

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
May 2, 2023
Remote Online Meeting**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Leda Eizenberg, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Craig Mack, members Christina Horner and Catherine Mirick; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services, Kat Bernklow.

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

Public Comment

No one gave public comment

Reports

Ms. Chow gave updates on the Hunnewell Track and Field Phase Two Projects. The Track and Field Task Force continues to go through designs and permitting and are in the process of going before the Wetlands Protection Committee with a request to amend the existing order of conditions. The original order was approved a year ago which included a bathroom and concession stand. This next phase includes sports lighting based on guidance and recommendations from the DPW. On March 16th the Wetlands Protection Committee hearing voted to have a consultant do a peer review of the project and chose BSC Company. NRC's May 4th meeting will be covering these topics and will be sharing a document on all of the requests that will become records.

Ms Chow gave an update and overview of the School's Department's motions and articles at the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 16 Approved - *Support the Community Preservation Committee*

Article 17 - Approved - *Anti-Racist & Anti-Bias Resolution*

Article 43 - Motion 2 - 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 did not pass.

Ms. Mirick gave an update on the Climate Action Committee. Green Schools and Sustainable Wellesley worked with WPD on "Idle Free in 23". The groups gathered at all of the school pickup lines asking motorists to sign a pledge to shut engines off while waiting. A big thanks to Chief Pilecki for all his hard work making this possible.

Sustainable Wellesley hosts an "EV Showcase" at Mass Bay College on May 11th from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Test drive an EV, get answers from EV owners and hear more about incentives.

WMS Social Studies Department hosted their first-ever 8th grade Civics Fair. The students did a great job of engaging civic leaders and presenting thoughtful, summary details of the issues they explored and the next steps that they hoped to see. This level of engagement around issues that our students have identified as important to them was exceptional.

WEA negotiations continue, a mediator was assigned in March of 2023 and a number of key issues have been worked on. Our next negotiation is Monday, May 8th. Thank you to all of the educators, staff, administrators during this time.

Mr. Mack updated on the School Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC), they met recently and covered topics on nurse office “snack attacks”. The high school PTSO will host “Screenagers - Under the Influence” on May 9th at Wellesley High School

Superintendent Report

The recent high school PTSO meeting covered the data from the *Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS)*. The study is very informative supporting the social and emotional health of our students. These results are on our website.

In March, three of our Math coaches Sara Carr, Cheryl Condon and Suzanne Colangeli and one Math teacher, Heather Heon, attended the ATMIM (Association for Teachers of Mathematics in MA) spring conference presented on "Prioritizing Equity in Elementary Classrooms" and "Deepening Student Understanding Through Representations".

WHS Drama Department Spring Play "Happy Anniversary Angel! Love, Gino" Directed by Kara Sullivan and lights and sound by Michael Lounsbery opens this week, food is available interactively as you enjoy the show, tickets are available online.

WHS hosted the MAJE Festival last weekend. The Rice Street Singers led by Dr. Kevin McDonald and Steve Scott's Jazz Combos One received gold medals. Jazz Combo Two received the silver medal.

Friends of Wellesley METCO Hike this Sunday, May 7th (with a rain date of May 21) from 1:00 - 3:00 at Millennium Park in West Roxbury.

Rock in the Fire House at TCAN last weekend included the WHS Rock Band who brought the house down with their rendition of “Smells Like Teen Spirit”.

Thom Carter's London trip over April break was a huge success. Great work pivoting planning from Peru when plans changed quickly.

Consent Agenda

Amended Minutes for February 7, 2023 and February 28, 2023 were reviewed and approved.

MOVED: Ms. Mirick; **SECONDED:** Mr. Mack; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes - Ms. Horner - Abstain (did not take office until 3/1).

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

Amended Minutes for March 21, 2023 were reviewed and approved.

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

MOTION CARRIED 5-0**Field Trip Approvals**

Wellesley Middle School Field Trip to Southwest National Parks in April 2024 open to grades 7 and 8 . Under the guidance of tour group, Grand Classroom, Kate Morton is very excited for the opportunity and has been working on this trip since before the pandemic. Ms. Morton has done extensive research and reference checks with this company, all have been very positive.

Wellesley High School Art Field Trip - *The Jewels of the Adriatic Sea* to study Art, History and the culture of Croatia. This trip is planned under the guidance of Hart Travel and will take off for April 2024.

