

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – June 9, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 5:45 p.m.)
Jessica Polizzotti
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Sam Goldstein, WHS Class of 2021
Kayla Simpson, WHS Class of 2021
Atharva Weiling, WHS Class of 2021
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal
Leisha Simon, Director of Technology and Digital Learning

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:33 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting 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>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	absent	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	

1. **Public Comment:**

There were no public comments.

Jeanne acknowledged Dr. Arthur Unobskey and his many contributions to the Wayland Public Schools, including his strong relationship and interaction with the students.

2. **Special Matters:**

(a) Discussion with Wayland High School Class of 2021 Students:

Three Wayland High School Class of 2021 students, Sam Goldstein, Kayla Simpson, and Atharva Weiling came before the School Committee to talk about their overall experiences during their time in the Wayland schools. Overall, the students valued their education and had positive experiences since they entered the Wayland schools. They spoke about the stress culture at WHS, particularly around test scores, AP classes and levels, homework assignments, cheating among students, and the lack of racial education in terms of how to address race issues both for staff and students based on some of Kayla's in-school experiences as a METCO student.

Ellen arrived at 5:45 p.m.

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The students made some suggestions going forward, such as offering a four-year mandatory race course for students and inviting a student representative, possibly a Boston student, to attend the School Committee meetings.

A discussion ensued about the previous high school student representative on the School Committee and how to make it work moving forward, as well as offering a mandatory multi-year race course separate from combining it with psychology as it is now. Dr. Mizoguchi commented that there was a plan pre-COVID to pilot discussions about race and racism as part of the 9th grade seminar. The plan is to continue this effort next year.

- (b) Discussion with Wayland Middle School and Wayland High School Principals regarding 2020-2021 Goals:

Middle School: Elevating Achievement

Betsy Gavron began the presentation by noting that this year's goals were approached in the context of the pandemic while focusing on student engagement in all three learning models. The comprehensive engagement tracker, which identified those students who are under-engaged, was developed by the curriculum leaders with the purpose of engaging students in meaningful ways. The teachers were asked to focus on the same student learning goal for those few students who were under-engaged.

Four patterns emerged for teachers while learning what was most effective in engaging the under-engaged students, such as the importance of building meaningful and true relationships with students, personalized learning and focusing on students' interests, conversations with students to establish goals followed by teacher feedback, and developing partnerships and strategizing with families.

Middle School: Deepening Social-Emotional Wellness

Given the postings last year on Dear Wayland accounts and the pandemic, it was realized that work was needed to address students' mental health and to make the community at large and school community a safer place relative to many issues. The middle and high school formed a Healthy Relationship Task Force in collaboration with REACH that consists of school staff, students, families, and community partners. Betsy described the work of the Healthy Relationship Task Force and the two sub-groups – Focus Groups and Policy and Practice. Wellness classes have included work around healthy relationships, as well as health education in partnership with McLean Hospital.

The Panorama Survey is a tool by which information is gathered regarding the mental health of the students. They contain valuable information but can be time consuming to review all that it encompasses; thus, some staff will pursue this effort during the summer.

Finally staff self-care is necessary so that staff can better serve the students. Betsy described some of the ways in which staff can implement self-care plans, such as exercise, playing a musical instrument, and creativity.

Middle School: Equity

Equity has been out front at all times, but particularly during the pandemic. A focus of the middle school was math achievement for the 6th grade Black and Latinx students. Student mathematical data is being compiled and tracked in K-12, including students' progress over time, what types of intervention, if any, were implemented, and what types of support can be put in place. As a result, seven Black and Latinx students were recommended for accelerated 7th grade pre-algebra. Betsy described situations in which student support was very successful.

Betsy responded to questions about executive functioning strategies in the classroom and at home, math tracking, supportive opportunities, and what percent of the seven 6th grade students recommended for accelerated 7th grade pre-algebra compared to the overall 6th grade student population.

High School: Elevating Achievement

Allyson Mizoguchi commented that as staff reflected on school improvement goals and navigated through new challenges and learning transitions, it was done in the context of the pandemic. The ultimate goal was to identify those struggling students, and Allyson focused on two of the approaches taken. Each department head team and faculty analyzed quarter grades by breaking down data by race, grade, and cohort, such as in-person vs. WRAP and special education vs. general education. Staff continued reflecting on new instructional and assessment practices that came up during the remote and hybrid modes. Staff utilized practices/tools already in place but developing them in a more robust way. One example overseen by the Academic Center coordinator was the introduction of the weekly "Remote Engagement Record" that monitored student progress so that interventions could be implemented.

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High School: Deepening Social-Emotional Wellbeing

The Remote Engagement Record was also used to check in on students on a weekly basis with the use of an SEL indicator. Students were surveyed on their SEL wellbeing during remote and hybrid. Allyson explained the follow-up process if a student needed intervention. Mental health discussions are also important to the students. Moving forward, a clinical school counselor will be hired for the next school year given the increase in mental health issues.

