

**WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 25, 2019**

A Regular Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on November 25, 2019 at the Joyce Middle School Conference Room, 55 Locust Street, Woburn, MA beginning at 7:00pm.

There was a moment of silence for former educator and baseball coach Mr. Butch Murray.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Chisholm-Present, Ms. Crowley-Present, Mr. Demers-Present, Mr. Kisiel-Present, Mr. Metters-Not Present, Dr. Wells-Present, Chairman Mulrenan-Present.

**APPROVAL OF RECORDS**

A motion was made to approve 11.12.19 SC Minutes.  
Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 6-0.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Student Representative Noah Stebbins was in attendance to update the SC.  
This week is Spirit Week at WMHS and will end with the Pep Rally being held on Wednesday, November 27, 2019. The Woburn joint Rotary luncheon was held last week. The Thanksgiving Day football game will be played in Winchester this year. Kickoff is at 10:15am. Homecoming Dance was held this past Friday night. The science team placed 3rd overall and Noah personally placed first. The Yearbook staff returned from Washington, DC and asked Noah to thank the committee for allowing this trip to happen. The World Language Honor Society Induction will take place on December 4, 2019 @ 6:30 PM at WMHS.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Jenie Thistle-Bilotta and Ms. Julie Cotton, two members of the SEPAC executive board, were here tonight to let the committee know that Governor Charlie Baker proclaimed November 2019 to be SEPAC AWARENESS MONTH. Ms. Thistle-Bilotta read the proclamation to the committee. Ms. Cotton went on to speak about SEPAC. The mission of the Woburn Public School (WPS) Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is to work towards the understanding of, respect for, support, and appropriate education for all children with disabilities in the WPS community. You can email SEPAC at [wps.sepac@gmail.com](mailto:wps.sepac@gmail.com). You can also like them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON**

Mr. Concannon was not present.

### **REPORTS/ PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF**

A motion was made to suspend the regular order of business to take Agenda B, November 5th PD day out of order.

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

### **NOVEMBER 5TH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**

November 5th is a professional development day for all staff. Ms. Chase and Ms. Crampton were in attendance to talk about the professional day from a teacher perspective; both as a presenter and as an attendee. Ms. Crampton participated in 4 classes that was probably the best PD she attended in 20 years. Offerings included social/emotional, Google and chopped. She feels PD is important to meet other teachers. She appreciates that her colleagues ran the workshops.

Ms. Chase spoke about her workshop she offered called CHOPPED. This is based off of the reality TV show where chefs compete and turn mystery ingredients into a three course meal. Ms. Chase has 5 kitchens and grouped five teams of 3 to prepare something from ingredients in mystery baskets to present to the judges. It was fun to watch as they only had a certain amount of time to prepare. Dr. Crowley was one of the judges. A rubric was used and two categories were taste and presentation. The spirit of the day was collaborative and a chance to learn something new.

Mr. Demers asked how PD has changed over the last 20 years.

Ms. Crampton commented that in the past they were boring. She likes the camaraderie and having a chance to meet teachers from other schools. In the past PD didn't grab you as much. This year it was fun. She feels people are listening more to the teachers.

Ms. Crowley appreciates them coming in tonight. She likes hearing the feedback as administration is trying to create positive professional development for the teachers.

Ms. Sprague presented a powerpoint presentation. She began by recalling our first "Learn Together" day on April 1, 2019. This was branded and moved to the first day of school for the teachers as well. This became "Learn Together Your Way." We had over 55 sessions available to participate in. Relationships, connections, and community are what our focus is for the year. We started off at the Boys and Girls club on the first day for teachers really trying to make those connections. As Ms. Crampton stated tonight, she felt this was a really important part of November 5th. We wanted to learn together and we reached out to staff. We had staff that came right on board and created sessions for teachers to attend. As part of what we are doing to promote our brand and be recognized when we are out and about in the community and doing things, Ms. Thifault has purchased a pop tent for us to use for the Woburn Public Schools. This was set back in the foyer of the high school on PD day. The pop up project on this day was a book swap; bring a book, take a book and ultimately the tables were covered in books. The pop

tent is something you will start seeing around for different events such as Tannerfest and things like that. Our presenters and judges consisted of many teachers, coaches, our content specialists, curriculum coordinators, directors, and administrators. We had an outside presenter from the Landmark school who was brought in by our SpEd department that did an afternoon session for all of the special education staff. A lot of topics were covered; ELA, Math, Fine Arts, Technology and Computer Science, History, Special Education and Social Emotional Learning. In addition, NPEN (Northeast Professional Educators Network) is a group of local communities that chip in and offer high quality, inter-district professional development on election day for low incident staff such as our ESL, World Language, Health/Physical Education, and Physical Therapist. There is a whole member of groups that is offered and is located in different places. Election day is a time for them to get together but beyond that they can build those networks. If you are the only Physical Therapist in town you can go there and build that connection with others. This is the first year we were able to join NPEN. Our ESL went to Reading, World Language went to Chelmsford, PE and Health went to Methuen and Business also went to Chelmsford. Over 1600 people sign up to take the workshop offerings. Ms. Sprague received positive feedback from those that attended. Moving forward we did a survey once the day was done. We had some comments ranged from “thanks I’ve taken away quite a bit” to “breakfast would be nice” and “always well run”. Ms. Sprague commented in going through the comments there were a lot of requests from teachers to allow more time in their classrooms. Part of that is where the day falls; it is the end of the quarter so grades are due. One of the last comments was “Thank You. I have been in Woburn for almost 20 years. The quality of professional development has improved every year but has grown by leaps and bounds the past 3 years. I am not kidding. Thank you very much”. One of the things that came from our teacher day back in September was the kindness letters; for staff to write letters to each other. Once they were filled out they were delivered to the teacher. There was much appreciation for the teachers that presented.

