

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
August 6, 2020
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. Those present included Chair Linda Chow, Vice Chair Melissa Martin, Secretary Sharon Gray, members Jim Roberti and Catherine Mirick; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Joan Dabrowski and Cynthia Mahr, Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov, WMS Principal Mark Ito, Fiske Principal Rachel McGregor, PAWS Director Rebecca Zieminski, Department Head of Nursing Linda Corridan, and Student Advisory representatives Ian Lei and Rachel White.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Nilforoshan, resident of 6 Twitchell Street and parent of 3 children, addressed the issue of young children spreading the coronavirus and the required spacing between young students in classrooms, noting that science dictates youngsters have limited ability to spread the virus and as long as teachers are spaced 6 feet away from children, there should not be a risk to teachers of contracting it from young children. She expressed her concern with children in the hybrid model spreading the virus due to attending after-school or other daycare programs during remote learning days. She encouraged the use of PPE for teachers and staff to avoid infection.

Adam Meyers, 62 Overbrook Drive and parent of 2 elementary children, hopes to hear more details about the hybrid model including what a typical day would look like, how many children will be in the classroom, how much movement will be allowed inside and outside the classroom. He wondered how similar hybrid learning will be to a traditional school day for students. He also asked how the district will react to a single case of the virus in a classroom, and wondered how ventilation will be addressed in older schools.

Sal Insogna, 95 Russell Road and parent of elementary students at Hardy, expressed concern with the reopening of schools in a safe manner due to issues with ventilation and the proper cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms and the school buildings overall.

Stephanie Albertson, parent of Middle and High school students, asked what the threshold is for positive cases before a classroom or school will be shut down, and also how many responses there were to the survey.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Martin reported that the **Middle School Building Systems project** is slated for the Special Town Meeting in October. Leading up to Special Town Meeting, there will be discussions scheduled with the PBC and the Advisory Committee to review the project.

Ms. Chow acknowledged Dr. Chisum and his team for pulling together on very short notice, a special, **in-person graduation for the Class of 2020** that was held on

July 31st. Ms. Chow also discussed that there is a **local sewing group** that has been making masks for WPS staff and students. She noted that the funding for the fabric was generously provided through the **Covid 19 Relief Fund** and she thanked both organizations for their generosity. Ms. Chow also announced that the Committee will hold a **Virtual Office Hour** on Thursday, August 13th at 9 am.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier reported he was just participating in a session with WPS DE&I Director Charmie Currie, who was hosting a **"Where Do We Go from Here?"** session with staff, students, WPS alums, and others to continue discussions regarding anti-racism. A final installment of **"Wake Up Wellesley"** is scheduled for Monday, August 10th. He encouraged community members to join the conversation.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Lei also attended the session with Dr. Curry and found it interesting to hear the perspective of WPS staff regarding anti-racism in schools.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes: July 7, July 13, July 15 and July 24, 2020 Open Sessions
New England Medical Invoices: WELLS2003 (\$690.84), WELLSFY2019 (\$130.50)

Ms. Chow entertained a motion to approve the July 7, 2020 Open Session minutes as presented.

MOVED: Mr. Roberti; SECONDED: Ms. Martin; ROLL CALL: Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Abstained.

MOTION CARRIED 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention

Ms. Chow entertained a motion to approve the balance of the Consent Agenda as presented.

MOVED: Ms. Gray; SECONDED: Ms. Martin; ROLL CALL: Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SCHOOL REOPENING PLANNING UPDATE

Ms. Chow acknowledged the commitment and energy on the part of the WPS leadership and reopening teams as well as the working groups to create a thoughtful reopening plan for the District.

Reopening Plans and Recommendations

Dr. Lussier and members of his senior team presented the proposed reopening plan for SY2020-21 for the Wellesley Public Schools, also acknowledging WPS administration, faculty, community and student volunteers who were involved in the creation of the draft plan.