High School: Equity

One positive outcome of the pandemic, placed an urgent concentration on equity and access overall. One focus of equity, with the help of the WHS School Council, has been the course recommendation and placement process for students. Listening sessions were created to get a sense of how students feel about their own courses, about their own recommendations and placements by staff, and to provide a sense of the override process. The School Council also received help from Caroline Han, Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Coordinator and Mark Liddell, the WHS METCO Coordinator. The findings from the listening sessions will inform priorities related to this process going forward.

Allyson responded to questions about the Remote Engagement Record and its ongoing use, the Student Study Team's function and makeup, and fall plans to transition 9th graders to their sophomore year since they missed most of the freshmen experience.

3. Superintendent Update:

(a) Graduation:

The graduation ceremony went very well, and Arthur noted that the student speakers presented their agendas very articulately.

(b) End-of-Year Activities:

Arthur noted that end-of-year activities are taking place, such as field days and a Chill Truck.

4. COVID-19 Response:

(a) Grades K-12 All-In Update:

Because of the heat, outdoor classes are being held for students to take MCAS.

(b) Update of Class Size Implications:

School placements for new residents, as well as classroom assignments for 1st to 5th graders, have been ongoing. Due to the creation of buffer zones a few years ago, certain grades will be tight, and Arthur recommended that class sizes be monitored over the summer as teacher assistants may be needed if the numbers exceed the class size guidelines.

(c) Special Education Update:

Richard reported that the staff is preparing for the Extended School Year that begins on June 28 and ends on August 6. Hiring new staff is ongoing.

(d) Transportation Update:

There were no updates.

(e) Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee (RHLPC) and COVID Learning and Safety Team Update:

RHLPC:

There was no update.

COVID Learning and Safety Team:

Jeanne reported that the CO2 sample testing continues in the schools and so far has come well within the range of where the levels should be. The team will discuss its future and structure at the next meeting.

(f) Surveillance Testing Update, including Current Enrollment in Program and Senior Activities:

Arthur thanked each parent who volunteered to help with the pooled testing and noted that the last scheduled testing will be June 11. All 195 pools tested last week were negative. In the fall, the Commissioner of Education expects completely normal school and pre-COVID protocols with the exception of mask wearing for K-5 students. The Commissioner will confirm all this in writing by mid-July.

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Jeanne referred to the town counsel’s opinion around mandating pooled testing for in-person extracurricular activities, and Kim commented that it has been over a month since the last student case.

(g) Summer Programming Plans Update:

Parry reported that the elementary, middle and high school summer programs are moving forward and will meet students’ needs as the needs are identified. New staff is being hired and applications are being filed for summer programming grants. Parry noted that there are 250 days of summer work in the district.

(h) Next Steps:

Next steps were discussed earlier.

5. Administrative Matters:

(a) Superintendent Transition Update:

Dr. Easy meets regularly with Susan, Parry, and Richard. He is involved in the hiring process and is working to reorganize the Central Office space. Arthur has shared important documents with him.

(b) Review of OML Determinations:

There were no OML determinations issued since the last School Committee meeting.

(c) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

Jeanne reported that after June 15, boards and committees must meet in person as the Legislature has not passed an option to extend remote capability. The next meeting, June 23, will be in person. A discussion ensued about the public’s participation – remote or in-person.

6. Financial Matters:

(a) Possible Vote to Approve Technology Purchase and Lease:

Leisha Simon requested the School Committee’s approval of the lease to engage in the purchase of the Apple computers/hardware for a total of 900 high school student computers and 100 high school staff computers. This replacement lease will be changed to a five-year lease, as the work continues to put all the hardware on five-year leases. This lease will also allow for two lab replacements.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the technology lease as described by Leisha.

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

(b) Update on Capital Project Scheduling:

The Finance Subcommittee met today and discussed the summary of capital projects slated to be completed this summer while focusing on the Loker roof project and the playground projects. The materials for the Loker roof have been delayed, and due to a miscommunication regarding the playgrounds, the sources of the portion of the funding will be adjusted. The bids for the playgrounds are going out again this week. Louise Miller will attend the next Finance Subcommittee meeting to report on those projects that will not be finished by September 1.

(c) Update on Bus Contract and Bus Parking:

The bid solicitations for summer bus parking were conducted by the Town. First Student was the lowest bidder, and the Town will execute a contract for three busses and three drivers. The summer busses will be parked in Sudbury at First Student’s location behind the Peter Noyes School, and the Sudbury dispatcher will be available to Wayland.

In terms of bus parking for the next school year, the busses will not be parked on school property but may remain in the back of the Town Building. There are some safety concerns at the Town Building, but the Town is working with an engineer in this regard. The group that is addressing bus parking will continue to look at a long-term solution one year out.

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7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Minutes: May 12, 2021:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda. 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	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	

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

None.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter executive session at 7:57 p.m. for 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 discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy with respect to litigation Stephen Cass v. Wayland School Committee et al pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the School Committee; (c) reviewing executive session minutes for possible declassification as listed on the agenda, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22; and (c) approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: May 12, 2021. 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	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	

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

The School Committee will adjourn in executive session and will not reconvene in open session.

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:19 p.m. 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	
Jessica Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Wayland School Committee

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Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Legal Opinion re: Testing
3. FY22-26 Apple Lease
4. Minutes of May 12, 2021
5. Executive Session Motion