

## MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting – November 9, 2016

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair

Jeanne Downs

Kim Reichelt

Kathie Steinberg

Absent:

Ellen Grieco, Chair

Also:

Paul Stein

Superintendent

Kim Reichelt convened the special session at 7:02 P.M. and noted that the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

### 1. **Presentation on School Start Times:**

Paul addressed the audience and announced that the School Committee and administration has decided to bring the issue of changing school start times to the community for serious consideration. He noted that the presentation is a discussion starter only with suggested options. The goal is to decide if there is a plan for Wayland and, if so, come up with a creative alternative that will balance the competing interests and needs of families and students of all ages.

Kim commented that she hopes to answer the following questions during this meeting:

- Why we are looking at changing school start times?
- What options are being considered?
- What are the challenges and opportunities?
- What does the community think?

Schools are looking into changing start times because research shows that current start times for middle and high school students run exactly counter to the biological needs of students. Sleep deprivation in older students causes a range of health problems, risky behaviors and reduced school performance. One study shows that only 8% of students get enough sleep, 40% of teens get 6 or few hours of sleep, and 20% sleep in class. The Metrowest Health Survey notes similar rates in Wayland.

Kim reviewed the reasons why, according to research, older students are not getting enough sleep, such as they have a biologically different sleep/wake pattern. For instance, if they can't fall asleep until at least 11:00 p.m. and have to wake up by 6:00 a.m. or earlier, they don't get the recommended amount of sleep of 8.5 to 9.5 hours. REM sleep is critical for learning and memory. Elementary students need and do get about 9 to 12 hours of sleep.

Kim cited the myths and misconceptions regarding sleep patterns of teens. In addition, Kim noted that getting enough sleep is very important because not getting enough will impact one's health, behavior, safety and school performance in a number of ways. As a result of the supporting research regarding school start times, the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends that Middle and High Schools not start any earlier than 8:30 a.m. However, Wayland schools start earlier than the Massachusetts average.

Three Massachusetts towns – Sharon, Nauset, and Duxbury – have changed their start times. Kim explained the schedules and the results of the change in those towns. The Middlesex County League and some towns in the Dual County League are actively pursuing a change in school start times.

Kim reviewed Wayland's current school schedules and the different options that are being considered. There are several challenges, such as a very early pickup time for young students, an impact on childcare arrangements, athletics schedules, and the impact of the change on school staff. However, the benefits and/or advantages are better academic performance, and improved health, wellness and safety.

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2. **Public Comments and Open Discussion:**

The majority of the audience was in favor of a change to the school start times. Many parents shared their experiences with their older children in the morning that supports the research cited. The benefits were clear to the audience, but many challenges were brought up. One parent suggested that it was important to know how many students ride the buses and how many participate in sports.

During this discussion, the audience expressed why they support this change, adding that the benefits override any logistics in planning. The audience was then asked to comment on those issues that they perceive to be the most challenging, such as finding time to do homework, early release days, athletic schedules, and before and after school childcare. Several issues surrounding busing were also raised. Parents asked that a better effort is made to inform the community of these meetings.

Paul described the general process moving forward that will include an online survey. The final decision will be made by the School Committee to change or not to change school start times after taking all factors and issues into consideration, as well as the decisions of other school districts.

3. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

See attached list.

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. School Start Time Presentation