Dr. Lussier reviewed the reopening planning process and timeline to date and subsequent timeline including action by the School Committee on August 13th and submission of the plan to DESE on August 14th.

School reopening priorities were reviewed including the health and safety of students and staff for in-person instruction; the social emotional health of students, staff and families; a differentiated learning approach for the most vulnerable students, including those with IEP services; increased academic rigor, synchronous (live) learning and feedback in the remote learning model; flexibility in staffing models; and continued support of professional development for all educators.

Dr. Lussier announced that based on the feasibility study conducted at each school using the WPS guidelines for 6 foot social distancing, scheduling and current reopening standards, WPS cannot support a full return of students for the fall.

Dr. Dabrowski provided an overview of the WPS recommendation for the hybrid model. Fixed days would be structured among student cohorts with Cohort A attending in person on Mondays/Thursdays; Cohort B attending in person on Tuesdays/Fridays; and prioritized students would attend in person on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All students would be learning remotely on Wednesday mornings. The daily schedule for the hybrid model for each level was reviewed for in-school days as well as at home learning days for the hybrid model, and there will be weekly dedicated time for faculty planning and professional development during the Wednesday half day.

Dr. Dabrowski discussed that the DESE also required districts to have the ability to pivot to a full remote model if it is necessary to do so at some point during the school year. She discussed how the hybrid program will shift seamlessly to remote learning, and reviewed the schedule for full remote learning for those students who were participating in the hybrid model.

Dr. Dabrowski then reviewed the Remote Learning School (RLS) model which is a self-contained model for students who cannot return to school in person and includes a blend of synchronous and asynchronous online learning and self-directed offline learning. She noted that even if those students in the hybrid model will need to shift to full remote learning during the school year, the Remote Learning School will continue to operate as a separate, self-contained space for students who are not able to return to school in person. The weekly schedule for the RLS as well as expectations were reviewed. It was noted that the RLS will be aligned with state standards for learning with more 'live' teaching and learning; students are expected to participate as they would for in-school learning and attendance will be taken; grades and feedback will be provided on academic work, and there will be regular communication with students and families about remote learning.

Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov reviewed the state guidance as it affects Special Education services. She indicated that students will receive their services regardless of which model they are in, including the implementation of IEPs. Ms. Orlov reviewed how Special Education students are prioritized for in-person instruction, and

for those Special Education students who do not meet the high needs criteria, they will participate in the hybrid model with the possibility of additional in-person services on the two remote days. The Student Services staff is working with families on how to accommodate their children. The reopening plan includes additional details regarding Special Education services.

Dr. Lussier reviewed the proposed phased-in approach to hybrid learning based on the DESE Commissioner's announcement of reducing the number of in-school days for students from 180 to 170. This decision was driven by the recognition that teachers would need additional time at the beginning of the school year to prepare for this year including additional training on health and safety protocols, as well as technological training, and to work on modified curriculum.

Ms. Mahr and Ms. Corridan reviewed health and safety protocols including mask, hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements; arrival/dismissal procedures; building signage and cleaning; air quality/ventilation; and personal protective equipment for faculty and staff.

Ms. Mahr discussed transportation restrictions as imposed by DESE guidance, as well as Food Services processes and procedures.

Next steps include a survey of parents/guardians regarding which model they will choose for their children; a survey of faculty asking them to indicate their ability to return to school buildings; and a transportation survey for parents who had opted in for busing services for SY20-21.

The School Committee was provided an opportunity to ask clarifying questions on various components of the reopening plan. Members expressed their appreciation for all the thoughtful work that has gone into the development of the reopening plan presented this evening.

The full draft report and presentation are available on the WPS website.

COVID Testing

The Committee was joined by Jesse Boehm, a Wellesley resident and cancer researcher who is part of a group of citizens in the scientific and medical fields that is proposing that, in addition to the safety protocols already put in place by WPS, Wellesley should consider taking the next step of a testing program for faculty and staff.

