

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – April 13, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM at Wayland High School.

*Present:*

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

*Also present:*

Dr. Omar Easy  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Ellen Whittemore  
Director of Finance & Operations

*Also:*

Caroline Han, Director of Equity, Diversity & Belonging  
Dr. Tony Laing, METCO Director

**1. Welcome & Call to Order:**

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:36 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. Kim noted that Wayland was once again recognized as one of the best communities for music, and the Wayland Student Press Network won several awards at the recent national convention.

**2. Public Comment:**

Stan Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road, attended the recent Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee meeting and had some suggestions regarding the evaluation process, such as maintaining anonymity, conduct interviews in a location other than the Town Building, include the WTA and WESA union presidents and vice-presidents, as well as the two candidates running for School Committee. Mr. Wohlfarth thanked Kim Reichelt for her service on the School Committee. He raised the issue of financial accountability in the Student Services Department in terms of the former Director out on paid administrative leave and the hiring of a new consultant when schools have had to cut back in several areas.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Mary Ann Wohlfarth regarding the meeting she attended regarding the Superintendent's evaluation. She suggested that all principals are anonymously interviewed, and town residents and parents should be part of the process. Ms. Wohlfarth believes that now is not the time to propose a new elementary school, as the priority in Wayland is a new Community Center/Senior Center. For many reasons, she believes the three elementary schools should be redistricted, and a capital planning committee should be formed to better allocate funds.

**3. Superintendent Update:**

(a) COVID-19 Update:

Parry reported that the distribution of COVID at-home tests to over 2,000 families will continue through May. The total student positive cases are as follows: March 24-30 (26); March 31-April 6 (11); April 7-13 (34). Staff cases are relatively low; however, March 24, there were about 15 staff cases reported. Kim Reichelt continues to update the Dashboard. Parry gave a shout out of appreciation to the parent volunteers during this time.

Given the uptick in cases due to some school events, parents have been given as much information as possible. Kim suggested requiring or strongly recommending masks in the auditorium given the number of positive cases after the Drama Fest. The administrators recently had a conversation regarding messaging that includes a recommendation for wearing masks at school events.

Another area of concern is the continuation of asking visitors in school buildings to fill out the attestation form. Dr. Easy asked the School Committee for its guidance in this regard, as well as guidance in increasing the building capacity from 80%, as voted by the School Committee, to 100% given the school events

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coming up. A discussion followed and each member provided input. The consensus was to highly recommend masks and to eliminate the attestation form for large events. However, contractors and parent volunteers should continue to fill out the attestation form during the day.

(b) Staff and Family Open Forum Update:

Dr. Easy held a parent open forum at each school with much success. He will have an additional evening session on May 4 (time to be determined) for all parents who were not able to attend during the day. Topics included, BASE enrollment, staff communication, the condition of the Middle School building and installation of modular classrooms, future plans for The Children's Way, and the Extended School Year Program. The next round of staff open forums will be held the week after April break in the afternoon.

(c) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Update:

Caroline Han, Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging, presented to the School Committee and identified her objectives in terms of the role and scope of her position and the possibility that the Committee will re-examine every policy and practice decision through an "equity lens." Ms. Han's work includes the following two objectives: diversity, equity and belonging means that all members are encouraged, supported and empowered to be their authentic selves, and there are constant efforts to be a community where everyone is courageous, self-reflective, and intentional in the work being done to dismantle systemic inequities in the schools.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, Ms. Han described the many professional development trainings and workshops and groups of staff in the district with whom she has worked and collaborated. She also assisted principals in response to an incident in December at the Middle School and the incident at the Wayland/Westford basketball game; she described the ongoing work around restorative justice.

Ms. Han, Parry Graham, Tricia O'Reilly, Laura Cole, and Cristina Sandza-Donovan are working together in an attempt to diversify the staff. The district is a member of the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE) and DESE's Diversity Network. MPDE monthly meetings are held with many other districts, there are annual recruitment fairs, and there is an expansion of job postings on several websites. Recently, there was a workshop/training on how to implement district anti-bias hiring practices. A survey was sent to all staff of color in Wayland to gather feedback on their experiences within the district. Ms. Han also facilitates monthly affinity groups for staff of color.

Imbedded in national policies and practices are hidden inequities that continue for some groups albeit advantaged or disadvantaged. Examples include district attendance, school holidays, requirements for accelerated honors/AP classes, disciplinary consequences, events (date, time, and access), and grading and tardiness policies in the classrooms. Ms. Han responded to the question about the inequities of attendance in school. An equity audit helps districts to look at and address biased practices and policies.

