

**Wilmington Public Schools**  
161 Church Street  
Wilmington, Massachusetts 01887  
Telephone: (978) 694-6000 Fax: (978) 694-6005



*School Committee*

**Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting**

October 12, 2011

1. **Roll Call:** Chairwoman Margaret Kane called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were: Superintendent Joanne Benton, Assistant Superintendent Kathleen Burnham, Mr. Quincy Vale, Mr. Mario Marchese, Ms. Ginny Bonish, Dr. Leslee Quick, Mr. Robert Hayes, Mrs. Kathleen Carroll and Mr. Paul Ruggiero.
2. **Approval of Items by Consensus:**
  - A. **Introduction of Items by Superintendent**
  - B. **Requests to Withdraw Items**
  - C. **Items for Approval:**
    1. **Approval of Minutes: September 14, 2011 – Regular Session**
    2. **Approval of Executive Session Minutes for Release**
    3. **Warrants: L10, L11, L12, RE205, CF6, FS3, GR402**
    4. **Payroll 9/14, 9/28**
  - D. **Consideration for Items Withdrawn from Consensus**

Superintendent Joanne Benton reviewed the four (4) items for approval on the Consent Agenda.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane called for a motion to approve the September 14, 2011 Regular Session School Committee minutes.

**Motion**, by Mr. Mario Marchese, seconded by Mr. Quincy Vale to approve the September 14, 2011 Regular Session School Committee minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane explained that the Executive Session Minutes for release were reviewed by herself and Superintendent Benton; the minutes date back to 2004 when Ms. Kane joined the committee and are open for review at the Roman House. Ms. Kane further stated there are minutes preceding 2004 that have not been released, but feels it is not for the current committee to do.

Mr. Mario Marchese commented that there are current members that were not on the committee in 2004 and stated that he didn't feel comfortable approving minutes during a time he was not a School Committee member.

Chairwoman Kane explained that the vote is not for formal approval, it is approval for release; she asked Mr. Marchese if he felt comfortable abstaining from vote.

Superintendent Joanne Benton noted that the minutes have been previously approved.

Mr. Robert Hayes inquired on the process of determining which minutes would be released. Chairwoman Kane responded by stating that determination was based on content.

Mr. Robert Hayes noted the purpose is to ensure we are compliant with the Open Meeting Law.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane called for a motion to approve the Executive Session School Committee minutes, for release--on the attached list.

**Motion**, by Dr. Leslee Quick, seconded by Ms. Ginny Bonish to approve the Executive Session School Committee minutes, for release--on the attached list.

**Vote:** Six (6) in favor; one (1) abstain; Mr. Mario Marchese abstained from vote.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane called for a motion to approve Treasury Warrants: L10, L11, L12, RE205, CF6, FS3 and GR402.

**Motion**, by Dr. Leslee Quick, seconded by Mr. Robert Hayes to approve the Treasury Warrants listed.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane called for a motion to approve the Payroll for September 14 and September 28, 2011.

**Motion**, by Mr. Robert Hayes, seconded by Mr. Mario Marchese to approve the Payroll for September 14 and September 28, 2011.

**Vote:** Six (6) in favor, one (1) abstain; Mrs. Kathleen Carroll abstained from vote.

### **3. Student Representative Report**

Kelley Wilcox was present on behalf of the Student Representatives' to report on upcoming school events and activities. Ms. Wilcox began her report announcing it is "Annual Spirit" week: Tuesday was Class Day, Wednesday is Sports' Day, Thursday is Military Day, and Friday is Blue and White Day. Auditions for the Winter Musical "Pajama Games" have just ended and they had their first meeting today.

Ms. Wilcox reported that last week, one of the marketing classes was able to obtain 108 new student members through various community resources; the Medical Careers Club will travel to Children's Hospital on Thursday; the Soccer, Volleyball and Cross-Country Teams have won their last events. Ms. Wilcox concluded her report stating that the Cheerleaders' held a car-wash last Saturday and the Band played in the Columbus Day Parade.

