

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WATERTOWN, MA**

**RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
149 MAIN STREET**

**MONDAY
MAY 21, 2018
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call

The School Committee Chairman, Mr. John Portz, called to order the May 7, 2018 meeting of the School Committee at 7:00 PM. Present were School Committee members Ms. Kendra Foley, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Mr. Mark Sideris, Ms. Amy Donohue, and Ms. Lindsay Mosca. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary C. DeLai, Director of Human Resources Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Student Services Ms. Kathleen Desmarais, and various members of the public. Ms. Lily Rayman-Read was absent.

II. Public Forum

A member of the school community spoke during public forum to express his disappointment with the superintendent with regard to a school-based process.

III. Teaching and Learning Showcase

A. Elementary Level Standards-Based Report Cards (SBRCs)

Dr. Theresa McGuinness (assistant superintendent), Olivia Cifrino (teacher), Allison Donovan (curriculum coordinator), and Diego Hammerschlag (parent) presented a summary of the process and the outcome in the development of the SBRC. Dr. McGuinness shared that beginning in the fall of 2016 continuing through June 2018, two teams comprised of nearly 30 dedicated representatives (teachers, administrators, and parents) met frequently with the purpose of aligning report cards with the Massachusetts State Frameworks as indicated through the Common Core Curriculum Standards, across disciplines and grade levels from kindergarten through grade 5.

Olivia Cifrino shared that a SBRC assesses student performance against a specific and observable grade set of skills, and measures each student's performance against the identified grade level "end of year" standard in several content areas and in the pro-social domain.

Allison Donovan stated that standards were largely taken from state standards and broken down into "lay" terms, and power standards were chosen to focus on. She outlined the indicators used to assess academic standards and pro-social learning indicators. Conversation continued around having no "exceeds expectations" and discussion followed about what it means to master and also to challenge students horizontally in their own grade level curriculum, not just doing the "next thing." Allison Donovan explained that 'mastery' does not mean the teaching and learning ends; rather it indicates the student has reached a level of performance expected of that grade level with consistency, accuracy, and independence. Instruction and learning will focus on gaining a deeper understanding by solving more complex problems within the standard and across standards, more

challenge applying the standard, and more opportunity for critical thinking within the standard (think Bloom's Taxonomy). Next steps and goals for students are important – if a student is developing, then what are the things that they specifically need to work on to get better? Math coaches in elementary will be helpful to engage teachers in grade-level tasks that will challenge students who master standards (two coaches between three schools next year). Present report cards are technically standard-based but outdated (pre-common core).

The team researched, resourced, and borrowed ideas from 11 Massachusetts public school districts. They completed a book study on Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading by Tim Westerberg, and considered several research articles. These resources helped focus the team as they constructed content standards by grade-level and finalized academic performance standards and pro-social learning indicators.

According to Diego Hammerschlag, student performance will be measured and formally communicated to students and parents two times per year (Term 1 and term 2) in January and June with progress/conference reports used to guide the intermittent parent-teacher conferences in November and March.

Dr. McGuinness read examples of the pro-social learning indicators (Personal Development/Classroom and Community Skills, and Approaches for Learning), which the district's Social-Emotional Learning Team drafted for the SBRC, and stated the importance of teaching both academic standards **and** social-emotional skills/growth.

Next, the team will continue developing of rubrics for grading, constructing the SBRC template in PowerSchool, and designing a brochure with FAQ for distribution to parents.

B. Learning Walks

Dr. Galdston provided an overview of the process of conducting learning walks across all schools beginning this past January. She explained that learning walks provide administrators with the opportunity to visit each other's schools, gather ideas to bring back to their own school, develop the team's understanding of effective teaching, and calibrate the approach to observing staff and providing feedback. She shared highlights of instructional practices that were visible during the walks including differentiated instruction practices, mastery objectives, and core belief in all students' ability to succeed. Learning walks will continue next year with the goal of expanding them to include teachers in the future.

IV. Presentations and Discussions

A. Overview of Transportation System for 2018-19

Ms. DeLai reviewed the process for securing transportation services to date, noting the upcoming date of May 22nd for the vote of Town Council on the five-year contract term. She discussed the process that will be used to gather information for establishing routes and stops, including pre-registration by interested families to occur over the next few weeks, and a project with Northeastern University to engage in a "hackathon" on June 12th to determine optimal routes and

stops that will allow the district to provide transportation to as many families as possible in a fiscally responsible manner.

Ms. DeLai then reviewed the three operational alternatives currently being considered. Some of the options may require an increase in the transportation fee which may be between \$85 and \$100 per family. Other options may require holding students at either the Hosmer or the Middle School at the end of the day which will necessitate adult supervision. The cost of the additional supervision is expected to be covered by the operational savings of these other options.

The goal of the administration is to have routes and stops finalized by the end of July or early August and to distribute this information to parents at that time for final registration with fees due by the start of the school year.

A school committee member inquired as to how much information would be shared in the pre-registration letter. Ms. DeLai responded that the administration intends to be very transparent and provide the current options being considered, the possible fee increase, and the timelines for sharing routes and stops and for final registration and payment of fees.

Mr. Portz asked if the pre-registration information would be collected in time to inform the “hackathon.” Ms. DeLai responded that the district intends to use current information as it does not anticipate receiving all pre-registrations by the date of the hackathon.

A school committee member asked that the district be sure to include the appropriate caveats with respect to our ability to provide transportation only on a space available basis. She asked if the options considered include the late bus for the Middle School to which Ms. DeLai responded in the affirmative. She also asked if the district anticipated being able to drop students from the Hosmer at the Boys and Girls Club. Ms. DeLai responded that the district feels that this is a strong possibility at least for next year.