Finally, Ms. Han recited a modified version of a Bell Hooks quote. The School Committee asked questions around the possibilities of how different cultural communication is perceived, the timely manner and goals of workshops, and the disproportionate number of students of color wearing masks after the mandate was lifted and their attendance at large school events. In her role, Ms. Han builds the capacity for all administrators to navigate diversity and inclusion.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Han for her amazing work over the past two years.

(d) METCO Program Update:

Dr. Tony Laing, METCO Director, provided the School Committee with a program and budget update/presentation. The areas covered were budget allocations from 2019 to the present, student enrollment in each school, budget expenses for 2021-2022, and program updates/highlights for 2019-2022.

In the year 2019, the DESE METCO allotment was \$1,045,884, it decreased in 2020-2021, and increased to \$1,046,813 in 2021-2022 resulting in an increase of \$73,155 from 2020-2021. This year, 131 Boston resident students are enrolled in Wayland, which is 7 under the previous enrollment and has been typical across all METCO districts for various reasons, including COVID. The goal is to enroll up to 138 students next year. Dr. Laing explained how the total number of students could be determined from year to year, particularly according to grade level and space in the schools.

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Dr. Laing presented and explained the allocation of funds for staff, support staff, two bus monitors, and a bus driver totaling \$648,200. Funds for stipend positions and contract services total \$121,773, such as a new initiative this year with two alumni speakers/mentors for the middle and high school students, as well as a METCO social worker who was the Claypit Hill METCO coordinator before taking a position at Wayland High School. Dr. Laing explained the tutoring services for 29 METCO students and the Calculus Project in collaboration with Boston University during the summer months to prepare the students for rigorous math courses by their senior year. Transportation is the second largest portion of the METCO budget that includes a contract with First Student for two buses and salaries for bus drivers. The town bus is paid out of the METCO grant.

Dr. Laing highlighted his work and initiatives since 2019 that includes hiring two academic coaches for 18 students enrolled in the middle school BASE program, hiring a second elementary bus monitor who is a Wayland METCO alumnus, and he began funding part of the position for a Director of Equity & Belonging/Academic Dean. During his first year, Dr. Laing held the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. program and dinner in Boston for the first time at which Pastor Matthew K. Thompson, a Wayland METCO alumnus, was the keynote. In addition, two seniors were nominated for the Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference at Harvard University. Dr. Laing continued to describe other program highlights and initiatives through the present.

Dr. Laing addressed the current admissions process, which includes applying to METCO, Inc. where families are entered into a lottery. If their number is called, districts are provided with files, although districts have different processes. There are sibling preferences and it is based on space availability, as are grade level acceptances.

#### 4. Administrative Matters:

- (a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the Preparation and Submission of a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Funding regarding a New Elementary School:

Dr. Easy requested approval from the School Committee to submit a SOI to the MSBA on or before April 29, 2022 for the purpose of potentially building a new elementary school. A vote is also required by the Board of Selectmen. Ellen Whittemore described the process and the timeline which includes a review over the summer by the MSBA of all Statements of Interest from all districts and, if approved, the MSBA will reach out to Superintendents after which it will conduct a senior study of the recommended building. Districts will be invited into an eligibility phase which lasts for about 270 days during which districts can secure the necessary vote to acquire funding for several studies, including a Feasibility Study. After walking the schools with the MSBA, Claypit Hill was the chosen site for a new elementary school. There are three options: renovate the existing building, build a new school on an existing site or build a new school on a new site. A discussion ensued about how one school is considered over another.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following letter to the MSBA. (Jeanne Downs read the letter verbatim, and it will be included in the packet of documents.)

- (b) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve that the Superintendent Brings the Statement of Interest to the Board of Selectmen for Its Approval:

Upon a motion duly made by Jess Polizzotti, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to request the Board of Selectmen's vote to approve the Superintendent's submission of a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a vote by the Board of Selectmen on April 19.

It was reiterated that this process takes a very long time, such as two to four years. Although Claypit Hill was the site chosen at this time, several assessments will be undertaken before a final decision is made.

- (c) Review of Open Meeting Law Determinations:

Since the last time Kim reported, there were 38 new OML decisions – half were found to be in violation and half were not found to be in violation. There were common themes, such as posting agendas on time and being sure that meeting minutes are complete. Kim noted one finding in which the Attorney General responded that “although a public body may not add anticipated topics within 48 hours of a meeting, the law does not prohibit a public body from removing.” This finding does not fit within the School Committee's experience or understanding. However, in another finding, it reads that a public body can add unanticipated topics within a 48-hour period. Thus, the two findings do not appear to be consistent.

