



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

March 5, 2021

To: *Wachusett Regional School District Committee*

Michael Dennis, Chair	Linda Long-Bellil
Christina Smith, Vice-chair	Kenneth Mills
Melissa Ayala	Benjamin Mitchel
Krista Bennett	Karl Ottmar
Scott Brown	Michael Pantos, Jr.
Maleah Gustafson	Deidre Shapiro
Sherrie Haber	Asima Silva
Robert Imber	Jeffrey Sullivan
Laura Kirshenbaum	Kelly Williamson
Eric Knowlton	Linda Woodland
Matthew Lavoie	Adam Young

From: Darryll McCall, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Brevity Report

I wish to welcome Eric Knowlton of Princeton to the Committee. Mr. Knowlton was appointed by the Princeton Selectboard to fill the vacancy created when Megan Weeks resigned from the Committee. Eric's term will continue until the May 2021 local elections. I welcomed Member Knowlton to the Committee and we look forward to him joining us at Monday's virtual meeting.

This Report will provide the Committee with information and data for discussion and review at Monday's Budget Hearing. Also on the agenda for Monday's meeting is "Return to School Plan," which will be reviewed and discussed at the meeting.

As has been the practice, Monday's Budget Hearing will be by remote participation via Google Meet. An invitation to the meeting has been sent/shared with members of the School Committee, the Student Representatives, Central Office executive staff, Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson, and the president of the WREA. If you have not yet done so, please "accept" the invitation if you are intending to participate in the meetings. Using a laptop with the Meet connection is preferable, though calling in by cell phone is also an option, though not the preferred way to participate.

Monday's Budget Hearing will be streamed for the public through YouTube Live. A link to the stream can be found on the homepage of the District website. The meeting will also be broadcast live on HCTV.

Members of the public wishing to address the School Committee through Public Hearing may register on the WRSDC webpage (www.wrsd.net/school_committee). Pre-registered commenters will be invited to address the Committee live through Google Meet or other instructions which will be sent just prior to the meeting.

For planning and quorum purposes, please advise if you are unable to participate in Monday evening's meeting.

Updated Roster, Subcommittee Assignments, and Posting

Attached is the updated WRSDC roster (attachment 1). Chair Dennis has made some additional modifications to the subcommittee memberships and attached is an updated listing of subcommittee assignments (attachment 2). Attached is the updated posting of School Committee, subcommittee, and SEPAC meetings scheduled for the coming months (attachment 3).

Proposed Draft FY22 Budget

Members of the executive staff and I have concluded our meetings with Member Town officials to review the developing draft budget and to answer questions town officials may have. As I mentioned at our last meeting, the proposed budget was a concern for several of the towns and we will be making modifications to this prior to our Budget Hearing on Monday evening. We will forward a copy of the presentation to School Committee members prior to the meeting.

Budget Narrative

Attached is the FY22 Budget Narrative, which outlines our proposed Appropriation (attachment 4). Hard copies of this document are available at the Central Office for members of the public.

School Readiness for Full In-Person Reopening

This week, while visiting schools, Deputy Berlo and I worked with building principals on establishing proper social distancing in areas such as the cafeteria and classrooms. We are pleased to review our reopening plans with the full Committee on Monday night as we move toward bringing our students back to full in-person learning. I share the following pictures of cafeterias from Dawson, Thomas Prince, and Davis Hill to give you an idea of spacing in various schools:



Dawson



Davis Hill



Thomas Prince

Vaccination for WRSD staff

As I shared with you earlier today, the Governor announced earlier this week that school staff may be vaccinated after March 11th. Working with the Rutland Vaccine Team, we have established a private clinic for all district employees on March 17th at Naquag Elementary School. The Pfizer vaccine will be administered. We have established a schedule for each school to follow with a window of time during the day when staff will be able to sign up for their vaccination appointments. We credit our quick turnaround time in setting up this clinic to our strong partnership with the Rutland Vaccination Team, which includes the Rutland Board of Health and Rutland Fire Department.

The schedule allows for all of the approximately 1,000 district employees to be vaccinated if they choose to do so. This is an excellent opportunity and will help our staff feel more confident about the eventual transition to full in-person learning.

All students will be remote on March 17th, as all of our school nurses will be assisting in the vaccination clinic on that day. A message will be sent to all families.

