

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
September 13, 2022
Remote Online Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Those present included Chair Leda Eizenberg, Vice Chair Linda Chow, Secretary Craig Mack, members Melissa Martin and Catherine Mirick; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach; Assistant Superintendent Cynthia Mahr; Director of Student Services Kathleen Bernklow; and Student Advisory representatives Ivy Wang, Sofia Dobado, Evelyn Harrison, and Armita Hamrah.

Ms. Eizenberg announced that the meeting is being held in the Juliani Room and recorded by local media and broadcast live by Wellesley Media. She welcomed everyone back to the Committee's first in-person meeting in over two years and the first ever in hybrid format. She thanked the community for their patience.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one wished to speak for Public Comment.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee members had nothing to report.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Lussier offered the following recognitions:

From Ellen Quirk: A continued and sincere thank you for all the host schools for being so welcoming to all of the Hunnewell staff and students.

From Rachel McGregor: A huge thank you to Sandy Trach, Jenn Friedman, and her team for purchasing new books for all elementary classroom libraries and book rooms. Thank you to the Fiske Literacy Specialist, Krsitn Stoetzel, and our TAs for sorting and labeling all the books and delivering them to the classrooms. Students and teachers alike are thrilled with the new titles! Thank you!

From Jordan Hoffman: Matthew Polletto, music teacher at Schofield, planned a whole-school flag-raising ceremony that took place today (Friday). Families joined us outside to watch fifth graders raise the flag and sing a patriotic song. The event wrapped up with the whole school singing the Schofield Song. It was wonderful having our entire school community together!

WHS recognizes senior Katherine Liu on her many accomplishments as a concert pianist and recently received the 2022 Davidson Fellow Laureate \$50,000 Scholarship at MIT this past weekend. Katherine and her brother, Jonathan, also started a club last year named "Music for Society" where all students who love to play music were welcomed and practiced with hopes to bring their group to play for senior centers and hospitals.

Dr. Lussier provided an update on the District's Strategic Plan. He stated a steering committee has been formed of approximately 20 people representing a cross section of Central Office, administrators, school staff at each level, parents, School Committee members, and students. Focus groups will be conducted later in the fall with parents, students, teachers, and community members. Each will utilize a skilful facilitator and a notetaker to take all data and encourage rich conversations. Surveys will be developed and administered at this time as well.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Ms. Harrison had nothing to report.

CONSENT AGENDA

Gift Acceptances

Trip Approval - Debate Team Conference, New York, NY, Nov. 2022

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

MOVED: Ms. Martin; SECONDED: Ms. Mirick.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

WELCOME INTERIM METCO DIRECTOR

Dr. Lussier stated current METCO Director, Cynthia Russell, will be relocating to Pittsburgh and a posting was created for an Interim Director. Mr. Karsten Cash is a 1991 Wellesley High School graduate and participated in the METCO program. Additionally, he is the parent of a current Wellesley student in the METCO program. Mr. Cash has recently served as the Director of Student Support Services at METCO Inc. headquarters. Dr. Lussier stated Mr. Cash brings an energy level and optimism to the WPS team.

Mr. Cash stated he has received an amazing welcome from people. He added it is wonderful to be able to work in an environment and community near and dear to his family's heart.

UPDATE: HUNNEWELL TRACK & FIELD PROJECTS

Ms. Chow stated the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) voted on July 7 to approve the installation of lights at the Hunnewell Track & Field. The vote was 3-2 in favor and the motion language specifically outlined parameters of use. The parameters are expected to be memorialized in an NRC policy as well as in a request to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to add to conditions of use. NRC will take into account that there might be other instances of use, such as if MIAA requires additional games for playoffs, if the start of WHS graduation gets pushed out, or if the town would like to hold a special event at night.

She stated estimated costs are being revisited with respect to inflation and supply chain issues. As of July, there is an estimated shortfall of \$50,115 for the bathrooms, which now has a total cost of \$575,115. Of note, \$525,000 was allocated to the project at Annual Town Meeting in 2018. The current estimate for the privately funded lights, sound system, and team rooms totals \$1,297,385. Ms. Chow noted the fundraising target for the projects is \$1,500,000.

Bathrooms - Currently in the design and permitting phase. Ms. Chow stated the estimated \$50,000 shortfall will be part of the fundraising effort. She noted three of the small bathrooms are gender neutral and accessible. The approximate timeframe from order to delivery is around six months, though is subject to change.

Team rooms, lighting, sound - Now that NRC has voted to approve the project, fundraising can begin. The hope is that some design and permitting work can continue while the fundraising is ongoing, though actual installation cannot happen until enough has been raised to order supplies. A team has been formed as an independent organization, not affiliated with the town in

any way, to handle the fundraising and will be led by Jerry Nigro. The team is using Community Investors, which is a Wellesley-based 501c3 organization whose goal is to support the physical, social and emotional wellness of our next generation through fun, inclusive, community-based active play. A website has been set up at www.wellesleyfieldfund.com (included here for informational purposes only). Ms. Chow explained that while the original understanding was that the Select Board would need to accept the funds, it has been clarified by Tom Harrington, Town Counsel, that the School Committee can accept them, as they accept other gifts. Mr. Harrington explained a fundraising group can offer either an unrestricted or restricted gift, which the Committee would vote to accept. The funds would then be put into a separate account by the Town Treasurer. The work can be done piecemeal as funds are raised.

