

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 12, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Chris Ryan, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Jeanne Downs
Jessica Polizzotti
Kim Reichelt

Also present:

Dr. Omar Easy
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Ellen Whittemore
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:32 p.m. A roll call was taken as follows:

1. Public Comment:

Michele Fiske, a 4th grade teacher, read a public statement on behalf of the WTA and it reads in part as follows. “The Wayland Public Schools have long been a high-performing district due in large part to its educators. Recently, the administration made significant changes to their teaching methods, curriculum, and operating procedures which are detrimental to the educational environment. As professionals, we welcome change when it is rooted in sound educational practice. However, we are increasingly concerned that these current changes are undermining our education system and ask the School Committee to take action.” Items that the WTA feels have impacted students’ educational experiences, teacher working conditions, and overall district morale were listed in part. The statement also listed Wayland Public School needs, such as a budget that prioritizes direct student services, transparent hiring practices that follow School Committee policy, curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments that are researched-based and driven by teacher input, etc. Finally, the WTA advocated for the welfare of the students and called upon the School Committee to hear teacher voices and act on their concerns.

Alexia Obar, 18 Dean Road, commented that she has seen wonderful changes in the district by the new Superintendent and during these trying times, such as elementary assistant principals in all the schools. Ms. Obar noted that the schools are great, but things can always be improved. She feels that now she can speak out without retribution against her children since they are no longer students in the Wayland Public Schools.

Jessica Polizzotti, 16 Indian Road, made a statement on behalf of herself and not for the Committee. She received a typed anonymous letter with no return address that she believes was meant for her as a School Committee member. There were two references – the sender is a Wayland teacher who lives in Wayland. Jess brought this letter to the police station. She is hopeful that everyone can be professional and requested that all School Committee communications are sent to her via the School Committee addresses provided or calls on her cell phone. She is also hopeful that there was no ill intent and asked that her family’s privacy and sense of safety is respected.

Kim Reichelt, Coolidge Road, made reference that she also received the same letter and shared the same sentiments as Jess. She continued that the School Committee welcomes emails but prefers that they are not sent anonymously or with made up pseudonyms. If there is a need for someone to remain anonymous, the School Committee will respect that and hopes that they can have a conversation.

Jeanne Downs, 195 Concord Road, thanked Parry Graham and Michelle Crowell for their well-done presentation at the last meeting, as it was very informative. She also referred to the tragic loss of a Loker student and thanked Brian Jones and Dr. Easy for the timely and sensitive communication to the community. Jeanne added that our WHS Director of Guidance visited Loker School with her therapy dog during this difficult time and it shows who and what Wayland is about.

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Chair Chris Ryan acknowledged the first public comment, adding that the School Committee also received it via email today, but the Committee has not had a chance to discuss it together. There is always another perspective with any communication, and Chris noted that the School Committee will review it as a Committee.

2. Superintendent Update:

(a) COVID-19 Response:

Dr. Easy noted that the return to school after a five-day quarantine was implemented on Monday. Lunch is now being served in the classrooms at the two elementary schools in which students cannot be six feet apart due to space issues. The classrooms are cleaned upon the students' exit, and air purifiers have been placed in the classrooms.

There has been an increase in the number of positive cases and contact tracing is a challenge. He has had discussions with the town and the nursing department to find a solution to acquire more help, adding that there may be a need for a part-time staff member to do the contact tracing.

Parry updated the School Committee on the positive cases in the schools since the beginning of the school year; however, a large majority occurred since the beginning of winter break. The student cases total 335 and the staff cases total 63. During the last three to five days, the cases declined a bit. Although the protocols and procedures remained in place, it has been a challenge over the last two weeks. Parry reviewed the results of the last pooled testing on January 4, including the challenge of not getting all of the individual results because CIC Broad Institute had a huge amount of testing last week while dealing with their own staffing shortage. Parry explained further.

