

**Woburn School Committee
Woburn Public Schools
55 Locust Street
Woburn, MA 01801**

A regular meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on January 25, 2023, in the Conference Room of the Joyce Middle School located at 55 Locust Street, Woburn, Massachusetts, starting at 7:00p.m.

For the purposes of simultaneous viewing, the School Committee arranged for the livestream of the meeting via Woburn Public Media YouTube Channel.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Cormier-Not Present, Ms. Crowley-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Lipsett-Present, Mr. Mulrenan-Present, Dr. Wells-Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Lipsett made a motion to approve the 1.10.23 SC Minutes.
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Kisiel went over the guidelines for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bill Radochia, parent of two children attending WPS.

Mr. Radochia thanked Mayor Galvin for his role in collective bargaining.

Mr. Radochia commented that Mr. Lipsett is part of the negotiating team and asked him to recuse himself from contract negotiations.

Ms. Crowley did not respond directly to the constituent and appreciates his comments. Ms. Crowley made a correction for the record that Mr. Lipsett is not a part of the negotiating team, he is a part of the school committee. The negotiating team consists of Ellen Crowley, and Chair Christopher Kisiel. It is important during this time to have accuracy.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles Viola, on behalf of the city council, congratulated Mr. Kisiel for being voted the new chairperson.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Sophia Furxhi presented tonight.

- WMHS students are completing Access Test this week as well as Mid-Year Make-Up Exams. Thank you to Mrs. Gillis for facilitating these exams all week.
- 1/26: Best Buddies Movie Night 6:15-8 pm in the WMHS Auditorium
- 2/1: Early Release at WMHS at 11:30. Lunch will be served.
- 2/1-2/2: MCAS Biology and Physics MCAS Test will be administered at WMHS (a bus will be provided on the Early Release Day for any students who need additional time on the test).
- 2/1 and 2/5: Woburn Dollars for Scholars Mailing Drive. Thus far, the number of participants is significantly higher than the previous years! Huge thank you to Mrs.

Patrissi as well as Mrs. Donovan for their efforts, and please follow Mrs. Patrissi on Twitter as well as check out the February Newsletter for more information.

- 2/2: Faculty Meeting at 2:00 in the WMHS Auditorium at 2:45.
- 2/3: Woburn High Report Cards will be distributed
- 2/6-2/14: Woburn High School will be piloting a new schedule to potentially roll out during the 2024-2025 school year. The schedule will be a waterfall fall schedule in which two classes will be dropped each day. This schedule will allow us to provide more time for learning for the students, common planning time for teachers as well as an intervention block that will address student learning loss due to the Covid pandemic. The school start and end time will remain the same, as well as the bus schedule. Mr. Martin will be sending out more information next week, and the schedule will be in the February school newsletter as well.
- 2/14: National Latin Honors Society Induction in the Auditorium from 2-3.
- 2/14: National Latin Honors Society Gladiator Tournament Fundraiser. The club is looking to raise money for students to attend the MA Junior Classical League State Convention in April
- 2/17: Interact Dating Game in the WMHS Auditorium (more details to follow)
- 2/20-2/24: School closed for February Vacation
- 2/27: Schools Reopen
- 2/27: SADD is hosting a fundraiser to raise money for Black and Blue Day on March 5th.

Upcoming Field Trips and Fundraisers

- 2/8: Spectrum Club/Gay Straight Alliance will be going to a leadership seminar at the DESE Headquarters in Malden.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

Elementary and Secondary Special Education Updates: Coordinators Erin Ficociello and Derek Mousseau

Derek Mousseau began by telling the committee this is his second year in the role of Secondary Special Education Coordinator. Last year he was hired in the same role, but he covered elementary and secondary. He is very happy to have Erin Ficociello this year to cover elementary, so he can focus on grades 6-12.

Erin Ficociello told the committee this is her first year with WPS. Ms. Ficociello highlighted a few of the district's special education programs.