We thank the Rutland Vaccination Team, the Rutland Board of Health, and the Rutland Fire Department for their ongoing partnership, and especially for their help with organizing this vaccine clinic. We are fortunate to have them in our corner to help bring this pandemic to an end and to support our faculty and staff in this way.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

cc: Executive Staff

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Agenda

Annual Budget Hearing

Special Meeting #332

Monday, March 8, 2021

7:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Presentation of the *Proposed FY22 Appropriation*
- III. Public Hearing
- IV. Return to School Plan
- V. Adjournment

WACHUSETT REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 2020 – May 2021

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>	<u>Home Address & Phone</u>
Melissa Ayala	2021	8 Sterling Avenue Sterling 01564 melissa_ayala@wrsd.net
Krista Bennett	2023	Holden 01520 (408) 771-4279 krista_bennett@wrsd.net
Scott Brown	2023	151 Highland Street Holden 01520 (508) 789-0711 scott_brown@wrsd.net
Michael Dennis	2023	15 Cypress Circle Holden 01520 (978) 853-1278 michael_dennis@wrsd.net
Maleah Gustafson	2022	63 Heather Circle Jefferson 01522 maleah_gustafson@wrsd.net
Sherrie Haber	2022	1 Olivia Lane Rutland 01543 sherrie_haber@wrsd.net
Robert Imber	2021	1 Clearings Way Princeton 01541 (978) 481-6999 robert_imber@wrsd.net
Laura Kirshenbaum	2023	41 Britney Drive Holden 01520 laura_kirshenbaum@wrsd.net
Eric Knowlton	2021	235 Mirick Road Princeton 01541 eric_knowlton@wrsd.net
Matthew Lavoie	2022	28 Grizzly Drive Rutland 01543 (857) 891-6164 matthew_lavoie@wrsd.net
Linda Long-Bellil	2021	35 Brentwood Drive Holden 01520 (508) 304-1920 linda_longbellil@wrsd.net
Kenneth Mills	2022	22 Flagler Drive Holden 01520 (774) 230-4712 kenneth_mills@wrsd.net
Benjamin Mitchel	2021	7 Colony Lane Paxton 01612 (508) 208-7728 benjamin_mitchel@wrsd.net
Karl Ottmar	2023	232 West Street Paxton 01612 (434) 242-7042 karl_ottmar@wrsd.net

3/5/2021

WACHUSETT REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 2020 – May 2021

Michael Pantos, Jr.	2021	19 Watson Lane Rutland, MA 01543 michael_pantos@wrsd.net
Deidre Shapiro	2023	3 Pinewood Lane Sterling, MA 01564 deidre_shapiro@wrsd.net
Asima Silva	2021	75 Nelson Street Holden 01520 (508) 852-1246 asima_silva@wrsd.net
Christina Smith	2022	362 Sterling Road Jefferson 01522 (508) 468-7929 christina_smithSC@wrsd.net
Jeffrey Sullivan	2021	39 Vista Circle Rutland, MA 01543 jeffrey_sullivan@wrsd.net
Kelly Williamson	2023	17 Redstone Hill Road Sterling, MA 01564 (774) 232-4957 kelly_williamson@wrsd.net
Linda Woodland	2022	4 Deborah Lane Sterling 01564 linda.woodland@wrsd.net
Adam Young	2021	434 Shrewsbury Street Holden 01520 (774) 272-0182 adam_young@wrsd.net

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Subcommittee Assignments

2020-2021

Business/Finance

Kenneth Mills, Chair
Maleah Gustafson
Benjamin Mitchel
Karl Ottmar
Jeffrey Sullivan

Education

Christina Smith, Chair
Linda Long-Bellil, Vice-chair
Krista Bennett
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum
Deidre Shapiro

Legal Affairs

Scott Brown, Chair
Karl Ottmar, Vice-chair
Robert Imber
Laura Kirshenbaum

Management

Michael Dennis, Chair
Scott Brown
Matthew Lavoie
Kenneth Mills
Asima Silva
Christina Smith
Adam Young

Superintendent Goals and Evaluation

Matthew Lavoie, Chair
Michael Dennis
Kelly Williamson
Linda Woodland

Facilities and Security

Adam Young, Chair
Linda Woodland, Vice-chair
Krista Bennett
Michael Pantos, Jr.

Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Subcommittee

Asima Silva, Chair
Linda Woodland, Vice-chair
Melissa Ayala
Krista Bennett
Maleah Gustafson
Laura Kirshenbaum
Linda Long-Bellil

WRSD By-Laws specify the Chair of the School Committee is an ex-officio member of all standing subcommittees.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Review the Regional Agreement

Kenneth Mills, Chair
Scott Brown
Matthew Lavoie

Audit Advisory Board

Benjamin Mitchel, Chair
Adam Young, Vice-chair

School Council Liaisons

Central Tree Middle School – Matthew Lavoie
Chocksett Middle School – Kelly Williamson
Davis Hill Elementary School – Kelly Williamson
Dawson Elementary School – Laura Kirshenbaum
Glenwood Elementary School – TBD
Houghton Elementary School – Deidre Shapiro
Mayo Elementary School – Adam Young

