

**WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**SPECIAL REMOTE MEETING**  
**4.16.20**

A Special Remote Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on April 16, 2020, beginning at 7:30 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Cormier-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Lipsett-Present, Mr. Mulrenan-Present, Dr. Wells-Present, Chairperson Crowley-Present

**APPROVAL OF RECORDS**

A motion was made to approve 3.10.20 SC Minutes.  
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

Chairperson Crowley mentioned that this meeting is being recorded and will be put on public media. This is one of several meetings that we will need to have. Schools are closed next week for April vacation. There will not be a school meeting during vacation; we will start when remote school reconvenes.

Chairperson Crowley made a motion to hear Budget Updates before Distance Learning. Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

**REPORTS/PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF**  
**BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2021- Introduction to Budget Discussions**

Dr. Crowley began by saying anchored to our FY21 Budget is our Strategic Plan. We do have a vision, and we are holding to it.

Dr. Crowley wanted the community to know our food service delivery continues and will continue during vacation week. Our remote learning is ongoing. This week surveys were sent out to every grade level. There were 119 responses regarding remote learning. As it relates to student needs, we are having weekly principals meetings to discuss our student needs. There is a structured procedure in place to meet those needs. Our Family & Community Liaison has been out and about in our community trying to meet the needs of all families and in particular some families who don't speak English as their first language.

Dr. Crowley went on to say our budget process for FY21 mirrors what we have done the last couple of years.

**Budget Process:**

Step 1 — Relied on WPS Strategic Plan; used this as a basis for FY21

Next Step — Google form was created; Over 100 budget requests were submitted

Discussions — Meetings with Principals, Department Heads and Curriculum Coordinators;

Leadership Team meetings were held prior to March 13th

Lastly — Data Analysis, building on successes, Reform before Revenue

Sources: MCAS and RADAR (Resource Allocation and District Action Report)

Our SpEd department and our EL department is where the majority of the requests lie. That aligns with our data and our equity. We want to build on what we have created. We don't want to go backwards. We want to build on any success we had. We are trying to look to see where we can reallocate. This is the process we have entered into. The state projects 5 billion dollars in lost revenue because of the COVID-19. The Department of Education is only looking to recoup a couple of hundred million dollars which will then be distributed throughout the state on the formula they use for Title I. The stimulus package may not reach us in a way we may need. Dr. Crowley has had many conversations with Mayor Galvin. He is very mindful of the city's projected revenue. As of right now we still do not have a return to school date. This is a variable that we don't know.

Dr. Crowley will send a three-year personnel plan to the committee. SpEd has legal requirements that need to be met. This January we did have a financial and operational review done of our policies and procedures. That report has been provided to administration and this will be shared with the committee. There are good suggestions in there as it relates to budgeting. We are going to have to prioritize quite a bit. Some difficult choices need to be made. The way that things have always been done might have to change. The budget books will be sent digitally to all school committee members. Separate from the operational budget; it's important to not forget we were trending towards trying to come up with a 5-year capital plan. The Mayor requests that the capital plan is separate from the operational budget. Prior to closing Ms. Judkins spoke to the committee about going 1:1 with Chromebooks. There is going to be a capital request as it relates to technology. Chairperson Crowley indicated we need to set up some meeting times. If we need to wiggle a little there is potential. At some point the city needs to put together a budget. The city is facing the same variables as we are.

Chairperson Crowley thanked Dr. Crowley for his introduction to the budget.

Dr. Wells asked if the Mayor gave any guidance on a percentage to strive for.

Dr. Crowley said no. He thinks we should think about creating multiple tiers of the budget.

Dr. Wells asked if Dr. Crowley needs to work with his team for a secondary plan and resources if we are still in a distance learning come the Fall.

Dr. Crowley said yes.

Mr. Mulrenan asked about the capital request for technology.

Dr. Crowley said the intent is to make the Chromebook a 1:1 at the high school. We distributed Chromebooks but the way we did that was to take the carts that were in various schools apart to make them individual Chromebooks. Not all students have a Chromebook because we don't have enough for everybody. Given the current status of the world, that capital request is still going to be made.

Mr. Kisiel asked about the budget books.

Mr. Elia said they will create different versions of the budget as they relate to the changes within that budget. Version 1 would be a base budget, Version 2 would include additional staff and so forth.

Mr. Kisiel asked if there will be any adjustments for transportation.

Mr. Elia said they are in discussion with NRT and North Suburban.

Chairperson Crowley said what we have in front of us is a plan to get in more depth with the budget. She reminded the members there is going to be some fiscal bumps this year. There are also two other pieces of this, two years ago our line item for SpEd was level funded and that impacted last year's budget. Additionally, we are sort of blind in predicting the number of students who will be moving in. We want to keep this in mind as this impacted our budget for last year.