A communication was sent to families and staff explaining this situation, as well as an email to those families who had children in the positive pools notifying them that their child was in a positive pool, including any staff who were in a positive pool. For anyone interested who was in an inconclusive pool, there is an opportunity to test tomorrow with an antigen test. In addition, pooled testing will be done again tomorrow with the expectation that results will be back more quickly according to CIC.

Kim suggested that a family is told that their child was in a positive pool so they might act sooner with an antigen test of their own, adding that Broad Institute should have known there would be a challenge with pooled testing. Parry described the testing protocol currently in place noting there hasn't been much of an issue prior to this. Dr. Easy suggested using some funds from the Board of Selectmen that are allocated for testing to come up with a backup plan should this happen again. Dr. Easy added that if cases continue to increase and the nurses cannot keep up with contact tracing, there may be a possibility to access more personnel from the town; however, this is still in discussions.

Finally, the wastewater numbers indicate that there could be a decrease in the number of positive cases.

3. Financial Matters:

(a) Discussion of FY23 Recommended Budget:

Wayland High School:

WHS Principal Allyson Mizoguchi presented highlights from the School Improvement Plan that drives the FY23 budget requests and was approved by the School Council in December 2021. The overarching themes of the plan are academic support, equity and access, and social-emotion wellbeing, all of which are reflected in the district and building-based goals.

School Goal #1: Focuses on launching the new START program as part of a more comprehensive academic support model in order to identify academically struggling students as well as track the effectiveness of interventions. This program is underway but not fully implemented. Existing supports will be adjusted and this new model will be presented to the faculty in February.

School Goal #2: Current systems will be evaluated and will build professional capacity around identity bias to ensure that Black and Latinx students have an equitable opportunity to enroll in and be successful in advanced or honors level courses. The WHS School Council has been exploring this for over a year together with the WHS METCO Coordinator and the Director of Equity and Belonging. The current course selection/placement process for bias and barriers will continue to be evaluated, data will be collected on how many students of color are in honors and advanced level courses including their experiences, and appropriate recommendations will be made for a change. There is also a plan to launch the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Peer Leader Program in the fall of 2022, and the

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staff has been involved in training with ADL coordinators to learn about this program.

School Goal #3: Identification and evaluation of the needs of the students is ongoing around strengthening the support of the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of students. The new clinical counselor role will be implemented as part of a holistic plan and the Healthy Relationships Task Force will continue to develop a communication plan around policies and practices related to dating violence.

Dr. Mizoguchi explained the role of the Healthy Relationships Task Force, as it was formed in response to the social media posts of violence against women. The task force will help students to get the appropriate support and put preventative measures in place, as well as create a plan around clear policies and practices in this regard. This is ongoing at every level, including work being done at the Middle School. Dr. Mizoguchi described the role of the WHS Clinical Counselor.

Dr. Mizoguchi outlined the budget requests that she describes as fairly modest, such as additional support in the Academic Center and a full position for a campus supervisor which can be achieved through the reallocation of existing funds. She addressed class sizes in the freshmen class as it is larger than usual. In addition, another anatomy and physiology class was added from last year's budget, but the position was not filled. The resources for the special education, EL and Boston students can always be more, as time presents challenges during which staff remains flexible and responsive because of the two additional teacher positions in the ALRT program. Another school psychologist would be helpful and shared at the high school and middle school because of the increase SEL needs. Dr. Easy explained this shared position as a result of a retirement in June. A discussion ensued in this regard and included the anticipated role of the campus supervisor position.

Athletics:

Athletic Director Heath Rollins presented the athletic program in terms of the athletic FY23 budget. After a difficult year last year, many parents and students supported the athletic program as there is a social and emotional value around student participation. With some restrictions, 877 roster spots were filled this year on 49 different teams as listed in the presentation. True budget numbers have not been reflected for the past three years due to COVID, but there are inflationary costs this year. Mr. Rollins noted that he is not asking for anything more in the budget. About \$280,000 is taken in for user fees for sports, such as ice hockey, crew, and sailing and are, therefore, not part of the operating budget.