Mountview Middle School – Scott Brown
Naquag Elementary School – Sherrie Haber
Paxton Center School – Karl Ottmar
Thomas Prince School – Asima Silva
WRHS – Kenneth Mills
Special Ed. Parent Advisory Council – Maleah Gustafson
ECC – Linda Woodland

3/5/2021

Education Subcommittee

Monday, March 8, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Developing Budget Priorities from Ed Subcommittee
- IV. Staffing implications due to enrollment changes
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business
- VII. Next Meeting
- VIII. Resources
- IX. Adjournment

The above agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Annual Budget Hearing

Monday, March 8, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Presentation of the Proposed FY22 Appropriation
- III. Public Hearing
- IV. Return to School Plan
- IV. Adjournment

The above agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

SEPAC - General Meeting

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

AGENDA

- I. Welcome

- II. What is working for your school?
 - A. Cohort D
 - B. Cohort A&B
 - C. Cohort C
- III. What is not working
 - A. Challenges
 - B. Future return of more students to the building
- IV. How did the SEPAC survey affect the schools?
- V. Vocation Program at the High School
- VI. Updates from the Director of Special Education
- VII. Thank you

The above agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

Legal Affairs Subcommittee

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2021 Meeting
 - Approval of Minutes of Executive Sessions:
 - August 17, 2020
 - September 30, 2020
 - October 27, 2020
 - November 16, 2020
 - December 1, 2020
 - January 4, 2021
 - February 2, 2021
- III. Review of Legal Bills
- IV. Executive Session
 - a. Executive Session to discuss strategy for contract negotiations with bargaining units (Teamsters Union Local 170 (paraprofessionals) and SEIU Local 888 (ABA PAs)); to report on progress of negotiations with the Wachusett Regional Education Association, Inc. (WREA) on 2020-2021 school reopening; and to provide an update and to discuss potential litigation as the Chair deems discussions in public session would have an adverse effect on the District's bargaining position, not to return to public session.
- V. Adjournment

The above agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

Management Subcommittee

Thursday, March 11, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Monday, March 15, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Special Meeting

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Education Subcommittee

Monday, March 22, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee

Monday, March 22, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet

Facilities and Security Subcommittee

Thursday, March 25, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Meeting to be conducted remotely, using Google Meet



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

FY22 BUDGET NARRATIVE

March 5, 2021

As I write the budget narrative, I want to begin by thanking all members of our community for their patience, understanding, cooperation, tolerance, and resilience, particularly since March of 2020. I do not believe anyone could have predicted the impact COVID-19 would have on the Wachusett District, the Commonwealth, the country, or the world, but I believe as we all work through this together and we begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel, the collaboration and teamwork shown will help guide us in our eventual return to “normal.”

As we have done over the past several years, the District and Member Town officials held the annual Budget Roundtable, virtually this year, on January 7, 2021. This meeting was the opportunity to discuss key budget issues associated with the upcoming fiscal year. Even though this year’s Roundtable was virtual, it was well attended by town representatives, officials from the state, members of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee, and community members interested in learning more about the budget process. Though budget development was delayed this year due to the pandemic as well as the state’s FY21 budget approval being later than usual, we have worked with our Member Towns, on behalf of all constituents, to develop an annual budget appropriation that will address the needs of Wachusett’s students and staff, while also being cognizant of the budget constraints of our towns.

The WRSD Strategic Plan provides the Wachusett community with a sense of purpose as we define priorities and set budgets. Each school has developed a School Improvement Plan that ties directly back to the Strategic Plan and will help define budget priorities at both the building and the District levels. Goals that have been set by administrators and teachers will have common themes connected to the five learning domains, enabling our five-town district to pursue common educational outcomes. This plan has made communication about the educational needs of our budget more easily understood when sharing our budget with our communities.

The current budget request for FY22 is aligned with the WRSD Strategic Plan as we focus on areas such as early literacy, professional development, technology and student health and wellness. Budget increases are primarily due to a slight increase in staffing, contractual

obligations, and an increase in health insurance. I would like to thank all parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and community members for their continued support and dedication to the education of the children in the Wachusett Regional School District during this time. We must continue to work together to provide our students with a quality education that will prepare them for success in the future.

The Wachusett Regional School District budget consists of nine (9) separate Appropriations with each one designed to meet a specific purpose. The first appropriation and most significant portion of the total budget is Salaries and Stipends.

