



HAMILTON-WENHAM
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
5 SCHOOL STREET, WENHAM, MA 01984 · TEL. 978-468-5310

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

In-Person Meeting

Buker Elementary School

Multipurpose Room

Thursday, December 2, 2021

7:00 PM - 9:45 PM

Present:

Dana Allara, Chairperson

Michelle Bailey (approximate 7:35 PM arrival)

Julia Campbell, Vice Secretary

Jennifer Carr, Secretary

Michelle Horgan

Anna Siedzik, Vice Chairperson

David Polito (approximate 7:07 PM arrival)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRHS Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration

Chris Domoracki, HWRHS Student Government Representative

Rebecca Butler, Cutler Elementary Principal

Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Elementary Principal

Ben Schersten, Buker Elementary Principal

Craig Hovey, Miles River Middle School Principal

Bryan Menegoni, Hamilton - Wenham Regional High School Principal

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. This meeting is being recorded and broadcast by HWCAM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Land Acknowledgement

Mrs. Carr reads the land acknowledgement, as written in the [exhibit](#).

[Exhibit](#)

4. Citizen's Comments

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.

[Exhibit](#)

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85684963071>

Ms. Allara reminds those in attendance that the District's current policy requires masks to be worn inside all buildings. She asks everyone present to either comply with this policy, or exit the meeting.

An unidentified, unmasked community member explains that she is unable to wear a mask, but would like to offer a comment at this time. Ms. Siedzik suggests the community member exit the meeting and offer comment via the Zoom link created specifically for this purpose. A tense exchange follows, with the community member ultimately refusing to comply and Ms. Allara adjourns the meeting in order to handle this issue.

The meeting is temporarily adjourned at 7:04 PM.

David Polito enters the meeting at approximately 7:07 PM.

The meeting reconvenes at 7:09 PM.

Ms. Allara consults with the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* - Ms. Siedzik confirms that written statements can be read in the meeting during citizen's comments. Ms. Allara reads the statement, summarized below:

Beth Herr, 270 Asbury Street, Hamilton: Ms. Herr provides a written statement regarding the masking mandate and vaccination policies. She believes that each of these decisions should be left up to the parents not DESE or the school administration. She urges the School Committee to make the right decision and end the mandate and other requirements. Ms. Herr points to peer pressure, segregation, and the precedent set when the School Committee enforces masking and vaccination requirements.

Ms. Allara closes public comments at approximately 7:14 PM, noting that those wishing to view the meeting can do so through HWCAM's livestream on the HWCAM [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

5. Vote to Renew Commitment to Protocols

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO RENEW COMMITMENT TO THE PROTOCOLS FOR THE HAMILTON - WENHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Discussion: Ms. Allara confirms that these are the same protocols that were approved last year, and the School Committee has been reviewing these since August.

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

This document will be finalized with all School Committee member signatures.

6. Student Representative Report

Chris Domoracki, *Student Council*, provides a report to the School Committee including:

- HWRHS Open House included panel, tour of schools, club/activity overview, etc.;
- Update on Spirit Week 11/18 - 11/24 and school events that took place;
- Toy Drive 11/29 - 12/03 and participate in "Stuff a Cruiser";

- Food Drive for Beverly Bootstraps - food can be brought in to the Guidance Office;
- HW Sports Update:
 - Fall Sports Tournament Update: HW Girls Soccer, HW Football, HW Girls Volleyball; HW Boys Soccer, HW Girls Field Hockey, HW Cross Country.
 - Winter Sports currently in session: HW Girls Basketball, HW Boys Basketball, HW Swimming & Diving, HW Boys Hockey, HW Indoor Track, HW Cheerleading, HW Gymnastics, Co-Op Girls Hockey (Marblehead), Co-Op Wrestling (Salem).
- Miles River Middle School update;
- Cutler Elementary School update;
- Winthrop Elementary School update;
- Buker Elementary School update.