Dr. Wells commented we might want to think of appointing some school committee members to work with administration. He feels it is important to get the school committee involved.

Chairperson Crowley said she intends to do this.

## **UPDATE ON WOBURN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Distance Learning including Special Education**

Dr. Crowley said he is very fortunate to have such a great team.

Ms. Sprague spoke about distance learning.

Woburn's Extended Learning Plan is on our website. This website was created to extend student learning when school is not in session. There are suggested activities and resources to continue learning at home. Grade level specific learning activities have been created by Woburn teachers and are updated weekly. There are resources for families including suggestions for daily routines, recommended live-streaming events, digital learning websites and more. Woburn STEM Coaches have developed a list of resources specific to the subject to support distance learning. Resources have been curated for each discipline. There are Google Webinars and links that offer some tips for taking data during distance learning followed by a variety of different data collection sheets you can download and adapt. Digital learning sites are linked in; things like Lexia which we currently use, IXL, and Discovery Kids. We also have Google classrooms. All content areas are being covered. The high school teachers are using Google Classroom to reach out to students. Guidance and Course Selections sections are available there. There is a family page parents/students can log on. Each of the departments did his or her own video to promote course selections.

The SpEd department site has a tremendous amount of things. It is broken down by grade level and content level. It has very specific links to programs that are age level appropriate. Programs related to Autism. Additional support for families which include behavioral suggestions, communication, motor activities and the link for the state is also attached there. The For Families link has a support section for things such as food service, tech support. There is an online piece that families can go on that is not connected to the choice boards for cooking and baking classes, yoga, and dance lessons. These are in addition to the actual boards and the work the teachers are doing with their classes. In addition to that there is a link for families to give us feedback about what is working and what they would like to see more of. This was originally sent out to elementary only. This was sent out again as a separate link, and we have had over 100 responses. Every family is different and dealing with different things.

Mr. Lipsett asked about how the student interactions are going especially at the high school level.

Ms. Sprague said we are seeing around 50% participation. There are many students who are off to work because they were able to pick up hours. Some students have parents who are both working.

Ms. Cormier asked for a little more information about the Autism program.

Dr. Baldassarre said Ms. Ryan has been working with the whole team and would defer to her.

Ms. Chisholm asked about the students and have they all been connected to.

Ms. Sprague said she does know there were some students we have not been connected to and for those that we have not been able to connect with the truant office has been sent to the home.

Dr. Baldassarre said teachers are to communicate with their principal or crisis/concern team after not hearing from students after a certain number of days. It is the principal's discretion with the number of days they want to be notified by the teachers. Once the principal is notified they go into a protocol. A letter will be delivered by one of our attendance officers. We also do wellness checks.

Dr. Wells suggested potentially assigning to a principal to develop a more comprehensive and put together plan. We might have to go to distance learning again in the future.

Mr. Lipsett asked what kind of things are being thought about for resources should we have to remain out of school longer.

Dr. Crowley responded by saying this week he was on call with the commissioner. If there is an extended closure DESE will be providing power standards for each grade level along with resources and suggested materials. DESE will identify the power standards. It is nice to know that DESE will support us in an extended closure with some specific guidance as it relates to curriculum and instruction.

Chairperson Crowley asked about the status of the Student Opportunity Act.

Dr. Crowley said the submission date has been delayed to May 15th. The commissioner can delay it further.

Dr. Crowley said he thinks the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is really progressive. Massachusetts ranked #2 in the country as it relates to remote learning due to the Coronavirus.

Ms. Sprague has been speaking with our department heads and curriculum coordinators about looking at what would typically be taught right now where we are not moving forward at this time and starting to look towards next year and how the standards from fourth grade can be then looked at in fifth grade. Math for example, if they didn't get to add fractions in fourth grade to look at fifth grade to see what they need to back up in the skills' area, so they can teach that prior to delving into their fifth grade materials.

Dr. Crowley said specifically the work that's been done over the past few years using ATLAS as our tool we at least know where we are in what standards have been taught and what standards haven't. This work will pay dividends upon our return.

Ms. Sprague said on our website there is an ATLAS link for families.

Mr. Kisiel asked about students who need extra help, is this available?

Ms. Sprague said at this time the engagement that teachers are having with students is basically enrichment and/or review of prior learning. There is not any additional tutoring being offered at this time.