Salaries and Stipends: \$66,902,524

This appropriation covers salaries for all teachers, nurses, specialized providers such as Applied Behavioral Analysts (ABAs), paraprofessionals, custodians, clerical staff, technical staff, principals, and administrators. Total salaries for FY22 have an increase of 2.64% which includes contractual obligations for all employee groups, projected spending for substitutes and stipends, and includes funding for three (3) new position requests. This budget request will enable the District to maintain all educational programs and expand our efforts in addressing targeted areas of need as outlined in the Strategic Plan. These include providing support for social and emotional learning and safe school learning environments. Our overall increase for Salaries, Stipends and Substitutes is \$1,720,039 or 2.64% above FY21's Appropriation.

Benefits and Insurance: \$17,631,390

The District has received information on health insurance that indicates a projected increase for both active and retired employees of 9.5% above FY21. To offset health care costs the District applies charge-backs to revolving funds such as School Choice and School Lunch which lowers the "net" total of the Employee Health Insurance budget. Cost increases are projected for Other Insurances and Benefits and for the assessment to the Worcester Regional Retirement System. By paying the FY22 Worcester Regional Retirement Assessment on July 1, 2021, the District saved \$43,306 from its original, budgeted figure. Our overall increase in this Appropriation will be \$1,583,577 or 9.87% above FY21.

Instructional Support: \$3,273,020

The District is proposing a decrease in the instructional support budget for FY22 by re-allocating Special Education Contractual Services to the Special Education Circuit Breaker fund. This is an area of the budget where we are committed to providing resources in order to address areas of need that have been lagging in recent years. We are requesting a decrease to this Appropriation to \$3,273,020 which is a decrease of (\$216,835) or (6.21%) under FY21.

Operations & Maintenance:**\$3,932,121**

The District is invested in the maintenance of our schools in order to provide a safe and secure learning environment for our students. The District continues to budget for ongoing building repairs and maintenance. We are projecting some increased costs for natural gas and electricity. For FY22, this Appropriation is being budgeted at \$3,932,121 which is an increase of \$193,890 or 5.19%.

Pupil Services:**\$52,758**

This Appropriation supports non-instructional programs in the schools such as the health offices and student related activities. There have been significant decreases in this Appropriation over the past several years as all athletic team expenses, with the exception of stipends, were redirected to be paid out of the athletic revolving fund. This Appropriation has been level funded for FY22.

Special Education Tuition:**\$2,511,780**

The District is responsible for student placements at other public schools, private schools, and collaboratives which are determined by the programmatic needs of the individual student and program rates approved by the state. Prior to arranging placements, the District evaluates whether a student's needs can be met through an in-District program and contract services. This budget continues to address all current and pending placement agreements and contract increases. The District lowers the "net" expense of this Appropriation by allocating costs to the Circuit Breaker Revolving Fund and the Federal, I.D.E.A. grant. For FY22 we are proposing to budget this Appropriation at \$2,511,780 which is a decrease of (\$258,220) or (9.32%) less than FY21.

Other Operating Costs:**\$1,732,282**

Other Operating Costs include the District's cost for tuition-out expenses for students attending schools in other districts through the School Choice and Charter School programs. These figures are estimates based upon FY21 expenditures. For FY22, we are proposing to budget this Appropriation at \$1,732,282 which is an increase of \$555,472 or 47.20% over FY21. As stated in each of the budget presentations, this increase is the end result of the timing of the Final State Budget for FY21 and the approved budget for WRSD for FY21. This is a fluid number and is likely to change during the State budget process.

Transportation:**\$6,855,504**

The Transportation appropriation reflects a contractual increase in the home to school bus contract as well as in the special education in-District and out-of-District contracts. The figure for Special Education transportation is difficult to pinpoint as Special Education transportation routes may change at any point in the school year given student programmatic need. This appropriation will be budgeted for FY22 at \$6,855,504 which represents a decrease of (\$386,197) or (5.33%) less than FY21 due to the use of a Transportation Stabilization account and Circuit Breaker funds.

Debt Service:**\$2,301,900**

Debt service includes payments for construction bonds for two projects which are the high school renovation/addition project and the Jefferson oil remediation project. These bonds were refinanced by the District this fall having been approved by the Massachusetts Municipal Finance Board last summer. This appropriation of \$2,301,900 reflects a decrease of (\$113,831) or (4.71%) below FY21.

Summary

The District continues to provide Member Towns with a budget that is proactive in supporting educational goals, including student health and wellness, while remaining fiscally prudent. Our overall increase of 3.01% from FY21 to FY22 will provide our students with the necessary tools and learning environment to prepare them for success in an ever-changing, global society of the 21st century.

Total Proposed FY22 Appropriation:**\$105,193,279**