Superintendent Tracy offers congratulations to Chris Domoracki, for recently being voted Football's MVP!

7. **Consent Agenda**

A. Warrants

[Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 13
- Voucher No. 1020
- Voucher No. 1021
- Voucher No. 1022
- Voucher No. 3059
- Voucher No. 3060
- Voucher No. 3061

B. Donations

- *Family and Friends of Winthrop - Disposable Trays \$826.02*

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Allara requests to hold the donation.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN; THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Discussion: The motion should exclude the donation.

Ms. Carr withdraws her motion.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN, EXCLUDING THE DONATION; THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

Ms. Allara points out that the 200 trays donated by the Friends of Winthrop are reusable, not disposable as indicated on the agenda.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION OF 200 PLASTIC TRAYS FROM THE FRIENDS OF WINTHROP, AS WRITTEN IN THE CONSENT AGENDA; THERE SHALL BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Discussion: The trays are reusable and are washed daily.

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

8. New Business

A. Report from World Language Steering Committee

[Exhibit](#)

Craig Hovey, *MRMS Principal*, and Bryan Menegoni, *HWRHS Principal*, provide a report from the World Language Steering Committee, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). The report includes review of: members of the Steering Committee; meetings held to date; data collected and relied upon to form recommendations; open questions that remain; etc. The committee's recommendations/findings include:

- There is strong interest in offering more than one language to students;
- District to continue studying feasibility of offering elementary level language program;
- District to clarify proficiency goals through ongoing *Portrait of a Graduate* and *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion* work;
- Maintain the two language model (Mandarin/Spanish) in grades 6-12 for the 22/23 school year.

There is a lengthy discussion about the details of the World Language Program and Steering Committee's work, including: analysis of current language program; Mandarin language challenges/benefits; survey data methodology/findings; implementing recommendations; timeline; budgetary implications; committee decision-making; alignment with district goals; etc.

There is a discussion surrounding next steps, with some members voicing their preference to develop an agreed upon action plan. Superintendent Tracy explains that this work will be addressed both in his Entry Plan and Strategic Planning conversations surrounding the district's mission and core values.

B. MCAS 2021 Results

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy presents the 2021 MCAS results, as detailed in the [exhibit](#), noting the number of variables and considerations (namely, the declines due to the pandemic) when comparing data to past years.

Superintendent Tracy explains that a large portion of the school year was used to teach students how to be back in school. There is discussion about the social emotional needs of students; strategy in bolstering foundational literacy and math skills; projecting future MCAS scores; filling TA positions designed to increase student performance; monitoring student growth; instruction via learning walks and administrator evaluation; etc.

C. Superintendent's Entry Plan

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviews the Superintendent's Entry Plan ([exhibit](#)), noting the way this project aligns with his 21/22 Superintendent Goals. He highlights the key components included in each of the three (3) stages of the Entry Plan:

- Stage 1 The Learning Stage;
- Stage 2 Visibility and Growth Stage;
- Stage 3 Execution Stage.

There is discussion surrounding the importance of including individual conversations with School Committee members, as has been done in prior years' entry plans. Both Ms. Bailey and Ms. Siedzik comment that these conversations are a crucial component of the work detailed in the plan.

9. Finance and Operations

A. All Principal's Budget Presentation

[Exhibit](#)

The principals present the budgets, as detailed in the exhibit. Each school level presentation includes:

1. Return on Investments, Celebrating Success, and Fast Facts
2. FY23 Budget Allows Us To
3. Unmet Needs

Bryan Menegoni, *Principal*, reviews the **Hamilton - Wenham Regional High School** budget presentation (pages 2-5 of the [exhibit](#)).

There is discussion about the goals and strategy involved with the sustained support for the 9th grade transition and common planning time. There is discussion about potential solutions to address the unmet needs - intercom system upgrades and science lab upgrades - which are substantial capital costs. Mrs. Carr suggests that the district reach out to some of the local scientific institutions (New England Biolabs, Fisher Scientific, etc.).

