



HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

In-Person Meeting

Buker Elementary School

Multipurpose Room

Thursday, October 7, 2021

7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Present:

Dana Allara, Chairperson

Michelle Bailey

Julia Campbell, Vice Secretary

Jennifer Carr, Secretary

Anna Siedzik, Vice Chairperson

David Polito (approximate 8:45 PM arrival)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRHS Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration

Chris Domoracki, Student Government School Committee Representative

Craig Hovey, MRMS Principal

Bryan Menegoni, Interim High School Principal

Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Principal

Rebecca Butler, Interim Cutler Principal

Ben Schersten, Buker School Principal

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All those in attendance, with the exception of School Committee member Anna Siedzik, rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizen's Comments

[Exhibit](#)

Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify himself or herself by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. After Citizen's Comments, the chat feature will be turned off. If members want to be recognized, they can use the raise hand feature.

Meeting ID: 890 7060 8729

In-Person Meeting, Zoom Link below is for Public Comment Only:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89070608729>

There are no citizen comments at this time.

Ms. Allara closes public comments at approximately 7:04 PM, noting that those wishing to view the meeting can do so through HWCAM's livestream on the HWCAM [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

Ms. Bailey asks whether the agenda should be modified to move the acknowledgement of teachers' professional status to the next order of business. Mr. Tracy states that there are no staff present at the meeting, and thus there is no need to move the agenda.

4. Review of School Committee Protocols

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Campbell reads School Committee protocols #5 and #6, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

5. Student Representative Introduction

Superintendent Tracy introduces *HWRHS Student Body President*, Chris Domoracki. Chris will serve as the 2021/2022 Student Representative to the School Committee, and will provide monthly updates.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

[Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 9
- Voucher No. 1013
- Voucher No. 1014
- Voucher No. 3044
- Voucher No. 3045
- Voucher No. 3046
- Voucher No. 3047

B. Donations

- High School Robotics Program, \$3,115

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEM A, WARRANTS, AND EXCLUDING ITEM B, DONATIONS; THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through vote of five (5) members present.

Ms. Bailey acknowledges Jackie Stanwood's generous donation of \$3,115.00. This will cover most of the cost for the *First Robotics* registration (detailed in Bryan Menegoni's 09/27/2021 memorandum, [exhibit](#)).

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEM B, DONATIONS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,115 TO THE HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS PROGRAM; THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Julia Campbell.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through vote of five (5) members present.

7. New Business

A. School Improvement Plans

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy provides a brief overview of the process involved in developing the *School Improvement Plans*.

Ben Schersten, *Buker Principal*; Carolyn Shediak, *Winthrop Principal*; Rebecca Butler, *Interim Cutler Principal*; Craig Hovey, *MRMS Principal*, and Bryan Menegoni, *Interim High School Principal* review the goals and action steps associated with the school improvement plans, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

After the presentations detailing the goals and action steps necessary for each school level, the School Committee engages in a discussion and asks clarifying questions..

There is extensive discussion surrounding the DEI focused goals: **Elementary Goal #3:** Elementary staff will increase awareness and support of our diverse community; **Miles River Middle School Goal #5:** Work in concert with the district goal on self-assessment, professional development and program review through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and **High School Goal #3:** Increase staff and faculty knowledge about DEI and its impact on the experiences of students. There is discussion about identification, reporting, and resolving instances of bias in the curriculum; firm chosen to conduct the DEI audit; staff training schedule; reception of actions taken so far; DEI Committee; book clubs established and literature chosen; etc.

There is further discussion regarding each of the goals outlined in the presentations, with longer discussions centered around Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) systems; professional development opportunities and forming the Professional Development Committee; the design of a World Language Program, including establishing a World Language Advisory Council; curriculum work; and transitioning MRMS students to High School.

B. HWRHS Handbook Update

[Exhibit 1](#)
[Exhibit 2](#)

Mr. Menegoni, *Interim High School Principal*,. provides an update on the *Hamilton - Wenham Regional High School Student Handbook* (detailed in 08/19/2021 School Committee meeting agenda [exhibit](#)). He notes that during the the 08/19/2021 School Committee meeting, the committee voted to approve the handbook pending the changes discussed at that meeting,¹ and during the 09/21/2021 meeting, the School Council voted to approve those recommended changes as presented by the principal.

Mr. Menegoni reviews the 10/07/2021 slideshow titled Student Handbook Update ([exhibit 1](#)), explaining that he organized the School Committee's requested changes into categories (mechanical, language-policy alignment, and school-level policies). He also details his recommendation for "future work" (page 10) which would finalize any content changes by the end of the school year, in order to dedicate the summer months to finalizing the formatting/polishing of the Handbook. Mr. Menegoni details the changes requested as organized in the table ([exhibit 2](#)) with (1) current language or change requested; (2) proposed change; and (3) rationale and recommendations.

There is discussion about the definition(s) of protected classes which appear inconsistent throughout the handbook. Ms. Siedzik will add this to the 10/25/2021 *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* meeting agenda to discuss in more detail.

¹ 08/19/2021 motion reads: I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO ADD LANGUAGE THAT IT IS APPROVED AS PRESENTED SUBJECT TO FURTHER REVISION BY THE SCHOOL COUNCIL AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY AND SECONDARY REVIEW BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AT THE MEETING THEREAFTER [motion to amend passes 5:2; original motion as amended passes 6:1).

