

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Office of the Superintendent
Wenham, Massachusetts 01984

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 20, 2014
To: School Committee Members
From: Michael Harvey, Superintendent of Schools
Re: Thursday, November 20, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: Sheila MacDonald called the **PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL CHOICE** meeting to order at 6:35 pm in the Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

Present: Larry Swartz, Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald, Deb Evans, Stacey Metternick, and Jeanise Bertrand; William Dery arrived at 7:41 pm.

Absent: William Wilson, Roger Kuebel

Others Present: Michael Harvey, Celeste Bowler, Jeffrey Sands and student representative Dana Valletti

- Michelle Bailey (Remington Rd., Wenham) spoke asking if the decrease in school choice students would have a prolonged difference in future revenue; has the district evaluated why they were not able to attract the number of choice students projected?; is it possibly due to the tone of discussions held?
- The public hearing remained open for other comments.
- Sheila MacDonald closed the public hearing on school choice at 7:01

CALL TO ORDER: Sheila MacDonald called the **REGULARLY SCHEDULED SCHOOL COMMITTEE** meeting to order at 7:01 pm in the Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

- Michelle Bailey (Remington Rd., Wenham) encouraged the committee to read the *Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle* and potentially respond to inaccuracies in letter on editorial page.

CHAIRS'S REPORT: (Bill Wilson absent; reported by Sheila MacDonald)

- Tuesday night (11/18/2014) meeting of two towns and the school for preliminary talks on budget; it was effective and good. Mike Harvey and Jeff Sands were in attendance.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: presented in order of strategic plan

- A. Instructional Core
 - Girls' XC state champ D2 Saturday; five girls finish in top 50; scored 94 team points; arrange with coach Sawyer to have team come to future meeting for in-person congratulations
 - Congratulations to cast and crew of "Working"; the show was deep and had wonderful individual and ensemble performances

- Third consecutive year that HW has been named to the College Board AP Honor Roll (out of 547 districts) for increasing participation in AP while maintaining or increasing scores of 3 or higher.
- B. Human Resources & HR Development
- Eric Tracy and Brian Menegoni presented to over 700 educators at the EdTech Teacher iPad summit in Boston. They will present at the 12/4/14 meeting with an update on iPad implementation and their presentation.
 - Danielle Petrucci (MRMS) was awarded a \$1000.00 scholarship from the MA Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (MAHPERD) at 85th annual convention.
- C. Operational Support
- 9C cuts announced by Governor Patrick due to projected revenue shortfall for FY2015
 - Regional transportation appropriation- our district had been at \$51M for FY14; had been increased for FY15 to \$70.2M; now knocked back to FY14 level. We had budgeted at the FY14 level and thought the FY15 appropriation would be excess, but that's gone.
 - On 11/18/2014 the Department of Revenue notified us the E&D balance was certified at \$1,277,879 as Powers & Sullivan submitted.
 - Jeff Sands, Bill Wilson, and Mike Harvey met with the joint HW Finance committees Tuesday 11/18/14 as a kickoff to FY16 budget process; it was a foundational talk of where we see the district and where we want to move things. The meeting is available on HW Cam.
 - Jason Waldron has been hired as new Director of Facilities. He is a Hamilton resident and will assume this new role 12/15/14. His first task is to hire a maintenance team; we have advertised for three technicians.
 - Mid-year retirements: Connie Hoar (HWRHS) will retire 12/1/14 and Cathy Butler (Winthrop) will retire 12/23/14. They will be recognized in June with the rest of the retirees this year.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2014
- Larry Swartz moved that the words "for first reading" be deleted from the Chairs report (first bullet related to school committee protocols). The motion to amend the minutes as requested was passed 6-0.
 - Deb Evans moved that the HW Regional School Committee accept the minutes as amended for 10/30/14; approved 6-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. AUDIT
- B. COMMUNICATIONS- Stacey Metternick
- The second monthly newsletter, "SC Spotlight" is available on the district website.
 - The foundation budget review met Monday; 150 were in attendance. She has spoken with Brad Hill who would like to get some testimony from us within four weeks.
- C. FACILITIES—Larry Swartz
- Larry and Barbara met and put together a draft list of objectives; next meeting 12/2/14. Jim Farnum will not be able to serve. We will discuss potential other candidates for appointment; someone in the construction trade would have the beneficial skills to serve.
- D. NEGOTIATIONS—Deb Evans
- The negotiations team met Tuesday morning with the objective of touching on three things: 1). the teachers' contract; 2). the clerical contract; 3). the custodial contract. We have open items with all three of those. Next meeting 12/2/14.
 - The committee on scheduling will be done on 12/1/14
- E. POLICY- Barbara Lawrence
- We will be presenting some policies for first reading; our next meeting is 12/2/14.
- F. WARRANT- Sheila MacDonald
- Everything is great with the warrant.

NEW BUSINESS * Change in order of agenda; starting new business with school choice (item C)

A. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROTOCOLS ADOPTION

Deb Evans moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the protocols adoption as presented tonight and referred to as exhibit B. Larry Swartz seconded. (Discussion opened).