### **4. Superintendent's Report**

#### **1. MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence**

Superintendent Joanne Benton announced Ms. Kristin Esdale, Senior at WHS, as this year's recipient of the 2011-2012 Superintendent Academic Excellence Award. She commended Kristin on all her accomplishments and stated, "We congratulate you and your parents on all of your successes."

Ms. Benton also introduced and welcomed new high-school staff members:

- Mr. Daniel Fionte, Arts
- Ms. Victoria Green, Math
- Mr. Michael Hildt, Special Education Learning Center

Ms. Jen Fiddler, new liaison for the Arts Department was also acknowledged and was introduced in the spring.

## **2. October 1<sup>st</sup> Enrollment Report**

Superintendent Joanne Benton reported that the October 1 Enrollment Report is included in the meeting packets and noted that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education uses this information when determining Chapter 70 funding. Ms. Benton stated that the report indicates 3,676 students, 20 less than last year; also attached are (five) 5-year projections which will be used as we begin the budget process for 2013.

### **Questions and Comments:**

Mr. Robert Hayes commented on the enrollment figure stating, "It seems to be down approximately 120". He further inquired about future enrollment trends for Wilmington.

Superintendent Benton acknowledged Mr. Hayes's clarification. She responded to his question on future enrollment trends stating that NESDEC performed an Enrollment Prediction three (3)-years ago and projections indicated we would level off in five (5)-years.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane commented that every Middle School loses students when moving onto high school; she is hopeful more will remain with the new high school.

Superintendent Benton stated that on average 70 students go to Shawsheen Tech and 10-16 attend private schools.

Ms. Ginny Bonish asked if the new high school may bring in more residents and students to the town.

Superintendent Benton stated the demographics do not provide that information; she hopes it will encourage them.

## **3. Class Size Report**

Superintendent Joanne Benton briefly reviewed the Class Size Reports and introduced Principals Eric Tracy and Christine McMenimen to provide a summary and respond to questions.

### **Questions and Comments:**

Superintendent Benton reported that she and Ms. McMenimen discussed the MCAS and AYP Reports and stated their intention to introduce new programs to support students at the Middle School.

Mr. Quincy Vale asked if there is an optimal class size recommendation.

Superintendent Benton replied that there is various data on the subject and stated that from a teacher perspective, below 22 for elementary grades and 24 and below for Grades 2-5 is ideal. She further commented that she believes the class size in the contract is favorable.

Ms. Christine McMenimen commented that history and origins, when tracking heterogeneous grouping, has shown an ideal class size of 19-22 students. She further stated that she thinks we do very well in the core subject areas; we are meeting the needs of students who learn at different paces, 20-22 is phenomenal.

Mr. Eric Tracy commented that Wilmington students have the opportunity to gain so much more given our class sizes and this will unleash amazing potentials; some surrounding communities have class sizes in the mid and upper twenties.

Mr. Quincy Vale asked if the class averages mask a significant variation—comparing small seminars with large lecture classes.

Superintendent Benton responded stating we are hoping to get there with the new high school.

Mr. Robert Hayes inquired about AP classes at the high school.

Mr. Eric Tracy responded stating that a Pre-AP model is being discussed in hopes of getting students into that mode; students tend not to choose those classes---Calculus has nine (9) students and Biology has just seven (7). He further stated that many colleges are not giving the students credit for those classes.

Ms. Ginny Bonish commented that from a university point of view, AP information is noted at admission and seen as a challenging point.

Mr. Robert Hayes inquired on the sustainability of the French program.

Ms. McMenimen responded stating that there has been much discussion with the Foreign Language Department since the introduction of Italian; French has traditionally been low.

Mr. Robert Hayes acknowledged the Performing Arts Department in both schools. He further asked for an update on the virtual high school.

