

Wareham School Committee
Thursday, October 5, 2023

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Multiservice Center, 48 Marion Rd, Room 320

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Present from School Committee: Joyce Bacchiocchi, Kevin Brogioli, Brennan McKiernan, Geoff Swett (via Zoom) and Apryl Rossi. Also present, Matthew D'Andrea, Superintendent, and Dr. Andrea Schwamb, Assistant Superintendent. The meeting was recorded and broadcast live by WCTV.

Absent: Jamie Wiksten, Recording Secretary

The Chair asked for a moment of silence for Lynn Rhodes, longtime -30 years - elementary school teacher. The Chair lead the meeting with the pledge of allegiance at the recommendation of of Apryl Rossi.

Public Participation:

There were no members of the public present for public participation.

Good News:

Ms. Bacchiocchi shared that today was the first Wareham High School Unified Basketball game. It was wonderful to watch.

Ms. Fay shared that SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) will be sponsoring a seminar - **Basic Rights: Evaluation and Eligibility provides an introduction of the complex special education laws and procedures** October 24th from 6-8 pm. Link to register is on the website. This seminar is virtual.

Mr. McKiernan shared that October 12th is Financial Aid Night at WHS and that it was incredibly helpful. On October 19th, CYE (Community Youth Empowerment) is sponsoring career opportunities night at 6:30 PM at the Onset Bay Center.

Dr. D'Andrea said the bulletin boards at Central Office were looking great with students' artwork from the schools.

Student Representative Report, Gisella Priestly:

There have been lots of club activities. Art Club, Foreign Language Club, JROTC, Newspaper Club have all met with a couple of meetings. The first newspaper of the year is coming out. The Film Club started their first movie - **Fantastic Mr. Fox**. Drama Club has casted their upcoming new production. As the high school has welcomed 5 new Haitian students - Key Club is doing a drive for winter clothes. Monetary donations can be given to Mr. Stanton

Dr. Roth has Music Mondays. Club advisors are concerned about the ban on purchasing from Amazon. They would like to know why they are not allowed to purchase from Amazon. Credit for Life was last week - every senior was able to complete the program. The Student Council is working on Homecoming.

Ms. Rossi asked about how the new students have been assimilated to WHS. Several students were assigned to each student and everyone is helping.

Minutes of the Meeting, September 21, 2023:

Ms. Rossi made a motion to approve the minutes with the suggested change to adjust Ms. Bacchiocchi's vote from "nay" to "yea" for the last two resolutions listed in the minutes, seconded by Mr. McKiernan.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea, Apryl Rossi – yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea – 5, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

Student Advisory Report:

The Student Advisory will give their first report to the School Committee. Brendon Tremblay and Gisella Priestley

Composting and recycling will begin with free compost bins. They will begin with Culinary Arts with Chef Breda and then move to the cafeteria. They were also able to get recycling bins for free for several schools.

Mr. McKiernan - How can we help? If you need something, please ask.

Ms. Rossi- Do you set goals for priorities for the year? Or wait for surveys? Brendon said they were adamant about surveying students first to get their opinions about school and what changes they are looking for.

Gisella Priestley - Abstract goals - They try to empower students and have more student voices in the schools.

Mr. Swett - Thank you for your presence. What is your assessment of the new 8th graders? Are they having a positive or negative impact on the education of the school? Thank you for articulate answers.

Brendon Tremblay - They are rather immature but they will take some time to adjust. It's always good to watch them grow and work with another grade. It helps us realize how much we have grown from 8th grade to now.

Gisella Priestley - In electives and clubs they have a presence. It creates an opportunity for upperclassmen to teach younger ones. It also makes the upperclassmen aware of their role.

Ms. Rossi asked if they had seen the change of perspective between 8th grade and now.

Mr. Brogioli said to remember that 8th graders are people too.

Student Services, Special Education Paraprofessional Handbook:

Provided in your packet is a DRAFT copy of the Special Education Paraprofessional Handbook. This has been reviewed by administration and the union. Melissa Fay will be present to answer any questions. A vote is required.

We have not had a handbook for Special Education paraprofessionals in the past. We had the association and senior paras from each building review one that we borrowed from New Bedford Public Schools.

