

**Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
January 17, 2023  
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Leda Eizenberg, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Craig Mack, and member Melissa Martin; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services Kat Bernklow; Director of Human Resources Monica Visco; Interim Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Jorge Allen; and Student Advisory representatives Evelyn Harrison and Armita Hamrah.

Ms. Eizenberg announced that the meeting is being held remotely and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lara Crawford, of 15 Rice St., stated she watched the recent Design Review Board (DRB) meeting regarding the Hunnewell Track & Field bathrooms, at which DRB voted on the project with one person abstaining, who stated she felt it was not a good project for the School Committee to have undertaken. She would like to see the Committee apply actions from the Climate Action Committee (CAC).

Mark Smith, of 7 Windermere Rd., has had three students go through WPS. He stated he fully supports the five key initiatives that seem to be the subject of the impasse in negotiations between the Administration and the teachers. He added that a low pay rate for teaching assistants, the idea of decreasing funding for art, and reducing time to prepare for teachers goes against what is needed to educate students.

Ellen Subramaniam, of Abbot Rd., thanked Dr. Chisum for adding additional AP courses at WHS, noting she would like to see more added. She stated many parents have raised concerns about Standards-Based Grading (SBG) particularly around consistency of grading. She urged the Administration to listen to feedback.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Chow stated the Committee remains hopeful a mediator will be assigned in the near future to aid in contract negotiations with the Wellesley Educators Association (WEA), adding the Committee is looking forward to continuing the process.

Mr. Mack stated he appreciated hearing from community members about contract negotiations and the FY24 budget. He added the WHS One Acts, which are Senior-directed performances, will take place this week and the Wellesley POPS, or Parents of Performing Students, will have a Callback Celebration on Friday, February 3.

Ms. Eizenberg stated she, Ms. Chow, and Dr. Lussier attended Central Council earlier in the day. The meeting included a presentation from Megan Bounit, Director of Technology, regarding the technology budget and new course offerings.

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

Dr. Lussier highlighted two events taking place Wednesday, January 18. Ms. Trach and her K-5 literacy colleagues will be hosting a webinar focusing on early literacy. Each elementary principal has sent out a link. Following that webinar, Hardy principal Grant Smith will host an

update on the Hardy building project, as the project is close to breaking ground. It will be a chance to check in with the Hardy community on design and site modifications.

### **STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT**

Ms. Hamrah stated the WHS Improv Troupe gig last week was successful.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Minutes - December 6, 2022

Surplus Material Memo - WHS Ricoh Copier

Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

MOVED: Ms. Martin; SECONDED: Mr. Mack; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

### **PRESENTATION FROM (TOWN OF WELLESLEY) DEI TASK FORCE**

Task Force members Amy Frigulietti, Donna Stoddard, Melinda Arias-Voci, Rachel Voci, Lina Musayev, John Benzan, Lise Olney, Ann-Mara Lanza, and Ayla Lari joined the Committee.

Ms. Frigulietti, Assistant Executive Director of Wellesley, stated the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Task Force joined the Committee to provide an update on their work this past year and ask the Committee for its support for and cosponsorship of Town Meeting Article 17, which would adopt an Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias Resolution as well as appropriate funds for an Equity Audit.

The DEI Task Force was convened in November 2021, made up of 20 individuals representing a cross-section of the community. They worked to create a vision statement for racial equity in Wellesley and establish community guiding principles and practices to support anti-bias, nondiscriminatory, and anti-racist behaviors and attitudes.

Ms. Musayev highlighted the work of the Resolution Subcommittee in drafting an anti-racist resolution to go before Town Meeting. She noted the School Committee and Select Board have previously issued strong statements backed up with actions and the Task Force is seeking a similar commitment from the community.

Ms. Stoddard highlighted the work of the Equity Audit Subcommittee. They reviewed equity audits of other towns and discussed what could be learned from conducting an equity audit, adding the audit is a study to give a snapshot of the town. It could be targeted to only focus on the town's employees or a broader approach could be taken. She stated they are proposing a broad equity audit. Desired outcomes include gaining an understanding of how inclusive and diverse Wellesley is as a town. The estimated cost for an external audit is between \$55,000 and \$75,000 with optional foundational DEI training at \$2,000-\$3,000 per session.

Ms. Frigulietti noted the Select Board has voted to support the article. Regarding next steps, she stated the Task Force will work to solicit support from other boards and committees and will host a DEI foundational workshop.

