

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

June 5, 2014

Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER AND
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Bill Wilson opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and others present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT:

Jeanise Bertrand, Bill Dery, Deb Evans, Barbara Lawrence, Stacey Metternick, Larry Swartz, Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning; Jeff Sands, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration

ABSENT:

Roger Kuebel, Sheila MacDonald

PRESENTATION OF RETIREES:

Principals spoke appreciatively of district staff who are to retire at the close of this school year: Winthrop secretary Adelaide Liporto, MRMS teaching assistant Althea Cranton, HWRHS teacher Wendy Campbell, and Cutler Elementary teacher Dede Johnson. Three of the departing staff members reflected on their years in the district; the fourth was unable to attend.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

Michelle Bailey (Remington Rd., Wenham) asked questions to which B. Wilson said the Committee would respond at a later date. She asked why the 2014-15 school calendar does not list dates for elementary school parent-teacher conferences; whether team teaching would be implemented at the middle school; whether middle school parent-teacher conferences are under consideration; and how many choice students the district is in the process of accepting for 2014-15, and if the number accepted is lower than projected, how the revenue shortfall would be made up.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

B. Wilson said he would circulate a schedule to Committee members within a week and a half proposing goals, priorities, and dates for summer meetings, which might include a Committee retreat in July.

He noted that some members of the Committee attended a state-sponsored conference the day before this meeting about the PARCC test; he encouraged members to actively seek out further information to educate themselves before the Committee votes in late June about whether to participate in that test in the coming year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Moratorium on NEASC Activities,

Dr. Harvey briefed the Committee on advocacy by a group of

visit in 2016

Massachusetts district superintendents for changes in the NEASC accreditation process, which this ad hoc group considers too time-consuming and expensive; Dr. Harvey said he has attended meetings of this group and agrees with its position. He asked members to read a letter and statement that the Committee received prior to this meeting (which are appended to these minutes). HWRSD is scheduled for a NEASC accreditation visit in 2016; Dr. Harvey said it would require the administrative team to set aside other projects for much of a year to prepare for the accreditation process. Discussion touched on topics including the optional nature of NEASC accreditation; whether opting out of the process would have an impact on students' college applications; and the high profile of the districts whose superintendents have signed the statement critical of the existing NEASC process.

Graduation

He congratulated the 181 graduates of the class of 2014 who graduated from HWRHS on the weekend prior to this meeting.

Master Planning Presentation

Dr. Harvey noted that Committee members have received copies of the final report of the master plan steering committee; after it is proofread and corrected it is to be posted on the district website. The next step is for the steering committee to plan how to act on the recommendations. He said the Committee would later vote on whether to accept the report.

CONSENT AGENDA:
Minutes of May 15, 2014

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. BARBARA LAWRENCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

OLD BUSINESS:
Policies 2nd Reading

B. Lawrence said the only policy changed from the version presented for a first reading at a previous meeting was the Recycled Product Procurement Policy; she distributed copies of the updated, shortened version of that draft policy.

Bonded Employees & Officers

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE BONDED EMPLOYEES & OFFICERS POLICY AS PRESENTED. LARRY SWARTZ SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

Energy Conservation

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICY AS PRESENTED. STACEY METTERNICK SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

Food Service Management

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT POLICY AS PRESENTED. LARRY SWARTZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

B. Lawrence said the Committee could change this policy in the future if it wished to outsource this function.

THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

Food Service Program

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM POLICY AS PRESENTED. STACEY METTERNICK SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-1-2. (B. Dery abstained.)

Free & Reduced Cost Lunch

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FREE & REDUCED COST LUNCH POLICY AS PRESENTED. STACEY METTERNICK SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-1-2. (B. Dery abstained.)

Passing Buses on School Property

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE PASSING BUSES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY POLICY AS PRESENTED. STACEY METTERNICK SECONDED THE MOTION.

B. Dery said there is no practical purpose to enactment of district policies that restate existing laws. Discussion touched on topics including why this policy was proposed, unsafe practices the administration recently took steps to correct, and J. Sands' opinion that such a policy would do no harm.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-1-0-2. (B. Dery voted no.)

