



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

**School Committee Meeting**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)**  
**Zoom Webinar ID: 934 2858 8064**  
**Meeting Password: 200279**  
**Monday, August 14, 2020**  
**12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

**Present:**

Michelle Bailey, Chairperson  
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson  
Dana Allara, Secretary  
Anna Siedzik, Vice Secretary  
Peter Wolczik  
David Polito  
Stacey Metternick

**Also Present:**

Mary Beth Banios, District Superintendent  
Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations  
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary  
Dr. Giselle K. Perez, member of Hamilton Board of Health  
Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse  
Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair of Wenham Board of Health  
Craig Hovey, Miles River Middle School Principal  
Stacy Bukyk, Director of Student Services  
Jennifer Clifford, Cutler Elementary School Principal  
Ben Schersten, Buker Elementary School Principal  
Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Elementary School Principal

**1. Call to Order**

12:00 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. This meeting is being recorded by HWCAM and held remotely per the Governor's emergency order. Ms. Bailey reviews the format of today's meeting, noting that the School Committee will need a brief recess in order to review information provided shortly before the meeting.

**2. 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. Total comment time will be limited to 20 minutes.*

*Martha Hale-Farrell, 15 Hamilton Ave. Hamilton: Thanks the School Committee for their hard work in ensuring equitable access to education. She also thanks all those who have participated in discussions about the school reopening plan. She invites anyone interested to send her an email at martha.hale@gmail.com*

**3. New Business**

A. Review of Ventilation Report and Action Steps

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

Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations, reviews the details of his presentation, as detailed in the exhibits above. Discussion regarding site visits and assessment of facility needs; HVAC plan

and costs; outside air circulation; health considerations; filter replacement schedule; etc. Mr. Wolczik asks for an anticipated date of completion for the work outlined, with Mr. Geary explaining that although some supplies are back-ordered, he hopes that the work will be completed by 09/12/2020.

Discussion regarding HVAC systems and air circulating fans, including whether either of these effectively reduce the amount of airborne viruses. Mr. Geary defers to experts on this subject, as he is uncomfortable answering this question with certainty. Discussion regarding cleaning schedule; required staffing; part-time position hiring; potential for volunteer work; measurements of air quality; action plan to increase air quality; deadlines for completing work; unbudgeted needs; mask requirements; etc. There is a brief discussion regarding last year's purchase of electrostatic machines, and the benefits the machines offer in sanitizing furniture and buildings to make them safer for occupancy.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ENTER INTO A 15 MINUTE RECESS TO REVIEW NEW INFORMATION, AND TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION AT 1:10 PM.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.**

Anna Siedzik	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES.

**MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 6 members present\*.**

*Open Meeting reconvenes at 1:10 PM.*

\* Ms. Bailey notes that Mr. Polito was hidden from her Zoom panelist view, and was therefore unintentionally excluded from the vote above.

Ms. Bailey states that she has noticed hands raised as well as audience members submitting questions. She notes the numerous opportunities that were made available to community members to ask questions and offer comments, and states that no further opportunities will be offered during this meeting.

B. Discussion and Vote on Fall Reopening Plan

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Banios reviews the district's reopening plan recommendations, reminding the School Committee and community members to remain flexible and patient as answers evolve. Ms. Banios reviews the fully remote model for both the elementary and middle school levels, detailing the discussion and analysis that went into the process of providing the recommended options found in the reopening plan.

Review Miles River Middle School remote learning model as detailed in the [exhibit](#). Mr. Hovey, Miles River Middle School Principal joins the discussion regarding the need for an additional math teacher; costs of hiring an additional teacher; assessing student needs; coordinating services; etc. Ms. Bucyk, Student Services review Special Education considerations at the Middle School level, including carrying out IEPs in each learning model; individualized in-person student services; "least restrictive" environments; other inclusion concerns and challenges, etc.

Discussion regarding recommended elementary level remote learning model using Edgenuity online learning platform, including the structure and sophistication of the learning platform; benefits offered; ability to monitor student progress; etc. Discussion regarding alternative remote learning option. Elementary principals Ms. Clifford, Mr. Schersten, and Ms. Shediak join the discussion regarding remote learning schedule; family support; plan flexibility; scalability; pivoting between learning models; training offered; teachers' changing roles; curriculum; direct instruction; etc.

Procedural discussion regarding the remaining items for the School Committee's consideration and order in which to address these issues. Remaining items include: (1) forming the COVID Response team; (2) health metrics; (3) vote on school reopening plan as presented; (4) decision/vote regarding how to begin school.

