

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN ♦ PAXTON ♦ PRINCETON ♦ RUTLAND ♦ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #258
Saturday, January 22, 2005
8:00 AM

Hagglund Room, Campus Center
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Worcester, MA

Committee Members Present:

Duncan Leith, Chairman	David Gibbs (8:10 AM)
John Nunnari, Vice-Chair	Mark James
Cynthia Bazinet	Alice Livdahl
Elizabeth Brennan	Mary Catherine Maher
Charles Capparelli	Natalie Mello
Robert Carter	Norman Plourde
Clifford Connell	Michael Sherman
Patricia Gates (8:05AM)	Margaret Watson

Committee Members Absent:

Jack Kane	Kelly Maxwell
Cheryl Rauh	

Administration Present:

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Paul K. Soojian, Deputy Superintendent and Director of Operations
Steven Penka, Director of Administrative Services

Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1):

Richard Sheppard, Chair, Sterling Selectboard

I. Call to Order

Chair Duncan Leith called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM and distributed the *Agenda* and the *Wachusett Regional School Committee Goals* (attachments 2 and 3). Chair Leith introduced new Committee Members from Holden, Robert Carter and Mary Catherine (Cathy) Maher, and the facilitator for the retreat, Paul LaCava.

II. Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Natalie Mello reviewed the process of last year’s retreat via a PowerPoint presentation and explained how the School Committee goals were ranked last year to determine the priorities (attachment 4).

Following the introduction, the Superintendent advised the Committee how the rankings, as well as the impact of special education and other requirements under the law, were utilized in the development of the budget. Much discussion took place over the impacts of the cuts that were made over the past two years. Areas of concern discussed included: increased enrollment, class size, support staff (instructional aides/counselors), technology, instructional and MCAS support.

Breakout groups were established, each assigned four standards to rank in order of priority so that number one be the top priority, number two the second priority and so on. (attachment 5). The result of the group work reported out follows:

Standard	Descriptors	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
		Capparelli Gates James Mello Nunnari (Standards 1, 5, 8, 4)	Leith Connell Maher Plourde Watson (Standards 2, 6, 11, 3)	Bazinet Brennan Carter Gibbs Livdahl Sherman (Standards 7, 9, 10, 12)
1	High Quality Curriculum	1		
2	Challenge and Motivate		1	
3	Optional Programs		4	
4	High Standards Assessment	3		
5	Conducive Environment	2		
6	Distribution of Resources		2	
7	Active Learning			1
8	Professional Development	4		
9	Technology			2
10	Beyond Academics			3
11	Alternative Education		3	
12	Diversity			4

A representative from each group reported out the rankings for their assigned priorities and the rationale for where each was placed.

Motion: To modify the language in Standard 1 to read as follows: “Maintain high standards based on academic benchmarks to ensure the continued development, implementation, and maintenance of a high quality curriculum that is consistent throughout the District and exceeds the requirements of the State Frameworks”.

(M. Sherman)
(M. Watson)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Robert Carter
Clifford Connell
Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Natalie Mello
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:

None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Motion: To modify the language in Standard 7 to read as follows: “Maintain high standards based on academic benchmarks that are measured by national standardized testing, state assessments including Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Standards and classroom assessment”.

(N. Mello)
(D. Gibbs)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Robert Carter
Clifford Connell

Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Natalie Mello
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

Following discussion, it was determined by consensus that rank of the priorities would be by the tiers, however they would be bulleted with no emphasis on priority within the tiers. The Superintendent advised the Committee that he would make it a priority, upon his return, to work on providing a value-based budget that would reflect the priorities as discussed, rather than a revenue-based budget, which has been provided in the past.

Discussion continued regarding the placement of Standard 5, "Provide support as needed to ensure that all students can participate and succeed in an environment most conducive to learning". IT WAS DECIDED BY CONSENSUS TO INCLUDE STANDARD 5 IN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY LEVEL. The Superintendent advised the Committee that the movement of Standard 5, "Provide support as needed to ensure that all students can participate and succeed in an environment most conducive to learning" to the highest level would result in the reinstatement of reductions and pupil teacher ratios to the 2002/2003 level. ~~It was decided by consensus to include Standard 5 in the highest priority level.~~

The priority rankings, as agreed by consensus of the School Committee at the retreat, for FY06 are as follows:

Highest priority:

- Maintain high standards based on academic benchmarks to ensure the continued development, implementation, and maintenance of a high quality curriculum that is consistent throughout the District and exceeds the requirements of the State Frameworks;
- Provide challenging educational programs that interest and motivate students to individual achievement;
- Provide quality instruction that promote active student learning and that is measured by national standardized testing, state assessments including

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Standards and classroom assessment; and

- Provide support as needed to ensure that all students can participate and succeed in an environment most conducive to learning;

Second level priority:

- Utilize the most efficient distribution of resources;
- Promote stimulating optional programs and activities that will promote maximum individual achievement;
- Promote and support the widespread use of technology in the classroom to ensure that all students possess the skills to compete in a technological society; and
- Encourage and support the efforts of students to reach beyond the traditional academic program into areas of interest.

Third level priority:

- Provide a program of professional development in order to ensure that all staff members possess the skills necessary to engage students in learning;
- Provide options for learning through alternative educational opportunities; and
- Provide support programs that support an appreciation for diversity.

The Superintendent informed the Committee that he will return to work in a week following approval by the surgeon and will focus on the budget, which will be standards-based rather than previous revenue-based budget submissions. It is hoped that the proposed budget should be available by the end of February in order to give the Committee additional time for deliberation and decision.

III. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(N. Mello)
(J. Nunnari)

Vote:

In favor:

Duncan Leith
John Nunnari
Cynthia Bazinet
Elizabeth Brennan
Charles Capparelli
Robert Carter
Clifford Connell

Patricia Gates
David Gibbs
Mark James
Alice Livdahl
Mary Catherine Maher
Natalie Mello
Norman Plourde
Michael Sherman
Margaret Watson

Opposed:
None

(Motion passed unanimously)

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred D. Tutela, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

ADT:pks/schoolcommittee/minutes