

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
March 8, 2022
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Catherine Mirick, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Leda Eizenberg, members Melissa Martin and Craig Mack; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov; and Student Advisory representatives Ivy Wang, Sofia Dobado, Jeremy Lee, and Abraham Budson-McQuilken.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Eizenberg stated that she, Ms. Chow, and Dr. Lussier had an opportunity to meet with the Fiske community and engage in great conversations. She added some concerns raised were around transportation and transportation safety. Additionally, on March 10, World of Wellesley (WOW) and WPS Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are hosting Isabel Wilkerson, author of the book *Caste*, in a virtual event, adding tonight is the last night to sign up to attend.

Ms. Chow stated that she, Ms. Mirick, and Dr. Lussier took part in the WMS Conversation with the School Committee. She noted many pertinent questions were asked around schedule changes, school start times, MCAS bullying, and social-emotional and mental health. Dr. Mark Ito also attended and discussed the Climate of Care as being part of the School Improvement Plan and district goals.

Ms. Mirick reminded the public that performances of *Mama Mia!* will take place at Wellesley High School this weekend and tickets can be purchased online.

Mr. Mack stated he and Ms. Martin met with the Fiske PTO on March 3 and engaged in great conversations, including on the topic of bullying. Ms. Martin added other areas of discussion included communication and pandemic recovery, particularly how to understand where gaps might exist. Mr. Mack offered a recognition that it was International Women's Day and acknowledged the amazing women educators who have led for many years.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier offered the following recognitions.

He congratulated students Ivy Wang and Skye Jacobs for being elected Town Meeting representatives, adding it is outstanding that young people in town are having a voice.

From Director of School Counseling Dana Plunkett, Congratulations to Janet Sozio, WHS school counselor and Moving Company Director, who was awarded the National Dance Education Organization's (NDEO) Presidential Award for her work on the organization's Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (JDEI) Committee. This group spent several months auditing all aspects of the NDEO including membership, website design, course and program offerings,

communication and recruitment. Once the data was collected, the JDEI Committee met with each subcommittee to present its findings and offer recommendations. A full report was created and presented to the general membership at the annual NDEO conference in October 2021.

He highlighted upcoming performing arts opportunities, namely *Mama Mia!* at WHS this coming weekend and *Frozen, Jr.* at WMS the following weekend.

The search for a Director of Student Services has been reopened and reposted.

He amplified the opportunity to listen to Isabel Wilkerson on Thursday, March 10. He hoped people have read *Caste* and have participated in the book groups that were offered.

Dr. Lussier noted it was International Women's Day. He stated he felt fortunate to work with incredible women every day who challenge and inspire.

Finally, he noted this week began the transition in COVID restrictions to a mask optional environment. Additional transitions are occurring around lunches and other aspects. Thus far, reports from principals are that things are going extremely well and a Climate of Care is being modeled by staff and students, adding there is great sensitivity to those who continue to wear masks reflecting the District's core values.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

The student representatives in attendance had nothing to report.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes - February 15, 2022

Gift Acceptances

Trip Approval - Quebec 2022

Trip Approval - Italy and Switzerland 2023

Surplus Memo - Transportation Wheelchair Van March 2022

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to accept the February 15, 2022 Minutes.

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

MOTION PASSED 3-0 WITH 2 ABSTENTIONS

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to accept the balance of the Consent Agenda.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MID-YEAR DISTRICT GOALS REPORT

Dr. Lussier introduced the topic by explaining these goals do not represent all the work done by the District; however the intent is to highlight significant priorities. An end-of-year update will be provided at a later date.

COVID response - First priorities continue to be around safety and part of that work has been staying attuned to the changing landscape with help from the Board of Health (BOH), Health Department, Ms. Hulme, and the nursing staff. The District has maintained a dashboard, held webinars, and utilized other means of communication to keep the community up to date.

Viral Testing - This year the District partnered with the state, participating in all aspects of their program. Most recently, the transition was made to primarily at home testing with rapid kits provided by the state and supplemented with WPS purchased supply. The state program is slated to end in April.

Pandemic Recovery - Ms. Trach discussed there are Advisories for both staff and students and the District has begun training 30 PreK-5 teachers in Responsive Classroom. Additionally, MCAS data has been disaggregated in order to identify strengths and needs. Department heads, directors, and principals are examining where it is necessary to prioritize instruction. She added they are prepared to launch tutoring opportunities before and after school. Families are encouraged to reach out to their student's teacher if they have questions about their progress.

21st Century Learning - Ms. Trach stated there are several Project-Based Learning (PBL) pilots underway. Grade 8 students are creating Civics projects in mid-April and the State is rolling out a Grade 8 Civics MCAS pilot this spring. WMS teacher Adam Blumer is taking the lead and his class will participate in the pilot.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) - Ms. Trach discussed the climate of care created at WHS and WMS in their advisory models as well as systemic investments in Responsive Classroom for the Prek-5 population, which involved using common language, modeling, and peer engagement.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) - Dr. Lussier discussed the District's goal to ensure an equity mindset in developing the budget. WPS continues its work with Panorama and recently received results from the second survey of staff, which helped compare the climate to where things were a year ago. He is hopeful they will be able to roll out a student survey soon.

