

**Wellesley Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting  
June 21, 2022  
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. Those present included Chair Catherine Mirick, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Leda Eizenberg, member Craig Mack; Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov; Interim Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Jorge Allen; Director of Nursing Ashley Hulme; and Student Advisory representatives Ivy Wang, and Sofia Dobado.

Ms. Mirick announced that the meeting is being held remotely and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no speakers.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Mirick stated today was the last day of school. She noted on Wednesday, June 15, Hunnewell held a farewell open house, which was attended by Ms. Quirk, Dr. Lussier, and other staff as well as current and former students and families. Today was the annual celebratory Lights Out Parade. The leader of the parade was Judy Johnson, who has been a crossing guard on Grove Street for 53 years and is retiring this year.

Ms. Mirick added that the Committee does not schedule Office Hours over the summer; however, they are still available to be reached via email.

Ms. Chow stated the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) continued their conversation regarding the Hunnewell Track & Field proposal at their meeting on June 16. They did not take a vote, as one member was not present. They plan to vote at their next meeting on July 7. Regarding the lacrosse wall, Ms. Chow stated there will be a point when the Committee will have to vote to accept the privately raised funds, though the timing is currently unknown and more information will come from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Mr. Mack recognized the Student Representatives and thanked them for their service this year, adding they have all been very dedicated.

**STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT**

Ms. Wang stated the students are happy that the end of the year is here and are happy that this year they were able to do many traditional things.

Ms. Dobado offered congratulations to the 8th graders for graduating today.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Meeting Minutes – June 7 and June 14, 2022
- Declaration of Surplus: Library Books - Hunnewell, Hardy, WMS, WHS; Special Education Testing Materials
- Trip Approval: NYC Theater Tour 1/27-1/29/23

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

MOVED: Ms. Eizenberg; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

#### **GRADE 5 WOW EQUITY PROJECT RECOGNITION**

Ms. Trach stated she has been looking forward to celebrating the students who participated in the World of Wellesley (WOW) project this year, especially as it was her first opportunity to engage with the essays and projects.

Students were able to choose from three prompts on the theme of equity and justice for all people. Of the 68 projects turned in, 75% were in the form of written stories, poetry, reflections, or slide decks; 5% were spoken essays in video or podcast format; and 20% were performances. Ms. Trach shared the names of students who participated. She thanked the fifth grade teachers and administrators and offered a big thanks to WOW for supporting the students. She added it was inspiring to see students have such voice and emotion in their work, noting they took the prompts to heart and sent in incredibly impressive work.

#### **2021-22 NURSING ACTIVITIES REPORT**

Ms. Hulme summarized the year in the Nursing Department.

In terms of COVID, the district employed the same mitigation strategies as the previous year with a few tweaks. Students and families were encouraged to get vaccinated and multiple clinics were held. Cleaning and disinfecting protocols stayed in place as well as point of care testing and surveillance testing. The District moved to a mask optional environment as of March 7. As of June 1, close to if not more than 90% of staff and students were vaccinated.

She discussed the evolution of COVID management in line with state guidelines. WPS participated in the state's testing program and began surveillance testing in schools in October with temporary help from the National Guard. In February WPS discontinued pool testing as well as test to stay and contact tracing and implemented home surveillance testing. In reviewing the four testing programs used throughout the year, Ms. Hulme noted that the test to stay program that ran from October through February saved an estimated 8,000 hours of learning time, adding that of 1,161 tests performed, only 7 positive results were returned. She noted symptomatic testing remained ongoing, adding a total of 6,946 COVID tests were performed on staff and students this year. Additionally, over 49,000 home kits were distributed between February and June thanks to the help of Niki Ofenloch and other volunteers. Throughout the year, the District has worked closely with the Wellesley Health Department, Board of Health, and DESE.

Additionally, new in 2022 is the SNAP health portal. This is a way for parents to gain access to their students' health records and upload required documents. It improves the flow of information.

Ms. Hulme closed by thanking the District's team of amazing nurses.

The Committee thanked her for her presentation and thanked her and her team for the tremendous amount of work they did this year.

**SWAC REPORT**

Ms. Orlov summarized the work the School Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC) did this past year. She stated SWAC serves a vital role in the District.

This year they reviewed and assessed the District's Wellness Policy and Implementation Guidelines in an effort to address school nutrition and nutritional education, physical activity, social-emotional well-being, and related issues that affect student health and wellness. In particular, they identified areas that require updating to be in compliance with federal guidelines around school wellness policies. These recommended updates were approved by the School Committee on June 14.

Looking ahead to next year, topics will include updates to the life threatening allergy protocol, reviewing results of the MetroWest survey that was given this year, continued discussions on COVID management and recovery and social-emotional health, vaping, issues for students who identify as LGBTQ+ to be sure students are supportive effectively, and possibly beginning to look at school start times, which has been on the SWAC list for a few years.

The Committee asked Ms. Orlov clarifying questions and thanked her and the SWAC committee for their work.

**ANNUAL FOOD SERVICE REPORT**

Matt Delaney, Food Services Director, joined the Committee.

Ms. Mahr offered an overview of the Food Service program. Since the beginning of COVID, meals have been offered free of charge to all students regardless of financial ability with no requirement to submit an application. This was through the USDA program known as the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). There has been a push nationally and locally for the program to continue and while the USDA will not continue to fund the program for the next school year, the State has considered running a similar program. At this point, it is unknown if the bill will pass and this is the point in the year where the District would come to School Committee to approve rates for the following year. Of note, the program has not and will not cover drinks, snacks, second meals, or a la carte items.

