

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
February 28, 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, members Melissa Martin and Catherine Mirick; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services Kat Bernklow; Director of Information Technology Megan Bounit; Interim Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Jorge Allen; and Student Advisory representatives Ivy Wang, Sofia Dobado, 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

Isabel Bida, of 22 Thomas Road, is a junior at WHS. She joined to voice her support for the WEA and the Fair Five. She stated she was grateful for TAs and noted more are needed to adequately staff the learning centers. She also noted that offering parental leave for all employees no matter how a child enters a family aligns with the core value of respect for human differences.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Chow discussed Article 43 that will be on the Town Meeting warrant. It is a citizens' petition that proposes to form a committee of neighbors to do a comprehensive study on the impact of night activities and lights on all town parks and fields. The second motion of the article is a moratorium on lights. Ms. Chow and Jay McHale joined Advisory along with the petitioners. There was only one favorable vote on Motion 1 from Advisory and no favorable votes for Motion 2. Additionally, Advisory voted unanimously in favor of the Sprague bathrooms.

Ms. Mirick offered an update on negotiations with the WEA. She began by thanking educators for all the work they do across the district and reiterating their value to WPS and the community. She stated that as requested by the Department of Labor Relations bargaining continued throughout February and the parties were able to meet four times. In an effort to settle the contract, the School Committee has proposed significant movement on the WEAs stated priorities. Most notably, by offering parental leave language that is equal regardless of gender & how a child comes into ones life and due process for Unit C. School Committee also made a very generous compensation offer - basically laying on the table the money that we have in our budget. Unfortunately, we were not able to settle the contract. As requested, we are reporting back to the DLR and will await their direction.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier offered a reminder on the process when there is inclement weather. While the preference is to make decisions the night before, not every storm makes that possible. He thanked everyone for their work with this past storm.

Tomorrow is Seminar Day at WHS. It is led and run by the students and is a way for kids to experience opportunities and to hear from faculty experiences they have had elsewhere in their lives.

The Panorama parent survey was released yesterday. Dr. Lussier noted this is the first time the survey is being sent out to students, staff, and families. He noted that, unlike the Strategic Plan survey, Panorama is geared only to current WPS families.

Ms. Trach highlighted upcoming Literacy Nights, stating flyers were sent home to elementary families. Family Literacy Nights are coming up on March 8 at Schofield, March 15 at Sprague, and March 22 at METCO headquarters. All events will be from 6:30-8:00pm and are open to all K-5 students. There will be literacy activities, book talks, and information on ways to support literacy at home.

Dr. Lussier highlighted a community meeting being hosted at WHS with Dr. Chisum and his team on evidence-based grading that will take place Thursday, March 9, at 7:00p.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Ms. Hamrah stated tomorrow is Seminar Day. She added each block has over 30 speakers and students are incredibly excited for it.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes - January 24, 2023

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

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MIDDLE SCHOOL MASTER SCHEDULE

The Committee was joined by Dr. Mark Ito, Cathi Gordon, Ana Hurley, Julie Caparco, Adam Blumer, Erin Sullivan, Ehrin Johnson, Toni Carlson, Emily Gordon, Lizz Gentes, Kate Morton from Wellesley Middle School.

Dr. Ito explained that updating the WMS master schedule was an effort 13 years in the making due to the many complexities involved. He discussed some of the research that informed the proposed changes, specifically how and when students learn best and have increased attention.

The current master schedule is a 6-day schedule with 7 periods in the day. Students have the same schedule every day. In the proposed schedule, morning classes rotate and afternoon classes rotate, with Period 4 remaining consistent. There will still be 7 periods and a 6-day rotation. Keeping rotations isolated to morning or afternoons allows for sharing of staff with other buildings. Other benefits of the proposed schedule are that it is simpler for students and staff to learn, it optimizes teaching and learning times of day, and it allows for more predictable planning for teachers. Additionally, the proposed schedule would provide the opportunity to maximize time teachers have with students and improve general intervention time.

Feedback from faculty has shown overwhelming approval, with 93.3% willing to try the new schedule. The proposal has been brought to School Council, a METCO parent meeting, Student Council, the PTO executive board, WPS Administrative Council, PTO meetings, and now to the

School Committee with overall very positive feedback. If the Committee approves of the new schedule, professional development for staff will be conducted in March or April and brought to students in grades 6 and 7 in May or June.

The Committee will vote on the proposed new master schedule at the March 21 meeting.

MID-YEAR DISTRICT GOALS REPORT

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS), with a focus on improving and ensuring rigorous, core Tier 1 instruction for all students. Many courses offered through a new Professional Development catalog, including online offerings. Ongoing progress towards meeting the goal includes selecting essential standards, developing coordinated K-5 master schedules, conducting evidence-based grading professional development for a grade 6-12 teacher cohort, and utilizing K-5 data teams.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), with a continued focus on providing a climate of care. The district was accepted as a member of the School Mental Health Leadership Institute (SMHLI) with 13 staff members across psychologists, social workers, and adjustment counselors, conducting a needs assessment to establish a comprehensive student mental health support team. with eye on id'ing tiered intervention needs. hope to have responsive interventions in place for principals, gen ed teachers, and liaisons to be able to support students. Other progress includes a fourth cohort of PK-5 educators to be trained in Responsive Classroom, school adjustment counselors piloting Second Step curriculum, and continued work with Panorama.

