



HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

**School Committee Meeting
Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room
Wednesday, February 24, 2020
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

Present:

Gene Lee
Michelle Horgan, Assistant Secretary
Tai Pryjma
David Polito, Chairperson
Peter Wolczik
Michelle Bailey, Vice Chairperson

Also Present:

Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration
Peggy McElhinney, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction
Eric Tracy, Hamilton - Wenham High School Principal
Dr. Jennifer Sauriol, 6-12 Math Curriculum Coordinator

1. Call to Order

7:00 PM

David Polito, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens' Comments

None.

4. New Business

Mr. Polito explains that *New Business Agenda Item C, Vote to Approve Math Sequence Change* will be moved to the following agenda item, given that there are audience members attending for this reason.

C. Vote to Approve Math Sequence Change

[Exhibit](#)

Dr. Kukenberger thanks Peggy McElhinney, *Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction* and Eric Tracy, *Hamilton - Wenham High School Principal*, for attending tonight's meeting, and introduces Dr. Jennifer Sauriol, *6-12 Math Curriculum Coordinator*. Dr. Sauriol provides a detailed overview of the proposed math sequence changes, designed to have all freshmen students enrolled in Geometry (opposed to either Geometry or Algebra 1). Doing so, Dr. Sauriol explains, would provide two major benefits: (1) the impact of the "gap year" (causing a recession in the necessary algebra skills) would be eliminated/minimized, and (2) all freshmen would hold a similar class schedule.

Discussion regarding sequencing of classes (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry); common student experiences; levels of algebra offered/necessary; honors levels; available resources; “integrated” math curriculum; parent and student responses; skills desired/acquired; timing of the proposal; Common Core; State requirements; Illustrative math curriculum; integrated classes; staffing needs; State frameworks; MCAS testing; etc.

Dr. Sauriol states that Eric Tracy, *High School Principal*, as well as the mathematics department are on board to implement these changes next fall. These changes will have no impact on the district’s available resources or the district budget.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CHANGES IN THE SEQUENCING OF THE MATH CURRICULUM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, AS PRESENTED BY DR. JENNIFER SAURIOL AND AS STATED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#); AND, BY EXTENSION, CHANGE THE SEQUENCE OF THE COURSE OF STUDIES OFFERED.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan

Discussion: Long term data collection and evaluation in measuring the effectiveness of sequencing changes. Ms. Bailey requests a comparison of the Algebra skills and MCAS skills. Discussion regarding implementation of changes, measurements of success, longevity of an accurate study/evaluation, etc..

Approved by 5 members present, with 1 member, Gene Lee, abstaining.

MOTION PASSES by majority vote.

A. Wenham Override Structure

Discussion regarding Wenham’s override structure for upcoming Town Meeting, 04/04/2020. Discussion regarding percent increases assumed by Wenham; levy limit; potential consequences of failed override; capital debt exclusions; anticipated handling of capital expenses; services normally provided by the Town of Wenham; process after a failed override; voter education; voter turnout; etc.

The School Committee needs to formalize a recommendation for Wenham’s override structure, and then communicate that recommendation to Wenham’s Board. Discussion regarding override structure; potential voter confusion; voting structure; language on ballot; next steps; strategy involving communication with Wenham; communication with voters; etc.

Consensus: School Committee members will attend tomorrow’s Board of Selectmen meeting at approximately 6:45 pm at Wenham Town Hall to put forth their formal recommendation to include Town and District as one (1) override.

Discussion regarding levy limit; Town of Hamilton updates; Hamilton debt exclusion; providing materials for printing; etc.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVES THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE TOWN OF WENHAM THAT THEY APPROVE A ONE (1) STRUCTURE OVERRIDE FOR THEIR WARRANTS.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Gene Lee.

Discussion: Math complexities involved in the Town of Wenham’s override.

Unanimously approved by 6 members present.