In discussion with the Committee, it was discussed that the Equity Audit will build on the work that has already been done, pulling data together to establish a baseline.

Ms. Eizenberg thanked the Task Force members for joining and for their presentation, noting the School Committee will take up a vote at the January 24 meeting.

**DISCUSSION OF POLICIES: GBGAA – HEALTH EXAMINATIONS; BULLYING POLICY, PREVENTION, AND INTERVENTION PLAN; CALENDAR POLICY FOLLOW-UP**

Ms. Visco discussed policy **GBGAA** regarding employee health examinations. She noted pre-employment physicals are no longer common practice for jobs that do not have high physical demands and they are not the recommended practice. Ms. Eizenberg stated the Policy Subcommittee is bringing forward this to be eliminated.

**Bullying Policy, Prevention, and Intervention Plan (BPIP):** Ms. Eizenberg reminded the Committee that the Bullying Policy was revised last year and the BPIP is the accompanying procedure document. Legal counsel reviewed the BPIP to advise changes and ensure compliance with changes at the State level.

Dr. Bernklow summarized the proposed changes. These include an updated definition of cyberbullying, assessing the accuracy of programs through data collection and surveying students, staff, and families periodically. Other revisions involve clarifying the responsibilities of the building principal and adding language regarding students with protected status. She discussed changes in the section regarding safety, for which the State requires language to include assessing needs and restoring safety of the environment and safety of students, including the alleged aggressor.

In the section regarding obligations to notify others, language was revised that aimed to create a distinction between notifying parents or guardians while an investigation is occurring providing notification when a determination has been made. Dr. Bernklow explained there are times a principal may not alert a student's parent or guardian for safety reasons until after a determination is reached. The Committee provided feedback that the proposed language could leave room for interpretation and does not provide the clarity that was its desired outcome. Dr. Bernklow offered to bring the language back to principals for additional feedback and to craft language that differentiates between developmental levels and gives the necessary flexibility.

The final proposed revision is regarding taking disciplinary action. The State is requiring Districts identify what types of remedies or discipline other than suspension might be given.

Ms. Eizenberg stated the Policy Subcommittee will incorporate feedback into the BPIP and bring it back to the Committee at a later meeting. The policies under review will be linked to the front page of the WPS web site.

**Calendar policy review:** Dr. Lussier reminded the Committee that in December when the 2023-2024 Academic Calendar was reviewed and approved, several members of the community came forward to speak about how important religious and/or cultural days are reflected on the calendar. He noted there are ways to allow for clarity and consistency around when students may miss days or when homework should not be assigned by recognizing dates on the calendar for members of the community. Dr. Allen has begun drafting language to be vetted and brought to the Policy Subcommittee then the full Committee.

**ACCEPT COLLABORATIVE ACTION ON NEW MEMBER DISTRICT APPLICATION (WESTBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS)**

Dr. Lussier stated WPS is a member of the ACCEPT Collaborative. There are currently 14 districts in the collaborative that support each other around special education placements. Benefits of being part of a collaborative include lower cost Out of District placements and opportunities for job-alikes and professional development. Westborough Public Schools has requested membership into the ACCEPT Collaborative. The Board of Directors, composed of the Superintendents of the member districts, does not see a downside in allowing them to join. The School Committee of each member district must vote to allow new districts to join. He is bringing forth the request and recommendation for the Committee to accept Westborough Public Schools into the ACCEPT Collaborative, of which WPS is a member.

Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to approve an amendment to the ACCEPT Education Collaborative agreement to allow the Westborough Public School district to become a member of the ACCEPT Education Collaborative.

MOVED: Ms. Chow; SECONDED: Ms. Martin; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

**QUARTERLY REVIEW - EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FOR RELEASE**

Ms. Eizenberg stated the Chair and chair and the Superintendent conduct a quarterly review of past Executive Session minutes and determine whether any can be released. At this time they do not believe there are any that can be released.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. Eizenberg stated the Executive Session was no longer required.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 8:05 pm, Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED: Ms. Martin; SECONDED: Mr. Mack; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Mack,  
Secretary

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

Wellesley DEI Task Force Presentation  
DEI Task Force Phase I Report  
DEI Task Force Phase I News Release  
Policy GBGAA - Health Examinations  
WPS Bullying Plan - Revised  
BPIP Matrix of Change

ACCEPT Governance  
ACCEPT Statement on Westborough Public Schools  
Westborough Statement