Ms. Bacchiocchi commented, "This is a great idea and glad you talked to others before creating."

Ms. Rossi asked, "What did you have before?"

Ms. Fay responded, "We had a job description but this gives specific examples and suggestions for different situations. They wished they had something like this."

Ms. Rossi asked if there are other positions who do not have a handbook? Are there employee handbooks for all positions?

Dr. Schwamb said that we did have a teacher handbook and Dr. D'Andrea said he would get you more information about other positions.

Ms. Fay said that the new Nurse Point Person could help create one for those positions.

Mr. McKiernan asked if there was anything in the handbook that went against the para contract?

Ms. Fay - "No, that's why we included everyone. This is more for examples and suggestions."

Mr. Swett wanted to know if there had been any significant changes from the first draft?

Ms. Fay - "No, we outlined our own programming as opposed to New Bedford's."

Ms. Bacchiocchi made a motion to approve the Special Education Paraprofessional handbook as presented, seconded by Ms. Rossi.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi - yea, Apryl Rossi - yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea – 5, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

Report of the Director of Finance, Kristin Flynn:

Included in your packet is a budget transfer. Kristin Flynn, Director of Finance, will be asking for a VOTE to approve these transfers.

Budget Transfer from Vendor Transportation for Out of District students.

\$70,000 from Special Education Transportation to Regular Education Transportation

We need these funds for 5 foster students and 7 homeless students.

Ms. Bacchiocchi asked if there had been a change in the number of students?

Ms. Flynn responded that there has been a change as this is a transient population and difficult to predict, although we base it on past numbers when we budget. Several times a month we are receiving requests for cost shares from other districts for students we did not know about.

Ms. Rossi asked about a reimbursement for McKenney-Vento students. Will that replace this transfer?

Ms. Flynn responded that the funds we get from the state are based on the previous year's costs. We only get reimbursement for homeless students. It is reimbursed to the Town and then the School Committee has to request that to be transferred back to the school.

Ms. Rossi asked why does it go to the town first?

MS. Flynn said that it was a General fund receipt. How it is handled would have to change in the legislature. We are currently transporting students to multiple towns for both homeless and foster students.

Mr. McKiernan made a motion to approve the balance transfer as presented, seconded by Ms. Bacchiocchi.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea, Apryl Rossi – yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea – 5, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

Superintendent's Report:

The Superintendent asked the committee to approve the Bill and Payroll Warrants as listed in the Superintendent's newsletter.

Ms. Rossi made a motion to approve the Bill and Payroll Warrants as presented, seconded by Mr. McKiernan.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea, Apryl Rossi – yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea – 5, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

Obsolete Vehicles:

The Transportation Department is looking for the School Committee to deem the several vehicles obsolete. These buses have not operated on the road for some time. All usable parts have been removed from the buses and utilized. A vote is required. There are 21 vehicles total

Ms. Rossi asked if all of the vehicles have been replaced?

Ms. Rossi made a motion to approve marking these vehicles as obsolete as presented, seconded by Mr. McKiernan.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea, Apryl Rossi – yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea – 5, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

Report of the School Committee:

Ms. Rossi reported that the Policy Review committee met last night. She will present their information at the next meeting.

Mr. Brogioli requested nominations for the Alumni Sub committee. You may nominate someone from the district website.

Principal's Report:

Ms. Jane Fondulis, PASS program

26 students - 7 are School Choice. 6 are seniors - some complete in January and some in June

We have extended to a 4th night - Monday through Thursday.

New Thursday classes are not costing us due to a grant and partners. We are able to offer electives.

Mr. Scott Palladino, Wareham High School

94.1% Student Attendance

97% Staff Attendance

Mr Palladino highlighted the following events -

Financial Aid Night

Unified Basketball

Credit for Life - thank you, Ms. Bacchiocchi. Moved to the fall and it was a great move. Appreciate Cape Cod Five and other companies

Sophomores - Seniors - All Cape College Day - 3:30 - 5:30, October 18th, High School gym. Schools from all around but mostly NorthEast.

Spirit Week - October 16-20 culminating in a football game and Homecoming Dance.