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

MOTION CARRIED 5-0**Action/Discussion****Panorama Survey Presentation**

Sandy Trach, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning started out the overview of the Panorama survey and introduced Dr. Jorge Allen, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Dr. Hannah Tolla, Director of Curriculum to join in the discussion.

The survey was administered to staff in fall of 2020, 2021, 2022, students in spring 2022 and 2023 and families in winter 2023. The breakdown in 2022-23 were as follows: 426 families (5.4%), 1769 students (76.6%) and 496 staff members (57%). The family survey topics cover barriers to engagement, school safety, school fit and family engagement. The educator and staff experience topics covered belonging, educating all students, cultural awareness and action (adult focus), cultural awareness and action (student focus), faculty growth mindset and professional learning about equity. The student survey topics covered school expectations, school belonging and school engagement.

The main focus in all groups was “belonging” - how much people feel that they are valued members of the community.

64% of the respondents to the educator survey feel they belong at their school completely or quite a bit.

65% of the respondents to the family survey answered favorably (their students feel tremendous belonging to their school)

Highest rates of belonging were grades K-5

62% of WMS respondents answered favorably to completely belong or quite a bit

56% of WHS respondents answered favorably.

Family Survey Selected Responses

- *“What is the most important thing for a school to do to ensure that all children are successful in school?”*

Environment, learning, meet kids, relationships, grading, focus, belonging, support, academics, challenges students, respect.

- *“How big of a problem is the following issue for becoming involved with your child’s current school: You feel unsure about how communicate with the school?”*

78% of respondents answered this question favorably, they did not find this to be a problem or only a small problem becoming involved.

- *“What recommendations would you make to the school for how to improve communications with parents?”*

Lack of parent community/difficulty engaging with other families, school’s reliance on social media and identify or create a single platform for communication.

- *“How big of a problem is the following issue for becoming involved with your child’s current school: You do not feel a sense of belonging within your child’s school community?”*

79% of respondents answered this question favorably (not at all a problem or have small problem)

Student Survey Selected Responses

“How connected do you feel to the adults in your school?”

27% of WMS respondents answered favorably and 24% of the WHS respondents answered favorably (extremely connected or quite connected)

- *“How excited are you about going to your classes?”*

18% of WMS students and 14% of WHS students indicated they are extremely excited or quite excited to go to class.

22-23 Belongingness Steps

Middle School - grade level assemblies with follow-up advisory lessons.

Home visits training

Elevating student voice - DE&I Student Advisory Council

Districtwide staff gatherings

School Mental Health Leadership Institute (SMHLI) - goals: identify a universal screener, establish an SEL curriculum, MTSS

Future Belongingness Steps

Communications/engagement work

Strategic Plan

Professional development for administrators

Relationship mapping - making sure each student has someone to connect with

Staff-Student

Staff-Staff

Advisory at WHS and WMS

Ms. Horner asked *“to what extent are we seeking the input from students in terms to what they need to have an increased feeling of belonging?”* Both Drs. Allen and Tolla have worked with MS and HS student advisory councils and did an exercise with middle school students with Chalk Talk asking *“what can we do?”* Students answers included wanting their teachers to know them in and outside of the classroom.

Mr. Mack asked *“What entails for home visits?”* Dr. Allen has received training under [Title 3](#) to better bridge communication to our English language learner families. We have not fully implemented the visits at this time however, we are looking forward to start them soon.

Ms. Chow & Ms. Mirick both questioned about the low response rate from families. Typically 5-30 percent is on the average of what is expected. There was multiple surveys (MWAHS) and Strategic Plan) administered at the same time and it could be a case of survey fatigue.

Ms. Eizenberg thanks Drs. Tolla and Allen.

Process Update on Strategic Plan

Dr. Lussier gives an overview of the work being done to move in the right direction of completing the new Strategic Plan. This year allowed us to have in-depth conversations and surveys with staff, community members, students and families.

Ms. Sharon Gray shared a quick review of the priorities and the process.

Priorities

Build on 2013-2019 WPS Strategic Plan

Operationalize the WPS Profile of a Graduate

Engage parents, educators, students and the community

Develop a five-year plan that also includes estimated costs

Process

Develop approach and timeline

Engage the community (focus groups and surveys)
Analyze the needs of the district
Evaluate feedback
Create draft five-year plan
Review plan with School Committee and community
Submit updated plan for School Committee approval

The next steps are presenting the draft to the School Committee for feedback and approval (May 23) and develop an operations plan and cost estimates to present a final plan report in the fall of 2023. More information is available on our website.

