

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – November 19, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, November 19, 2018, at 7:00 P.M. in the Council on Aging (Senior Center) of the Wayland Town Building.

*Present were:*

Jeanne Downs, Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair  
Nate Buffum  
Kim Reichelt  
Kathie Steinberg (by remote)

*Also:*

Arthur Unobskey  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan  
Director of Finance & Operations

Richard Whitehead  
Director of Student Services

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the regular session at 7:07 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM, as well as by news stations from Channel 7 and 25. Kathie Steinberg is participating remotely given her distance.

1. **Special Matter:**

(a) Update regarding SEL Work in the District:

Richard Whitehead updated the School Committee on the effort planned to deepen Social Emotional Learning (SEL) offerings for students over the next three years. The kickoff meeting was November 7 and 50+ were in attendance (faculty, administrators, parents and representatives of community groups). A Committee will be formed and Richard reviewed its goal and what will be accomplished in the district while building upon what already exists. There will be building-based teams and parent subcommittees, all a part of the SEL central committee.

Richard described the grant process that began in September and was awarded to Wayland in the amount of \$20,000. The grant money will be used to fund a consultant who will help to create a self-assessment, technical assistance, and substitute coverage and mileage for faculty who will attend meetings in other districts who already have broad SEL offerings in place, such as Arlington, Lynn, and Reading. Richard reviewed the next steps and noted the meeting schedule for the SEL Committee (12/12/18, 1/9/19, 2/13/19, 3/13/19, 4/10/19, 5/15/19). Richard will provide another update in the spring.

2. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

John Grabill, Riverview Circle, thanked the School Committee for being flexible in planning and read a statement. He described the School Committee's comments after hearing everyone's input. However, he believes there is a third option for the School Committee and that is to postpone the vote to change start times until everything can be worked out. Mr. Grabill asked the School Committee not to rush an incomplete plan that does not have the support of students and teachers, as the current plan will not help them.

Michael Delman, Stonebridge Road, is an educator and for 8 years taught in a middle school that started at 8:30 a.m. to address the students' wellbeing. He is currently studying what helps students to become healthy and effective. Mr. Delman described how the brain works in terms of health and wellness and academic success of students when they don't get enough sleep. He was a presenter at the International Chad Conference recently and commented that we have a major safety issue in place and it would be inexcusable to wait to make a change.

Kim Winter, Glover Road, has a daughter who graduated from WHS two years ago. She read a communication from her daughter who is in favor of a change in start times and is disappointed that the change did not happen while she was attending WHS. Ms. Winter's daughter said that she sometimes fell asleep in class and couldn't focus. In her opinion, more sleep is a welcomed gift.

Sheila Carel, Joyce Road, commented that this issue is complicated. She agrees that the kids are tired, but she is not convinced that the School Committee's approach to change start times is really looking at the whole problem. There are true

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concerns and a lot of unanswered questions that must be solved. Ms. Carel compared the Loker School closing many years ago to this current issue. She asked the School Committee to look at the issues before voting and to come to a consensus that works for the community of Wayland.

Deedee Bergeron, a teacher in Wayland for 25 years does not dispute the research for older students. However, stress and anxiety is also true for elementary students. When younger students don't get enough sleep, their behavior can mimic ADHD. Ms. Bergeron feels that making a decision will be at the expense of the elementary students. She questioned the plan for the Boston students and some other concerns for which she feels have not been addressed. She urged the School Committee to find a solution that benefits both groups of students.

Erin Newton, Bennett Road, has taught at Dover Sherborn HS for 16 years. She has three elementary students and feels that their voices have been marginalized in this discussion. Ms. Newton shared her son's medical condition in terms of his sleep habits, adding that his daily life depends on his sleep. She noted that daycare is an issue in this town and she is concerned about how this will affect the Boston students as well as the elementary students.

Ken Rideout, Highgate Road, is a teacher at Wayland High School. He was an advocate of this change, but he now believes that this is not the time to implement a plan. Mr. Rideout commented on the history of the discussions regarding school start times many years ago of which he was a participant. He also sat on the recent School Start Time Committee and believes that the report that was produced contains a lot of moving parts. This is a complicated problem and asked the School Committee to start over and revisit some of the restrictions that the Committee placed upon themselves, as teacher support is vital and there is no teacher support.

