



HAMILTON-WENHAM

Regional School District

5 School Street, Wenham MA 01984

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting

[Zoomlink](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 94749417401

Tuesday, September 18, 2025

7:00 p.m. - 8:58 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara

Meghan Benson

Julia Campbell (remote participation)

Jen Carr

David Frenkel

Amy Kunberger

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order

At 7:00 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order and stated that one member was participating remotely and all votes this evening would be roll call votes. She reminded the community that the meeting is being recorded and live-streamed via HWCAM.

Dana Allara stated that David Polito has resigned his seat on the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee and she thanked David for his service.

All rose for the pledge of allegiance.

2. Citizen's Comments [Exhibit](#)

Jeff Austin, discussed the recent election. He stated that the community has lost confidence in members Dana Allara, Julia Campbell, Jen Carr, Amy Kunberger and David Polito and called for them to resign for failing to respect the will of the people.

Ed McCarthy, 60 Cunningham Drive, stated that he respects the talents of the group as educators but it is time to bring in people to the Committee with building facilities knowledge to begin to incrementally repair the schools and make them what they should be. He thanked the members for their work.

Marta Minnetyan, 110 Railroad Avenue thanked the Committee for their time and efforts to try to improve the schools in a way that would benefit the most number of students and teachers. She stated that we need to hold ourselves accountable for students and be optimistic and let the School Committee and Superintendent shape a positive force forward.

Natalie Hildreth thanked the Committee for their time and the genuine thought that went into the school vote. She acknowledged David Polito for his tireless support of the district, the students and their families.

Deb Stafford, Maple Street, stated that the community has said no to a large school and she hopes this Committee will be able to pivot and not sabotage a new plan to renovate our small schools. She encouraged the Committee to replace David Polito with someone with a different viewpoint.

Melissa Politis, Beech Street, commended the committee for taking on this project and wished them perseverance and patience as they navigate next steps.

Public comment from zoom closed at 7:19 p.m.

Ed Flynn, encouraged the Committee to follow Jeff Austin's recommendation to resign. He then stated that the district needs to do something immediately to strengthen school security. He encouraged the Committee to replace David Polito with Jeff Austin who brings to the Committee a different viewpoint.

Victoria Piper, Highland Street, thanked the Committee for their hard work and stated that the members are elected volunteers and since they won their election obviously a majority voted for them.

Public comment was closed at 7:25 p.m.

Dana Allara expressed her appreciation for the public comments and the respectful manner of the commenters.

Dana Allara stated that she would like to skip the protocol and mission statement as it is the first item on new business. In response to a question, she stated that she will be discussing how a vacant school committee seat is filled during her chair report. Jen Carr agreed to serve as secretary for this meeting.

3. Review of School Committee Protocol [Exhibit](#)

4. Review of School Committee Mission Statement [Exhibit](#)

5. Student Representative Report; *Anderson Kraft*

Dana Allara stated that the student representative was unable to attend this evening and will be scheduled to attend a future meeting.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 5
- Voucher No. 1066
- Voucher No. 1067
- Voucher No. 1068
- Voucher No. 4160
- Voucher No. 4161

b. Minutes

- September 4, 2025 [Exhibit](#)

c. Donations Warrants

- Edfund Mini-Grant - MRMS Elective 3D Printers for STEAM; \$4,245.50 [Exhibit](#)
- Edfund Mini-Grant - Digital Photography Equipment Update for 2025; \$9,551.20 [Exhibit](#)

d. Other

- Middle School Grade Waivers for Athletics [Exhibit](#)

e. Field Trips Minutes

- Class of 2029 Field Trip - Maine [Exhibit](#)

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

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

7. New Business

a. Discussion of Ethics Policy and Protocols [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)