There is discussion surrounding the drug and alcohol policy as referenced in the handbook, including a discussion regarding whether the policy aligns with district's practice; ethical considerations; district's past practices/use of suspension; legally required language; etc. There is discussion about graduation gown color and concerns about inclusion.

There is a lengthy discussion about the Handbook approval procedure; School Committee's purview/authority; past practices when approving the Handbook; policy changes; etc. There is some disagreement about what role the School Committee has in this process. Ms. Bailey explains that the School Council is ultimately in charge of developing the content of the handbook, while the School Committee only has authority to approve/not approve based solely on whether or not the Student Handbook content aligns with district policy. Ms. Siedzik voices her concerns about being asked to approve the handbook, while also being given no authority over the content being approved.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR BASED ON THE CHANGES PRESENTED.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by David Polito.

Discussion: Ms. Siedzik reiterates her concerns with the School Committee being tasked with "approving" the Student Handbook, while having no authority or purview as to the contents of that Handbook. Mr. Polito encourages a different perspective: the School Council has heard, considered, and ultimately approved of the School Committee's requested changes. Ms. Bailey adds that the district's policy used to give authority to the Superintendent to review/approve the Handbook - however, this changed in the last few years to give that authority to the School Committee.

MOTION PASSES through majority (5:1) vote of six (6) members present.

8. Finance and Operations

A. Student Activity Club Approval

[Exhibit](#)

The FY21 Student Activities Update normally appears in the Treasurer's semi-annual report to the School Committee, however, due to the turnover in the position of treasurer, this update is being presented by Mr. Leone. Mr. Leone explains that the School Committee is required to approve these accounts on an annual basis.

Mr. Leone reviews the [exhibit](#), which details over thirty-seven (37) active high school subsidiary accounts. The district has an internal policy stating that if a student activities account is inactive for two (2) fiscal years, the account will automatically close, with funds distributed amongst the remaining active accounts. However, Mr. Leone asks for an exception: the request is to close one (1) of the seventeen (17) inactive accounts, and leave the remaining accounts open and active for at least the next year.

There is discussion about the groups included on the list of subsidiary accounts, and which groups are considered "active" and financial activity that would warrant their inclusion.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE LIST OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ACTIVITIES' SUBSIDIARY ACCOUNTS AS PRESENTED ON THE PREVIOUS SLIDE TITLED "AUTHORIZATION OF CLUBS".

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Discussion: Procedure regarding raffle licensing for club's fundraising efforts.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through vote of six (6) members present.

9. Policy

A. Review Face Coverings Policy

[Exhibit 1](#)
[Exhibit 2](#)

Review of the *Face Covering Policy EBCFA*, as detailed in [exhibit 1](#), as well as the up-to-date data as reported in [exhibit 2](#). There is discussion regarding data collected; shared spaces in facilities; pool testing and other mitigation strategies; strategy with booster shots; etc.

10. Superintendent's Report

A. District Goal Updates

Superintendent Tracy reviews the progress on District Goals, including:

- Communication sent to parents to encourage participation in council and advisory boards;
- Three (3) different public meetings scheduled next week to allow parents to connect with him;
- Superintendent's blog, Twitter, Instagram are all active;
- Portrait of a Graduate meeting last week;
- Members selected for DEI committee;
- Meeting with equity partners in the near future;
- MTSS literacy - he has been spending time in the schools and observing teaching;
- All elementary teachers completed training on Dibels 8 last Friday;
- Instructional training completed and three (3) instructional coaches will begin working with teachers;
- Mr. Tracy has met with Kristen Borges to begin curriculum review, and a document will track progress and ensure continued transparency;
- Members selected for World Language Committee. Mr. Tracy encourages continued participation from all those interested, and he will continue to solicit feedback;
- Learning Facilities: Cutler School Project (which encompasses all 3 elementary schools and potential consolidation) has been put on the MSBA's shortlist.
 - 10/15/2021, 9:00AM: Zoom meeting with MSBA
 - 10/20/2021, 9:30AM: in-person walk through of elementary schools, begins at Cutler;

A School Committee member will need to be present for both the above meetings: the School Committee agrees to have David Polito serve in this capacity.

B. Impact of Vacant Positions

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviews the impact of the district's vacant positions, as detailed in the [exhibit](#), and per request of Mrs. Carr at the last School Committee meeting.

C. Acknowledgement of Professional Status 2020 & 2021

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy congratulates teaching staff who have reached Professional Status, which is awarded to teachers who have completed three years of non-professional or probationary status teaching and have started their fourth year as a teacher in the district. The acknowledgement includes teachers from the past two (2) years, since the pandemic created obstacles in recognizing teachers in 2020.

~~11. Committee Reports~~

~~A. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee~~

~~B. Policy/Legislative Subcommittee~~

~~C. Negotiations Subcommittee~~

~~12. Chair's Report~~

~~13. — Topics for Future Meetings~~

14. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 10/07/2021 MEETING AT 10:05 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Julia Campbell.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through vote of six (6) members present.

Respectfully submitted October 29 2021 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.