ELEMENTARY

SOAR Program - Structured Opportunities for Academic Readiness

The students in this program are cognitively and academically below their grade level peers and require small group instruction.

3 classrooms at Malcolm White

24 students; grades 1-4

3 teachers and 3 paras

GAIN Assessment Center

The Assessment Center is for students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade who may or may not be receiving special education services or 504 services, and are in need of an extended or initial evaluation. These students are in need of additional testing and immediate counseling, behavioral and academic support. Located at Goodyear Elementary School. Thus far the Assessment Center has

seen 5 students through, we are keeping the numbers small. All students are working towards a 40-day evaluation where they are doing extensive assessments. At the end of the 40 days, the team can come together and make generally a recommendation for one of our programs. This allows families and teams not to make a double jump. Another example is a sensory room at the Goodyear with interactive equipment.

RISE—Reaching Independence through Structured Environments

These students have a high level of need due to significant communication disabilities.

7 classrooms at Shamrock

39 students, grade K-5

19 paras

Ms. Ficociello told the committee that having Sensory Spaces is one of the most exciting things that is happening in all schools across the district. Reeves Elementary installed a “Calming Corner” to support students’ needs. This space was created to help students regulate their emotions and prepare them to continue the school day after feeling overwhelmed.

Mr. Mousseau highlighted a few of the district’s secondary programs.

SECONDARY

LEAP—Learning to Excel in Academic Potential

3 classrooms at Joyce Middle School

10 students, grades 6-8

2 teachers, 1 fellow, 2 paras

The LEAP Program is for students in grades 6th through 8th grade who have Language Based (LB) Disabilities. These students are in need of intensive LB instruction in all core classes. These students receive all academic instruction, reading services, and speech services in LEAP and are included in general education classes for electives.

SKY ROOM—Joyce Middle School Sensory Room

Students can use this as a calm zone, or use it to do some school work. The room has a treadmill for active students. Adjustment Counselors use this space for social groups, as the room has an accordion wall for separation.

Mr. Mousseau touched upon other work they are doing. At the Kennedy Middle School, their therapeutic program is now called the GAIN to be more aligned with elementary. That is a new space they are working on. They are working collaboratively with the Triumph Center at all levels to reimagine all the therapeutic programs and this goes all the way up to the high school where they are trying to expand for next year.

Lastly, on February 2, 2023 globally acclaimed Social Thinking experts, Michelle Garcia Winner and Pamela Crooke, will be visiting Woburn Public Schools. During the school day, Michelle and Pam will be touring classrooms and working with various special education staff in the classroom. That evening, Michelle and Pam will be formally presenting at WMHS Auditorium, and this event will be open to families.

Dr. Wells asked about the GAIN Assessment Center; 5 students have gone through, how does that work?

Ms. Ficociello told the committee it is a need based admission process. For example, they had one student for 5 or 6 school days, and he was significantly deregulated in his home school. The staffing at that home school was such they were not able to manage that. He required smaller instructional grouping, and this student was not currently on an IEP, and we needed to open the evaluation process and by law we have 40 days. He came into the assessment center and we started that evaluation.

Together with the three Team Chairs at the elementary level, we know which teams are having concerns. We have a small waiting list for students who are coming in. Right now we have 5, but it has not always been at 5. One student has his final meeting later this week and his determination will be the program that he is going into and that will open up a spot if we need it.

Dr. Wells asked about the SOAR program at Malcolm White.

Ms. Ficociello there are some home based students in SOAR as there are in RISE.

Dr. Wells asked about the RISE program; there is one at the elementary level, but isn't there one at the secondary level?

Mr. Mousseau there are two levels of RISE; RISE I and RISE II at the Joyce Middle School and also at WMHS.

Dr. Wells asked if the purpose is the same as elementary and just for older students?

Mr. Mousseau said yes it is, it is continuing services.

Ms. Crowley commented she is impressed with the Assessment Center. This is an in-district option because what normally would happen is a student would be sent out of district for an evaluation. She asked Ms. Ficociello to speak about the advantages of having it here.

Ms. Ficociello told the committee, as a parent, one of the prime advantages is the student is still here in Woburn. Some assessment centers that we contract with have long waiting lists. Most of our students on the waiting list are in kindergarten, so think of that student having to go out of town to be assessed. We want to keep our elementary students close. Our staff will do evaluations. A student might need a higher level of evaluation, and we are able to contract that out. They would come here to do the evaluation.

Mr. Mulrenan commented on keeping students in our district; allowing these students to stay in Woburn, they might be in a different building, but they are remaining in Woburn.

WMHS Winter Athletic Updates, Athletic Director James Duran

Mr. Duran began by saying the fall season went well. We are midway through winter sports.

Coach Fletcher and the girls track have been very successful and have a good chance of winning the state championship.

Mr. Duran and Principal Steve Martin attended Addressing Hate in School Sports Conference at TD Garden, led by Maura Healey. The conference was aimed at providing school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, and referees with ways to stop hate in sports, and build positive and inclusive sports environments.

A purchase order has been processed, and the turf has been ordered for the practice field. Things are on track for late May.

Students have been supporting all of our teams.

Dr. Wells asked about the swim team plans with Burlington for next year.

Mr. Duran will look at the numbers; we will probably go back to just Woburn. It was a good experience for everyone, but we didn't expect the numbers to be so high from Burlington. Originally there was only going to be 3 participants, but after the first day of practice word got out, and they had 36. Coaches have done a great job, and it was a successful year for everybody.

Dr. Wells asked how they worked out the finances for this.

Mr. Duran said they paid for the coaches, transportation and chipped in for the pool time.

Dr. Wells asked how are our athletics in terms of numbers post COVID-19, are we getting the participation that we saw pre-COVID?

Mr. Duran does not think we dropped off a lot. The spring has always been tough because you lose some seniors. We haven't had freshman field hockey or softball. Boys volleyball will be starting in the spring.

Dr. Wells asked how we are doing for Title IX.

Mr. Duran said by adding boys volleyball, this makes it even for right now.

Dr. Wells commented that he noticed Woburn has done a little better in wrestling this year in terms of filling all the slots.

Mr. Duran said they have big numbers; we have 3–5 girls participating, and they are doing well.

Dr. Wells saw some movement at the state house about protecting referees.

Mr. Duran said it is difficult because there are not a lot of referees, we have to get out in front of it and provide education to the parents.

Dr. Wells student athletes and families sign something but maybe emphasize being respectful to the officials.

Mr. Duran said the difficult part is that other towns might not have the strict supervision that Woburn has. People might get away with a bit more, so when they come here you need to go over to talk to them. It is a problem.

Mrs Chisholm said the MASC sent the committee a letter saying there are some towns that are trying to include the referees as part of the protection plan as staff. She asked Mr. Duran if this is something he would support the committee in trying to get legislation on.

Mr. Duran said yes. The officials are an important part, if we don't have the officials we will not be able to have the games. Mr. Duran would support anything we can do to help them.

Dr. Wells suggested putting this through Ms. Cormier's subcommittee.

Chair Mr. Kisiel made a note of this suggestion in Ms. Cormier's absence tonight.

Mr. Mulrenan commented it is important to remember we do not have athletic fees.

FY24 Timeline, Assistant Superintendent, Bob Alconada

Mr. Alconada told the committee we are in our third month of the budget process for FY 24. In November, the budget packets were released to principals and members of the leadership group.

Those budget packets came to Mr. Alconada in December. This month, Mr. Alconada has held budget meetings with principals and members of the leadership group to understand their requests a little more. Currently, Dr. Crowley, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Young and Mr. Alconada are conducting a comprehensive review of their requests ensuring that the proposed spending is aligned with our strategic plan and initiatives.

The current process will produce an initial budget, which will be shared with the school committee and the finance committee at an upcoming meeting.

During the months of February, March, and April, the school committee will prioritize our spending decisions for the district and ultimately produce a spending document that will likely be \$75 million or more for the upcoming fiscal year.

Finally, the timeline will have the school committee vote to approve its FY 24 budget at the April 26th meeting, and we will forward that budget to the Mayor on or around May 1st.

Mr. Kisiel stated one request from the Superintendent was to add a budget meeting to the school committee calendar on March 1st.

Dr. Wells asked for clarification, the last few years we have done this as a Finance subcommittee, is this the plan for this year?

Mr. Alconada said yes, that is what they plan on doing. On March 1st, if the committee votes to have a 3/1/23 school committee meeting, we would put forward what we will call an initial budget and over the course of 7 or so weeks the Finance committee will drill into that as well as the committee as a whole.

Chair Mr. Kisiel said we have a proposal from the Superintendent and Mr. Alconada to have a March 1, 2023 school committee meeting for budget purposes only at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to add Wednesday, March 1, 2023 to the school committee calendar to present the initial draft of the budget.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

Dr. Wells asked Mr. Alconada what do we have for COVID-19 relief funds for the 2023-24 Budget? Mr. Alconada responded by saying Dr. Wells is referring to the ESSER Grant. Right now we are still spending FY 23, and we have some expenses planned out of ESSER. The FY 24 budget will probably have upwards of two million dollars in ESSER funds, which needs to be spent by September 30, 2024.

Vote on WMHS Field Trip(s)

Chair Mr. Kisiel referred to the two field trip requests the members have in their packet.

These are overnight trips, so the school committee needs to approve.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to approve both field trips collectively.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

On the motion Dr. Wells saw a cost of \$6,0000.

Dr. Crowley said the high school is supporting the cost of the trip.

Mrs. Chisholm asked what the cost was to the students.

Ms. Young said there is no cost to the students.

Mr. Lipsett commented that the second page of the proposal states the expenditures.

Dr. Wells wants to make sure there is equity. We don't want to see students who can't go because of the costs.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Dr. Wells said they have not met.

A tentative meeting has been set for February 14th.

This will be the usual time for this subcommittee to meet, before the 1st school committee of each month. Dr Wells wanted to make sure that a school committee meeting will be held as this is also the State of the City Address.

Mrs. Crowley made a motion to move the February 14th school committee meeting to February 15th. Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0

Communications/Policy Subcommittee

They will be meeting on February 1, 2023.

Curriculum and Data Trends Subcommittee

Mr. Lipsett said they have not met.

Personnel Subcommittee

Mrs. Chisholm said they have not met.

Resource & Capital Planning Subcommittee

Ms. Crowley said they have not met.

Student Services and Achievement Subcommittee

Mr. Mulrenan said they have not met.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Renee Prestia sent an email in support of Woburn teachers, paraprofessionals and all other educators and staff who assure our children's safety and education in Woburn.

Dr. Wells clarified that they have not been without a contract for several years as stated in her email, it has been several months.

Mr. Bill Rodochia sent an email asking about roles on the Negotiation team.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Young reminded everyone the next Speaker Series is February 16th at 6:30 pm at the high school. Jeff Perrotti from Safe Schools will be talking about supporting our LGBTQ students.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

Mr. Kisiel announced we are going into executive session at 8:00pm.
Dr. Wells made a motion to enter into the executive session.

Mr. Lipsett on the motion quickly spoke on comments from the speaker during public comment. When Mr. Lipsett became a member of this committee, he contacted the state ethics committee. Mr. Lipsett placed a letter on file stating he would carry out his duties, he had taken two oaths, and signed school committee protocols. His first priority is the city of Woburn, and he has not deviated from that.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Crowley-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chair Mr. Kisiel-yes

Mrs. Chisholm excused herself from the executive session.

Chair Mr. Kisiel announced we are back in regular session at 8:30pm.
No votes were taken during the executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn.
Motion was seconded, all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean MacLeod

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary

