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Superintendent of Schools

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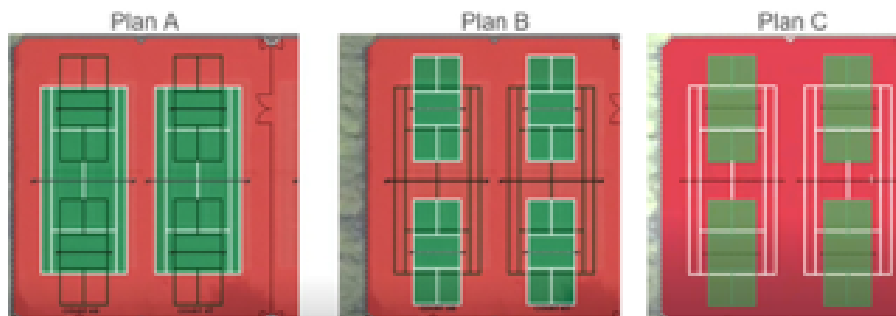
**CYNTHIA D. MAHR**  
Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations

To: Natural Resource Commission  
Cc: David Cohen, DPW Director, David Hickey, Town Engineer  
From: Dr. David Lussier, Superintendent of Schools  
John Brown, Athletics Director  
Date: May 31, 2025  
RE: **WPS Follow-up to May 15th NRC Meeting**

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## Background

At the May 15th Natural Resource Commission (NRC) meeting, Superintendent David Lussier and Athletic Director John Brown shared feedback from the Wellesley Public Schools regarding the proposals for line striping at the Hunnewell tennis courts. (This followed the vote at Town Meeting to double stripe two of the courts for pickleball and tennis.) The model recommended by the Department of Public Works to start the meeting (Plan "A") was consistent with the WPS expectation that the two courts in question would be lined as tennis courts, with more subtle pickleball lines in the foreground. From the WPS perspective, this approach was also aligned with the guidance the district has continued to receive from the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA), which is the governing body for school district athletics in Massachusetts.



During the course of the May 15th meeting, NRC members clarified their preference that pickleball lines represent the dominant striping schema for the two courts in question as represented in Plan “B”. In response, Athletic Director John Brown shared several key points:

- 1) The MIAA has continued to provide guidance to WPS that double-striped courts should be lined in a way that does not interfere with tennis play. At the same time, this is not reflected in a formal MIAA rule/policy.
- 2) Because WPS matches have no officials, student athletes call their own fouls and points. More dominant pickleball lines would make those calls that much more difficult. As such, WPS would be reluctant to schedule matches on those courts.
- 3) The NRC preference for dominant pickleball lines on two courts may have more of a negative impact on the program than the original proposal of only losing a single court to pickleball exclusively.
- 4) Athletic Director John Brown indicated that he was unaware of any high school that practices or plays on courts with dominant pickleball lines and has since confirmed that, while the town of Wakefield might have such a court, it is used only for recreational purposes and not for school tennis matches.

At the conclusion of this discussion item at the May 15th meeting, Superintendent Lussier asked the NRC members if any action on their proposal could wait until WPS had a chance to share the NRC preferred proposal with the MIAA and report any additional feedback, including any formal policy that may be in place related to this double-striping issue. The NRC agreed to this request and delayed any format action until a subsequent meeting.

## **WPS Follow-Up**

- 1) Athletic Director John Brown reached out to the MIAA again to confirm their guidance to the double-striping question. MIAA/MSAA Associate Director Richard Pearson confirmed that, “pickleball lines should not interfere with tennis boundary lines and it would be best as a different color.” He also shared the [USTA’s Statement of Guidance re: Facilities for Tennis and Pickleball](#)
- 2) Further, WPS would also like to highlight MIAA Handbook Rule 81, which states that, “*Massachusetts’s high school tennis shall be played under the rules of the United States Tennis Association*”:  
<https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/2025-pdfs/2025-friend-at-court.pdf>

The definition of “blended lines” (page 161 of the glossary section of the [USTA Handbook of Rules](#)) states that, “*Blended Lines has a narrow definition and a broad definition. The lines on the regulation 78-foot court are painted white. Sometimes permanent lines for Red Ball Tennis and Orange Ball Tennis are also painted on the court. These lines should be painted a lighter or darker shade of the color of the court surface. The narrower definition of blended lines refers to these lines only. Courts with blended lines as defined in the narrow sense may be used for almost all matches except certain ITF events. The broader definition of blended lines refers to*

*courts with lines used by sports other than tennis such as pickleball, badminton, or basketball. Absent the applicable sanctioning body prohibiting matches on courts with blended lines in the broader sense, the Referee determines whether matches may be played on these courts.”*

- 3) Additionally, the rules for blended courts are outlined in Appendix X on page 32 of the [USTA Handbook of Rules](#): *“When sanctioning bodies approve so called “Blended Lines” on courts the following guidelines must be followed:*

*Colour:*

- *Within the same colour family as the background playing surface.*
- *Lighter than the background playing surface.*
- *Limit on colour variation of +22 points on the L\* scale (Add ≤25% by volume of white paint to the background colour)*

*Pace:*

- *Within 5 CPR of the playing surface. Dimensions: • 1.0-1.5 cm narrower than the standard lines.*

*Marking:*

- *Terminate 8 cm from intersection with white playing lines.*

#### **4) Summary of the USTA Tennis court rules:**

Blended lines in the same color family as the one used for the tennis court surface. The tennis lines must be continuous because the rules state that the blended lines must stop 8 cm from the tennis lines. Courts should be painted with continuous tennis lines and choose one color for the entire background paint of the tennis court with added pickleball lines of lighter shade in the same color family as that tennis court’s background color. Under the definition of "Blended Lines", it states that "the lines on the regulation 78-foot court are painted white".

### **WPS Recommendation**

First, WPS wants to continue to work in partnership with the NRC and appreciates the opportunity to seek a solution that works both for our tennis program and town pickleball play. To this end, a double-striping solution is a good compromise that can meet both needs.

Second, the WPS strongly preferred striping schema remains Plan “A” as originally presented at the May 15th NRC meeting by the Department of Public Works. The district understands that the NRC preference appears to be the model (Plan “B”) in which the pickleball lines are the dominant striping pattern on two of the eight Hunnewell tennis courts. The district believes this approach would have a negative impact on our tennis program.

If Plan “A” cannot be approved, then WPS proposes an additional option in which there is one continuous background color for both courts with the only difference being the colored striping between tennis and pickleball.



From p. 2 of [USTA's Statement of Guidance re: Facilities Approach to Tennis and Pickleball](#)

Along these lines, we recently learned that the NRC received [a letter from the Executive Director/CEO of USTA New England](#) in which they not only express support for Plan A (more specifically what they refer to as Plan A-Light), but also propose a Plan D – the latter appears to be the aforementioned, additional option that WPS is bringing forward for consideration.