Ms. Rossi asked all principals what the average class size in their building is and how many school choice students were currently enrolled.

Mr. Palladino stated that he could bring that information to a later meeting. Due to the high school's schedule this was not an easy report to create. He also stated that at the current time there were no school choice students at WHS. When Ms. Rossi asked why there was no school choice, Mr. Palladino explained that he did not have enough teachers for the schedule he had now. Adding school choice students would mean he would need even more teachers.

Ms. Tracie Cote, Wareham Middle School

97% Staff

95% Student

Ms Cote highlighted the following things -

Pictures were taken the other day.

Field trips for students with Buzzard Bay Coalition - grant funded.

½ way through term 1 - Progress Reports went home today

Our average Class size is around 20.

School choice numbers are difficult because once a student is accepted in school choice, it rolls over every year and they do not have to reapply annually. If they were accepted at WES, they are automatically at WMS without notification.

Ms. Bethany Chandler, Wareham Elementary School

98% Staff, 95% Student Thanks to Guidance Counselors for this work

Dr. Chandler highlighted the following things -

Kindergarten Rally - tonight to showcase work

Basketball Clinic at WES - Friday afternoon with grade 3 and 4 girls - 62 girls with Mr. Fortune

Student Council just started - Holiday Fair, Pumpkin Story Walk, Veterans Day

Picture Day - 10/19

Ms. Chandler did not know the school choice numbers right then.

Class Sizes - K - 18, 1 - 19, 2 - 17, 3 - 22, 4 - 21

Mr. Brogioli asked who is participating in Veterans Day? JROTC is heading it up.

Mr. McKiernan asked what the next issue that the school committee could help with?

Mr. Palladino's response was that it is necessary to maintain the current level of staffing.

Mr. McKiernan wanted to know why this is an issue?

Mr. Palladino said, "Every year we are cutting staff positions. Last year was a History position and the year before it was a Science position which is why we have no Computer Science. These cuts limit what we can offer."

Ms. Rossi wanted to know if many students were enrolled in AP/IB classes?

Mr. Palladino said that they had very high numbers this year.

Mr. Brogioli requested that if board members have questions in advance to please send them to the chairman and it will get to the principals so they can let principals be prepared.

MCAS REPORT:

Dr. D'Andrea began by thanking Dr. Schwamb for the presentation, for the data and for putting it all together. Thank you to the principals and staff for their time and attention. And of course, our teachers and their hard work! There are certainly areas where we showed significant growth - good news - and there are areas where we still need to work.

Dr. D'Andrea reviewed the district's CORE values with an emphasis on Perseverance and how often he saw that demonstrated by students and teachers within the schools

The definition of SGP is that it measures the degree to which a student's achievement has changed from the prior year compared to other students in the same grade who performed the same as the student.

DART - District Analysis Review Tool - compares a district to comparable districts. As opposed to close districts, DESE now compares WPS to districts with similar enrollment demographics. A chart was shown that lists the districts that DESE says are comparable. Dr. Schwamb filled out the chart for each district in our DART list. She completed charts that compared us to those other districts.

WES -

Dr. Chandler introduced Dr. Russo, Assistant Principal. WES was one of 66 schools named as a School of Recognition. That meant that WES was at the top of the 7 categories that DESE ranks. Thank you to everyone who makes this happen.

Dr. Chandler's comments -

WES improved +19 percentile in the Accountability ratings.

Grade 3 data - not as well as in grade 4. It is the first year that students take MCAS. This is an area that we are focused on for this year.

Last year was the first year that both the principal and AP administered MCAS. It was a learning experience.

Dr. Russo - We have a new curriculum - Amplify CKLA. Students are currently doing voice overs with stories. We found that we lost points in the writing portion. There is after school tutoring for select students. There were 23 students who missed proficiency by 1-2 questions and 40 students who missed in Math. Intensive interventions are being done with those that are very close to proficiency.

Dr. Chandler said they need to intervene further and better. The problem is in synthesis and in production. At the end of grade 1 and grade 2, they can read it but are having an issue with the writing.

Grade 4 - We were above the state in both ELA and Math in SGP and at the state for Meeting/Exceeding. We think that small group sizes, BOOST, returning to one teacher teaches all subjects and a focus on attendance played a huge part. Sub groups did very well.