- Larry Swartz requested the following edits be made to items 2, 4, and 5 for clarification:
 - #2: The Superintendent and the School Committee represent the needs and interests of all students in the district and place **[the students']** interests above all others in their decisions while remaining within the limitations of a voter approved budget.
 - #4 final sentence: Recognizing...School Committee members will contact the School Committee Chair **[and/or]** Superintendent in advance of a meeting**[, whenever prudent,]** if they have questions or concerns about an agenda item or will ask **[the chair at least 72 hours prior to a meeting]** that an item be placed on an agenda.
 - #5 final sentence: Members will analyze carefully and debate fully**[, whenever necessary,]** prior to making decisions.
- William Dery stated he had many changes that were long and substantive. Sheila asked if he submitted them in writing. Bill responded he asked to have a meeting but was refused. After discussing the protocols were out of "Lenin's playbook" as it attempts to limit what a school committee member can or cannot say or do under the guise of protocol, he had seven changes. Final changes after committee discussion are presented below.
 - #1 Members of the Committee will make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that **[relate to the School District]**.
 - #3. School Committee members will establish a vision, create policy, **[approve a budget]**, and assure accountability to sustain continuous improvement in teaching, learning and **[facilities]**.
- Deb Evans moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee amend the protocols adoption as outlined in Exhibit B as discussed by Larry Swartz; Barbara Lawrence seconded. Approved 7-0-0
- Deb Evans moved that the Hamilton Wenham School Regional Committee amend the protocols adoption as outlined in Exhibit B as made by William Dery in items #1 and #3; Larry Swartz seconded. (See above changes in bold). Approved 7-0-0.

Deb Evans moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the amended protocols adoption as presented tonight and referred to as exhibit B. Larry Swartz seconded. Approved 6-1-0.

B. PRESENTATION OF K-12 MATHEMATICS & LITERACY PROGRAMS

- See exhibit C slide presentation
- Christine Fichera presented the Elementary Math Curriculum overview.
 - The new 2011 MA Frameworks for Mathematics have new standards for shifts in "Focus, Coherence, Clarity and Rigor." Standards are grouped in five strands and grouped in domains; goals are for students to make sense of a problem and persevere in problem solving.
 - Units of study are created using Understanding by Design; In 2014-15 we have full implementation of new units; pre- and post-assessments (DDMs); use of math journals K-5; focus on higher-order thinking; using data to inform instruction. The task force is large and deserves thanks. The work has been invigorating for teachers. The curriculum is constantly changing; we are keeping up with best practices and resources; reflect on them; continually improve.
 - Larry Swartz queried how long the units are, are they implemented consistently and how they are measured; Christina responded that most grades (2-5) have eight units per grade and they last different lengths; K has mini-units with more informal assessments and observations. There is pacing flexibility. Some teachers embrace change; there is new value in solving things in multiple ways.
 - Our goal is to improve student achievement and understanding. At the instructional core there is a student, teacher, and content component. It is a multi-faceted look.

- Deb Evans asked how pre-testing (DDM before we teach them) impacts a student's confidence; Christina stated it is a best practice for differentiating instruction and is research-based. We are setting a culture that it's ok to not recognize or understand things you haven't seen before.
- Bill Dery stated new math was just set theory. He asked if the new system taking away old "rules" of math. Christina said we still use standard algorithms. We value drawing a picture of the problem and understanding place value. Students can memorize but don't know what the steps mean. It's part of a balance.
- Tony Walsh presented the 6-12 Mathematics Curriculum
 - There are two pathways, College Preparatory and Accelerated/Honors. New this year is a 7th grade accelerated math and 12th grade Advanced Algebra with Trigonometry if Pre-calculus is too challenging. Students have opportunity for movement between paths. College Prep 7th graders have option to test into 8th grade accelerated program; 10th graders can "double-up" in order to take Calculus in 12th grade.
 - There are numerous mixed ability electives including AP Statistics, AP Computer Science, and the Mathematics of Finance. There is also a strong MA Mathematics League teams at both MRMS and HWRHS.
 - DDMs look for a problem (like slope) through the curriculum year over year. We also look at responses to the same problem year over year to show growth. The math department is designing curriculum maps through UbD. One change is statistics at every level. Each teacher has worked through the PARCC exam at his/her grade level. Teachers are getting used to teaching more critical thinking and less rote.
 - The math department has led technology as key participants in the 1:1 iPad program; Khan Academy; "flipped" classroom, 3D printers, etc. We are using the CK12 cloud-based textbook that can be modified by teacher. He later explained in response to Larry Swartz's question that teachers are working in teams on the textbooks, they are not left to their own devices.
 - Bill Dery expressed concern about pushing topics further down to earlier grades; are students just be taught a "survey" course? Tony responded it is too much curriculum for a percentage of children in our district. The teacher looks at what students must know and leaves off some of the rest.
 - Barbara Lawrence inquired is the hope that students will be prepared for this upper level thinking as they move from the elementary, through middle and high school? Tony replied it is the hope. Tony expects there will be some pulling back from the excessive rigor. Only 71 (24%) of MA high schools are taking the PARCC.
 - Larry Swartz asked how to determine successful elements-- is it the kid's ability and development, the curriculum, or the teaching methods or the teacher? Tony responded that the DDM's help answer that. Teachers look at data, 90% of the midterm is the same and teachers participate in cooperative grading where they will grade other teacher's exams. We'll look at the results and see what worked, what didn't work.
- Dawn Kraunelis presented the Elementary English Language Arts Curriculum
 - The entry plan focused on needs assessment, creating maps where there haven't been any; and looking at the research behind the standards. On the DESE website Appendix A gives all of the research behind the Frameworks.
 - The priorities are consistent training on writing instruction, choosing a core writing resource, and creating curriculum maps with common assessments. Grade 4 MCAS long compositions shows relative weakness. We need to have other stops along the way for assessing writing.
 - The shift in the Frameworks is in valuing evidence; students must wade through and critique evidence. We are incorporating more informational text in content knowledge. We are teaching how to approach and read nonfiction text.

