

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – May 20, 2015

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair
Donna Bouchard
Jeanne Downs
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk
Student Services Director

Chair Ellen Grieco convened the Special Session at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

There were no comments or written statements from the public.

2. **Summit Reports:**

(a) Raising the Bar: (Paul Stein and Ellen Grieco)

Before beginning the presentation, Paul noted that the background design for the PowerPoint was chosen by the Happy Hollow “Principals for the Day” during their visit to his office.

Paul reminded the Committee that the task at hand for all summit groups was to take the information gathered at the original Summit, including information received since the Summit, and narrow down the suggestions given to the groups in an effort to put together a long range plan. His group’s frame of the discussion focused on the following question: What needs to be enhanced or adopted in order to assure that all students, particularly those in the middle, are challenged and fully served?

At the initial summit meeting and the later Boston meeting, 41 ideas/enhancements were discussed. The subgroup narrowed down the information into 9 categories, resulting in 6 priorities. Paul listed the 6 priorities and gave a brief explanation for each. Priorities 2 through 5 relate more to solutions to the ideas developed.

1. Develop a definition of what we mean by ‘students in the middle,’ taking into consideration issues relating to maturation, development, culture and gender.
2. Develop a system that fosters personal connections with students “in the middle” that lights a fire, inspires, and leads to self-motivation.
3. Evaluate, enhance, and expand both adult and peer to peer mentoring relationships.
4. Evaluate how the system explicitly teaches students study, preparation, and self-advocacy skills, including efforts to enable more students to succeed in high level courses.
5. Evaluate and expand the use of differentiated learning.
6. Evaluate and expand the use of individual and group project-based learning.

Paul and Ellen developed questions related to each priority, all of which Paul elaborated on the specifics of what is hoped to be achieved long term. Ellen and Paul described the process for choosing their 6 priorities. Paul noted that the summer pilot program does fall into some of the categories presented tonight, and Ellen commented that most items already exist in the schools; however, this method is a more structured approach to raising the bar.

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- (b) Technology: (Donna Bouchard, Leisha Simon, Jeff Dieffenbach, Win Treese, Rajiv Shridhar, Dave Howe – also representing the Technology Task Force). Donna noted that two of the group's members could not attend, including some of the technology staff.

Leisha prefaced the presentation by commenting on the group's goals in terms of long range planning together with the support of the entire Technology Task Force (TTF), which is to take the information gathered and implement it into the technology planning this fall. The group's discussion included the use of instructional technology at all levels and its future potential. Leisha commented that because technology is evolving, it is cyclical with everything being done and the goals need to be reassessed on a regular basis. Donna added that the TTF toured an elementary school and the middle school to understand the technology that is currently being used and to help in its efforts to advance the use of technology. They will tour the high school in the future. All of the work done relative to the enhancements noted will be included in the Technology Plan that is required by the state.

The following are the top 6 enhancements highlighted and chosen by the group:

1. Balance technology and non-technology learning
 - Educate parents on use of screen time outside of school
 - Communicate how schools balance the learning
2. Student learning should drive the technology use
 - Task a group with proposing solutions to continue effective technology integration
 - Find more effective ways to communicate with parents
3. Set objectives and continuously update the objectives based on progress and learning
 - Better articulate the process in place
 - Keep parents and community informed of progress
4. Help teachers integrate technology into their daily workflow
5. Every student learns to their potential at their own pace.
6. Empower teachers to drive innovation.

The group reviewed the top 3 in more detail, the associated concerns, and the vision to address each enhancement. One concern related to technology is excessive screen time; a discussion ensued. Other concerns are the time needed for teachers to be trained to select educational tools and assess the resulting student data, and effective and consistent parent communication. More discussion followed that included analyzing student data and available data driven tools.

Ellen left the meeting at 8:13 p.m.; returned at 8:15 p.m.

The technology group's action items were also noted. They responded to a question regarding their take-aways from this process.

Ellen left the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

- (c) Enhancing the Curriculum: (Jeanne Downs and John Todd)
Jeanne noted that the subgroup's members were John Todd, Ken Rideout, Karyn Saxon, Brad Crozier, and Juliette Fay.

This group's mission was to look at new or expanded ideas for enhancing the curriculum and developed 10 calls to action or areas of curriculum, which are listed in a prioritized manner.

- Foreign Language in Elementary Schools
- STEAM/Computer Science
- Elementary Math Program
- Joy of Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Writing Program
- Study Skills/Transitions Between Schools (more emphasis on middle to high school)

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- Redefining Social Competency
- Nature Rich Education
- Social Studies

For each Call to Action, the group identified the impact on student learning, the grades affected, the ease of implementation, and the status of each. Jeanne explained each Call to Action. A question was raised about the demographics of those interested in this summit topic to which John responded.

Jeanne identified the scope, barriers, and solutions for the high interest areas and the level of impact on learning. Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools was the most popular and the most focused on; however, it is hard to implement, although it has a high impact. The group recommended that a task force be formed to research foreign language in other districts, to engage the public in this effort, and to identify the budget, staff, and time constraints.

Barb commented that, under the direction of a former Assistant Superintendent, a task force was formed to research foreign language in the elementary schools.

Jeanne continued to describe the scope, barriers and solutions for Experiential Learning, Nature Rich Education, Social Studies, and the Joy of Learning. Jeanne noted that 9 out of the 10 Calls to Action are difficult to implement but have a high impact. Six out of 10 are in process, but more work is needed to reach the next level.

(d) Wellness: (Marlene Dodyk and Malcolm Astley)

This group is represented by school staff, counselors and community members. Input was also received from the Wellness Committee, guidance counselors, and the wellness staff.

Marlene noted that 34 different enhancements were identified as ways to improve or look at in the Health and Wellness program. Some of the areas identified were:

- Self-Regulation
- Body Image
- Mental Health
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Sexual Relationships
- Boys & Self Expression
- Dating Violence
- Sleep & Nutrition
- Family Time
- Technology & Health

The top 6 priority enhancements were:

- Self-Regulation
- Moral Development & Stress
- Technology & Health
- Balance between Work, Love & Connectedness & Fun and the Heart & Spirit

Four major areas of resilience:

- Self-Regulation
- Stress Management
- Moral Development
- Character Development

Marlene provided an overview of activities of the summit subgroup, beginning with a brainstorming of the list of health and wellness aspirations, establishing action steps based on aspirations, and providing

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feedback and synopsis to the School Committee. Funding was received from the Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund for a .1 FTE from March through this school year to create a comprehensive list of existing Health & Wellness assets across the District. To create this Asset Map, WHS guidance staff member, James Chiarelli, will interview principals, health and wellness teachers, and guidance counselors.

Marlene commented that during this process, they are focusing on the four major areas of resilience. Several areas of actions were identified and the action steps were categorized as hard/high impact and easy/high impact on student learning. Marlene also noted some factors that are being considered that are not included in the action items.

3. **Discussion regarding Next Steps:**

The Committee discussed its next steps related to each group. A discussion ensued in this regard. Barb suggested that each group identify 3 or 4 priorities that are high impact/hard to implement for which the School Committee can move forward with, while still identifying the high impact/easy to implement priorities that would be given to Paul to incorporate in the near future. Donna suggested a survey monkey and gave examples to include in the survey.

The Committee discussed the overwhelming amount of information presented and a possible overlap of information in terms of identifying priorities. The Committee agreed to continue this discussion at a School Committee meeting in July.

4. **Comments from the Public:**

There were no comments from the public.

5. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Enhancing the Curriculum Presentation
3. Raising the Bar Presentation
4. Employing Technology Presentation
5. Health & Wellness Findings Presentation