

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – March 30, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM at Wayland High School.

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:

Allyson, Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
John Berry, SADD Adviser

1. Welcome & Call to Order:

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:35 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. The School Committee members spoke about an event or an experience since the last meeting. Kim attended the recent Diversity Event, adding that she had hoped it would have been more about the recent racial incident at the Wayland and Westford basketball game with a focus on racial justice. As the WHS liaison, Jess recently met with Dr. Mizoguchi to discuss issues that may arise. Chris reported on his recent visit to Claypit Hill School during the time when classrooms were being reconfigured, adding that teachers and students were happy and engaged. Ellen spoke to Loker Principal Brian Jones and all is going well, and Mr. Jones thankful and appreciative of all Dr. Easy's and Central Office's support. Jeanne participated in the Annual Spelling Bee which was a fun event and the first in two years.

2. Public Comment:

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Karen Blumenfeld, Oxbow Road, whose three children graduated from the Wayland Public Schools. She is a member of the Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Ms. Blumenfeld thanked the School Committee members for their public service and expressed her appreciation to Dr. Easy for his leadership and promotion of policies and practices to ensure that all students can succeed and hopes that the School Committee will support Dr. Easy and his efforts.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Elaine Donnelly and David Shmeizer, Hampshire Road, in which they expressed their support and vote of confidence, particularly for Dr. Easy, and the School Committee, as they recognize the importance of the work and ongoing efforts and decisions being made on behalf of Wayland students.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Amruta Mudambi, 16 Hampshire Road. She recently met with Dr. Easy and found him to be approachable, warm, knowledgeable and committed to improve the Wayland Public Schools. Ms. Mudambi believes that there are many areas for growth in Wayland, and urges the community's unwavering support as Dr. Easy moves forward to establish bonds with stakeholders with sensitivity and understanding.

3. Superintendent Update:

(a) COVID-19 Update:

Parry reported that the State will continue to support pooled testing through the end of the school year, and they are currently committed to support the at-home test distribution through April vacation.

The positive cases for students during the month of March are as follows: March 3 – 9 (14 cases); March 10 – 16 (12 cases); March 17 – 23 (20 cases); and March 23 – 30 (26 cases). The high school accounts for about half of

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the 26 cases during the last week of March. Parry provided more detail in terms of school cases. Principals do send a weekly positive count to families.

Kim announced that the wastewater data in Middlesex and other counties is trending upwards for positive cases. She has been posting on the Dashboard from wastewater data, as she believes that Town and State data is no longer useful; Kim explained. She is concerned about messaging in terms of low case numbers and could be confusing to some. This week the Town of Wayland is at a 3.3% positive rate vs. the State at 1.7% based on PCR tests. A discussion followed.

(b) Assessment Task Force Update:

Jess Polizzotti provided an Assessment Task Force update, including background information leading up to the formation of the task force to address this issue which has been ongoing since 2018. In the fall of 2021, the School Committee Policy Subcommittee established a policy that ensured equity for all students in returning tests. After presenting this policy to Dr. Easy, he took a collaborative approach in which the Administration collected data from other districts, including a Tri-County Superintendent's survey containing three questions.

In forming a task force, the goal was to examine two issues – assessments and the non-return of tests – and eventually make a recommendation to Dr. Easy by the end of the school year. An outside mediator is also present at the meetings. A call went out to everyone and twenty-five applications were received from those interested in sitting on the task force: 11 parents, 11 students, 2 teachers, 2 community members, and 1 School Committee member. However, the initial plan was to recruit 4 parents, 3 students, 4 teachers, and two community members. Eventually, 1 more teacher joined as well as Caroline Han, Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Director, who also recruited 2 Boston resident students and 1 Boston parent for which a hybrid option is available.

There have been four closed meetings thus far, and Jess talked about the discussions and the recurring themes, such as reflection sheets, process for accessing exams, communication to parents, and can parents, students, and tutors review the exams. Equity and equal access to the tests and to the teachers is an important part of the discussions. A status summary of the task force's work was created at the last meeting based on the discussions and recurring themes.

Jess praised the students serving on the task force, all of whom have shown up for the meetings, have been polite, respectful, and honest and forthcoming in their thoughts and opinions. Jess commented on the students' input during which they are willing to listen to both sides of the discussions. Dr. Easy noted that a representative of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) could be attending a task force meeting, as well as an expert from Research for Better Teachers (RBT) in terms of data research.