Ms. Mahr noted the number of meals served and the revenue outside of reimbursement for meals increased dramatically in the 2021-22 school year from the previous two years, up from 86,701 meals in 2019-20 to 189,004 in 2021-22 and revenue up from \$21,889 to \$320,275. There is a projected fund balance of \$461,014 for the end of this year, which is nearly back to what was seen pre-COVID.

Mr. Delaney offered Food Services highlights. The new production kitchen at the middle school operates as a hub, making meals for all elementary schools. Sustainability efforts included making paper straws available, eliminating plastic bowls, and replacing most plastic bottles with cans. Meatless Mondays were practiced at all schools. Local, organic fruits and vegetables and local seafood were served. A pilot program with Whitson's for Veggabols, a plant-based entree program, and pop-up shops were a hit with students.

Looking ahead to the 2022-23 school year, Mr. Delaney stated the District will continue to utilize government commodities whenever possible to save money and will continue to provide locally sourced milk, yogurt, and bakery breads. The Veggabol program at WMS and WHS will continue daily and will be available at the elementary schools weekly. Pop up shops will continue with more added.

Ms. Mahr stated the federal and state reimbursement rates are much higher under SSO than the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Massachusetts districts are waiting to see what the State will do to continue an SSO-type program and next year's reimbursement rates have not been published yet. She is requesting permission from the Committee to potentially increase the price of meals 25 cents each meal at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels if the Conference Committee does not fund universally free meals. If it does pass, the ask is moot unless the reimbursement rate is reduced.

Ms. Eizenberg stated she has heard from families that the cultural variety of foods has meant a great deal. Ms. Mirick added she was grateful for the option to donate leftover funds.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to raise prices by 25 cents per meal if the Massachusetts Conference Committee does not fund universally free meals.

MOVED: Ms. Eizenberg; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

#### **VOTE: NON-UNION SALARY INCREASE**

Ms. Mahr stated on an annual basis, non-union salaries are brought to the Committee to approve an increase. These positions include central administration, substitutes, tutors, lunch monitors, van drivers, principals, and others not covered under one of the bargaining units. The Superintendent's salary is not included in this request and is voted separately. She is requesting to increase and adjust salaries by 2.5% with two exceptions, one being a previously approved restructuring of van driver Step 5 to a total of a 5% increase and a previously approved restructuring of before school hourly rates, which will be funded by fees.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion that the School Committee vote to approve the salary and wage schedule for FY23 for all non-union staff, except the Superintendent's salary.

MOVED: Mr. Mack; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Ms. Mirick noted the following proposed changes in Committee assignments:

SWAC: Craig Mack to take over for Catherine Mirick

Wellesley Climate Action Committee (CAC): Catherine Mirick to take over for Cindy Mahr. Ms. Mirick thanked Ms. Mahr for her work on the committee for the past three years.

Ms. Mirick entertained a motion to appoint Craig Mack to SWAC and Catherine Mirick to the Climate Action Committee.

MOVED: Ms. Eizenberg; SECONDED: Ms. Chow; ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

Ms. Mirick stated she had quite a year as School Committee Chair, noting she learned a lot. She appreciated the support and work from colleagues on the Committee, Dr. Lussier, and the staff at Central Office, offering huge thanks to Vice Chair Ms. Chow for her insight and guidance.

Ms. Mirick moved to appoint Leda Eizenberg as School Committee Chair, Linda Chow as Vice Chair, and Craig Mack as Secretary effective immediately. Mr. Mack seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

Ms. Eizenberg offered thanks to fellow Committee members for their faith in her taking on the role and thanked Ms. Chow for staying on as Vice Chair.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sharon Gray congratulated Ms. Eizenberg on her new role. She also wished Ms. Orlov and retiring Superintendent Administrative Assistant Addie Doherty the best in their retirement.

Ms. Gray congratulated Ms. Mirick on completing her service as Chair, noting she showed grace during a very difficult year, adding Ms. Mirick should be very proud of the way she managed the year and advocated for students.

Ms. Eizenberg and Ms. Chow read comments by those who could not attend the meeting, including Select Board members Tom Olfelder and Colette Aufranc and School Committee member Melissa Martin. In their messages, they stated it was an honor to work with Ms. Mirick, noting her kind, caring, and straightforward nature served the students well and served as a compass for the School Committee. They complimented her balanced judgment, willingness to tackle difficult topics, and expansive empathy.

Ms. Eizenberg stated she admired Ms. Mirick's leadership, noting she always asked questions from all sides and gave equal weight to each perspective. Mr. Mack thanked Ms. Mirick for her patience, mentoring, and stewardship. Ms. Chow added the Committee was fortunate to have Ms. Mirick at its helm with her work on improving community engagement, careful planning, and invaluable steady leadership.

Ms. Mirick stated it was an honor to serve as Chair and she was looking forward to continuing the work next year.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 6:46 pm, Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOVED:** Ms. Mirick; **SECONDED:** Mr. Mack; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mirick – Yes; Ms. Eizenberg – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Mr. Mack - Yes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Leda Eizenberg  
Secretary

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

2022 WPS-WOW Grade 5 Project Description  
2022 WOW Grade 5 Equity Project Presentation  
Nursing Activities 2021-22 Presentation  
Nursing Activities Report 2021-2022  
SWAC SC 2021-2022  
FY23 Non-Union Salaries Memo  
2022 Food Services Presentation