Jackie Durant, Boston Parent Council, described this matter as everyone being in the same boat together and the School Committee is leading the boat. She urged the School Committee to start over if a solution can't be worked out for all students, especially if the elementary kids are being sacrificed.

Paul Morenberg, Hazelbrook Lane, stated that this is not a rushed process and thought the decision had been made two meetings ago and referred to the Open Meeting Law. He appreciates the previous comments of those who are not in support of this change, there are many parents and teachers who do support this proposal. It may not be perfect, but it is an excellent plan. In order to make progress, he asked that everyone embrace what isn't perfect so adjustments can be made. Mr. Morenberg does support an 8:00 a.m. start time for elementary students as that time would have the least impact.

Barrett Brontas, Bow Road, shared a message from her freshman son who thanked the School Committee and urged them to stay strong and make the decision so kids can get more sleep. Ms. Brontas mentioned those elementary students who need additional support and that they are very well supported in the schools. She related a personal story when her daughter started Kindergarten at Loker and then moved to three different schools before she went to the Middle School and added that kids are resilient and can adapt to change. It's the older kids that are dealing with so much stress and anxiety. She asked the School Committee to have confidence in its transparent process and to move forward with a decision, as it has not been rushed and all voices have been heard.

Reed Newton, Haven Lane commented that his son is not good with transition and is thriving because of the teachers' impact. The School Committee should be listening to the teachers because they do not want this change. His high school junior is exhausted now and feels that he could get more sleep if the homework was reduced. As a youth soccer coach, Mr. Newton also feels that a change will affect the youth soccer program.

Paula Berg, Wayland Hills Road, commented that this is about the realities of the kids' developmental stages and they will all experience the same problems as they get older. Strategy and implementation are two different things, and implementation can be adjusted and tweaked. She urged the School Committee to make the change and work very hard on the implementation.

Happy Hollow teacher and mother of fifth grade twins, Lise Weig commented that there are still options to ensure that everyone is considered, as she feels that the teachers are not being heard and she doesn't believe there is an option that takes care of those at the elementary level. She invited the School Committee to visit the elementary classrooms to witness those kids who are struggling, as the problems are getting bigger and getting more intense. Ms. Weig asked the School Committee not to rush into a decision.

Maureen Devlin, teacher of 33 years, honors everyone's point of view, but feels that the options can be more creative. She suggested offering a one-hour hybrid course for high school students, either online or at the school; she explained how it could work. It could be implemented it as a pilot next year before making any changes to start times.

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Kate Bouchard, Old Connecticut Path, has three children under the age of five. She commented that there is a huge gap in the research for elementary aged children. Ms. Bouchard referred to a social media post in which there were 158 comments about this issue. She asked the School Committee to delay its decision until everything can be worked out.

Sejal Srinivisan, Covered Bridge Lane, asked the School Committee to have confidence in the work that has been done together with her and others. She added that they have holistically looked at the needs of all students and there is a public health epidemic, as noted by the American Association of Pediatrics. The AAP has directed all school districts to heed the warning and find ways to fix this epidemic. Ms. Srinivisan added the data supports the fact that this is necessary in Wayland. She referred to a year ago when a proposal was brought forward for a 9:00 start time for elementary students, but there was no teacher support. However, a third of teachers do support the proposals put forth currently. There are financial constraints and it is okay not to have all the answers to all the questions. She urged the School Committee to have the confidence and fortitude to move forward.

Happy Hollow teacher Lorraine Horgan does feel that the School Committee has listened. However, she prefers a later start time for elementary students and no one disputes that the middle and high school students need more sleep. There is one thing, she says, that has not been mentioned and that is she gets to school an hour and a half before the start of school to set up the classroom, as well as sometimes on the weekend. She elaborated on the time she spends on setting up.

Renee Foster-Degenhardt, Lincoln Road, agrees with everything that has been said about elementary kids and agrees that older kids need more sleep. However, she is concerned about the emotional wellbeing of her family as family time will become less and being together is very important and vital to her and her family. She commented that not everyone can afford childcare or adjust work schedules.

Mei-Lin Kingsley, York Road, feels that data and research is being disregarded, as it is about what is best for the kids now and in their futures and not about the issues and schedules at home. She believes that this process has been very thorough and transparent, adding that some things can't be answered until everything is up and running. Ms. Kingsley shared her experience with her middle school daughter, even though she tries to get a good night's sleep.

