



HAMILTON-WENHAM

Regional School District

5 School Street, Wenham MA 01984

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Committee Meeting Minutes

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting

[Zoomlink](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 91506397254

Thursday, November 6, 2025

7:00 p.m. - 9:51 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara

Meghan Benson

Amy Kunberger

Kristin Noon

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order

At 7:01 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order. Dana Allara welcomed Kristin Noon to the Committee. She reminded the community that the meeting is being recorded and live-streamed via HWCAM.

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

Jeff Austin, Hamilton, discussed the role of the School Committee under Massachusetts General Law. He encouraged the Committee to follow Massachusetts General Law language and keep the super-majority requirement that is currently included in the regional agreement.

Beth Blanchard, former Hamilton-Wenham teacher and currently involved with the teachers' retiree group. She encouraged the community to attend an upcoming forum on November 13 at the Salisbury Library where there will be an open discussion on what communities think students should know and be able to do and how students would demonstrate readiness to graduate.

Deb Safford addressed comments made at the prior meeting by School Committee members regarding the Build Bright Futures group. She encouraged the Committee to move forward in a productive and constructive way that reflects the fact that the community has spoken. She also encouraged the Committee to keep the super-majority language in the regional agreement.

Beth Herr, Asbury Street, stated that she would prefer to dissolve the regional district rather than have the super-majority language removed from the regional agreement because individual towns have the ability to have $\frac{2}{3}$ vote and regionals should as well. She stated that she is looking to build bridges. She stated that she believes the Committee has been neglecting the save the small school people and asked that they acknowledge the loss, investigate other school facility options and move forward.

Scott Maddern, 12 Old Cart Road asked the Committee as they develop next year's operating and capital budgets to work with other boards to determine the reason for the failure of the school project and to begin to set aside \$1 to \$2 million per year into a renovation capital fund, hire a social media team to counter misinformation, present options and provide regular updates and charter a renovation outreach committee. Mr Maddern volunteered to assist the Committee.

Public comment closed at 7:20 p.m.

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

Amy Kunberger read School Committee Protocol number 4.

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

Kristin Noon read the following from the Mission Statement: The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Committee's mission is to ensure our schools create graduates with a passion for lifelong learning together with the critical skills needed to maximize their potential. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee will lead and inspire a district that supports and guides the Superintendent to execute and achieve the approved 2025-2026 District Goals.

5. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 9
- Voucher No. 1073
- Voucher No. 4167
- Voucher No. 4168
- Voucher No. 4169

b. Minutes

- October 16, 2025 [Exhibit](#)

c. Donations Warrants

- Edfund Grant - Elementary STEM Startup Project; \$51,777.94 [Exhibit](#)

d. Field Trips

- DECA State Conference [Exhibit](#)
- DECA International Conference [Exhibit](#)
- HW Band & Chorus - Carols at the Community House [Exhibit](#)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the consent agenda as presented in tonight's agenda.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

The Committee thanked the EdFund for their donation.

6. New Business

a. DECA Presentation [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)
The DECA Officers gave a presentation on the DECA Program.

b. Annual Enrollment/Class Size Presentation [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy reviewed the annual enrollment/class size presentation. He stated that this year there is an overall increase of 37 students in the district. He noted that the state will not certify the enrollment numbers until mid-November. In response to a question he stated that the district tries to get information on pre-school aged students but it is difficult to get information from private preschools.

c. Appoint SC Member on Negotiations and Policy Subcommittees
The Committee discussed the open seats on the subcommittees.

I nominate Kristin Noon to serve on the negotiations subcommittee.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

I move to table the policy subcommittee appointment discussion until the next meeting.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

d. Update 2025-2026 School Committee Liaisons [Exhibit](#)
The Committee discussed the School Committee liaison positions.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee appoint Amy Kunberger as the Miles River Middle School liaison, Meghan Benson as the Cutler Elementary School liaison, Kristin Noon as the Wenham Finance Committee liaison and Amy Kunberger as the Hamilton Select Board liaison and that the following liaison roles be removed from the list: Athletic Facilities Improvement Building Committee, Hamilton Master Planning Committee and Wenham Master Planning Committee.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

e. Vote Buker Amendment of Lease - Extension of Lease Term [Exhibit](#)
Superintendent Tracy discussed the amendment of Buker Lease.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the extension of the lease on the Buker School as written.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

Superintendent Tracy noted that the document will be dated once approved by the Committee and that the Wenham Select Board voted on a ten year lease due to the uncertainty of next steps for school facilities.

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

f. Approval of Prior Year Invoices [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the need for School Committee approval to pay prior year invoices.

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

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

g. Discuss Elementary School Facilities Direction/Options [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy discussed his elementary school direction/options memorandum. He stated that the memorandum is a starting point and there are other options that could be added. The Committee had a discussion which generated the following ideas for additional discussion at a future meeting.

- need for listening sessions before the first of the year
- initiate a new enrollment study for the district
- rebuild trust in community
- create a structured way to have listening sessions to understand communities priorities
- create a committee designed to get the community to agree on an established set of facts
- town-wide mailing/survey
- investigate rules regarding building upgrade requirements if an out-building is added
- form a school building committee not to make decisions but to collect community feedback
- understand how MSBA applications could be utilized for renovations/additions
- need for estimates for renovations/additions

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee task Superintendent Tracy to develop a process to establish listening sessions to move forward potential options with the elementary school facilities.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

7. Finance & Operations

- a. FY26 Q1 Year-End Forecast [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone presented the FY26 Q1 year end forecast.

8. Committee Report

- a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - next meeting Monday
- b. Policy Subcommittee
 - o Second Reading & Vote HWRSD Competency Determination Policy - IKFE Draft [Exhibit](#)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Competency Determination Policy as written.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

Superintendent Tracy stated that the state will be sending additional changes to the template of the Competency Determination Policy.

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

- c. Negotiations - new member appointed, email will be sent out to determine meeting date
- d. Secretary Report - no update
- e. In Our Inboxes - no update

9. Superintendent's Report [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy congratulated the boys and girls soccer teams. He discussed his position paper submitted to DESE regarding Chapter 70 funding.

10. Chair's Report

Dana Allara informed the Committee that the most recent Regional Agreement discussion meeting has been postponed.

11. Topics for Future Meetings

Policy subcommittee appointment, FY27 budget and next steps for formation of some type of committee for elementary school project.

12. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 9:51 p.m.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Kristin Noon

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)