Ms. Eisenberg thanked both for all your hard work.

Hunnewell Update

Ms. Mirick updated on the construction progress of the new school, water proofing, framing, drywall, painting and masonry work is almost complete, building ventilation is being installed and the doorknobs for the classroom are being picked out. There is a large acknowledgement plaque that will be installed in the lobby of the school. It was decided to add Mr. Hunnewell's first name "Horatio" to the plaque and the names of the SC members that were in seats during the Town Meeting, voting and funding will be listed, who are: Leda Eizenberg, Jim Roberti, Melissa Martin, Linda Chow & Catherine Mirick.

There has been great progress on the Hardy School, the foundations are being poured this week.

In both buildings "Library" will remain the proper name of the libraries, not "media center".

Policy Work

Linda Chow and Leda Eizenberg worked closely with the senior administration to form a subcommittee and have gotten through a multitude of priorities.

Dr. Jorge Allen, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion brought forward two policies.

Policy IMDA (New) - ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

The Wellesley Public Schools District is a religiously and culturally diverse community. In keeping with the district's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) mission statement, our moral responsibility is to welcome, celebrate and affirm the full spectrum and intersections of human differences in and beyond our community. Therefore, the school district intends to be aware of and respect the religious and cultural observances of its students, families and staff.

A community calendar listing an expansive and detailed list of observances will be available along with the official school calendar.

Policy BDCB (New) - Wellesley METCO Representative to Wellesley School Committee

The Wellesley School Committee, in addition to its regular members and its student representatives, will have one non-voting representative who shall represent families participating in the Wellesley METCO program. In addition, there shall be an alternate who will act on behalf of the representative in their absence. The METCO representative will be authorized to sit at all open sessions of the School Committee and to discuss matters of concern in a fashion similar to school committee members. In addition, the METCO representative may accept other responsibilities, including committee assignments, as determined and assigned by the chairs of the Wellesley Committee. Boston-resident METCO families shall choose a METCO representative via a biannual election for a two-year term.

An eligible representative shall be a parent/legal guardian of a Wellesley student participant in the METCO program. An election will occur through a fair and open process determined by the Wellesley METCO Parent Advisory Council. The METCO representative will be qualified for re-nomination provided the representative is still a caregiver of a current Boston-resident METCO student in the Wellesley schools. If a vacancy occurs, the Wellesley METCO Parent Advisory Council may nominate an eligible person for appointment to complete the unexpired.

METCO families do not live in Wellesley, therefore they are unable to vote.

Ms. Eizenberg thanked Dr. Allen.

Ms. Trach welcomed Ms. Toni Carlson, PreK-12 Director of Libraries and Innovation, to discuss in detail two new policy updates.

Library Materials Policy

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints. The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee

WPS does not have an Instructional Materials policy or a Reconsideration of Instructional Materials policy section. Surrounding community school policies including Andover, Dover Sherborn, Needham, Weston, Wayland and Sudbury have similar instructional materials and reconsideration of instructional materials policies to one another.

This proposal is to add an IJ "Instructional Materials Policy" is and an IJ-R "Reconsideration of Instructional Resources Policy" to our policies. This would allow us to keep the same wording in our IJL policy. It would also support the School Committee with a policy and process in the event of a challenge to instructional resources and library materials.

Removing the final approval of principal and superintendent - it is far too extensive to have that happen for every piece of material the librarian should have the authority to choose the book selection.

Library Resource Policy

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance). If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

At 8:30 PM, Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to enter into an executive session under G.C. c. 30A, §21(A), exemption #3 – Strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wellesley Educators Association because, as Chair, she declared that to discuss this in Open Session could have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Committee. We will adjourn directly from Executive Session.

L.Eizenberg said she is inviting into the meeting:
David Lussier, Superintendent
Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent
Jim Pender, Legal Counsel
Monica Visco, Director of Human Resources
Sandra Trach, Assistant Superintendent
Kathleen Bernklow, Director of Student Services

Respectfully submitted,

Craig E. Mack

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Panorama Survey Review

050223 SC Strategic Plan Presentation

Policy IMDA (New) - Accommodations for Religious & Cultural Observances

2023-2024 Wellesley Public Schools Religious and Cultural Observances Calendar

Policy BDCB (New) - Wellesley METCO Representative to Wellesley School

Policy IJ and IJ-R

Approved 06-13-23