- Curriculum maps are being updated (UbD), core resources are being reviewed and a decision will be made in the spring. There is a 12 person curriculum team across all schools pre-K – 5. Next steps include continued professional development in writing.
- Bob Hickey presented the 6-12 English Language Arts Curriculum
 - We ask two key questions: What are the most important skills and what are the best lessons and assessments to assure students will display those skills independently?
 - Skill #1: Reading a variety of texts closely and with increasing independence
 - Students read both fiction and informational text; they look at patterns, arguments, and critique the text, not just summarize it. DDMs focus on close reading.
 - Skill #2: Writing convincingly for various purposes and audiences
 - Reinforce throughout 6-12 writing arguments, informative essays, and narratives.
 - Skill #3: Speaking and listening effectively
 - All careers require the ability to communicate ideas.
 - Skill #4: The central role language plays in our lives
 - How do we help students feel more confident with grammar and conventions and acquire new vocabulary?
 - The curriculum mapping continues to be theme and essential questions based rather than a specific text. This allows us to ask why are we teaching this book? We engage students in big ideas and many different texts; teachers are creative in this rigorous work and provide student choice to test out their skills. Teachers attend ongoing professional development.
 - We are starting to make interdisciplinary connections- how can we foster a love of reading and writing; the open response writing template and rubric is used across disciplines; possibly move 11th grade American Literature to line up with American History.
- Barbara Lawrence inquired for a future time to hear student representative Dana Valletti's perspective on the curriculum presentations tonight.

C. VOTE OF SCHOOL CHOICE FOR 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR FOR GRADES 9-12

- Deb Evans moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve school choice for grades 9-12 in the 2015-2016 school year.
- Sheila MacDonald reviewed last year's decision to limit the number of school choice students to fill up existing classes and not add a new section. We are planning to do the exact same thing this year.
- Deb Evans clarified what was being voted- to accept school choice using the same agreement as last year (to not add new sections). Deb shared the answers to citizen M.Bailey's questions to remind the committee what information they were voting on.
 - Last year's school choice program had a target of 15-20 9th grade openings to fill up existing class sections; all of the school choice numbers are available in the handouts (Exhibit D slides) from the 10/30/14 school committee meeting. There is a total of 98 choice students at the high school, nine are in the freshman class.
 - With the choice process, students are offered a spot through a lottery, but they don't have to take it; there is no deposit required.
 - We budgeted for 100 choice students and we have 98.
 - Barbara Lawrence stated there are 401 districts in MA and fewer than half (172) accept choice students. It is a good accommodation to accept choice but not increase staff or sections. We are making a responsible choice. Population is decreasing on the north shore. That is part of the reason it is harder to get students.
 - Sheila MacDonald confirmed we continue to call applicants as spaces open up; we can accept students as sophomores.
 - Larry Swartz stated the issue bears continued vigilance to see what the impacts are.
- Vote on the motion: approved 6-0-0

- Applications for school choice will be posted on the high school website; the lottery will be held in early February 2015.
- D. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF NORTSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT (Exhibit E)
- Mike Harvey stated every school committee on the list (page 2) has to approve the new articles of agreement due to changes in state laws regarding collaboratives. The agreement has been wholesale re-written.
 - It is the same cost, \$10,000 for membership; Larry pointed out that the Consortium can retain up to 33% of excess every year, as part of the law.
 - Deb Evans moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the Northshore Educational Consortium Articles of Agreement as presented and referred to as Exhibit E. Approved 7-0-0.
- E. POLICIES (1ST READINGS)
1. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING
 2. STUDENT PUBLICATIONS
 3. STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
 4. RETIREMENT OF CAPITAL ASSETS
 5. STUDENT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES
- Barbara Lawrence invited the committee to read the policies carefully and send comments to Mike Harvey. We will have a second reading and a vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Bill Dery moved that the Hamilton-Wenham regional School Committee vote to adjourn. Numerous seconds. Approved 6-1-0.