



HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting, [Zoomlink](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 88288030801

Thursday, October 5, 2023

7:00 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara

Julia Campbell

Jennifer Carr

Francesca Connors

Amy Kunberger

David Polito (arrived at 7:10)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Leone

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Dana Allara called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All those in attendance rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Dana Allara stated that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed via HWCam.

3. Citizens' Comments [Exhibit](#)

Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.

Dana Allara reviewed the Committee's procedures for citizens' comments.

Nicholas Ristaino, president of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association, spoke in support of Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) and urged the Committee to settle the contract.

Brigid O'Donnell, 105 Main Street, Wenham, a 22 year employee of the district spoke in support of the work of ESPs and asked the Committee to support a contract that provides a living wage for the district's ESPs.

Kelly Keegan, 35 Tally Ho Drive, Hamilton, a current employee of the district spoke in support of the work of the ESPs. She discussed the hourly wage paid to ESPs.

Jackie Maher, 142 Railroad Ave, Hamilton, a current employee of the district and a parent of students in the district, discussed the support ESPs provide to students.

Heidi Dearborn, 72 Cedar Street, Wenham, a current special education teacher in the district, discussed the importance of the student supports provided by district ESPs.

Kathy O'Shea, a current teacher in the district, discussed the work of the ESPs and the need for the district to invest in ESPs to retain these employees.

Christina Decourcy, a resident of Hamilton and a current district employee spoke in support of the work of the literacy ESPs. She stated that to retain employees the district needs to increase pay.

Dana Allara stated that due to time constraints for other presenters this evening she would allow one final citizen comment but would then be closing comments.

Joanie Albers, a current ESP and a parent of students in the district stated that if the Committee is committed to staff retention the simplest answer is to pay the ESPs and appreciate them in a way that makes them want to stay.

At 7:26 Dana Allara temporarily adjourned the meeting.

At 7:29 Dana Allara reconvened the meeting.

Dana Allara stated that due to the high school and middle school staff having a commtment this evening she would, without objection from the Committee, take Item 7A School Improvement Plans out of order. There was no objection.

7. New Business

a. School Improvement Plan Presentation [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy stated that the order of this evening's presentation would be changed to middle school, high school and then elementary schools.

Middle School

Principal Zachary Best reviewed the three School Improvement goals:

Goal #1: By the end of the 2023-24 school year, the Miles River Middle School will expand MTSS practices to better meet the needs of all students.

Goal #2: Beginning in August, implement building-wide research-based practices to support executive functioning for all students.

Goal #3: Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Miles River Middle School will implement a number of practices designed to strengthen the family/school relationship in order to increase families' sense of connection to their school.

It was suggested that the 6th grade orientation evening be moved to earlier in the year, before private school decisions must be made by families.

In response to questions, Principal Best provided information on what he viewed as the biggest challenge and also provided additional details on the implementation of executive functioning training.

High School

Principal Brian Menegoni reviewed the six School Improvement goals:

Goal #1: By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, HWRHS will enhance data review processes and tiered supports for students in ninth and tenth grade.

Goal #2: Increase the proportion of students matriculating from MRMS to HWRHS.

Goal #3: Identify the existence and extent of performance gaps among various subgroups in the high school.

Goal #4: The high school will integrate the Portrait of a Graduate into day-to-day operations, including curriculum resources, assessments, and classrooms.

Goal #5: Increase the display of student work throughout the building and in the community.

Goal #6: The high school will expand opportunities for students to learn outside of the walls of the building.

In response to questions/comments, Principal Menegoni provided additional information regarding:

- partial funding of field trips to ensure all students have an opportunity to participate
- senior internship program
- benefits of outside data sources for the STAR math program
- homework at the high school level
- Involving students in establishing the school's social media presence

Elementary Schools

Elementary Principals Schersten, Schneider and Shediak reviewed the shared and individual elementary school goals.

Goal #1: By the end of 2026 school year, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District will strengthen the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model across all elementary schools targeting learning outcomes in literacy, math, and social-emotional learning.

Goal #2: Commit to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) practices By June 2024, HWRSD will implement activities that support ongoing teaching and learning experiences that build understanding, support implementation of practices, and allow for reflection and assessment of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging practices.

Buker Goal #3: By the end of the 2023-24 school year, all Buker Elementary School students will meet mathematical fluency at all grade levels.

Cutler Goal #3: By the end of the 2023-24 school year, Cutler School will incorporate the theme “We Belong” which will contribute to strengthening a sense of community and belonging by developing systems of support.

Winthrop Goal #3: By the end of the 2023-24 school year, Winthrop Elementary School will strengthen a sense of community and belonging through a variety of scheduled activities and opportunities.

In response to questions/comments, principals provided additional information regarding:

- executive function training
- communication and resource sharing between the 3 elementary schools
- whether additional opportunities similar to the band program are possible

Dana Allara stated that the Committee would move back to agenda item 6 Consent Agenda.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

Voucher No. 7

Voucher No. 1064

Voucher No. 1065

Voucher No. 1066

Voucher No. 3314

Voucher No. 3315

Voucher No. 3316

Voucher No. 3317

b. Minutes [Exhibit](#)

September 21, 2023

c. Donations [Exhibit](#)

Salem Witch Trials Guest Speaker - EdFund Mini-Grant; \$150

- d. Field Trip Request [Exhibit](#)
Grade 8 - Washington DC
- e. Other
Request to Sell Advertising in the HS Musical Program [Exhibit](#)
8th Grade Waiver Requests [Exhibit](#)
2023-2024 Winter Cooperative Teams [Exhibit](#)
Request to Set Up User Fee for High School Fall Musical, Merrily We Roll Along [Exhibit](#)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the consent agenda as written.

Motion by: Francesca Connors Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Connors, Kunberger and Polito)

7. New Business

- b. Approve FY23 Prior Year Invoices [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy reviewed the final group of FY23 prior year invoices for payment.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the FY23 prior year invoices as presented.

Motion by: Francesca Connors Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Connors, Kunberger and Polito)

- c. Superintendent's Goals 23-24 [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy reviewed the proposed superintendent goals for 23-24.

In response to questions/comments Superintendent Tracy provided the following information:

- the superintendent's role in goal 3 is to "support" and the deliverable for that goal will be evidence of that support such as leadership agendas
- information on the MSBA process and the MSBA approved options for the building project
- the district communication draft plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of December

A question was raised regarding whether there could be an option to renovate the Winthrop School. A request will be made under Future Topics to continue this discussion.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Superintendent's goals for 23-24 as presented.

Motion by: Francesca Connors Seconded by: Julia Campbell

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Connors, Kunberger and Polito)

d. Visioning Schedule for Cutler Elementary [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy stated that he was providing the visioning schedule as an information item for the Committee. Dana Allara asked members to notify her if they plan to attend a session in case a quorum of the Committee is present at a meeting. In response to a question regarding the timing of the distribution of the schedule to the Committee, Superintendent Tracy stated that this timeline was not finalized in time to present at the previous school committee meeting.

8. Finance and Operations

a. Budget Calendar [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the budget calendar and noted that there were no changes from the proposed calendar presented at the last meeting.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the FY25 budget calendar as presented in the exhibit.

Motion by: Francesca Connors

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Connors, Kunberger and Polito)

Dana Allara reminded the Committee that the final budget must be approved by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Committee on either February 8 or on the backup date of February 15.

9. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - the budget calendar was reviewed at the last meeting and the next meeting is scheduled for October 18
- b. Policy Subcommittee - no update
- c. Negotiations Subcommittee - an executive session will be held this evening to provide an update
- d. Secretary Report - the Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee has completed 20 sets of minutes and continues to work on the remaining sets of minutes. The Policy Subcommittee has completed 2 sets of minutes. The Negotiations Subcommittee has approved 6 sets of minutes.

10. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy stated that October 2 was National Custodian day. He discussed some of the school tours done as part of the visioning process. Superintendent Tracy noted that this was the week for finalizing evaluation goals.

11. Chair's Report

Dana Allara stated that she would be sending out information to all members regarding the upcoming Hamilton Master Planning community meeting. She discussed the recent Chairs' meeting regarding the upcoming budget season.

12. Topics for Future Meetings

Jen Carr requested a discussion regarding switching elementary, middle and high school start times. Francesca Connors requested a discussion regarding the MSBA project.

13. Adjourn

I move vote to Adjourn to Executive Session for purpose #3 To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with TA Union if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, not return to Open Session.

Motion by: Dana Allara

Seconded by: Julia Campbell

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Connors, Kunberger and Polito)