Discussion regarding metrics, as detailed in the [plan appendix](#), beginning on page 29. Dr. Giselle Perez, Dr. Andrew Ting, and Public Health nurse Maribeth Ting join the discussion regarding health metrics; safety concerns; data accuracy; surrounding towns and county data; term consistency; threshold; historical data; etc. Discussion regarding including metrics in the reopening plan while indicating the fluidity of that information.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE CREATES A PLACEHOLDER FOR THE METRICS REGARDING COVID RESPONSE.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.**

*Discussion:* DESE does not require inclusion of the metrics appendix. Motion clarified: Ms. Banios will take out the current information and insert placeholder language similar to "metrics are under development and will be provided when they are available."

David Polito	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;

**MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 7 members present.**

Lengthy discussion regarding school reopening plan including safety determinations; pivoting between learning models; risk assessment; trust in the Hamilton - Wenham educators; concerns voiced from the community; School Committee concerns; etc. Although the discussion occasionally moves to opinions on which learning model should be used when opening schools, School Committee members support the Fall Reopening Plan as presented.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FALL REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED, WITH THE METRICS PLACEHOLDER INSERTED, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SITUATION IS FLUID AND THIS PLAN WILL EVOLVE DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

*Discussion:* Motion clarified: motion/vote to approve the Fall Reopening Plan *only*, **not** to approve which learning model schools will open with. Further discussion regarding the plan, with Ms. Banios explaining that the High School plan has not changed since it was initially presented. Further discussion regarding the changes made to the learning plans as presented this afternoon.

Dana Allara	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
David Polito	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;

**MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 7 members present.**

Thank you to everyone involved in creating the Fall Reopening Plan!

*Ms. Bailey calls for a brief recess: 3:16- 3:24 PM (there is no motion/ vote).*

The next order of business is to decide which learning model will be in effect when opening the schools on 09/14/2020, and further how to monitor data and when to pivot to different modalities.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OPEN IN THE HYBRID LEARNING MODEL, WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT FLUID CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND THE PANDEMIC COULD CREATE A NEED TO CHANGE THAT MODEL.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.**

*Discussion:* There is a lengthy discussion regarding members' opinions surrounding the learning model most suitable to begin the school year. A brief summary of those opinions are as follows:

Ms. Siedzik believes the hybrid learning model assumes too much unnecessary risk. She supports the district opening in a remote only learning environment, revisiting and analyzing the data every 2 weeks to gradually open in a hybrid model. She is uncomfortable with schools opening in the hybrid model given that the model lacks support from the Teachers Union and a number of teachers have voiced their concern about safety. She believes it is smarter to begin the school year cautiously rather than hopefully.

Mr. Wolczik believes that the schools should open with a remote learning model. He points to facts surrounding school reopening: COVID causes death and other permanent damage; the Hamilton-Wenham community does not exist in a bubble; schools opening in-person elsewhere have suffered negative consequences; students will be coming into a dystopian environment; and there is the risk of teaching staff and students suffering from increased levels of anxiety.

Ms. Horgan believes that opening schools with the hybrid learning model is the best option for students and the community. She points to the fact that pediatricians, along with the CDC, recommend returning to in-person learning environments. She supports the schools opening in the hybrid learning model.

Ms. Metternick supports the schools opening in the hybrid learning model. She believes opening in a remote only model would be an incredible disservice to students and families in the district. Ms. Metternick points to the overall risk being low, and stresses the importance of students' social/emotional well-being.

Ms. Allara asks clarifying questions about safety concerns voiced by Ms. Siedzik and Mr. Wolczik. She supports the schools opening in the hybrid learning model.

Mr. Polito supports the district opening in a remote only learning environment. He points to the number of variables that could affect the schools' opening plans, noting that things could change at the last minute should the district plan to open with a hybrid approach. Using the time over the next month to plan for a remote model is a better choice, given that no variables would change those plans at the last minute.

Ms. Banios explains that regardless of the School Committee's decision today, the district would use the 12 "extra" teacher days at the beginning of the school year to plan how to move between modalities, and how to best operate under each of the learning modalities.

Ms. Bailey supports the schools opening in the hybrid learning model. She is concerned that spending time to build the remote learning plan that may only be used for two weeks is not the best use of time or resources. She notes that the community has expressed their desire for in-person learning, and that those who want or need the remote option will still have that available. Finally, Ms. Bailey states that she is in

support of the schools opening in a hybrid model, but she also fully supports the development of metrics for determining if/when remote learning becomes necessary.