(c) The Children's Way Update:

Dr. Easy reported that he has a meeting scheduled with DESE regarding The Children's Way in terms of moving forward with a possible Pre-K certified program with licensed teachers and part of the WTA. There will be three tiers of staffing and the goal is to retain the current staff but in different capacities, such as lead teachers, co-teachers, and teaching assistants. Positions will be posted as members of the WTA and WESA. This change will not increase the operating.

The position for the new director has been posted, as the current director is leaving at the end of April. The former director Katy Merrell may return May 1 through the end of June as the interim director.

(d) Staff and Family Open Forum Update:

Dr. Easy updated the School Committee on the ongoing open forums for staff and parents. He met with Loker parents earlier in the day and noted the upcoming monthly forums at the other schools, including additional staff open forums. The concerns include the BASE program and the ongoing effort to build trust and collaboration across the district.

Special Education Update:

Dr. Easy hired Donna Sweeney, a special education consultant, to attend IEP and student observation meetings, as well as meeting with principals and department heads. The posting for the Director of Special Education will be posted by Friday of this week, and a hiring committee will be created with parents, staff, administrators, and a School Committee representative. Parry will be facilitating the hiring process that will include a feedback form for all to fill out at the conclusion of the interviews which will begin around May 2. The goal is to recommend three

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finalists to Dr. Easy by May 10. Parry addressed a question in terms of the process if any of the three finalists do not accept the job offer. Dr. Easy added that the search would probably be reopened.

(f) Approval of WHS SADD Club Trip:

Principal Allyson Mizoguchi and John Berry, SADD adviser, requested approval from the School Committee for the WHS SADD overnight trip from July to 17, 2022 to the National Conference in California. This is the 40th anniversary of SADD and Wayland is the founding Chapter. Wayland High School was one of three schools in the country to receive a grant in the amount of \$2,400 for two students and an adviser to attend. The students will also fundraise, and at least two to four chaperones will accompany the students depending on the number of students.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the SADD trip.

(g) Approval of 8th Grade Geology Trip:

Dr. Easy presented the 8th grade geology trip to New York.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 8th Grade Geology Trip as presented.

4. Administrative Matters:

(a) Review of Open Meeting Law Determinations:

Kim did not have any OML determinations, but she did mention that Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School posted the results of a survey around the newly implemented school start times. Their time switch is similar to that of Wayland's, but there were two highlights of the survey. About 10% of students were getting 8 hours of sleep and, after the switch, over 50% of students got 8 hours of sleep. There was also a 5% reduction in extracurricular activities.

(b) Discuss Proposal for Meetings Utilizing a Mediator and an Update on Monthly Meetings with WTA:

Chris Ryan and Ellen Grieco met with the WTA President and Vice-President to discuss the mediation proposal to hire an independent expert to attend meetings at which a forum will be created for WTA representatives to discuss and provide expertise and opinions regarding the issues and concerns around curriculum, as well as communication and morale. The E-Board expressed positive responses to this proposal. Each school would appoint a teacher representative, the WTA would appoint a representative, Central Office administrators, including Dr. Easy, would participate, as well as two building administrators and two School Committee members (Chris and Jeanne). Certain areas will not be discussed, such as individual Human Resources issues, math assessment issues, and social media posts.

Kim asked if these meetings could be public and if it is appropriate for School Committee members to be a part of this process, and what the members' role are as it relates to the Open Meeting Law. A discussion ensued with the members expressing their opinions about this process. The School Committee members will act as observers only and report back to the entire Committee.

The next steps include hiring a mediator and creating a meeting schedule.

5. Financial Matters:

(a) Finance Subcommittee Update:

- Capital Project Status Update:

Claypit Hill Rooftop Units:

The appropriation for the Claypit Hill rooftop units was \$90,000 which will pay for the A/C gas units to back up on the roof, but will not pay for the replacement of the electric units, as the cost is much more. A discussion ensued and the School Committee is in agreement to move forward with the gas units, as they are needed now and replacement was postponed from last summer. Appropriation for electric units, including an electrical upgrade, would have to be voted on at a future Town Meeting. Split classroom units were suggested, but the appropriation is for rooftop units only.