Craig Hovey, *Principal*, reviews the **Miles River Middle School** budget presentation (pages 6-9 of the [exhibit](#)).

There is discussion about the unmet needs outlined in the presentation, with some members requesting the costs associated with those needs. Mr. Hovey provides further details about the shortcomings of the intercom system. There is a brief discussion about the social worker line item in the budget.

Ben Schersten, *Baker Principal*, and Carolyn Shediak, *Winthrop Principal*, review the **Elementary School** budget presentation (pages 10-13 of the [exhibit](#)).

There is discussion about the district's strategy surrounding vacant Teaching Assistant positions and addressing the learning space shortage (potential solution may be a "portable" classroom/trailers).

B. FY23 Budget Recommendation - Phase 4-Use of E & D

[Exhibit 1](#)

[Exhibit 2](#)

[Exhibit 3](#)

[Exhibit 4](#)

Mr. Leone details the FY23 Budget Recommendations, Phase 4 - Use of E & D funds, as detailed in the exhibits above. Mr. Leone is recommending that the remaining balance of \$2,000,550 be invested in the OPEB Trust Fund. This would end up saving the district \$20 million in the long run (see [Exhibit 1](#), page 12). He explains how this recommendation would impact the district's budget and highlights the fact that this investment would not have any impact on the town's assessments. He provides further details of the long-term impact through this recommendation.

There is discussion about OPEB funding; fiscal responsibility; historical attempts in funding OPEB; rate of return; strategy in communications with the towns and voters; Town Meeting strategy; etc.

10. Policy

A. Review Face Coverings Policy

[Exhibit 1](#)

[Exhibit 2](#)

- *Parent Survey by School*

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviews the district's current COVID data as detailed in [Exhibit 2](#). There is a brief discussion regarding the effectiveness of mask wearing, as the majority of cases and spread of cases occur outside of the school building.

B. Draft Plan for Removing Masks

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviews his recommendation for removing masks in Hamilton - Wenham schools, as detailed in his memorandum dated 11/24/2021 ([exhibit](#)). Mr. Tracy recommends reviewing the draft plan this evening, providing any needed clarification, and then having a more detailed discussion at the next School Committee meeting, 12/16/2021.

There is some discussion regarding increase in cases; DESE attestation form; required vaccination rate; process of changing masking policy; etc.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE EXTEND THE MEETING UP TO 30 MINUTES AS NEEDED.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

MOTION PASSES through majority (4 in favor; 3 opposed) vote of seven (7) members present.

C. Vote Policy BE

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Siedzik explains that the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* revised the *Duration of School Committee Meetings (BE)* policy, removing the “under no circumstances” clause as presented in the [exhibit](#). Ms. Presser advised that the School Committee could have voted to approve the policy at the last meeting, given that there was consensus about the revision.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE DURATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS (POLICY BE) AS PRESENTED.

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through vote of seven (7) members present.

This policy has been approved and is in effect immediately. This policy will need to be updated on the district’s website.

11. Superintendent’s Report

None.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 12/02/2021 MEETING AT 10:06 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by David Polito.

MOTION FAILS (3 in favor; 4 opposed).

12. Committee Reports

~~A. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee~~

~~B. Policy/Legislative Subcommittee~~

~~C. Negotiations Subcommittee~~

13. Chair’s Report

- There will be a joint meeting with the Towns (Board of Selectmen and FINCOMs) next Wednesday, 12/08/2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

Michelle Bailey exits the meeting at 10:08 PM

- Saturday, 01/22/2022, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM: School Committee DEI Workshop (Central Office, location will be confirmed)

~~14. Topics for Future Meetings~~

15. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 12/02/2021 MEETING AT 10:10 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Jennifer Carr.

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

Respectfully submitted December 11 2021 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.