Michelle Horgan YES;  
Dana Allara YES;  
Anna Siedzik NO;  
Peter Wolczik NO;  
Stacey Metternick YES;  
David Polito NO;  
Michelle Bailey YES;

**MOTION PASSES through majority (4:3) roll call vote of 7 members present.**

There is a discussion regarding whether this vote requires a simple or super majority. Ms. Stonberg, district legal counsel, confirms later in the meeting that the motion requires a simple majority vote.

C. Vote Amended 2020-2021 School Calendar (originally D)

[Exhibit](#)

Discussion regarding the 2020-2021 School Calendar, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). Discussion regarding start of school, use of Buker by the Town of Wenham, Kindergarten start date, etc. Ms. Siedzik proposes moving Good Friday to “other religious observances” in order to treat all religions equally. She also proposes including Ramadan ( 4/12/21 - 05/11/21) on the school calendar: although school is still in session, the calendar serves as a reminder of other components in students’ lives. Finally, Ms. Siedzik recommends that the district begin tracking Juneteenth, which is now a state holiday.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR AS PRESENTED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#), WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COSMETIC CHANGES AROUND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AS DISCUSSED.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.**

Michelle Horgan YES;  
Michelle Bailey YES;  
Dana Allara YES;  
Anna Siedzik YES;  
Stacey Metternick NO;  
David Polito YES;  
Peter Wolczik YES.

**MOTION PASSES through majority (6:1) roll call vote of 7 members present.**

D. Discussion and Vote on BOH Metrics and Determination of Intended Fall Reopening Learning Environment (originally C)

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Banios recommends the formation of a COVID Response team, comprised of:

- Public Health Nurses from Hamilton and Wenham;
- HWRSD Lead Nurse;
- Superintendent;
- Director of Facilities;
- School Committee Representative;
- HWEA Representative

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO SELECT THOMAS GEARY, DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE, FACILITIES & OPERATIONS, TO SERVE AS THE COVID RESPONSE PERSON.**

**MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.**

Peter Wolczik YES.

David Polito YES;  
Stacey Metternick YES;  
Anna Siedzik YES;  
Dana Allara YES;  
Michelle Horgan YES;  
Michelle Bailey YES;

**MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 7 members present.**

The School Committee reaches consensus and charges Superintendent Banios with forming the COVID Response Team. Superintendent Banios will form the COVID Response Team as an advisory body, and update the School Committee as to her progress. In addition, Ms. Banios will continue to collaborate with the Boards of Health in developing a matrix, and provide these details at the next School Committee meeting.

#### **4. Other**

- Mr. Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration, is absent due to his scheduled time off for his wedding. Thank you to Mr. Leone for his extraordinary efforts serving both the district and larger community;
- Potential meeting scheduled between today and next scheduled meeting 09/02/2020. Ms. Bailey will distribute a poll to determine School Committee members' availability and preference;
- A chat with elementary school principals and kindergarten teachers is scheduled for this upcoming Wednesday, 08/19/2020 at either 6:00 or 7:00 PM.

#### **A. Topics for next meeting (Next Meeting: Wednesday, 09/02/2020)**

- District communication strategies;
- Mask policy and other pandemic related policies (including graduation requirements);
- COVID Response team details and update.

#### **5. Vote to Adjourn**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 08/14/2020 MEETING AT 4:52 PM.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.**

Michelle Horgan YES;  
Dana Allara YES;  
Anna Siedzik YES;  
Peter Wolczik YES;  
David Polito YES;  
Stacey Metternick YES;  
Michelle Bailey YES.

**MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 7 members present.**

*Respectfully submitted September 25th, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.*

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\*\*Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A § 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. The School Committee reserves the right to implement additional remote participation procedures and will notify the public of these procedures as soon as practicable. Please [click here](#) to read the Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20.\*\*

\*Zoom App Information: If you plan to participate, download the [Zoom.com](#) application now. The option to download will also be available at the start of the meeting. When opening the Zoom App, select "Join Meeting" in the upper right corner and enter the webinar id: 934 2858 8064; password: 200279. The community should ask questions via the "chat" function within the Zoom application during the Citizen's Comments section. During the Zoom meeting, participants will be given instructions on how to

provide their comments. Unfortunately, we must limit the in-person conversations to just the Committee members. However, for the benefit of all, the School Committee meetings will be available on our local cable channel, HWCam, and [HWCam.org](#), for review a few hours after the meeting has ended. Members of the public can access the meeting via [YouTube HWRSD live stream link](#) the next day.