Next steps - Ms. Chow will update the Hunnewell Track & Field webpage. Regarding bathrooms, the project will move forward through Design Review Board (DRB) and ZBA for the permitting and approval process. Regarding team rooms, lights, and sound, fundraising will begin immediately and the projects will concurrently move through Wetlands Protection Committee, DRB, and ZBA. Additionally, discussions will continue regarding ongoing operating expenses and potential implications for annual budgets going forward.

**DISCUSSION/VOTE: JOB DESCRIPTIONS - COORDINATOR FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT;
ACCOUNTING COORDINATOR - RAO & PAYROLL**

Ms. Eizenberg stated there were no changes to the job descriptions since the previous meeting.

In discussion with the Committee, Dr. Lussier appreciated that it is not common to create new roles outside of the regular budget cycle and he acknowledged the level of urgency that prompted the request. He noted the Coordinator for Community Engagement would be a .75 FTE position to begin, possibly to become a 1.0 in subsequent years. Regarding the RAO and Payroll position, he noted with the unique nature of the job description, they would be seeking a candidate with strong baseline technical skills with a preference for someone with experience in the growing area of public records.

Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to accept job descriptions for Coordinator for Community Engagement; Accounting Coordinator - RAO & Payroll.

MOVED: Mr. Mack; SECONDED: Ms. Martin.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DRAFT DISTRICT/SUPERINTENDENT GOALS

Dr. Lussier stated that each year the Administration brings its goals to the Committee, noting they do not reflect all the work happening in the District. He explained the draft being presented is preliminary.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) - Ms. Trach discussed the continued focus on ensuring rigorous core instruction PreK through Grade 12 by prioritizing essential standards, increasing the use of formative assessment, and implementing interventions and extensions to learning. This will be achieved through continued professional learning in MTSS and evidence-based grading as well as by implementing data teams, a data dashboard, and progress monitoring, to include a pilot program to measure academic progress using a real time assessment tool at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. She stated it was important for teachers and administrators to have a clear picture on how students are doing in order to pinpoint strengths and areas of need.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) - Dr. Bernklow discussed the continued goal of creating a climate of care at all levels by developing a framework for SEL and mental health supports. She noted the District was able to add five School Adjustment Counselors and Social Workers at the elementary level. Ms. Trach stated PreK-5 educators will continue to be trained in Responsive Classroom and noted evidence of it taking hold can already be seen in her visits to schools. The District will also pilot a PreK-5 skills-based social-emotional curriculum. Additionally, WPS will continue to utilize Panorama surveys. There will be a staff survey in the fall, a family survey likely after the New Year, and a student survey will likely be conducted again in the spring.

High Expectations Teaching - Ms. Trach stated a data dashboard will be implemented that will allow for visualizing and analyzing student performance in real time. PreK-5 data teams will be implemented that will analyze student data five times per year and provide interventions and extensions, and conduct progress monitoring. Dr. Bernklow stated the District will pilot early screening and assessment tools for PreK-1 students who struggle with concepts of early reading. This will assess discrete skill areas and can identify the exact area where a student may be struggling. Additionally, WPS will develop a three-year implementation plan in response to last year's Integrated Specialized Services (ISS) program evaluation.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Dr. Lussier stated a METCO needs assessment will be conducted and the recommendations shared. Ms. Trach described an anticipated partnership with Regis College to help WPS develop a more culturally responsive workforce. This is a pathway program to support paraprofessionals achieve a Bachelor's degree and/or licensure. Additionally, *TalkingPoints* will be implemented as a two-way multilingual family engagement platform.

Dr. Lussier briefly discussed **Critical School Facilities Projects**, the **Strategic Plan**, and **Communications and Community Engagement** as additional goals that have been discussed in greater detail at the September 6 meeting.

Technology Plan - Ms. Bounit described the goal of developing a five-year Technology Plan that is student-centered, equity focused, and data driven. She has been gathering information throughout the district as part of her Entry Plan.

Bargaining with WEA - Dr. Lussier stated negotiations will continue this fall and will hopefully be completed before the end of the calendar year.

Superintendent Professional Learning - Dr. Lussier outlined his goals to include job-alike work with MASS as well as participate in professional development with WPS staff around MTSS. He hopes to work with an external coach. He noted that he has recently updated his certification and in addition is hoping to earn 25 PDPs around special education and English Language Learners.

The Committee thanked the Administrative team for presenting the District's goals noting they appreciate that the goals reflect what has been heard from the community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:11 pm, Ms. Eizenberg entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session under G.C. c.30A, §21(A), exemption #3 - Strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wellesley Educators Association; exemption #2 - Strategy for contract negotiations with non-union personnel (David Lussier); and pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(A), exemption #3 for discussion of strategy regarding

litigation. because, as Chair, she declared that to discuss this in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating and litigating position of the Committee, and to invite into the Executive Session Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendent Sandra Trach, Director of Human Resources Monica Visco, Attorney Jim Pender, and to not return to Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Mack,
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

Karsten Cash Announcement

Job Description - Accounting Coordinator - RAO and Payroll

Job Description - Coordinator for Community Engagement

Update on Hunnewell Track & Field Projects for SC 9.13.22

SY 2022-23 District Goals