Mr. Eric Tracy replied that he will prepare a report.

Superintendent Benton made note and stated that it will be included as a future Agenda Item.

Chairwoman Kane asked if space was adequate, at the Middle School, for Special Education classes and instruction.

Ms. McMenimen responded stating that spacing is adequate; we utilize and share it well.

#### **4. Walk for WEF**

Superintendent Joanne Benton reminded all that the Wilmington Education Foundation's Walk for WEF will take place on October 31 for grades Pre-K through 8. She stated that half the funds raised will be given to the school and the other half will go to WEF grant programs. She hopes that everyone will participate and will provide a schedule for anyone who wants to stop by.

## **5. Boston Magazine – Best Public Schools 2011**

Superintendent Benton acknowledged Mr. Quincy Vale's recommendation of adding this topic to the Agenda. Boston Magazine's 2011 school-district ranking, article, and information on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) are included in the meeting packages for review. Ms. Benton reported that she felt challenged by the information and sought feedback from the Leadership Team and School Committee members; this will be a reoccurring item on our Leadership Team's Agenda.

### **Questions and Comments:**

Mr. Quincy Vale thanked Ms. Benton for including the information, as well as the Leadership Team for their feedback. He continued to state that he feels this is a baseline for comparing and analyzing data with local areas; this will also assist in strategic planning. Mr. Vale stated that he hopes to find a way for broader comparisons as well.

Superintendent Benton stated that she appreciates Mr. Vale's thoughts; she commented that she would be pleased to see Wilmington included in the Top 50 list and stated she has conveyed this to the Leadership Team. She further referenced the "Race to Nowhere" and student reports of taking classes just to reach an end-goal, stating that she is intrigued to look at graduates from 5 years ago and evaluate what classes most benefited them. She additionally commented that she would like to track how many students complete college.

Mr. Robert Hayes commented on the accuracy of the information, noting that Wilmington is listed as offering half day Kindergarten; a full-day program is offered.

Mr. Mario Marchese noted a discrepancy on the figures and data pertaining to budgets.

Discussion ensued and committee members shared thoughts and opinions surrounding the data.

## **6. Global Child**

Superintendent Benton reported that class and enrollment information for the Fall 2011 Global Child Program is included in the meeting packets.

Ms. Benton distributed the monthly Public Health Report provided by Ms. Doreen Crowe.

## **5. Old Business**

### **1. Status of High School Building Project**

Superintendent Joanne Benton called attention to the Public Forum tomorrow evening from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium; she recommends all attend. Ms. Benton reported that this is the stage when we send MSBA the proposed costs and schematic design; she looks forward to approval in November.

## **6. New Business**

### **1. MCAS Report**

Superintendent Joanne Benton thanked Ms. Kathleen (Kate) Burnham for her preparation of the MCAS 2011 Report--a copy is included in the meeting packets.

Mrs. Burnham provided a PowerPoint presentation and corresponding handout highlighting significant data from the reports.

**Summary Topics:**

- Performance Data--moderate to very high growth coupled with higher achievement.
- The achievement gap in the performance of subgroups.
- Performance in Mathematics is not as strong as in English Language Arts.
- Performance in Science, Technology and Engineering in Grades 5 and 8 can be improved.

**Action Plan**

- The Leadership Team has been performing in-depth review of the data.
- Successful practices will be shared district-wide.
- Teacher access to and discussion of data to inform instruction, assessment, intervention and curriculum renewal will be facilitated.
- Professional Development on differentiated instruction and 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching strategies will occur.
- Aim to foster student-centered instruction at all grade levels to increase student achievement.

Ms. Burnham also stated that the district webpage has several links offering information.

Superintendent Benton referred to the Addendum from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education stating they have issued corrected student score reports. Ms. Benton made note of increases.

Ms. Burnham reviewed the revised scores, identified the corrections and how they are reflected in the percentages; she additionally suggested performing an item analysis to further analyze data.

**Questions and Comments:**

Dr. Leslee Quick commented that the curriculum for Science and Technology has been the same since 2009; given the decrease in scoring, this is something we need to address. She further asked if an item analysis would provide further clarification to the reasoning behind the decrease.

Superintendent Benton stated that examination of the last five (5)-years of data will need to occur to possibly identify reasoning.

Discussion ensued surrounding math scores.

Mr. Quincy Vale commented that recently he read students doing the best 5-10 years out of high school came from schools where math scores were at least one standard deviation higher than the average math score. The best predictor for future success is a rigorous focus on math and this is something for us to strive for; he is open to implementing an action plan for emergency re-dress.

Superintendent Benton stated we will be discussing this at the next School Committee meeting.

## **7. Delegations**

None.

## **8. Board Members Questions and Comments**

This item was previously eliminated from the Agenda.

## **9. Other Reports**

### **1. Subcommittee Reports**

Mrs. Kathleen Carroll reported that the upcoming SPEDPAC meeting is October 20, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the WHS Library; the focus is Anti-Bullying.

Mr. Robert Hayes reviewed highlights of the recent Technology Task Force meeting. He reported that Wilmington is one of the first districts in the state to grade technology at the elementary level; fiber optics networks are available to all schools in the district; there was a demonstration of how a mobile device can be used for in-class polls. Mr. Hayes stated he will forward the minutes to the School Committee members.

Superintendent Benton stated that Mr. Ellis will now be able to provide presentations and information electronically via a Drop Box; she will forward the member's this information.

Dr. Leslee Quick reminded all that the Walk for WEF is on Halloween; this year we have sponsors donating pedometers. She stated that half of the donations go directly back to the school for a "current need" and noted that a list will be published in the Town Crier this Thursday identifying the distribution of proceeds from last year's walk.

Dr. Quick continued to report on topics from the Health and Wellness Committee meeting from September 28:

The school located Flu Clinic will be offered on October 20 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Wilmington Middle School; the town-wide Flu Clinic will be offered on October 22 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

The Drug Take Back Program will be held on October 29 at the Public Safety Building.

Dr. Quick announced that the North and West Intermediate Schools received the School Wellness Bronze Award from the Mass Department of Public Health.

She concluded her report noting that the new high school will allow community members' access to gym equipment.

Mr. Mario Marchese reported that the "Travis Roy" event was phenomenal, stating that students were mesmerized. Mr. Travis is inspiring and a tremendous speaker; he thanked him for a great event.

Ms. Ginny Bonish reported that she is pleased the fiber-optic network upgrade will be available when the new high school is ready. She additionally stated that a Student Information System is being developed which will allow parents to track their children's grades and progress.

Mr. Quincy Vale reviewed topics of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee meeting, stating this was a very productive meeting. The Strategic Plan Draft will be uploaded to a file-sharing program and the committee will be engaging in discussion sessions surrounding broad categories consistent with recent discussions on 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set, measuring quality products, process and procedures.

Chairwoman Margaret Kane stated that she is impressed with the enthusiasm of the teachers on the Technology Sub-Committee.

#### **10. Correspondence**

Mr. Robert Hayes reported that Mr. Mike Murphy acknowledged receipt of the card he had sent.

#### **11. Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items**

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>a. October 13</b>  | <b>Public Forum on New High School—6:30 p.m.</b>      |
| <b>b. October 26</b>  | <b>School Committee/Regular Meeting</b>               |
| <b>c. November 9</b>  | <b>School Committee/Regular Meeting</b>               |
| <b>d. December 14</b> | <b>School Committee/Budget Presentation—6:30 p.m.</b> |

#### **12. Adjournment**

Chairwoman Margaret Kane requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion**, by Mr. Quincy Vale, seconded by Mr. Robert Hayes to adjourn.

Motion was carried by all.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mr. Robert Hayes, Secretary