



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: 91269722815

Thursday, March 19, 2026

7:00 p.m. - 9:31 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara

Meghan Benson

Jen Carr

Amy Kunberger

Kristin Noon

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order

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

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

There was no citizen comment.

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

Kristin Noon read School Committee Protocol number 8.

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

Meghan Benson 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 is a source of civic pride and municipal engagement to serve the community for generations to come.

5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy discussed the Northeast Regional History Day contest and noted that 6 groups from Hamilton-Wenham will be participating in the finals next week.

6. Student Government Representative; Andersen Kraft

Anderson Kraft updated the Committee on events and activities throughout the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

7. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes
 - March 5, 2026 [Exhibit](#)
- b. Other:
 - Game Day Advertisements & Program Book Advertisements [Exhibit](#)

Jen Carr asked to hold the minutes of March 5 from the consent agenda and to correct the header date from May 5 to March 5. Dana Allara requested to hold the Game Day Advertisements from the consent agenda.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee change the Thursday, March 19 agenda so minutes say March 5, 2026 not May 5, 2026.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

In response to a question, Superintendent Tracy stated that the game day advertisements are similar to the Booster book ads but they will be used for the Booster group run concession tables.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee accept the game day advertisements and program book advertisements as written.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

8. New Business Committee Report

- a. Vote FY27 Annual Budget Book & Report [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy discussed the budget book and report.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee accept the budget book as written.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

- b. MSBA Submissions - Buker, Cutler & Winthrop [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy discussed the MSBA submissions. He stated that once approved the submissions will be uploaded to the DESE portal and a response is anticipated sometime in October or November. A typo was noted on page 5 where Cutler School should state Buker

School on the Buker submission and Winthrop School on the Winthrop submission.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee accept the following: Having convened in an open meeting on 3/19/2026, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District School Committee of the towns of Hamilton and Wenham, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated March 20th, 2026 for the Buker Elementary School located at 1 School Street in Wenham, MA Winthrop Elementary School located at 325 Bay Road, South Hamilton, MA, and Cutler Elementary School, located at 237 Asbury Street, South Hamilton, MA which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future which is number 7; Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

c. Budget Communication Flyers [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)
The Committee held lengthy discussions regarding the budget communication flyers.

On the roof replacement document it was agreed to add a key to show which section of the roof is being replaced and also to clarify the language in the 2nd paragraph taking out *currently and approval* so it is clear that the district is not waiting for MSBA approval on the project. In response to a question regarding the financial impact of project approval on each town and each household, Superintendent Tracy stated that the towns Finance Committees will determine the amount and that amount will be included in the town warrant book.

Jen Carr made a motion seconded by Meghan Benson that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the budget communication flyers as written including any and all minor changes that need to be made. Jen Carr then withdrew the motion.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the roof budget communication flyer as written including any and all minor changes that need to be made.

Motion by: Jen Carr

Seconded by: Kristin Noon

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

On the budget communication flyer, it was agreed to include the items to be reduced if the override does not pass and to specify there would be no late bus available if the override

doesn't pass as the Committee already eliminated one of the late buses in their recommended budget. It was suggested to include information on whether required approval is $\frac{2}{3}$ or a simple majority. The Committee discussed the need to be able to clearly articulate what excess and deficiencies are as well as interest income. It was agreed to change the total budget number to the number including debt service noting that the total includes debt service. It was requested that alternate language be looked at to replace *unplanned maintenance* and to look to shorten the language discussing the 3 reasons costs have risen. In response to a question from Amy Kunberger, the Committee agreed that it would be acceptable, if space is needed, to remove the *please vote box* from the back of the flyer.

I move that the Hamilton-Weham Regional School Committee approve the budget request fact sheet and to authorize Amy Kunberger to make additional edits following the upcoming discussion on budget outcomes should the override not pass.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

The Committee discussed different ways to disseminate this information to the community including mailing a postcard to each household, social media posts and possible insert in the local newspaper.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee send out the relevant information for the school budget handouts in a manner that reduces the cost to the school district - up to \$2,500.

Motion by: Meghan Benson

Seconded by: Kristin Noon

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

d. School Start Time Report [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviewed the school start time report and asked the Committee to spend time reviewing the report prior to the next meeting. He stated that he will bring this item back to the next meeting with additional recommendations and will be asking the Committee to decide whether they want to move forward.

e. Discussion - School Trips FY27

Superintendent Tracy reviewed the upcoming overseas trips to Spain and Taiwan and noted that due to world circumstances one family has decided not to send their child on the trip to Taiwan. He stated that the district has been in touch with the tour operators regarding safety processes in place and he stated that tour companies have confirmed they have staff available in the country should any issues arise.

8. Finance & Operations

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

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed budget scenarios should the override not pass. Superintendent Tracy and Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the impact to the district of the proposed reductions. In response to questions, Superintendent Tracy stated that it may be necessary to eliminate course offerings at the secondary level and at the elementary level it may be necessary, if the number of elementary sections are reduced, to transfer students to a different elementary school. He also stated early retirement incentives are handled through the

Mass Teachers Retirement Board and Essex County Retirement Board so it is not possible for Hamilton-Wenham to say who can retire early.

9. Committee Reports

- a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - met on Monday
- b. Policy Subcommittee -
 - i. First Reading Policy JICFB - Bullying Prevention [Exhibit](#)

The Committee did a first reading on policy JICFB. There was a request to clarify school functions on page 2 under the Prohibition of Bullying section.

- c. Negotiations Subcommittee - next meeting March 24
- d. Secretary Report - no update
- e. In Our Inboxes - no update

10. Chair's Report

Dana Allara stated that she is scheduled to attend the Wenham COA on Wednesday to discuss the budget and she held office hours virtually on Monday. Amy Kunberger stated that she has linked her office hours to the district calendar. Megan Benson stated the Friends of Cutler meeting has been postponed until next week and she attended the Friends of Buker meeting last night.

11. Topics for Future Meetings

Second reading bullying policy.

12. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 9:31 p.m.

Motion by: Megan Benson

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)