Dr. Crowley said teachers are checking email every day. Parents are encouraged to email their teacher to set up a time to address any concerns they may have.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dr. Baldassarre asked Ms. Cormier if she wanted to comment on the SSA meeting. She said it was well attended. There was a lot of communication and a lot of updates. There is going to be a lot of communication going forward and things are constantly changing.

Dr. Baldassarre said when guidance originally came out from the Department of Education nobody realized we were going to be closed initially until May 4th. When the closing first happened the guidance from the Department of Education regarding Special Education was that enrichment only be provided. Then on March 26th the Department changed, and they then were requiring districts to provide direct services.

That came with legal hurdles. Special Education needs to have consent to receive remote services. We also had privacy issues we needed to work through to protect our students and staff. We did have to work with our legal counsel, so we could have a document go out to our parents that is a consent that is stating when you engage in this online instruction that you are doing that you are providing consent. The legal notification was drafted and posted. We also did the tele-mental health consent, so we could provide 1:1 interactions and have correspondence with families. For some of our related services providers; our Speech & Language Pathologists in particular, they have to complete a credential. The Department of Education changed the regulation for that just last Friday. The Department of Education said that districts have to make every effort to use really creative strategies to provide Special Education instruction and services to the extent feasible. They recognize that we really can't provide all services in the manner that they are in an IEP. There are a lot of reasons for that. There are a lot of things that have to be balanced. The creative strategies that we have used so far; recorded lessons, there is

virtual instruction on google meets and there are a variety of resources and supports available online. For some of our students with specific learning needs we did get them subscriptions to Teach Town and Everyday Speech. These are really comprehensive online programs that are used not remotely. A lot of programs use these applications right in their school days. We have purchased those for some of our students who are in substantially separate programs particularly students with Autism. There are Special Education tips for families. The Special Education staff has been reminded by Ms. Ryan that they make every effort to respond to parents via email within 24 hours. It has been stated that it's mandatory that they respond within 48 hours. There have been a number of communications from the Special Education Office and each communication is online. Additional efforts have been made to verify and update emails from our families and especially for kids who attend school out of district. We did everything that we could to ensure that all of our Special Education kids have Chromebooks. Some of our students have specialized devices that they use for communication. We had to have some custodians go through classrooms to find certain devices, so we could bring them home to our students. Some of our students have devices that go from home to school and back every single day. Some of our out of district students also needed devices, and we had to allocate for devices for them. On April 10th the Department of Education asked the districts to utilize a specific remote learning plan for each student. These documents are really comprehensive. You have to look at the students' IEP and know the student to put this together. This is a mandate of DESE. April 10th we were told we need to have a plan and families need to be provided with a plan by April 29th. We are on track to get this done. Dr. Baldassarre thanked Ms. Judkins, Ms. Ryan and the Special Education teachers. Annual review meetings will be held remotely. We had to come up with a virtual process, to have protocols for providers and staff to hold virtual meetings, we have to get consent to hold virtual meetings, we have to have a way to get signatures on documents electronically, and we have to have internal procedures to convert what was a paper process to digital. We have to communicate with parents to see when they are available to attend these meetings. On the advice of counsel we have to give priority to our transition meetings. It has been one challenge after another. We are fortunate to have a team that knows what they are doing and are putting in the hours. Dr. Baldassarre feels comfortable with where we are. He knows we are in a better spot than some of his peers in other cities and towns.

#### **VOTE ON SCHOOL CHOICE**

Dr. Crowley said this is an annual mandate from the state. We need to let them know by June 1st. It can change year to year. In the past Woburn has not allowed school choice, in other words students from another district being able to tuition in to Woburn. Given the uncertainties of this FY 21 budget Dr. Crowley's recommendation would be to be conservative to vote no on school choice.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to follow the Superintendent's recommendation.

Dr. Wells second the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Woburn will not allow school choice.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes

Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Finance Subcommittee**

Ms. Chisholm said they met yesterday virtually.

The committee reviewed the list of bills.

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the list of bills.  
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

#### ROLL CALL

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes  
Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

The balance of accounts was reviewed.

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the balance of accounts.  
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

#### ROLL CALL

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes  
Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Dr. Wells is signing the bills electronically during the shutdown.

Discussion on whether we pay for transportation after the close of school.

We are now in negotiation for a new bus contract for 2020-2023 school years so there is a hope to sustain a positive outcome, so we do not have any transportation issues when school resumes.

Discussion on lunch price increase- Joe Elia presented that we need to charge 3.09 in order to satisfy the federal guidelines with free and reduced lunches.

Discussion on preschool tuition — a recommendation for increasing the cost of preschool was presented.

#### **Policy and Safety Subcommittee**

Mr. Kisiel said they met on April 7th Virtually.