Technology:

Director of Technology and Digital Learning Leisha Simon presented the IT highlights for digital teaching and learning. In terms of hardware, students have access to approximately 2700 1:1 devices that include MacBook Airls, iMACs, Chromebooks and, new this year, iPads. The staff uses about 400 devices, such as Macbook Airls, Chromebooks, and Chromeboxes. Interactive projectors, document cameras (IPEVO), and Viewsonic interactive flat panels are used throughout the district.

The software provided is for the Student Information System is eSchool PLUS, still being rolled out is Google Workspace for Education Plus and Classlink which is a single sign-on and rostering for SIS for students, particularly elementary students. Communication software is also supported for School Messenger and the School Messenger Website. The district has about 200 software titles that are being assessed as well as updating Student Data Privacy contracts.

The software goals include technology integration and supporting the work of the teachers, including professional development. The hardware goals are to continue to move the hardware toward the sustainable five-year leases. Ms. Simon displayed some of the work being done in the classrooms, adding that coding is being done beginning with first grade. Ms. Simon described the program Screencastify.

Dr. Easy praised the high school administration and leadership team for their collaboration and the student-focused promises made to the students, particularly when they had to cancel the mid-terms for different reasons.

4. **Administrative Matters:**

(a) Review of OML Determinations:

Kim reported on the following: The Everett City Council received 80 OML complaints in 2021. The Weston Planning Board discussed something in a meeting that was not on their agenda. Kim explained, including a noted added by the Attorney General in the response. A member of the Everett Committee on Governmental Operations Public

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Safety and Public Service was not always present at a meeting and was attending another meeting resulting in not having a meeting quorum some of the time. Meetings can be held without a quorum, but decisions cannot be made at the time. Kim explained how a non-meeting does not violate the Open Meeting Law. Finally, the Newbury Select Board attended a Council on Aging meeting without posting the meeting, even though three out of five members attended and spoke at the meeting. Another public body can attend another meeting only if they listen and are members of the audience; Kim elaborated.

5. Policy Matters:

(a) Possible Vote to Approve the Following Policies:

- EBC Supplemental: Interim Pandemic Policy
- GBEB: Staff Conduct
- IJNDD: Policy on Social Media

There were no edits since these policies were last discussed. The School Committee reviewed for any further edits. Dr. Easy noted that the Administrative Council discussed Policy IJNDD and then circled back to the Policy Subcommittee. The policy will be sent to the principals and the Athletic Director for his review, including the advisors.

Jess read the one comment that was received for EBC Supplemental regarding class size around the incorrectly worded “health and safety” measures. The recommendation was to change the words “health and safety.” A discussion followed in this regard, and it was decided to keep it as is. The next comment, as read by Jess, referred to “time and learning” due to the time it takes for arrivals and departures, particularly at Claypit Hill. The commenter asked for consistency across all three elementary schools. This comment was discussed further.

Jess read other comments regarding vaccinations for visitors in the schools, illness and contact tracing, and masking. It was noted that the masking policy is not referenced in Policy EBC, as it a separate policy.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve Policies EBC Supplemental (Interim Pandemic Policy), GBEB (Staff Conduct) and IJNDD (Social Media) as written.

(b) Policy Manual Website:

Kim described this new process and functionality through Google. This process will move forward as recommended by Kim.

6. Consent Agenda:

(a) Accounts Payables Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated January 10, 2022, in the amount of \$383,531.83

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- December 15, 2021

Jeanne provided the adjournment time and motion in the December 15 minutes.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0-1) (Kim abstained) to approve the consent agenda.

7. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

8. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:22 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) approving the executive session minutes of December 15, 2021, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22. The Chair noted that the executive session minutes will not be approved this evening. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	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.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:26 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	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Policy EBC Supplemental
3. Policy GBEB – Staff Conduct
4. Policy IJNDD – Policy on Social Media
5. Accounts Payables Warrant
6. Minutes of December 15, 2021
7. Executive Session Motion