B. FY21 Budget Communication Strategy

Discussion regarding FY21 Budget Communication Strategy, including a one-page flyer to explain the budget in simple terms. Detailed discussion regarding what information to include; how to best present information; what story to tell; reflecting district's unmet needs; budget amount; borrowed amount; and further details regarding where the money "comes from". It is vital that the flyer communicates the School Committee's ask: a vote to allow the district to borrow an amount of money necessary to address the district's urgent needs, and pay this amount back over time.

03/03/20 Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee meeting agenda will include developing a list of talking points to ensure all School Committee members are consistent in their communication.

Further discussion regarding the challenges of consolidating the FY21 Budget complexities to a one page summary; tailoring communication to different audiences/different interests; budget "correction" year; investing in the future; "cost containment" budget; etc.

Discussion regarding upcoming events and communicating key points of the FY21 Budget:

03/02/20 8:30 AM: Friends of the Miles River Middle School (Julie Kukenberger to attend/speak)

03/02/20 7:00 PM: Friends of Cutler

03/02/20: Rotary (Julie Kukenberger to attend/speak)

03/10/20: Hamilton - Wenham Sports Night (Michelle Horgan and possibly Michelle Bailey to attend/speak)

03/10/20: EdFund (Michelle Horgan to attend/speak)

03/11/20 10:30 AM: Hamilton Council on Aging (Julie Kukenberger to attend/speak)

03/18/20 10:00 AM: Wenham Council on Aging

03/25/20 7:30 AM Hamilton - Wenham Mothers Club (Michelle Horgan and Michelle Bailey to attend/speak)

Friends of Buker/ Friends of Winthrop meetings TBD.

Discussion regarding developing a unified message, ensuring Ms. Metternick's participation in events; gathering feedback about the 1 page flyer presented at these events; etc.

The School Committee decides to host a "FY 21 Q&A with the School Committee" on 04/01/20 at 7:00PM. Further discussion regarding the dissemination of the 1-page flyer through School newsletter and other potential outlets.

D. Vote to Approve the Annual Report

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT, AS PRESENTED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#).

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.

Discussion: School Committee members appreciate Dr. Kukenberger's work in developing the 2020 Annual Report.

Unanimously approved by 6 members present.

The 2020 Annual Report will also be sent to the Town of Hamilton.

Citizen Comment

Mike Novak, 17 Meridian Road, Wenham: Mr. Novak attends tonight's meeting with the intention of commenting on the math sequencing changes. He informs the School Committee that there was an 8th Grade Parent Meeting scheduled at the same time as this School Committee meeting, and he had hoped to be able to arrive in time to offer his opinion.

Discussion regarding the change to the agenda to hearing the sequencing changes as the first order of business. School Committee encourages Mr. Novak to review the HWcam recording of the meeting, where Dr. Sauriol explains the benefits of implementing the sequencing change, and which ultimately led to the committee voting favorably. Discussion continues regarding current sequencing; changes voted in this evening; MCAS testing; accelerated programs; "learning gap," etc.

Mr. Novak states that he is concerned about whether students are being prepared for college and overall success, or merely taught skills to produce high MCAS scores. Dr. Kukenberger encourages Mr. Novak and other parents to continue advocating for their children. She notes that the district and parents can collaboratively identify a number of creative approaches to best meet the needs of students.

Further discussion regarding students' choices in the mathematics program and offering a foundation of basic mathematical skills to allow students to branch out later.

5. Other

A. Topics for Future Meetings

- Policy H;
- Minutes;
- Review Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee communication strategy (this will not be available the Friday before the meeting, due to the scheduled meetings);
- Dorothy Presser, MASC representative: 30-minutes to update on the superintendent search process - results of search committee decisions, communication of the results, and other decisions in moving forward.
 - Ms. Bailey states that the screening committee received 22 superintendent applications for review.

03/09/20, 6:30pm - 8:00pm: Mr. Polito will escort candidates between the Administration Building and the COA building.

6. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN AT 8:43 PM.

**MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

Respectfully submitted May 15, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.