Dr. Baldassarre discussed the policies on the table and made the suggestion to adopt.

JB- Educational Equal Opportunities

JFABF- Ed Opportunity for Children in Foster Care

JFABD- Homeless Students Enrollment Rights and Services

JFABE- Ed Opp. for Military Students

They have been on the table for at least 30 days.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to take the policies off of the table. Chairperson Crowley stated the committee does not have the policies for a second reading.

Ms. Chisholm said we had them on the table but revisions were made.

Dr. Baldassarre said the policies were reviewed in the subcommittee on April 7th. Those policies we did bring forward, he does not know that they were distributed to the school committee members. He thought the only one that was distributed to school committee members was the Recording policy. He thought that these were voted on to bring to the committee tonight.

Chairperson Crowley said the Foster Care policy was a first reading, it is going on the table tonight. The Recording policy can come off of the table because that has been sitting for 30 days.

Chairperson Crowley said the three amended policies should go on the table tonight.

Dr. Baldassarre said that is correct because the committee has not had the chance to deliberate on those.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to adopt the Recording policy as written.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

#### ROLL CALL

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes  
Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Dr. Baldassarre will send this to MASC tomorrow.

Future topics to be discussed will be Fundraising, PTO and Student Activities, and public comments at school committee meetings.

### **Student Services & Achievement Subcommittee**

Ms. Cormier said they met this morning virtually.

Ms. Ryan gave an update on Special Education. They are continuing to plan pre-K.

Dr. Baldassarre gave an update on the EOS grant to help give food to families.

There were some concerns about the EL program, making sure the kids are not regressing while they are outside the classroom.

Truancy officers are doing wellness checks.

Ms. Donovan is monitoring for depression.

There are still requests for Chromebooks coming in.

There was an issue with Inwood Drive. Comcast considers Inwood Drive to be Rural.

Comcast opened a ticket to get internet on Inwood Drive.

SEPAC gave an update on their survey to parents with remote learning.

Discussion on program descriptions. Dr. Baldassarre and Ms. Ryan will be moving forward on that.

Protocol was sent to teachers in case of any crisis concerns while doing ZOOM with kids and what to do if there is an issue.

Dr. Baldassarre commented that the grant fund code 336 allows us to provide counseling for kids when school is not in session. The Department of Education is going to allow Dr. Baldassarre to amend that grant, so he can use funds from that grant for other services for students between now and June 30th. There is approx. \$20,000.00 remaining. They will allow us tremendous flexibility. Dr. Baldassarre will be meeting with Ms. Donovan to put together a plan to see that those funds are allocated to help our kids in the best way possible. Our Institutional Self Evaluation that we have to do for our corrective action plan, that is still underway there is no time extension of time on that. The ACE Program development; we are about halfway through. The team is working hard to make some significant changes. Our Tiered Focus Monitoring audit which is for the Civil Rights, EL and SpEd department; the timeline was extended by three weeks. We are continuing on getting the things they need. They did move the Education Stability audit up by a couple of months.

Dr. Wells asked if we should write a letter to our State Reps. for the Inwood Drive residents.

Dr. Baldassarre said it would be great if our State Reps could advocate for us.

Dr. Wells made a motion that we authorize the administration to reach out to our Congressional and State Representatives as needed in the case of the Inwood Drive situation on behalf of the school committee.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes

Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairperson read a letter she received from the Woburn SEPAC.

SEPAC wanted to share the parent perspective with the school committee.

They asked parents to complete an online survey a few days ago and thought it would be helpful to share what the parents are experiencing. Please know that although there are things that parents feel are not going well, SEPAC's purpose was not to offer criticism but to be transparent in how they see things so that we can work together and brainstorm possible improvement.

Chairperson Crowley received another letter from Marissa Schild. She wanted to know why schools are not providing more services specified in children's IEPs. She wants the school committee to know that our children who are serviced on IEPs are the most at risk for regression and Woburn Public Schools are not doing enough to support them.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to accept both pieces of correspondence into the public record.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

## **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes

Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Crowley pointed out that SEPAC is supposed to write and advise us of major things that are happening in the district. She appreciates all the hard work they put into advocating for these students, and she appreciates the relationship the school committee has with SEPAC

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Dr. Wells — How we are going to deal with Preschool next year; this should be a separate agenda item

Chairperson Crowley — we need to form a negotiation group to deal with the expiration of the Teacher's MOA.

Ms. Chisholm — Graduation for our Seniors

Mr. Kisiel — Student Reps to attend a virtual meeting

Next SC Meeting — April 28th

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Chisholm made a motion to adjourn.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jean MacLeod*

Jean MacLeod