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(d) Discuss Superintendent Evaluation Process, including Feedback, Timing, and Additional Goals:

Jeanne and Jess, as members of the Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee, reviewed evaluation processes in other peer districts and found that the process has changed. Some of the changes included the non-use of the anonymous survey in four districts, and one district does participate in 1:1 interviews. Jeanne noted what the evaluation process entailed over the last few years, such as surveying the Administrative Council, observations, and interviews. The School Committee reviewed the survey and discussed the possibility, or not, of using the survey again, adding that it was anonymous in the past. The survey is not a public document per school counsel. Jeanne described the past interview process held in person or on the phone with twelve staff members. The summary prepared from the interviews may be a public document; Jeanne will confirm. A discussion ensued, including past practices. The School Committee agreed that it will move forward with the interviews and observations. However, it will decide on the survey at the next meeting.

The evaluation timeline was reviewed and proposed. Dr. Easy could share his evidence during the week of May 23. There could be an additional meeting during the week of May 30 for the sole purpose of the evaluation. Kim pointed out that she will no longer be a member of the School Committee in late May and will provide feedback, adding that new members should have limited feedback. After discussion, Dr. Easy will present his evidence during the week of June 6. The final evaluation will be on June 15 with a goal of finishing the process by June 30.

### 5. Financial Matters:

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the Reallocation of COVID-19 Testing Funds:

This discussion and possible vote is to approve bringing the request for the reallocation of testing funds to the Board of Selectmen. It was confirmed that pooled testing will continue to be funded by the State through the end of the school year. At the March 30 meeting, the School Committee discussed the possibility of reallocating testing funds in the amount of \$45,474.50 to now fund the summer's Extended School Year programs that will focus on significant learning loss as a result of the pandemic. The programs will be extended from 3 to 5 weeks because of the number of students who have significant learning loss. Specialized staff have been hired for those students who require language-based services, as well as additional staff, to ensure that students do not regress during the summer. Dr. Easy explained further. It was suggested that the letter to the BOS contains more detail regarding the request, including an explanation/purpose of the ESY program.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to authorize Dr. Easy to ask the Board of Selectmen for approval to reallocate the COVID testing funds per the amended memo discussed tonight.

(b) Review and Possible Vote to Approve Support Organizations Budgets:

The School Committee reviewed the FY21 Year End Reports, the FY22 Budgets and donations for the support organizations. In FY21, the support organizations donated via grants \$304,023.13, and the FY22 budget is \$536,080 in anticipation of grants and expenses.

Ellen Whittemore noted that the FY21 year-end reports and the FY22 budget was not available from the Boston Parent Council due to a change in leadership, and the Wayland Boosters did not provide the FY21 year-end report. Dr. Easy will request this information going forward.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) with gratitude and appreciation that the School Committee accepts the budgets as presented in the booklet and the grants that have already been funded.

(c) Review of Budget Hearing Logistics and Presentations:

The School Committee reviewed the format and content of the Budget Hearing presentation to be held on April 27. Chris will add a list of unmet needs in terms of how long they have been such, including the initial year request. The needs that have been met will be removed from the list. Enrollment numbers and FTEs will also be added to the presentation. The Budget Booklet was recently updated by Jeanne and will be posted online before the hearing. Jeanne and Chris will finalize the Budget Booklet.

### 6. Consent Agenda (out of order after the DEB presentation):

(a) Accounts Payables Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated April 13, 2022, in the amount of \$556,092.11.

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(b) Approval of Minutes: March 16, 2022, March 31, 2022, and April 8, 2022:

Kim described the edits for the March 16, 2022 minutes that she forwarded to Diane. The April 8<sup>th</sup> minutes will be passed over because the incorrect date was posted.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda without the April 8, 2022 minutes and with the amendments to the minutes that Kim sent to Diane.

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

Jeanne attended the recent ZBA meeting at which Becky Stannizzi presented for the purpose of requesting long-term parking at the Wayland Town Building. The Town will apply given that the buses are parked on town-owned land.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:45 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 collective bargaining with Wayland Educational Secretaries Association (WESA), 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 (c) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: March 16, 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	absent	
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 Chris Ryan, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 9:32 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	absent	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

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

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Keri Shouten, 188 Cochituate Road  
Heather Gruber, 108 Sears Road

***Corresponding Documentation:***

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Presentation
4. METCO Presentation
5. Revised Letter to MSBA re: Statement of Interest (SOI)
6. SOI Vote Template 2022
7. Superintendent Evaluation Timeline 2022
8. Superintendent Evaluation List of Interviews
9. Superintendent of Schools Leadership & Performance Assessment 2019
10. Verbiage for 2022 Interviews
11. Support Organizations FY21 End-of-Year Reports Revised
12. Support Organizations FY22 Budgets Revised
13. Draft FY23 Budget Hearing Presentation
14. FY23 School Committee's Recommended Draft Budget Book
15. Accounts Payables Warrant
16. Draft March 16, 2022 Minutes
17. Draft March 30, 2022 Minutes
18. Draft April 6, 2022 Minutes
19. Executive Session Motion