

**REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
2007-2008**

**MICHAEL YOUNG, CHAIRMAN  
MARLENE ALLEN, VICE CHAIRMAN  
CHRISTOPHER D.T. GUIFFRE, SECRETARY  
SUZANNE LITTLEFIELD  
SUZANNE NEWMAN**

This year was again marked by a significant number of changes in personnel together with completion, continuation or initiation of several major projects related to our school buildings. The School Committee was pleased with the outcomes and is appreciative of the support from the Town's citizens.

The School Committee wishes to report the following:

**Personnel**

1. Our new superintendent, Bella Wong, experienced a challenging and successful first year. We look forward to continuing to work closely with her.
2. Half of the school leadership positions this year were staffed by individuals who were either new to the Wellesley Public Schools and/or to their role. With the support and mentoring of our superintendent, their peers and associates, the extensive leadership transition went extremely well.
3. Sixty-five newly hired teachers jumped into their roles with enthusiasm and help from leaders and peers.
4. All union contracts were up for renewal in 2008, and negotiations continue as of the publishing date of this report. All parties are confident that mutually acceptable settlements will be reached.
5. In March 2007, voters reelected school committee members Christopher D.T. Guiffre and Suzanne B. Newman to three-year terms.

**School Operations**

6. A supplemental fiscal year 2008 budget request in the amount of \$530,000 was approved at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting to cover unexpected increases in out-of-district special education tuition and transportation (ST&T). This request was that portion of the \$1.18 million overage in ST&T that could not be covered by reductions and efficiencies in other budget areas. At the end of the fiscal year, we were able to return the entire amount to the Town's general fund.
7. The School Committee and Town Meeting approved a fiscal year 2009 operating budget in the amount of \$53,842,308, an increase of 8.5%. The two largest contributors to the increase were out-of-district special education tuition and transportation costs (3.7%) and salary increases (3%). Throughout the budget development process, it looked as if a Proposition 2-1/2 override would be required, but final hour confirmation of greater-

than-expected state funding, lower-than-expected health care increases, and a reduction of \$1.2 million in the proposed school budget resulted in a balanced budget and no need for an override. The budget received strong support at Annual Town Meeting.

8. The Selectmen and School Committee agreed to pool maintenance budgets under the direction of the town director of facilities, who now reports jointly to the executive director and the superintendent's designate.

### **School Facilities**

An unprecedented amount of school facility activity took place this year. The activities involved School Committee, administrators, parents and teachers, the School Building Committee, the Permanent Building Committee, town employees and interested citizens.

9. The program year started with a final hour completion of the Wellesley Middle School renovation project. While a large "punch list" remained, the school was fully operational, and teachers and students were happy to have the 27-month renovation project behind them.
10. Design work and a limited amount of construction were completed for the \$11.2 million, three-year elementary school infrastructure initiative approved by Annual Town Meeting and the voters in the spring of 2007. Most of the work on roofs, boilers and asbestos abatement is scheduled for the summers of 2008 and 2009.
11. The Wellesley High School project has demanded the most time and attention this year. The School Building Committee, led by Selectman Katherine Babson, manages the project. This committee has assessed and concluded on new construction v renovation options and prepared for dialog and negotiations with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) regarding all aspects of the project and the MSBA's commitment to fund a share of the project cost.
  - Architects were engaged to work with the School Building Committee and the Permanent Building Committee of Wellesley.
  - Included in this intense effort were countless public forums, newspaper articles and letters, small group discussions, responses to citizen comments and frequent publication of an email newsletter open to all citizens by subscription.
  - Dialog with the MSBA began in June 2008 with expectations of reaching agreement. It is further anticipated that a Special Town Meeting will be convened in the fall devoted to the high school project, followed by a December 2008 debt exclusion submission to voters.
12. A proposal to comply with the State's mandate to remove or cover the metal and glass chards from portions of the Sprague athletic fields and to install two synthetic turf fields was hotly debated and narrowly defeated at Annual Town Meeting 2007. School Committee then established a broad based taskforce representative of all interested groups to develop an alternative proposal, which was brought forward at Annual Town Meeting 2008. The proposal included provisions for funding of the necessary field remediation from sources including the Town, Community Preservation Committee, and private funding through the town's various athletic programs. The proposal was supported by substantially more than the required two-thirds majority.

The School Committee and school administrators are grateful for the continued strong support of

- Hundreds of volunteers who contribute their time, energy, creativity and significant financial resources to benefit the schools
- Parent Teacher Organizations
- Central Council of PTO's
- Committee for Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Wellesley Education Foundation
- The many Town boards and employees
- Sports and Performing Arts booster organizations

The School Committee extends thanks, congratulations and good wishes to those members of the faculty who retired during school year 2007-2008. We appreciate their years of dedicated service to the Town of Wellesley.

Susan Allain  
Carol Cushner  
Clare Kehrer  
Peter Mitchell  
David Snyder

Ralph Bowman  
Richard Deppe  
Marie Kevorkian  
James Razzano  
Gayle Z. Vonasek

Lynne Buchhalter  
Claire Fusaro  
Andrew Levin  
Rhonda Silverman

WELLESLEY RESIDENTS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS

as of  
October 1, 2007 in Grades K-12

WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	<u>Non-resident*</u>	<u>Wellesley resident</u>
Elementary Schools	Grades K-5 88	Grades K-5 2,318
Middle School	Grades 6-8 38	Grades 6-8 1,018
High School	Grades 9-12 <u>51</u>	Grades 9-12 <u>1,165</u>
	177	4,501

(Total Wellesley Public Schools enrollment,  
both resident and non-resident) . . . . . 4,678

STUDENTS ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF WELLESLEY  
(including programs under the direction of The Education Cooperative). . . . . 16  
STUDENTS ATTENDING PRIVATE SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF WELLESLEY  
(state-approved special education programs for which Wellesley pays tuition. . . . . 63  
VOCATIONAL/REGIONAL SCHOOLS . . . . . 5

PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN WELLESLEY

Dana Hall	Grades 6-12 . . . . .	65
St. John's School	Grades K-6 . . . . .	93
St. Paul's School	Grades K-8 . . . . .	37
Tenacre Country Day	Grades K-6 . . . . .	<u>55</u>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>

PRIVATE SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF WELLESLEY\*\*  
Grades K-12 . . . . . 563

**GRAND TOTAL** **5,575**

\* Includes students paying tuition, in approved foreign exchange programs, participating in ABC or METCO programs, and others.

\*\* Excluding state-approved private special education schools for which Wellesley pays tuition.