools shut down in the spring, the state guidance was to focus on enrichment for the first three weeks and then move into providing new content for students, but not more than 50% of what would have been focused on in a normal spring. Thus, a ceiling/barrier was established in the spring and this will not be the case in the fall. It was acknowledged that some curriculum was lost, but the teachers covered all of the concepts but not diving as deep into them. Parry explained the teachers' approach further, adding there wasn't a clear metric in this regard, not all students mastered the concepts, and some subjects were more conducive to online learning.

In terms of elementary students, about 50% of literacy skills were the focus in Kindergarten and 1st and 2nd grades in the spring, 100% of math standards were covered in Kindergarten and about half of math concepts were covered in 1st and 2nd grades. Second grade teachers covered about 90% of the science curriculum, but through information dissemination and not with the FOSS hands-on approach. Social studies was not covered at the level of depth in a normal school year. In the upper elementary grades, math skills were prioritized, reading and writing was more individualized because of different accessibility to resources. A majority of the science standards were covered via virtual experiments and social studies was also limited with adaptations due to the field trip connection to the lessons which were not possible. The special classes (art, music, library, wellness, and technology) were taught but in a limited capacity for art, music and wellness classes and in an asynchronous environment; Parry explained.

The goal for the fall is to move forward with the curriculum, and teachers will not reproduce those lessons that were missed in the spring. However, there will be some exceptions for which Parry described. There will also be extra help for those groups of students who will need it. A discussion ensued in terms of how much of the curriculum, particularly in math, will have to be covered in the fall. However, it does depend on the subject area and the needs of some students, particularly in phonics. Parry explained further, adding that screening assessments will be applied in the fall, such as the use of "Track My Progress" and other methods, including structured interventions for students. Kim suggested providing some reinforcement materials for students.

Parry continued to describe the curriculum coverage by the middle school and high school teachers in the spring.

The upcoming listening sessions were discussed as to date, time, and which Committee members would attend which sessions.

A discussion ensued about the possibility of eliminating the all-in model. The topic will continue to be discussed at Wednesday's meeting.

5. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

6. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 3:44 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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	<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 Comments
3. Minutes of June 24, 2020 and July 6, 2020