Katy Walsh, Davelin Road, has 2 children in high school and 1 in middle school. She is a pediatrician and also has a degree in academia and public health. Ms. Walsh believes that a change in school start times would benefit her kids. There is overwhelming evidence that supports this and is confident that it will benefit all the children in the school system. She thanked the School Committee for their persistence.

Jess Adani, Jeffrey Road, commented that Acton did change their elementary start time to 9:00 a.m. and everyone seems to be happy about this.

Alexia Obar, Dean Road, commented that this plan has too many outstanding issues, such as BASE. Eighty percent of kids are involved in athletics and many teachers are coaches, and Weston does dismiss athletes early for games and practices. Ms. Obar noted that Acton and Concord Carlisle start the day for high school and middle school students at 8:00 a.m. She believes that the plan being proposed will create many problems for the kids and the School Committee should go back to the drawing board and postpone for a year.

Jeanne read a public statement from Christine McKenna-Lok, some of which addressed what other school districts have done or not done in this regard. She asked that the School Committee listen to the Wayland teachers who oppose the change and to take more time in making a decision.

Kim Reichelt, Coolidge Road, commented in reply to the previously read comment. Ms. Reichelt spoke to the Superintendent in Winthrop at the time about their decision to change the start times, only to revert back to the original times. She described how this all came about. He is now the Superintendent in Stoneham and told Kim that Wayland's schedule is perfect.

Tamika Thompson has two boys at Happy Hollow for whom she related her daily experiences with her children. In her opinion, this will not be a good decision because the change in elementary start time is too early and it parents' and teachers' opinions do matter.

John Gracia, Pelham Island Road, said that all comments are important. However, another year of delay means another year of a national health epidemic and delaying could mean rejection altogether. The biggest difficulty is organizational change and there is a lot of resistance of how we move forward.

*Jeanne and Ellen responded to a question about the School Committee's vote this evening.*

Jeanne thanked the audience for their thoughtful comments and noted that the School Committee has received many emails,

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has had phone and face-to-face conversations, and the Committee takes every comment seriously. The School Committee's focus is what is best for the children, and it will work diligently to implement a change that is well thought out, as well as address all of the concerns that have been raised.

3. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Unobskey gave his report later in the meeting.

(b) Continued Review of School Start Time Proposals:

- Continued Discussion of Concerns
- Possible Vote to Approve a Proposal

The School Committee continued with a lengthy discussion about school start times, and each member voiced their thoughts on this matter. Some of the comments made included:

- Concerned about the earlier proposed elementary start time
- Sleep is not the only issue that speaks to student health
- Middle school and high school schedules need to change
- Important to get to 8:30 for the high school
- The implementation has been delayed a year already and the risk for kids will only get worse
- Looking at this for the benefit for the whole district
- Feels strongly about the health epidemic for kids
- The evidence is compelling
- Concerns about staff morale and the teachers' opinions
- Many districts start elementary schools at 8:00 a.m.
- A high percent of parents are in support of this change
- BASE must be a priority in making sure it is available for all those who need it
- The School Committee must stay focused on its mission

The School Committee reviewed the two scenarios before them with the intent of voting to remove one and tweak the remaining proposal, while keeping the weekly early release day.

Upon a motion duly made by Nate Buffum, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted to continue its discussion and only focusing on Scenario 2, which keeps the early release day. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Arthur clarified the difference between a 3:05 vs. a 3:10 dismissal for the high school in terms of the game schedules and the early release for some athletes who participate in golf, alpine skiing, and track and field events held at Northeastern. The Committee consensus was that it would be better if elementary could start as close to 8:00 a.m. as possible, and the High School could have a 3:00 dismissal. A discussion ensued in this regard, including dismissal times in other districts in which Wayland plays the sports teams.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted (4-1) to adopt Scenario 2(b) with a 7:55 a.m. start time for elementary and a 3:10 p.m. end time for the High School that includes an early dismissal day. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair		X
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

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Kathie clarified that a 3:15 or later end time for the High School was taken off the table.

Arthur addressed the timeline for this process for implementation of the new school start times in terms of different issues. He explained how the administration will move forward with each concern. Each will have a working group to refine programmatic responses in areas such as childcare, issues for Boston students, teacher schedules, extra-curriculars, bus schedules and registration, and professional development. Arthur will provide updates to the community and School Committee going forward.