Recycled Product Procurement

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE RECYCLED PRODUCT PROCUREMENT POLICY AS PRESENTED. LARRY SWARTZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

B. Dery asked for clarification of the draft policy's reference to "reasonable prices and terms." B. Lawrence said this would be relative; J. Sands responded to B. Dery's questions about what price differential for recycled products he would consider unreasonable. J. Sands said he had not seen this version of the draft policy before and that he did not know how he would be able to police it and ensure the Committee that the district was in compliance. Committee members suggested viewing the policy as stating a goal, on which guidelines could be based. The

Committee deferred action to allow time for J. Sands to review the draft language and suggest revisions if appropriate.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation PARCC/MCAS Choice

Dr. Harvey gave a PowerPoint presentation about the PARCC test, which two classes at Winthrop Elementary took during this school year in place of the MCAS, and the Committee's upcoming choice of whether to have all students take the PARCC or MCAS in 2014-15. (The PowerPoint slides are appended to these minutes.) He said state education officials plan to retire the MCAS and will either replace it with PARCC, or adopt another standardized test to replace the MCAS, following a 2014-15 "test drive" of the PARCC. His presentation touched on topics including administration of the test on paper versus by computer; PARCC test components and testing dates for 2014-15; and the timeline for this Committee's decision about which test to use in HWRSD in 2014-15. He discussed students' and staff members' opinions about the PARCC versus the MCAS; HWRSD administrators' reaction to test questions they answered on a sample basis; whether HWRSD is ready to implement a new test given other initiatives already underway; and complaints about the test agency's help line and other issues. He displayed sample test questions onscreen, detailed the prompts, and commented on the questions' process and goals and how they compare to MCAS questions.

Discussion touched on topics including whether the test challenges high-achieving students; how the PARCC would be scored and how test results would be reported; how individual students' PARCC scores would be aggregated into cohorts and tracked grade-to-grade to measure growth, and how that differs from procedures for MCAS; PARCC's emphasis on non-fiction reading; districts' ability to customize data analysis; whether to ask state officials to arrange for specialists to make a regional presentation on how content testing differs between the two tests' approaches; students' facility with computers and ability to navigate online testing processes; the comparative costs of the tests; testing of students receiving special education services; and how to gather public opinion within the district.

B. Wilson invited public comment. M. Bailey asked what it would cost to train the teachers to administer the test, and the opportunity cost; she also expressed concerns about test-taking by special education students and issues around accommodations and IEPs. She said if curriculum directors say they prefer to continue with the MCAS for the coming year, the Committee should give great weight to their recommendations.

Policies 1st Reading
Recyclable Materials

B. Lawrence said this policy would encourage recycling, and encourage teachers to integrate lessons on recycling into the core curriculum when appropriate. D. Evans suggested that because state policies may change

over time, the policy draft be revised to state that the district will comply with current policy, rather than specifying details of policies as they now stand.

*Transportation for Student Eligible
for Special Education Services*

This policy would state existing practice, and indicate that a team will assess and decide about individual students' transportation needs.

Subcommittee changes—SEPAC,
Facilities, Communications

B. Wilson said J. Bertrand requested reassignment from the facilities subcommittee; he recommended appointing L. Swartz to fill the facilities vacancy. B. Dery asked to be removed from that subcommittee. Brief discussion touched on the need, as the Committee reduces from 9 to 7 members, to appoint community members to serve on subcommittees alongside School Committee members. B. Wilson said membership on subcommittees could be readjusted during the upcoming year as needs for specific expertise arises.

DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SUBCOMMITTEE CHANGES FOR THE 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR; THE SEPAC LIAISON TO BE BILL WILSON; THE FACILITIES COMMITTEE TO BE CHANGED TO ADD LARRY SWARTZ, REMOVE BILL DERY, REMOVE JEANISE BERTRAND, AND ADD JIM FARNHAM; THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE TO BE CHANGED TO ADD JEANISE BERTRAND; AND THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE BE CHANGED TO ADD BILL DERY. JEANISE BERTRAND SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

VOTE TO ADJOURN:

B. DERY MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. LARRY SWARTZ SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-2.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

**DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS
USED AT THIS MEETING:**

Letter from Brookline Superintendent of Schools William Lupini to NEASC dated March 17, 2014 (1 page)
"NEASC's Niche" statement by Ad Hoc NEASC Reform Committee (undated) (3 pages)
Draft policies: Bonded Employees and Officers; Energy Conservation; Food Service Management; Food Service Program; Free and Reduced Cost Lunch; Passing a School Bus on School Property While It Is Loading Students; Recycled Product Procurement (7 pages)
PARCC/MCAS PowerPoint presentation dated 6/5/2014 (19 slides)

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith