

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 24, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Monday, January 24, 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

Also: Betsy Gavron, Middle School Principal
Brian Jones, Loker School Principal
Tricia O'Reilly, Happy Hollow Principal
Christie Harvey, Claypit Hill Principal

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:33 p.m. Chris noted the change in order for the agenda items.

1. Public Comment:

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Shavon Drayton, 159 Orlando Street, Mattapan, in which she shares her support regarding the School Committee's decision to hire Dr. Omar Easy. Ms. Drayton has great hope for the future with Dr. Easy as Wayland's superintendent.

Craig Gruber, 108 Sears Road, read an email sent to the School Committee and the WTA written by Mrs. Gruber. It states that School Committee's response to the WTA on January 20 lacks consideration that any of the teachers' concerns have merit. Our excellent schools are filled with educators and staff who are skilled, dedicated and passionate. Mrs. Gruber wants to understand the root of the WTA's concerns. Mrs. Gruber also notes that Dr. Easy has not been responsive to her emails or her husband's. Mr. Gruber was asked to end his public comment after the two-minute timer.

2. Financial Matters:

(a) Discussion of FY23 Recommended Budget:

Principal Betsy Gavron shared the highlights of the Middle School's School Improvement Plan (SIP) approved by School Council in November 2021 and as it relates to the FY23 budget. In line with the District Improvement Plan, the overarching themes of the SIP are academic support, equity and achievement, and social-emotional well-being.

Ms. Gavron reviewed the first school goal as "continuing to reflect on the first year of school-wide standards based assessment practices and refine both formative and summative assessment in order to enhance learning outcomes." This weekly work is done in the PLC's made up of same grade same subject area teams. Ms. Gavron described the implementation and goals of the START program while individualizing supports and tracking outcomes. Ms. Gavron addressed the work being done to support the 8th graders transitioning to the high school.

The second school goal focuses on the achievement gap. The progress of six Black and Latinx students in the accelerated 7th grade math is being monitored, and staff will support them to continue this path towards accelerated 8th grade algebra placement. Ms. Gavron described the supports in place for these students.

Finally, the third school goal focuses on prioritizing "social-emotional well-being for students and staff in order to foster a compassionate and nurturing learning environment." This addresses last year's challenges and stress of virtual and hybrid learning. Included will be a focus on Anit Bias Anti-Racist (ABAR) professional development during Super Wednesdays and faculty meetings, a continuation to target intervention and support by using the

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Panorama data, and to continue the work of the Healthy Relationships Task Force to develop a communication plan addressing policies and practices related to dating violence. Ms. Gavron described these ongoing efforts, adding that the impact of the pandemic will have ripple effects for several years.

Ms. Gavron reviewed and described the FY23 Middle School budget requests that includes transitions support, an executive function coach/support, a 6th grade Math Boost, and a restoration of enrollment driven sections in social studies and science. Dr. Easy explained how a Middle School retirement 1.0 psychologist position could be reallocated as two support positions. Many students could benefit from executive functioning and clinical support. A discussion ensued in this regard. Additionally, there will be two clusters per grade level next year.

Elementary Schools:

The elementary principals collaboratively presented the core components of the Elementary School Improvement Plan as well as the FY23 budget requests. The core components include implementing iReady as a mathematics assessment and teaching tool in all grades while continuing to utilize ST Math as an instructional resource, leading important discussions and utilizing the START program around progress and achievement for Black and Latinx students, and prioritizing social-emotional learning through many methods, such as Open Circle and Social Thinking. Dr. Christie Harvey described the implementation of the iReady and MyPath tools, and the START program which will result in equitable and accurate referrals to special education, and SEL.

Dr. Tricia O'Reilly continued to describe the ongoing work in the elementary schools. They are committed to diversity issues by working with the Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging, Caroline Han, around curriculum and other learning opportunities for our diverse student population, utilizing the Panorama Survey to inform social-emotional instruction, prioritizing community events, and engaging in real conversations with students around racial and social injustice. Dr. O'Reilly described the Panorama Survey for students in Grades 3, 4 and 5.