Dr. Boehm discussed the group's recommendation to implement a 3-month pilot program at WPS for the testing of students and staff, with notification within 24 hours of testing. He noted this program will help Wellesley quickly isolate individuals prior to the onset of symptoms and reduce transmission. He informed the Committee that the group has developed several memos to stakeholders addressing the financial, operational and scientific issues and concerns related with this proposal.

The testing program proposal includes 3 aspects: baseline testing of students and staff at the start of school; testing of symptomatic individuals and their contacts; and possibly

the continued surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals. The cost of this program is significant and will require some form of fundraising and other financing options.

Dr. Boehm hopes to have additional information next week relative to operational, financial and logistical possibilities.

ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION

Ms. Chow reminded the Committee this resolution was drafted by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and discussed by the Committee at a previous meeting. Since that time, Ms. Chow and Mr. Roberti, along with DE&I Director Charmie Curry and members of the WPS administrative team, reviewed and revised the resolution to make it representative of the work that Wellesley has done and continues to do.

Ms. Chow was pleased to announce that Dr. Curry had applied and was just recently accepted to a program offered by DESE called the Culturally Responsive Leadership Academy. The Academy will present a series of presentations and a working group to help set goals for the district around DE&I for SY21-22. Dr. Curry will be forming a team of academic leaders as well as some optional members, such as members of the School Committee, to participate in this program.

After a discussion and review of the suggested revisions, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to endorse and accept the Anti-Racism Resolution as presented.

MOVED: Ms. Gray; SECONDED: Ms. Mirick; ROLL CALL: Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HHU UPDATE

Hardy/Upham

Ms. Chow removed herself from the meeting at 10:14 pm and returned at 10:22 pm.

Ms. Gray reported the SBC is moving towards a decision on a preferred school building site for submission to the MSBA by October 27, 2020. She reviewed the three options the SBC is considering, as well as other work the SBC continues to do on each site. She encouraged the Committee and the community to follow the SBC meetings and visit the SBC website for extensive information on this project. A presentation to the School Committee and Selectmen is planned for October 1st, and a community forum is scheduled on September 17th.

Advisory Committee Appointment to SBC

Ms. Martin indicated Mary Gard, the Advisory Committee's representative on the SBC, has completed her term on Advisory, so there is a need to appoint a new member to represent the Advisory Committee on the SBC. The Advisory Committee's recommendation is to appoint Patti Quigley as its liaison to the SBC. Affirmative votes from the Selectmen and School Committee are required to have Ms. Quigley appointed.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Martin entertained a motion to affirm the Advisory Committee's recommendation to appoint Patti Quigley to the School Building Committee.

MOVED: Ms. Gray; **SECONDED:** Mr. Roberti; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes; Ms. Mirick – Yes; Mr. Roberti – Yes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 10:23 pm, Ms. Chow entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session under Massachusetts G.L. c 30A, §22, to approve minutes from the Executive Session on July 15 and 24, 2020; and under Massachusetts G.L. c 30A, §21(A), exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wellesley Educators Association because, as Chair, she declared that to discuss this in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee, and to invite into the Executive Session Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Cindy Mahr and Joan Dabrowski, Director of Student Services Sarah Orlov, Director of Human Resources Gayle McCracken, and Town Labor Counsel Jim Pender of Morgan, Brown and Joy, and to not return to Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

MOVED: Ms. Martin; **SECONDED:** Mr. Roberti; **ROLL CALL:** Ms. Mirick – Yes; Ms. Gray – Yes; Ms. Chow – Yes; Ms. Martin – Yes.; Mr. Roberti - Yes

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mirick
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

NE Medical Invoices WELLS2003, WELLSFY2019

WPS Draft Reopening Plan & Presentation

Preliminary Reopening Plan Submission to DESE

COVID Testing Presentations

Safer Teachers, Safer Students Memos – 3 Sequential Strategies Recommendations

WPS/School Committee Anti-Racism Resolution

Continuum of Becoming an Anti-Racist Institution Chart