The School Committee discussed sending out a communication regarding school start times.

(c) Discussion regarding Diversity Curriculum in the WPS:

Since this topic came up at the recent Boston meeting, Arthur updated the Committee on how he has moved forward in addressing these issues. As a result, there is an opportunity to deepen the diversity conversation in Wayland. In terms of equity, the district wants to provide every student the opportunity to achieve their academic, social and emotional potential. The Middle School is forming a group to address diversity, and there will also be a district-wide group. Arthur explained the goals in this effort. School Committee representation is welcomed.

Jeanne commented that the School Committee received an email requesting that the conversation include all ethnic and diverse backgrounds.

(d) Receive and Discuss the FY2019 Enrollment and Class Size Report:

Susan thanked sophomore Mira Mills for the pen and ink drawing used in the report that she drew in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Susan explained that the Enrollment and Class Size Report is used to report annually to DESE, and it becomes the baseline for Chapter 70 funding and is used to project the next year's enrollment which drives personnel and non-personnel requirements. The report is also used to project outward of three years, which determines multi-year financial projections.

Actual vs. projected enrollment showed 43 fewer students than was projected. The budget was built upon 2,740 students, but as of October 1, 2018, 2,697 students were enrolled. The biggest change was in Kindergarten enrollment and was overestimated by two sections. As a result, those FTEs were not used and the monies not spent will become part of staffing exchange. Susan explained the reasons for why the Kindergarten estimates were off and what determines personnel and non-personnel expenses going forward. Susan presented the current classroom and program breakdown for 2,697 students. She noted that Wayland does receive Chapter 70 funding for non-resident students. The district received approximately \$382,000 for non-resident students. Susan addressed what data is used to determine Kindergarten enrollment. Twenty-three more students are expected next year and growth will be fairly level over the next few years.

*Kathie left the meeting (by remote) at 10:30 p.m.*

4. **Financial Matters (all were passed over due to the lateness of the meeting):**

- (a) Receive and Discuss the FY2019 Q1 Financial Report
- (b) Receive and Discuss the DESE End-of-Year Report and Summary
- (c) Discussion Review and Possible Re-vote of Capital Improvement Plans
  - Revised Five-Year Capital Summary – Prioritized
  - WPS Requests for Capital Reconciled with OSI
- (d) Discussion regarding Special Revenue Funds
- (e) High School Master Athletic Plan:
  - Project Update

5. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- (a) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Request:

Jeanne commented that there is a pending WTA public records request in regards to all emails to the School Committee from those who are in support of the change in school start times.
- (c) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Open Meeting Law Matters:

None.
- (d) Discussion of School Committee Communications and Information for The Buzz:

Kim will submit another article regarding school start times.

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6. **Educational Matters (taken out of order):**

(a) Superintendent's Report:

Arthur commented that WHS won the state championship for soccer, and the fall sports teams received the Best Sportsmanship Award in the DCL. He gave a shout out to all those who were involved in the WHS production of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." Arthur enjoyed the experience of being with the kids and the wonderful Fine Arts team.

7. **Finance Subcommittee Update:**

(a) Budget Process

This agenda item was passed over.

8. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

9. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated November 19, 2018, in the amount of \$430,750.49
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated November 19, 2018, in the amount of \$8,657.51
- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated November 7, 2018, in the amount of \$1,534,530.35
- Wayland Public School Payroll Warrant, dated November 21, 2018, in the amount of \$1,441,426.42

(b) Approval of Fine Arts Donation

(c) Re-approval of High School Master Athletic Plan Invoices

(d) Approval of Minutes:

- October 29, 2018
- November 5, 2018
- November 13, 2018

Jeanne noted that a very generous gift of \$10,000 was awarded to the Fine Arts Department. She explained why the High School Master Athletic Plan invoices were being approved again.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted (4-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

10. **Executive Session:**

Due to the lateness of the meeting, the Executive Session was postponed.

11. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 10:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

See attached list.

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda and Backup Information
2. Public Statement read by Jeanne Downs from Christine McKenna-Lok
3. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
4. Regular Minutes of October 29, 2018
5. Special Minutes of November 5, 2018
6. Special Minutes of November 13, 2018
7. FY2019 Enrollment and Class Size Report