Dr. Schwamb and Dr. Chandler presented a timeline of how we got to where we are beginning in 2017. When she first started in the district, 60% of K students were under the state. They began to work with Carrie Thurston and included a combination of all stakeholders.

WMS - Ms. Cote and Ms. Frain, AP of Special Education

WMS was the reason that the district was a level 3 district for many years. We turned in 2018 and continue to climb. DART districts are important so Ms. Cote performed her own investigation of those districts compared to Wareham. WMS has the highest accountability rating compared to all other DART districts. They double the accountability rating of 7 of the DART districts.

ORR - 56, Bourne - 33, Carver - 36 But the other districts do not come close to the demographics of Wareham. 74% high needs, 70% low income

WMS is not where we want to be but we are climbing. We have so many students at the 491, 494, etc. Only 20% are proficient which creates an upside down triangle. There is no way to move out in one year. I am confident that we will get out of the upside down triangle.

Ms. Frain - We are not looking for perfection but for progress especially in Special Education. We grew in most categories 8-10 points. Grade 6 ELA is a focus after reviewing scores. We are climbing and the goal is progress.

Science MCAS tests 3 years worth of standards. The standards have changed and the test has changed again.

Empowering teachers to make curriculum decisions, using data to drive instruction has led to our results. Teachers are asking for more data. It is a tribute to teachers, paraprofessionals, and families. What can we do? Collaboration - not just one factor but a combination of so many.

WHS - Mr. Palladino, Ms. Cavicchi, Ms. Cannon

IF you look at how accountability ratings are calculated, WHS gets grouped with 9-12 and K-8, 9-12. We are back to CORE classes for remediation in ELA and Math for 8th and 10th grades. There is improvement - up 5 points.

Some reasons we have noted for scores include 8th grade moving to WHS the first year of the Next Generation test.

We have moved Biology to grade 9.

Ms. Cannon, AP of Special Education, discusses focus on SGP for High Needs and Special Education.

Ms. Cavicchi reviewed scores for our 10th grade tests. SGP rose 11 points. It is not where we really want to be but we have broken down the standards. Areas of focus are in writing and vocabulary.

Mr. Palladino - We had a tough environment last spring with the death of a classmate. ELA was finished and Science immediately followed his death and the Math assessment was right after his funeral. We have seen increased social emotional concerns with students leaving from COVID. We made a change

from large area testing to classroom testing last year but plan on moving back to a large area this year. Having an 8th grade dean was very helpful for creating the appropriate environment.

NEASC preparation takes two full years. There was little professional development for our teachers in those years. Computer Science is not offered and it is part of the MCAS Science assessment.

Ms. Cannon - As a group we really dove into the scores. Special Ed, Low Income and High Needs were on par with the state. What is happening? We began to focus on SEL for our sub-groups. Mental Health - Tier 2 interventions for students. Viking Block for students who don't have As and Bs have to work with their teachers.

Ms. Cavicchi stated that Interventions, formative assessments such as Edulastic and other methods to allow teachers data quickly have helped raise scores.

Ms. Rossi asked Ms. Cote if she was beginning to see students with the changes in literacy at WES? Ms. Cote replied that given the scores from last year's 4th graders, 40% proficient, they are hoping to see this year. Ms. Rossi commended the high school for recognizing that the middle of the road students need attention and we tend to lose them to other districts.

Ms. Bacchiocchi stated that most of the questions around how you are using the data have been answered. Congratulations to WES for your recognition. Thank you to Ms. Cote for the extra analysis. She asked what they felt was the most important piece of data here? SGP?

Dr. Schwamb said that SGP but the internal data is also very important and is what we actually use on a day to day basis. The internal data is what is used to change our instruction?

Mr. Brogioli stated that he appreciates your candor in acknowledging there is still work to be done.

Without any further business, Ms. Rossi made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. McKiernan.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi - yea, Apryl Rossi - yea, Brennan McKiernan - yea

Yea - 5, Nay - 0 Abstain - 0

VOTE: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Recorded by Bonnie Lasorsa, Director of Technology

Respectfully submitted by:

