

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – June 21, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at the Wayland Town Building

*Present:*

Erin Gibbons, Interim Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair  
Erin Mueller  
Christina Rodrigo

*Also present:*

Parry Graham  
Acting Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent

Tom Lafleur

Director of Finance & Operations

*Also:*

Barbara Cataldo, Interim Director of Special Education  
Debbie Dixson, FY24 Interim Director of Student Services  
Meghan Sullivan, Special Education Teacher for Language-Based Classroom  
Jen Soha, Reading Specialist for Language-Based Classroom

**1. Welcome & Call to Order:**

Interim Chair Erin Gibbons called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM.

Ellen Grieco thanked Parry Graham, Tom Lafleur and Barbara Cataldo for a job well done this year.

There was a brief pause during the meeting to be sure that the meeting was being livestreamed.

Erin Mueller congratulated the graduates of the Class of 2023 and acknowledged the success of the sports teams. Christina enjoyed the Loker Ice Cream Social, and Erin Gibbons commented that her 6<sup>th</sup> grader enjoyed the Walden Pond bike trip recently, as it was delayed from the fall schedule.

**2. Public Comment:**

Courtney Conery, 8 Goodman Circle, spoke on behalf of SEPAC regarding their concern and hope that the district will comply with DESE's dyslexia screening timeline, particularly for Kindergartners. In the past, parents have not been notified until the January screening. SEPAC parents would also like more information in terms of who within the Wayland district will be making the diagnosis, what the interventions will be and by whom for children significantly below the benchmark, and which programs will be used. SEPAC strongly recommends that the district expands the language based services especially for those children who are below reading levels. They feel that the LBC, housed at Claypit Hill, is not equitable and should be expanded to other elementary schools. In addition, they recommend that the district finds ways to increase access to more highly skilled reading teachers. Ms. Conery commented that the highly successful math interventionist program, funded by the METCO Grant, was eliminated when it should have been expanded to all schools and encourages the district to find ways to bring this back. Another concern is the achievement gap for children on IEP's and METCO students, particularly around MCAS scores. Finally, SEPAC invites all parents to attend the DECAP presentation this fall.

**3. Acting Superintendent Update:**

**3.1 Discussion and Possible Vote to Appoint the Interim Director of Student Services:**

Parry Graham introduced Debbie Dixson as the Interim Director of Student Services for the 2023-2024 school year. Ms. Dixson has significant experience and expertise, as she has worked in peer districts as a Director of Student Services and Interim Director after retiring in districts such as Sudbury, Dover/Sherborn, Acton/Boxboro, Concord, and Franklin.

Parry described the DESE waiver process when administrators retire but return to work due to a critical shortage period for which districts can apply for a critical shortage waiver. Ms. Dixson answered questions from the School Committee around trends and unmet goals in other school districts.

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Upon a motion duly made by Erin Mueller, seconded by Christina Rodrigo, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint the Interim Director of Student Services Debbie Dixson.

### 3.2 *Review of Year One of the Language Based Classroom and a Summary of Specialized Programs:*

Claypit Hill Principal Emily Charton began the presentation via a pre-recorded video in which she briefly spoke about the three sub-separate programs at Claypit Hill, such as SKIP (Skills Improvement Program), ILC (Individualized Learning Classroom), and the summer work program.

**SKIP:** This program assists students with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties that impacts their ability to learn in a regular education setting. The goal is to help students to enjoy school, build confidence, help them to become more independent, and to learn how to adapt in a regular education classroom during a possible transition to either ARC at the Middle School or to a regular classroom. There is a higher student to teacher ratio in smaller groups or on a 1:1 basis. To meet student needs, the curriculum may be modified from the curriculum used in a regular education classroom. There were six students in SKIP last year and it is projected to have seven students this coming school year.

**ILC:** This program serves children diagnosed with moderate to severe autism, a mild to moderate neurological disability, a developmental delay, an intellectual disability, a sensory disability, and/or a non-speaking or speech disability. These students receive exposure and individualized, targeted and systematic instruction in order to provide the necessary life skills and increased independence to access inclusion settings at school, at home, and in the community. Ms. Charton described the focus and goals of both the Milestones Track and the Strides Track within the ILC.

Ms. Charton described the summer work preparation and the goals of the program and offered to report back to the School Committee in the fall.

**LBC:** Meghan Sullivan and Jen Soha presented an overview about the LBC which was established this past school year for Grades 2-4 by Meghan and Jen with the support of the administration and with guidance and a partnership with Landmark School. The team includes an occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, a teacher assistant and three teachers. The same criteria will be followed for Grades 3-5 next year with an additional three teachers. The goal is to increase the LBC to all secondary grade levels moving forward.

Although a sub-separate program, the ten students in the LBC represent a specific student profile, such as being diagnosed with dyslexia or having a language-based learning difference. They are completely engaged in their grade level classrooms for all subjects except reading, writing, listening, speaking, organizational and executive functioning skills which is provided in the LBC. Jen described other learning challenges that students may have, such as ADHD, a central-auditory processing disorder, or an anxiety disorder. However, she added that the students possess many other strengths beyond their learning challenges.

An entrance criteria was established, and once a student is placed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) dyslexia will be identified on the IEP. There is an expected range of cognitive scores for LBC student profiles and should align with the program's instructional practices. If a student satisfies the criteria, the team (Meghan Sullivan, Jen Soha, Emily Charton, and the Director of Student Services), will determine entrance in to the LBC. There is a 3-6 month monitoring stage before a student enters the LBC; Meghan explained further.

Tier 3 instruction, a structured literacy program, is used in the LBC and uses the Orton-Gillingham principles. The instruction is direct, multi-sensory, systematic and cumulative. The staff has been highly trained in programs such as Phonemic Awareness and Reading and Writing; Meghan explained. In addition, much of the frameworks is provided by Landmark School. A discussion ensued in this regard. The LBC teachers meet frequently with the general education classroom teachers as well.

Meghan and Jen provided and explained the student data for this past school year for two second graders in the LBC in terms of progress and accuracy as well as growth data for all ten students. The student progress in all areas was very positive. All ten students will continue in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Currently, there are no second graders who will meet the entrance criteria for the fall. A discussion ensued about how the rolling criteria interplays with the Start Process for students, including the issue of access for the younger children (K-1). Additional questions were asked about what the criteria is for intensive instruction.

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### 3.3 *Review of Staff Deployment Report:*

Parry reported that the Staff Deployment Report identifies all of the FTE's in the district, including historical and current class sizes and enrollment patterns. It is based on October 1 data, and is very helpful during budget preparation. The report will be presented to the School Committee at a summer meeting once the report is complete.

*Erin Gibbons left the meeting at 7:27 p.m.; returned at 7:29 p.m.*

### 3.4 *Kindergarten Registration and Assignment:*

School placement decisions for Kindergartners usually occurs during the summer, and catchment areas and buffer zones are important in the placement process; Parry explained. Currently, there are about 200 Kindergartners who will be placed in ten classrooms across three elementary schools. Class size guidelines and policy strongly recommend 20 students per class. The Alta Oxbow apartment complex is narrowly in the Claypit Hill catchment area, and Parry strongly recommends that the location is looked at in terms of the possibility of changing the buffer zone boundaries to allow more flexibility to the Superintendent around Kindergarten placements.

*Erin Mueller left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.; returned at 7:39 p.m.*

## 4. **Administrative Matters:**

### 4.1 *Approval of the Following Executive Session Minutes with the Intent to Withhold Said Minutes: May 10, 2023:*

Erin Gibbons announced the approval of the following executive session minutes at the last meeting with the intent to withhold said minutes May 10, 2023.

### 4.2 *Interim Chair's Review of Released Executive Session Minutes for 2010, 2011, 2012 to Confirm Continued Non-Disclosure of Redactions to Released Minutes, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §22(g)(1):*

Erin Gibbons announced that as Interim Chair she has reviewed the potential release of executive session minutes for 2010, 2011, and 2012 to confirm continued non-disclosure of redactions to the released minutes pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §22(g)(1).

### 4.3 *Discussion, Assignment and Possible Vote of Committee Roles and Liaison Positions:*

This agenda item was passed over.

### 4.4 *Discussion of Possible School Committee Retreat:*

Erin Gibbons reported that there will be a public and working School Committee retreat with David Fleishman and some district administrators later in the summer. The agenda will be developed by a facilitator that will be based on district priorities. The date and location is yet to be determined.

## 5. **Financial Matters:**

### 5.1 *Status of the FY23 School Budget:*

The School Committee reviewed the year-to-date budget report and as explained by Tom Lafleur. Moving forward, there will be budget reports presented at each meeting.

## 6. **Consent Agenda:**

### 6.1 Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated June 21, 2023, in the amount of \$1,011,045.17

### 6.2 Approval of Minutes: May 24, 2023

### 6.3 Declaration and Approval of Surplus Items to be Recycled

### 6.4 The Parent Organization of The Children's Way Scholarship Award of \$1,000

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Mueller, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the consent agenda.

## 7. **Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

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8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA) and possible vote to approve Memorandum of Agreement with the WTA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Wayland Educational Secretaries Association (WESA), Custodians and Food Service, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), and possible vote to approve Memorandum of Agreement with the Wayland Food Service Association, as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (c) approving executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: May 24, 2023; and (d) reviewing executive session minutes, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §§21(a)(7) & 22(g): April 12, 2023, April 26, 2023, May 1, 2023, May 10, 2023. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Erin Gibbons, Interim Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Parry Graham, Acting Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent, Michael McCall, Town Manager, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Mueller, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 10:05 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Erin Gibbons, Interim Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Gibbons, Interim Chair  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

Courtney Conery – Wayland SEPAC

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. Debbie Dixson Resume
3. Recycle Lists for Happy Hollow, Loker, and Middle School
4. The Children’s Way TPO Scholarship Award
5. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
6. School Committee Minutes of May 24, 2023
7. Executive Session Motion