High Expectations Teaching - Ms. Trach discussed that teachers have been participating in a High Expectations teacher course with Jon Saphier. Members of Academic Council, consisting of 40-50 administrators, are taking his course where they are learning about success, growth mindset, implicit bias, and specific instructional strategies. Additionally, district leaders and teachers are participating in Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) training to create systems and structures to support all students. All schools have implemented a Student Support Team (SST) and WHS has refined and improved the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP).

School Facilities Projects - Dr. Lussier noted construction on the new Hunnewell building will begin this summer. Work is currently being done to prepare for internal swing space during construction, which consists of many layers, including staffing, students, resources, transportation, and which grade levels will attend which host schools.

Strategic Plan - Dr. Lussier stated the Administration is finalizing the five-year plan that is being driven by the District's core values and Profile of a Graduate. He added they look forward to bringing it to the Committee.

Bargaining with WEA - Contract negotiations with all five units of the Wellesley Educators Association (WEA) are ongoing using an interest-based bargaining approach.

Communications and Public Engagement - Dr. Lussier stated there have been ongoing conversations with the School Committee throughout the year regarding the expectations around transparency while maintaining appropriate privacy protection obligations. Discussions continue around how to best communicate. Ms. Mahr worked to develop and implement an exit survey for those exiting the district.

FY23 Budget Proposal - Ms. Mahr discussed that the Administration built a budget that is within Select Board and School Committee guidelines, moves the strategic plan forward, and addresses pandemic recovery. It will go before Town Meeting beginning March 28.

The Committee thanked Dr. Lussier, Ms. Trach, and Ms. Mahr for the presentation and remarked it was a good reminder of the breadth of work the District does.

ATM ARTICLE 31 - PERMITTING ENFORCEMENT

Ms. Chow offered updates based on the previous meeting's discussion. Article 31 will be brought forward by the Recreation Commission to Annual Town Meeting. The article would add teeth to their existing policy that requires anyone using town resources for commercial gain to obtain proper permitting. They want to be able to enforce noncompliance with the policy. As both the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and School Committee have ownership of the land where these resources reside, it is important for both boards to vote. NRC has already approved the language.

In answering Ms. Eizenberg's question from the previous meeting regarding who would be responsible for enforcing the policy, Ms. Chow stated it will be the Recreation Department and its staff. Regarding Ms. Mirick's question about noncompliance beyond the third offense, Ms. Chow stated language has been added to include consequences for subsequent offenses.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to support Article 31 as presented.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HUNNEWELL TRACK & FIELD LIGHTING / BATHROOMS / TEAM ROOMS

Ms. Chow offered an update on the projects. Regarding the bathrooms, Town Engineer Dave Hickey is working to put together detailed engineering diagrams and will show proposed sites of bathroom and concession buildings at an upcoming Wetlands Commission meeting. There is no update on team rooms, as they are on hold until a decision is made around lighting.

Regarding the lighting proposal, Ms. Chow noted that at its February 15 meeting, the Committee talked about being unsure about next steps. As such, a memo was put together sharing the Committee's thoughts on the overall process. She stated that at their March 3 meeting, the NRC discussed giving each commissioner an opportunity to share their thoughts on each criteria for the NRC's land use policy. The plan would then be for the School Committee to take that feedback and move forward. Ms. Mirick added that NRC will have each member's comments at their March 17 meeting and the School Committee will decide at their March 22 meeting, based on those comments, if they want to make changes to the proposal.

DISCUSSION: JICFB - BULLYING POLICY, PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PLAN

Ms. Chow stated the Policy Subcommittee met three times between December and February and were joined by Dr. Lussier, Ms. Orlov, and attorney Amy Rogers. They put together revisions and refinements to the policy. During the process, they looked at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) model policy as well as other districts' policies.

Ms. Eizenberg stated that Ms. Rogers advised the subcommittee on statutory language that required updating. She added that in a broader sense, they discussed that historically, policies have not gone into great detail; however with this particular policy and in reviewing the MASC model policy and surrounding districts' policies, it would be advisable to provide more detail. With changes in language, they sought to reflect the District's core values and provide detail about creating a supportive learning environment. A section on reporting was added based on the MASC model policy as well as a new section on student assistance. Language was also added stating that each year the Superintendent will report to the School Committee an overview on bullying incidents within the WPS community the previous year, with the data to be used to assess the efficacy of the policy and reporting procedures.

The Committee asked clarifying questions regarding the new sections and terminology and engaged in wordsmithing conversations.

Ms. Chow stated the policy will be posted to the District's website and the Policy Subcommittee will reconvene to continue revising the policy based on the Committee's discussions and public input.

Ms. Orlov stated WEF is supporting a presentation by Dr. Elizabeth Englander from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) on March 31 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. MARC does extensive work on bullying and social skills and social-emotional development. She will talk about bullying and cyberbullying and the impact pandemic has had on social development and how families can help their children recover socially. She added the MARC website has many resources. The presentation will be recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 9:02 pm, Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Leda Eizenberg
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Policy JICFB current
MASC Model JICFB
JICFB 2-15-22 redlined to revised
JICFB 2-15-22 clean copy

SY2021-22 District Goals

Article 31 Motion - Updated

Update on Hunnewell T&F Proposal for SC 3.8.22