V. Action Items and Related Reports – Discussion and Vote

A. Appointment of Heidi Perkins as Director of Finance and Operations (eff. July 1, 2018)

Dr. Galdston presented her recommendation for the appointment of Ms. Perkins as the Director of Finance and Operations and noted some of the highlights of Ms. Perkins experience, including both school and municipal finance experience. A motion was made by Mr. Sideris and seconded by Mrs. Foley to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation. *Motion passed 6-0.*

Ms. Perkins then thanked the Committee for the opportunity as well as the search committee. She also thanked Ms. DeLai and Dr. Galdston for their time and assistance with the transition. Mr. Portz welcomed Ms. Perkins to Watertown Public Schools.

B. School Committee Operating Protocols

Mr. Portz reviewed the School Committee Operating Protocols that were drafted by the Committee at their retreat on May 10, 2018. A motion was made by Mr. Sideris to adopt the protocols and seconded by Ms. Donahue. *Motion passed 6-0.* A second motion was made by

Mrs. Mosca for the School Committee to formally discuss the social media presence of WPS.
Motion passed 6-0.

C. Approval of Gifts

- \$115.56 Robotics Team Fundraiser to Robotics Team
- \$25 from Susan and Michael Kinnear to Robotics Team
- \$1140 from Lowell PTO for field trip buses
- \$4800 from Boston College for supplemental grant for ELL liaison doing family outreach
- \$500 from Commonwealth of MA DA Office for WHS Overnight Party
- \$1854 from Lowell PTO for purchase of 12 iPads

A motion was made by Mr. Sideris to approve these gifts and the motion was seconded. *Motion passed 6-0.*

D. Approval of Minutes

1. May 7, 2018 School Committee Meeting minutes: *tabled.*
2. May 10, 2018 School Committee Meeting minutes: a motion was made by Mr. Sideris to approve these [minutes](#) and seconded by Ms. Donahue. *Motion passed 6-0.*

VI. Reports

A. Subcommittees

1. Curriculum

Mrs. Mosca provided a report from the Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting which happened earlier in the day. Discussed were:

- Standards-based report cards, specifically the rollout process and development
- The need for parent education outreach such as translation services, etc.
- What “mastery” means, and how to best support parents in understanding this
- Different ways teachers will be supported in helping students reach next steps

A formal report will be presented for approval at the next School Committee Meeting.

2. Budget and Finance

Mrs. Foley provided a report on the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting of March 20, 2018. Budget reviews were done on District Curriculum, Student Services, Elementary Schools and Early Steps. A motion was made by Mr. Sideris to accept the [minutes](#) of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting on March 20, 2018 and seconded by Mrs. Mosca.
Motion passed 6-0.

B. WPS Projects and Activities

1. Building for the Future

a) [Elementary Project](#)

The Building Committee met on May 16, 2018. Mr. Portz indicated that in this contextual meeting, participants received an update on the timeline as well as various design ideas from the architect. Dr. Galdston presented on the mission and vision of the district. Participants looked at conceptual designs and examined costs parameters. They reviewed

“visioning activities” that have occurred within the community and looked into enrollment patterns. The committee will continue to examine strengths, challenges, opportunities and goals, as well as examine opportunities and criteria for energy efficiencies within the new structures. The Building Committee will meet on May 30 at 6pm, and future meetings are planned for June 6 and 20. A community forum is in the planning stages for June as well.

b) High School Project

Dr. Galdston indicated that her office is currently at the point of delivering the names of people serving on the High School Building Committee to the state. Committee members are also examining the strengths, challenges, opportunities and goals, as well as the district mission, core values, etc. They are actively working towards pulling together a list of priorities to commit to, which will best benefit the school, town, neighborhood, community and budget in order to deliver educationally appropriate and fiscally responsible buildings. It is important to note that the architect and project manager who were specifically hired for the Elementary Project only were not part of the discussion for the High School Project.

2. Communications and Marketing Team

Dr. Galdston stated that the Communications and Marketing Team met recently and considered ideas from the past few meetings which addressed questions such as what is the brand of WPS, what do we stand for, and what we want the community to know about us. The team identified issues around communication as a district and will be pulling together a very specific plan which describes what needs to be done. The team will be creating and distributing a survey to all families in order to determine how information from WPS is consumed. They hope to present a final action plan to the School Committee in June.

C. School Committee Chair

Mr. Portz reminded everyone that there are many end-of-year events happening within the district and encouraged people to attend. He also reminded participants about the Budget Hearing for Town Council taking place on May 29, 2018 at 6pm.

D. Superintendent

Dr. Galdston reminded the community that she would be holding coffees the next day. She also encouraged the community to attend the showing of “If They Had Known,” a documentary about the dangers of mixing prescription drugs with alcohol. School Committee member Amy Donohue also spoke about the showing. Lastly, Dr. Galdston spoke about WHS Graduation on June 1.

VII. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VIII. Announcements

A. School Committee Meeting – June 4, 2018

Mr. Ports noted that the next School Committee Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 4, 2018.

IX. Public Forum

No one spoke in Public Forum.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.

Meeting Documents:

- [Elementary Level Standards-Based Report Cards](#)
- [Learning Walks](#)
- [Overview of Transportation System for 2018-19](#)
- [School Committee Operating Protocols](#)
- [School Committee Meeting Minutes: 5/10/18](#)
- [Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes: 3/20/18](#)
- [Elementary Project](#)

Minutes submitted by Renee Ruggiero, Executive Assistant to the School Committee