

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – December 15, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the South Building Lecture Hall 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

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:36 p.m. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM.

1. Public Comment:

Jonathan Smith, 10 Oak Farm Circle, commented that the Surgeon General of the United States issued an advisory of nation-wide youth mental crisis. Mr. Smith read his email to the School Committee dated December 6 regarding the live bomb exercise planned at Wayland High School on November 17 for which there was no advance notice. Fortunately, the exercise was called off before beginning and could have resulted in countless injuries and many broken windows by staff and students trying to exit the buildings. Lastly, the emotional impact on his daughter, students and faculty would have been immeasurable due to the current environment of school violence.

Former Wayland employee and resident, Stephen Cass, commented that he is one of two Wayland AD's who were fired illegally for reporting serious illegalities in the school system that, in his opinion, have continuously been covered up. Mr. Cass continued to list his accusations and events, but was stopped after two minutes, the time allotted for each public comment.

Jessie Villatoro, WMS Special Education teacher and WTA President, read a statement on behalf of the WTA. The statement contained in part the following. As a high-performing district, Wayland teachers, families and administrators have worked together with a shared goal to provide the best education and experience for all students. In recent years, there have been changes moving the District toward a more autocratic model, but some level of communication and collaboration remained. The WTA embraces thoughtful and purposeful change that includes the voices of the Wayland educators. Ms. Villatoro noted that the most recent changes around the education of the students were implemented without the input or support of the teachers. It is the WTA's stance that their voices should be valued by the district and how strongly they feel about being heard. The WTA advocated for a budget that provides the resources and materials that teachers need to most effectively the students' academic and social and emotional needs. It was requested that the School Committee ask for evidence that proposed changes are warranted, will be effective, and are in the best interest of the students. The WTA looks forward to an increase in collaboration and communication between teachers, Central Office, and the School Committee so that the students are given what they need to learn, grow and succeed.

2. Special Matter:

(a) Superintendent's FY23 Budget Presentation:

Dr. Easy presented his FY23 recommended budget that included a level service budget overview. The level service increase amounted to \$1,699,271 or a 3.76% increase that included contractual adjustments and non-personnel drivers. The proposed budget totals \$48,381,799 that includes a proposed increase in level services of \$1,459,217 for a total proposed increase in level services of 3.1%.

Based on enrollment predictions and discussions with principals, there are staffing needs totaling \$129,295 for a Spanish Immersion Interventionist, library teacher, visual arts teacher, elementary teacher, and EL teacher.

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Program improvements in the amount of \$383,155 include a Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and EL, a campus life supervisor, building based subs in the elementary schools, and two .5 FTE assistant principals. To address social emotional needs, Dr. Easy proposed hiring a Director of Social Emotional and increasing the FTE's for guidance/psychologist at Happy Hollow and Loker, all totaling \$200,650.

In terms of non-personnel drivers, Dr. Easy proposed a math curriculum review, systematic and structured phonics instruction, professional development regarding Innovative Pathways, i-Ready Analytics, and 3 new photocopiers, all totaling \$112,400. There are also some anticipated costs in special education for a total of \$433,717 and in building maintenance needs totaling \$200,000.

The School Committee asked questions about Innovative Pathways, the increase in the level services budget, the role of the campus life supervisor, and the grants that funded a portion of the Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and EL as well as the two .5 FTE assistant principals and the increase in FTEs for guidance/psychologist positions. Additional questions centered around the enrollment driven expenses, the grant-funded i-Ready program vs. ST Math, the vision for a Director of Social Emotional Learning, the budget process and discussions with K-12 administrators, the Math Curriculum Review for K-5, the maintenance budget, anticipated special education costs, and potential long-term COVID expenses.

(b) Discuss School Committee December 12, 2021 Email to Community:

Chris Ryan addressed the email sent by the School Committee that referred to the Middle School racial incidents in the past week and at the end of the day on Friday. The concerns by the School Committee resulted in an emergency meeting in an effort to draft the email. Chris noted the 48-hour posting requirements for meetings, but the School Committee considered this to be an emergency. The meeting was not posted until Monday morning even though the posting was sent to the Town Clerk via email over the weekend. The meeting was recorded and is available online. Chris read the email to the public.

Dr. Easy reported on the sequence of several racial incidents, social media posts and racial graffiti on the bathroom walls within a one week period. Several open office meetings were held with Middle School parents and staff. Upon declaring the Middle School in a state of crisis and the need to have more presence, K-12 administrators will monitor the hallways and bathrooms until December 22. An investigation is ongoing and many steps will be put in place to ensure the safety of students and staff, as well as professional development around cultural awareness and TAG meetings. Many parents have reached out in support. A discussion ensued around the ongoing investigation.

The School Committee offered their support and appreciation to the staff and administrators in their effort to keep the buildings safe. The Committee members also thanked the families for organizing the ongoing peaceful demonstrations outside of the Middle School.

3. Superintendent Update:

(a) COVID-19 Response:

- Presentation of COVID Cases by Dr. Graham:
Parry updated the School Committee on recent COVID cases since the last meeting for which there were 4 student cases (3 in elementary and 1 at WHS) bringing the total positive cases among students since the start of school to 66 cases (11 identified through pooled testing) or 85% in grades K to 6 and 15% in grades 7 to 12. Parry explained the chronological order of meetings in terms of representing a pattern in the number of cases. One pattern has shown an increase in students who are quarantining based on out-of-school contacts. New families have enrolled in pooled testing to begin in January which has increased participation in all schools to about 65-70% and is highest in the elementary schools. It is encouraged for those who are vaccinated to participate in pooled testing, as there have been several breakthrough cases among the vaccinated and unvaccinated. A discussion ensued in this regard.