Mr. Brian Jones presented the key budget initiatives that include the Assistant Principal positions and psychologist/guidance positions. With assistant principals in buildings, two of the many opportunities that principals have is more time in the classrooms connecting with students and more time to connect with teachers around teaching and learning. The principals also described other roles of the assistant principals. Mr. Jones stressed the importance of school psychologists and guidance staff due to the challenging situations due to the impact of the pandemic, adding that SEL is the foundation of everything that is being done. Mr. Jones spoke about the positive benefits of the START program, as it is a collaborative model.

3. Superintendent Update:

(a) COVID-19 Response:

Parry updated the School Committee on positive COVID cases since last Wednesday which total 52 student cases and 20 staff cases, adding that the Dashboard has been updated. Mr. Graham cited the pooled testing results from last week and noting that results came in more quickly than before the holiday break. DESE and DPH do not recommend testing students when returning to school after isolation; however, it is strongly encouraged by the district. A discussion ensued about antigen testing after day five and placing students to a separate classroom during lunch with other kids who are in the same situation from days 6 to 10. Dr. Easy described this process. The policy will remain the same.

Testing kits for students and staff will be available soon. Two hundred and forty staff and 961 students signed up to receive the test kits.

Ellen Grieco left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Tests will be distributed bi-weekly and the logistics of distribution are being planned. One out of five or six kids has had COVID; thus, those families may not be signing up at this point.

Dr. Easy confirmed that the third booster clinic will be held on Saturday, January 29, at Wayland High School. Also, the High School will be hosting a public forum tomorrow about weighted GPA.

On a different note, Jeanne Downs recognized Dr. Laing and his staff for a great MLK Program.

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3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Community Budget Presentation, including Q & A:

Dr. Easy presented a summary of the FY23 recommended budget for the community which will be followed by a Q & A. The presentation included the three district target goals, the anticipated costs in special education (\$433,717) and maintenance needs (\$200,000), and a list of immediate unmet needs. The total recommended budget is \$47,323,092 which is \$2,099,000 over the FY22 operating budget.

Dr. Easy reviewed the items in the level services budget, such as COLA's, step and lane increases, and longevity, as well as the enrollment-driven costs. The program improvement needs include an increase in FTEs for two assistant principals and guidance/psychologist positions, as well as an additional elementary math coach.

The Superintendent's Entry Plan initiatives include a math curriculum review, systematic and structured phonics instruction, Innovative Pathways PD, Restorative Justice training, and a technology upgrade. Dr. Easy explained his vision for Innovative Pathways that could reduce the vocational tuitions for some trades paid by the Town, such as Robotics, computer science, and engineering. Grant funds could also be accessed in this regard. Proposed adjustments to the budget include a Director of Social Emotional Learning, building-based subs in the elementary schools, a campus life supervisor, and full-day Kindergarten funding.

Q & A:

The questions and recommendations from the audience asked about the following portions of the budget.

- Funding for the Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessments & EL
- Personnel and budget line items, such as the Assistant Superintendent and teaching positions, and supply lines
- The WHS Executive Functioning Coach recommendation
- The Director of Social Emotional Learning role (job description was recommended)
- The Campus Life Supervisor's role
- Innovative Pathways PD
- Unmet needs for elementary for systematic phonics instruction
- Math Coach

Given the low turnout of community residents, resident Kathie Steinberg is concerned about getting the message out to students, parents and families about the request of \$400,000 for staffing positions, given that they were asked for last year in the FY22 operating budget and never came to fruition. Mrs. Steinberg advocated for these positions as they are very important and needed in the schools.

Ellen Whittemore gave an overview of the budget process that included discussions with all of the building administrators. Parry also described how the Curriculum & Instruction budget was developed.

4. **Administrative Matters:**

(a) Review of OML Determinations:

Ludlow did not properly post a meeting, but was posted in a binder in the Town Building and not on the website. An OML complaint was filed, but was Ludlow was not in violation. Kim suggested that the School Committee asks the Board of Selectmen to make the website the official posting place.

The Chair of the Sudbury Goodnow Library Board of Trustees circulated documents to the Board that would be discussed at the next meeting. This was an OML violation because there was an opinion expressed.

The Westford Board of Health was not in violation for discussing a mask mandate even though it wasn't on their agenda. It is recommended that Boards do not vote on matters not anticipated until the next meeting.

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

None.

6. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:09 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

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open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee. 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	

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 Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:28 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

Observers:

Andrea Gellerstein, Claypit Hill
Alexia Obar, Resident
Bill Steinberg, Resident

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Executive Session Motion