Chairman Mulrenan stopped by that day and commented on the amount of energy that day. He feels everyone had a great time and administration had great presenters.

Ms. Sprague said a big thank you goes out to a lot of people. This wasn’t done by any one person. The curriculum coordinators all participated, the coaches participated, administrators at the help desk and high school students volunteered to move equipment in the building.

Ms. Crowley thanked Ms. Sprague for all of the work that went into this day. She also asked for a list of SpEd offerings for that day.

Dr. Wells made a motion to return to regular order of business.

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

### **MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT**

Dr. Baldassarre began by going over the panel and attendees for that day.

He thought the day went really well. The panelists started off by telling the attendees a little bit about their work. Discussions began and one big takeaway was people who were there presenting became familiar with faces and names of people who are working directly with our kids in the Woburn Public Schools. There was a lot of sharing of contact information; cell phone numbers and emails. A lot can get done quicker when you are working with people who you are familiar with. Big items that were discussed with the DCF were how and why the department closes cases for non-compliance. Meaning when families don't participate with what the agency is asking the department closes the case out. How and why 51A abuse allegations get screened out when the school district feels strongly that students are in harm's way. We talked about the nature of DCF caseworker turnover because their staff tends to move in and out pretty quickly. Some curious questions such as how many children are on the caseload of one DCF worker. With regard to the Department of Youth Services, Dr. Chan reported that Woburn's DYS representation is very low; Woburn does not have a lot of kids that are in DYS custody. She said this is a testament to a community that has good diversion programs, good mental health programs and other services for families and kids who have great need. Always a topic at these type of events is how difficult it is for children to get a child psychiatric services. The wait for a child to see a psychiatrist now is about 8 weeks. Woburn has a psychiatrist consultant who works with us when kids have that level of need. All of our clinicians learned how to access the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access System. There was a lot of information that came out about that. Dr. Baldassarre sees this event being held every year but with different speakers. He envisions bringing in different people for discussions for how our families and students can access services. Next year he would like to bring in some folks from the commonwealth who oversee housing for homeless students and students who are in foster care. One idea is to invite Representatives from the Juvenile Justice System specifically the Department of Youth Probation. We will always invite DCF to our summit every year because of the quantity of work that takes place between DCF and the schools. All in all the networking aspect was great this year.

The relationships with DCF were found to be very fruitful. They see each other as team members and allies. We want to keep these relationships going with these agencies. Dr. Baldassarre already has ideas on how we can sharpen it up for next year.

Ms. Crowley commented she attended the summit and she thought there were some very open conversations about some really difficult topics. Connections were made. She feels events like this can really change the lives of children. She thought it was great. The William James Interface program came up as being a very big need for Woburn. Dr. Baldassarre looked into this and the cost is \$8,500.00 to get this back again.

Dr. Wells said any time you talk about mental health is a good thing; it should not have a stigma and it should be treated as any other illness.

Ms. Chisholm hopes Mr. Rick Jolly our Substance Abuse Coordinator is always a member of this summit. We do have a problem in Woburn, and we can't bury our heads. We need to get the information out there.

Ms. Crowley said Mr. Jolly was there and gave some very insightful conversations. Elementary students should be educated earlier.

Dr. Wells said maybe we want to think about presenting a You-tube video of important topics instead of the traditional auditorium.

Dr. Baldassarre said he can be contacted anytime if they have an interest in being part of this summit.

Dr. Crowley thanked Dr. Baldassarre for coordinating this event and he appreciates his efforts for making this happen. He also thanked Ms. Sprague for her effort and teamwork on the November 5th PD day. He said the takeaway is we are working collaboratively in the best interest of our kids.

### **NOMINATION FOR NSBA CONFERENCE 2020**

Dr. Wells made a motion to nominate Mr. Mulrenan as representative for the NSBA Conference 2020.

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

### **APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS**

Dr. Wells made a motion to accept and approve the Superintendent's Goals.

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

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Finance Subcommittee**

Dr. Wells said they met on November 20th.

They reviewed the list of bills and the balance of accounts and they were found to be in order.

A motion was made to approve the list of bills.

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

A motion was made to approve the balance of accounts.

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

They discussed the circuit breaker account and the amount of money we will be getting back was increased. The school lunch debt was discussed. The meal debt is currently \$52,457.00. A lot of that is carried by students who have shown to be eligible for free and reduced lunch which will erase around \$20,000.00. Notices will be sent home to families.