The Committee discussed the ethics policy and protocols. In response to a question raised, it was agreed that the policy subcommittee will review whether to add the primary functions of the School Committee into the policy document. David Frenkel stated that he did not sign the protocols last year due to his concern that it seemed to call for prohibiting ongoing dissent. After discussion regarding when members are speaking in their role as Committee members versus when they are speaking as individual community members, it was agreed that David Frenkel would draft language to address his concern and bring that back to the next meeting. Dana Allara encouraged other members to bring back any additional comments or concerns to the next meeting as well.

b. Election Results [Exhibit](#)

The Committee discussed the recent election results. The vote on the elementary school building project did not reach the majority threshold necessary to pass. Superintendent Tracy stated he would submit the necessary withdrawal notification to MSBA. It was noted that the results of the survey done earlier in the year regarding the project were very accurate.

c. Vote MASC Delegate

The Committee discussed the upcoming MASC Conference and the need to appoint a delegate to vote as directed by the Committee on any resolutions.

I nominate Dana Allara to serve as the delegate at the MASC conference and nominate David Frenkel as an alternate delegate.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Jen Carr

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

d. Review School Committee Mission Statement [Exhibit](#)

The Committee discussed the School Committee Mission Statement.

I move the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee accept the 2025-2026 School Committee Mission as written. David Frenkel made a friendly amendment to move the second to the last bullet to the top; the amendment was accepted by Meghan Benson.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Jen Carr

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

e. Appoint the Superintendent as NEC Board Member

Superintendent Tracy discussed the requirement that the Committee now vote to appoint him to serve as an NEC Board Member.

I move the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee appoint Superintendent Tracy to serve as the NEC Board Member.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

f. Update 2025-2026 School Committee Liaisons [Exhibit](#)

The Committee discussed the liaison positions and agreed to correct an error on the current list which shows Julia Campbell instead of David Frenkel as serving on the Wellness Committee. In addition, it was the consensus of the Committee to wait to fill the liaisons to the Hamilton Select Board and the Wenham Finance Committee until a new School Committee member is appointed at which time another review of liaison positions will occur.

I nominate Amy Kunberger to serve as the Miles River School liaison.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

g. Appoint School Committee Secretary

I nominate Julia Campbell to serve as School Committee Secretary.

Motion by: David Frenkel

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

I nominate Jen Carr to serve as the School Committee Assistant Secretary.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: David Frenkel

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

8. Finance & Operations

a. FY27 Budget Calendar [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the proposed budget calendar. Jen Carr stated that she will not be able to attend the meeting on November 12 and Meghan Benson stated that she will need to attend the February 12 meeting remotely.

b. Prior Year Student Activity [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the prior year student activity accounts.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the following 32 High School subsidiary accounts for the 2025– 2026 School Year.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)

9. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - next meeting is on 10/06.

b. Policy Subcommittee - next meeting is on 9/29. The Committee will need to appoint a new member to the subcommittee.

c. Negotiations Subcommittee - next meeting is on Monday. The Committee will need to appoint a new member to the subcommittee.

- d. Secretary Report - none
- e. In Our Inboxes -
 - o A question regarding new stadium lights that have been on late at night. Superintendent Tracy discussed the dark sky certification testing which required lighting to be on after 8:00 p.m. for 3 nights and in addition the district is still working out the kinks with the contractor to ensure lighting timing is correct.
 - o An email thanking Superintendent Tracy for visiting a lemonade stand in town.

10. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy discussed recent classroom visits with new teachers. He stated that he is working to reschedule the field opening which was postponed due to weather and the current thinking is to build it into Thanksgiving week.

11. Chair's Report

Dana Allara reviewed the process for appointing a new School Committee member.

12. Topics for Future Meetings

The voting threshold guide will be ready for the next meeting. A discussion on moving forward on facilities will need to be scheduled.

13. Adjourn to Executive Session

I move to Adjourn to Executive Session under G.L. c. 30A, section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation (Jeffrey Austin, Deborah Safford, Dorothy Galante vs. HWRSC) 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 to return to Open Session.

Motion by: Dana Allara

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger voted yes)