Happy Hollow Chairlift:

A working chairlift has been replaced and the work order has been closed out. Dr. Easy described the work

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done and the accessibility issues, such as the Gaga pit, in terms of violations as addressed by the Office of Civil Rights. Dr. Easy noted the options moving forward to replace the Gaga pit. The original pit was an Eagle Scout project and it was suggested to look the possibility of another Eagle Scout replacement project.

The process for a chairlift at Loker School will begin with the same contractor.

Claypit Hill Playground:

The intention was to close down the playground during April break, but a new date was extended to May given that warmer weather above 50 degrees is necessary. The School Committee agreed with the May construction timing.

Loker Egress Doors:

Ellen Whittemore noted that the fire chief is recommending that the egress doors are installed in two Loker classrooms as secondary egress doors. This will provide additional safety in the building. The funds were appropriated last year.

School Space Study:

The modular classrooms have been installed and the project will be closed out with the Town. The elementary school fire alarms will be done during the summer once the bids are received and a contractor is chosen.

PA Systems:

The Middle School installation will be done over April break, and the elementary school installations will be scheduled going forward.

Replacement of Elementary Storage Systems:

Claypit Hill received the first shipment of cubbies, and the second shipment is expected but will be delayed one to two weeks. Installation is being done on the weekends.

Middle School Tiling Project and Locker Replacement:

The bid opening is scheduled for April 21 for the lockers, and Ellen Whittemore is working with Ben Keefe in regards to the scheduling for the work to be done for both the lockers and tiling.

Happy Hollow Walk-in Fridge:

The bid opening for the walk-in fridge is on April 28.

- **Loker Roof Project Update:**
The change order for the Loker School electrical rooftop units was approved by the Board of Selectmen and the HVAC equipment is on order. New electrical service will be provided at Loker School. A discussion ensued about the roofing materials that have been in storage.
- **COVID Testing Fund Update:**
There is a \$45,000 balance in this fund, and since the State will sponsor the pooled testing through the end of the school year, there have been suggestions for using the remaining funds for COVID-related purposes. Those include programming to address missed learning or to prevent significant regression over the summer, purchasing tents, or building ventilation. A discussion ensued in this regard. Jeanne suggested drafting a proposal to be approved by the School Committee and then presented to the Board of Selectmen.

(b) The Education Cooperative (TEC) Budget Update:

As the School Committee TEC Board representative, Jeanne presented the TEC budget update, adding that TEC provides many different special education day programs for students, including an alternative high school. Wayland, as well as other school districts, pay a yearly assessment as part of this collaborative. TEC is also the sponsoring organization of TECCA, provide online courses for teachers, they have a cooperative purchasing program, and a student data privacy alliance. Jeanne explained these and other services provided by TEC.

The School Committee reviewed the TEC budget and Annual Report.

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(c) Continued Discussion of Logistics for Budget Hearing:

The Budget Hearing will be held on April 27. The School Committee reviewed last year's presentation in terms of format. Suggestions were made in terms of slides and content, including unmet needs, FTE's, benefits packages, and enrollment projections. The legal notice process was also discussed.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Accounts Payables Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated March 30, 2022, in the amount of \$167,311.60.

(b) Approval of Minutes: December 22, 2021, March 2, 2022

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda without the March 2, 2022 minutes.

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

The process to make up a school day at the Middle School was discussed because a day was missed due to a flood at the school. One possibility is to extend the school day on some Wednesdays.

Jeanne will link the school calendar to the All School News.

Dr. Easy noted that parents are concerned about the lottery proposal for the after school program BASE, as families think that everyone should be eligible. However, staffing is a challenge. A discussion ensued in this regard.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:00 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 related to negotiations with non-union personnel, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), 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: March 2, 2022. 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 Kim Reichelt, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:04 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	

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Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Mary Ann Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road
Stan Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. WHS SADD Club Trip Request
4. 8th Grade Geology Trip Request
5. The Education Cooperative (TEC) Annual Report
6. TEC Budget Summary
7. TEC FY23 Budget Presentation
8. TEC Member District Benefits
9. Draft Budget Hearing Presentation
10. Draft Budget Book
11. Accounts Payables Warrant
12. December 12, 2021 Minutes
13. Executive Session Motion