Dr. Easy noted that families will be asked to volunteer the vaccination status for students who are age five to eleven. The CDC guidelines around quarantine will be followed as well as those of DESE. Parry added that those who are fully vaccinated do not have to quarantine.

- Update on Vaccination Clinics and Safety Measures:
Dr. Easy reported that 150 younger students received the second vaccine on December 13 and the booster clinic held on December 4 was well attended. He is working with DESE and the vendor to hold a second clinic after the holidays, possibly mid-January.

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- Discussion of Revised Re-Entry Plan:
Dr. Easy noted that the revision/adjustment was on page 6 of the re-entry plan regarding parents visiting the school buildings, as he would like to monitor parents who enter the buildings.

4. **Administrative Matters:**

(a) Review of OML Determinations:

This agenda item was passed over.

(b) Discuss School Committee Goal Setting and Self-evaluation Exercise:

After discussing this topic at the last meeting, Chris Ryan sent the Committee members a document from the MASC that covers the process by which the School Committee will evaluate itself – what is within the Committee’s purview, what the Committee is doing, and how the Committee can improve. Chris described the scoring aspect of the process. Kim will draft a Google Form for the members to record their anonymous individual responses. They will discuss this process again at the first meeting in February.

5. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Review of Budget Calendar:

The School Committee discussed the budget calendar in terms of the final vote on the FY23 budget. Given that the Annual Town Meeting is in May, the School Committee will conduct its vote on January 26 and will update the Finance Committee throughout the month of January. The School Committee January meeting calendar will be revised.

(b) Review of Draft Demographic Review:

The Finance Subcommittee is drafting a one-page document that includes the tax rate, per pupil expenditures, and teacher/student ratio for the Finance Committee. It was noted that the FinCom’s peer districts are different from the School Committee’s. ClearGov could be used as a resource. It will be discussed at a future meeting.

6. **Policy Matters:**

(a) Policy Manual Website:

This agenda item was passed over.

(b) Possible Vote to Approve Policy EBC – Supplemental Interim Pandemic Policy:

During the last discussion, the School Committee approved changes in the policy that addresses school visitors; however, more change is needed after a discussion between Kim and Dr. Easy. Kim explained those pieces that are obsolete within the policy having to do with homeschooling and remote learning during the emergency pandemic.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to put Policy EBC Supplemental as revised out for public comment.

(c) Possible Vote to Remove Policy JLA – Student Insurance Program:

This policy was removed from the MASC policy manual and, since the district does not offer student insurance, Kim proposed the removal of this policy from the Wayland Public Schools’ Policy Manual.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to take Policy JLA out of the Wayland Policy Manual.

7. **Superintendent Evaluation:**

(a) Review of Superintendent Goals:

Jeanne described the Superintendent’s Evaluation Subcommittee process in terms of the Superintendent’s goals and the standards and elements used for evidence within the rubric. The School Committee reviewed Dr. Easy’s goals and evaluation standards.

Dr. Easy presented each goal and why he chose them. They include a Student Learning Goal, Professional Practice Goal, and two Improvement Goals. The Student Learning Goal is multi-year in an effort to create an environment of high expectations for every student by using key action steps, such as identifying students who are not meeting or exceeding State achievement expectations, identifying the learning gaps for all struggling students, analyzing the special education offerings and personnel to ensure effective Tier 3 reading supports, examining current

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instructional practices and methods of data collection, and developing school-based action plans to address interrupted learning during COVID-19.

The Professional Practice Goal addresses reopening schools safely while prioritizing students' and staff's safety during school. The key actions include implementing COVID testing and protocols, continuing appropriate mitigation strategies and amending and updating processes, protocols and policies as needed, and promoting vaccinations for staff and students who are eligible.

The first District Improvement Goal will keep the WPS moving forward during this leadership transition and working with the Administrative Council to ensure meaningful progress on critical district and school goals. Dr. Easy presented a timeline of his key actions in this regard. The second District Improvement Goal is to develop an effective strategy to efficiently maintain, manage and service all other school buildings for which Dr. Easy will create a clear organizational structure for management and operation, will build effective communication with Town officials, and will conduct a facility study for the elementary school buildings.

(b) Review of Evaluation Process:

Dr. Easy presented four standards:

- Standard I: Instructional Leadership with a focus on assessment.
- Standard II: Management & Operations with a focus on the school environment and fiscal systems.
- Standard III: Family & Community Engagement with a focus on collaboration and a shared responsibility.
- Standard IV: Professional Culture with a commitment to high standards and strong communication skills.

8. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Accounts Payables Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated December 15, 2021, in the amount of \$677,025.06.

(b) Approval of Minutes: November 17, 2021, November 29, 2021

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

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

None.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:22 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; and b) approving the executive session minutes of November 17, 2021, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22, and (c) discussing strategy with respect to the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(1), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating 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.

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10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:50 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:

See attached.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Policy EBC Supplemental
3. Policy JLA – Student Insurance Program
4. Superintendent’s Evaluation Rubric
5. Superintendent’s District Goals
6. Accounts Payables Warrant
7. Minutes of November 17, 2021
8. Minutes of November 29, 2021
9. Executive Session Motion