High Expectations Teaching. A data dashboard for MCAS and ACCESS assessment data has been designed and a student assessment dashboard is in process. Nearly 100 educators have been trained in High Expectations Teaching to date. Early Bird is being piloted to look at very early literacy skills.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The equity facilitator team is working to amplify student voices and rebuild the DEI Student Council. Academic gap-closing efforts are ongoing. WPS applied for a DESE Teacher Diversification Grant, which is pending DESE approval. WPS has invested in Talking Points and Rapport International to support family engagement and on-demand phone interpretation.

Project-Based Learning (PBL). Professional Development will be conducted in March. A summer institute and PBL curriculum work will be offered over the summer.

Proceed with Critical School Facilities Projects. The Hunnewell swing space has gone extremely well. The Hardy and Hunnewell projects are proceeding on their planned timelines, ultimately leading to school consolidation, when redistricting will occur and Upham will close. The Skills program will be built into the new Hardy building.

Strategic Plan. The Steering Committee hosted 16 focus groups in the fall and a community-wide survey was conducted this winter, the results of which will be presented at an upcoming meeting. Ongoing strategic priorities were included in the FY24 budget recommendation and the goal remains to finalize a new strategic plan before the end of June 2023.

Technology Plan. The Technology Department is currently collaborating on writing the “data governance and security plan” section of the Technology Plan, focusing on student data privacy, cyber incident preparedness, data breaches, data recovery, and multifactor identification.

Bargaining with WEA. The Committee and Administration remain hopeful a settlement can be reached as soon as possible and they remain focused on getting over the finish line as thoughtfully and quickly as possible.

Communications/Community Engagement. WPS contracted with Melwood Global to support the district’s communication work as well as created and filled an internal position of Coordinator of Community Engagement. These efforts will allow the District to continue to provide transparency. Additionally, an Accounting Coordinator for Payroll and Public Records has been hired.

Professional Learning. Dr. Lussier and Ms. Trach presented on MTSS at the MASS conference over the summer. Additionally, Solution Tree PD work began last March and continued into this year.

DISCUSSION/VOTE ON POLICIES: BULLYING POLICY, PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN; LBC - APPROVAL OF NEW PRIVATE SCHOOLS; EEA - STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES; DN: SCHOOL ASSETS DISPOSAL PROCEDURES; JC - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONE

Ms. Chow stated there had been no additional changes to the proposed revised policies nor any feedback from the community since the previous meeting.

Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to approve and adopt Policies LBC, EEA, DN, JC, and the Bullying Policy, Prevention and Intervention Plan as proposed.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thomas Ulfelder, Jim Roberti, KC Kato, Matt Kelley, Michael D’Ortenzio, Wendy Paul, and Sharon Gray joined the Committee to pay tribute to outgoing member Ms. Martin.

The guests thanked Ms. Martin for her six years on School Committee and marveled at the breadth of responsibilities she undertook, many at same time, all of which she did so well. They remarked on her practical approach to issues, her wonderful sense of humor, her openness, and her consensus building. She served with grace, always keeping the students of Wellesley a priority, during what will be known as one of the most challenging times in history. They stated she listened thoughtfully and meaningfully. They noted she deserves a lot of credit for shepherding the HHU and facilities projects.

Dr. Lussier stated his appreciation for her partnership and steadiness through challenging times as well as for her thoughtfulness and amazing sense of humor, adding she made him a better superintendent and he knows she will remain an advocate for kids and schools.

Current School Committee members noted that Ms. Martin was quick to welcome new members and accept them as members of the team. They remarked that she was a great example of calm and caring leadership and they felt fortunate to work alongside her.

Ms. Martin stated she was appreciative of everyone coming and sharing their thoughts. She noted the work is the work of the Committee and that she felt fortunate to be surrounded by people working hard to do so much for kids. She expressed her gratitude for the administrative team. She thanked the student representatives, noting their invigoration of commitment makes the work of the School Committee better and more robust. She was able to engage with all sorts of people and appreciated every moment someone asked a question, confided in her, or shared a concern or idea. She thanked her partners in town government. She thanked her husband and children who loaned her to the Committee and all the evenings of work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:08 pm, Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session under Massachusetts G.L. c 30A, §21(A), exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wellesley Educators Association because, as Chair, she declared that to discuss this in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee, and to approve Executive Session minutes from 9/1/22, 9/20/22, 11/15/22, 11/29/22, 1/12/23, 2/13/23, and to invite into the Executive Session Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Cindy Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Sandy Trach, Director of Human Resources Monica Visco, Jim Pender, Labor Counsel, Sharon Gray, Coordinator for Community Engagement, and Michael Scott, Laura Giordano, and David Guarino from Melwood Global and to not return to Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Mack,
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

WMS New Master Schedule 2023-24 Handout
SY2022-23 District Goals - Mid Year Update
WPS BPIP - revised 2-2-23
Policy LBC - Approval of New Private Schools
Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services
Policy DN: School Assets Disposal Procedures
Policy JC - Elementary School Attendance Zone