#### **Resource Utilization Subcommittee**

Mr. Kisiel said the met this evening at 6:15 PM.

They talked about the NESDEC report that just came out. Mr. Kisiel said committee members received a copy via email to review. He asked if the NESDEC could be put on as a future agenda item. They discussed solar panels. The Hurld Wyman and Goodyear have panels are on the roof.

Ms. Chisholm asked about the donation boxes for clothes at the schools and wanted to know how much they are getting back. Mr. Kisiel said there is no set amount because it varies by what is put in there. Ms. Sprague will look into this but commented that it is a good amount of money.

### **Personnel Subcommittee**

Ms. Chisholm said they met on 11/22/19.

They talked about Mr. Elia's replacement. Part of the discussion was the title of this position and how to advertise for this. The Superintendent will update the job description and hopefully get the advertisement out in December. The goal will be to get an applicant that comes in with experience.

They discussed receiving an updated list of positions prior to the 2020 budget.

We hired a part time position to work on our compliance focus; this position is through June. Recreation Commission Representative was discussed.

There is discussion with Administration for additional staff in SpEd as well as Technology. The Technology Department is mainly looking for capital money. The discussion also included some requests for maintenance positions since there have not been any additions in that area.

Evaluation of SC Secretary; we did not have enough information on this. This was tabled until we can get a working document so that this committee can complete one.

The new Liaison will be housed in the Joyce Middle School but will be out within the community.

Ms. Crowley to the committee can help with the rubric for the evaluation of Ms. MacLeod

### **Curriculum and Professional Development Subcommittee**

Mr. Demers said they met on November 21, 2019.

First topic of discussion was a review of WMHS course requirements.

Principal Callanan presented the subcommittee a powerpoint presentation on graduation requirements and reconsidering the 4x4 plan; 4 years of English, 4 years of Math, 4 years of History and 4 years of Science and moving towards a proposed 4x3 plan; 4 years of English, 4 years of Math, 3 years of History, and 3 years of Science.

#### **Current Concerns of the 4x4:**

Financial hardship for night school and summer school

Students are limited in pursuing their passion

Social and emotional health is negatively impacted.

Disproportionately impacts at risk subgroups

#### **Benefits of the revamped graduation plan:**

Financial relief for students and families

Students having the ability to take classes they want to take

Students having more electives, more advanced coursework and vocational pathways

Increase graduation rate and allow students to explore passions before college

Just as an update, in the last 4 years there have been 60 courses added in the program of studies at Woburn Memorial High School to give our students more options.

After discussion and joint agreement that this would open opportunities for our students Dr.

Wells made a motion and Ms. Crowley seconded; the vote was 3-0 that we approve the move to the 4x3 plan with the stipulation presented by Dr. Wells that we review any data and any changes in 2022.

Mr. Demers made a motion that we accept the favorable recommendation from the subcommittee report and allow the curriculum department as well as the high school to move forward with the shift to the 4x3 plan.

Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

Chairman Mulrenan asked Mr. Demers to repeat the motion.

Mr. Demers said State Law sets graduation requirements at the authority of the school committee; for any changes to occur the school committee has to vote.

Mr. Demers made a motion to accept the proposed change from a 4x4 plan to the 4x3 graduation requirement at Woburn Memorial High School with a review in 2022.

Ms. Crowley on the motion agrees with Ms. Callanan and the advantages of this move.

We are the only school in this area with a 4x4.

Ms. Chisholm commented that when we went to a 4x4 it was to put our kids above the surrounding towns. Now this is telling us it does not make any difference when they apply to college. She wants to make sure we are not hurting anybody.

Ms. Sprague commented that it is a benefit to students.

Chairman Mulrenan said we have a motion on the floor from Mr. Demers for the change in the 4x4 to the 4x3 with a review in 2022.

All in favor, 5-0. (Mr. Metters was not in attendance and Dr. Wells left early)

The other topic of discussion was course selection. They are looking at proposing to push the course selection calendar to later in the year in 2020-21. It is difficult to get a really good read on a student, especially our AP students. Upperclassmen will have a different move up day and that change is being discussed by administration.

An update on ATLAS was provided.

### **Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Crowley said they have not met.

She asked the committee members to review the Bullying policy.

Overnight Travel will be sent to subcommittee to look at again.

### **Student Services and Achievement**

Mr. Metters was not in attendance to report.

Ms. Crowley asked about the William James referral service. She believes this has been reviewed by SSA multiple times. She asked if the committee can move this to the Finance subcommittee in terms of cost.

Mr. Demers suggested Ms. Crowley send an email to Mr. Metters.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Kickit 2019 Update

Mr. Mulrenan received an email that the day was a success with the community coming together. They will have another one in 2020.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Pep Rally at WMHS on November 27th.

Thanksgiving Day Football Game will be at Winchester, 10:00 AM.

Next school committee meeting is December 10, 2019.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dr. Crowley informed the committee there was no need for an executive session this evening.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

(Mr. Metters was not in attendance and Dr. Wells left early)

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary